

ORDINANCE NO. 2022-09-XXXX

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL, CALIFORNIA, TO APPROVE ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT 22-05, AMENDING TITLE 20 OF THE SIGNAL HILL MUNICIPAL CODE TO ADD CHAPTER 20.25 ENTITLED “SP-25, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES AND THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ACADEMY (AUHS/AURA) SPECIFIC PLAN”, AND AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP TO CHANGE THE ZONING DESIGNATION OF AN APPROXIMATE 3.75-ACRE SITE AT 1600 E. HILL STREET FROM “COMMERCIAL OFFICE (CO)” TO “AUHS/AURA SPECIFIC PLAN (SP-25)” (APN 7215-009-005), CONTINGENT ON THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPTION OF THE NEGATIVE DECLARATION ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

WHEREAS, American University of Health Sciences has been in operation at 1600 E. Hill Street in the City of Signal Hill since 2009; and

WHEREAS, the applicant, Morgan Pickard of Morgan Pickard Architectural Design, on behalf of AUHS, formally filed an application to create the American University of Health Sciences and American University Research Academy (AUHS/AURA) Specific Plan (“Project”) at a 3.75-acre site consisting of one parcel at 1600 E. Hill Street (APN 7215-009-005) in the City of Signal Hill and legally described in Exhibit A attached hereto (“Site”); and

WHEREAS, the AUHS/AURA Specific Plan (SP-25) (“Project”) proposes to expand the existing university programs offered and add a private high school, resulting in an increase student enrollment, faculty, and staff, and a Master Educational Plan document has been prepared identifying the educational and physical layout of AUHS/AURA and their campus occupancy at the “Site” attached as Exhibit B; and

WHEREAS, based on the AUHS/AURA Master Plan, the total number of students, staff, and faculty on campus at identified times has been analyzed in an on-site parking and circulation report and a traffic analysis, and the 237 existing parking spaces at the campus—along with the student drop-off, faculty parking, circulation and traffic generation, level of service, and vehicle miles traveled impacts—were studied and analyzed by the City Traffic Engineer and via the environmental analysis, and the number of parking spaces and circulation patterns were deemed to be sufficient and non-impactful; and

WHEREAS, the “Project” will provide additional educational opportunities to the local, State, national, and international communities; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Government Code Section 65855 and Signal Hill Municipal Code (SHMC) Chapter 20.86, entitled “Amendments,” the subject Zoning Ordinance Amendment is properly a matter for City Council adoption; and

WHEREAS, the rezoning of the site from Commercial Office (CO) to the AUHS/AURA Specific Plan (SP-25) is consistent with the Commercial Office land use designation in the General Plan; and

WHEREAS, on June 21, 2022, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public workshop to review the proposed project. The City received an email from a resident who noted concerns regarding parking and traffic impacts to residents, impacts of high school drop-offs to residents commuting to work, access to the main parking lot, all of which were considered in the parking and traffic analysis reports. After considering the public testimony and review of the plans and associated reports, the Planning Commission directed staff to complete the environmental analysis and prepare the Project for a public hearing; and

WHEREAS, on August 5, 2022, notice of a Planning Commission public hearing regarding the proposed project was mailed to all property owners and residents within a 300-foot radius of the site, as well as to 59 residents on Legion Drive who had previously requested to receive notice of development activities in and around their neighborhood, formally named the Civic Center Neighborhood; was published in the Signal Tribune newspaper; and was posted in accordance with SHMC Section 1.08.010; and

WHEREAS, following the August 5, 2022 public notice, staff received a second public comment from a resident on the adjacent Gaviota Avenue with concerns about parking, traffic, and AUHS site and building maintenance. The development standards for the SP-25 specific plan include measures to enforce parking, and the site and building maintenance is subject to the requirements of the SHMC; and

WHEREAS, on August 16, 2022, a public hearing was held before the Planning Commission, and all interested parties were given an opportunity to be heard regarding the proposed project; and

WHEREAS, the Project is considered a project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act; and

WHEREAS, an Initial Study and Negative Declaration (ND) evaluating potential environmental impacts of the “Project” were prepared and a Notice of Intent to Adopt the ND was circulated for public review and comment in accordance with the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act for 20 days beginning on July 26, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has recommended City Council adoption of a Negative Declaration SCH2022070504 relative to Zoning Ordinance

Amendment 22-05 in satisfaction of the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act and approval of Zoning Ordinance Amendment 22-05; and

