

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

DATE: SEPTEMBER 28, 2005

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: GREG RAMIREZ, CITY MANAGER

BY: MIKE KAMINO, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: CONDUCT A PRE-SCREEN REVIEW TO CONSIDER A ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT REGARDING SELF-STORAGE FACILITIES (CASE NOS. 04-PSR-003 AND 05-PSR-003)

Two separate applicants are requesting direction from the City Council about expanding the existing zoning ordinance regarding self-storage facilities. Self-storage facilities typically consist of structures that have storage units within them that are available to rent for the storage of household goods. They also typically store recreational vehicles and boats outdoors or within the storage structures and usually have a 24-hour caretaker's residence. The purpose of this pre-screen review is to receive non-binding comments from the City Council and to help provide direction to the applicants as to whether they should proceed with the necessary legislative changes that would allow such use.

The City Council considered a pre-screen review for a similar request on February 23, 2005. At that time, Chris Chigaridas of Canwood Storage, LLC, sought direction on amending the zoning ordinance to allow a self-storage facility within the Freeway Corridor (FC) Overlay Zone on a 4.8 acre site located at 28661 Canwood Street, west of Derry Avenue. The City Council found the proposed use of a self-storage facility in that particular vicinity of the Business Park-Manufacturing (BP-M) Zone to be in keeping with the immediate area in relation to the existing surrounding light industrial uses and the scale of existing neighboring development. Also, the site is not prominently visible from the freeway and is convenient to the residential communities north of the freeway. The applicant has since filed for a Zoning Ordinance Amendment to allow the use in that vicinity. A draft ordinance will be prepared by staff for review by the Planning Commission prior to the City Council taking final action.

The current requests before the City Council for pre-screen review are by Gene Chan and Carl Hammond. Mr. Chan's pre-screen review request is to develop a self-storage facility south of the freeway on a 36,000 square foot parcel located at 28340 Roadside Drive, west of Lewis Road. The site is a vacant in-fill lot located adjacent to a recently constructed office building and is in the CRS-FC-OA (Commercial Retail Service – Freeway Corridor Overlay – Old Agoura Design Overlay) Zones. Concept plans show a 49,200 square foot,

four-story building with some ancillary retail sales and office space. The second pre-screen review request is from Carl Hammond who is proposing a 23,169 square foot, two-story self-storage building on a vacant parcel that is 25,172 square feet in size. Mr. Hammond's parcel is also located south of the freeway, between Lewis Road and Chesebro Road, at 28222 Dorothy Drive. The site was previously used for outdoor storage, but has since been cleared. Similar to Mr. Chan's property, this lot is located in the CRS-FC-OA Zones.

The zoning ordinance, as currently written, is quite restrictive regarding self-storage facilities. Specifically, the zoning ordinance allows for self-storage uses only in the BP-M and CRS zone, subject to a Conditional Use Permit, provided that they are conducted in an enclosed building and not located within 5,000 feet of another self-storage facility. Also, the Freeway Corridor (FC) Overlay Zone standards expressly prohibit self-storage facilities and yards. In order for either of these requests to move forward, a zoning ordinance amendment would be necessary to allow storage facilities and yards in the FC Overlay Zone, and to remove the criterion requiring a 5,000 foot separation between storage facilities.

There are currently two self-storage facilities in the city which are both considered non-conforming as they existed prior to the City's incorporation. Both sites are located in the FC Overlay Zone and are located less than 5,000 feet from each other. Conejo Valley U-Store-It is located on Agoura Road, east of Kanan Road in the CRS Zone, and the Agoura Self Storage is located on Agoura Road, west of Kanan Road, in the BP-M Zone. The attached exhibit shows the location of the two existing non-conforming self-storage facilities in the city, the proposed two self-storage sites, and the BP-M-FC and CRS--FC Zones.

In general, it appears that unlike the older, traditional self-storage facilities, many new ones are designed to be more compatible with the surrounding uses and greater architectural quality is incorporated into the development. Some storage facilities incorporate office buildings which further help blend with the surrounding uses. Also, the amount of traffic that would be generated from self storage facilities would be minimal and primarily on weekends. In addition, the development of self-storage facilities provides a service to City residents for storing household goods and possibly vehicles.

While there may be reasons to allow self-storage facilities in the CRS Zone, there are disadvantages. First, job creation and sales tax generation is minimal. Also, the large land area made available for self-storage use could consume the City's vacant land inventory which could be used for more productive uses. In addition, there could possibly be a change in the character of the commercial area.

