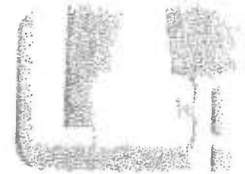




DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
RECOMMENDATION REPORT



ITEM 6

City Planning Commission

Date: April 9, 2015
Time: After 8:30 A.M.
Place: City Hall, 3rd Floor
Board of Public Works Hearing Room
200 North Spring Street, Room 350
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Public Hearing: February 26, 2015
Appeal Status: Public Benefits Approval
appealable to City Council
Expiration Date: April 11, 2015

Case No.: CPC-2014-2768-GPA-PUB
CEQA No.: WO-E1904503-REC2
Related Cases: AA-2014-2769-PMLA
Council No.: 14 – Huizar
Plan Area: Central City North
Specific Plan: None
Certified NC: Historic Cultural
GPLU: Commercial Manufacturing
Zone: CM-1-RIO

Applicant: City of Los Angeles, Bureau
of Engineering

Representative: Tricia Robbins Kasson /
Brad Rosenheim,
Rosenheim and Associates

PROJECT LOCATION: 454-462 and 506 Commercial Street, 459-461 and 503-511 E. Ducommun Street

PROPOSED PROJECT: The demolition of an existing manufacturing warehouse, a storage building, and surface parking area and the construction of an Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) Bus Maintenance and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Fueling Facility. The project will consist of 30'8" tall, 21,867 square foot maintenance and operations building; a 15'6" tall, 100 space parking structure; a compressed natural gas fueling facility; and a surface parking area for approximately 70 DASH buses that includes a 6,829 square foot Service Building, service area, fueling station, and bus-washing bay. The project site is approximately 3 acres. The project also includes a General Plan Amendment for the re-designation of Hewitt Street between Commercial Street and Ducommun Street from a Collector Street to a Local Street to accommodate a future street merger.

- REQUESTED ACTION:**
1. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21166 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 and 15164, find that the previously adopted **Mitigated Negative Declaration**, adopted on September 20, 2006 by City Council, and Addendum dated October 27, 2011, together with the proposed Addendum (WO-E1904503-REC2) adequately serve as the environmental clearance for the project. **Adopt** the proposed Mitigation Monitoring Program.
 2. Pursuant to Section 11.5.6 of the LAMC a **General Plan Amendment** to the Transportation Element and the Central City North Community Plan to permit the re-designation of Hewitt Street between Commercial Street and Ducommun Street from a Collector Street to a Local Street.
 3. Pursuant to Section 14.00 A.3 of the LAMC a **Public Benefit Project** approval for the proposed project of an LADOT Bus Maintenance and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)

Fueling Facility (Governmental Enterprise) in the CM-1 zone.

4. Pursuant to Section 14.00 B an **Alternative Compliance Approval for a Public Benefit Project** to permit the proposed project with the following alternatives from the performance standards of Section 14.00 A.3 of the LAMC: (a) to permit proposed structures to be higher than any structures on the adjacent property; (b) to permit a project without the required 10-foot landscape buffer; (c) to not provide parking area landscaping pursuant to the requirements of Section 12.21 A.6 of the LAMC; (d) to provide more than 1 identification sign; (e) to permit a project with a majority of frontage on a Collector Street in lieu of the required frontage on a Major or Secondary Highway; and (f) the adjacent streets, alleys and sidewalks will not meet standard dimensions as required.


RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

1. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21166 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 and 15164, **Find** that the previously adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration, adopted on September 20, 2006 by City Council, and Addenda dated October 27, 2011 and January 29, 2015 adequately serve as the environmental clearance for the project. **Adopt** the proposed Mitigation Monitoring Program.
2. **Approve and Recommend** the City Council Approve a **General Plan Amendment** to the Transportation Element and the Central City North Community Plan to permit the re-designation of Hewitt Street between Commercial Street and Ducommun Street from a Collector Street to a Local Street, pursuant to Section 11.5.6 of the LAMC.
3. **Approve a Public Benefit Project** approval for the proposed project of an LADOT Bus Maintenance and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Fueling Facility (Governmental Enterprise) in the CM-1 zone pursuant to Section 14.00 A.3 of the LAMC.
4. **Approve an Alternative Compliance Approval for Public Benefit Project** to permit the proposed project with the following alternatives from the performance standards of Section 14.00 A.3 of the LAMC: (a) to permit proposed structures to be higher than any structures on adjacent property; (b) to permit a project without the required 10-foot landscape buffer; (c) to not provide parking area landscaping pursuant to the requirements of Section 12.21 A.6 of the LAMC; (d) to provide more than 1 identification sign; (e) to permit a project with a majority of frontage on a Collector Street in lieu of the required frontage on a Major or Secondary Highway; and (f) the adjacent streets, alleys and sidewalks will not meet standard dimensions as required, pursuant to Section 14.00 B.


MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE
Director of Planning



Daniel Scott, Principal Planner



Shana M. Bonstin, Senior City Planner
(213) 978-1217



Blake E. Lamb, City Planner
(213) 978-1167

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Project Analysis	A-1
Project Summary	
Background	
Issues	
Conclusion	
Conditions of Approval	C-1
Findings	F-1
General Plan/Charter Findings	
Entitlement Findings	
CEQA Findings	
Public Hearing and Communications	P-1
Exhibits:	
A – Plans for Approval	
Site Plan	
Elevation Plan	
Landscape Plan	
B – Radius Map	
C – Environmental Clearance - WO-E1904503-REC2	
C-1 – Mitigation Monitoring Program	

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Project Summary

The proposed project is the construction of a Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) DASH Bus Maintenance and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Facility that will function as a maintenance and operations building, a fueling facility, parking structure, and surface parking for approximately 70 DASH buses. The proposed maintenance and operations building will contain 21,867 square feet of floor area and will be approximately 30'8" tall. The parking structure will accommodate 100 cars and will be approximately 15'6" tall. The Service Island will include a 6,829 square foot Service Building with storage areas and restroom facilities for staff. The project will demolish an existing manufacturing warehouse, a storage building, and surface parking area for the construction of the project.

In order to create a contiguous property large enough to accommodate the requirements of the facility, the 500 North block of Hewitt Street is proposed to be merged into a single parcel as part of City Planning Case No. AA-2014-2769-PMLA. With the merger of Hewitt Street into the subject property, the project site would be approximately 3 acres in size. However, Hewitt Street is currently identified as a Collector Street in the Central City North Community Plan and the Transportation Element of City's General Plan, and therefore a General Plan Amendment is required in order to re-designate Hewitt Street to a Local Street to accommodate the proposed merger.

Maintenance and Operations Building

The 21,867 square-foot Maintenance and Operations Building (M&O Building) will provide facilities for DASH vehicle maintenance, operator facilities, and administrative spaces for operations and management. The ground floor will house six service bays, a fueling station and a bus-washing bay. The second floor will provide administrative offices, conference rooms, a dispatch room, and a breakroom for administrative staff. Driver facilities will include restrooms, showers, a dayroom/breakroom, an exercise room, and training room.

Service Island

The Service Island will provide fueling, general vehicle maintenance and fluid top-off, tire inflation, and data download from onboard computer systems, inspection, and interior and exterior cleaning. Two service lanes will be provided, one with an automatic drive-through wash rack. The service lanes are designed to accommodate DASH buses (35 feet in length) and also the potential fueling of the larger/longer Commuter Express buses (45 feet in length) without any queuing onto public streets. The Service Island will also include a 6,829 square foot Service Building with storage areas and restroom facilities for staff. A Southern California Gas Company natural gas line presently runs under Garey Street and will provide Natural Gas service to the site via an underground extension to on-site CNG compressors. From there, CNG piping will extend to the fueling stations at the Service Island and four CNG storage/process vessels will be installed to facilitate the fueling process.

Parking

On-site parking will be provided for up to 70 DASH buses and 64 Commuter Express buses when the DASH buses are in use and the parking spaces are available. Buses will be queued in a stacked arrangement with bypass lanes to ensure maneuvering flexibility. Buses will enter and exit the site via Ducommun Street.

A two-story, 100-space employee parking structure will be developed on the north-western portion of the project site, adjacent to the M&O Building. The parking structure has in and out access via Commercial Street.

Operations

The DASH Facility will operate 24-hours a day, seven days a week. It is anticipated that 110 Operators will be dispatched from this facility daily. A total of approximately 150-155 full-time staff will be located at the LADOT Downtown DASH Facility over the course of a normal 24-hour day including approximately 110 coach operators and 40-45 administrative and support personnel, including mechanics, dispatchers, road supervisors, service attendants, inventory control personnel and managers. Commuter Express operators may be on site during the midday layover, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Operator, Dispatch, and supervising staff will work at the facility during staggered shifts from 4:30 am to 9:00 pm daily, with staggered Operator sign-ins from 5:27 am through 7:00 am. The morning Crew Dispatch and Road Supervisor shift is from 4:30 am through 1:30 pm and the evening Crew Dispatch and Road Supervisor shift is from 12:00 pm through 9:00 pm, with a 1.5-hour shift overlap to ensure a complete shift change. Maintenance, Utility/Fueling Crews, and Security employees work several shifts during a 24-hour period, seven days a week. All buses will roll out in the early morning hours, from 5:45 am – 7:15 am, prior to morning peak traffic.

