



# City of Culver City

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## Staff Report

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**File #:** 22-897, **Version:** 1

**Item #:** 3.

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**PC - PUBLIC HEARING: Consideration of a Conditional Use Permit, Administrative Use Permit, and Zoning Code Map Amendment to construct three additional vehicle repair bays at an existing remote customer auto repair facility at 11039 Washington Boulevard (Project).**

**Meeting Date:** June 8, 2022

**Contact Person/Dept:** Jose Mendivil, Associate Planner  
Erika Ramirez, Current Planning Manager

**Phone Number:** 310-253-5757

**Fiscal Impact:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**General Fund:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**Public Hearing:** ☒ **Action Item:** ☐ **Attachments:** ☒

**Public Notification:** (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - Planning Commission (06/01/22); (Posted) City Website (05/18/22); (Mailed) Property owners and occupants within a 500-foot radius (05/18/22); (Sign Posted) at Project Site (05/18/22); (Publication) Culver City News (05/19/22).

**Department Approval:** Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director, (05/16/22)

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt a resolution adopting a Categorical Exemption, and approving Conditional Use Permit, Administrative Use Permit, and recommending the City Council approve a Zoning Code Map Amendment, P2021-0043-CUP, -AUP, -ZCMA, -CE, subject to conditions of approval, to allow construction of three additional vehicle repair bays at an existing remote customer auto repair facility.

### **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/DISCUSSION**

### **Request**

The Project applicant operates the Volvo and Mazda auto dealerships (Culver City Volvo Cars and Culver City Mazda) located at 11201 Washington Boulevard and 11215 Washington Boulevard respectively. Dealership offices and 3 customer auto repair bays are located at 11039 Washington Boulevard (the "Project Site") which is approximately 0.25 miles from Culver City Volvo / Mazda. The customer auto repair at the Project Site is remote and does not have direct customer access. Customers leave and pick up their vehicles at one of the dealership locations and auto repair technicians drive the cars between the dealership and the Project Site auto repair facilities. The request includes:

- The addition of 3 vehicle bays for a total of 6 vehicle auto repair bays (Subject to CUP)
- Tandem and vehicle aisle stacked parking (Subject to AUP)
- Zoning Code Map Amendment to change the rear 45-foot portion of the Project Site from Residential Medium Density Multiple (RMD) to Commercial General (CG) (Subject to Zone Change)

### **Existing Conditions**

The Project Site is a generally flat, 23,055 SF parcel and irregularly shaped. It is located at the northeast corner of Tilden Avenue and Washington Place at the point where it intersects with Washington Boulevard. The south or front property line faces both Washington Place and Washington Boulevard. The Project Site is developed with a 7,718 SF commercial building that includes the existing auto repair bays and offices. Canopy structures in the rear serve as covered parking and there are 17 striped parking spaces in the front of the Project Site facing Washington Boulevard and Washington Place. There are no striped parking spaces in the rear of the Site-.

### **Surrounding Area/Zoning/General Plan**

The Project Site is located within an urbanized area with a mix of commercial and retail buildings fronting Washington Place and Washington Boulevard and residential uses behind. A more detailed description of the surrounding uses and zoning is in the Project Summary (Attachment No. 3). The rear 45 feet of the Project Site is zoned RMD, and the rest of the Site is zoned CG. The entire Site has a General Corridor General Plan Land Use designation, which is one of the commercial designations.

### **Project Description**

The Project involves renovation of the existing 7,718 SF building to accommodate 3 additional auto repair bays. The northeast portion of the building encompasses 918 SF of auto and parts storage and open sheds. This portion will be demolished and replaced with a new 1 story, 2,167 SF addition resulting in approximately 8,867 SF of total floor area on the Project Site. The addition will include the 3 new service bays and 4 of the 34 required parking spaces. The building is in the middle of the Project Site and serves as a barrier between the Site's two surface parking areas, one north of and one south of the building. These parking areas will be reconfigured to accommodate the 30 of the 34 required parking spaces. Entrance to the new work bays will face the north parking area.

