City of Culver City

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

Staff Report

File #: 20-563, **Version:** 1 **Item #:** PH-2.

PC - Consideration of Conditional Use Permit, P2018-0266-CUP, for an Automated Parking Stacker for a Medical Office Located at 10744 Washington Boulevard, and Adopt a Categorical Exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Meeting Date: December 11, 2019

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

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

Fiscal Impact: Yes [] No [X] **General Fund:** Yes [] No [X]

Public Hearing: [X] **Action Item:** [] **Attachments:** [X]

City Council Action Required: Yes [] No [X] **Date:**

Public Notification: (Mailed) Property Owners and Occupants within a 500-foot and extended radius (11/19/19); (Email) Meeting and Agendas - Planning Commission (12/05/19); Gov Delivery (11/20/19); (Posted) City website (11/20/19).

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (11/26/2019)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt a Categorical Exemption, Class 1 and Class 3 CEQA finding and approve a Conditional Use Permit subject to Conditions of Approval for an Automated Parking Stacker.

PROCEDURES

1. Chair calls on staff for a brief staff report and 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. Commission discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.

BACKGROUND

Request

On November 1, 2018, Tecta Associates (the Applicant) submitted a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application on behalf of Cosmetique Aesthetics, the Property Owner and business operator to allow construction and operation of an automated car stacker (the "stacker"). The stacker provides required parking for a medical office building at 10744 Washington Boulevard (Project Site) in the Commercial General (CG) Zone.

Background

The Project Site is 4,998 square feet in area and developed with a 2-story, 4,700 square foot commercial building with three surface parking spaces in the rear of the lot. In 2017, a building permit was issued for various tenant improvements including seismic upgrades and additional floor area of 1,026 square feet at the second floor of the building, allowing a medical office use. The increased area required additional parking and a CUP request for an automated car stacker was submitted. The Planning Commission is not considering a Site Plan Review (SPR) because the additional floor area is less than the 5,000 s.f. threshold for SPR, only requiring a building permit.

Project Description

Preliminary Development Plans (Attachment No. 4) show location of the proposed stacker depicting its design, location, and elevations. Other building floor plans and elevations are included in the plan set for reference only. The automated car stacker, proposed by Parkmatic, will be setback 21 feet from the rear property line and 36 feet from the south side of the 15-foot wide alley. The stacker will be screened with a metal mesh affixed to the structure and designed to be compatible with the office building. The stacker is a four (4) level, rotary or carousel system, capable of holding six (6) vehicles with one vehicle entrance on the ground level, two levels of side by side parking, and a top level for a single vehicle. It will be constructed at 30 feet in height and will extend five (5) feet above the building parapet line. The additional five (5) feet is similar to the height of roof top mechanical equipment and the heights of the stacker and the medical office building are below the 56-foot height limit for the CG Zone. The stacker will have a 20-foot by 17-foot building footprint (340 square feet), and at 4 levels, will be approximately 1,360 square feet in area, resulting in a relatively small parking stacker structure. The Project Summary (Attachment No. 3) summarizes applicable development standards for the stacker.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

The Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Section 17.320.025.G - Automated, Semi-Automated, and Stacked Parking, provides standards and regulations for automated car stackers.

Parking Requirements

The Project Site currently has three (3) surface parking spaces and is legal nonconforming regarding parking. The Applicant's proposed building addition results in three (3) additional required spaces, based on one parking space per 350 gross square feet of medical office use. The proposed six (6) car stacker and a van accessible surface parking space result in a total of seven (7) on-site parking spaces. The parking is required for the medical office use at the Project Site and all parking is accessed off the alley.

