



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 19-114, **Version:** 1

Item #: 1.

PC: Conditional Use Permit, P2018-0001-CUP to Operate a 4-bay Auto Repair Facility at an Existing Car Rental and Office Building at 2926 La Cienega Boulevard.

Meeting Date: August 8, 2018

Contact Person/Dept: Jose Mendivil, Associate Planner
Michael Allen, Current Planning Manager

Phone Number: (310) 253-5757 / (310) 253-5727

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☒

Action Item: ☐

Attachments: ☒

Public Notification: (Mailed) Property owners and occupants within a 500 foot radius of the Project Site (07/18/18); (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - Planning Commission (07/18/18); (Posted) City Website (07/18/18).

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (08/02/2018)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission 1) Adopt a Categorical Exemption as stipulated in CEQA Section 15303, Class 3 - New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, finding that there are no potentially significant adverse impacts on the environment; and 2) Approve Conditional Use Permit, P2018-0001-CUP, subject to the Conditions of Approval as stated in Resolution No. 2018-P006 (Attachment No. 1).

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, and receives comments from the general public.
3. Chair seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented.
4. Commission discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.

BACKGROUND

Request

In January, 2014, a permit to build 2,475 square feet of offices and ancillary garage enclosures for a car rental business (California Rent a Car) at 2926 La Cienega (the “project site”), was issued to the applicant. Work at the project site was completed in July, 2018. During project construction, on January 4, 2018, Rosemary Shokof, the architect for the project, submitted a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application for a proposed 4-bay auto repair facility (the Project) at the project site.

The project site is located in the East Washington Overlay (-EW) Zone requiring any business activity to be enclosed, including vehicle display for sales or rental. Consequently, the garage enclosures were intended for car rental display. Although enclosed there are no garage doors, glazing, or walls at the front of the car rental enclosure areas; they are enclosed on three sides with concrete walls and are fully covered. . The proposed use for auto repair will be located within the existing building that was built as part of the 2014 building permit. In addition, a new, 34 foot high, three-story, 2,878 square foot office building is proposed for the site which may or may not serve the existing car rental business. A nine foot high enclosed stairwell shaft will be located on the roof deck and will serve as roof access. Although shown on the plans, the 2,878 square foot addition is below the threshold for requiring a Site Plan Review (5,000 square feet) and can be built with only a building permit provided it complies with parking, height, and setback standards.

General Information

See Attachment No. 1, Project Summary.

Existing Conditions

The project site includes a 33,406 square foot through lot that fronts both La Cienega and Adams Boulevards and is improved with 4,663 square feet of single-story office and enclosed car rental parking structures for car rental display. The remainder of the site is used for vehicle parking and circulation for the existing office and car rental business (California Rent a Car). Driveway approaches are located at both La Cienega and Adams Boulevard with surface parking facing La Cienega Boulevard and the structures facing Adams Boulevard.

Surrounding Area/General Plan/Zoning

The surrounding area includes light industrial uses with commercial office spaces south of Washington Boulevard and retail service and commercial uses along the north side of Washington Boulevard. Several buildings in the surrounding area are tilt up concrete, stucco, or brick with single story high ceilings conducive to warehouse and storage operations.

The project site has a General Plan Land Use Element designation of Industrial Park and is zoned East Washington Overlay (-EW) and Industrial General (IG). Surrounding zoning and existing land uses are outlined below (La Cienega Boulevard is considered north/south orientated):

<u>Location</u>	<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Land Use</u>
West:	IG and EW	1 & 2 story light industrial, office, auto repair, restaurants
East:	IG and EW	1 & 2 wholesale food distributor
North:	IG and EW	1 story commercial, auto repair/tire, retail, fueling station
South:	IG	1 story contractor's supply store

Project Description

The project proposes to convert an existing, enclosed garage auto vehicle display area serving a portion of an existing car rental business to a four-bay vehicle repair and mechanic storage space. An existing office area directly southeast of the repair and storage bays will serve as the offices for the vehicle repair business. Metal roll-up garage doors will be installed at the front of the storage and repair bays. The area proposed for auto repair is located at the northeast end of the project site, totaling 1,701 square feet, with the remaining 3,107 square feet of enclosed area to be occupied by the car rental business. Other than the new roll-up doors the existing gray colored, exposed concrete block wall structures on the site will remain; no physical changes will be made to the existing office area that will serve as offices for the vehicle repair business. The new 2,878 square foot office building will be finished with stucco walls and storefront glazing. The applicant has not indicated who the tenant will be for the new office building. New landscaping including trees, bushes, and low shrub will be installed at the site as part of the CUP.