Requested Actions*General Plan Amendment*

The applicant is requesting a General Plan Amendment to the Central City North Community Plan and the Transportation Element of the City's General Plan to re-designate Hewitt Street between Commercial Street and Ducommun Street from a Collector to a Local Street. On March 9, 2015 City Planning Case No. AA-2014-2769-PMLA approved the merger of approximately 25 existing lots and Hewitt Street in order to create one (1) contiguous parcel for the subject property. However, in order to merge Hewitt Street into one (1) contiguous parcel with the other 25 lots, Hewitt Street must be downgraded to a local street as only local streets can be merged with other lots.

Public Benefit Project

Governmental Enterprises are a Public Benefit in any zone, per the LAMC Section 14.00 provided they comply with certain performance standards or seek an Alternative Compliance. While the proposed use, a "bus storage and maintenance facility" is normally not permitted in the CM zone, it may be classified as a Public Benefit if operated by a Governmental Enterprise. The project applicant is the Los Angeles Department of Transportation, which is considered a Governmental Enterprise and therefore is able to take advantage of the Public Benefits provision of the LAMC.

Alternative Compliance – Public Benefit Project

Public Benefit projects must meet certain performance standards, per the LAMC. If those performance standards are not met, then the project must meet alternative compliance measures. The proposed project is asking for the following deviations: (a) to permit proposed structures to be higher than any structures on the adjacent property; (b) to permit a project without the required 10-foot landscape buffer; (c) to not provide parking area landscaping pursuant to the requirements of Section 12.21 A.6 of the LAMC; (d) to provide more than 1 identification sign; (e) to permit a project with a majority of frontage on a Collector Street in lieu of the required frontage on a Major or Secondary Highway; and (f) the adjacent streets, alleys and sidewalks will not meet standard dimensions as required.

Background

The proposed project site is located within the Central City North Plan Area, which was adopted by the City Council on December 15, 2000. The project site is located within the Government Support subarea of the Central City North Community Plan. The Government Support subarea

is bounded by Ducommun Street, the Los Angeles River, N. Main Street, and Alameda Street. City and County uses dominate this neighborhood. The Mens Central jail, Piper Technical Center, DWP yards and the Alameda District Specific Plan (including Union Station) are all a part of this area. The William Mead Housing complex is located off Main Street and is the only housing component in this area.

The subject property is currently improved with two surface parking lots and a warehouse building and is comprised of approximately 25 individual lots, and the site is bisected by the 500 north block of Hewitt Street, from Commercial Street to Ducommun Street. Pursuant to City Planning Case No. AA-2014-2769-PMLA, approved on March 9, 2015, the merger of approximately 25 existing lots and Hewitt Street has been approved in order to create one (1) contiguous parcel for the subject project. However, in order to merge Hewitt Street into one (1) contiguous parcel with the other 25 lots, Hewitt Street must be downgraded to a local street as only local streets can be merged with other lots.

LADOT wishes to develop the subject property into a DASH Bus Maintenance and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Facility. The LADOT has the second largest fleet of buses in Los Angeles County, second only to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). Traditionally, LADOT has contracted with private operators to not only operate the buses but also to maintain, inspect and store them. As a result, and due to the length of operator contracts (typically five-years), transit facilities are Operator leased or owned and often operate in excess of individual facility design capacities. The proposed LADOT Downtown DASH Facility is the first property LADOT will develop for fleet inspection, maintenance, and bus layover, and will allow LADOT to exercise greater control over the location, design, capacity, and security of the facility. The proposed project will meet the agency's growing need for additional capacity and operational control.

In response to the growing demand for its DASH services within the Downtown area and the need to establish greater control of the operations, LADOT prepared a Feasibility Study for the proposed project in 2006. Subsequently, the Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering prepared and certified a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND - dated March 9, 2006) for an earlier iteration of the proposed project. After that, the proposed project was listed within the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and LADOT obtained a \$33 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5307 program for the purchase of land, and design and construction of the LADOT Downtown DASH Facility. Due to the receipt of FTA Section 5307 Grant funds, the design of the facility is required to "increase the ability of the transportation system to support homeland security" and to incorporate United States Department of Transportation / FTA Transit Security Design Consideration requirements.

