



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

August 6, 2026
Agenda Item No. 4

SUBJECT: Fletcher Jones Parking Lot (PA2023-0220)
▪ Conditional Use Permit

SITE LOCATION: 20052 Birch Street

APPLICANT: Austin Hahn, Allegro Civil Engineers

OWNER: Jones Bristol Parcel, LLC

PLANNER: Jerry Arregui, Assistant Planner
949-644-3249, jarregui@newportbeachca.gov

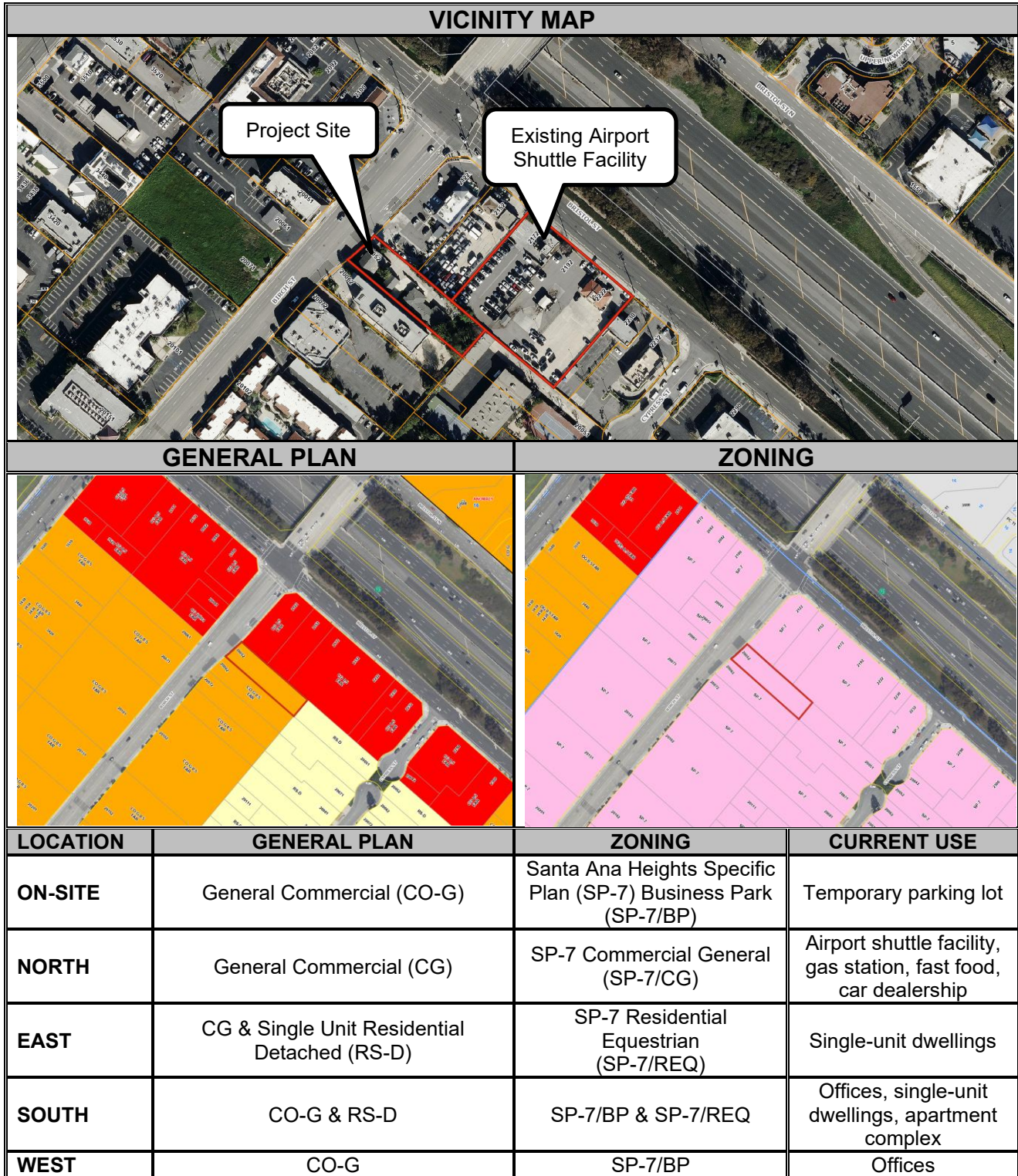
PROJECT SUMMARY

A request for a conditional use permit (CUP) to convert a temporary parking lot into a permanent 39-space parking lot that will function as an extension of the adjacent airport shuttle facility operated by Fletcher Jones Motorcars. The lot will serve as overflow parking to shuttle customers, improve onsite circulation and it will include concrete pavement, a driveway approach, an access gate, striping, site walls, light fixtures, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and landscape buffers. The parking lot will operate between the hours of 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday, consistent with the existing airport shuttle facility hours. Access to the parking lot will be limited to Fletcher Jones employees and it will not be open to the public. The existing CUP approved for the Fletcher Jones airport shuttle facility (PA2022-128) will not be affected by the project.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Conduct a public hearing;
- 2) Find this project exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15311 under Class 11 (Accessory Structures) of the CEQA Guidelines, because it has no potential to have a significant effect on the environment, and the exceptions to this exemption under Section 15300.2 do not apply; and
- 3) Adopt Resolution No. PC2026-024 approving the Conditional Use Permit filed as PA2023-0220 (Attachment No. PC 1).

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INTRODUCTION

Project Setting and Background

The property is located at 20052 Birch Street within the Santa Ana Heights neighborhood near the intersection of Birch Street and Bristol Street (Project Site). The Project Site is approximately 1,100 feet south of John Wayne Airport (JWA) and 400 feet south of State Highway 73. This portion of the Santa Ana Heights area was originally developed under the jurisdiction of the County of Orange (County) and was annexed into the City in 2003. Properties along Birch Street are primarily developed with multi-tenant professional and medical office buildings; however, there are also nonconforming residential uses, including an apartment complex and several single-unit dwellings to the south of the Project Site. The Project Site is adjacent to a single-unit residential neighborhood to the rear along Cypress Street. The abutting property to the rear, however, is developed with a storage building and private recreational amenities.