All other portions of the building, including corporate offices, storage areas, and 3 existing service bays accessed from Tilden Avenue, will remain. The new construction will match the finish, color, and material of the existing building. Extensive landscaping including trees, shrubs, and ground cover will be planted along the perimeter of the Project Site including the rear facing a residential property. The 3 existing driveways on

Tilden Avenue remain and the Washington Boulevard driveway is removed. Adjacent sidewalks and landscaped parkways are improved to conform to City street standards.

The Business Operations Plan (Attachment No. 5) states there is no customer access to the Project Site and all customer interactions will continue at the off-site dealerships. Project Site parking is only for the office staff, auto repair technicians, and for vehicles undergoing service or awaiting return to the dealership. Tandem parking is striped in the parking area south of the building and traditional striping and aisle stacked parking is in the parking area north of the building.

Project details and plan layout are provided in the Project Summary (Attachment No. 3), the Preliminary Development Plans (Attachment No. 4), Business Operations Plan (Attachment No. 5), and Parking Management Plan (Attachment No. 6).

## **ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION**

### **Zoning Standards (Commercial General - CG Zone)**

The CG Zone allows the uses and proposed expansion. The majority of the Project Site is in the CG Zone, except for the Project Site's rear 45 feet, and the Project is consistent with the CG Zone standards related to setbacks, height, and parking. Further discussion on parking is provided in the analysis below and detailed in the Project Summary (Attachment No. 3).

### **Architectural Design**

Overall, the building design is utilitarian and simple with straight lines. The building addition is at the rear and will be built into the existing building and has a north facing frontage and an east facing frontage. Metal garage doors take up most of the north face and the east face abuts an interior property line and a parking lot serving an adjoining business. The color and finish of the small addition will match the existing building with dark and light gray colors and stucco finish. It will not be visible from either Tilden Avenue or Washington Place/Boulevard because of its 20-foot height and screening from the existing building.

### **Vehicle Parking, EV Parking and Access**

The Project provides the code required 34 parking spaces and code required 13 Electric Vehicle (EV) parking spaces. The Preliminary Development Plans dated April 4, 2022 (Attachment No. 4) shows the parking layout which includes standard 90-degree parking in the rear or north parking lot with additional aisle stacked parking within the north parking lot drive aisle. The garage addition contains the new work bays and provides 3 of the 34 required vehicular parking spaces. Another space is located within a single car garage space in the existing building. The south or front facing parking contains tandem parking which is part of the AUP request.

The Parking Management Plan explains in detail how parking will be managed (Attachment No. 6). Auto repair technicians working at the Project Site will assist in parking and retrieval of cars. The Project Site is not open to the public and there will be an average of 6 office workers and 6 auto repair technicians on-site, allowing for ease of parking management. There is sufficient internal back up space in both parking lots to provide on-site temporary vehicle storage during vehicle parking and retrieval without using the public right of way.

Pursuant to the Zoning Code, bicycle stalls equal to a minimum of 5% of required parking shall be provided and the Project includes 2 bicycle stalls at the east end of the building facing Washington Boulevard. These spaces are for employees and are not for customer use. The City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Plan does not require bicycle parking for auto repair facilities.

Access to the Project will continue from the three driveways facing Tilden Avenue. One of these driveways serves the south parking lot, another serves the north parking lot, and the third driveway leads directly from Tilden Avenue into the three existing work bays. The drive approach along Washington Boulevard will be eliminated and replaced with curb, gutter, and sidewalk. Elimination of this driveway reduces potential vehicular conflicts along the major arterial intersection of Washington Boulevard and Washington Place.

### Landscaping

Landscaping is required in areas not occupied by driveways, parking areas, walkways, building projections, and approved hardscape areas. The Project will integrate significant new landscaping, enhancing the site that currently contains no landscaping. The project will include a new 5-foot landscaped area where surface parking areas abut Washington Place and Washington Boulevard and a new 8-foot landscaped area along the rear or north facing property line, abutting residential uses. A total of 14 new trees will be planted at the rear and in 4 planter areas that break up the rear parking spaces. The trees will screen from view the vehicle repair bays from the Project Site. A total of 9 trees will be planted along Washington Place, Washington Boulevard and Tilden Avenue and will help screen the view of the surface parking lot. Vines will be added along the existing 4-foot-tall wrought iron fencing enclosing the south parking lot, adding to the visual buffer provided by the 9 trees. The standard landscape and irrigation Project Condition was revised to require xeriscape and drought tolerant landscaping and tree planting for water conservation.

