



CITY OF CARSON

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

PUBLIC HEARING: August 10, 2010
SUBJECT: Conditional Use Permit No. 821-10
APPLICANT/OWNER: Altmans
22020 Recreation Road
Carson, CA 90745
REQUEST: Addition of an electronic message sign to an existing freeway-oriented pylon sign in the CA zone district and within Redevelopment Project Area No. 1.
PROPERTY INVOLVED: 22020 Recreation Road

COMMISSION ACTION

____ Concurred with staff
____ Did not concur with staff
____ Other

COMMISSIONERS' VOTE

AYE	NO		AYE	NO	
		Chairman Faletogo			Graber
		Vice-Chair Park			Saenz
		Brimmer			Schaefer
		Diaz			Verrett
		Gordon			

I. Introduction

Date Application Received: May 6, 2010

- Conditional Use Permit No. 821-10

Property Applicant/Owner

- Altman David J. CO TR, 22020 Recreation Rd. Carson, CA 90745

Representative

- George Saelzler, Electra Vision Advertising Corp.
731 West 11th Street, Claremont, CA 91711

Project Address

- 22020 Recreation Road, Carson, CA 90745

Project Description

The applicant requests the approval of a conditional use permit to replace an existing static internally illuminated sign cabinet with a new colored LED electronic reader board display located at the upper panel of an existing freeway pylon sign. The new electronic reader board would add 384 square feet of electronic message to the existing pylon sign. The existing amber electronic reader board would be retained. In total, the pylon sign will have 768 square feet of electronic reader board display. The pylon sign would also retain the four individual non-illuminated brand panels located on each side of the sign structure.

The subject property is used for recreation vehicle sales and service and is located in the CA (Commercial Automotive) zoning district. Section 9131.1, Uses Permitted, of the Carson Municipal Code (CMC) requires all electronic message center signs to obtain a Conditional Use Permit (CUP).

Existing Pylon Sign

On January 29, 2002, the Planning Commission approved Conditional Use Permit No. 523-01 and Variance No. 437-01 for a 50-foot-high pylon sign with an electronic reader board. The electronic reader board uses amber LED lights and measures 8 feet high by 24 feet wide. Above the reader board is an 8-foot-high by 24-foot-wide internally illuminated cabinet that displays the Altman's logo in blue, white, and red letters. A sculptured top cap uses the same color and material as the pole and buildings and reads the "City of Carson" in blue acrylic letters.

Background

Use of Property

The recreational vehicle sales and services dealership has been operating at this location continuously since 1980. The property is developed with two commercial buildings consisting of a 15,470-square-foot recreational vehicle sales building and a



12,000-square-foot vehicle service building. A 1,500-square-foot recreational vehicle rental building built in 1970 is also located on the property.

Previously Approved Discretionary Permits

Design Overlay Review No. 107-80: Addition of a new auto service building and pole sign to an existing automobile dealership.

Design Overlay Review No. 730-00: Remodel and expansion of an existing recreation vehicle dealership. Approved by the Planning Commission and Redevelopment Agency in 2000 and 2001, respectively.

Conditional Use Permit No. 523-01 and Variance No. 437-01: Construction of a 50-foot-high electronic message center sign. The variance request was for construction above the 30-foot height limit. Approved by the Planning Commission on January 29, 2002.

Public Safety Issues

After consulting with the Public Safety Department it was determined that there is no zoning code enforcement case associated with this property.

Ordinance No.03-1279

Section 9138.15, Commercial, Automotive (CA) Development Standards, of the CMC establishes design guidelines, including sign requirements, for automobile dealerships in Carson. The subject property was included due to the freeway visibility of the RV dealership.

Section 9138.15(E) allows an electronic message sign along the freeway. One freeway-oriented pylon sign is permitted up to 30 feet in height above the freeway grade. The sign must be architecturally consistent with site development and subject to Planning Commission approval under a conditional use permit (CUP), which can only be approved if certain findings can be made.

II. Analysis

Location/Site Characteristics

The subject property is approximately 239,580 square feet or 5.5 acres and located at 22020 Recreation Road. Commercial uses and single-family residential dwellings surround the subject property. The subject property is bound by Recreation Road and the 405 Freeway to the south, and the Dominguez Channel to the north.

Zoning/General Plan/Redevelopment Area Designation

The subject property is zoned CA (Commercial, Automotive) and has a General Plan land use designation of Regional Commercial. The subject property is located within Redevelopment Project Area No. 1.



Applicable Zoning Ordinance Regulations

The proposed CUP is subject to the approval of a development plan in accordance with the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) procedures as provided in Section 9172.21 and subject to CMC Section 9138.15 (Commercial, Automotive).

Required Findings: Conditional Use Permit

Pursuant to Section 9172.21(D), Conditional Use Permit, the Planning Commission may approve the proposal only if the following findings can be made in the affirmative:

1. The proposed use and development will be consistent with the General Plan.
2. The site is adequate in size, shape, topography, location, utilities and other factors to accommodate the proposed use and development.
3. There will be adequate street access and traffic capacity.
4. There will be adequate water supply for fire protection.
5. The proposed use and development will be compatible with the intended character of the area.

