



Planning Commission Staff Report

February 13, 2008
Item 5.b.

SUBJECT: PCUP-209

APPLICANT: AT&T Services

PROPERTY OWNERS: Pacific Bell

PURPOSE: Application for a conditional use permit to allow AT&T Services to establish an operation center for AT&T Project LightSpeed on the former Pacific Bell Telephone/AT&T Services, Inc. site

GENERAL PLAN: Public and Institutional

ZONING: P (Public and Institutional) District

LOCATION: 4400 Black Avenue

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location Map
2. Exhibit A: Floor Plan, Site Plan, and Written Narrative dated "Received December 19, 2007"
3. Exhibit B: Draft Conditions of Approval
4. UP:71-12
5. PMC 18.56.030 and .040, Permitted and Conditionally Permitted Uses

BACKGROUND

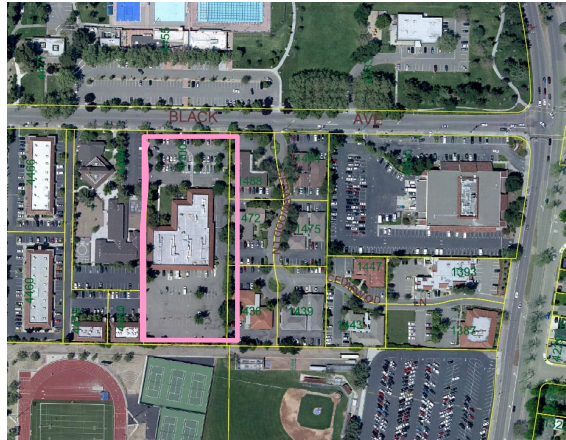
The AT&T has been operating at the project site since 1971 as a directory assistance center under the approval of UP-71-12, formerly processed for Pacific Bell operations. Over the years, operator call centers have become obsolete given newer technology, thus leaving this site mostly vacant.

The 1971 use permit specifically conditioned the site to be used exclusively as a directory assistance center. Therefore, the applicant is requesting a new conditional use permit to allow various operations to be conducted at this location as described within Exhibit "A", Narrative. This item is before the Planning Commission because a conditional use permit is required per the Pleasanton Municipal Code (PMC) for public utility- storage buildings and service yards and

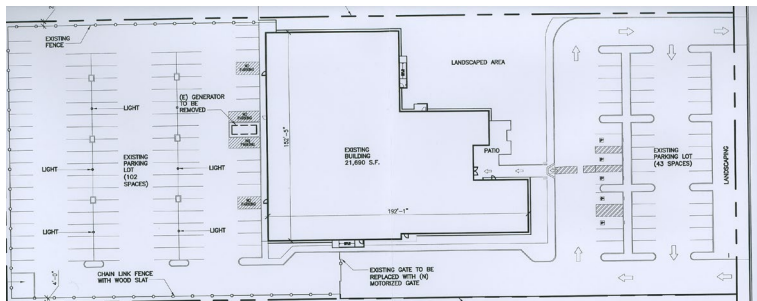
for any other public or quasi-public use which the planning commission determines is similar in nature to those listed PMC 18.56.040 and which will not be detrimental to the proper development and maintenance of surrounding land uses.

SITE DESCRIPTION

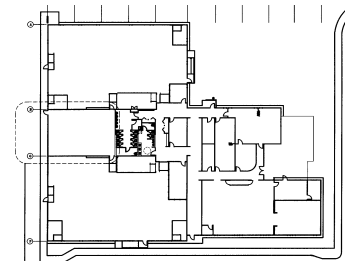
The subject site is an approximately 39,648 square-foot parcel located to the west of the Santa Rita Road and Black Avenue intersection. The site is zoned P (Public and Institutional).



Properties adjacent to the site are the Quarry Lane School to the west, the Amador Medical Park to the east, the Amador Valley High School to the south, and the Dolores Bengtson Aquatic Center to the north. This site contains one building; totaling approximately 21,690 square feet. There is one vehicle entrance and a separate vehicle exit to the site from the Black Avenue (refer to the right side of the site plan below).



Site Plan



Floor Plan

The site is mostly screened from public view by lush landscaping and a substantial building setback from the street, approximately 150 feet.



There are 145 parking spaces surrounding the perimeter of the building (43 spaces in the front and 102 spaces in the rear of the building).



Front Parking Lot



Rear Parking Lot

The site contains existing fencing. Parts of the existing fencing are in disrepair, staff discusses the existing fence conditions and the proposal for new fencing in the “Project Description” portion of this staff report below.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Business Operations

AT&T is currently upgrading their equipment network under the name of *AT&T Project LightSpeed*, and is proposing to utilize the existing building for administrative offices and related support services.

There will be approximately 54 service technicians, 3 managers, and approximately 10 administrative support personnel.

Service technicians will arrive at the site each morning to access the company vehicles (57 small pickup trucks/standard sized cars and a forklift) and be dispatched to various locations throughout the City. Service technicians are dispatched between 6:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and return between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Administrative hours of operation are 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. with two shifts of personnel being scheduled per day. The company vehicles stay on-site when not in use.

