



CARSON PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: February 27, 2024
FROM: Christopher Palmer, AICP - Planning Manager
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SUBJECT: Design Overlay Review 872-04 Mod No. 1, Special Use Permit 1-68 Mod No. 4

PROJECT/APPLICANT INFORMATION

Project Summary: A request for approval of a Modification to Special Use Permit (SUP) number 1-68 and Modification to Design Overlay Review (DOR) number 872-04 for the construction of two petroleum storage tanks, located at an existing petroleum storage tank farm.

Project Location: 2365 E. Sepulveda Boulevard (APN # 731-501-1013)

Zoning: Manufacturing, Heavy- Design Overlay (MH-D)

Project Applicant: Olympus Terminals, LLC

Project Owner: Olympus Terminals, LLC

I. OVERVIEW

A. Introduction

This project, which is located at 2365 E. Sepulveda Boulevard, involves the following two applications:

- The tank farm facility was approved by the County of Los Angeles prior to the City's incorporation under their requirements for a SUP. The City has adopted the findings and requirements for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to be applicable to active SUPs issued by the County of Los Angeles. After a Conditional Use Permit has been granted, modification of the conditions of the permit, including additions or deletions, may be considered upon filing of an application by the owner of the subject property or his authorized representative in accordance with (CMC) 9173.1 and is processed under CMC 9172.21(G). This application is for the modification of the existing entitlement with the installation of two petroleum storage tanks at the existing petroleum storage tank farm. Per CMC 9172.21(G)(2), the proposed modification of conditions extends beyond the intent of the original approval, so a public hearing is required to be held. Per CMC 9172.21(G)(3), the decision on the proposed modification shall be in the same manner as for a Conditional Use Permit (i.e., under CMC 9172(D)-(E)). Furthermore, even if the proposed development were treated as a separate project rather than a modification, the

same decision standard would apply, because petroleum storage uses involving an amount greater than 2,500 barrels are conditionally permitted in the MH Zone per CMC 9141.1.

- Section 9172.23 of the Carson Municipal Code (CMC) stipulates that projects located within the Design Overlay District that have a construction valuation of \$50,000 or more are subject to approval of a Design Overlay Review (DOR) by the Planning Commission. This application is for the modification of DOR 872-04 in accordance with (CMC) 9173.1.

B. Project Description

The subject 14.8-acre tank farm located northwest of the intersection of Sepulveda Boulevard and Intermodal way has been in continuous operation since 1968 and currently contains 22 petroleum storage tanks. This application is to allow the installation of two additional storage tanks and related piping, pumps, and control systems to an existing petroleum storage facility.

As depicted in the attached site plan (Attachment 1), the two storage tanks are proposed in the eastern section of the property along Intermodal Way. The first tank measures 64 feet in height and 41 feet in diameter, with a capacity of 15,000 barrels. The second tank stands at 64 feet tall, with a diameter of 78 feet, accommodating a capacity of 54,000 barrels. Each tank will rest on a separate concrete foundation equipped with a leak detection system. Additionally, reinforcement plates will be welded to the floor to provide added strength in areas of concentrated loads, such as columns. Earthen dikes and concrete secondary containment walls will be constructed and maintained, including access roads surrounding the tank areas. The tanks will feature a cylindrical shape and will be constructed with a white steel roof and shell, mirroring the shape, size and color of the existing tanks on site.

Landscaping consisting of a mixture of trees, a grass lawn, and shrubs is provided along the street frontages of Sepulveda Boulevard and Intermodal Way, extending to both the front parking lot and the area behind the office building. Moreover, fencing along Sepulveda Boulevard and Intermodal Way includes a maintained vine hedge, providing screening from public view. To bolster security measures, additional fencing is proposed along the western property line adjacent to the Dominguez Channel. Furthermore, a CMU block wall is proposed to encircle the tanks within the property line.

The property features two access points: one driveway situated on Intermodal Way and another on Sepulveda Boulevard. Complementing the existing infrastructure of 22 storage tanks, the site incorporates various essential facilities such as an office building, a dedicated control room, and a parking area. Additionally, the site is equipped with intricate piping and pumping systems essential for operational processes, a heating system comprising a boiler and heat exchangers, as well as truck loading and unloading facilities. Furthermore, the site is equipped with necessary vapor recovery and disposal systems, ensuring continued compliance and efficiency in waste management protocols.

The stored petroleum products, comprising biodiesel and gasoline, will be conveyed to the site from vessels through pipelines and dispatched from the site via truck unloading racks. The proposed project does not require the addition of new employees and is anticipated to result in an additional seven truck trips per day compared to the current volume.

1. Land Use Information

The project site is surrounded by industrial uses on all sides: an intermodal container transfer facility to the east and north, an oil refinery to the west, and an intermodal chassis leasing company to the south. As previously mentioned, the property is developed as a petroleum storage tank farm.

