

Planning Commission Staff Report

August 9, 2017
Item 6.a.

- SUBJECT:** PUD-123
- APPLICANT/
PROPERTY
OWNER:** Mathew Zaheri
- PURPOSE:** Application for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) development plan to construct a 201-stall parking lot for vehicle display/inventory to be shared by Stoneridge Chrysler-Jeep-Dodge-Ram and a future auto dealership
- LOCATION:** 2694 Stoneridge Drive, part of the Auto Mall Site at Staples Ranch
- GENERAL PLAN:** Retail/Highway/Service Commercial/Business and Professional Offices, Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, and Parks and Recreation
- SPECIFIC PLAN:** Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch - Auto Mall
- ZONING:** Planned Unit Development – Commercial (PUD-C) District
- EXHIBITS:**
- A. [PUD Draft Conditions of Approval](#)
 - B. [Project Plans dated "Received July 19, 2017"](#)
 - C. [Staff Report and Draft Excerpt of the June 28, 2017 Planning Commission Work Session Minutes](#)
 - D. [Approved Perimeter Landscape Plan](#)
 - E. [Location and Notification Map](#)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission approve Case PUD-123 by taking the following actions:

1. Find that the anticipated environmental impacts of the proposed development are adequately evaluated in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) and adopted Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations for the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch and that none of the conditions in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15162 calling for preparation of subsequent environmental review have occurred;

2. Make the PUD findings for the proposed PUD development plan as discussed in the staff report; and
3. Adopt a resolution recommending approval of Case PUD-123, subject to the conditions of approval listed in Exhibit A, and forward the application to the City Council for public hearing and review.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant is proposing to construct a 201-stall parking lot for vehicle display/inventory to be shared by Stoneridge Chrysler-Jeep-Dodge-Ram (Chrysler) and a future auto dealership. Staff believes the proposed design is consistent with the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment for Staples Ranch and other requirements applicable to auto dealerships, and recommends approval of this PUD development plan.

BACKGROUND

On January 13, 2017, Mathew Zaheri, on behalf of Chrysler, submitted a PUD development plan application for the construction of a 201-stall parking lot to be shared by Chrysler and a future automobile dealership on a 3.6-acre vacant site located at 2694 Stoneridge Drive within the Auto Mall site at Staples Ranch.

