

REPORT TO THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE ISSUED: October 31, 2024
HEARING DATE: November 13, 2024 AGENDA ITEM: 6
PROJECT NUMBER: PRJ2019-001109-(2)
PERMIT NUMBER: Conditional Use Permit (“CUP”) RPPL2019002142
SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT: 2
PROJECT LOCATION: 9313-9323 Laurel Street, Florence-Firestone
OWNER: Antonio Gil
APPLICANT: Antonio Gil
CASE PLANNER: Elsa M. Rodriguez, Principal Planner
erodriguez@planning.lacounty.gov

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation is made prior to the public hearing and is subject to change based upon testimony and/or documentary evidence presented at the public hearing:

LA County Planning staff (“Staff”) recommends **APPROVAL** of Project Number PRJ2019-001109-(2), CUP Number RPPL2019002142, based on the Findings (Exhibit C – Findings) contained within this report and subject to the Draft Conditions of Approval (Exhibit D – Conditions of Approval).

Staff recommends the following motions:

CEQA:

I MOVE THAT THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING AND FIND THAT THE PROJECT IS CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT PURSUANT TO STATE AND LOCAL CEQA GUIDELINES.

ENTITLEMENT:

I MOVE THAT THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NUMBER RPPL2019002142 SUBJECT TO THE ATTACHED FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Entitlement(s) Requested

- A CUP to authorize the continued operation of an outdoor pallet yard in the M-1 (Light Manufacturing) Zone at 9313-9323 Laurel Street in Florence-Firestone (“Project Site”). The Project Site’s zoning was changed to SP (Specific Plan) in conjunction with the adoption of the Florence-Firestone Transit-Oriented District Specific Plan on February 7, 2023. Pursuant to County Code Section 22.246.020 (Applicability of Zone Changes and Ordinance Amendments), the applicant chose to have the complete CUP application be subject to the zoning and regulations in effect at the time it was submitted on April 4, 2019.

A CUP is required for outdoor businesses located within 250 feet of a Residential Zone or a sensitive use pursuant to County Code Section 22.324.070.C.4 (Florence-Firestone Community Standards District Zone Specific Development Standards) as it existed on April 4, 2019. The Florence-Firestone Community Standards District was repealed in conjunction with the adoption of the Florence-Firestone Transit-Oriented District Specific Plan on February 7, 2023. As noted above, the applicant chose to have the complete CUP application be subject to the zoning and regulations in effect at the time it was submitted on April 4, 2019.

B. Project

The Project Site is an existing outdoor pallet yard owned and operated by A and I Pallets. The business has operated in the community for 28 years. Although some pallets are manufactured and assembled onsite using hand tools, most of the yard is used solely for storage. The business’ primary location is across the street at 9405 South Alameda Street. Pallets are transported via a company owned flatbed truck from the outdoor pallet yard to the business’ primary location. No other trucks are used for loading and the outdoor pallet yard is not open to the public or any other visitors. Two employees manage the inventory onsite. The hours of operation are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Project Site includes surveillance cameras along the Laurel Street frontage.

The Project Site is located one block west of the Alameda Corridor, which is designated for industrial uses. However, the Project Site is located within 250 feet of a Residential Zone. Multifamily residential uses are located approximately 15 feet away from the Project Site because they are immediately across the alley to the west. A CUP is required for the outdoor pallet yard because it has outdoor operations.

The Project Site is 0.77 acres in size. Vehicles travel onto the Project Site in a one-way direction from Laurel Street via a 26-foot-wide driveway and a 24-foot-wide driveway and exit onto Laurel Street via a third 26-foot-wide driveway. The Project Site is paved and will include a new 280-square-foot modular office building with a bathroom. There are two existing metal storage buildings onsite (one is 1,876 square feet in size and the other is

