



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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REPORT TO THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

SUBJECT

Proposed Project:

USE PERMIT: to allow a change of use from industrial to place of assembly - community serving (Sunnyvale Community Services).

Location: 1160 Kern Avenue (APN: 205-24-002)

File #: 2020-7239

Zoning: M-S/POA - Industrial and Service / Places of Assembly

Applicant / Owner: Arc Tec, Inc. (applicant) / Sunnyvale Community Services (owner)

Environmental Review: Class 32 Categorical Exemption relieves this project from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions.

Project Planner: Momoko Ishijima, 408-730-7532, mishijima@sunnyvale.ca.gov

BACKGROUND

The site is surrounded by industrial and commercial uses in an area that are zoned M-S (Industrial and Service) to the north and west, and M-S/POA (Industrial and Service / Places of Assembly) to the south and east. The existing industrial building was constructed in 1971 and has been occupied by various industrial businesses. Most recently, the property was owned and occupied by Resource Area For Teaching (RAFT). Sunnyvale Community Services (SCS) purchased the property in 2019.

Description of Proposed Project

The proposed project is to allow a change of use from industrial to a place of assembly - community serving use, which requires approval of a Use Permit at a public hearing. Sunnyvale Community Services (SCS) is a non-profit emergency assistance agency providing food, financial assistance, and support programs to prevent hunger and homelessness in the local community. SCS is proposing to relocate to the project site from their existing location at 725 Kifer Road in Sunnyvale. The project includes interior and exterior improvements.

See Attachment 1 for a map of the vicinity and mailing area for notices and Attachment 2 for the Data Table of the project.

Previous Actions on the Site

Based on the permit history, the property and the existing building was developed in 1971. Over the years there have been Use Permits and Miscellaneous Plan Permits approved for enclosed and unenclosed storage on-site.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Under the provisions of Section 15332, Class 32 (In-Fill Development) of the California Environmental Quality Act, the project is found to be exempt from further environmental review. The Section 15332 exemption applies to projects that are consistent with the applicable General Plan

designation and all applicable General Plan policies, as well as with the applicable zoning designation and regulations. The proposed use occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres and is substantially surrounded by existing industrial and commercial land uses. The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species; approval of the project will not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality. Additionally, the site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public service. A detailed analysis is included in Attachment 5.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Use

Sunnyvale Community Services (SCS) has been serving the Sunnyvale community since 1970 to prevent homelessness and hunger. SCS propose to relocate to the project site from their current location on Kifer Road to be able to meet growing demands and programs. Programs offered by SCS include:

- Financial aid for housing, utilities, medical, and other expenses
- Budget counseling
- Screening for benefits program
- VTA Pass distribution
- Produce Mondays
- Monthly Food Program
- Backpack Distribution
- Holiday Center
- Essential Needs Distribution for the Homeless

The 36,028-square foot building will be split into 17,106 square feet (47%) of warehouse space for storage and sorting of food and produce for distribution. The remaining 18,922 square feet (53%) will be office and meeting rooms for administrative staff and case workers to engage with clients. SCS has 36 staff members, with 26 employees in the front office and 10 employees in the warehouse and distribution center. Approximately 30 volunteers and part-time employees work in the warehouse and distribution center in various shifts. At any given time, a total of 50+ employees and volunteers will be on-site.

The general hours of operation are 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. There will be staff members on-site on alternating Saturday morning hours to accommodate client schedules and emergencies. On Produce Mondays and Monthly Food Programs (1st and 3rd Wednesdays) days, food distribution will be from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Other events such as Backpack Distribution and the Holiday Center will provide clients with backpacks, back-to-school supplies, holiday gifts and food, where clients will reserve a time for pick up. (Refer to Attachment 7 - Project Description Letter)

Site Layout and Architecture

The 2.25-acre site is currently developed with one single-story industrial building and is located mid-block on the south side of Kern Avenue between Santa Trinita Avenue and Lawrence Expressway. The site is occupied by a single-story, square-shape industrial building which is simple in form with non-distinguishing architectural features. The front façade has glazing and a faux awning and roof. The rear of the building has a delivery loading dock and ramp and several covered storage structures. The project includes interior improvements to create offices, meeting rooms, warehouse and distribution center. The exterior improvements include the demolition of the existing storage

areas, construction of a new solid waste enclosure, new canopy over the loading dock, new storefront glazing, light fixtures, and roof screen. A new perimeter fencing and gates will be installed and a condition of approval has been added to finalize the fence design and material with staff prior to building permit and installation. (Refer to Attachment 4 - COA BP-13)

Development Standards

The proposed project complies with all applicable development standards, as set forth in the Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC), such as lot coverage, setbacks, height, and parking. The existing condition of the project site has non-conformities related to two development standards, floor area ratio (FAR) and landscaping.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

The existing building has a FAR of 40% where the municipal code standard is a maximum of 35% FAR. The project does not include addition of new floor area. The demolition of existing covered storage spaces in the rear of the building will reduce the FAR to 37% improving the nonconformity by 3%.