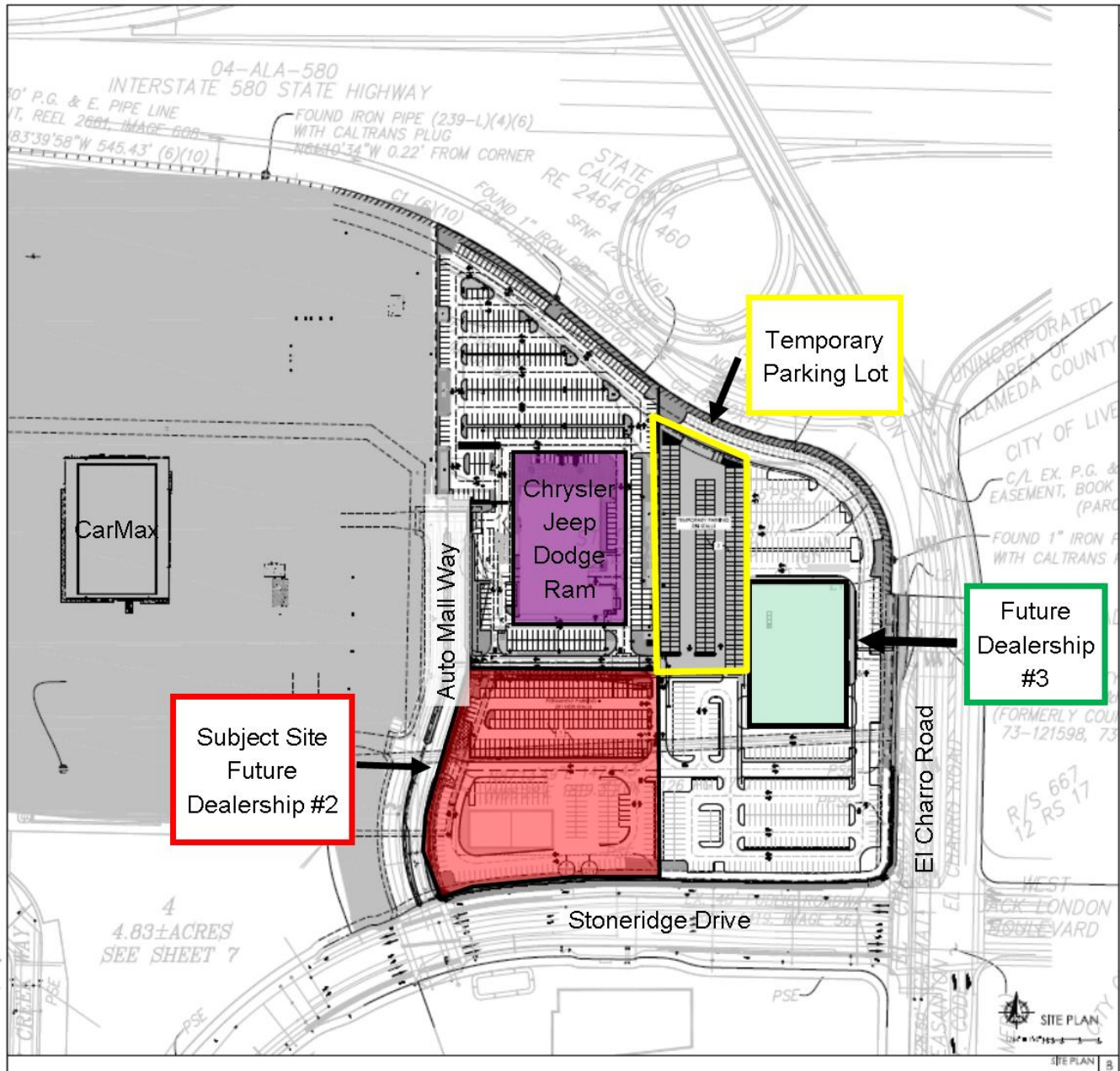
The original project was reviewed and discussed at a workshop with the Planning Commission held on June 28, 2017. At the workshop, the Planning Commission expressed general support for the new parking lot, but expressed concerns about Chrysler's current operations and property maintenance, including excessive light and glare on the site and the poor condition of existing landscaping along the perimeter of the site. In addition, the Planning Commission raised concerns about the adequacy of proposed perimeter landscaping, new lighting, and site configuration. The staff report and minute excerpts of the June 28, 2017 Planning Commission workshop are attached to this report as Exhibit C.

Since the workshop, the applicant has worked with staff on plan revisions to address the Planning Commission's and staff's concerns. On July 20, 2017, the applicant submitted a revised narrative and plans. The applicant has indicated that he will replace dead and dying landscaping and the submitted narrative and plans were revised to: improve the perimeter landscaping by enhancing corner treatments, and adding shrubs along the perimeter of the site adjacent to Stoneridge Drive and El Charro Road; clarify the future master plan and shared parking arrangement between the sites; reduce lighting levels during operating hours to a maximum of 30 foot candles; and include an after-hours lighting plan that reduces the lighting levels to a maximum of 10 foot candles. The Planning Commission's recommendations on the application will be forwarded to the City Council for review and final decision.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The approximately 3.6-acre project site (Lot 2) is currently vacant and is located at 2694 Stoneridge Drive at the northeast corner of Stoneridge Drive and Auto Mall Way, on the south side of the 36-acre Auto Mall site. Figure 1 shows the proposed revised master plan of the Auto Mall site at Staples Ranch with a temporary 244-space parking lot on Lot 3. The CarMax Auto Superstore is located on the western 20 acres of the Auto Mall site. The area owned by the project applicant is the 16 acres in the eastern portion of the Auto Mall site. The Chrysler dealership is in the north-central portion of the site and is bordered to the south by the subject site and to the east by the future dealership.