The Project Site is rectangular, flat, and consists of approximately 18,041 square feet. Vehicular access is provided from Birch Street. It was historically developed with three nonconforming residential dwelling units; however, the units were demolished in March 2026.¹

Existing Airport Shuttle Facility

Fletcher Jones Motorcars (Fletcher Jones) currently operates an airport shuttle facility on the adjacent property to the north, addressed as 2172, 2192, and 2222 Bristol Street (Shuttle Facility). The Shuttle Facility provides Fletcher Jones preferred customers with vehicle parking and shuttle service to and from JWA. The Shuttle Facility has operated for over 20 years since it was originally authorized by the County in 2002. Historically, the shuttle's path of travel has been to exit onto Bristol Street, a one-way street, and travel east, turn left at Jamboree Road, and head back towards JWA along North Bristol Street. The shuttle has always been prohibited from traveling on residential streets.

In 2020, Fletcher Jones purchased the former Enterprise Rent-a-Car properties (2192 and 2222 Bristol Street) to expand the Shuttle Facility. On February 23, 2023, the Planning Commission approved a CUP and Lot Merger (PA2022-128), authorizing the merging of three lots and expansion of the Shuttle Facility. The CUP also authorized the construction of a new, private carwash with detailing bays and authorized the shuttle service to operate between the hours of 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday. The Shuttle Facility expansion is currently under construction at this location.

On May 24, 2023, the Planning Commission approved a CUP (PA2023-0172) authorizing Fletcher Jones to relocate the Shuttle Facility to 20071 Birch Street. That approval was not

¹ The nonconforming residential units were demolished pursuant to Building Permit Nos. U2025-0470 and U2025-0520 through U2025-0522, in conformance with the Housing Crisis Act of 2019.

exercised and subsequently superseded by PA2025-0220, which proposed a new medical building.

Temporary Parking Lot

In anticipation of the Shuttle Facility's redevelopment, Fletcher Jones purchased the Project Site to provide additional area for parking and construction material staging. On December 11, 2025, the City's Zoning Administrator approved the Limited Term Permit (LTP) filed as PA2025-0141, authorizing a temporary parking lot and material staging use, as shown in Figure 1 below. The LTP authorizes these temporary uses from January 26, 2026, through January 26, 2027, allowing the Shuttle Facility to remain in operation during construction.



