



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 16-593, **Version:** 1

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PLN16-0053; Conditional Use Permit to allow reuse of a parking lot for a vehicle storage yard for a park and ride lot (commuter lot) on 140,000 square feet of the subject property at 1700 Doolittle Drive; Alameda County Assessor's Parcel Number 79A-385-2-6; J. Noori, Nterra Group (applicant) and B. G. Gordon, W.P Carey, Inc. (property owner); IG Industrial General District.

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION**

The proposal is to allow for the reuse of an existing parking lot for outdoor storage of vehicles for a park and ride park (commuter lot) using 140,000 square feet at 1700 Doolittle Drive. The remaining 22,000 square feet of the subject property along the Doolittle Drive frontage would be for a pop-up retail/commercial container park. The property is zoned IG Industrial General. San Leandro Zoning Code Section 2-706 B. 31., provides that Vehicle Storage uses in the Industrial General (IG) zoning district requires a Conditional Use Permit. The container park (pop-up containers) component is accessory and independent to the vehicle storage. The pop-up container project is a "work in progress" where the City is negotiating the terms with the applicant and property owner to use the portion of the site and working with a company that designs and constructs containers for business purposes.

The proposed project would reuse the former parking lot for the commuter lot and would enhance and improve the prominent Doolittle Drive portion of the property, which has been underutilized, by facilitating the development of a pop-up container park to serve this area of the West San Leandro industrial area. The pop-up container park pilot project aligns with goals of the 2013 Next Generation Workplace and seeks to engage existing business and humanize the industrial area. Staff recommends that the Board of Zoning Adjustments approve the project and make the following actions:

1. Adoption of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Exemption per CEQA Guidelines, Article 5, Section 15301 (e)(2);
2. Adoption of Recommended Findings of Fact for Approval of PLN16-0053; and
3. Approval of the Recommended Conditions of Approval for Conditional Use Permit PLN16-0053.

### **APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

See attached.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING AREA**

The subject property is zoned IG, Industrial General, and situated on the northeastern block of the Doolittle Drive and Williams Street intersection, thus having frontages on Doolittle and Williams. The small corner property facing the intersection is a separate site, independent of the subject property.

North of the site is Jucy vehicle rental which obtained a Conditional Use Permit (PLN2014-00026) on December 4, 2014. Adjacent to the southeast is the Alameda County Fire Department Station #10. To the east and south, across Williams Street, are large sites with various warehousing and distribution businesses. To the west, across Doolittle Drive, is also a large industrial site which is the headquarters for Energy Recovery Inc. (ERI).

## **BACKGROUND**

The telephone company (Western Electric Company, Pacific Bell, AT&T, etc.) owned and used the subject property from 1955 to the mid-1990s as a parking lot for its hundreds of employees based across the street at 1717 Doolittle Drive, which is now the headquarters and home of Energy Recovery, Inc. (ERI). The site does not have history of any other development or use on it other than parking lot.

## **DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL**

The proposal is for a Conditional Use Permit to reuse the former telephone company parking lot for a commuter parking lot and transfer station for private vehicle parking and commute transfers. These activities include employees driving to the subject property during typical morning commute times from 5:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. to park their vehicles and board privately operated shuttles, buses and similar vehicles for the remainder of their work commute. Afternoon activities include the return trips to bring employees back to their vehicles during typical afternoon commute times from 3:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. There are up to eight morning and eight return afternoon trips by shuttles and buses. Also included in the proposal is the owner, tenant and City are negotiating an agreement with the City of San Leandro to sublease approximately 22,000 square feet of the subject property along the frontage of Doolittle Drive, for the purpose of a pilot pop-up container park (commercial/retail container park) which is described in more detail below.