Figure 1: Auto Mall Site Plan



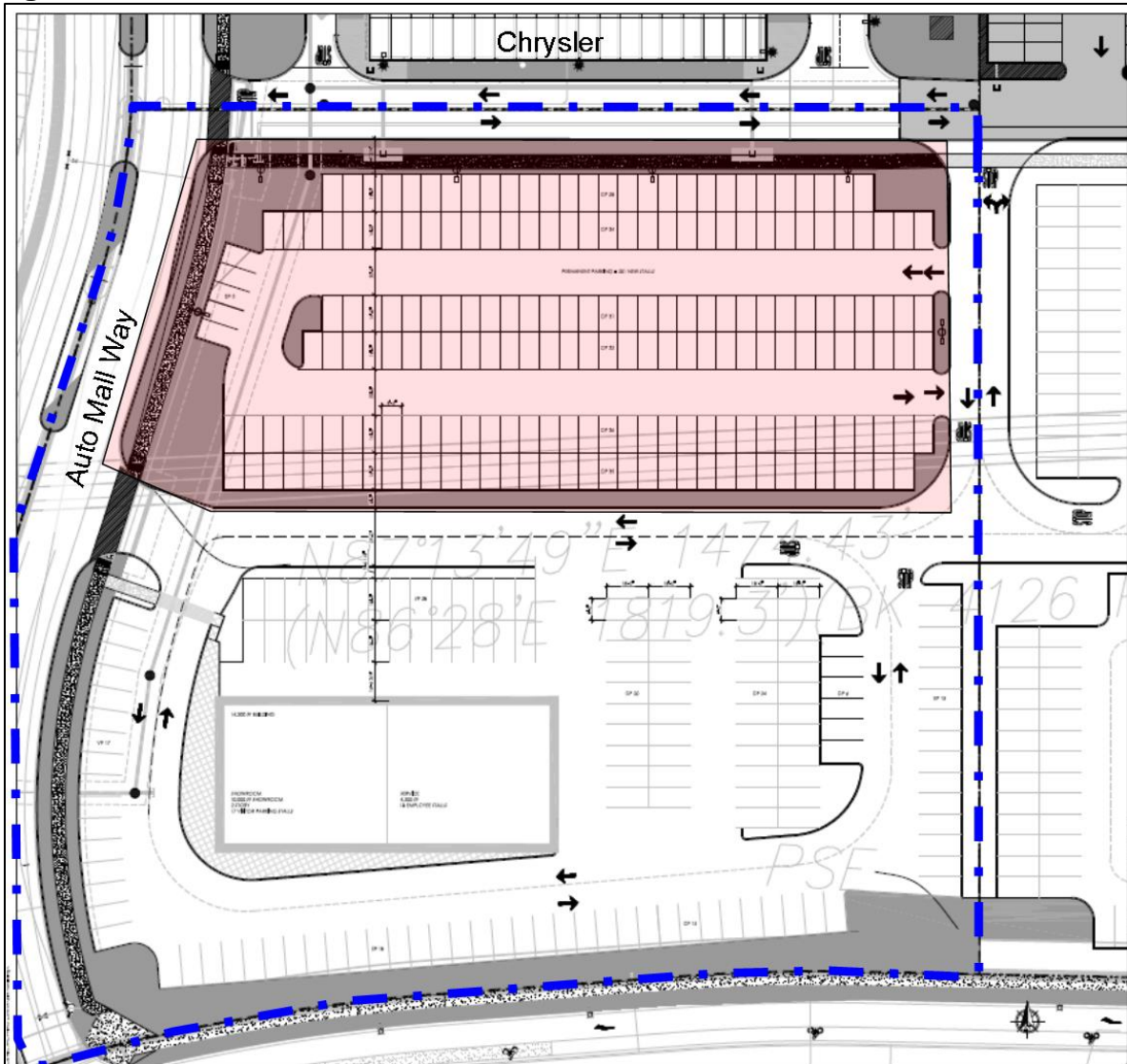
The subject parcel is vacant and relatively flat. Two driveways along Auto Mall Way currently provide access to the Chrysler dealership. No future access to any of the dealerships will be provided from Stoneridge Drive. No mature trees are located on the site.

PROJECT AND ANALYSIS

The applicant proposes to construct a 201-stall parking lot for display/inventory parking to be shared between Chrysler and the future automobile dealership on Lot 2. The new parking lot would be on the northern 1.25-acre portion of the subject parcel within the Auto Mall site highlighted in Figure 2 in red. All 201 parking spaces would be used by Chrysler until the future dealership is constructed on the subject parcel. Once the future dealership on the subject parcel is developed, the parking area would be shared between Chrysler (130 stalls) and the future

dealership (71 stalls). The future dealership would utilize the two rows on the south side of the parking lot and Chrysler would utilize the rest of the parking. The applicant's narrative indicates that, if the future Dealership #2 requires additional parking, the applicant would strive to provide such parking. Such parking could be provided via shared parking agreements with Chrysler, modifying the boundaries of Dealership #3, or other means. The project characteristics are described below; project plans are included as Exhibit B.

