

August 6, 2020

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach

California

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept Categorical Exemption CE18-156 and approve Conditional Use Permit CUP18-017 to establish a drive-through use within an existing, remodeled shopping center at 1320 Atlantic Avenue in the Community Automobile-Oriented District (CCA) zone. (District 6)

APPLICANT: Hany Malak for Black Equities Group, LTD
McKently Malak Architects
35 Hugus Alley, Suite 200
Pasadena, CA 91103
(Application No. 1806-24)

DISCUSSION

The site is located in the Community Automobile-Oriented District (CCA) zone and is currently improved with a 60,225-square-foot retail strip center set back from Atlantic Avenue with parking in front of the building. There are two (2) outlying pads at the southwest and northwest corners of the project (Exhibit A - Vicinity Map). Uses within the shopping center include Smart N Final, Poly Burgers, Atlantic Coin Laundry, and Babette Bakery. The site is bounded by New York Avenue to the north, Lime Avenue to the east, Anaheim Street to the south and Atlantic Avenue to the west. The table below identifies adjacent land uses.

Table 1: Adjacent Zoning and Land Uses

DIRECTION	ZONING	LAND USE
North	R-1-N	Assembly and Single-Family Residential
East	R-1-N and CCA	Single-Family Residential and Commercial
South	CHW and CCA	Vacant Building and Vacant Lot
West	SP-1-TN, CO and P	Auto Repair, Barber Shop, Pocket Park and Multi-Family Residential

On May 27, 2020, the Site Plan Review Committee approved a Site Plan Review for the exterior remodel of the in-line building and construction of new outlying pad buildings (Exhibit B - Site Plan Review Findings). Additionally, the proposed site improvements include an additional 16,737 sq. ft. of landscaped areas, including the installation of 68 new trees.



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Table 2: Proposed Changes to the Existing Structures On-Site.

SITE LOCATION	PROPOSED FLOOR AREA	PROPOSED CHANGES
Building #1	6,256 sq. ft.	New construction for potential food uses with outdoor patio/dining area
Building #2	26,000 sq. ft.	Existing building shall remain with major anchor tenant Smart N Final.
Building #3	20,125 sq. ft.	Demolition of 7,142 sq. ft. of building, proposed exterior remodel of remaining
Building #4	6,174 sq. ft.	New construction of a multi-tenant building with a vehicular drive-through and outdoor patio/dining area.
TOTAL FLOOR AREA	58,555 sq. ft.	

The proposed demolition of two existing buildings and construction of one new building results in a net decrease of 1,670 square feet in total building area. The existing parking area which serves both the in-line buildings and outlying pads has 239 parking stalls and is non-conforming, 280 spaces are required for the existing center. Exhibit C - Plans, shows that the parking area is proposed to be remodeled, adding more landscaped areas and tree wells, in addition to being restriped and reconfigured to accommodate 234 parking stalls. Although there is a decrease of five (5) spaces as shown in Table 3 below; there was a corresponding reduction in total building floor area which results in an overall improvement as the existing parking rate of the retail strip center is 3.9 spaces / 1,000 square feet of floor area and will increase to 4.0 spaces / 1,000 square feet of floor area. The Site Plan Review was supportive of this since it did not result in a net increase in parking demand based on building area.

Table 3: Parking Analysis

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT		PROPOSED PROJECT	
Current Floor Area	60,225 sq. ft.	Proposed Floor Area	58,555 sq. ft.
Existing Parking Stalls	239	Proposed Number of Parking Stalls	234
Current Rate	3.9 spaces / 1,000 sq. ft. of Floor area	Proposed Rate	4.0 spaces / 1,000 sq. ft. of Floor area

Project Description

The applicant is requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit to operate a vehicular drive-through lane at one of the new freestanding buildings. The purpose of a Conditional Use Permit is to facilitate individual review for certain types of land uses (based on the nature of the use). It is meant to determine whether the use proposed is compatible with the surrounding community or can be made compatible through the imposition of development conditions. In addition, there are general development standards which the project must satisfy. In 2019, the City adopted new special development standards for projects with drive-through lanes. However, the subject application was deemed complete prior to the adoption of the new standards making it exempt from the new standards which include: 1) as reduced hours within 150 feet of residential zones; 2) 500-foot minimum distance requirements to the nearest school

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or park; and 3) finding of sites suitability for more intensive uses to further the City's Economic Development Goals, and emission control standards. The proposed use must still be evaluated based on the general CUP finding and special development standard in place at the time it was deemed complete for ensuring compatibility with the adjacent uses. At the time that the application was deemed complete, Section 21.45.130 (Special Development Standards - Drive Thru Facilities) of the Long Beach Municipal Code required a minimum queuing distance of 150 feet to be provided from the forward most drive-up window to the entrance of the drive-through automobile queuing area. As designed, the drive-through for Building #4 measures approximately 297 linear feet, room for approximately fourteen (14) vehicles.