WHEREAS, on September 2, 2022, notice of a City Council public hearing regarding the proposed project was mailed to all property owners and residents within a 300-foot radius of the site, as well as to 59 residents on Legion Drive who had previously requested to receive notice of development activities in and around their neighborhood, formally named the Civic Center Neighborhood; was published in the Signal Tribune newspaper; and was posted in accordance with SHMC Section 1.08.010; and

WHEREAS, on September 13, 2022, a public hearing was held before the City Council, and all interested parties were given an opportunity to be heard regarding the proposed project; and

WHEREAS, the City has incorporated all comments received and responses thereto.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, that the City Council of the City of Signal Hill, California, does hereby find as follows:

Section 1. Recitals. The facts set forth in the recitals of this Ordinance are true and correct and incorporated by reference. The recitals constitute findings in this matter and, together with the staff report and other information contained in the record, are an adequate and appropriate evidentiary basis for actions taken in this Ordinance.

Section 2. General Plan Consistency. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65855, and based on the entire record before the City Council, including all written and oral evidence presented to the City Council, the City Council hereby finds that Zoning Ordinance Amendment 22-05 is consistent with the General Plan because it is consistent with the following Goals and Policies of the Signal Hill General Plan:

LAND USE ELEMENT GOAL 1 – Manage growth to achieve a well-balanced land use pattern that accommodates existing and future needs for housing, commercial, and industrial land, open space, and community facilities

and services, while maintaining a healthy, diversified economy adequate to provide future City revenues.

Land Use Policy 1.11 – Encourage a wide range of responsive and accessible public facilities and community services, including fire and police protection, library and educational, cultural and recreational opportunities, and other municipal services.

Finding regarding Policy 1.11 – The Specific Plan allows for expanded, specialized educational opportunities such as a private university and high school.

LAND USE ELEMENT GOAL 3 – Assure a safe, healthy, and aesthetically pleasing community for residents and businesses.

Land Use Policy 3.1 – Mitigate traffic congestion and unacceptable levels of noise, odors, dust, and glare which affect residential areas and sensitive receptors.

Finding regarding Policy 3.1 – The Project’s impact on circulation has been evaluated and does not create unacceptable levels of traffic. In addition, onsite circulation and parking were evaluated as part of this Project and the site provides adequate access and parking to accommodate the proposed uses.

LAND USE ELEMENT GOAL 4 – Ensure that future land use decisions are the result of sound and comprehensive planning.

Land Use Policy 4.4 – Encourage citizen participation in planning and the land use decision making process and development of land use programs and policies.

Finding regarding Policy 4.1 – The proposed project participated in neighborhood meetings as well as a Planning Commission workshop, prior to proceeding to a public hearing and considered public comments regarding parking and traffic impacts during public presentations of the “Project”.

CIRCULATION ELEMENT GOAL 1 – Ensure that new development results in the preservation and enhancement of the City’s circulation system.

Circulation Policy 1.f – Ensure that new development provides adequate parking for anticipated uses; however, reductions in parking requirements should be considered where alternative modes for transportation or shared parking exist.

Finding regarding Circulation Policy 1.f – A parking study was prepared by the applicant and reviewed by the City’s contract

traffic engineer, who confirmed that the number of parking spaces provided exceeds industry standards for a university campus and is appropriate and that the internal circulation is satisfactory.

Section 3. The streets surrounding the site for the proposed use and related to the Streets and Highways Element of the General Plan are adequate in width and pavement type to carry the quantity and type of traffic generated.

Section 4. The topography of the site is suitable for the proposed site plan, and, the site plan, subject to the applicable environmental mitigation measures, is suitable for the use intended.

Section 5. The proposed development provides for an appropriate exterior structure design and appearance consistent with and complimentary to present and proposed buildings and structures in the vicinity of the subject site, while still providing for a variety of designs, forms and treatments.

Section 6. The Project environmental analysis determined the Project will have a less than significant environmental impact to public health, safety, and general welfare, and the environmental determination was a Negative Declaration.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that the Signal Hill City Council adopt a Negative Declaration [SCH2022070504](#) relative to Zoning Ordinance Amendment 22-05 satisfying the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act and approve Zoning Ordinance Amendment 22-05, as follows:

Section 1. That the Official Zoning Map of the City of Signal Hill be amended to change the zoning designation of an approximately 3.75-acre site at 1600 E. Hill Street and 3177 California Avenue from “Commercial Office” to “American University of Health Sciences and the American University Research Academy (AUHS/AURA) Specific Plan” (SP-25) as shown on Exhibit C attached hereto.