Figure 2: Site Plan



Site Layout & Access

The applicant currently owns the entire 16-acre site, comprising three separate parcels, and operates the Chrysler dealership immediately to the north of the subject parcel. There are no immediate plans to develop the remainder of the subject parcel beyond the proposed parking lot improvements. The applicant has provided a revised conceptual master plan that encompasses the entire 16-acre site to ensure that the on-site circulation system, including fire truck access, areas for unloading of vehicles, and other related items, are designed comprehensively in a way that is acceptable to the City.

The 16-acre project site is accessed from Stoneridge Drive via Auto Mall Way, which is shared with CarMax Auto Superstore. The entry drive contains two lanes to enter the project site and three lanes for exiting. The access drive continues further north and ends at a T-intersection where incoming visitors make a right turn into the Chrysler site. One additional access point is proposed from Auto Mall Way into the subject parcel once the future dealership is developed. Chrysler is currently utilizing a temporary gravel parking lot to the east of its current dealership for employee/inventory parking as shown in Figure 1. Once the proposed parking lot is constructed, the applicant will remove the temporary gravel lot and move inventory parking to the subject parcel. Until Dealership #2 is developed, the proposed parking lot would only be accessed from the Chrysler parcel. The parking lot would be used strictly for vehicle inventory and display and would not be accessed by the public unless on foot. The parking lot would be visible from Stoneridge Drive until the landscaping to the south of the lot matures and the future dealership is developed. The dimensions of the proposed parking stalls within the display and service areas are 8 feet 6 inches wide by 16 feet deep, and 20-foot drive aisles would be provided. Tandem parking is proposed for some of the spaces, consistent with City approvals granted to other dealerships in order to maximize the amount of inventory parking. The proposed lot meets Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department requirements.

Landscaping

A conceptual landscaping plan has been submitted illustrating the proposed parking lot landscaping. New landscaping would be installed along the new parking lot frontage behind the sidewalk as well as along the southern parking lot perimeter planter and within parking end-cap landscape planters. Proposed tree species for the parking lot landscaping include: flowering pear and coast live oak (all are proposed to be 24-inch box size). Staff has included a condition of approval to increase the size of the proposed trees to 36-inch box to address screening concerns discussed at the Workshop. A variety of shrubs and ground cover is proposed in the planters and bio-retention areas. The proposed landscaping plan has been designed to be consistent with landscaping associated with the existing Chrysler dealership.

Landscaping along the street frontages of El Charro Road, Stoneridge Drive, and Auto Mall Way was installed with the development of the Chrysler parcel. Exhibit D shows the approved landscape plan for these street frontages. The landscape plan included shrub plantings of dwarf xylosma only in a small area along Stoneridge Drive as shown in Figure 3. The landscape plan for the remainder of the perimeter included only low-lying ground cover on the interior side of the sidewalk. The applicant has agreed to continue the planting of these shrubs around the remainder of the perimeter where no shrubs were previously required. The applicant has also agreed to enhance the landscaping along the corners of El Charro Road and Stoneridge Drive as well as Stoneridge Drive and Auto Mall Way. A condition of approval would require this additional, enhanced landscaping. In addition, the project narrative indicates that the applicant has hired a new landscape maintenance firm which has inventoried the existing landscaping along the perimeter of the street frontages of El Charro Road, Stoneridge Drive, and Auto Mall Way and has begun to replace all dead and dying plants. The applicant has also agreed to review the existing irrigation system and watering schedule and adjust it accordingly to make sure that all future plants are adequately watered and maintained.

Figure 3: Existing Landscape Along Stoneridge Drive



Lighting

The proposed lighting for the proposed parking lot has been designed to be consistent with the lighting currently on the Chrysler site and is included within the project plans. No lighting is currently proposed for the vacant remainder of the site. Pole-mounted lighting at a height of 25 feet above finished grade is proposed in the parking lot area, consistent with the 25-foot maximum height allowed by the Specific Plan. The plans have been revised to reduce the lighting in the “designated display areas” to a maximum foot candle level of 30 during operating hours. In addition, a separate plan for lighting levels during non-operational hours has been submitted that reduces lighting within the display areas to a maximum of 10 foot candles.

