



Planning Commission Staff Report

July 10, 2013
Item 5.a

SUBJECT: P13-1987/1988

APPLICANT: Amerco Real Estate Company

PROPERTY OWNERS: GRE Sunol Industrial LLC

PURPOSE: Applications for: (1) Modification to the approved Conditional Use Permit (PCUP-109) for Cor-O-Van Moving and Storage to accommodate a U-Haul moving, rental, and storage facility; and (2) Design Review approval to modify the site and building.

GENERAL PLAN: General and Limited Industrial

ZONING: "I-P" (Industrial Park) District

LOCATION: 5555 Sunol Boulevard

EXHIBITS:

- A-1. Draft Conditions of Approval - CUP
- A-2. Draft Conditions of Approval – Design Review
- B. Site Plan/Floor Plans, Elevations, Landscape Plan, Photometric Plan, Preliminary Grading & Drainage Plan, Carport Plan, Narrative dated "Received June 7, 2013", Preliminary Arborist Report dated "Received June 14, 2013"
- C. Aerial Photograph of Site
- D. Photographs of Site
- E. Corporate Information from U-Haul
- F. Location/Noticing Maps

BACKGROUND

The subject site was originally developed in the 1960s as a sales and distribution center for Harper and Row Publishers, Inc. Tenneco Chemicals and Hüls

America/Creanova, Inc. later occupied the site. In June 2004, Cor-O-Van received conditional use permit approval to operate a moving and storage facility on the subject property. Cor-O-Van occupied the site from August 2005 through early-2012.

Cubix Construction Company, in August 2005, received approval to divide the lot into two parcels, and received conditional use and design review approval, to construct a self-storage facility on the newly-created parcel, sharing the site with Cor-O-Van. This project never materialized and the approvals have since expired.

Warehousing, not including the storage of fuel or flammable liquids, is a conditionally allowed use in the I-P Zoning District. The City's Municipal Code does not specifically address moving and storage businesses. Staff believes that a moving, rental and storage company is analogous to a warehouse use in terms of indoor and outdoor activities, potential traffic, parking demand, noise levels, tenant improvements, etc.; the Planning Commission and the City Council have upheld this determination by virtue of the previous conditional use permit actions on this property. While falling under the same land use classification, the current proposal includes new, though directly-related, functions, as well as site and architectural modifications. Therefore, the proposed moving, rental, and storage facility requires modification to the previously approved conditional use permit for Cor-O-Van and design review approval for the site and building changes. The Planning Commission has final authority to approve such applications unless its decision is appealed.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site contains approximately 8.38 acres on the westerly side of Sunol Boulevard. The existing, approximately 97,750-square-foot, primarily one-story building is currently vacant. Three driveways off Sunol Boulevard provide access to the site: the northerly driveway leads to a 58-space, paved parking lot, and the two southernmost driveways provide access to a three-bay loading dock facing Sunol Boulevard and a paved area at the rear of the property with another three-bay loading dock. The property has several trees within the area of the proposed development.

Adjacent Properties

Properties adjacent to the site include: single-family residences in the Canyon Oaks subdivision to the west, across the Alameda County Transportation Corridor (ACTC); Richert Lumber, Richert Lumber's Rock Yard (landscape supply), and Pleasanton Pool Center to the north; MBM Customized Foodservice Distribution and Berlogar Geotechnical Consultants to the south; and an office building (5510 Sunol Blvd.), vacant I-P zoned lot (5791 Sunol Blvd.), and an office/light industrial building (5600 Sunol Blvd.) to the east, on the opposite side of Sunol Boulevard.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Amerco Real Estate Company has requested conditional use permit and design review approvals to operate a self-storage facility to be named U-Haul of Pleasanton within the existing 97,750 sq. ft. industrial building. The rear parking lot and unused property would be redeveloped for use as covered recreational vehicle (RV) storage. The existing northernmost and southernmost driveways off Sunol Boulevard would continue to provide access to the facility. The center driveway would be eliminated and replaced with landscaping and a new internal drive would connect the two remaining driveways.