The outlying pad with the drive-through lane is located directly along the southwest quadrant of New York Street and Lime Avenue (northwest corner of the site) on a site that is also adjacent to Atlantic Avenue. The drive-through lane will wrap around the building and will not be actively visible from Atlantic Avenue. It has been designed to accommodate a high volume of vehicles so as not to cause parking lot circulation issues with pedestrians and vehicles. Furthermore, the drive-through lane will be screened from right-of-way view by landscape buffers along New York Street and Lime Avenue. This will serve to offset any visual impacts associated with the facility and the incorporation of enhanced landscaping, including tree plantings, have been provided in the right-of-way. The facility, as designed, will therefore not be detrimental to the surrounding community.

The Project's drive-through lane will not interrupt or intrude into a concentration of retail uses or impede pedestrian circulation between retail uses. The outlying pad with the drive-through lane is part of the existing commercial development which is proposed to be rehabilitated and upgraded. Pedestrian experience and circulation have been incorporated into the programming of the site which provides a pedestrian pathway connecting each building on the site.

The location of the ordering board speaker for the drive-through lane will be placed along the south side of the building, which is directly across from single family residences on the east side of Lime Avenue. Despite the proximity to the residential properties across the street, certain measures will be conditioned to provide mitigation from potential noise and light concerns. These measures include a block wall, landscaping and compliance with all applicable city noise ordinance regulations. With the additional noise-mitigating conditions and the distance of approximately 78 feet from the nearest residential structure, adverse impacts are not anticipated. Additionally, conditions of approval requiring light shields on new light standards and require signage oriented toward residential uses to automatically adjust to the ambient lighting conditions.

The site has a General Plan Land Use PlaceType designation of Transit-Oriented Development-Low (TOD-L). This PlaceType encourages mixed-use and commercial buildings, apartments, condominiums, and community-serving commercial uses. A mix of commercial uses is encouraged to meet consumers' daily needs for goods and services, including restaurants with outdoor dining, cafes, retail shops, grocery stores and other uses that support a pedestrian-friendly streetscape. While the proposed drive-through use does not specifically cater to transit users, the overall scope of the project and its improvements does address the intent of providing a mix of commercial uses that includes retail and restaurants with outdoor space. Pedestrian-friendly development is achieved with the use of clearly delineated walkways and several outdoor patio areas throughout the site. The project is expected to revitalize a site

surrounding area, provided the conditions of approval are met (Exhibit E - Conditions of Approval). Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the Findings of Fact and approve the Conditional Use Permit for the new drive-through use at 1320 Atlantic Avenue.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A total of 543 public hearing notices were distributed on July 20, 2020, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Long Beach Municipal Code. No public comments were received at the time the report was prepared.

This project was originally scheduled for a Planning Commission hearing in 2018. However, due to public opposition, the applicant requested an indefinite continuance to allow additional time for public outreach. The majority of the public opposition was related to objection of the imminent eviction of several tenants from the subject site as a result of the project. Other opposition was related to the objection of drive-through uses in conjunction with an outcry for more pedestrian-friendly uses/design in the area. In response to public opposition, and as a result of public outreach, the project applicant conducted informational meetings with the building tenants, and the proposed project now features only one drive-through lane, instead of two drive-through lanes as originally proposed.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, this project is exempt per Section 15301, Class 1 (Existing Facilities, subsections d and e.2.A & B and Section 15303, Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) Subsection c (Categorical Exemption CE18-156).

Respectfully submitted,



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PROJECT PLANNER



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PROJECT PLANNER



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Attachments:

- Exhibit A – Vicinity Map
- Exhibit B – Site Plan Review Findings
- Exhibit C – Plans
- Exhibit D – Findings of Fact

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Exhibit E – Conditions of Approval