### Noise

A Noise and Vibration Technical Report was prepared by ESA and Associates for the proposed Project (Attachment No. 7) and determined there would be no construction or operational impacts. A Project Condition of Approval will require that work bay doors be closed during vehicle repair operations. Noise and vibration potentially impacting the abutting residential property is minimized by a 6-foot-high masonry wall at the rear, 14 trees located at the rear of the Project Site, and a 45-foot separation between the work bays and the residential property.

The Project is subject to standard construction related conditions that serve to reduce construction noise impacts. Additional construction conditions are required that include:

- An 8 foot tall construction fence equipped with noise blankets rated to achieve sound level reductions consistent with noise thresholds found in the City's General Plan Noise Element for residences and parks (Tellefson Park). The fence and noise blankets will block the line-of-sight between construction equipment and these noise sensitive receptors during early Project construction phases (up to the start of framing) when the use of heavy equipment is prevalent.
- Construction and demolition activities shall be scheduled to avoid operating several pieces of equipment simultaneously.
- Heavy equipment, such as use of a large bulldozer will not be used within 45 feet of the neighboring residential structures.

Potential traffic noise caused by test driving of vehicles under service will not impact residential areas. The test drive route will be on major arterials: Washington Place west to Inglewood Boulevard south, to Washington Boulevard east, to Sepulveda Boulevard north, to Washington Place east, and back into the facility's driveway or garages.

### Mobility and Transportation Demand Measures (TDM)

The Parking Management Plan indicates that an average of 6 office workers and 6 auto repair technicians will

be on-site. Although the current office space area will not increase, and number of office employees is not expected to increase, the applicant has agreed to provide above and beyond the minimum requirement for enhanced mobility and TDM. Mobility and TDM measures included as part of the proposed project includes the following (Condition of Approval No. 8):

- End of trip facilities including Employee Bicycle Lockers / Showers.

*The applicant currently has 3 employee bicycle lockers and will maintain these 3 lockers on the Project Site.*

- EV spaces above the minimum code required.

*The Applicant will comply with the EV requirements of CCMC Chapter 17.320. The Applicant plans to go above-and-beyond these requirements by installing EV chargers at the vehicle service bays (which are not considered to be parking spaces). In addition, the Applicant anticipates converting the required EV Capable parking spaces into EV Ready and EV Fully Equipped spaces in the future, as demand for electric vehicles continues to increase.*

- Designated low/zero emission vehicle parking spaces.

*This measure is aligned with the Applicant's commitment to creating EV parking spaces as described above.*

- Promotion of "walk to work" programs.

*The Applicant currently encourages walking to work. In addition, walking is the primary mode of travel for staff traveling between the project site and the Volvo and Mazda dealerships, given their proximity-it takes approximately 6 minutes to walk between the properties. The Applicant will continue to promote and encourage walking as a sustainable way to travel to/from between their homes and the project site, as well as between the project site and the car dealerships.*

- Two bicycle sharing spaces with accompanying bicycles in addition to the two required bicycle parking spaces.

*The Applicant is receptive to creating two bicycle sharing spaces with accompanying bicycles on the project site. The Preliminary Development Plans dated April 4, 2022 show two required bicycle parking spaces and two bicycle sharing spaces.*

The Project Site is within a Transit Priority Area (TPA) which precludes a VMT impact analysis to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Further, the proposed project is under the 250 net new trip threshold requiring supplemental transportation analysis and therefore potential impacts are considered less than significant.

#### Neighborhood Compatibility

The Project's addition is in a portion of the Site that is screened from view by adjoining properties by the existing building. There are improvements to the building elevations so that the building has the same colors (dark and light gray) as the dealerships. In addition, use of trees on all frontages except the east property line that faces a commercial property, will help to reduce potential visual and noise impacts. The single-story addition further minimizes the potential Project impacts. The Project Site's office and vehicle auto repair uses with surface parking on either side of the building will continue, thereby continuing the commercial character of

Washington Boulevard. In addition, the continuation of the uses with an additional 3 vehicle bays is small enough to not significantly impact both the residential and nearby park uses.

