

Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee



CASE REPORT

ZA-2022-2788-CU-SPP-SPR-WDI

**IN-N-OUT Burgers
22822 West Ventura Blvd.
Woodland Hills, 91364**

Demolition of existing of a vacant 1-story, 6,739SF bank building with parking lot (total 39,876 SF lot) and construction of a new 3,342 SF restaurant with drive-thru service, dining patio, parking lot with 33 spaces including handicapped, bike racks, and trash enclosure in the Cahuenga Blvd./Ventura Blvd. Specific Plan.

PLUM Presentation:

December 1, 2022

Applicant: IN-N-OUT Burgers
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PLUM Case Leader: Martin Lipkin, martinlipkin@yahoo.com; tel: (818) 999-4340

Project Description:

The applicant is requesting to demolish a vacant 1-story former bank building of 6,739 SF on the corner of Rigoletto Street and Ventura Blvd., and replace it with a new 3,342 SF restaurant with 24 car drive-thru service lane, dining patio, parking lot, and trash enclosure in the Cahuenga Blvd./Ventura Blvd. Specific Plan. The property that the building is on is zoned C4-1 VLD. The property also includes a large parking lot adjacent to the south that is zoned P-1 VLD. The entire property totals 39,876 SF, and has two access entry/exits—on Ventura Blvd, and on Rigoletto.

The application asks for relief on four Code sections with “discretionary entitlements” and a request to waive a dedication along Rigoletto Street:

1. A CUP (Conditional Use Permit) to allow a drive-through Fast Food establishment in the Cahuenga/Ventura Specific Plan
2. A CUP for a corner commercial development that (1) operates between 11 PM and 7 AM, and (2) does not comply with requirements enumerated in Section 12.22.A.23(a)(3)
3. Relief from Project Permit Compliance, Section 11.5.7.C
4. Request to waive the 5-foot dedication along Rigoletto.
5. Relief from a Site Plan Review

Project site and circulation

The project site currently holds a decaying and vacant 1-story bank building that previously has two entry/exits onto City streets—one on Ventura Blvd., and the other on Rigoletto St. A large parking lot to the rear of the bank building that was bordered by Del Valle provided a significant number of parking spaces.

The site is bordered to the east by a 7-11 convenience store fronting Ventura Blvd., and a 2-story apartment complex at the corner of Fallbrook and Del Valle.



View of the existing vacant bank structure at the corner of Ventura Blvd. and Rigoletto Street.

The IN-N-OUT burger project calls for the removal of the existing structures and building a new, 1-story restaurant and adjacent dining patio fronting Ventura Blvd. The remaining portion of the site will be configured to facilitate a dedicated 22-car drive-through service station on the east side of the building and a landscaped parking lot that will accommodate 33 automobiles which exceeds the required number of spaces by the LAMC. Plans call for there to be access to the lot and the drive-through via two entry/exits—one along Rigoletto St. to the west, and the other opening onto Del Valle to the south. The drive-through will be for single car exit only onto Ventura Blvd.



Proposed location and landscaping for the new IN-N-OUT, including the outdoor dining patio along Ventura and a landscape buffer between the drive-through queue and the apartments on the corner of Del Valle and Fallbrook Avenue.

All of the project’s building and structures will be located entirely in the C-4-zoned portion of the property. The P-zoned portions of the property will be used for parking, circulation, landscaping, the drive-through lane and queuing and minimal signage (menu order boards).

The restaurant will operate 7 days a week-- from 10:00 AM to 1:00 AM Sunday through Thursday, and from 10:00 AM to 1:30 AM on Friday and Saturday. Approximately 10-12 employees will be on a shift, and there will be 3 shifts each day. The restaurant will utilize employees taking orders on hand-held pads in the queuing lines if there is a large rush. All deliveries are made between 2 AM and 9 AM by IN-N-OUT delivery vans—not semi’s or heavy work trucks.



Aerial view showing project site, adjacent properties and the “alley” that is unused. The project proposes landscaping the “alley” and shutting off all access.

IN-N-OUT Project features:

As submitted, the project accomplishes a number of things with the potential to enhance and upgrade this section of Ventura Blvd.:

1. The indoor service area of the restaurant will accommodate 40 guests, while the outdoor dining portion will accommodate 26 guests.
2. Additional outdoor seating will be provided under canopies along the building’s west façade.
3. The dining patio activates the street along Ventura Blvd. And because the parking is in the rear, no large parking areas along Ventura Blvd. are necessary.
4. Outdoor diners are separated from vehicular traffic and are far enough away from queuing cars so that their dining experience isn’t impacted by vehicle emissions.
5. The restaurant building will have solar energy panels installed.
6. The project provides a 10-foot landscaping buffer around the parking areas.
7. The existing 7-foot wall that separates the property from the adjacent residential complex will be maintained and enhanced with masonry repairs and landscaping.



Elevations for the IN-N-OUT show the Front and Right Side of the building (top) and the Rear and Left Side in the second elevation diagram.



Rendering of the west side of building showing parking lot, trash bin area and part of the dining patio in the distance.

PLUM Case Analysis:

The plans for an IN-N-OUT restaurant at this new Ventura Blvd. location seem to have addressed and solved many of the issues of traffic flow, noise, vehicle-pedestrian interaction, disruption in adjacent neighborhoods, and numerous other problems encountered at the previous site (at the Ventura Blvd. Car Wash) which led homeowners to vociferously protest those plans, and IN-N-OUT finally withdrawing their proposal for that location.

This new location not only effectively activates Ventura Blvd. with the outdoor dining patio, but logically eliminates the majority of traffic issues by placing the two major ingress and egress points on the secondary streets surrounding the property, and limiting vehicular traffic from the restaurant to the single drive-through lane exiting onto Ventura. The only issue at this exit is that LADOT should restrict all traffic to a right-hand turn only.