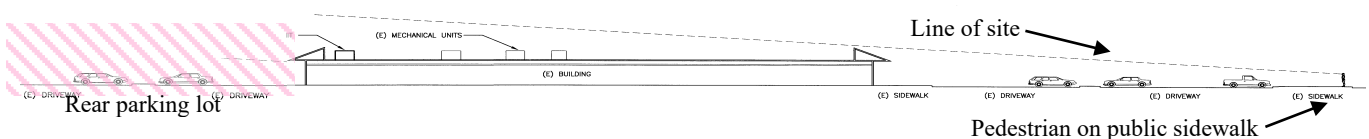
The site will also be used for limited storage of equipment inside of the building. The equipment to be stored includes clean high tech equipment such as routers, cables/wires on small reels, connectors, and hand held testing instruments, IC boards, documents/manuals, small hand held tools, etc. There is no outdoor storage being proposed with this application.

Additionally, there will be no vehicle repair or maintenance done on-site and there is no public access or public contact offered by this facility.

There will be approximately 54 service technicians, 3 managers, and approximately 10 administrative support personnel.

The new use of the facility and the storage of company vehicles require upgraded fencing for security proposes. The applicant is proposing to replace the existing manual locking gate with a motorized gate closure. The applicant has stated in their written narrative that they will accommodate fire access requirements. Additionally, the existing fencing along the east and south property lines are in disrepair. The applicant is proposing to replace this fencing with new chain link fencing with wood slats. Staff may be able to support this fencing design if the adjacent neighbors are in agreement to have the existing style of fencing replaces with chain link with wood slats. Staff has added a condition of approval requiring new fencing to obtain review and approval by the Planning Director. The new fencing is also required to not impact any of the existing trees along the east property line and that special care is given to work done in the area of the existing tree at the south east corner of the property. The applicant will be required to evaluate the health of the trees and potentially bond for a period of one year.

Visibility of the company vehicle parking is limited due to the location of the parking at the rear of the lot, existing landscaping, the building setback, the access gate, and the site layout. As shown in the illustration below, a pedestrian on the public sidewalk would not be able to see the vehicles parked in the rear of the lot.



ANALYSIS

Conditional uses are uses that, by their nature, require individual review to ensure that impacts associated with their use will be minimal. Conditional use permits may be subject to appropriate conditions to ensure that any potential adverse impacts associated with the use will be mitigated. The following is staff's analysis of the proposed company vehicle parking, equipment storage, and office use and their impacts, if any.

Land Use

The Land Use Element of the General Plan designates the subject property as "Public and Institutional". The subject site is zoned P (Public and Institutional) where the Municipal Code specifies the uses that are permitted or conditionally permitted for this site. If the requested use permit were granted, the new approval would supersede the 1971 use permit approval. No additional rezoning or other land use modification to the property is necessary to allow the proposed use at this time.

Other uses in the area are office, recreational, and educational. Staff believes that the proposed use would be similar to these uses and therefore compatible with existing uses in the area. One of the primary concerns in reviewing a conditional use permit application is the effect of the proposed use on surrounding uses. In the past, the Planning Commission has approved similar uses. Staff is not aware of land use issues associated with any of those businesses.

Parking

A total of 145 parking spaces are available on the subject site. The Pleasanton Municipal Code requires public and private business and administrative offices, and technical services offices to provide one space for each three hundred (300) square feet of gross floor area. With the existing building size of 21,690 square feet, the 145 existing parking spaces exceed the required 73 parking spaces.

Based on the parking requirement standards (73 parking spaces), the number of immediate on-site parking spaces (145), the nature of this type of facility, the calculated parking demands (57 company vehicles and 67 personnel vehicles to total 124 spaces needed). Staff believes adequate parking is provided in that the facility is not open to the public.

On-site Circulation

Staff feels that because of the direct access from Black Avenue, the layout of the parking lot, the staggered scheduling, and the hours of operation, circulation should not be a problem.

Circulation

Staff feels that because of the limited number of vehicles entering and exiting the site each day, the amount of time they are there, the hours of operation, the scheduled deployment of company

vehicles, and circular ingress/egress pattern of the parking lot, circulation should not be a problem.

Noise

The Pleasanton Municipal Code also states that a proposed conditional use must be in accord with the objectives of the Zoning Ordinance. One of those objectives is to “promote the stability of existing land uses that conform with the General Plan and to protect them from inharmonious influences and harmful intrusions.” As proposed, staff believes that noise or traffic from the site would not negatively impact future or existing uses located adjacent to the subject site. The site is not providing contact with the general public, further limiting noise and traffic impacts from and to surrounding properties. Therefore, based on the proposal, staff considers the use to be a quiet use as the office functions that boarder this site to the east and quieter then the educational and recreational uses that boarder this site to the north, south, and west.

Therefore, staff does not believe that the proposed use would be disruptive to existing, or future, neighboring businesses.