It is staff's opinion that the required findings related to consistency and compatibility cannot be made in the affirmative. Staff has consistently informed the applicant that the replacement of the static cabinet sign for a new color LED electronic message center sign would not be supported but that it would be appropriate for the older amber LED electronic sign to be replaced. This situation is identical to the recent proposal by AEG for the two electronic marquee signs advertising the Home Depot Center. The existing amber LED electronic sign was replaced with a color LED electronic sign. The graphic capabilities of the color LED sign are clearly superior and enhance advertising capabilities.

The proposed color LED electronic sign provides newer technology which allows for color graphic images similar to photographs. The existing sign provides older technology that allows primarily for written text. The provision of two electronic signs would be an intensification that could be detrimental to the safety of drivers. The additional message board would add additional light and glare that could be an unnecessary distraction. In reviewing other electronic signs in Carson and surrounding areas, staff has been unable to find any similar example where two different electronic signs have been used together. It is staff's opinion that the combination of the signs is not customary and would create visual clutter.

Other electronic message signs along the 405 Freeway for auto dealerships, including the Carson Auto Row (Nissan and Honda), Toyota, Don Kott, Car Pros, and Cormier Chevrolet, are single boards while the proposed project would create two message boards on the same pylon sign. Because of proximity, the proposed project would draw attention away from the Home Depot Center sign. Allowing the applicant to have two electronic message signs would be an advantage over other properties in the Commercial Automotive District that only have one electronic message sign, and would be contrary to the purpose of the Commercial Automotive District in providing aesthetic harmony among dealerships.



The recreational vehicle dealership is a destination facility designed to attract customers from more distant areas. Freeway exposure is important for commercial businesses that are regional in nature. The recreational vehicle dealership already provides a business sign and an electronic message center sign on the freeway-oriented pylon sign. The proposal to replace the upper sign cabinet panel with a double-sided 8-foot-high by 24-foot-wide color LED electronic reader board would provide two dramatically different types of LED electronic display that would be in keeping with the Commercial Automotive District and Home Depot signs. Staff recommends that the applicant be encouraged to exchange the signs. As such, the Planning Commission could continue this public hearing and staff would prepare a resolution approving the new color LED electronic sign as a replacement to the existing electronic message sign.

III. Environmental Review

Pursuant to Section 15270, a recommendation for denial is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

IV. Conclusion

It is staff's opinion that allowing for a second electronic message center sign is inappropriate for the area and would cause visual blight and additional distractions for drivers. The existing pylon sign with one electronic message center sign and one static sign is effective for the business. Intensifying the electronic message center sign would be out of character with the area and in conflict with the Carson Auto Row vision and the policies of the General Plan.

V. Recommendation

That the Planning Commission:

- **DENY** Conditional Use Permit No. 821-10; and
- **WAIVE** further reading and **ADOPT** Resolution No. _____, entitled "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON DENYING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 821-10 FOR AN ADDITIONAL ELECTRONIC MESSAGE SIGN TO AN EXISTING FREEWAY PYLON SIGN LOCATED AT 22020 RECREATION ROAD."

VI. Exhibits

1. Resolution of Denial
2. Development Plans

Prepared by: Peter Raktiprakorn
Peter Raktiprakorn, Planner

Reviewed by: John F. Signo, AICP, Senior Planner

Approved by: Sheri Repp Loadsman, Planning Officer

[Signature]

CITY OF CARSON
PLANNING COMMISSION
RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF
CARSON DENYING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 821-10 FOR AN
ADDITIONAL ELECTRONIC MESSAGE SIGN TO AN EXISTING FREEWAY
PYLON SIGN LOCATED AT 22020 RECREATION ROAD**

**THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA,
HEREBY FINDS, RESOLVES AND ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:**

Section 1. An application was duly filed by George Saelzler of Electra Vision Advertising Corporation, on behalf of Altmans Winnebago, with respect to real property located at 22020 Recreation Road and described in Exhibit "A" attached hereto, requesting a conditional use permit, to add an additional color LED electronic message sign to an existing freeway-oriented pylon sign in the CA (Commercial, Automotive) zoning district and within Redevelopment Project Area No. 1. The new electronic sign would replace an existing static cabinet sign on the top portion of the pylon.

A public hearing was duly held on August 10, 2010, at 6:30 P.M. at City Hall, Council Chambers, 701 East Carson Street, Carson, California. A notice of time, place and purpose of the aforesaid meeting was duly given. Evidence, both written and oral, was duly presented to and considered by the Planning Commission at the aforesaid meeting.

Section 2. Evidence, both written and oral, was duly presented to and considered by the Planning Commission at the aforesaid meeting.