Operations Plan

The Applicant has provided a Parking Operations Plan (Attachment No. 5). Vehicles enter at the ground level off the 15-foot wide alley and drive onto a metal plate; an electric motor moves the plates in clockwise or counter clockwise rotation until all plates are filled with vehicles, similar to a ferris wheel. Retrieval is done in

the reverse with a plate rotated to the ground level and the vehicle driven in the reverse to exit the metal plate. Vehicles will have a 21-foot backup/queuing space off the alley. The proposed rotary/carousel system is designed with a control panel that can be operated by an individual parking his/her vehicle in the stacker. However, a project condition of approval will require that it be fully managed by a parking attendant who will guide motorist into and out of the stacker and who will operate the control panel. An additional attendant will be required in the event three or more vehicles enter and/or exit at the same time. A condition of approval will require that the medical office hours be the same as the stacker operational hours of 7:30 AM to 7:30 PM, Monday through Friday and 8 AM to 4 PM on Saturdays.

The Parking Operations Plan states that the stacker can accommodate a vehicle that is up to 17-feet long, 7-feet wide, and with an overhead clearance of 6-feet. A list of vehicle models and makes that are (or not) able to park in the stacker is on pages 28 through 33 of the Parking Operations Plan. Typical small to midsize sedans and SUV's such as the Acura ILX, Chevrolet Impala, Dodge Challenger, Ford Fusion, Mercedes Bens E-class, BMW X3M, and Honda CRV can park in the stacker. Examples of vehicles not able to use the stacker are full size sedans, SUV's, and truck such as the Cadillac CT6, BMW X7M, Cadillac ESV, and Chevrolet Silverado. The plan further reports that it takes one (1) minute for a vehicle to reach the highest position in the 4-level stacker and an average of five (5) minutes fill all six (6) positions. Further, it takes a few seconds for a position to rotate from the ground to the next spot above it and an average of 60 seconds to retrieve a car at the top level. Individuals will be entering and exiting at different times, staff shifts are staggered, and patient appointments are scheduled throughout the day. It is not likely that six (6) vehicles will enter or exit at the same time.

Permanent Structure and Screening

The stacker will be a permanent structure and screening material will consist of multi-colored metal cladding of grey, white, and black applied directly onto the stacker. The colors are intended to compliment the off white/light gray cement plaster medical office building exterior walls. The screening is designed to replicate the characteristics and texture of the medical office structure's flat roof, straight building lines, and ninety (90) degree angles. Overall the stacker structure is proportionate in scale with the Project Site's building. Its footprint and volume are minimal. Project lighting will include standard exterior lighting for security and safety and will include motion sensors and shields. High efficiency lighting will be required, and on-site exterior lighting will be required to ensure it is not excessively bright and does not shine onto adjoining properties.

Technical Studies

An October 2019 Noise Impact Study prepared by ESA, environmental consultant for the Applicant (Attachment No. 6), determined that noise impacts on existing residences in the project vicinity from operation of the stacker would not exceed established thresholds and would be less than significant. The stacker is expected to generate a maximum 55 to 65 dB. The study reviewed both the rotary/carousel system and a non -rotary system.

The Project Site abuts an alley separating it from single-family residential uses. The potential noise sources include operational activities from the parking stacker. The noise analysis included measurements of existing noise levels at two (2) residential locations south of the Project Site and one location north of the site fronting Washington Boulevard. The study explained the regulatory framework, including Municipal Code standards and policies and objectives of the General Plan Noise Element, which specifies exterior noise standards for various uses. For residential and commercial uses, the General Plan Noise Element sets an exterior standard of 65 dB (CNEL). The ambient exterior sound levels measured from the three locations were 70.6 dB for the area fronting Washington Boulevard and 55.2 dB and 54.3 dB for the two rear residential locations.

The Parking Operations Plan indicates the stacker noise level when in operation, ranges from 55 to 65 dB at three feet from the stacker, and at 50 feet the noise level reduces to 30 dB. These exterior noise levels closer

to the residential uses are less than City adopted 65 dB (CNEL). However, a project condition of approval will require that the screening incorporate sound attenuation technology and that there be a look-back noise study once the stacker is in operation.

