



Legislation Text

File #: 17-301, **Version:** 1

PLN17-0017; Consideration of a request for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a car rental business and to have vehicle storage for the car rental business at 1922 Republic Avenue (at Nicholson Street; southeast corner); IG Industrial General District; Alameda County Assessor's Parcel Number 77A 646-2; Enterprise Holdings c/o L. Fogelhut, Architect (applicant); C. Lutz, Balco Properties, LTD., LLC (property owner).

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The proposal is to operate a car rental business and to have vehicle storage for Enterprise (Rent-A-Car) at southeast corner of Republic Avenue and Nicholson Street. Both activities require a Conditional Use Permit in the IG District pursuant to Zoning Code Sections 2-706 B. 30. Vehicle/Heavy Equipment Rentals, and 31. Vehicle Storage.

Staff believes that the proposed vehicle rental business and associated vehicle storage will be compatible with the nearby industrial uses in the immediate area. With the implementation of the recommended Conditions of Approval, the proposed would operate without detriment or burden to the immediate area. Staff recommends that the Board of Zoning Adjustments:

1. Adopt the findings that this project is exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15301 for Existing Facilities with no expansion;
2. Approve the attached Recommended Findings of Fact for a Conditional Use Permit for PLN17-0017; and
3. Approve Conditional Use Permit PLN17-0017 subject to the Recommended Conditions of Approval.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING STATEMENT

See attached.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING AREA

The subject property is a corner lot at the southeast corner of Republic Avenue and Nicholson Street (one block west of Merced Street and Kaiser Hospital Medical campus). It is zoned IG Industrial General District. The project site is a single parcel and has an area of 17,700 square feet and is developed with two buildings comprising approximately 7,200 square feet. The proposed business will occupy the entire site which was formerly occupied by Acme Security Systems and Locksmith. Surrounding properties to the north, east, south and west are all similarly zoned IG and contain a mix of appropriate general industrial uses such as Applied Fusion, building materials wholesalers, and specialty contractors.

BACKGROUND

Vehicle rental and vehicle storage uses are conditionally permitted in order to have a case-by-case review of each proposal. The purpose for the conditional use review is to evaluate and ensure that the proposed uses will not have an adverse impact in the adjacent neighborhood of the subject property. The review must determine whether the operation of the uses and the neighborhood are compatible.

DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

The subject property, a corner lot is approximately 100- by 179-foot, and is developed with a 4,400 square foot building (approx.) at the northwest corner closest to the intersection (front) and a 2,800 square foot building at the rear southern edge (see Exhibit B - Site Plan). The buildings placement creates an interior “L-shaped” interior parking and driveway area.

The front building would contain a 3,000 square foot office in front and a 1,400 square foot warehouse space at the rear for car cleaning and preparation area for the rentals. The office area has a reception area, sales offices, a break room, and a restroom. The car cleaning area has storage room, a mechanical room, storage room and is appointed with the car detailing and washing equipment such as pressure washing and vacuum hoses. The floor of the car cleaning area would be improved with the required inlets, filters, and sump pump. There is no intended improvements or usage in the rear building.

The L-shaped outdoor area would be one-way vehicular circulation. Republic Avenue would be ingress and Nicholson Street would be egress only. Thus the parking will be 17 diagonal spaces, including one disabled-person parking space, along the left side of the one-way driveway. The parking area has gates to secure the parking area when the business is closed. The gates and fencing are tubular metal at the Republic Driveway and chainlink at the Nicholson driveway.

The business, Enterprise, will operate in a specific way, unlike a retail car rental business with walk-in customers during the business day. This Enterprise location business model specializes in providing replacement transportation for customers whose vehicles are disabled as a result of an automobile accident or mechanical problem. The applicant’s services include the delivery of rental vehicles to customers at their home, repair shop, car dealership, or place of business. In addition, services includes local corporate business, and business and leisure travelers that are close by.

The operation will be staffed with four full time employees and one part time car preparation employee. The hours are normal daily business hours which are Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and closed on Sunday.

As stated previously, a key element of the applicant’s business model is that Enterprise will deliver and drop off cars to its customers rather than having them drive to the subject property. This business model minimizes the traffic and parking issues that other retail rental companies have. The applicant forecasts that its business will be at a very high occupancy level (usually more than 90% of its vehicles will be out on rental) thus there would only be a few vehicles on site at any given time.

The applicant stated that it does not sell vehicles on-site or provide any vehicle maintenance on-site at this location. It would utilize various ‘Business to Business relationships’ with local gas stations, vehicle repair facilities and maintenance shops (oil changes, tire rotations).

The exterior of the building would be refreshed with light beige paint, black parapet cap (flashing),

and Enterprise Rent-A-Car branding (see Exhibits D and E - Elevations and Perspective Rendering, respectively).

The proposed wall signs and the two-sided monument sign will comprise 173 square feet. This is below the maximum sign area of 245 square feet which is calculated at 15 times the square root of the frontage of the property (square root of 266 feet equals 16.3 feet).

The existing landscaped setback will be refreshed with selective pruning of the trees and shrubs; bare areas would be planted with replacement shrub cover; and two trees would be planted in front of the blank western facing wall of the rear building along Nicholson. In addition, to enhancing the appearance of the property, the chainlink fence and gate along Nicholson will be replaced with decorative tubular metal fencing and gate equal to the existing ones along Republic Avenue.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The Zoning Code categorizes vehicle and equipment rental as rental of automobiles, including storage and incidental maintenance, but excludes maintenance requiring pneumatic lifts. The proposed car rental business model would basically be a site for storing cars until they are ready to be delivered to the customer needing the rental. The applicant would not have customers coming to the subject property. It is not a high traffic or parking generator due to the specialized nature of the business and it would have a low number of employees on-site at any one time. The 0.4 acre corner site can easily accommodate the vehicles and employee parking. No major changes to the site are necessary to accommodate Enterprise's vehicle rental business. The building is the necessary size to suit the business offices and the inside area to prepare the cars which includes vacuuming them and washing them. The property owner stated that the applicant would be the only business using the property. The rear building would not be used by another business or user.