When the City Council considered the pre-screen review request in February of 2005 for a self-storage facility on Canwood Street, it was acknowledged that the BP-M Zone is the most intensive zone in the city and that it allows for industrial-type uses such as wholesale distribution facilities, light manufacturing and assembly, and auto repair. Moreover, the proposed site on Canwood Street is on the north side of the freeway where it is closer and

more convenient to the residential areas and is less visible from the freeway. However, unlike that proposed self-storage use in the BP-M Zone, the current proposals call for self-storage facilities in the CRS Zone, which has a stated purpose defined in the zoning ordinance providing for general commercial, retail and service uses. The type of uses that typically exist in the CRS Zone are small professional offices, restaurants, stores and services and, therefore, it would be more difficult for a self-storage facility to blend with the fabric of a commercial retail-service environment. Properties and development in the CRS Zone are typically much smaller than those in the BP-M Zone and, therefore, a self-storage facility could appear out of scale with the area. Also, CRS zoned properties by nature of their intended uses are located along major traffic corridors and, thus, would be more visible and would have a greater impact on the surrounding character.

The property at 28340 Roadside Drive is adjacent to a recently completed office building. There are other office buildings, restaurants and retail uses in the immediate area and the site is prominently visible from the freeway. In order to provide a use that is more consistent with the character of the CRS Zone, the applicant is proposing to provide retail service uses within the storage facility that would include mail boxes and U.P.S. service, the sale of boxes, and photocopying and faxing services. The applicant has also provided the attached feasibility study of the proposed use for the City Council's review.

The site at 28222 Dorothy Drive is less visible from the freeway and will be further screened by future development on the north side of Dorothy Drive. Existing uses within the immediate area of the applicant's parcel include offices, a gasoline service station, a garden nursery, and supply yards. Thus, while the area could be considered more conducive for self-storage uses when compared to the Roadside Drive location, the site is, however, within a special commercial area of the Old Agoura Design Overlay Zone that is considered unique in character. The zoning ordinance recognizes this and expressly allows for a limited number of small retail and office uses to help maintain and promote the unique character of this special commercial area of Old Agoura. Self-storage facilities currently are not allowed within this area of Old Agoura. Thus, a zoning ordinance amendment to allow self-storage facilities in this area would require amending the Old Agoura Design Overlay development standards as well.

Staff is also seeking direction from the City Council on whether they would support amending the zoning ordinance to allow for redevelopment of the two existing, non-conforming storage facilities in the city. Staff has met with representative of both facilities and the property owners are open to redeveloping their sites to upgrade the self-storage buildings and include a separate retail or office component to their operations to be consistent with the Agoura Village development standards. This would require amending the non-conforming buildings and uses provisions of the zoning ordinance. The Agoura Village Specific Plan document, which is currently in draft form, would also need to address the changes in use.

Based on the above analysis, if the City Council finds it appropriate to consider expanding the zoning ordinance regarding self-storage facilities south of the freeway, staff recommends the following:

1. That self-storage facilities be limited to properties located in the CRS Zone, on Dorothy Drive, east of Lewis Road and not adjacent to the freeway.
2. That self-storage facilities be subject to development, design, and performance standards. These could include provisions such as maximum percentage of site devoted to outdoor storage, screening and landscape requirements, amount of lot coverage, types of items that may be stored, etc.
3. That self-storage facilities be subject to approval of a Conditional Use Permit. Additional development and operational features can be included in the Conditional Use Permit to further address neighborhood compatibility.
4. That existing self-storage facilities be allowed to redevelop the property with building upgrades and retail components, subject to required amendments and development standards to the zoning ordinance and the Agoura Village Specific Plan.

The applicant would be responsible for filing an application for any amendments to the zoning ordinance regarding self-storage facilities. The request would first be reviewed by the Planning Commission at a public hearing to formulate recommendations to the City Council. The City Council would then conduct another public hearing prior to taking final action. Actual development would be subject to Conditional Use Permit review by the Planning Commission.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff respectfully requests the City Council conduct a pre-screen review regarding a zoning ordinance amendment relative to self-storage facilities.

Attachments: Project Description and Feasibility Study from Gene Chan, Applicant
Letter from K. McMenamin-Torress
Vicinity Map