The following table summarizes the surrounding land uses, zoning, general plan designations:

Land Use Summary Table

	Existing Use	Zoning	General Plan
Subject Site	Petroleum Storage Tank Farm	Manufacturing, Heavy -Design Overlay (MH-D)	Heavy Industrial (INH)
North of Subject Site	Intermodal Container Transfer Facility	Manufacturing, Heavy -Design Overlay (MH-D)	Heavy Industrial (INH)
South of Subject Site (across Sepulveda Blvd)	Intermodal chassis leasing	Manufacturing, Heavy (MH)	Heavy Industrial (INH)
East of Subject Site	Intermodal Container Transfer Facility	Manufacturing, Heavy -Design Overlay (MH-D)	Heavy Industrial (INH)
West of Subject Site (across The Dominguez Channel)	Oil Refinery	Manufacturing, Heavy -Design Overlay (MH-D)	Heavy Industrial (INH)

- As previously stated, the property is located within the MH-D Zone and has a General Plan Designation of INH. The MH-D Zone provides areas for the full range of industrial uses which are acceptable within the community, with provisions for controlling any adverse effects upon the more sensitive areas of the City. The allowed uses in the zone include manufacturing and storage of various products, logistics, resource extraction, and others. The INH General Plan Designation permits operations which are more intensive and may have nuisance or hazardous characteristics, which for reasons of health, safety, environmental effects, or general welfare, are best segregated from other uses. Extractive,

primary processing, rail operations, and food processing industries are typical of this designation.

II. ANALYSIS

A. General Plan Consistency

The proposed development project is consistent with the General Plan and General Plan designation (INH) of the site for the following reasons:

- The Land Use Element of the City of Carson General Plan includes Policy LUR-G-1: “Maintain a balanced land use program that promotes a diversified economic base and capitalizes on Carson’s location and assets, strong industrial economy, access to major freeways, rail corridors, airports, and the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, and the presence of California State University, Dominguez Hills.” The current petroleum storage tank farm enjoys a strategic positioning, situated approximately 1,000 feet from Interstate 710, with direct piping connections from nearby ports. Furthermore, the proposed project aims to enhance productivity, building upon the established longevity of its operations.
- The Land Use Element of the City of Carson General Plan includes Policy LUR-G-14: “Ensure that future industrial development is inharmony to the extent possible with adjacent residential areas. To this end, new logistics buildings should ideally have easy access to freeways and the Alameda corridor. When feasible, truck routes should be designed to prevent trucks passing next to residential areas.” The proposed project aligns with this policy as it is situated within an established petroleum storage tank farm, surrounded by extensive industrial operations on all sides. Additionally, the tank farm is positioned along Sepulveda Boulevard, a designated truck route, and will continue to utilize this route.

B. Zoning Ordinance Compliance

The proposed development project is consistent with the Zoning (“MH-D”– Manufacturing, Heavy- Design Overlay) designation of the site. The existing facility is conditionally approved via SUP 1-68 and complies with all relevant sections of the site development standards, encompassing site planning and design, height of buildings and structures, compatibility with the General Plan and convenience and safety of circulation for pedestrians and vehicles.

1. DOR 872-04 Mod. 1

The proposed development satisfies the criteria for DOR approval as outlined in CMC 9172.23 (D). Not only does the project align with the General Plan, but it also harmonizes with the design and scale of both existing and projected developments in the surrounding industrial area. Additionally, the project ensures efficient vehicle circulation, further enhancing its compatibility with the locality.

2. SUP 1-68 Mod. 4

The proposed project for expansion of an existing petroleum tank farm by two tanks aligns with the criteria for approval of a modification to SUP 1-68. Situated within a heavy industrial area, the subject property conforms to the General Plan Land Use Designation of Heavy Industrial and the MH zone. The project site is designated for heavy industrial use, and its design ensures compliance with all Fire Department requirements, including adequate water supply and circulation for fire protection. Vehicular ingress and egress are facilitated via Intermodal Way, linking to Sepulveda Boulevard to the south. Regional access is available to the north via the 405 Freeway through Alameda Street and to the east via the 710 Freeway through Sepulveda Boulevard. Furthermore, the project complies with the conditions of approval of SUP 1-68.

C. Public Hearing Notice

Public Notice (Attachment 3) was given in accordance with Part 7 of the CMC. Notice of public hearing was posted to the project site and mailed to property owners and occupants within a 750' radius by February 14, 2024. The agenda was posted at City Hall no less than 72 hours prior to the Planning Commission meeting.

D. Environmental Analysis

The proposed request for approval of a Modification to Special Use Permit (SUP) number 1-68 and Design Overlay Review (DOR) number 872-04 for the installation of two additional storage tanks and related piping, pumps, and control systems to an existing petroleum storage facility is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332, in-fill development. Moreover, the project adheres to the requirements of all prior approvals on site, including the approval of Modification to SUP No.3, which encompasses the associated Mitigated Negative Declaration.

E. CFD/DIF Discussion

In On April 16, 2019, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 19-1931 to implement the City's Interim Development Impact Fee ("IDIF") Program. Developments consisting of new construction of less than 10% of the on-site building footprint are exempt.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In the judgement of staff, the project is consistent with the General Plan and General Plan Land Use Designation. The project design is compatible with existing and anticipated development in the area consisting of heavy industrial uses. The project provides adequate vehicle circulation; furthermore, the proposed project aims to enhance productivity, building upon the established longevity of its operations.

Staff recommends the Planning Commission:

- **ADOPT** Resolution No. 24- __, entitled “A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON FINDING A CEQA EXEMPTION AND CONDITIONALLY APPROVING MODIFICATION NUMBER 4 TO SPECIAL USE PERMIT (SUP) NUMBER 1-68 AND MODIFICATION NUMBER 1 TO DESIGN OVERLAY REVIEW (DOR) NUMBER 872-04 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO PETROLEUM STORAGE TANKS, LOCATED AT AN EXISTING PETROLEUM STORAGE TANK FARM.”

ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Development Plans
- 2) Vicinity/ Zoning Map
- 3) Public Hearing Notice
- 4) Draft Resolution No 23- _____.
 - A. Legal Description
 - B. Conditions of Approval