



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

File #: 20-0795, Version: 1

REPORT TO THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

SUBJECT

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT: To demolish an existing restaurant building and landscaping to allow for a new surface parking lot with associated site improvements including new landscaping and site lighting for Costco Wholesale. The project requests a deviation to exceed the maximum number of parking spaces combined with the Costco site and to maintain legal nonconforming bicycle parking.

Location: 1210 Kifer Road (APN: 216-27-053)

File #: 2020-7365

Zoning: MXD-1 (Flexible Mixed-Use I for the Lawrence Station Area)

Applicant / Owner: David Babcock & Associates (applicant) / Costco Wholesale Corporation (owner)

Environmental Review: A Class 11 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions.

Project Planner: Cindy Hom, 408-730-7411, chom@sunnyvale.ca.gov

BACKGROUND

This project was originally scheduled for the June 12, 2019 Zoning Administrator hearing but was withdrawn to allow time for Costco to purchase the subject property. The project site is approximately 1.6 acres in size and is located within the Lawrence Station Area Plan (LSAP). The site is currently vacant and developed with a one-story restaurant building with surface parking and landscaping. Costco is contiguous to the subject property with a shared driveway access that serves both sites.

See Attachment 1 for a map of the vicinity and mailing area.

Description of Proposed Project

The proposed project includes demolition of the existing 8,200 square foot restaurant building and removal of existing improvements including the removal of all on-site trees to allow construction of 102 surface parking spaces and installation of associated site improvements, including new landscaping and lighting. The proposed parking lot will be used by Costco patrons. A deviation is requested to exceed the maximum number of parking spaces combined with the Costco site.

Previous Actions on the Site

The existing building was built in 1990. The site was previously occupied by Sweet Tomatoes restaurant, which permanently ceased operations in May, 2020. There are no previously approved planning projects related to the subject property, and no open Neighborhood Preservation complaints.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Class 11 Categorical Exemption (construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to

(appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities) relieves this project from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions.

DISCUSSION

Site Layout and Access

The existing site is served by a shared driveway access, from Kifer Road, that is entirely on the adjacent Costco parcel. The proposed project will maintain this existing access.

Development Standards

The proposed project complies with most of the applicable development standards as set forth in the Sunnyvale Municipal Code, except for the maximum number of parking spaces allowed.

Parking and Circulation

The project includes striping of 102 standard-sized parking spaces. The existing Costco parking lot contains 746 parking spaces. The project includes removal of ten spaces on the Costco site to allow for pedestrian access between the two sites. The modifications will result in a total of 838 parking spaces for use by Costco patrons and employees.

When combined with the Costco site, a minimum of 557 parking spaces and maximum of 696 parking spaces are permitted. Therefore, the combined sites exceed the maximum number of parking spaces by 142 parking spaces. While the parking calculation indicates that the parking supply exceeds the demand, the Costco site experiences a demand for parking that appears to warrant the additional parking spaces. Costco is located along a major thoroughfare, and includes retail, food services, auto repair and a gas station. The additional parking is to provide for a better shopping experience for Costco customers.

Bicycling parking at the Costco facility is legal nonconforming and provides six (6) secured bicycle parking spaces where a total of twenty-nine (29) are required based on a ratio of one Class I bicycle parking per 30 employees and one Class II bicycle parking per 6,000 sq. ft. of building area. The proposed project will not generate additional employees or result in additional building square footage. Although the project will not expand or enlarge the nonconformity, staff is recommending a condition of approval to add five (5) additional Class I bicycle parking to promote commute alternatives and utilization of public transit for Costco employees. (Recommended Condition No. PS-1 found in Attachment 4). The applicant has agreed to the installation of the additional five (5) bicycle spaces.

Landscaping

The site complies with landscaping requirements, by providing 14,163 square feet of landscaping (20% of the site), a 15-foot frontage landscape buffer and 50% of the parking lot to be shaded by trees within 15 years. The project also meets water-efficient landscaping and stormwater requirements.

Tree Removal and Replacement

The site contains a total of thirty-two (32) trees consisting of London Plane, Olive, Purpleleaf Plum, Japanese Flowering Cherry, Brazilian Pepper and Carob trees. The applicant proposes to remove twenty-seven (27) trees, which includes six (6) protected trees and maintain four (4) London Plane

street trees and one (1) London Plane tree on-site along the Kifer Road street frontage. The trees proposed for removal are considered as “moderate” suitability for preservation, due to declining health or structural defects. The trees would also conflict with the proposed parking lot design and access. Therefore, staff is supportive of the tree removals.

The project proposes to install fifty-three (53) new 24-inch box trees throughout the parking lot, which complies with the Tree Replacement Standards.

Lighting

Light poles will be installed throughout the parking lot to match the existing light poles on the Costco site. Lighting will be standard LED and facing downward to avoid lighting spillover.

LAWRENCE STATION AREA PLAN (LSAP):

The City Council rezoned the site to MXD-1 in 2016 as part of the LSAP adoption, which prioritizes mixed-use development due to its proximity to the Caltrain station. The subject site would be difficult to redevelop to mixed-use on its own, due to the lack of direct driveway access on the parcel and reliance on the Costco site for access to Kifer Road. Furthermore, Costco is still highly utilized and unlikely to redevelop anytime in the near future.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACTS/COMPATIBILITY:

The proposed project will provide much-needed parking for Costco patrons. The proposed parking lot is not expected to have a detrimental visual impact on the surrounding properties, as the design is compatible with the existing Costco parking lot and is screened from street view through a landscaping buffer and tree planting.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Fourteen (14) notices were sent to surrounding property owners and residents adjacent to the subject site in addition to standard noticing practices, including advertisement in the Sunnyvale Sun Newspaper and on-site posting. No letters or calls were received from the public by staff.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Special Development Permit with recommended Conditions in Attachment 3.
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 in Attachment 3.

Prepared by: Cindy Hom, Associate Planner
Reviewed by: Shaunn Mendrin, Principal Planner
Approved by: Momo Ishijima, Senior Planner

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity and Noticing Radius Map
2. Project Data Table
3. Recommended Findings
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval

5. Site and Architectural Plans