### Zoning Code Map Amendment

The rear 45 feet of the Project Site is designated with the RMD Zoning and General Corridor Land Use designation for several decades. The General Corridor Land Use designation indicates the appropriate zoning for the rear is CG. The Map Amendment changing this section of the Site to the CG zone will make the Project completely compliant with the General Plan and its historic commercial land use.

- The RMD Zoning designation existed since at least the 1950s.
- The General Corridor land use designation existed since 2000.
- A parking and outside storage land use operated on the Site since at least 1956.

A Zoning Map Amendment is part of this proposal as the current residential zoning is not consistent with the land use and with the commercial General Plan designation. The Site has not been used for residential purposes.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

As part of the Project review process, a community meeting was held January 21, 2020 at the Project Site at 7 PM. One person attended the meeting and had no questions. This person expressed support for the project after the Project architect did a presentation. There are no meeting summary notes as there were no questions and answers section of the meeting other than the presentation.

### Comments Received During Public Comment Period

A public notice was mailed to all property owners and occupants within a 500-foot radius extended to end of City block on April 6, 2022 advising the public hearing was scheduled for the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting of April 27, 2022. At the April 27, 2022 Planning Commission meeting, City staff requested the item be continued to May 11, 2022 to comply with publishing notice requirements. A second notice was mailed on April 28, 2022 as courtesy to the public. The May 11, 2022 Planning Commission meeting was cancelled due to lack of a quorum.

A public notice was mailed to all property owners and occupants within a 500-foot radius extended to end of City block on May 18, 2022 advising the public hearing was scheduled for the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting of June 8, 2022. As of the writing of the original report, one written comment expressed concern that there was too little time provided to review the Project. The Project was noticed with the minimum 21-day comment period and the individual was informed they could review the project file at City Hall. A verbal comment expressed concern about the Project's air quality impacts. The individual was informed that they could review the Project's air quality study which did not identify significant impacts.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, initial review of the project by staff established there are no potentially significant adverse impacts upon the environment, and the project has been determined to be Categorically Exempt pursuant to CEQA Section 15301, Class 1 - Existing Facilities, because the proposed project involves a 2,167 square foot addition to an existing auto repair facility to accommodate additional vehicle repair space which is under 2,500 square feet threshold for additions and also under the 10,000 square foot total area threshold for an urbanized area.

**CONCLUSION/SUMMARY**

Based on the proposed preliminary development plans and recommended conditions of approval, staff considers the Project compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, adequately served by public facilities and, consistent with the General Plan, Zoning Code, and all CCMC requirements. Staff believes that findings for Conditional Use Permit, Administrative Use Permit, Zoning Code Map Amendment, and Categorical Exemption, P2021-0043-CUP, -AUP, -ZCMA, -CE can be made as outlined in Resolution No. 2022-P006 (Attachment No. 1).

**FISCAL ANALYSIS**

There is no fiscal impact from this project to the City

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. 2022-04-27\_ATT-1. Proposed Planning Commission Resolution No. 2022- P006 and Exhibits A, B, and C.
2. 2022-04-27\_ATT-2. Vicinity Map.
3. 2022-04-27\_ATT-3. Project Summary.
4. 2022-04-27\_ATT-4. Preliminary Development Plans dated April 4, 2022.
5. 2022-04-27\_ATT-5. Business Operations Plan dated January 4, 2022.
6. 2022-04-27\_ATT-6. Parking Management Plan dated April 4, 2022.
7. 2022-04-27\_ATT-7. Noise and Vibration Study by ESA and Associates dated November, 2020.

**MOTION**

That the Planning Commission:

Adopt a resolution adopting a Categorical Exemption and approving a Conditional Use Permit and Administrative Use Permit; and recommending the City Council adopt a Zoning Code Map Amendment, for Case Nos. P2021-0043-CUP, -AUP, -ZCMA, -CE, subject to conditions of approval.