



City of Huntington Beach

File #: 20-1596

MEETING DATE: 6/9/2020

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Ursula Luna-Reynosa, Director of Community Development
BY: Hayden Beckman, Senior Planner

SUBJECT:
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 20-001 (G&M OIL OFFICE BUILDING)

REQUEST:

To permit A) the construction of a new 1,490 square foot single story office and storage building on a vacant property at an overall height of 28 feet, with ancillary site improvements; and B) that access to parking on the site be provided from the local street (A Lane) in lieu of the abutting alley.

LOCATION:

16942 A Lane, 92647 (East side of A Lane, 190 linear feet north of Warner Avenue).

APPLICANT: Karl H. Huy, Travis Companies, Inc., 4430 E. Miraloma Avenue, Suite F, Anaheim CA 92807

PROPERTY OWNER:

George J. Pearson, Vice President/General Manager, G&M Oil Company, Inc., 16868 A Lane, Huntington Beach CA 92647

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

1. Is the project proposal consistent with the City of Huntington Beach's adopted land use regulations (i.e. General Plan, Zoning Map, and Zoning Code including any specific plans and overlay zones where applicable)?
2. Does the project proposal satisfy all the findings required for approving a Conditional Use Permit?
3. Has the appropriate level of environmental analysis been determined?

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Planning Commission take the following actions:

- A) Find the proposed project categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15303, Class 3.

B) Approve Conditional Use Permit No. 20-001 with suggested findings and conditions of approval (Attachment No. 1).

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

A) Do not make the suggested findings which will result on a mandatory denial per Section 241.10 (c) of the Zoning Code.

B) Continue Conditional Use Permit No. 20-001 and direct staff accordingly.

PROJECT PROPOSAL:

The project proposal is to construct an approximately 1,420 sq. ft. business office and storage building on a vacant property that will include on-site vehicular access and parking, landscaping, and site lighting improvements. The subject property is zoned Commercial General (CG) and is located on the eastern frontage of A Lane, between Robidoux Drive to the north and Warner Avenue to the south.

Properties fronting the portion of A Lane north of Warner Avenue are a unique assortment of land uses and zoning designations. All parcels along the western side of A Lane are within the Town Center Boulevard Segment of the Beach Edinger Corridor Specific Plan (SP14). These properties are currently developed with a drive-through restaurant, a single family residence, an office building, gas station, and liquor store. All parcels along the eastern portion of A Lane are designated CG on both the Zoning Map and by the General Plan Land Use Map and are provided with public alley right of way access along the rear property line. With the exception of the vacant subject site, these properties are currently developed with an office building to the north along Robidoux Drive, several residences, and a vehicle service and tire shop to the south along Warner Avenue. Consistent with current zoning designations, land uses are changing along this section of A Lane from residential to commercial, as reflected by the existing mix of residential and commercial uses.

The subject request was filed as a CUP to the Zoning Administrator for construction on a vacant property in the CG zone. The HBZSO currently requires new commercial development to take access from an alley when available. The subject development proposal includes a new office building with primary vehicular access proposed to be provided from A Lane, in lieu of the existing public alley along the rear property line. The property owner desires to maintain vehicular and pedestrian access from A Lane, and as such, the subject CUP requires approval by the Planning Commission pursuant to HBZSO Section 230.12(E)(3). The Planning Commission is designated by the HBZSO as decision maker for consideration of the alternative access proposal.

The subject property has remained undeveloped since 1999, when a pre-existing single family residence was demolished. The property is currently utilized as an equipment and materials storage yard, with no buildings or modern improvements provided. There are no previous or active Code Enforcement cases associated with the subject property.

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS:

Subject Property And Surrounding General Plan Designations, Zoning And Land Uses:

LOCATION	GENERAL PLAN	ZONING	LAND USE
Subject Property:	Commercial General (CG)	CG	Storage Yard
North of Subject Property:	CG	CG	Single Family Residence
East of Subject Property:	CG	Residential Medium High Density (RMH)	SCE Warner Substation
South of Subject Property:	CG	CG	Vehicle Equipment Repair
West of Subject Property:	Mixed Use - Specific Plan (M-sp)	Beach Edinger Corridors Specific Plan (SP14)	G&M Oil Training Offices

General Plan Conformance:

The General Plan Land Use Map designation on the subject property is currently Commercial General (CG). The request is consistent with this designation and the goals and policies of the City's General Plan as follows:

Land Use Element

Goal LU-1: New commercial, industrial, and residential development is coordinated to ensure that the land use pattern is consistent with the overall goals and needs of the community.

Policy LU-1(C): Support infill development, consolidation of parcels, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

Policy LU-1(D): Ensure that new development projects are of compatible proportion, scale, and character to complement adjoining uses.

Policy LU-7(C): Minimize visual clutter along commercial corridors.

Policy LU-12(B): Encourage renovation and revitalization of deteriorating and struggling nonresidential areas and corridors, particularly commercial locations.

The project will revitalize an existing vacant and underutilized property, and provide a new modern office and storage building including ancillary site improvements within an existing commercial corridor that lacks cohesion and adequate public infrastructure. The proposed infill development of a new office and records storage building and its associated public and private improvements are consistent with the General Plan land use of CG (Commercial General). The proposed project will be compatible in the proportion, scale, and character of the adjoining commercial uses in that the new building will comply with all applicable development standards. The one-story office and records storage building includes two offices, a restroom and area for storage of business records and files for G&M Oil Co., a business whose headquarter operations are located 200 linear feet north of the subject property, at 16868 A Lane.