Tenant Improvements

The applicant is anticipating only minor internal modifications, replacement fencing, and the removal of an exterior generator. Because the interior improvement plans have not been fully development at this point staff has conditioned the project to obtain all required city permits prior to beginning work. All tenant improvements are subject to the review and approval of the Building and Safety Division and the Fire Department. There are no changes to the exterior of the building at this time; changes to the exterior of the building shall not be made without prior approval from the Planning Department. The removal of the generator is considered an exterior modification to the site and does require staff level design review from the Planning Department and a demolition permit from the Building and Safety Division. Staff does see the removal of the generator as an improvement to the site and will result in a decrease in the noise level currently being emitted from the site.

The City recently adopted the 2008 building and fire codes which may or may not impact the tenant improvements for this site. Staff has placed a condition of approval requiring conformity to all codes; building and fire. Staff encourages the applicant to initialize discussions with these departments at the earliest opportunity.

Signage

The applicant is not requesting additional signage for this location and is not anticipating any such requests in the future. If signage modifications or additions are needed in the future, the applicant will need to secure approval for signage under a separate application subject to review and approval by the Planning Department.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this application was sent to all property owners and occupants within 1,000 feet of the subject property. At the time this report was prepared, staff had not received any comments or concerns.

FINDINGS

The Planning Commission needs to make the following findings prior to granting the conditional use permit for the proposed business:

1. The proposed location of the conditional use is in accordance with the objectives of the zoning ordinance and the purpose of the district in which the site is located.

Objectives of the Zoning Ordinance include: fostering a harmonious, convenient, workable relationship among land uses; protecting existing land use from inharmonious influences and harmful intrusions; and insuring that public and private lands ultimately are used for the purposes which are most appropriate and beneficial to the City as a whole. The proposed operation center for AT&T Project LightSpeed would provide vital technical support to the local maintenance of this utility upgraded system. The City has allowed similar uses to be located in office, industrial, Public and Institutional, and commercial areas. Staff is not aware that any of these operation centers has created any impacts on surrounding businesses. As conditioned, staff believes that the proposed use would be consistent with these objectives.

The subject site is zoned P (Public and Institutional) District, where a mix of office, educational and recreational service uses surrounds it. Based on the proposal, staff considers the operation center to be as quiet or quieter than the surrounding uses. Staff does not feel that the proposed operation center would be disruptive to the neighboring businesses/tenants. As proposed there would be 67 employees and no on-site public contact. For these reasons, staff does not believe that the use would create parking or circulation impacts.

For the reasons stated above, and as conditioned, staff believes that this finding can be made.

2. The proposed location of the conditional use and the conditions under which it would be operated or maintained will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity.

Staff believes that the use, as conditioned, would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity. The applicant would be required to receive all Building and Safety Division permits for any future tenant improvements and for the demolition of the existing generator. All storage would be located inside the building; activities would not take place outside of the structure. Thus, staff does not believe that the proposed use would be disruptive to other businesses/tenants in the area.

For the reasons stated above, and as conditioned, staff believes this finding can be made.

3. The proposed conditional use will comply with each of the applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

Chapter 18.124 of the Municipal Code states that, because of their unusual characteristics, conditional uses require special consideration so that they may be located properly with respect to their effects on surrounding properties. Per PMC 18.56.040, the P zoning of the subject site conditionally permits the establishment of “Public utility and public service facilities”, if it is found that are necessary for the public health, safety, and welfare and the establishment of “Public or quasi-public uses which the Planning Commission determines is similar in nature to those listed in PMC 18.56.030 and .040.

Staff feels that the recommended conditions of approval will help to integrate the proposed use without detrimentally affecting the surrounding properties and the City in general. As with any use permit, this use can be suspended or revoked if the conditions are not met. As conditioned, the operation center would comply with all applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. Additionally, staff feels that AT&T Project LightSpeed is necessary for public welfare and the AT&T use of the site is similar to other public operations centers/public utility and service facilities within the City.

For the reasons stated above, and as conditioned, staff believes this finding can be made.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Existing facilities consisting of the operation, permitting, licensing, or minor alteration of structures involving no expansion of use beyond that existing are categorically exempt (Section 15301, Class 1 (E)(2)(A)) from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project is in an area where all services and facilities are available and consistent with the General Plan. Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

CONCLUSION

Staff believes that the required use permit findings for the project can be met if the project is approved as conditioned. Conditions of approval have been included which will ensure that the safety and general welfare of the surrounding area is maintained. Staff is of the opinion that the proposed operation center would be complementary to the existing businesses in the area. Staff believes that the business is providing a beneficial service to the community by providing technical support to a desired utility service upgrade.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Case PCUP-209 by taking the following actions:

1. Make the required conditional use permit findings as listed in the staff report; and
2. Approve PCUP-209 subject to the conditions listed in Exhibit B.

Staff Planner: Rosalind Rondash, Assistant Planner, 925.931.5607 or rrondash@ci.pleasanton.ca.us