



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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REPORT TO THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

File #: 2017-7764

Location: 905 East El Camino Real (APN: 213-46-014)

Applicant / Owner: Ahluwalia Enterprise Inc (applicant) /Wolf & El Camino Invs Llc (owner)

Proposed Project:

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT to allow the addition of four car wash machines to an existing car wash facility. A new trellis and relocation of the existing hand vacuum station are also proposed as part of the application.

Reason for Permit: A Special Development Permit is required for car wash use within the Highway Business Zoning District (C-2).

Project Planner: Aastha Vashist, (408) 730-7458, avashist@sunnyvale.ca.gov

Issues: Noise, neighborhood compatibility, architecture.

Recommendation: Approve with conditions

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Zoning District:	C-2/ECR (Highway Business Zoning District with El Camino Real Precise Plan combining District)	Existing	Gas Station, Car Wash and Convenience Store
		Proposed	Same

Previous Planning Projects related to Subject Application: A Use Permit for allowing sale of beer and wine at the convenience store (2017-7447)	Yes
Neighborhood Preservation Complaint	No active complaints
Deviations from Standard Zoning Requirements	No

The proposal includes the addition of four new car wash machines, relocation of the existing hand vacuum station, and construction of a 12-foot tall trellis at an existing gas station with car wash and convenience store. The addition of car wash machines (expansion of use) requires a Special Development Permit (SDP).

See Attachment 1 for a Vicinity and Noticing Map and Attachment 2 for the Project Data Table.

Background

The existing car wash facility was approved through a Special Development Permit (2005-0724) by the Planning Commission in 2005. Recently, a Special Development Permit (2017-7447) was approved through a Zoning Administrator Hearing to allow sale of beer and wine at the existing convenience store. The City's Neighborhood Preservation Division received a complaint regarding multiple mobile food trucks at the site. The case (2017-2809) has since been closed and the applicant has verified that there are currently no mobile food trucks on site.

Use

The current site includes retail sales of gasoline, car wash services and convenience store. No change in use is proposed as part of this application.

Currently, the customers drive their cars up to the pump/vacuum area and then exit their cars and walk into the waiting room/cashier area. Car wash employees then drive the cars from the pumps through the car wash and out to the drying areas. The existing car wash is entirely mechanized from the washers to the dryers. The use includes a manual hand wash and automatic dry, with a final hand finish dry after cars exit the wash/dry area.

The applicant proposes the addition of four car wash machines including a hydraulic wrap brush, top brush, low brush and cool down arch with soap foamer that will improve the quality of the car wash service. The proposed addition will not increase the capacity of the car wash facility, therefore; it will not increase the number of vehicles that can be served by the facility.

Besides making the improvement to the existing car wash facility, the applicant proposes construction of a 12-foot tall trellis along El Camino Real that will be used for drying, finishing and vacuuming the cars after the car wash. The existing hand vacuum station is located near the eastern side of the property, adjacent to the mobile home park. The vacuuming station is proposed to be relocated under the trellis as part of this application.

The proposed hours of operation for the car wash facility are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. during April through October, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. during November through March. The gas station and convenience store are open 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday through Thursday, and 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. There are currently 12 total employees for the gas station, car wash and convenience store. The applicant does not expect to hire any additional employees.

Noise

Staff required the applicant to submit a noise study to determine the possible noise impacts of the addition of the car wash machines and relocation of the hand vacuum station. The adjacent mobile home park to the east represents the nearest residential neighbor to the subject property.

Charles M. Salter and Associates conducted an acoustical study to quantify the potential change in carwash noise when the wash becomes mechanized. They also conducted the initial noise study for this site in 2005, as part of the original SDP, which resulted in a 9-foot tall concrete block wall being required to separate the mobile home park from the subject property. The wall offers up to 9 decibels of attenuation from the noise generated on the site.

The recent study for the addition of car wash machines found the following:

- The overall noise generated at the eastern property line at a maximum of 60dBA,
- The relocated vacuum station will reduce the existing noise levels at the eastern property line by 8dBA.

The study finds that the carwash machine noise levels and vacuuming are more than 10 decibels quieter than the existing carwash noise, thereby, they will not increase the carwash noise levels and no further attenuation measure are required.

As part of the application, the hand vacuuming station is also proposed to be moved from its current location near the mobile home park to along El Camino Real. The new vacuuming station will be an additional 80 feet away from the mobile park that results in 8 dB reduction in noise from the vacuuming to the mobile park.

In conclusion, the acoustical study determines that the addition of four carwash machines and vacuuming relocation will not cause the noise to increase, and the noise level will not exceed Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) permitted levels of 60 dBA during the daytime when the carwash will be in operation.

Refer to Attachment 6 for the Noise Study.

Site Layout

The site is located at the intersection of East El Camino Real and South Wolfe Road. The site has two driveways leading into and out of the site. The driveway along El Camino Real leads to the gas station that is located towards the east side of the property, adjacent to the neighboring residential zoned property. The convenience store is centered on the site and the car wash facility towards the rear side of the structure. The exterior patio area with a trellis in front of the convenience store serves as the waiting area for car wash customers. The trellis is proposed to be located at a 15-foot setback from the front property line along El Camino Real, consistent with the development standards listed in SMC 19.26.160. The proposed trellis roof is less than 50 percent solid; therefore, will not be included in the lot coverage and floor area for the site.