Figure 1: Photos of Temporary Parking Lot from Interior of Lot (Top) and the Birch Street Frontage (Bottom)

Project Description

The Applicant proposes converting the temporary parking lot and materials staging area into a permanent, 39-space, parking lot that will operate as an extension of the existing Shuttle Facility. As shown in Figure 2 below, the Project Site will provide overflow parking for the Shuttle Facility as well as direct northbound access to JWA, avoiding the one-way travel eastbound on Bristol Street.

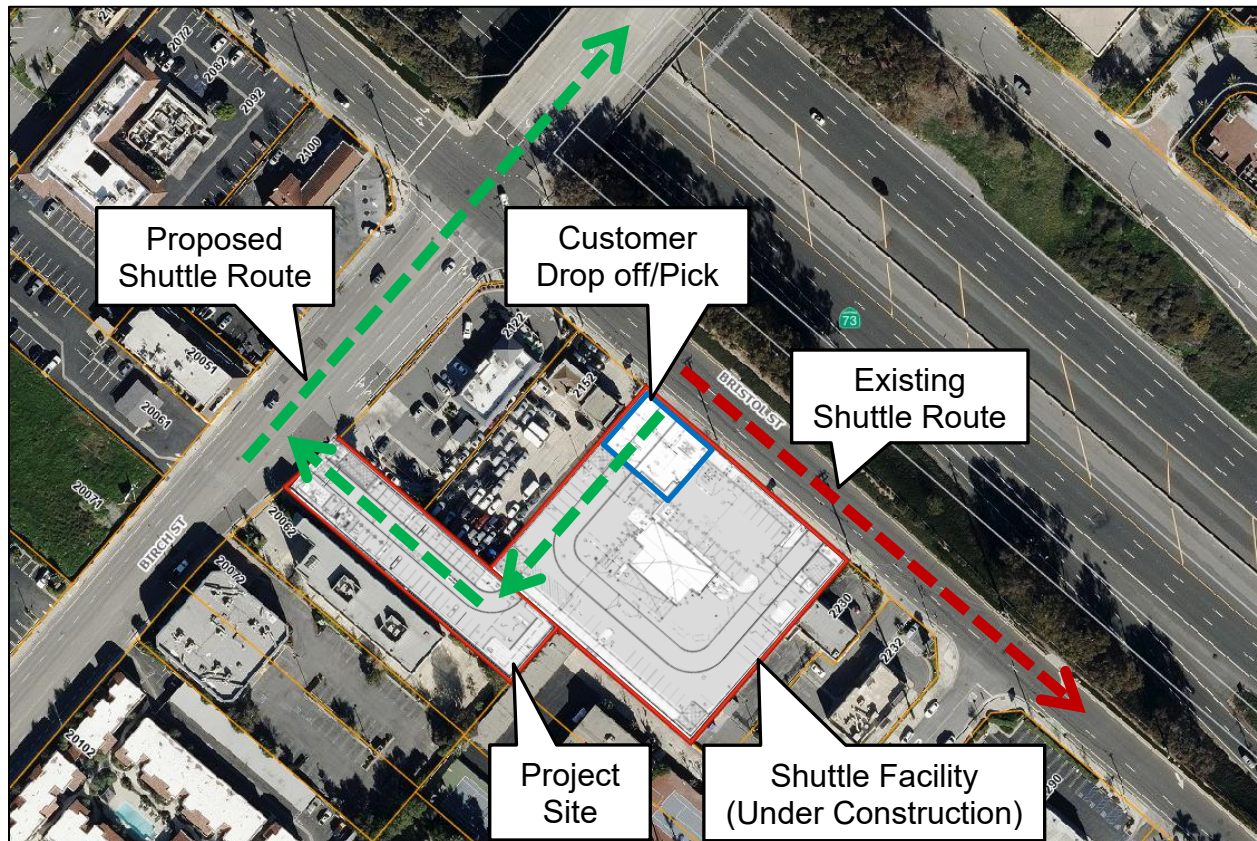


Figure 2: Aerial View of Fletcher Jones Airport Shuttle Facility and Proposed Parking Lot

Consistent with the existing CUP, customers will continue to access the Shuttle Facility using Bristol Street, where they will temporarily park in the designated customer drop-off/pick-up area and check in. Customers will then be transported via shuttle to JWA. Fletcher Jones employees will park customer vehicles in either the Shuttle Facility parking lot or the Project Site.