### Site Plan

The vehicle storage yard will be served by existing driveways on Doolittle Drive and Williams Street. See attached Exhibit D - Site Plan. There are driveways at the northernmost and the southern most of the Doolittle Drive frontage and one on Williams Street. The outdoor yard will be striped for 284 parking stalls which include 258 standard spaces and 26 accessible spaces. The striped design meets the City's requirements for aisle widths for vehicle back-up and on-site circulation. In the center aisle is the designated bus/shuttle stop for pick-up and drop off. Just 100 feet south of the shuttle stop are bicycle racks and lockers. The chainlink fencing around the perimeter of the site will be maintained and replaced where necessary. New chainlink fencing and rolling gates will be constructed, setback from the Doolittle Drive and Williams Street frontage, to contain and secure the vehicle storage yard.

The remaining 80- by 240-foot area along the Doolittle Drive frontage, between the commuter lot driveways is designated as a lease area for the future pop-up container park where the future plans are still "work in progress." There is a third driveway on the Doolittle Drive frontage that would serve the future pop-up container businesses.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

## Vehicle Storage

The main purpose for conditional use review is to ensure that the subject use will not have an adverse impact on the immediate and adjacent neighborhood.

The vehicle storage category is typically used for this type of use, airport parking lots, towing business impound yards, and truck yards. The former parking lot property conveniently and easily suits the purpose for vehicle storage (a commuter lot). The efficient layout of aisles and parking spaces allows the large volume of cars that can be parked on the acreage. The vehicle storage does not appear to have any aesthetic or visual impacts since it is situated approximately 80 feet from the Doolittle Drive frontage. In addition, the parking lot would be effectively screened along Doolittle Drive by the future pop-up container park business and along Williams Street by the corner property at the intersection and Fire Station #10.

Staff has visited the site and surrounding neighborhood, reviewed the exhibits and description of the proposed commuter lot activities and believes that with the recommended Conditions of Approval, that the vehicle storage will be compatible with the existing industrial uses along Doolittle Drive and the immediate area. Some recommended conditions include:

- Vehicle storage is strictly limited to a commuter/employee parking lot and transfer station for private vehicle parking and commute transfers.
- This use permit approval does not include any other vehicle storage uses such as commercial parking lot such as airport parking; rental parking spaces for operable vehicles, inoperable vehicles, trailers, boats, or recreational vehicles; automobile storage for new car sales, used car sales, or car rental businesses; storage for vehicle repair businesses; vehicle storage for a corporation yard; or vehicle impound yard for towing business.
- Provide the minimum landscaped setback of 10 feet along Williams Street frontage, excluding the driveway and the minimum landscaped setback of 20 feet along the Doolittle Drive frontage excluding the driveways and the pop-up container park shall be implemented as part of the Building Permit application.

## Pop-up Container Park

In June 2013, the City Council commissioned the urban design firm of Freedman Tung + Sasaki and the economic consulting firm, Spinnaker Strategies, to prepare a planning and economic study to address the immediate needs and opportunities arising from the Kaiser Permanente Medical Center (completed in Summer 2014) and the Lit San Leandro high speed fiber loop. The study, titled, the Next Generation Workplace Districts was completed in October 2013. The study is intended to guide the transformation of the industrial area into a vibrant, innovative and attractive 21st century workplace to attract and retain advanced manufacturing and high tech companies and stimulate the creation of high paying jobs.

The three key strategies are: 1) boost value-added companies, 2) engage existing businesses, and 3) humanize the industrial area. In the study, based on interviews with businesses, one concept to humanize the industrial area is the provision to have better and more varied eating opportunities, via

establishment of a "Food Pod" with multiple food carts. Thus, as part of the CUP application review, the City identified an opportunity to implement one of the three strategies which is to humanize the place.

The aim of the project is to provide a space for emerging food-related businesses to incubate their business at a significant lower cost than opening a brick and mortar space. The parking lot users would have the opportunity to buy food in the morning and in the evening when they return from work. Additionally, the goal is to activate the space on evenings and over the weekends during the summer months. Staff has determined that the container park and the parking facility will work well together because the commuters using the lot create additional demand to support the businesses at the container park.

