



City of Culver City

Mike Balkman Council
Chambers
9770 Culver Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232

Staff Report

File #: 25-36, **Version:** 1

Item #: PH-1.

PC - PUBLIC HEARING: Consideration of a Conditional Use Permit Modification (P2021-0135), to allow the relocation and expansion of an existing fueling station, surface parking, and associated project design features and site improvements at 13431-13463 Washington Boulevard (Project).

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

Contact Person/Dept: Gabriela Silva, Associate Planner

Phone Number: (310) 253-5736

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☒

Action Item: ☐

Attachments: ☒

City Council Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒

Date: N/A

Public Notification: (Mailed) Property owners and occupants within a 500-foot radius and extended area (07/03/24); (Email) Public Notifications - Planning Commission (07/03/24), Meetings and Agendas - Planning Commission (07/19/24); (Posted) City website (07/03/24)

Department Approval: Emily Stadnicki, Current Planning Manager (07/15/24)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 2024-P007, adopting a Class 32 Categorial Exemption pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 15332 In-Fill Development Projects, and approving Conditional Use Permit Modification, P2021-0135-CUP/M, for the demolition of an existing fueling station and two commercial structures, and the construction of a new relocated and expanded fueling station and associated project design features and site improvements subject to conditions of approval.

PROCEDURES

1. Chair calls on staff for a brief staff report and the Planning Commission poses questions to staff as desired.
2. Chair opens the public hearing, providing the applicant the first opportunity to speak, followed by the general public.
3. Chair seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented.
4. Planning Commission discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.

BACKGROUND

Request

The Applicant (Costco Wholesale), requests approval of a Conditional Use Permit Modification (CUP/M) to allow the relocation and expansion of the existing Costco fueling station, including project design features and associated site improvements. The Project Summary (Attachment No. 3) and Preliminary Development Plans (Attachment No. 4) provide a synopsis of the project details and proposed plans.

Project Site/Existing Conditions

The Project site (Site) is located at 13431-13463 Washington Boulevard, on the along the north side of Washington Boulevard, between Walnut Avenue and Glencoe Avenue (see Vicinity Map, Attachment No. 2). The Site, comprised of a total of ±3.2 acres over three existing parcels within a larger commercial center, is generally flat in topography and irregular in shape. The Site is currently developed with an existing eight-dispenser fueling station and two commercial structures totaling ±8,480 square feet. The overall commercial center includes the Costco Warehouse retail store, a bank, a pet supplies store, a vehicle repair facility, and fast-food restaurant with a drive-thru. Vehicular access to the existing parcels is provided by two existing driveways on Washington Boulevard.

The Land Use Element of the City's General Plan designates this site as Industrial, Regional Center which is consistent with the site's zoning designation of Commercial Regional Retail (CRR). Surrounding properties are:

Direction	General Plan	Zoning	Uses
North	City of Los Angeles: Low Residential and Low Medium I Residential	City of Los Angeles: R1 and R2	One- and two-story single- and multi-family residential
South	General Corridor	Commercial General (CG) Zone	Multi-story commercial/office
East	General Corridor and Low Density Single Family	Commercial General (CG) Zone and Residential Single Family (R1)	Multi-story mixed-use and commercial uses; and one- and two-story single-family dwellings
West	City of Los Angeles: General Commercial and Low Residential	City of Los Angeles: C2 and R1	Surface parking and commercial; and one- and two-story single and multi-family residential

Project Description

The Project consists of:

- demolition of the existing eight-dispenser fueling station (including underground storage tanks) and two commercial structures at the west end of the commercial center,
- construction of a new 15-dispenser fueling station relocated in place of the two commercial structures, and
- new surface parking with electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in place of the existing fueling station,

as illustrated in the preliminary project plans (Attachment No. 4) and summarized in the Project Summary (Attachment No. 3).

The fueling station will include a new 17.5-ft high canopy, supporting ground-mounted equipment, controller enclosure, temporary noise barriers, perimeter landscaping, and other project design features as listed in the

Project Summary (Attachment No. 3) as well as associated site improvements. Internal vehicle circulation and parking around the area of the relocated fueling station will be adjusted to improve queueing and access; the one-car exit driveway apron from the existing fueling station will be removed.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

Architectural Design

The Project will have only one new structure, the canopy over the fueling station islands, measuring 17.5 feet in height. The canopy style will be consistent with the existing commercial center development, characterized by a contemporary utilitarian architectural style, incorporating straight lines and right angles, with a flat roof. It will be set back at least 25 feet from Washington Boulevard and at least 65 feet from Walnut Avenue, in compliance with the minimum required 15 feet.

The canopy material and color palette also follow the same style using split-face CMU block, metal, and neutral tones. The controller enclosure will be painted in neutral tones to match the metal canopy; related ground-mounted equipment will be screened further through landscaping. All signs will be reviewed separate from the subject entitlement, in compliance with the Zoning Code sign regulations as part of the required master sign program. The overall design and street view are maintained in a contemporary style and consistent with the one-story massing along the Washington Boulevard frontage of the commercial center.

Landscaping

The Project will incorporate landscaping in proposed planters surrounding the relocated fueling station, and within the parking area placed in the location of the existing fueling station. Additional landscape will include planters along reconfigured parking areas. Planters will include a combination of low ground cover and trees, with certain planters incorporating medium height shrubs and plantings suitable for screening. Preliminary landscape information is included in the preliminary development plans made part of this report (Attachment No. 4). Final landscape and irrigation plans will be submitted for review during the plan check process.

