

REPORT TO THE HEARING OFFICER

DATE ISSUED: April 11, 2024

HEARING DATE: April 23, 2024 AGENDA ITEM: 7

PROJECT NUMBER: PRJ2020-001956-(2)

PERMIT NUMBER(S): Conditional Use Permit ("CUP") RPPL2020006176

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT: 2

PROJECT LOCATION: 2225 E 92nd Street, Florence Firestone

OWNER: Gregory Williams

APPLICANT: Williams Recycling Co. Inc.

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 PRJ2020-001956-(2), CUP Number RPPL2020006176, 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 motion:

CEQA:

I, THE HEARING OFFICER CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING AND FIND THAT THE PROJECT IS CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT PURSUANT TO STATE AND LOCAL CEQA GUIDELINES.

ENTITLEMENT:

I, THE HEARING OFFICER, APPROVE CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NUMBER RPPL2020006176 SUBJECT TO THE ATTACHED FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Entitlement

- CUP for the continued operation and maintenance of a scrap metal processing yard and recycling facility in the M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing) Zone pursuant to County Code Section 22.22.030 (Principal Use Regulations for Industrial Zones). A CUP is also 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). The Florence-Firestone Community Standards District was repealed in conjunction with the adoption of the Florence-Firestone Transit-Oriented District Specific Plan on February 7, 2023. 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 September 2, 2020.

B. Project

The Project is an existing scrap metal processing yard and recycling facility that has operated onsite and under the same ownership for almost 43 years. The existing scrap metal processing yard and recycling facility employs eight to ten people full-time. The hours of operation granted by Condition No. 7b of previously approved CUP No. 90-272-(2) are 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, although the scrap metal processing yard and recycling facility ceases operations at 4:00 p.m. on most days. The Project generates 10 to 50 truck trips per day. The applicant does not need to make any modifications to the existing driveway or onsite circulation to continue the existing use.

The Project Site is 1.43 net acres in size and is accessible via a 40-foot-wide driveway on East 92nd Street. East 92nd Street is approximately 80-feet-wide and is mapped as a Secondary Highway in the County's Master Plan of Highways. The Project Site is paved and contains an existing car preparation area, a material sorting area, a non-operational shear, a 61-foot-long scale with a radiation monitor, a 460-square-foot garage, a fuel area, a 3,000-square-foot warehouse and office building, 11 standard-sized vehicle parking spaces, and two truck storage spaces. Heavy equipment is utilized daily and stored onsite overnight, including three skid steers loaders, three excavators, one rubber tire loader, and three forklifts. The Project Site is secured by a 10-foot-tall perimeter solid concrete masonry unit wall with a three-foot-tall solid metal topper. 532.5 square feet of landscaping is provided in seven separate landscaped buffers abutting East 92nd Street. Each landscaped buffer is four and a half feet in depth. No physical or operational changes are proposed to the existing site.

