

Department of Regional Planning Department Statement

Board of Supervisors Meeting: April 16, 2024

Hearing on the appeal of Project No. PRJ2022-000029-(2), Conditional Use Permit No. RPPL2022000061, to authorize the continued use, operation, and maintenance of an outdoor vehicle storage yard with the accessory sale of used and salvaged vehicles on a 9.77-acre parcel located at 8423 South Alameda Street in the M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing) Zone within the Metro Planning Area, applied for by Dana Sayles.

The item is an appeal of the Regional Planning Commission's (Commission) decision to approve a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) authorizing the continued use, operation, and maintenance of an outdoor vehicle storage yard with the accessory sale of used and salvaged vehicles (Project). The Commission approved the CUP on October 25, 2023. The Project applicant, Copart (Appellant), appealed five conditions of Project approval on November 7, 2023.

The Project includes paving vehicle storage areas with an asphalt surface, relocating and restriping the vehicle parking area to increase the total vehicle parking space count from 16 spaces to 60 spaces, and site improvements to bring the Project Site into compliance with County Code Title 22 provisions regarding outdoor storage. 12,288 square feet of landscaping and 129 trees with a permanent irrigation system will be installed along the perimeter of the Project Site. The existing perimeter fencing will be replaced with new ten-foot-tall corrugated galvanized steel walls and gates.

The Project is consistent with County General Plan Land Use Policy LU 5.2 and Economic Development Policy ED 2.7, which encourage a diversity of commercial, retail services, and public facilities at various scales to meet regional and local needs and which incentivize economic development and growth along existing transportation corridors and in urbanized areas. The Project is located along an existing urbanized transportation corridor and its continued operation will promote the diversification of commercial and retail services in the community and will allow the business to meet local and regional needs for more affordable automobiles and auto parts. The Project Site has been occupied by auto-oriented uses since the 1970's and is a thriving remnant of the historical industrial sector in the community. In addition, the approval of the Project will provide local employment opportunities and incentivize

economic development and growth in a manner that benefits the safety and wellbeing of the community, compared to haphazard growth that worsens land use incompatibilities.

The Project is consistent with General Plan Land Use Policy LU 7.1 and Economic Development Policy ED 2.2, which prioritize reducing and mitigating the impacts of incompatible land uses by using buffering and a variety of design techniques to facilitate compatibility between industrial and non-industrial uses. The Project is in the M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing) Zone, where the outdoor vehicle storage yard is permitted with the approval of a CUP. However, the surrounding areas west, northwest, and southwest of the Project Site are primarily in the R-3 (Limited Density Multiple Residence) Zone and are occupied by single-family and multiple-family residences. The siting of an industrial zone in proximity to a residential zone, or in proximity to sensitive land uses in general, is not an encouraged planning practice and would not occur per current standards, but the existing land use and the surrounding residences are a result of historical land use patterns originally intended to provide workforce housing in proximity to large industries located along the Alameda Corridor.

The Project's conditions of approval will require compliance with County Code Title 22, which will assist in mitigating operational and visual impacts on the nearby residences and the larger community. The Appellant will be required to install a five-foot-wide landscaping and tree buffer along the street-facing perimeters of the Project Site. The Appellant will also be required to install new ten-foot-tall steel walls that will be of a uniform material, design, finish, and neutral color. These improvements to the Project's image will increase the curb appeal of the business and surrounding land uses.

By allowing this outdoor vehicle storage yard to continue operating, the County demonstrates its support of industrial commerce and local employment opportunities, provided that the property owner and the business operator are good neighbors and conduct their business in a responsible manner. To ensure that the Project's conditions of approval are met and maintained, LA County Planning Zoning Enforcement staff will conduct biannual site inspections for the duration of the CUP grant term of 10 years (a total of 20 site inspections), and the Appellant will be required to post permanent signs near the business' pedestrian entrance (facing Alameda Street) and on the rear wall visible to the adjacent residences (facing Lou Dillon Avenue) with contact information for the site manager and for LA County Planning Zoning Enforcement staff so the community can report potential complaints.

The Commission found the Project qualifies for Categorical Exemptions Class 1 – Existing Facilities and Class 3 - New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures under the California Environmental Quality Act and the County environmental guidelines. The Project involves an existing establishment and does not include any expansion to its current site and operations.

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The required site modifications are cosmetic improvements and fall well within the building parameters of the Class 3 Categorical Exemption. The Project does not qualify for an exception to an exemption per Section 15300.2 of the California Code of Regulations because it is not located in an environmentally sensitive area, does not contain scenic or historic resources, and there are no unusual circumstances that would indicate a reasonable possibility that the Project could have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, there are no exceptions to the proposed exemptions and the exemptions still apply to the Project. Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors deny the appeal and uphold the Commission's approval of the Project.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Amy Bodek', followed by a horizontal line.

AMY J. BODEK, AICP
Director of Regional Planning

AJB:DJD:MG:CN:lm

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