A total of 1,436 storage units would be located in the facility: The front, lower-profile building would contain 402 units on a single level; customers would use the loading docks facing Sunol Boulevard to access these units. The rear building would contain 1,034 storage units on three levels; customers would use the rear loading docks for access.

Storage units would be rented on a month-to-month basis by residential and commercial customers. No hazardous or flammable materials, food, or vehicles would be stored within the building. Hours of operation would be from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and Saturday, 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Friday, and from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays. All U-Haul customers would be issued a card-swipe style identification card, which must be used to gain access to their unit; use of the card would disarm the alarm particular to the customer's unit as well as activate the motion-activated lighting system. For an extra fee, customers could gain extended or 24-hour access.

The applicant proposes to add two new functions. First, rental trucks and trailers, primarily for use in residential moving, would be made available at this site. Vehicles would not be stored here, but would be shuttled in and out of the site to fulfill reservation requests. The awaiting vehicles would be parked in the area labeled "Proposed Shunting Area" on the site plan. This area, currently landscaped, would be surfaced with permeable pavers. A recommended condition of approval requires that final plans show that a minimum of five percent of the area of all parking areas be landscaped as required by the Municipal Code. Rental vehicles would also be washed at this location if they would be turned around immediately to another customer. A condition of approval requires that the car wash area shall be covered and drainage shall be through an oil/water separator to the sanitary sewer or collected in a holding tank for removal by a disposal and recycling service.

Secondly, recreational vehicle (RV) storage would be added at the rear of the property, using approximately 38,000 square feet of currently-paved parking area and 51,000 square feet of undeveloped land. "Carports" would be installed to provide covered

storage spaces for 85 recreational vehicles. The currently undeveloped area would be surfaced with a permeable aggregate surface to mitigate the need for additional storm water treatment. As currently proposed, the carports do not meet the required minimum setbacks of 25 feet from the rear property line and 20 feet from the sides; final plans shall indicate compliance with the required setbacks, which may cause the loss of a number of RV parking spaces. A recommended condition would require the carports to be painted consistent with the new building color palette and to be non-reflective to reduce any potential impact to the single-family residences to the west.

The existing structures would largely be unchanged. The most significant change would be the addition of a bank of windows along the entire street façade and a portion of the northerly-facing façade (see Exhibit B, Sheet EL – Elevations). Besides allowing additional natural light into a portion of the building, the fenestration provides architectural interest to the facades with the greatest public visibility. A portion of the street-facing, lower profile portion of the building would be painted using U-Haul’s two-color diamond motif; the remainder would retain its galvanized metal finish. The rear, higher-profile building would be cleaned and repainted its existing white color. The orange U-Haul “wave” would be mounted to a portion of the existing cornice of the forward, lower-profile building. The final color selections would be subject to review and approval of the Director of Community Development.

It appears that grading along the northerly edge of the property could require removal of thirty-two trees, eight of which are heritage trees. Forty trees, including 33 heritage trees would be preserved. A preliminary arborist report has been provided to the Planning Division, which includes tree preservation guidelines. The developer would contribute funds to the City’s Urban Forestry Program to compensate for removed trees. New trees would be added along the Sunol Boulevard frontage and along the rear property where fill-in trees are needed to maintain an adequate landscape screen along the Transportation Corridor.

ANALYSIS

General Plan and Zoning

The General Plan Land Use designation for the parcel is “General and Limited Industrial,” which includes warehouse/self-storage uses. The applicant proposes only minor changes to the structure of the building. Additionally, with three to five employees, and an a.m./p.m. trip generation of 0.15 trips/0.26 trips per 1,000 sq. ft., respectively, the proposed project would generate a small number of vehicle trips.

The site is zoned “Industrial Park (I-P).” The I-P zoning requires conditional use permit and design review approvals for the proposed moving, rental, and storage facility. This process enables the City to ensure that the proposed use and development would not

adversely affect surrounding uses in terms of noise, traffic, parking, lighting, aesthetics, or other objectionable influences.