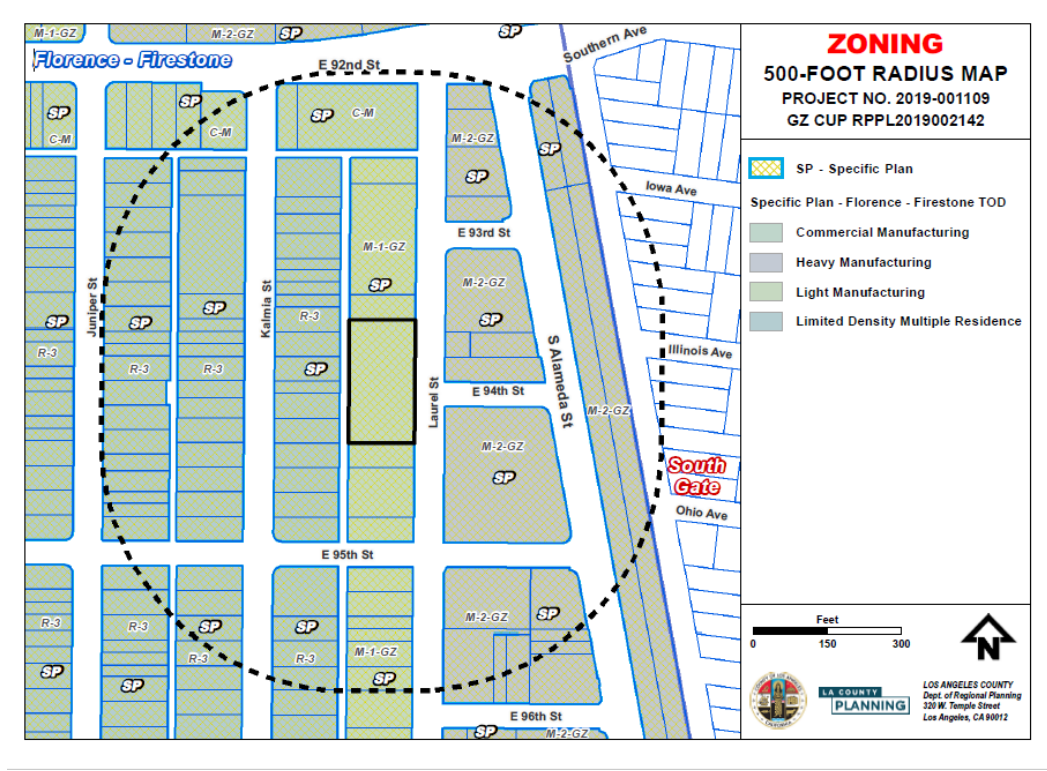
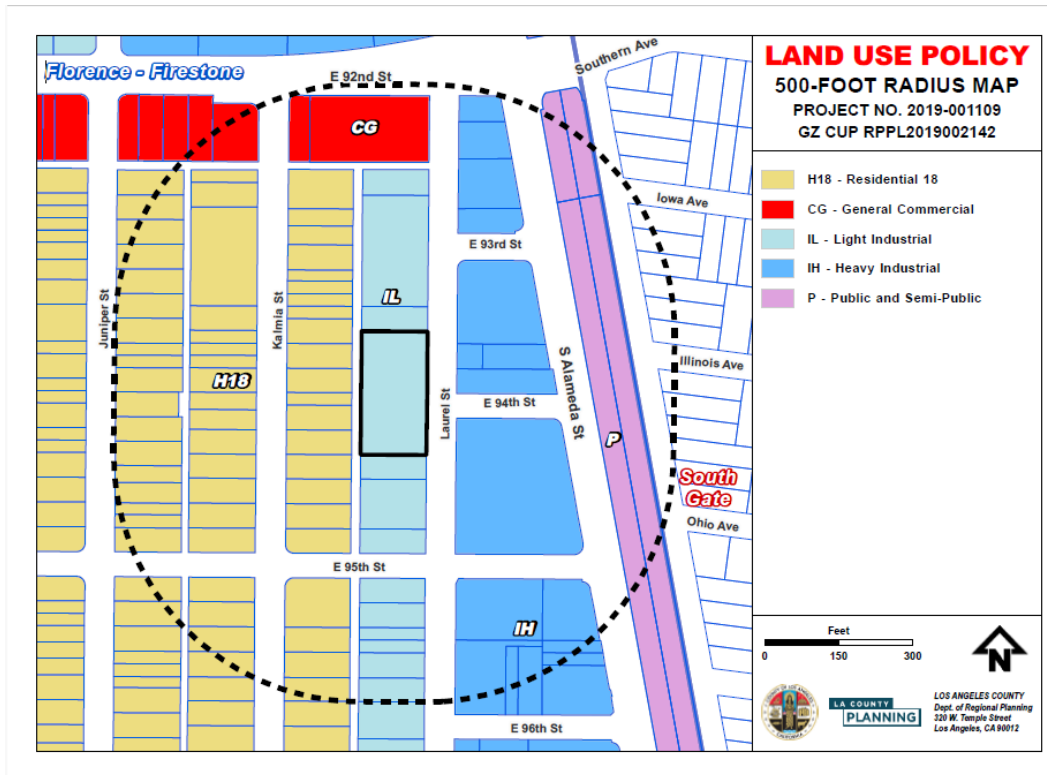
3,136 square feet in size) and six vehicle parking spaces, including five standard-sized parking spaces and one parking space that is accessible to people with disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The remainder of the Project Site consists of an open yard for the outdoor storage of pallets and a loading area. The Project Site is secured by a 14-foot-tall solid metal panel perimeter fence that will be replaced with a new 15-foot-tall solid metal panel perimeter fence on the eastern and western property lines. The new perimeter fence will be set back three feet from the property line on Laurel Street to allow for 546 square feet of new landscaping with a permanent irrigation system along the Laurel Street frontage. The solid metal perimeter fence on the north and south property lines will remain unchanged. A total of 3,382 square feet of new landscaping is proposed onsite. Ministerial Site Plan Review Case No. 40789, which proposed two new storage warehouses on the Project Site, was denied due to inactivity on November 25, 1992. No other entitlements exist for the Project Site.