Although the pop-up container park project is not explicitly the subject of this application, it is dependent on the approval of this use permit. The applicant has agreed to make a substantial investment in site infrastructure for the container park, however the applicant will not serve as the operator and will not be responsible for any ongoing role in the container park project. The City is presently working with a team of designers and architects to develop the project and is beginning to market the opportunity to potential business operators,

Negotiations are underway for a lease between the City of San Leandro and the property owner and no rent will be charged to the City until April, 19, 2020 (the existing lease agreement). At that point, one 5-year renewal option will be made available if the lease is renewed by the applicant and the property owner. As noted in the proposed conditions of approval for the commuter lot, continued operation of the lot is contingent upon successful execution of the container park lease and completion of the site improvements.

The applicant and the City of San Leandro will also enter in a separate shared access and parking agreement to memorialize the following in connection with the pop-up container park: access parameters (pedestrian/vehicular), shared parking rules, hold harmless/indemnifications, and insurance requirements.

## **GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE**

The proposed reuse conforms to the General Plan, which designates the property for General Industrial areas are characterized by a wide range of manufacturing, transportation, warehousing, vehicle storage, and distribution uses. Such uses may be subject to performance standards to avoid adverse off-site effects. The Plan also identifies that, in West San Leandro, it should build upon the locational strengths and transportation features of West San Leandro to support the area's continued development as a major industrial, technology, and office employment center.

The following General Plan policies are applicable to the proposed project:

**7.01 Industrial Assets** - Build on the strengths of the City's existing industrial base, transportation infrastructure, and proximity to Oakland International Airport in the City's business development efforts.

**7.06 Adaptive Reuse** - Encourage private reinvestment in vacant or underutilized industrial and commercial real estate to adapt such property to changing economic needs, including the creation of

flex/office space.

**7.09 West San Leandro Business District** - Build upon the locational strengths and transportation features of West San Leandro to support the area's continued development as a major industrial, technology, and office employment center. In accordance with the West San Leandro Plan, limit the encroachment of incompatible residential and retail uses into the area, and promote additional development and redevelopment with manufacturing, technology, warehouse and distribution, office/flex, and similar uses.

**44.05 Street Beautification** - Upgrade the City's commercial thoroughfares by building upon their existing strengths and improving their aesthetic qualities. The City should implement programs to underground utilities, abate weeds and graffiti, eliminate litter, improve buffers to adjacent residential uses, prohibit excessive or out-of-scale signage, remove billboards, and provide streetscape amenities and landscaping along these thoroughfares.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This item is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15301 (e)(2) as it is an Existing Facility that involves no expansion; that is in an area where all public services and facilities are available to allow for maximum development; and that is not located in an environmentally sensitive area. The ultimate purpose of the project is to use the existing parking facility to reduce and consolidate commuter trips which have the added effect of reducing vehicle emissions and vehicle miles traveled.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This Board of Zoning Adjustments meeting received the required 10-day noticing period for a public hearing item before the BZA. The required methods of noticing were conducted including a legal advertisement in the East Bay Times newspaper, the posting of placards near the subject property on nearby utility poles, and the mailing notification to property owners and business owners within a 500-foot radius of the subject property.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Board of Zoning Adjustments make the following actions:

1. Adoption of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Exemption per CEQA Guidelines, Article 5, Section 15301 (e)(2);
2. Adoption of Recommended Findings of Fact for Approval of PLN16-0053; and
3. Approval of the Recommended Conditions of Approval for Conditional Use Permit PLN16-0053.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Applicant's Supporting Statement  
Vicinity Map  
Recommended Findings of Fact  
Recommended Conditions of Approval

Exhibit A - Title Sheet

Exhibit B - Site Details (Sheet 1.0)

Exhibit C - Existing Conditions (Sheet 2.0)

Exhibit D - Proposed Site Plan (Sheet 3.0)

Photographs of Existing Site Conditions

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