The drive-through queue can handle 24 cars, and should the line grow longer, the staff will be equipped with hand-held electronic ordering menus so that they can walk to vehicles and substantially speed up the service. With traffic entering from Rigoletto and Del Valle, there are no SFR neighborhoods that will bear the brunt of an especially busy day.

The Applicant's requests for relief and deviations from several Cahuenga/Ventura Specific Plan requirements such as the CUP for a drive-through and the CUP for commercial corner development appear to be logical and pose little threat to the overall makeup of the area. Their request to waive the 5-foot dedication along Rigoletto will be balanced by the Applicant's proposal to add additional dedication footage along Del Valle.

The Applicant has addressed the privacy/quiet needs of the adjacent apartments on the southeast corner of the block by having a 10-foot wide landscape buffer featuring a row of trees to shield those apartments from noise and sight of the queue lines.

The proposed installation of solar panels on the roof is a major step in addressing energy concerns.

There is some concern however over the use of the “alleyway” to the east as a garden area, the inability to meet the 50% window transparency requirements on some exterior walls and floors, and the overall architectural design of the building which adheres to a design that stopped being relevant in the early 1960’s.

Issues for PLUM Committee Consideration.

For the mostpart, the site plan and concept for this new IN-N-OUT restaurant to replace the decaying bank building appear to be a beneficial step forward for the community. But, the Applicant and the PLUM Committee should consider some “tweaking.”

1. One of the most critical issues is addressing the exit from the drive-through onto Ventura Blvd. It is obvious that this should be a “Right Turn Only” onto Ventura since this portion of the Boulevard is a haven for speeders and attempting to make a left-hand turn from here could result in significant traffic accidents. The question PLUM and the Applicant should answer is if a sign will be enough to dissuade drivers from attempting a left turn, or if the ramp onto Ventura should be skewed to allow only right-hand turns. To “double-back” in direction, drivers only need to drive a short distance to Fallbrook and turn right. Then make another right at Del Valle and continue west. They can re-access Ventura via several of the North/South local streets.
2. What is the purpose of the conversion of the alleyway off Fallbrook into a landscaped area? Does it make sense to have plants, trees, grass there considering the drought situation? Does the Applicant need to take another look at this area?
3. The developer is requesting a deviation from the minimum required window Transparency for a Commercial Corner Development for the windows along Ventura Blvd. and Rigoletto Street. They claim they cannot meet the LAMC’s 50% transparency requirement because the top part of the building’s façade provide a parapet buffer screening mechanical equipment. More specifics and a greater explanation are needed on this.
4. While the architectural format hews to a long-time IN-N-OUT design, the overall appearance looks extremely dated and bland. Since this is one of the areas included in the Re-Imagine Ventura Blvd. project, the question arises if the architects can add some elements to up-date the project instead of having it look like a re-tread from the 1960s?

Proposed PLUM Motion:

Having held one virtual (Zoom) public meetings for the application ZA-2022-2788-CU-SPP-SPR-WDI, concerning the demolition of existing 6,739SF bank building with parking lot (total

39,876 SF lot), and construction of a new 3,342 SF restaurant with drive-thru service, dining patio, parking lot and trash enclosure in the Cahuenga Blvd./Ventura Blvd. Specific Plan section of Woodland Hills, the Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee hereby finds that:

WHEREAS, the Applicant has submitted a demolition and construction plans that substantially conform to the requirements of the Cahuenga Blvd. /Ventura Blvd. Specific Plan; and

WHEREAS, the request for relief from Code Section 12.24.W.17 for a CUP for a drive-through restaurant in the C4 Zone appears to be warranted; and

WHEREAS, the request from Code Section 12.24.W.27 for a CUP for a commercial corner development that operates between 11 PM and 7 AM and does not comply with requirements in Section 12.22.A.23(a)(3) also appears to be warranted; and

WHEREAS, the request to waive the 5-foot dedication along Rigoletto (and add to the dedication along Del Valle) should be considered; and

WHEREAS, the submitted landscape plan not only satisfied the Specific Plan requirements, but also will help shield the adjacent apartment complex from the project; and

WHEREAS, the project Applicant has acknowledged and accepted the conditions of the Neighborhood Council and agreed to include them on a project summary page in revised project plan submittal;

THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee, for the findings and conditions stated herein, finds that the submitted application and plans for the proposed project at 22822 Ventura Blvd, Woodland Hills, CA 91364, and recommends that the Board of the Woodland Hills-Warner Center Neighborhood Council adopt this motion of the committee as its own in SUPPORT of the requested actions as stated contingent upon adoption by the Applicant of the following conditions:

Condition(s)

- 1.) All plans presented on December 1, 2020 at the virtual PLUM Meeting of the Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council (WHWCNC) shall be dated as such and re-submitted to Planning as an (updated) project application submittal.
- 2.) The applicant will not submit any significant, further updated plans without first presenting them to the WHWCNC for support.
- 3.) Additionally, all conditions herein shall be printed on one of the Project Summary pages as a commitment to and acceptance of these conditions.
- 4.) Applicant shall work with the City’s Department of Transportation to address the “Right Hand Turn Only” necessity for the drive-through exit.
- 5.)
- 6.)

The Planning, Land Use, and Mobility Committee recommends that the Board of the Woodland Hills- Warner Center- Neighborhood Council advise the City of Los Angeles Planning Department and Council District 3 Councilmember Bob Blumenfield of PLUM's findings and its subsequent supporting recommendation to approve this application as presented on December 1, 2022.

Motion: Martin Lipkin
Seconded:

VOTE: Aye Nay Abstain