The shuttle also provides a return service, and vehicles will be ready for customer pick-up upon arrival. Customers will not have access to the Project Site and will continue to enter and exit the Shuttle Facility using Bristol Street. The Project Site will operate between the hours of 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday, consistent with the Shuttle Facility, consistent with the approved Shuttle Facility hours and the approved temporary parking lot hours. The customer experience will remain the same.

As illustrated in Figure 3 below, the parking lot includes a commercial driveway approach, a 6-foot tall wrought iron access gate along Birch Street, 6-foot-tall concrete site walls, six 18-foot-tall light standards, vehicle charging stations, and perimeter landscape buffers.

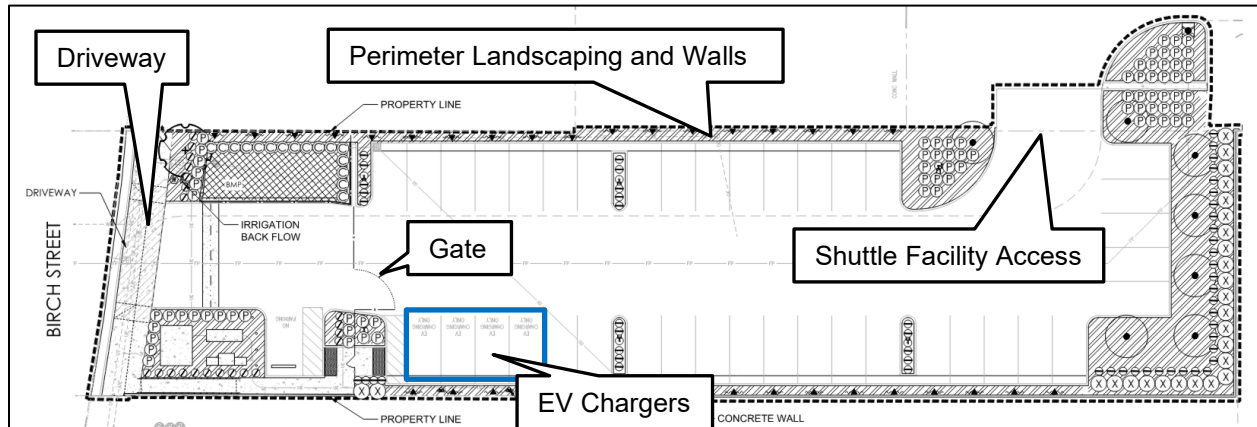


Figure 3: Parking Lot Site Plan

Collectively, the parking lot improvements and operating characteristics are referred to as the "Project." The Applicant's project description and project plans are available as Attachment Nos. PC 2 and PC 3, respectively.

DISCUSSION

Analysis

General Plan Consistency

The Project Site is categorized as General Commercial Office (CO-G) by the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The CO-G category is intended to provide areas appropriate for the development of administrative, professional, and medical offices with limited accessory retail and service uses. Hotels, motels, and convalescent hospitals are explicitly prohibited. The Project is consistent with the CO-G categorization because the parking lot will be used as an extension of the existing authorized Shuttle Facility, a commercial use that provides transportation services for City residents and Fletcher Jones customers in the region.

While not an exhaustive list, the Project is in furtherance of the following General Plan policies for the implementation of new uses:

- **Land Use Element Policy LU-3.4 (Buffering Residential Areas).** *Require buffers between non-residential and residential areas to minimize potential impacts using landscaping, decorative walls, and other features.*

To soften the transition between the Project Site and the single-unit residential properties to the rear along Cypress Street, the Project includes a 6-foot-tall block wall and a 17-foot rear landscape buffer.

- **Land Use Element Policy LU-7.5 (Parking Location).** Locate open parking lots away from streets with screening such as landscaping and architectural walls.

The Project includes an approximately 50-foot-wide landscape buffer along the front property line abutting Birch Street and a 6-foot wrought iron gate which serve to visually screen the parking lot from Birch Street.

- **Land Use Element Policy LU-17.4 (Community-Serving Uses).** Support community-serving commercial uses that help create a balance of land uses and increase resident access to make Newport Beach a self-sustaining community with essential resources.

