

City of Garden Grove

INTER-DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

To: Matthew Fertal
Dept: City Manager
Subject: CONSIDERATION OF PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT NO. PUD-119-07

From: Susan Emery
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Dept: Community Development
Date: February 12, 2008

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this report is to transmit information on efforts made to address the concerns raised regarding the site design for a car wash included in a Planned Unit Development, originally heard by City Council at the September 25, 2007 meeting. At the first meeting, staff transmitted the Planning Commission's recommendation for approval to rezone a 1.37-acre commercial site from C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial) zone to Planned Unit Development (PUD-119-07).

BACKGROUND

The applicant owns the property at the northwest corner of Chapman Avenue and Knott Street, and has operated a smog check shop and hand-detailing business for several years. The existing building on the site was originally part of a gasoline service station.

In this area of Garden Grove, the neighborhoods to the west of Knott Street are residential and those to the east of Knott Street are mainly industrial. At the intersection of Chapman Avenue and Knott Street, there are pockets of existing commercial development on the northwest and southwest corners, surrounded by residential tracts. The applicant's property is a 15,000 square foot, commercial lot on the corner that is zoned C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial) zone.

On August 16, 2007, the applicant received approval from the Planning Commission for a Site Plan to construct a 50-foot automatic car wash building and a Variance to allow a commercial PUD on less than five acres. The Planning Commission also recommended approval of the PUD. No one spoke in opposition to the proposal at this meeting.

The applicant requested the approval of the PUD to allow a specific mix of uses on the site that included a fully automatic car wash. The PUD proposed a 1.37-acre site that included the applicant's corner property and the commercial property immediately to the north. These two properties comprised the extent of the commercial development on the northwest corner of Chapman Avenue and Knott Street. The larger commercial property, behind the applicant's corner site, is

developed with a multi-tenant commercial building and a freestanding pad building constructed in the 1950's. Businesses in the multi-tenant building include Perry's Pizza restaurant, a hair salon, and a liquor store. The Guacamole Grille Burger #3 occupies the pad building.

A fully automatic car wash building of 50 feet in length is allowed in the C-2 (Community Commercial) zone, while self-service car wash facilities are allowed in the C-1 zone. The Planning Commission has approved car wash proposals in the C-1 zone but only for smaller (40 feet in length), semi-automatic, drive-through car wash facilities. Rezoning the applicant's property to the C-2 zone is problematic as this zone allows a broader scope of commercial activities including nightclubs, bars and major automotive repair that would not be allowed on properties near to residential neighborhoods. The PUD process allows the creation of development standards for a mix of uses that includes a larger car wash and the type of commercial businesses that can serve residential neighborhoods.

On September 25, 2007, the City Council held a public hearing for the request to rezone a commercial site from the C-1 zone to a commercial PUD to allow an automatic car wash operation. Three people spoke in opposition or to express concerns on the proposed car wash. The comments included concern about the redesign of the corner with "tight turns in-and-out of the parking lot," "water running off into the street," potential visual impairment caused by the bus stop, and diminished visibility for the other commercial businesses because of the proposed block wall. Council Members asked for additional time to review the site while raising concerns regarding the number of cars expected at the car wash and noise impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods. City Council directed that PUD-119-07 would return on the October 9, 2007 meeting.

The applicant requested the hearing be continued to a date in the future to allow additional time to compile facts and information addressing concerns raised in the City Council hearing. The project designer has submitted a revised site plan, an outline for the operation of the car wash, including the flow of vehicles, and an outline that includes the schedule of meetings held and the proposed changes to the project.

DISCUSSION

On October 5, 2007, a code enforcement officer made site visits to three existing car wash facilities and took measurements of the noise levels at these properties. The conclusion was that more noise emanated from the cars and trucks on the adjacent street than from the car wash equipment. The sites visited were the Pacific Car Wash at Beach/Chapman, the Crystal Car Wash at Harbor/Chapman and the Chapman Car Wash (Attachment 7).

The applicant, his partner and the project designer, have worked to find solutions for the concerns raised at the City Council meeting. The designer spoke to several of the business owners in the multi-tenant commercial building behind the car wash site. These business owners included the owner of Perry's Pizza, the hair salon (Chrissie's Hair Fashions), and the liquor store (Crown Empire Liquor). The applicant met with the owner of Perry's Pizza to discuss his concerns. The designer has met with several representatives from companies that produce dryers used in car wash facilities. The applicant, his partner, and the designer met with Tony Flores to discuss the details of the project and the concerns he had heard from the West Garden Grove community (Attachment 8).