Architecture

The proposed trellis will utilize stucco material and wood features for the design. The trellis will be painted a two-tone tan color to match with the gas station canopy columns and convenience store. The maximum height of the trellis at the peak of the roof will be 12 feet. The applicant proposes to incorporate the hand vacuum pipes into the structure, including a 6-inch horizontal pipe and 3-inch vertical pipe (See Attachment 4 for Site and Architectural Plans). The pipes will be painted to blend with the trellis and will be completely screened from El Camino Real (See Condition of Approval PS-1 in Attachment 3), per SMC 19.38.020.

Parking and Circulation

The existing uses on the site include a convenience store, gas station and car wash facility. Per SMC 19.46.110, gasoline pump canopies do not require parking spaces, and convenience store associated with auto-service use require parking at the rate of 2.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet. Accessory car washes with three or fewer employees require a minimum of one additional parking space, while car wash facilities with over four employees require a parking study.

The site currently has seven parking spaces, plus one additional parking space is proposed to be provided as part of this application. In addition, eight spaces are provided under the trellis for the vacuuming station that can be used for parking after the car wash facility hours. The proposed parking spaces conform with the City's Parking Lot Design Standards per SMC 19.46.120.

Based on the applicant's description, the site has a total of 12 employees, of which half use public transit and the remaining six employees carpool using two cars. The parking lot shall contain 8 spaces, of which 5 spaces are required for the convenience store. Staff finds that the remaining three number of parking spaces are sufficient to accommodate the parking needs for the car wash facility employees that currently occupy two parking spaces on site.

Staff recommends adding a condition of approval to require two designated parking spaces for the employees to avoid potential parking overspill on the adjacent streets or properties (Refer PS-1 in Attachment 3).

Therefore, based on staff's analysis and proposed parking improvements, staff finds that there would be sufficient parking to accommodate the site uses.

USE	Area	PARKING RATE	REQUIRED PARKING
Convenience Store	1,787 s.f.	2.5 parking spaces per 1,000 s.f.	5
Gas Station	1,785 s.f.	None	0
Car Wash Facility (8-12 employees) Currently use 2 parking spaces, plus 1 additional parking space	1,062 s.f.		3
Total Minimum Parking Required			8
Parking Provided			8

Landscaping

The existing landscaping on site meets the current standard of 20% of the site (7,900 s.f.), as required by SMC 19.37.040. The project proposes a 3-feet high hedge along the East El Camino Real frontage to soften the visual appearance of the parking under the proposed trellis (See Condition PS-1 in Attachment 3)

Neighborhood Impacts / Compatibility

The project will not have a negative visual impact from the street and surrounding properties. Staff finds the architectural style is suitable for this portion of El Camino Real. The proposed project architecture and improvements is of high quality and will enhance the visual appearance of the site. The noise study further indicates that the project shall not generate more noise and shall comply with the City's noise ordinance (see Attachment 6).

Public Contact

As of the date of staff report preparation, staff has received no comments from the neighbors.

Notice of Public Hearing :

- Posted on the site
- 420 notices mailed to property owners and residents within 300 feet of the project site
- Posted on the City's official notice bulletin board

Staff Report/Agenda:

- Posted on the City of Sunnyvale's Web site
- Provided at the Reference Section of the City of Sunnyvale's Public Library

Environmental Determination

A Categorical Exemption Class 1 CEQA exemption (existing facilities) (Guidelines Section 15301) relieves this project from CEQA provisions.

FINDINGS

In order to approve the Special Development Permit the following findings must be made:

1. Attain the objectives and purposes of the general plan, specific plan, precise plan, or other specialized plan of the city of Sunnyvale; **Finding met**

El Camino Real Precise Plan Goal 3.2.2. - To maintain and enhance the retail sales tax revenue generated for the city.

The proposed project helps maintain and enhance the existing car wash facility on the site. The trellis over the vacuuming station is designed to complement the architecture of the building and the landscaping improvements help in maintaining and enhancing the visual appearance of the subject site.

2. Ensure that the general appearance of proposed structures, or the uses to be made of the property to which the application refers, will not impair either the orderly development of, or the existing uses being made of, adjacent properties. **Finding met**

The proposed trellis architecture and site improvements are compatible with surrounding properties and are well designed. The proposed project involves no change of the existing uses on the site and will not result in noise increase. The proposed project architecture and site design is of high quality and will complement the existing structures on the site.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Special Development Permit with recommended Conditions of Approval in Attachment 2.
2. Approve the Special Development Permit with modifications.
3. Deny the Special Development Permit.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1. Approve the Special Development Permit with recommended Conditions of Approval in Attachment 2.

Prepared by: Aastha Vashist, Assistant Planner

Approved by: Ryan Kuchenig, Senior Planner

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity and Noticing Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Standard Requirements and Recommended Conditions of Approval
4. Site and Architectural Plans
5. Letter from the Applicant
6. Noise Study