All other existing structures and vehicular and pedestrian access driveways will remain. Surface parking will be improved with 22 new parking spaces facing Jefferson Boulevard, ample new landscaping, and a new trash enclosure area.

ANALYSIS:

Site Operation

The existing car rental display structures face inward into the project site's east end and surface vehicle maneuvering area. The display structure at the northeast end of the site will be converted to the four-bay vehicle repair and will also face into the surface vehicle maneuvering area with little or no visibility to adjacent properties and public rights of way. Existing car rental display structures south of the site and the new, three story office building will obscure the vehicle repair operations from the property south of the site. An approximate 150 foot distance from La Cienega Boulevard west of the structure housing the proposed vehicle repair will further lessen potential visual impacts to the La Cienega frontage. The majority of the site's surface parking will be located within this 150 foot distance. These various physical characteristics will reduce impacts associated with the vehicle repair business. In addition, the project will be subject to Zoning Code required project conditions specific to the -EW Zone and to vehicle repair facilities such as all work conducted within a fully enclosed structure, prohibition on the storage of wrecked vehicles, and prohibition on the loading or unloading of vehicle outside of the project site.

Architectural Design

The existing buildings are of general industrial design and consist of one-story grey cinderblock structures with charcoal gray, smooth surface, concrete like cladding facing adjacent properties and rights of way. The office portions of these buildings have storefront glazing and face into the interior of the property and surface parking area. The existing design and material will remain unchanged. The new office building, not be visible from the public right-of-way, will be of similar utilitarian design with straight edges and no articulation. Instead of concrete cinder block, it will be made of stucco siding and similar to the existing buildings it will have substantial store front glazing facing the interior parking area. Additional store front glazing will face La

Cienega Boulevard but at a distance of approximately 100 feet from the west property line. Existing eight (8) foot tall metal fences will remain along the property line. The overall design is consistent with surrounding industrial and commercial buildings in the vicinity.

Setbacks and Height

There are no setback requirements in the -EW and IG zones for interior property lines facing non-residential zones; the existing buildings and new building on the project site are consistent with this code provision. The -EW Zone limits height to 43 feet and three (3) stories and the existing building to be converted is a single story, 17 foot height structure. The new office building will be three stories and 34 feet in height with an additional eight (8) feet for a stairwell enclosure leading to the roof consistent with -EW standards and allowed projections for roof top stair shafts.

Landscaping

Current site landscaping is minimal and mostly gathered along the public rights-of-way. The proposed landscaping plan proposes an expansion of landscaping area. Existing shrubbery along Adams Boulevard will remain in a 4 foot, 3 inch wide landscape strip. Landscaping along La Cienega Boulevard will include a mix of shrubs and ground covering. Five Crape Myrtle and four fern podocarpus trees will be placed around the planting area. Enhanced landscaping along La Cienega Boulevard and in the La Cienega Boulevard facing parking lot will help to increase the aesthetic appeal of the street frontage. The additional tree planting and landscaped areas helps the City achieve the objective of reducing the heat island effect caused by paved surfaces with little or no landscaping. As trees mature on the site, the proposed project will help reduce the heat island effect, by shading the surface parking.

Traffic, Circulation, and Parking

Access to the project site will be from the existing driveways off of Adams Boulevard and La Cienega Boulevard. The project's three driveways, two on La Cienega Boulevard and one on Adams Boulevard, will be restricted to right-turns in and right-turns out. This is due to recent public right of way improvements including striping on La Cienega Boulevard with the northbound left-turn lane to Washington Boulevard extended southerly. Also, during the morning peak period the vehicle queues in the northbound left-turn lane of La Cienega Boulevard continues past the project's southerly driveway. The raised median and striping on Adams Boulevard also restricts the project's driveway on Adams Boulevard to right-turns in and right-turn out. A project condition will require the applicant to pay for the required signage restricting movements as noted above. The site provides adequate internal circulation with drive aisle widths, back up maneuvering areas, and parking stall dimensions that comply with Zoning Code standards.