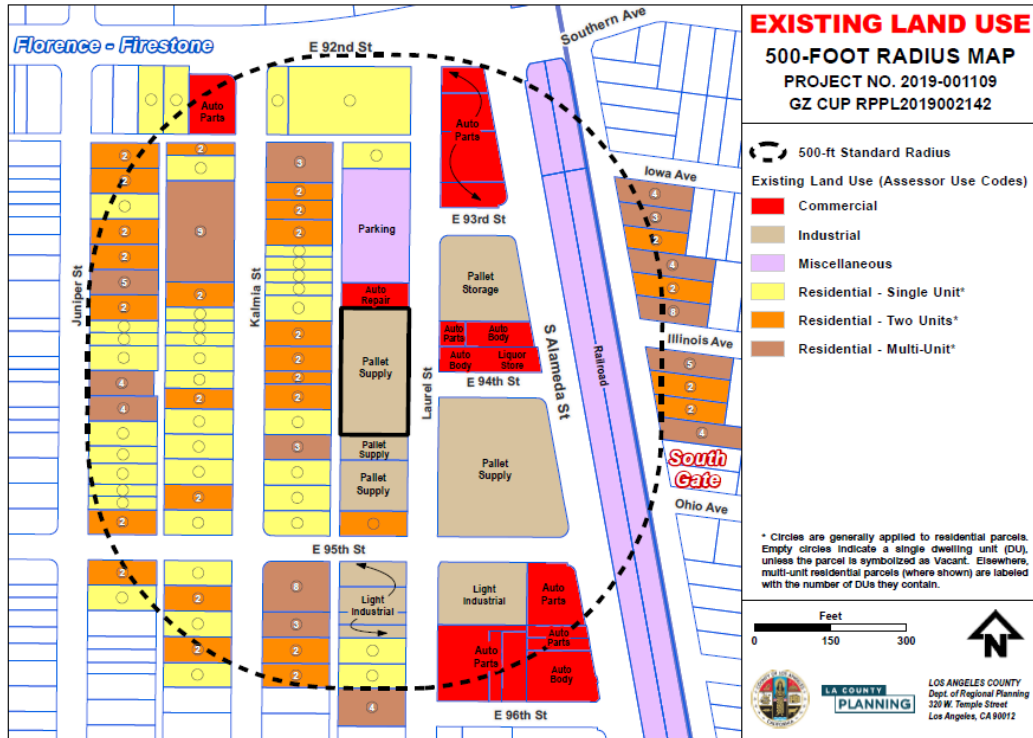
SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SURROUNDINGS

The following chart provides property data within a 500-foot radius:

LOCATION	GENERAL PLAN LAND USE POLICY	ZONING*	EXISTING USES
SUBJECT PROPERTY	IL (Light Industrial)	M-1 (Light Manufacturing)	Outdoor pallet yard
NORTH	IL	M-1	Outside storage
EAST	IH (Heavy Industrial)	M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing)	Two outdoor pallet yards and one recycling center
SOUTH	IL	M-1	Outside storage, outdoor pallet yard
WEST	H18 (Residential 18, 18 dwelling units per net acre maximum density)	R-3 (Limited Multiple Residence)	Multifamily residences

* Note: The zoning was changed to SP (Specific Plan) in conjunction with the adoption of the Florence-Firestone Transit-Oriented District Specific Plan on February 7, 2023. Pursuant to County Code Section 22.246.020 (Applicability of Zone Changes and Ordinance Amendments), the applicant chose to have the complete CUP application be subject to the zoning and regulations in effect at the time it was submitted on April 4, 2019.