The Project will support the continued operation of the Shuttle Facility, which provides residents with convenient and essential transportation to and from JWA.

- **Safety Element Policy S-9.1 (Land Use Compatibility).** Participate in the planning process for projects related to the Airport, including any future updates to its Airport Environs Land Use Plan (AELUP). Continue to ensure new development land use intensity and compatibility align with the most currently available AELUP for the Airport to minimize potential safety impacts on residents.

The Project is located within Safety Zone 3 (Inner Turning Zone) of the AELUP, which is an area where aircraft are typically turning when departing or arriving. The AELUP prohibits buildings with more than three habitable floors and recommends avoiding moderate and high intensity non-residential uses such as major shopping centers, theaters and meeting halls within Safety Zone 3. The Project is for a surface parking lot and does not include any buildings. It is not classified as a moderate or high intensity use and is consistent with the AELUP.

A full General Plan consistency analysis is in the draft resolution provided as Attachment No. PC 1.

Santa Ana Heights Specific Plan and Zoning Code Consistency

The Project Site is located within the Santa Ana Heights Specific Plan (SP-7) Business Park (SP-7/BP) Zoning District. Section 20.90.120 (Business Park District: SP-7[BP]) of the NBMC neither permits nor prohibits parking lot uses; however, it authorizes the Planning Commission to review uses not otherwise addressed and to allow such uses if found to be consistent with the purpose and intent of the SP-7/BP Zoning District through approval of a CUP.

The SP-7/BP Zoning District is intended for professional and administrative offices, commercial uses, specific uses related to product development, and limited light industrial uses. The Project is to redevelop a property previously developed with nonconforming residential uses into a parking lot associated with the Shuttle Facility. Several properties along Birch Street have similarly been redeveloped from nonconforming residential uses into multi-story medical and professional office buildings that range in size from 10,000 to 33,000 square feet, providing between 40 and 130 space surface parking lots. The Project's parking lot is within the smaller range of parking lots serving properties on Birch Street. The Project will continue the ongoing transformation of Birch Street into a non-residential, business park area by establishing a parking lot use that is compatible with the surrounding development and consistent with the purpose and intent of the SP-7/BP Zoning District.

The Project complies with the applicable site development standards including, but not limited to, landscape setbacks as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Development Standards

Development Standard	Standard	Proposed
Landscape Setbacks (min.)		
Front (Birch Street)	10 feet	50 feet
Side (north)	3 feet	3 feet
Side (south)	3 feet	3 feet
Rear (south east)	10 feet	17 feet
Parking	0 spaces	39 spaces
Lot Coverage	40 %	Not Applicable
Floor Area Ratio	0.5	Not Applicable
Height (max.)	37 feet – Building	Not Applicable

The Project does not include any buildings; therefore, the development standards for floor area ratio (FAR), building setbacks, site coverage, minimum parking, building height, and solid waste storage are not applicable.

In addition to site development standards, Section 20.90.030 (Design Guidelines) of the NBMC establishes design guidelines for business park uses located in the SP-7 area. The Project does not include any buildings so many of the design guidelines are also not applicable. The Project landscape buffers comply with the design guidelines by including the required pallet of trees, shrubs, and ground cover, which soften the view of the parking lot from Birch Street. Additionally, the Project provides a 6-foot concrete masonry wall along the side and rear property lines, consistent with the design guidelines.

Conditional Use Permit Findings

In accordance with Section 20.52.020(F) (Conditional Use Permits and Minor Use Permits) of the NBMC, the Planning Commission must make the following findings to approve a CUP:

- 1. The use is consistent with the General Plan and any applicable specific plan;*
- 2. The use is allowed within the applicable zoning district and complies with all other applicable provisions of this Zoning Code and the Municipal Code;*
- 3. The design, location, size, and operating characteristics of the use are compatible with the allowed uses in the vicinity;*
- 4. The site is physically suitable in terms of design, location, shape, size, operating characteristics, and the provision of public and emergency vehicle (e.g., fire and medical) access and public services and utilities; and*
- 5. Operation of the use at the location proposed would not be detrimental to the harmonious and orderly growth of the City, nor endanger, jeopardize, or otherwise constitute a hazard to the public convenience, health, interest, safety, or general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the proposed use.*

Staff believes there are sufficient facts in support of the findings required to approve the CUP. These facts are discussed in detail in the attached draft resolution provided as Attachment No. PC 1 and the key facts in support of findings are summarized in the following paragraphs.