Site Plan

There are no significant changes to the existing buildings, parking areas, or circulation patterns that would impact surrounding properties. The new recreational vehicle (RV) parking area is a low-activity use that should not further impact the residences to the east.

Traffic and Circulation

Access to the loading docks serving the self-storage units would be primarily provided by the existing southernmost driveway. The northernmost driveway would serve the retail/rental/service functions and the RV storage area. The new internal crossover driveway would allow customers to access multiple services without re-entering Sunol Boulevard.

The Cor-O-Van project generated an estimated 11 AM Peak Hour trips and 19 PM Peak Hour trips based on the trip generation rates for such a use in the City's 2003 Baseline Traffic Report and its impact was determined to be negligible. The City's Traffic Engineer has determined that the proposed project would provide no significant change to traffic impacts compared to the previous use and that a traffic report was not necessary.

Parking

Self-storage facilities do not generate a high parking demand, as users typically only visit the facility to load and unload items from their storage space. The proposed U-Haul facility would require a total of 18 parking spaces: 13 spaces (one for each 500 square feet of gross floor area) for the lower-level showroom/service/rental function, and five spaces (one for each employee on the maximum shift) for the warehouse function. Fifty-seven parking spaces are proposed, exclusive of the loading docks.

Eighteen (18) parking spaces are proposed directly in front of the showroom/service function. It is anticipated that customers would use these spaces to park their cars when arriving at the facility for the first time to inquire about renting a storage space, when paying for their storage space, arranging for vehicle rentals, or making retail purchases of moving supplies. Staff believes that the 18 parking spaces are adequate for this purpose. Once customers have rented a storage space they would thereafter drive into the facility, park at the existing loading docks, and gain access with their personal swipe-card. A total of six loading spaces would be available: three on the front end of the building facing Sunol Boulevard, and three at the rear of the building.

An additional parking lot, containing 32 parking spaces, is located at the midpoint of the property ahead of the access to the RV storage area. This parking lot would more than adequately handle the needs for as many as five employees, RV storage customers, and overflow parking during any peak periods.

Hours of Operation

Hours of operation, including the retail showroom and access to storage rooms and RVs, would be Monday through Thursday 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; Friday 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Saturday 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; and Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.. U-Haul also proposes to allow 24-hour access to the storage spaces, for an additional fee, to a limited number of customers. Its experience is that approximately three percent of its customers take advantage of the expanded accessibility, in this case, translating to 44 storage units. Staff finds the proposed hours to be acceptable, including 24-hour accessibility to a maximum of 50 storage units, and believes that they would not create any adverse impacts on the adjacent neighbors.

Noise

Likely noise sources from the proposed use would include: the loading and unloading of materials to be stored by customers; employees and customers driving on the site; the maneuvering of RVs and rental vehicles, and property maintenance activities such as leaf blowing, mowing lawns, etc. However, staff believes that noise levels will not change substantially from those currently experienced in the area. Staff notes that the storage unit doors are inside the building, minimizing noise impacts. Trash facilities are located within the building and wheeled out for collection. Furthermore, the facility would be open when background noise levels are generally higher and noise generated by the users of the facility would be harder to detect and/or annoy neighbors. Overall, staff believes that it is unlikely that these noises would significantly impact the nearby residences or adjacent tenants. Staff has included a “standard” use permit condition of approval on the project that allows the City to review the project again to add mitigating conditions should any future complaints regarding noise levels occur.

Construction Hours

Short-term construction noise would also be generated during construction of the improvements to this site. Staff has recommended that construction activities for the site be subject to the City’s standard construction hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

Drainage

Parking lots and drive aisles must drain into shallow, turf-lined biofilter swales or a bioretention pond that would filter contaminants from the storm water before entering the arroyos and, ultimately, the bay. These are the types of storm water runoff measure strongly supported by the Regional Water Quality Control Board and local agencies like Pleasanton implementing the urban clean water runoff program. As the proposed plans indicate changes to surface paving and landscape areas, final development plans will be required to indicate how the required storm water filtration will be accomplished. The need for such filtration will be mitigated by the proposed use of new permeable surfaces at the “shunting” area and the RV storage area.