There are several outcomes from these meetings. The designer has found a dryer motor for the car wash that can be mounted at grade and uses a single motor. The originally proposed dryer had three motors mounted at the top of the tunnel. The new single motor will be placed on the south side of the car wash tunnel further from the neighboring property. With the new placement and the required silencer package, the dryer motor will emit a decibel level that is within the City of Garden Grove Noise Ordinance. This is a significant change and allows the height of the proposed block wall to be lowered to 6'-0".

In addition to lowering the height of the wall, the portion of the wall immediately behind the new car wash building will be removed. In the previous site plan the wall continued completely around the back of the car wash tunnel, although for sound mitigation the wall was only required at the openings. This created a narrow area for landscaping (ten feet at its widest) between the rear wall of the car wash and the new perimeter block wall. By removing this portion of the perimeter wall, the tenants and customers of the abutting multi-tenant building will have the benefit of a landscape planter.

Traffic has been raised as a concern about the project. The proposed car wash has been through several years of review by the Planning Division and Public Works Engineering (Traffic Section). The proposed car wash is not large enough to contribute substantial vehicle trips and no traffic study was required. The site was originally developed as a service station on an arterial street. The Institute of Transportation Engineers booklet, "Trip Generation, 7th Edition," states that service stations generate 75 trips per hour during the a.m. peak hours and 65 trips per hour during the p.m. peak hours. The number of cars that can go through the car wash in an hour is estimated to be twenty. Given that there may be customers at the smog check bay and at the hand-detailing bay, the number of cars on the site in a single hour of peak demand could reach 25. This number of cars is significantly less than what the previous service station use generated.

The applicant has provided a plan that outlines the sequence of operation for the car wash. The operation of the car wash includes the active management of cars on the site that will be reinforced through a condition of approval. The car wash

operation of ticketing, vacuuming, wash conveyer, and drying can accommodate nine to ten cars at a time. In the existing building, the hand-detailing portion of the business has two service bays and the smog check business has a single bay to accommodate a total of three vehicles. In front of these bays is an area for three cars (auto service businesses are allowed to provide some of their parking spaces in areas where staff manages the parking of cars in tandem spaces). Ten separate customer parking spaces are provided on the lot. The total number of spaces for vehicles on the site is 26. The applicant has proposed that in the management of cars on the lot, when the site has reached capacity for cars, an employee will post a "lot full" sign and limit access to the site (Attachment 9).

Traffic Engineering staff carefully considered the circulation on the site and requested that the number of driveways be reduced on the site. The proposed site plan reduced the number of driveways from four to two, with the main entry for in-and-out traffic on Chapman Avenue and an exit-only on Knott Street. The proposal removed the driveways closest to the corner. These changes were required to improve the circulation at the corner and improve the safety of drivers. The proposed changes to the driveways will create a larger area for the existing bus stop on Chapman Avenue and improve its function.

The applicant/property owner has submitted a petition with signatures in support of his car wash proposal. The petition contains 162 signatures (Attachment 10).

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

None.

COMMUNITY VISION IMPLEMENTATION

The approval of the Planned Unit Development will allow the improvement of the site through the construction of an automatic car wash and, therefore, further the Vision and Strategic Plan by implementing the Economic Development goal "Improve the aesthetics of the community and eliminate blighting influences" and "Maintain and improve the transportation system in the City to ensure the safe, efficient flow of traffic." The project will improve the corner property by removing the existing canopy from a past service station use, adding new landscaped setbacks and planters, reducing the number of driveways and improving circulation for the site. A new viable business on the site will help to keep the property maintained and improve the character of the neighborhood.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

- Introduce the attached ordinance regarding Planned Unit Development No. PUD-119-07.

SUSAN EMERY
Community Development Director

By: Erin Webb
Senior Planner

Attachment 1 – Reductions of Site Plans
Attachment 2 - Draft City Council Ordinance for approval
Attachment 3 - Revised Exhibit "A" Conditions of Approval
Attachment 4 - City Council Minute Excerpt of September 25, 2007
Attachment 5 - Planning Commission Staff Report dated August 16, 2007
Attachment 6 - Planning Commission Resolution Nos. 5607 and 5608
Attachment 7 - Planning Commission Minute Excerpt of August 16, 2007
Attachment 8 - Code Enforcement Noise Study from October 5, 2007
Attachment 9 - Outline of meetings "Activity Log"
Attachment 10 - Car Wash Operation "Sequence of Operation"
Attachment 11 – Petition provided by Applicant