The proposed project does not require a traffic study as determined by the Institute of Transportation Engineers' (ITE) Trip Generation Manual, 8th Edition. Calculations of potential trip generation for the project based on the ITE Trip Generation Manual Table 942 (Automotive Care Center) indicates that the AM peak hour trips generated by the project are not expected to exceed 4; the PM peak hour trips generated by the project are not expected to exceed 5. These potential trips are below the 50 trips in the AM or PM peak hour threshold for requiring a traffic study.

The project complies with code required parking; the table below shows the various parking requirements by use:

	Parking Code Calculations	Code Required Parking	Parking Provided
Existing Office (includes Offices for Vehicle Repair)	2,446 sq.ft./350	7	7
Display Area	3,107 sq.ft./1000	3	3
4-Bay Vehicle Repair	4 Bays X 3	12	12
Storage for Vehicle Repair	521 sq.ft./350	1	1
New Office	2,878 sq.ft./350	8	8
Total		31	31

Noise and Area Compatibility

The current car rental facility is consistent with surrounding light industrial, storage, and office uses. The addition of a vehicle repair facility does not impact a mainly light industrial area and such a use is conducive to the surrounding nonresidential neighborhood. There is no new square footage and noise generated by the repair facility will be shielded by the building concrete block wall at the rear of the work bays towards the north and the site's other office and rental car structures across the surface parking area towards the east and south. Immediate uses surrounding the project site include a fueling station with a car wash and a contractor's supply store. Surrounding streets include heavily trafficked La Cienega, Adams, and Washington Boulevards generating their own vehicle traffic noise. The nearest residential area is approximately 223 feet north of the project site; commercial properties on the north side of Washington Boulevard, Washington Boulevard, and a fueling station lie between the residential neighborhood and the project site.

Refuse and Vehicle Repair Waste.

The trash enclosure area serving the entire site was reviewed and approved by the Public Works Environmental Programs and Operations Division. The vehicle repair facility will be subject to all local, State, and Federal regulations for the proper disposal or recycling of vehicle repair waste. Also the Public Works Engineering Division will require a Hazardous Waste Clarifying Tank underneath the surface parking lot which shown on the plans.

Public Outreach

As part of the project review process, a community meeting was held on Tuesday, June 19, 2018, at 7:00 pm, at Syd Kronenthal Community Center. The Applicant invited interested persons to learn about the development Project, provide comments and feedback, and share any concerns regarding the proposed Project. There are no meeting notes because no one attended the community meeting.

Comments Received During Public Comment Period

As of the writing of this report, one comment was submitted by the contractor storage facility south of the site. They did not express opposition to the project but rather are concerned that the applicant's employees sometimes block the entrance to their business with parked vehicle. A condition will be imposed that requires all business activity for all uses on the project site to occur on the project site.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY:

This project will add a new vehicle repair facility and a small office building to a site with existing offices and car rental operations. This will enhance the site and broaden its economic potential. The vehicle repair facility is not expected to cause significant impacts because no new square footage is required. Staff believes the findings for this project can be made.

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 project has been determined to be Categorically Exempt pursuant to CEQA Section 15303, Class 3 - New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures because the proposed project involves the conversion of a portion of an existing small structure in an urbanized area not exceeding 10,000 square feet, from Auto Rental to Auto Repair, where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The following alternative actions may be considered by the Planning Commission:

1. Approve the proposed Project with the recommended conditions of approval if the applications are deemed to meet the required findings.
2. Approve the proposed Project with additional and/or different conditions of approval if deemed necessary to meet the required findings and mitigate any new Project impacts identified at the meeting.
3. Disapprove the proposed Project if the applications do not meet the required findings.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Resolution No. 2018-P006 and Exhibit A "Conditions of Approval"
2. Vicinity Map
3. Project Summary
4. Preliminary Development Plans dated March 20, 2018.

MOTION

That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt a Categorical Exemption as stipulated in CEQA Section 15303, Class 3 - New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, finding that there are no potentially significant adverse impacts on the environment; and
2. Approve Conditional Use Permit, P2018-0001-CUP, subject to the Conditions of Approval as stated in Resolution No. 2018-P006.