



Item No: 2
Meeting Date. July 24, 2012

To: Planning Commission
Date: July 12, 2012
Authorized By: Stephen Scott,
Acting Chief of Planning
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**Subject: PA 12-033, Sleep Train Loading Zone SPAR
487 S. El Camino Real (APN: 034-144-220)**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission approve the project by making the following motions:

- A. Approve the Categorical Exemption from environmental guidelines, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Class 1 Section 15301 (c) Existing Facilities - streets, based upon the Findings for Approval in Exhibit A; and
- B. Approve the Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR) for the designation of a dual-use loading zone/public parking on a public street based upon the Findings for Approval in Exhibit A and subject to the Conditions of Approval in Exhibit B.

BACKGROUND

On 11/28/2011, the applicant submitted a building permit application to change the use of a tenant space at the above private property. The space was formerly occupied by East West Bank and is currently proposed to be a retail use for Sleep Train Mattress Centers. The proposed change in land use category is subject to current zoning code requirements including the requirement to provide one loading berth and bicycle parking.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The applicant is proposing to locate in the office building at the northeast corner of S. El Camino Real and E. Fifth Ave. The building is part of the Central Park Plaza and while customers of the Plaza may utilize the adjacent parking lot, there are no loading zones within the private property. It is important to note that the lane through the middle of the block is an Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA) lane and is not appropriate for use as a loading zone.

The office building is located on a 17,240 square feet parcel which is generally bounded by S. El Camino Real to the west, commercial uses to the north and east, and Central Park to the south. (Vicinity Map, Attachment 1). The General Plan land use designation for the project site is Downtown Retail Core. The Zoning Classification is Central Business District (CBD).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As mentioned above, the proposed change in use from financial office to retail is subject to current zoning code requirements including the requirement to provide one loading berth and bicycle parking. San Mateo Municipal Code (SMMC 27.64.390) requires one 10 ft by 25 ft loading zone for retail stores with gross floor area between 5,000 – 12,000 square feet and bicycle parking (2 short-term, 1 long-term). The applicant has approached the adjacent property owner with regard to potentially locating the loading zone on the adjacent surface parking lot. However, a deal could not be reached due to the property owner's concern that a long term lease would encumber the property and limit its potential for redevelopment.

SMMC 27.64.390 enables the applicant to apply for a SPAR to request on-street loading zone. With this planning application, the applicant is seeking approval for a dual-use loading zone/public parking on E. Fifth Avenue (Plans, Attachment 2).

DISCUSSION/ISSUES

The San Mateo Municipal Code (SMMC 27.64.390) enables approval of a SPAR for on-street loading zone based on finding that the following conditions apply:

1. Adequate on-street parking is available along the parcel frontage to accommodate a loading vehicle;
2. On-street parking intended for temporary loading purposes is located at least 50 ft from any intersections, and provides convenient access to building entrances; and
3. The street width is adequate to accommodate loading vehicles without impeding use of the sidewalk or local traffic circulation or otherwise be detrimental to public safety.

Location

The metered parking spaces on the north side of E. Fifth Avenue are generally used by visitors to downtown businesses or Central Park. Two metered spaces are required in order to meet the 25 ft length requirement for a loading zone and provide adequate room for maneuvering (Plans, Attachment 2). The applicant worked with Planning and Public Works staff in selecting the location based on the following considerations:

1. Limit queuing in the lanes onto El Camino by locating the loading zone at least 50 ft from the intersection.
2. Wider curb to curb distance on E. Fifth Avenue.
3. Distance from entrance to Sleep Train tenant space.
4. Unlikely ability to obtain Caltrain approval to locate a loading zone on El Camino since it is a state highway and would remove a travel lane.

5. Recorded agreement between property owners for use of adjacent private parking lot for businesses in Central Park Plaza.

Additionally, Planning and Public Works staff conducted field observations over a period of two weeks during the month of March. On those occasions, no vehicles were parked in the two metered parking spaces before 11 am (Field Observation Notes, Attachment 3). Visitors to Central Park or the Central Park Plaza were observed to park in the metered spaces near the pedestrian crossing rather than the ends of E. Fifth Avenue. The majority of visitors to Central Park Plaza utilized the private parking lot.

Hours & Loss of Meter Revenue

The applicant is proposing a dual-use loading zone. The loading operation would occur between 6 am – 10 am and would return to public parking from 10 am and thereafter. The applicant is required to enter into a Parking Agreement to ensure annual compensation to the Downtown Parking Fund for the loss of metered revenue. Based on current meter rates, loss revenue is estimated to be \$2.00 per day for both spaces. Please refer to Exhibit B for Conditions of Approval that address the hours and compensation issues.

No other discretionary approval is requested and the applicant is working with City staff in Building, Fire, Police, and Public Works to meet applicable code requirements for the building permit application to change the use from office to retail.

BUDGET IMPACT

The applicant will be required to enter into a Parking Agreement to compensate the Downtown Parking Fund for the loss of meter revenue on an annual basis until such time as the use vacates the premises (Conditions of Approval, Exhibit B). There are no anticipated impacts to the General Fund.

EXHIBITS

- A. Findings for Approval
- B. Conditions of Approval

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Project Plans
3. Field Observation Notes

CC:

Interested Parties