LADOT chose this site for several reasons. The site is located over an existing CNG transmission line, which eliminates the need to truck in CNG to the facility or to maintain large storage tanks. Because the site is within the Central City North Plan Area's Government Support subarea, there is a dense network of transportation services and infrastructure surrounding the property including Los Angeles Union Station (terminus of the Metro Red and Purple lines and a central stop on the Metro Gold and Silver lines and for Metrolink and Amtrak trains), the Metro Bus Terminal (currently under construction), and Patsouras Transit Plaza, a central transfer location for the transit lines for multiple cities, Metro, and Flyaway service to three area airports. The Subject property's proximity to this dense transit network is convenient, and by locating the LADOT Downtown DASH Facility adjacent to the downtown routes its buses serve, the distance DASH Buses must travel before beginning their routes is lessened and emissions are minimized.

Two forthcoming regional transportation projects are expected to impact the Subject property. To the extent that the Southern California Regional Interconnector Project (SCRIP) (intended to

connect Union Station's current 'stub-end' tracks directly to the south of the station to create a continuous Metro route) and the Los Angeles County segment of the California High-Speed Rail (CHSR) system (which is expected to connect to Union Station with the CHSR terminal proposed near the intersection of Vignes Street and Ramirez Street to the north of the 101 Freeway) are both currently designed to cross over the proposed LADOT Downtown DASH Facility. The facility, therefore, has been designed to accommodate these important regional transportation infrastructure projects.

Description of the Property

The proposed project site is located within the Government Support subarea of the Central City North Community Plan. The site is zoned CM-1-RIO. The "RIO" or River Improvement Overlay District is an ordinance which became effective on August 20, 2014. It is a special use district along the Los Angeles River corridor that requires projects to comply with certain guidelines. The subject property is located within the "Outer Corridor" of the RIO which addresses issues such as landscaping, lighting, and location of mechanical equipment. The Commercial Manufacturing Zone (CM Zone) permits uses allowed in the C2 zone (with restrictions on residential uses), certain lighter manufacturing and industrial uses which are limited mainly to uses that process, fabricate, or assemble finished parts or products and which have limited impacts to adjacent properties. While the proposed use, a "bus storage and maintenance facility" is normally not permitted in the CM zone, it may be classified as a Public Benefit if operated by a Governmental Enterprise. The project applicant is the Los Angeles Department of Transportation, which is considered a Governmental Enterprise and therefore is able to take advantage of the Public Benefits provision of the LAMC.

The project site consists of 25 parcels currently improved with two surface parking lots and one warehouse. It is bounded by Commercial Street to the north, Ducommun Street to the south, an existing LADOT equipment repair facility to the west, and Garey Street to the east. The north 500 block of Hewitt runs through the property from north to south. Hewitt Street is a designated Collector Street. The east portion of the project site is lined by an approximately 6-foot tall chain link fence and consists of a paved surface parking lot and unpaved areas. The west portion of the project site, across Hewitt Street, is lined with a combination of a 6-foot tall chain link fence and concrete walls. This portion of the site also contains the 1-story warehouse building.

The site is immediately south of the 101 Freeway and immediately south and east of the elevated Gold Line light-rail tracks (which cross over the 101 Freeway).

Access to the site is achieved via Commercial Street or Garey Street. Ducommun Street is a cul-de-sac to the west of the property and is closed off at Alameda Street so does not provide through access. Garey Street provides access from the south although it ends approximately 720 feet to the south at Temple Street, which provides access to points west. Temple Street dead-ends just to the east at train tracks that run parallel to the Los Angeles River. Commercial Street to the north provides access to the 101 Freeway with the on and off-ramps located at the terminus of Gary Street. Commercial Street also provides access to points west including Alameda Street, but dead-ends approximately 1,400 feet to the east of the property at train tracks that run parallel to the Los Angeles River. Commercial Street is classified as an improved Collector Street. Ducommun Street is classified as an improved Collector Street. Garey Street is an improved Collector Street. Hewitt Street is classified as an improved Collector Street; however the applicant has requested a General Plan Amendment to downgrade Hewitt Street from a Collector Street to a Local Street.

Surrounding Properties

To the east of the project site are commercial manufacturing buildings zoned CM-1 (across Garey Street) which includes an LAPD vehicle storage facility. To the west of the project site is an existing LADOT equipment repair facility. To the north of the project site is the 101 Freeway