A temporary parking lot has existed on the Project Site since early 2026 and has operated successfully without incident or code enforcement complaints suggesting the site is both suitable and appropriate for continued use as a parking lot. The Project will support the continued operation of the Shuttle Facility and will provide a high-quality parking lot design that is adequately landscaped, ensuring it is compatible and sufficiently buffered from the surrounding business park and residential uses along Cypress Street.

The Project is not anticipated to generate any public inconveniences such as noise, light, odors, traffic, or other detrimental conditions. The Project includes conditions of approval to ensure that potential conflicts with surrounding land uses are minimized to the greatest extent possible, including limiting the parking lot for use by Shuttle Facility employees, prohibiting self-parking, prohibiting the parking lot from being used as an employee break or smoking area, requiring stored vehicles to be maintained in working order, allowing the Community Development Director to require the dimming of lighting, and requiring the hours of operation to be consistent with the Shuttle Facility. Additionally, in the event of a delayed evening flight, customer vehicles located on the Project Site shall be relocated to the Shuttle Facility pick up area prior to 10 p.m. to limit activity during later evening hours.

The Project has been reviewed by the City's Fire and Public Works Departments and Building Division, which have determined that the Project's design will provide adequate public and emergency vehicle access and that adequate public services and utilities are available to serve the Project Site. The Applicant is required to comply with all City ordinances, as well as the California Building Code to ensure the safety and welfare of employees that operate and access the parking lot.

While not a listed land use, staff believes the Project is consistent with the purpose and intent of the SP-7/BP Zoning District by redeveloping a property previously developed with a nonconforming residential use, into a parking lot associated with the Shuttle Facility which will continue to provide residents with convenient and essential transportation to and from JWA.

Although a CUP is a vested land use right that runs with the land, compliance with the conditions of approval is required, including Condition of Approval No. 10 that prohibits future use of the Project Site as an independent parking lot use. Therefore, the Project Site shall only be used in conjunction with the Shuttle Facility and separate use of the Project Site for self-parking or another use would require a new CUP.

Alternatives

Should the Planning Commission feel the facts are not in evidence of support for the Project, the following alternative actions are available:

1. The Planning Commission may require changes to the Project to alleviate any concerns related to the design or the ability to make the required findings. If the changes are substantial, the Planning Commission should continue the item to a future meeting to allow the Applicant to make the necessary adjustments and to allow staff to prepare a revised resolution incorporating new findings and/or conditions.
2. If the Planning Commission believes that there are insufficient facts to support the findings for approval, the Planning Commission may deny the application and provide facts in support of denial and allow staff to prepare a revised resolution for denial of the Project.

Environmental Review

This Project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15311 under Class 11 (Accessory Structures) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential to have a significant effect on the environment.

The Class 11 (Accessory Structures) exemption authorizes the construction or replacement of minor structures which are accessory and appurtenant to existing commercial, industrial or institutional facilities, including small parking lots. The Project is

for a small parking lot which is accessory and appurtenant to the Shuttle Facility and only includes minor structures including site walls, gates, lighting and electric vehicle charging stations. Therefore, the Class 11 exemption is applicable.

The exceptions to this categorical exemption under Section 15300.2 are not applicable. The Project Site does not impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern, does not result in cumulative impacts, does not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances, does not damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway, is not a hazardous waste site, and is not identified as a historical resource.

Public Notice

Notice of this hearing was published in the Daily Pilot, mailed to all residential occupants of property within 300 feet of the boundaries of the Project Site (excluding intervening rights-of-way) including the Applicant and posted on the Project Site at least 10 days before the scheduled meeting, consistent with the provisions of the NBMC. Additionally, the item appeared on the agenda for this meeting, which was posted at City Hall and on the City's website.

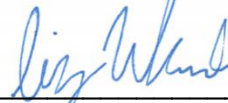
Prepared by:



Jerry Arregui
Assistant Planner

JP/ja

Submitted by:



Liz Westmoreland, AICP
Deputy Community Development Director

ATTACHMENTS

- PC 1 Draft Resolution with Findings and Conditions
- PC 2 Applicant's Project Description
- PC 3 Project Plans

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