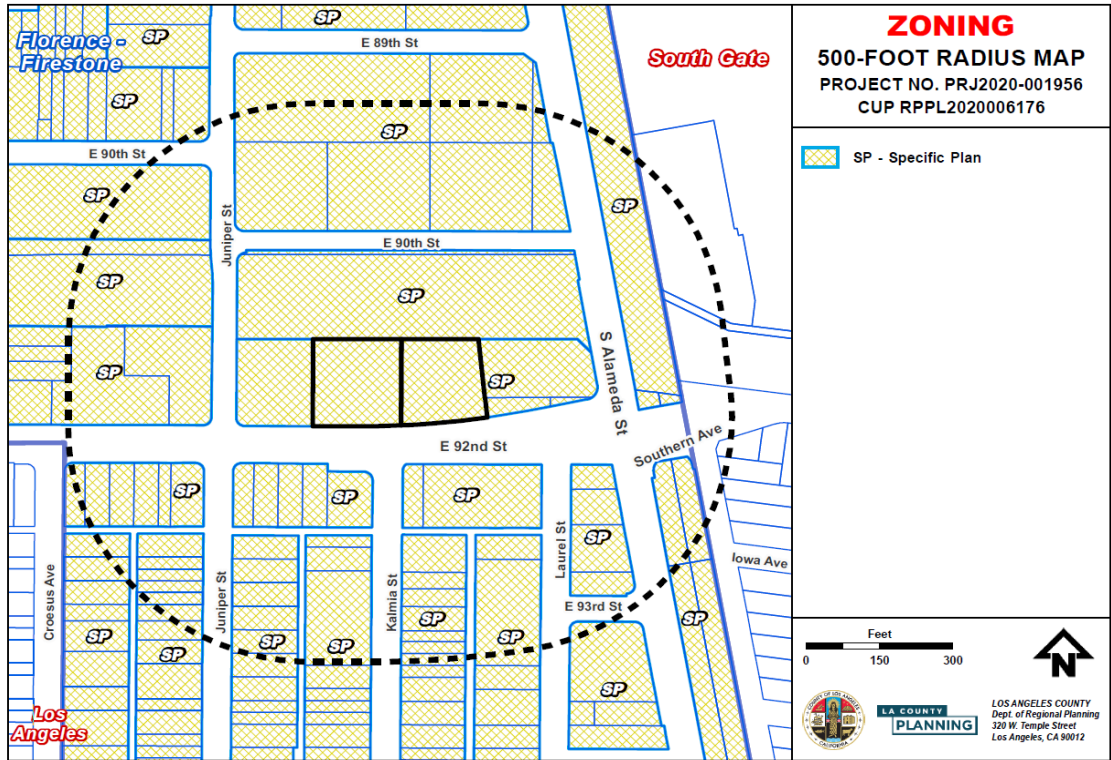
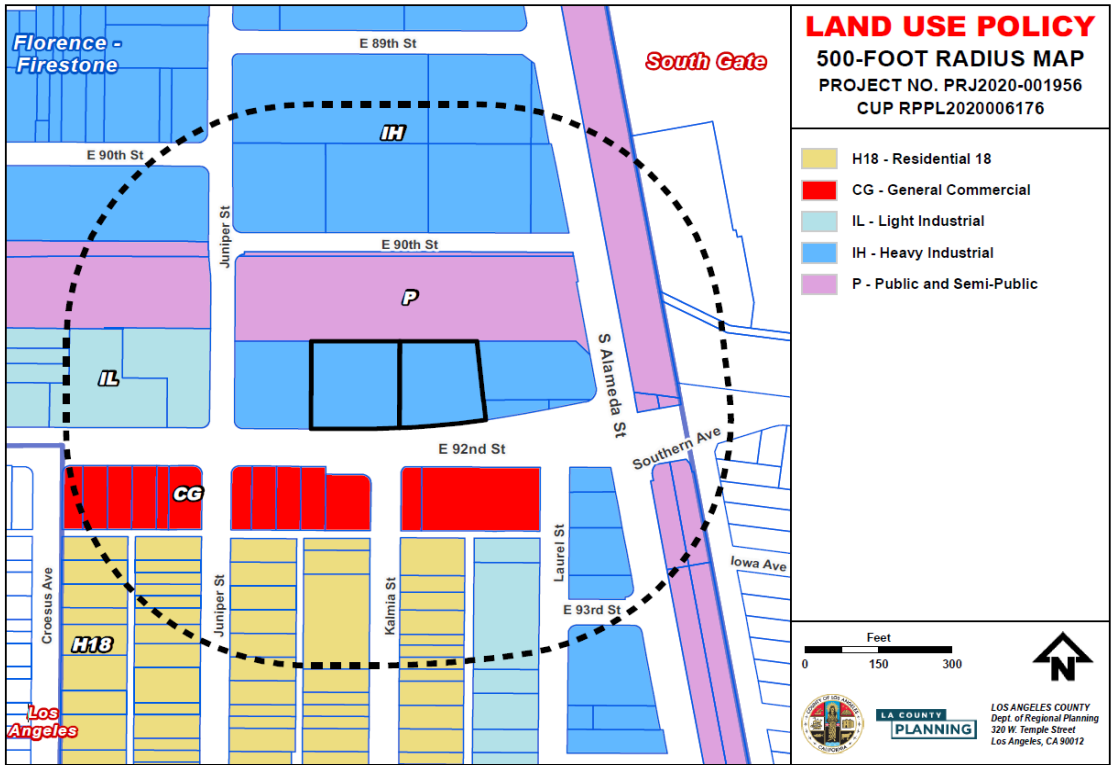
The Project Site was originally developed as an auto wrecking yard pursuant to Zoning Exception Case No. 2255, which was approved on December 20, 1955, and Zoning Exception Case No. 7639, which was approved on April 20, 1965. CUP No. 1761-(2), which was approved on April 1, 1981, allowed the continued operation of the auto wrecking yard with the addition of a scrap metal processing yard and recycling facility. CUP No. 90-272-(2), which was approved on September 11, 1990, and expired on September 11, 2020, allowed the continued operation of the scrap metal processing yard and recycling facility.