Section 2. That SHMC Title 20 be amended to add Chapter 20.25 “SP-25, American University of Health Sciences and the American University Research Academy (AUHS/AURA)” Specific Plan as follows:

Chapter 20.25

SP-25 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES AND THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ACADEMY (AUHS/AURA) SPECIFIC PLAN

Sections:

- 20.25.010 Purpose.
- 20.25.020 Adoption of SP-25, AUHS/AURA Specific Plan.
- 20.25.030 Applicability.
- 20.25.040 Use classifications.
- 20.25.050 Development standards.
- 20.25.060 Off-street parking and circulation.

20.25.010 Purpose.

A. The purpose and intent of this chapter is to guide the land use and operations of a unique educational land use at designated site at 1600 E. Hill Street and to establish the AUHS/AURA Specific Plan, designated as SP-25 on the official zoning map of the City. A Specific Plan and its function may be described by comparison with the General Plan. The General Plan expresses, in very broad terms, the City's planning of its future environment, generally on a long-term basis. Adopted by the City as a legislative act, the General Plan may be amended, as required by changing circumstances. The Specific Plan, on the other hand, is a device used to implement the General Plan by focusing on a particular parcel or parcels. The preparation and adoption of a specific plan are authorized by Chapter 3 of Article 8 of the State Planning and Zoning Law. The AUHS/AURA Specific Plan replaces the usual development otherwise applicable to the property under the previous zoning designation and serves as a basis for the city to consider and act upon a unique educational land use. The Specific Plan sets standards, against which the function and operations of the use can be judged and imposes controls on the use of the subject site. The Specific Plan is more detailed than a General Plan and can be viewed as a bridge between the General Plan and individual project submittals. In an effort to accommodate the City's diverse uses, the concepts, regulations and conditions set forth in the AUHS/AURA Specific Plan, is added to provide for the development of both a private university and a private high school campus. The AUHS/AURA Specific Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the State Government Code (Sections 64540 through 65507) and addresses all the issues and topics specified in that code.

B. Location and Boundary of AUHS/AURA. The Specific Plan has an area of approximately 3.75 acres located on East Hill Street between Walnut Avenue and Gaviota Avenue.

20.25.020 Adoption of SP-25, AUHS/AURA Specific Plan. The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all property shown as SP-25 AUHS/AURA Specific Plan on the official zoning map.

20.46.030 Applicability. The standards of this chapter shall be applicable to all development, redevelopment, expansions, and modifications of buildings and uses on all property shown on the official zoning map with the zoning designation of SP-25 AUHS/AURA Specific Plan.

20.25.040 Use Classifications.

A. Principal Uses. The following uses shall be permitted within the SP-25. Unlisted uses shall be prohibited.

1. Private University
2. Private High School

B. Accessory Uses. The following Accessory Uses shall be permitted, in conjunction with the development of a University.

1. Pharmacy;
2. Outpatient Pediatric Clinic;
3. Accessory uses to the High School in accordance with Section 20.25.050 and 20.25.060;
4. Open space; and
5. Garages, carports, and uncovered parking lots.

20.25.050 Development Standards and Operational Standards.

A. All property within the Special Plan shall be developed and maintained in accordance with all provisions of the AUHS/AURA Specific Plan and applicable ordinances and policies of the City of Signal Hill. In the event of inconsistency between the Specific Plan and any other ordinance or regulation of the City, the Specific Plan shall prevail.

B. Substantive changes to the physical improvements on the site may be made only after administrative review and approval by the Director of Community Development, or the Planning Commission, in compliance with the findings of Section 20.52.050, "Site Plan and Design Review," of the Signal Hill Municipal Code, and this chapter.

C. Master Plan. As the guiding document for the AUHS/AURA Specific Plan, AUHS has prepared a Master Plan document that describes in detail the current and proposed educational facility, site plan, floor plans, and location and descriptions of all existing and proposed educational activities. Prior to proceeding with any changes to the site conditions, floor plans, or educational operations, SP-25 must be amended by the same public hearing process identified in the Signal Hill Municipal Code Chapter 20.86 "Amendments".

D. Enrollment and On-site Attendance.

1. The maximum allowed number of enrolled high school students is 80.
2. The maximum allowed number of all on-site students, faculty, and staff at any given time of day shall be 234.

20.25.060 Off-Street Parking and Circulation.

A. All areas of a lot to be used for the purposes of parking, loading, storage, or access to any parking, loading or storage area shall be graded, surfaced, drained, and marked in accordance with all city standards and the provisions of this title. Parking stalls shall be clearly delineated by striping not less than three inches wide and appropriately labeled for loading, handicapped, etc., where necessary. Wheel stops and/or six-inch concrete curb shall be required for all parking stalls. Directional arrows and signs shall be placed on and off-site where required by the city engineer. In addition, parking area surfaces and grades shall comply with Section 20.70.080 of this title. Loading areas shall be sufficiently screened and shall not interfere with pedestrian ways.