Landscaping

The project site has a landscape area of 8.6% where the municipal code standard is 20% of the lot size. The project adds landscaping and trees in the parking lot, however, some landscaping will be removed to create pedestrian access from the front of the property to the rear of the building. The landscape area will be increased to 9.2% and the landscaping will be enhanced with the addition of 35 new trees, which will bring parking lot shading into compliance with a proposed 52.3% shading where 50% is required. A total of 10 trees were surveyed onsite, three of which are protected. Seven trees will be removed, one of which is protected.

Parking and Circulation

There are two driveway accesses from Kern Avenue and vehicle parking spaces are available in the front and the rear of the building. The two driveways will be designated for one-way ingress from Kern Avenue on the west side, and egress to Kern Avenue on the east side. The one-way circulation down the west driveway to the back of the building accommodates a long vehicle queue around the property for food distribution and pickup. Vehicles will exit the east driveway. Volunteers will be available to direct traffic at the driveway entrance, through the queue, and at the pickup location on the southeast corner of the building. Both vehicle and public transit accesses to the proposed site will be an improvement to SCS' existing site on Kifer Road.

The property south of the project site (City Sports site) located at 1165 East Arques Avenue owns the driveway east of the project site. When City Sports was developed, the driveway access was studied and conditioned to be one-way egress to Kern Avenue only. The project site's east driveway and the adjacent property's driveway appear as one wide driveway with a valley gutter in the center, and shares one wide driveway apron (access) at Kern Avenue (Refer to Attachment 6 - Site and Architectural Plans). There is a narrowed driveway access on the south side where the driveway meets the parking lot of the City Sports site. Over the years, patrons of the athletic club and other businesses have used the driveway as two-directional access and have driven over the project site's east driveway to access the City Sports site. There are no easements on the driveway that allow for this access. The project proposes a perimeter fence to be installed just to the left side of the valley gutter and a gate near the front of the building. Both the project site's and the City Sports driveway

will be one-way out-going only. Communication has been established with the property owner of the City Sports site to provide direction to the patrons to only use the driveway to exit the site. As conditioned, staff will review the final design of the fence and gates, and require signage at all driveways to direct and prohibit traffic. (Refer to Attachment 4 - COA BP-12 and BP-13)

The project proposes 83 parking spaces where 81 is the minimum requirement. The project will also add four bicycle parking spaces.

Offsite Improvements

There are currently no sidewalks in front of the project site on Kern Ave. As part of a budgeted Capital Improvement Program, the City will install new sidewalks, curb, gutter, and driveways. City staff will coordinate timing of the improvements with the project and affected property owners and businesses.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACTS/COMPATIBILITY:

Staff finds that the proposed use is consistent with the intent of the M-S/POA zoning district. As defined in the municipal code, places of assembly - community serving includes civic and social organizations, and Sunnyvale Community Services has been providing much valued community support programs and services for 50 years. The relocation to a larger site within the City will create opportunities for expanded services to meet the growing demand, and improved vehicle and public transit accesses to SCS. The neighboring properties are on large lots with large separations between buildings and uses. The closest residential neighborhood is over 1/4 mile away and is not anticipated to be impacted by the operation. Most of the activities at SCS will be interior to the building except on designated food distribution days which are spread throughout the month.

In addition, the project proposes minimal construction other than interior and exterior improvements to the existing building, solid waste enclosure and the addition of more landscaping and trees. Given the unique and important characteristics of the use, staff finds the proposed use will have minimal impacts to neighbors.

PUBLIC CONTACT

21 notices were sent to surrounding property owners and businesses 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.

Community Outreach Meeting - October 21, 2020

The applicant conducted a teleconference outreach meeting on October 21, 2020. The meeting was attended by five interested parties. Sunnyvale Community Services representatives gave a presentation with an overview of the SCS programs and services and the proposed project, and then opened the forum for questions and answers. Members of the public expressed support for the project.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Use Permit with recommended Conditions in Attachment 3.
2. Approve the Use Permit with modifications.
3. Deny the Use Permit.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1. Approve the Use Permit with recommended Conditions in Attachment 3.

Prepared by: Momoko Ishijima, Senior Planner

Approved by: Noren Caliva-Lepe, Principal Planner

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity and Noticing Maps
2. Project Data Table
3. Recommended Findings
4. Recommended Conditions of Approval
5. CEQA Class 32 Exemption Analysis
6. Site and Architectural Plans
7. Project Description Letter