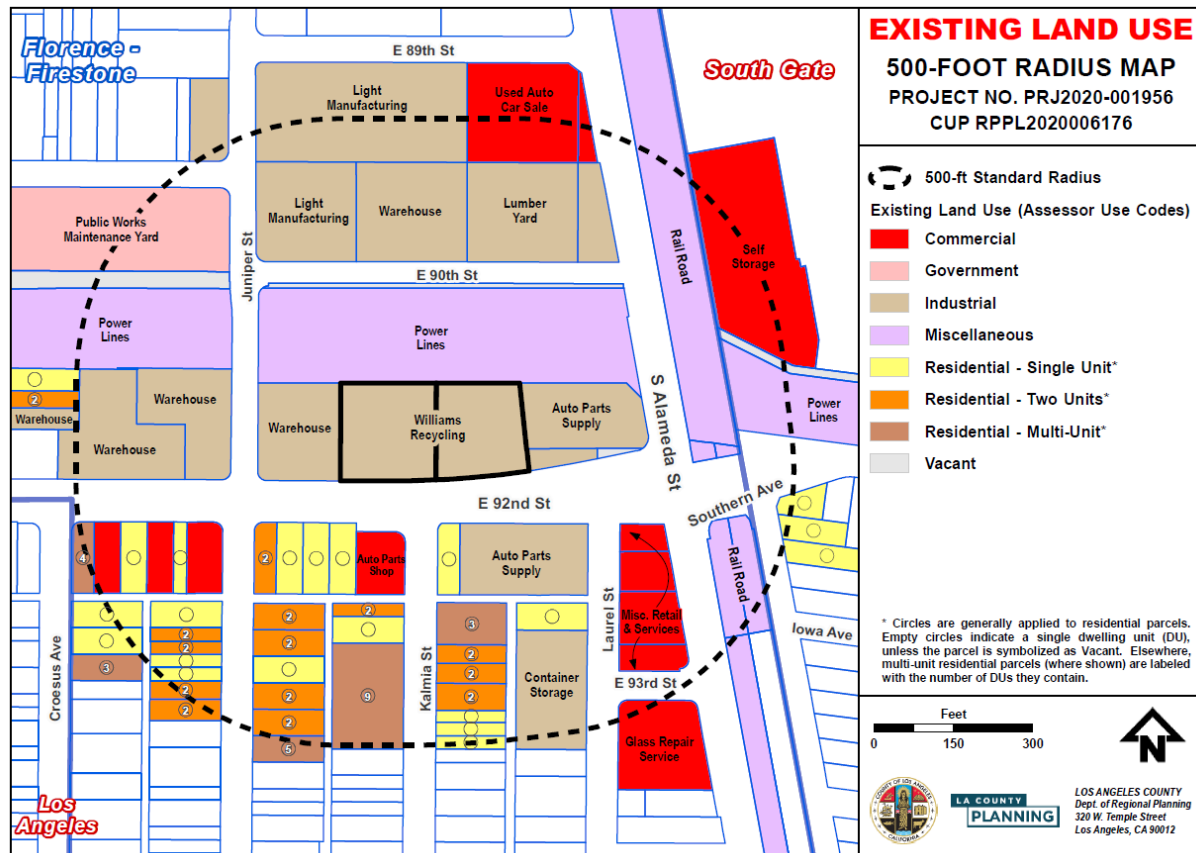
SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SURROUNDINGS

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

LOCATION	FLORENCE FIRESTONE LAND USE POLICY	ZONING*	EXISTING USES
NORTH	P (Public and Semi-Public)	O-S (Open Space)	Los Angeles City Department of Water and Power Transmission Lines
EAST	IH (Heavy Industrial)	M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing)	Auto Glass and Parts; Alameda Freight Corridor
SOUTH	CG (General Commercial) H18 (Residential 18. Maximum 18 dwelling units per net acre)	R-3 (Limited Density Multiple Residence)	Auto Glass and Parts; Used Auto Parts; Single-family and Multi-family Residences
WEST	IH and IL (Light Industrial)	M-2 and M-1 (Light Manufacturing)	Refrigeration and Store Fixtures; Warehousing and Storage

* Note: The zoning was changed to SP (Specific Plan) on February 7, 2023, 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 September 2, 2020.