The proposed attention to refresh the existing landscaping for the site's frontages will enhance the appearance of property from the street-view and fit in with similar landscape improvements along Republic Avenue and Merced Street.

The property owner has already resurfaced and striped the existing parking lot for Enterprise to provide the 17 parking spaces. All of the parking area will be located behind the building and gated driveways. Further, Engineering and Transportation staff has reviewed the circulation and parking layout for the site and has found it adequate. Moreover, the exterior of the building facing the intersection will be improved with paint and branding as described previously in this report.

Recommended Conditions of Approval for the proposed project include:

- All vehicle parking on the site shall be undertaken in a neat and orderly manner at all times;
- Employees and customers shall be instructed by the applicant and/or property owner to park in the internal parking area and not to park on the street in front of nearby businesses;
- No automotive repair work shall be conducted on the property;
- No pneumatic lift shall be permitted on the property;
- All landscaping shall be maintained in a healthy and growing condition at all times;
- There shall be no used vehicle sales or display of vehicles "For Sale" on the subject property or on the public street;
- There shall be no storage of inoperable vehicles or wrecked automobiles on the subject property;

- There shall be no dismantling or salvaging of vehicles on-site; and
- The use permit conditions of approval shall be made accessible to all employees on the property.

The proposed use, without the under-the-hood or tire maintenance and service of its rental cars, would promote economic development via business to business relationships with the various oil change, tune-up, brake, tire, and wheel sales and service providers.

The existing site is adequately served by streets, utilities and other public facilities. Engineering and Transportation staff has reviewed the circulation and parking layout and has found it adequate. The Fire Department has recommended conditions at the time of the Building Permit application to comply with Fire Codes. The Environmental Services Division of Public Works has found the vehicle wash pad plumbed to an oil-sand interceptor inside the building acceptable. The applicant must apply for a wastewater discharge permit if engine compartment cleaning or engine degreasing is anticipated.

GENERAL PLAN Conformance

The property is designated General Industrial in the City's General Plan Land Use Map. General Industrial areas are characterized by "a wide range of manufacturing, transportation, food and beverage processing, technology, warehousing, vehicle storage, office-flex and distribution uses" (General Plan page 3-31), therefore, the provision of a vehicle rental business and vehicle storage will be consistent with the City of San Leandro General Plan for this land use designation. In addition, the following General Plan goals and policies will apply:

Innovation Districts (LU Land Use)

Policy LU-7.1 Leveraging Locational Assets. Build on the locational strengths and transportation features of San Leandro's industrial area to support the area's continued development as a major advanced manufacturing, technology, and office employment center.

Policy LU-7.2 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 and space for technology-driven businesses.

Business Attraction and Diversification (ED Economic Development)

GOAL ED-1 Attract jobs and investment across all economic sectors.

Policy ED-1.1 Leveraging San Leandro's Assets. Build on San Leandro's strengths, including its central location, transportation infrastructure, affordability, industrial land supply, and business-friendly reputation to leverage economic growth and private investment in the city.

Policy ED-1.3 Industrial Land Use Efficiency. Encourage more efficient use of the City's industrial land supply, creating higher employment densities and high quality jobs, while discouraging the use of large sites and buildings for storage and other low intensity uses. Ensure that zoning and other development regulations support higher utilization of sites zoned for commercial and industrial activities.

GOAL ED-2 Create an environment in which local business can prosper.

Policy ED-2.5 Business to Business Relationships Facilitate the formation of business relationships between San Leandro companies. Measures that create a sense of community among local businesses should be encouraged.

A More Visually Attractive City (CD Community Design)

GOAL CD-7 Create a more visually attractive City, with well landscaped and maintained streets, open spaces, and gathering places.

Policy CD-7.2 Tree Maintenance. Encourage tree maintenance practices that contribute to the long-term health and appearance of the City's urban forest.

Policy CD-7.5 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 facades, 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 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.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

A notice of the June 1, 2017 public hearing was sent to property owners and businesses within 500 feet of the subject property. A legal advertisement was published in the East Bay Times Daily Review newspaper and the property was posted with placards 10 days prior to the Board of Zoning Adjustments meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

The use as proposed conforms both to the City zoning code and to the General Plan. Any planning issues associated with this application will be mitigated by the implementation of the proposed conditions of approval. Staff therefore recommends that the Board of Zoning Adjustments:

1. Adopt the findings that this project is exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15301 for Existing Facilities with no expansion;
 2. Approve the attached Recommended Findings of Fact for a Conditional Use Permit for PLN17-0017; and
- A. Approve Conditional Use Permit PLN17-0017 subject to the Recommended Conditions of Approval.

ATTACHMENTS

Vicinity Map

Applicant's Supporting Statement

Recommended Findings of Fact

Recommended Conditions of Approval

Exhibit A - Cover Sheet, Index Notes (Sheet T-1)

Exhibit B - Existing Site Plan (Sheet A1.0)

Exhibit C - Proposed Site Plan (Sheet A1.1)

Exhibit D - Exterior Elevation (Sheet A5.1)

Exhibit E - Perspective Rendering

Photographs of Existing Site Conditions

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