Grading, Drainage, and Storm Water Runoff

As mentioned previously, the site is relatively flat, and the proposed parking lot would not substantially change the existing topography. An “existing conditions” plan is included as part of Exhibit B as Sheet C01, and a preliminary grading and drainage plan are included on Sheet C2. The preliminary stormwater management plan included as part of Exhibit B (Sheet C4) indicates that several best-management practices are proposed for purposes of storm water quality control. Bio-retention planters are proposed in the parking area and along the north and west boundaries of the property.

The City Engineering Division has reviewed the preliminary grading and drainage plan and finds it to be generally acceptable. A condition of approval requires the project to meet the requirements of the current Municipal Regional Stormwater National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit.

Dealership Operations

The Chrysler dealership includes an approximately 31,792-square-foot building with a 2,175-square-foot service canopy and 1,250-square-foot car wash with 46 visitor stalls, 248 display stalls, 55 service vehicle stalls, and 36 employee stalls for a total of 385 stalls. In addition, Chrysler is currently utilizing 244 temporary stalls on the eastern parcel. Once the new parking lot is complete, Chrysler will move all cars from the temporary lot and utilize the 201 new stalls until the development of the future dealership, at which time the parking will be shared and Chrysler's parking will be reduced to 130 stalls within the lot, for a total of 515 stalls.

The project proposal indicates that the future dealership on the subject site is planned to be approximately 14,200 square feet, which would include a 10,000-square-foot two-story showroom/office and a 4,200-square-foot service department. The site would include a total of 199 parking spaces including: 17 visitor stalls, 164 display/service stalls, and 18 employee stalls. The future dealership on Lot 3 could include a dealership up to 60,000 square feet with approximately 600 parking spaces. All future dealership buildings and site improvements would require future approval through the PUD Development Plan process (Planning Commission and City Council review).

ALTERNATIVES

The applicant seeks to expand his business by constructing a new parking lot to store additional vehicle inventory that would be shared in the future with a new dealership. Staff believes that the site design is consistent with the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch. There are also other dealerships within the City with similar inventory lots. However, other alternatives could include:

1. The Planning Commission could deny the PUD application, and the property owner would have to find off-site storage for vehicle inventory.
2. The applicant could revise his application to convert the existing temporary lot into a permanent lot.

Alternative 1 would limit the applicant's ability to store vehicles on-site and could potentially impact overall vehicle sales, with effects on the City's sales tax base. In addition, requiring the applicant to store more vehicles offsite would generate more vehicle trips, traffic congestion, and associated noise and air quality impacts compared to the proposed project. Alternative 2 would require the applicant to move the current inventory off-site during construction of the permanent facility, generating additional vehicle trips and associated impacts. In addition, the current configuration of the temporary lot is not consistent with the overall master plan for the site and would create circulation patterns that are not ideal for the site. The proposed design conforms to the requirements and intent of the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch and underlying zoning district and is compatible with the surrounding uses and area. Therefore, staff believes the proposed development is appropriate for the site.

PROS/CONS

PROS	CONS
Project would increase the viability of the Chrysler Dealership, potentially allowing for an increase in sales.	Because the future dealership is unknown, the design of the new parking lot may limit the future viability of the site.
Project could increase sales tax revenue for the City.	The potential inventory parking for a dealership on Lot 2 is reduced, although future modifications may change the ultimate site configuration.
Project is consistent with existing zoning regulations and Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch.	

PUD CONSIDERATIONS

The Zoning Ordinance of the Municipal Code sets forth purposes of the Planned Unit Development District and considerations to be addressed in reviewing a PUD development plan; these purposes and considerations are discussed in this section.

1. Whether the plan is in the best interests of the public health, safety, and general welfare:

The proposed project, as conditioned, meets all applicable City standards concerning public health, safety, and welfare. The subject development would include the installation of all required on-site drainage and utilities with connections to municipal systems in order to serve the new development. The proposed development is compatible with the General Plan, Specific Plan, and zoning designations for the site, and, with enhanced landscaping as required by conditions of approval, would be consistent with the existing character of the area. In addition, the project would include the on-site pre-treatment of stormwater runoff in vegetative swales before discharge into the City’s storm drain system, protecting water quality.

Therefore, staff believes that the proposed PUD development plan is in the best interests of the public health, safety, and general welfare, and that this finding can be made.

2. Whether the plan is consistent with the City's General Plan and any applicable specific plan:

The site’s General Plan Land Use Designations of “Retail/Highway/Service Commercial/Business and Professional Offices, Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, and Parks and Recreation” allow for a varied mix of uses within the Specific Plan area. Development of the proposed project will further the implementation of the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch, as approved by the City Council on August 24, 2010. The Specific Plan anticipates up to 331,000 square feet of auto dealerships, as well as related inventory, car servicing, car renting, and wash facilities on the subject property within the Auto Mall. As conditioned, the project would adhere to the design parameters of the Specific Plan.