B. The number of parking spaces and the design, construction, and striping of the parking areas shall be consistent with the site plan in the Master Plan document and as identified in the Parking Analysis Report on file in the Community Development Department. The site plan is attached as Exhibit C to the Ordinance codified in this chapter and on file with the office of the city clerk.

C. Parking stalls shall measure nine feet in width by 20 feet in depth. Aisle widths shall measure 24 feet in width. The maximum vehicle overhang for any parking space shall be three feet.

D. Parking Analysis Report. The existing number of parking spaces as identified in the Master Plan on-site parking and circulation analysis report is 237. This number of spaces shall be maintained at all times.

E. Parking Permits. Parking permits shall be issued to all students, faculty, and staff. A maximum of 20 parking permits shall be provided for the High School students.

F. Parking Operations. Parking operations shall comply with the AUHS/AURA Operations and Parking and Operations Management Plan required by subsection G, below.

G. AUHS/AURA Parking and Operations Management Plan. A Parking and Operations Management Plan shall be prepared by the applicant addressing, at a minimum:

1. Planned days and hours of operation of the pharmacy and clinic;
2. Expected number of daily clients at the pharmacy and clinic;
3. Limitations on pharmacy clients to those visiting and being treated at the clinic;
4. Safeguards against break-ins;
5. A parking and traffic management plan specifying provisions for on-site drop-off and pick-up areas, ingress and egress, and parking management measures to keep AUHS and AURA faculty, staff, and students from parking on surrounding city streets; and
6. Provisions for periodic meetings with surrounding property owners to learn of and address any concerns.

Such plan shall be provided to and approved by the Community Development Department and kept on file at the Department. Any proposed changes to the Parking and Operations Management Plan shall be approved ministerially by the Community Development Director in writing. The Director shall have the authority to refer any such proposed changes to the Planning Commission for consideration and action.

Section 3. Certification and Effective Date. The City Clerk shall certify to the passage and adoption of this ordinance by the City Council of the City of Signal Hill and shall cause a summary of this ordinance to be published in accordance with Government Code Section 36933, in a newspaper of general circulation which is hereby designated for that purpose, and this ordinance shall take effect thirty (30) days after its passage.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the City Council on this ____ day of _____, 2022.

KEIR JONES
MAYOR

ATTEST:

CARMEN R. BOOKS
SECRETARY

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES) ss.
CITY OF SIGNAL HILL)

I, CARMEN R. ROOKS, City Clerk of the City of Signal Hill, California, do hereby certify that Ordinance No. 2022-09-xxxx was introduced by the City Council of the City of Signal Hill, California, at a regular meeting held on the 13th day of September, 2022, and that the same was adopted by the City Council of the City of Signal Hill, California, at a regular meeting held on the _____ day of _____, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

CARMEN R. BROOKS
CITY CLERK

Exhibit A

Parcel: 7215-009-005

LOT 1 OF TRACT NO. 708, IN THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 15, PAGE 161, OF MAPS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY.

EXCEPT THEREFROM, AN UNDIVIDED 8% OF ALL OIL, GAS AND OTHER HYDROCARBON SUBSTANCES, IN OR UNDER SAID LOT, EXCEPT THE SOUTH 311 FEET OF SAID LOT, AS CONVEYED TO LAUREL EDWARD SMITH, AN UNMARRIED MAN, BY DEED RECORDED MAY 16, 1947, IN BOOK 24572, PAGE 230, OFFICIAL RECORDS.

ALSO EXCEPT THEREFROM, AN UNDIVIDED 8% OF ALL OIL, GAS AND OTHER HYDROCARBON SUBSTANCES, IN OR UNDER THE SOUTH 311 FEET OF SAID LOT, AS CONVEYED TO LAUREL EDWARD SMITH, AN UNMARRIED MAN, AN UNDIVIDED ONE-THIRD INTEREST AND TO FLORENCE LESLIE DUNN, A MARRIED WOMAN, AS HER SOLE AND SEPARATE PROPERTY, AN UNDIVIDED ONE-THIRD INTEREST AND TO WILSON N. SMITH, A SINGLE MAN, AN UNDIVIDED ONE-SIXTH INTEREST AND TO JAMES SMITH, A SINGLE MAN, AN UNDIVIDED ONE-SIXTH INTEREST.

**EXHIBIT B
MASTER PLAN DOCUMENT**

(follows)

EXHIBIT C
ZONING MAP