PROPERTY HISTORY

A. Zoning History

ORDINANCE NO.	ZONING	DATE OF ADOPTION
6728	M-1	July 12, 1955
2111	C-3	June 1, 1932

B. Previous Cases

CASE NO.	REQUEST	DATE OF ACTION
Ministerial Site Plan Review 40789	Two new storage warehouses	November 25, 1992 (denied due to inactivity)

C. Violations

CASE NO.	VIOLATION	CLOSED/OPEN
15-0005442	Unpermitted land use without a CUP (Auto body and fender repair)	Opened September 29, 2015 Closed April 30, 2018
RPCE2018002220	Unpermitted land use without a CUP (Auto body and fender repair).	Opened April 30, 2018 Closed May 25, 2023

RPCE2018002217	Unpermitted land use without a CUP (Auto body and fender repair).	Opened April 30, 2018 Closed May 25, 2023
----------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------

ANALYSIS

A. Land Use Compatibility

The Project Site is located one block west of the Alameda Corridor, which is predominately zoned for light and heavy industrial uses. There are six multifamily residential uses located within 250 feet of the Project Site to the west. These multifamily residential uses are buffered by a 15-foot-tall solid metal panel perimeter fence and an existing alley. The Project Site is primarily used for storage and is not open to the public. The business' primary location is located one block to the east on Alameda Street. Less traffic, noise, and business activities will occur on the Project Site than will occur at the business' primary location and the Project will therefore have minimal impacts on the residential uses across the alley.

B. Neighborhood Impact (Need/Convenience Assessment)

Unpermitted uses that were formerly on the Project Site and were unable to comply with the required development standards, including an auto body repair business and a welding business, have been removed. The remaining outdoor pallet yard will comply with all required development standards, as depicted on the proposed plans (Exhibit "A"). The business operations on the Project Site are in character with the other industrial uses in the neighborhood. The outdoor pallet yard is primarily used for storage. Two employees manage the Project Site, which is not open to the public or any other visitors. Therefore, traffic impacts to the neighbors are minimal.

C. Design Compatibility

The Project complies with development standards related to screening because a new 15-foot-tall solid metal panel perimeter fence will replace the existing 14-foot-tall solid metal panel perimeter fence. A new three-foot-deep landscaping buffer with a permanent irrigation system is also proposed along the Laurel Street frontage and all signs comply with Title 22 development standards. Therefore, the Project fits into the character of its industrial surroundings because it complies with development standards related to screening, landscaping, and signage.

GENERAL PLAN/COMMUNITY PLAN CONSISTENCY

The Project is consistent with applicable goals and policies of the General Plan. Consistency findings can be found in the attached Findings (Exhibit C – Findings).

ZONING ORDINANCE CONSISTENCY

The Project complies with all applicable zoning requirements. Consistency findings can be found in the attached Findings (Exhibit C – Findings).

BURDEN OF PROOF

The applicant is required to substantiate all facts identified by County Code Section 22.158.050 (Application Burden of Proof) with applicant's responses is attached (Exhibit E – Applicant's Burden of Proof). Staff is of the opinion that the applicant has met the burden of proof.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Staff recommends that this Project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption (Class 1 Exemption, Existing Facilities and a Class 3 Exemption, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") and the County environmental guidelines. The Project is the continuation of an existing outdoor pallet yard with new development limited to a modular office building with a bathroom, replacing the existing dilapidated fencing with new solid metal panel perimeter fencing, landscaping, and a permanent irrigation system. The Project does not qualify for an exception to the CEQA exemption 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, Staff recommends that the Regional Planning Commission determine that the Project is categorically exempt from CEQA. An environmental determination (Exhibit F – Environmental Determination) was issued for the Project.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

A. County Department Comments and Recommendations

1. The Department of Public Works, in a letter dated June 27, 2024, recommended that the Project proceed to a public hearing with required conditions of approval.
2. The Fire Department, in a letter dated April 23, 2024, recommended that the Project proceed to a public hearing with required conditions of approval.
3. The Department of Public Health, in a letter dated April 23, 2024, recommended that the Project proceed to a public hearing.

B. Other Agency Comments and Recommendations

Staff has not received any comments at the time of report preparation.

C. Public Comments

Staff has received nine comments in support of the Project and one inquiry about the Project. Supporters include the Florence-Firestone Community Association, current employees and neighboring businesses.

Report
Reviewed By: *Carmen Sainz*
Carmen Sainz, Supervising Planner

Report
Approved By: *M. Glaser*
Mitch Glaser, Assistant Deputy Director

LIST OF ATTACHED EXHIBITS	
EXHIBIT A	Plans
EXHIBIT B	Project Summary Sheet
EXHIBIT C	Findings
EXHIBIT D	Conditions of Approval
EXHIBIT E	Applicant's Burden of Proof
EXHIBIT F	Environmental Determination
EXHIBIT G	Informational Maps
EXHIBIT H	Photos
EXHIBIT I	Agency Correspondence
EXHIBIT J	Public Correspondence