Staff concludes that the proposed development plan is consistent with the City’s General Plan and the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch, and staff believes that this finding can be made.

3. Whether the plan is compatible with previously developed properties in the vicinity and the natural, topographic features of the site:

The project site is currently vacant and is flat. CarMax Auto Superstores and Chrysler have been developed on sites to the west and north, respectively; the Stoneridge Creek Continuing Life Communities project has recently been completed farther to the west; and the Pacific Pearl commercial/retail center is under construction to the south. The property directly to the east has been designated for an additional auto dealership. The Specific Plan allows the site to be developed with an auto dealership and related improvements such as vehicle parking. The project has been designed to include landscaping to help screen the new lot as well as new light standards in accordance with the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch requirements. The proposed development will allow for Chrysler and the future development to be compatible with adjacent properties and nearby commercial development in both Pleasanton and Livermore.

Therefore, staff believes that this finding can be made.

4. Whether grading takes into account environmental characteristics and is designed in keeping with the best engineering practices to avoid erosion, slides, or flooding to have as minimal an effect upon the environment as possible:

The site is relatively flat with minimum changes in grades proposed. Erosion control and dust suppression measures will be documented in the building permit plans and will be administered by the City's Building Division. City building code requirements would ensure that the parking lot is constructed on properly-prepared surfaces. Stormwater runoff associated with the project would be treated and directed into the bio-retention planters before being released. The site is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone.

Therefore, staff believes that this finding can be made.

5. Whether streets and buildings have been designed and located to complement the natural terrain and landscape:

As mentioned previously, minimal changes to the natural terrain are proposed. Development of the site would not make major topographical changes to the site's existing flat terrain, and proposed perimeter landscaping would protect and enhance the aesthetic character of the existing street system.

Therefore, staff believes that this PUD finding can be made.

6. Whether adequate public safety measures have been incorporated into the design of the plan:

The improvements associated with this project would be consistent with City design standards. The existing driveway entrance is located and configured to provide adequate line-of-sight viewing distance and to facilitate efficient ingress/egress to and from the project site. Adequate access would be provided to the lot for police, fire, and other emergency vehicles. The site and parking lot would be required to meet the requirements of the Uniform Building Code, Fire Code, and other applicable City codes.

Therefore, staff believes that this finding can be made.

7. Whether the plan conforms to the purposes of the PUD District:

The proposed PUD development plan conforms to the purposes of the PUD district. The primary purpose of the PUD district is to allow flexibility in the development of projects that the City determines are in its best interest. Staff believes that the proposed project is designed to reflect its site and location and implements a key component of the Specific Plan approved by City Council on August 24, 2010. The project is also consistent with the General Plan. Moreover, input from nearby property owners, residents, and tenants has been sought and obtained through a Planning Commission workshop; further opportunity for public comment will occur at the Planning Commission and City Council hearings.

Therefore, staff believes that this finding can be made.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this application was sent to surrounding property owners, residents, and tenants within 1,000 feet of the site as shown in Exhibit E. At the time of the report publication, Staff received no comments or concerns. Any public comments received after publication of this report will be forwarded to the Commission.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

On August 24, 2010, the City Council certified an SEIR and adopted Findings and a Statement of Overriding Considerations for the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch. The SEIR was a supplement to the EIR prepared for the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch Project, which was certified on February 24, 2009. The square footage and number of parking spaces associated with the currently-proposed auto dealership development falls within the development envelope assumed in the EIR and SEIR and therefore would not be expected to result in additional environmental impacts beyond those identified in the previously-certified environmental documentation. The SEIR included mitigation measures that must be addressed prior to issuance of a building permit for a project. The applicable mitigation measures have been included in the draft conditions of approval for this project.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

The subject proposal is intended to allow for additional vehicle inventory and display space on-site to better serve potential consumers. The site is zoned for auto dealerships and related uses and the project has been designed with sensitivity to adjacent uses. The project would replace existing landscaping in poor condition while adding more landscaping to the site perimeter, providing a more attractive appearance that is compatible with surrounding development and buildings, and meets all applicable requirements of the Pleasanton Municipal Code and Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch.

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