Circulation Element

Goal CIRC-1c: Through ongoing evaluation of jurisdiction, efficient transportation management provides the highest level of safety, service, and resources.

Policy CIRC-1c(F): Require development projects to provide circulation improvements to achieve stated City goals and to mitigate to the maximum extent feasible traffic impacts to adjacent land uses and neighborhoods as well as vehicular conflicts related to the project.

The new driveway and parking lot with access from A Lane on the western portion of the site is the most feasible for providing primary vehicular and pedestrian access to the property and will improve the traffic experience for the office building and surrounding uses. The project will provide a new on-site parking lot, thereby improving the traffic flow along A Lane by removing any need for on-street parking of vehicles associated with the new office building. Other commercial developments along this portion of A Lane feature vehicular access from A Lane in lieu of the alley along the rear property line.

Zoning Compliance:

With the exception of the request to provide vehicular and pedestrian access from A Lane in lieu of the alley, the subject request, as conditioned, complies with all development standards of the Commercial General zoning designation. Business and professional office uses are permitted by right and new construction on vacant parcels is subject to approval of a conditional use permit by the Zoning Administrator. As identified above, the request also includes an alternative access request by the property owner to provide vehicular access from A Lane in lieu of the existing alley along the rear property line of the subject site. Therefore, the request has been elevated to the Planning Commission at the property owner's request. The narrow width of the lot restricts the design of the property to allow for use of the alley as primary vehicular and pedestrian access and comply with all other applicable development standards, which limits the full use of the property. Staff supports the request for alternative access, citing a more feasible and safe circulation pattern for accessing the property, and compatibility with other commercial properties along A Lane.

The General Plan land use designation and the HBZSO anticipate commercial uses in this area and the proposed office and storage use will be located within a new building that conforms to land use and applicable development standards, with the exception of vehicle access. The proposed office and storage building will be compatible with surrounding uses because the proposed use is consistent with the existing land use pattern and is located on a property designated for commercial use. The proposed use does not include outdoor facilities and all future commercial operations will occur within the interior of the building space.

The subject requests are consistent with the scope and intent of development and land use within the General Plan and HBZSO. The proposed development, including the request for alternative site access, will not be detrimental to the general welfare of persons working or residing in the vicinity nor detrimental to the value of property and improvements in the neighborhood above existing conditions.

Urban Design Guidelines Conformance:

The proposed project will comply with the City's Urban Design Guidelines for General Commercial development. The subject development will occur on a standalone parcel located mid-block, fronting a street that lacks a consistent commercial presence. However, the proposed one-story office

building complies with applicable setback and height requirements, and as new development, will complement adjacent uses and future commercial development. Additionally, the design of the new office building will incorporate architectural elements such as exterior stone accent wainscoting, varied paint color accents, and a metal eyebrow feature highlighting architectural windows placed along the street facing building façade. Further, the proposed building will be oriented in a manner that allows for on-site landscaping above minimum development standards, sufficient parking spaces, and site lighting that improves the quality of the commercial streetscape along A Lane.

Environmental Status:

The proposed project will not have any significant effect on the environment and is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15303, Class 3 - *New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures* of the CEQA Guidelines as the project involves the construction of one commercial building that is less than 10,000 sq. ft. in an urbanized area where all necessary public services and facilities are available and the surrounding area is not environmentally sensitive.

Coastal Status:

Not Applicable.

Design Review Board:

Not Applicable.

Subdivision Committee:

Not Applicable.

Other Departments Concerns and Requirements:

The Public Works Department has reviewed the proposed project and do not have concerns with the project taking access from A Lane from a safety, efficiency, and circulation perspective. Taking access from A Lane will enable a project design that provides superior public safety for vehicles and pedestrians within the neighborhood. Further, the departments of Fire, Police, and Community Development have reviewed the project and identified a list of applicable code requirements (Attachment No. 4).

Public Notification:

Legal notice was published in the Orange County Register on May 28, 2020, and notices were sent to property owners of record and tenants within a 500 ft. radius of the subject property, individuals/organizations requesting notification (Planning Division's Notification Matrix), applicant, and interested parties. As of June 3, 2020, staff has not received any inquiries or comments regarding the project.

Application Processing Dates:

DATE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION:	MANDATORY PROCESSING DATE(S):
May 4, 2020	July 4, 2020

SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

- A) Find the proposed project categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15303.

- B) Approve Conditional Use Permit No. 20-001 with suggested findings and conditions of approval (Attachment No.1)

This recommendation is based on the following:

- Use is consistent with the General Plan and the Huntington Beach Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance (HBZSO);
- Proposed project provides an additional modern facility to an existing local business and offers new public and private improvements to the surrounding uses;
- No impacts are anticipated to the surrounding properties;
- The project will add additional parking opportunities; and
- The improvements associated with the use will bring the property in further compliance and further the vision and viability of the Commercial General zone.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Suggested Findings and Conditions of Approval
2. Conceptual Site and Floor Plans received and dated April 14, 2020
3. Project Narrative
4. Code Requirements Letter dated May 8, 2020