Traffic, Circulation, and Parking

The primary surrounding public right-of-way is Washington Boulevard, which is classified as a primary artery in the Circulation Element of the City's General Plan, has been deemed to be of adequate width to serve the site and the proposed development. The existing exit driveway apron from the existing fueling station will be replaced with continuous sidewalk; all other driveways and vehicular points of the access will remain.

The length of the westerly driveway, adjacent to the proposed relocated fueling station, will be increased to allow for improved entry flow and exit queueing to improve existing conditions. Any sidewalk along the project's frontage which is not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will be replaced to comply. Pedestrian access to/from the parking and existing commercial structures will remain as currently configured.

It is expected the additional dispensers will continue to serve patrons already visiting the site and will improve queueing management and wait times. The project will coordinate construction activities with the City's Washington Boulevard Stormwater and Urban Runoff Project to avoid concurrent construction within specified distances of certain locations. (The latest version of the City's project has been significantly scaled down from its original scope.) The proposed development will not create any significant traffic impacts as indicated in the Traffic Analysis within the Categorical Exemption Report (Attachment No. 5), and there are no required mitigation measures.

Under the current Zoning Code, no minimum off-street parking is required. In order to provide improved onsite and offsite circulation and queueing, the Project proposes reducing the overall parking inventory from 963 to 907, resulting in one space per approximately 203 square feet of floor area. The proposed parking within the

existing fueling station footprint will include 54 spaces, of which 20 will include full electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.

Noise

The existing commercial center is surrounded by residential streets along its north, east, and west perimeter. Accordingly, the Project includes various project design features that will also serve to minimize any noise for surrounding residential. This will include temporary noise barriers that range from six to 16 feet in height and will be located to minimize noise to residential uses along Walnut Ave and Glencoe Ave. Further details are provided in Attachment 3.

Construction Management

The applicant is required to submit a final Comprehensive Construction Management Plan (CMP), including a Pedestrian Protection Plan, and a Construction Traffic Management Plan to minimize the potential for disruptions resulting from the construction related activities for the Project. Per the Conditions of Approval, said plans will incorporate measures for noise reduction and dust control, and will specify detailed construction phases and timelines, construction and crew vehicle parking, on-site staging areas, lane closures, pedestrian path of travel and coordination of construction deliveries. Further, the final CMP will incorporate methods for continued coordination with the City's stormwater project. The preliminary construction management plan (Attachment No. 6) provides preliminary details of the anticipated approach to the construction.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

As part of the review process, two community meetings were held for the project, one virtually and one in person. The first meeting was held on Thursday, February 25, 2021, during the preliminary review phase, and the second meeting was held Thursday, November 9, 2023, during the application review phase of the process. The applicant sent invitations two weeks before each meeting, to property owners and occupants within a 500-foot radius and extended area, inviting interested persons to learn about the development project, provide comments and feedback, as well as to share any concerns regarding the proposed Project. Based on the comments and questions there were clear concerns about existing parking, traffic, queuing overspill, noise, and other nuisance conditions and the potential for the project to exacerbate those conditions. See Attachment No. 7 for a summary of both meetings.

Comments Received During Public Comment Period

As of the writing of this report, staff received two written comments via email in response to the public notification of the public hearing for this item. One comment indicated support for expanding the fueling station to improve queuing times and related vehicle emissions, while the other expressed concern regarding existing vehicle traffic and circulation safety and the project's potential to intensify those conditions (Attachment No. 8).

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, initial review of the Project by staff established that there are no potentially significant adverse impacts on the environment and the proposed Project has been determined to be a Class 32 Categorical Exemption as an "In-Fill Development Project" (Section 15332), as further detailed in the CEQA Class 32 Report (Attachment No. 5). The Project is consistent with the General Plan Land Use Designation of Regional Center and corresponding CRR Zone; it is located on a ±3.2-acre site within City limits, surrounded by urban uses, and has no value as a habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species as it is currently developed with multiple commercial structures, paved parking lot and walkways, and vegetation consistent with adjacent development. Based on the proposed scope and scale, the Project will not have significant traffic impacts or vehicle trips exceeding

established thresholds, noise and air quality effects will be within established thresholds, implementation of Public Works stormwater run-off standards will result in less than significant impacts to water quality, and the Project can be adequately served by utilities and public services.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There is no fiscal impact to the City from the proposed Project.

CONCLUSION

The proposed project will relocate and expand an existing fueling station, reduce existing commercial floor area within an existing commercial center, and provide revised onsite circulation intended to improve onsite and offsite queuing and circulation. Based on the proposed preliminary development plans, and recommended conditions of approval, staff considers the project to provide a layout, architectural design and landscape consistent with applicable development standards and guidelines, with adequate public facilities, and consistent with the Culver City General Plan and the requirements of the Zoning Code, and as further allowed through the Administrative Modification process. The findings for Conditional Use Permit Modification, P2021-0135-CUP/M, are made as outlined in Resolution No. 2024-P007 (Attachment No. 1).

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Resolution No. 2024-P007, including Exhibit A: Conditions of Approval and Exhibit B: Standard Code Requirements
2. Vicinity Map
3. Project Summary
4. Preliminary Development Plans dated February 7, 2024
5. CEQA Class 32 Report (including Transportation Study) dated June 28, 2024
6. Preliminary Construction Management Plan dated June 10, 2024
7. Community Meeting Summaries
8. Public Comments

MOTION

That the Planning Commission:

Adopt Resolution No. 2024-P007 adopting a Class 32 Categorical Exemption pursuant to CEQA and approving Conditional Use Permit Modification, P2021-0135-CUP/M, for a fueling station relocation and expansion Project, with specified project design features, subject to the Conditions of Approval.