PROPERTY HISTORY

A. Zoning History

ORDINANCE NO.	ZONING	DATE OF ADOPTION
4733	M-1	February 6, 1946
810009z	M-2	September 29, 1981

B. Previous Cases

CASE NO.	REQUEST	DATE OF ACTION
Zoning Exception Case ZEC 2255	Auto Wrecking	Approved on December 20, 1955
Zoning Exception Case ZEC 7639	Auto Wrecking	Approved on April 20, 1965
Conditional Use Permit 1761-(2)	Metal Salvage and Recycling Facility	Approved on April 1, 1981
Conditional Use Permit 90-272-(2)	Metal Salvage and Recycling Facility	Approved on September 11, 1990

C. Violations

CASE NO.	VIOLATION	CLOSED/OPEN
11-0019339-RZPVIO	Barbed wire	Opened August 3, 2011 Closed May 30, 2013
NATAGCY2017006071	Barbed wire, hours of operation	Opened December 5, 2012 Closed December 10, 2012
07-0005531-NAT-DRP	Hours of operation, noise	Opened March 6, 2007, Closed April 2, 2007,

ANALYSIS

A. Land Use Compatibility

The Project is consistent with the Project Site's IH (Heavy Industrial) land use designation. The Project is an existing scrap metal yard and recycling facility that is similar to other industrial uses along the Alameda Corridor, such as pick-your-part junk and salvage yards, auto dismantling yards, and auto repair shops. An auto wrecking yard and/or a scrap metal processing yard and recycling facility has operated on the Project Site since 1955 and no physical or operational changes are proposed. To the north there is an existing Los Angeles City Department of Water and Power transmission line that is approximately 188 feet wide and buffers the Project Site from other nearby industrial uses. To the east and west there are auto part related uses and warehouse uses. However, the Project is less compatible with the existing single-family and multi-family residential uses to the south. The existing residential uses are buffered from the Project Site by East 92nd Street, which is an existing 80-foot-wide Secondary Highway mapped on the County's Master Plan of Highways. The Project Site directly adjoins East 92nd Street, which means that trucks entering and existing the Project Site do not need to travel on local streets that primarily serve residential uses.

The siting of industrial uses near residential uses is not uncommon in the Florence-Firestone community. This development pattern reflects the community's historic industrial and manufacturing sector, which was first established in the early 1900's due to the community's proximity to the Southern Pacific Railroad, which ran along Alameda Street and provided access to the ocean ports. The demand for workforce housing grew near the Alameda Corridor despite the incompatibility between residential and industrial uses. The current CUP requested by the applicant will provide a safeguard to the community because it will ensure that the applicant will operate within the allowed hours of operation and that all development standards and conditions will be satisfied during the grant term of the CUP.

B. Neighborhood Impact (Need/Convenience Assessment)

The Project provides a needed service to the Florence-Firestone community and the greater region because many customers that sell scrap metal at the Project Site also live in the community.

C. Design Compatibility

The Project complies with all the applicable development standards and requirements prescribed by Title 22 of the County Code for scrap metal processing yards, including those related to solid walls, signage, tree planting, paving, and landscaping and irrigation. The Project's current visual impact is negligible because the Project Site already includes a warehouse, garage, and office space. The Project Site's scale and sorting area are located behind the two-story warehouse and office space structure and the entire Project Site is secured by 10-foot-tall solid walls.

GENERAL PLAN/COMMUNITY PLAN CONSISTENCY

The Project is consistent with applicable goals and policies of the General Plan and the Florence-Firestone Community 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 (Conditional Use Permit Findings and Decision Requirements). The 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) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the County environmental guidelines. The Project is not proposing any expansion or any physical changes. The Project does not qualify for an exception to an 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 Hearing Officer 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 October 10, 2023, recommended that the Project proceed to public hearing with no required conditions of approval.
2. The Fire Department, in a letter dated October 17, 2023, recommended that the Project proceed to public hearing with no required conditions of approval.

3. The Department of Public Health, in a letter dated November 21, 2023, recommended that the Project proceed to public hearing with no required conditions of approval.

B. Other Agency Comments and Recommendations

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

C. Public Comments

Staff has received six public comments in support of the Project. Four public comments are from existing nearby businesses, one public comment is from the President of the Century Sheriff Station Foundation and one public comment is from the President of the Florence-Firestone Community Organization.

Report

Reviewed By: _____
Carmen Sainz, Supervising Planner

Report

Approved By: _____
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