Inspection Report and Back-up Power

Conditions of approval will require an annual maintenance inspection report, annual maintenance plan, and an alternative back-up power to allow emergency operation of the parking system, in the event power is unavailable.

Non-Operation

The Parking Operations Plan states the stacker has a 98% operational efficiency when maintained with a routine service schedule. In the event of a malfunction, repairs would be made approximately four (4) hours from the time a technician is dispatched. The manufacturer includes a one-year maintenance plan with purchase of the system and a project condition of approval will require proof of an annual maintenance agreement. Should the electric motor malfunction, vehicles can be retrieved with a hand lever located next to the control panel that will move the carousel with gravity. The Applicant has stated that in the event of malfunction and/or extended nonoperation, the Property Owner will pay for Uber and Lyft transportation for patrons and employees, or as an alternative, reserve a valet provider that will valet cars to and from the Project Site. A project condition of approval will require the submittal of a final alternative parking plan upon the occurrence of each non-operation event. In addition, any future changes to the uses/tenants occupying the building will require the submittal of an updated/revised Parking Operations Plan.

Circulation

A parking stacker is not considered a traffic generator because it is not a stand-alone commercial destination. The parking stacker serves the medical office use. A queuing analysis is not required given the small number of vehicles the stacker services. As noted, a project condition of approval will require a valet attendant during business hours to ensure there is no parking in the alley.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

A community meeting was held on September 5, 2019 at Veterans Memorial Building at 7 PM as part of the project review process. Seven (7) people from the community attended the meeting. After a project presentation by the Applicant the following issues/questions were discussed:

- Medical office hours of operation:
  10 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday and 10AM to 2 PM on Saturday
  A project condition will require stacker operating hours and business hours be the same
- Potential traffic impacts:
  The project is too small to require a traffic study
- Patient and staff current parking:
  Patients and staff rely on street parking; the site currently has three parking spaces
- Potential urgent care service:
  Property Owner has not decided
- Potential for light and noise impacts:
  Noise study indicates no significant impacts; project condition will require sound attenuating screening; project condition will require exterior lighting not shine onto surrounding properties
- Community member suggested a rotary/carousel system:

The Applicant is proposing a rotary/carousel system as suggested

- Adjacent property owner complained the vacant lot has created a nuisance. The nuisance will be eliminated with completion of the Project.

Comments Received During Public Comment Period

As of the writing of this report, staff has not received public comments in response to the notification for the public hearing.

CONCLUSION:

The requested parking stacker will support an existing medical office building with a 1,026 square foot addition and will result in an improvement to the Project Site that is currently partially vacant with delayed construction. The stacker will require sound attenuating screening and attendant/vale services to ensure efficiency in vehicle parking and retrieval. There is enough on-site queuing and based on the proposed preliminary development plans and recommended conditions of approval, the Project will be compatible with surrounding areas, the General Plan, and the Zoning Code.

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 is a Class 1 - “Existing Facilities” (Section 15301) and Class 3 - “Construction or Conversion of Small Structures” (Section 15303) Categorical Exemption. The Project, located in an urbanized area, involves negligible expansion of an existing medical office building and construction of a small automated car stacker to store vehicles, totaling approximately 2,500 square feet, thereby not exceeding 10,000 square feet. Therefore, the project is categorically exempt pursuant to CEQA.

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 Planning Commission Resolution No. 2019-P013 with Exhibit A - Conditions of Approval
2. Vicinity Map
3. Project Summary
4. Preliminary Development Plans, dated October 8, 2019
5. Parking Operations Plan prepared by Tecta Associates and dated November 18, 2019
6. Noise Impact Study, October 2019 (ESA)

7. Community Meeting Notes

MOTION

That the Planning Commission:

Adopt a Categorical Exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, and Approve a Conditional Use Permit, subject to Conditions of Approval stated in Resolution No. 2019-P013.