Building Design

The building has varying degrees of visibility from Sunol Boulevard to the east and from the adjacent residences and Valley Avenue/Junipero Street to the west and northwest. The project proponent intends to clean up the building, add windows, and apply paint and decorative features to identify the building with the U-Haul brand. These elevations would have additional architectural treatment, described earlier, to add interest and make the building more attractive. Staff is satisfied with the design of the building.

Signage

While the plans indicate the intent to install wall signs, the sign package is incomplete at this time and is not included in this application. A monument sign exists at the front of the property and it is likely that the applicant will want to reuse it. Approval of a Sign Design Review application will be required prior to the installation of any signs.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of the proposed project was sent to the surrounding property owners and residents within 1,000 ft. of the site. As of the writing of the staff report, staff had not received any written or verbal comments pertaining to the proposal.

FINDINGS

Conditional uses are those uses which, by their nature, require special consideration so that they may be located properly with respect to the objectives of the Municipal Code and with respect to their effects on surrounding uses and properties. In order to achieve these purposes, the Planning Commission is empowered to approve, conditionally approve, or deny applications for use permits. The Commission needs to

make the following findings prior to the granting of a use permit for the moving, rental, and storage facility:

A. That 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.

Some of the objectives of the zoning ordinance are to: foster a harmonious, convenient, workable relationship among land uses, protect existing land uses from inharmonious influences and harmful intrusions, and to insure that public and private lands ultimately are used for the purposes which are most appropriate and beneficial to the City as a whole. The subject site is zoned I-P (Industrial Park) District. One purpose of the Industrial Park District is to provide locations for uses that can operate in close proximity to commercial and residential uses with minimum mutual adverse impact. As conditioned, staff believes the proposed moving, rental, and storage facility use would be consistent with the zoning ordinance objectives and Industrial Park District purpose in that it would provide a beneficial service to the community and would be conducted so as to not impact or interfere with the surrounding uses. The applicant will also be required to mitigate any future nuisances that may occur as a result of the proposed use. Therefore, staff believes this finding can be made.

B. That 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.

As conditioned, staff believes that the proposed use will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare, nor will it pose a threat to surrounding properties or improvements. All streets around the site are designed per City standards to provide safe ingress and egress into and out of the site and the traffic generated by the use will not significantly impact the adjacent streets or intersections. In addition, the proposed use will have adequate off-street parking to meet project demand. Conditions limiting noisy activities would mitigate potential impacts on the adjacent neighbors. Conditions have also been included that would require the applicant to mitigate any future nuisances as a result of the proposed use. In summary, staff believes this finding can be made.

C. That the proposed conditional use will comply with each of the applicable provisions of the zoning ordinance.

The I-P zoning of the subject site allows the establishment of a storage/warehouse operation with a conditional use permit. In addition, the

proposed use complies with all relevant sections of the zoning ordinance. Granting a conditional use permit to the applicant would be consistent with the City's ability to regulate zoning as listed in the Municipal Code Chapter 18.124. Therefore, staff believes that the third finding can be made.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Projects of this nature are categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) of the CEQA Guidelines. Therefore, no environmental documentation accompanies this report.

CONCLUSION

Staff believes that the proposed moving, rental, and storage facility use, as conditioned, will be compatible with the surrounding properties and is appropriate for the site. Self-storage facilities are also one of the lowest trip-generating land uses. The storage buildings include architectural enhancements, where needed, to add interest and make the building more attractive. Additionally, since there is not a self-storage facility currently located in the south part of the City, the proposed facility would provide a convenient storage location in close proximity to homes and businesses in south Pleasanton. Based on these and other attributes described in this staff report, staff believes that the proposed project would be a good development for this location.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Make the Conditional Use Permit Findings as listed in the staff report; and
2. Approve Cases P13-1987 and P13-1988, subject to the conditions listed in Attachments "A-1" & "A-2."

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