Section 3. The Planning Commission finds that:

- a) Pursuant to Section 9136.7 of the Carson Municipal Code (CMC), a Conditional Use Permit is required for all electronic message signs. Section 9172.21(D) of the CMC requires that the Planning Commission, by resolution, render its approval based on the ability to make affirmative findings for certain criteria. The proposed project does not comply with criteria (a) of this Section in that it conflicts with the policies of the General Plan and the Commercial Automotive District as described in Section 9135.15. General Plan Land Use Goal 7.5 encourages "adjacent land uses that are compatible with one another." Allowing the applicant to have two electronic message signs would be an advantage over other properties in the Commercial Automotive District that only have one electronic message sign, and would be contrary to the purpose of the Commercial Automotive District in providing aesthetic harmony among dealerships.
- b) The addition of an LED color reader board to an already existing electronic message pylon sign would be precedent setting especially relative to the freeway-oriented location, and would not be compatible with the surrounding area. The proposed project would essentially double electronic messages on the pylon sign and create unnecessary light and glare that may be detrimental to the safety of drivers in that the existing pylon is located at the inward bend of the 405 Freeway. The provision of one electronic message sign is adequate to promote business and attract customers.
- c) The existing pylon sign is located in close proximity to a regional Home Depot electronic message sign and the proposed project would detract from this sign and other signs in the area. Other dealerships along the 405 Freeway have one electronic message center sign and the proposed project would give an unfair advantage to the applicant. Furthermore,



the proposed project would encourage other businesses to intensify their electronic message signs or erect an electronic message sign of their own.

Section 4. Based on the aforementioned findings, the Commission hereby denies Conditional Use Permit No. 821-10, with respect to the property described in Section 1 hereof.

Section 5. The Secretary shall certify to the adoption of the Resolution and shall transmit copies of the same to the applicant.

Section 6. This action shall become final and effective fifteen days after the adoption of this Resolution unless within such time an appeal is filed with the City Clerk in accordance with the provisions of the Carson Zoning Ordinance.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 10th DAY OF AUGUST, 2010

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

SECRETARY



EXHIBIT "A"

Conditional Use Permit No. 821-10

COMMONLY KNOWN AS: 22020 Recreation Road and

Described as Follow:

PARCEL 1:

LOT 1 OF TRACT 27833, IN THE CITY OF CARSON, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 778 PAGES 68 TO 71 INCLUSIVE OF MAPS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY.

EXCEPT ALL OIL, NAPHTHA, GAS, PETROLEUM OR OTHER HYDROCARBON SUBSTANCES DEPOSITED IN, LYING UNDER OR FLOWING THROUGH SAID LAND, AND ALL METALS AND MINERALS THEREIN OR THEREON, BUT WITH NO RIGHT OF SURFACE OR SUBSURFACE ENTRY, ABOVE A BELOW A DEPTH OF 500 FEET FROM THE PRESENT SURFACE OF THAT PORTION OF LOT 1 WITHIN LOT 40 AND PORTIONS OF LUCERNE STREET AND 220TH STREET THAT WOULD PASS WITH A CONVEYANCE OF SAID LOT 40 OF TRACT NO. 4546, RECORDED IN BOOK 50 PAGES 21 AND 22 OF MAPS, FOR THE EXTRACTION OF SAME, AS RESERVED BY ETHEL HADDOK, A MARRIED WOMAN IN DEED RECORDED SEPTEMBER 16, 1963 AS INSTRUMENT NO. 309 IN BOOK D2182 PAGE 356 OFFICIAL RECORDS.

PARCEL 2:

THOSE PORTIONS OF LOTS 50 AND 51 OF TRACT 4546, IN THE CITY OF CARSON, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 50 PAGES 21 AND 22 OF MAPS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY, LYING GENERALLY NORTHERLY OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED LINE:

BEGINNING AT THE MOST EASTERLY CORNER OF THE LAND DESCRIBED IN PARCEL 2 OF DIRECTOR'S DEED D7426.1, RECORDED MAY 2, 1967 IN BOOK D3631 PAGE 120 OF OFFICIAL RECORDS IN SAID OFFICE; THENCE ALONG THE GENERAL SOUTHERLY LINE OF SAID PARCEL 2 THE FOLLOWING THREE COURSES (1) SOUTH 89°50'16" WEST 109.98 FEET; (2) NORTH 0°09'44" WEST 11.00 FEET; (3) SOUTH 89°50'16" WEST 9.69 FEET TO THE SOUTHERLY TERMINUS OF THAT COURSE DESCRIBED AS NORTH 00°09'44" WEST 33.24 FEET IN SAID PARCEL 2; THENCE ALONG THE SOUTHERLY PROLONGATION OF LAST MENTIONED COURSE, SOUTH 00°09'44" EAST 0.08 FEET TO THE EASTERLY CONTINUATION OF THAT CURVE DESCRIBED AS HAVING A RADIUS OF 1894 FEET AND A LENGTH OF 695.95 FEET IN THE GENERAL NORTHERLY LINE OF THE LAND DESCRIBED IN DEED ESTATES PARCEL 7439, RECORDED MARCH 22, 1960 IN BOOK D788 PAGE 546 OF SAID OFFICIAL RECORDS; THENCE WESTERLY ALONG SAID EASTERLY CONTINUATION OF SAID CURVE, FROM A TANGENT WHICH BEARS NORTH 88°10'53" WEST, THROUGH AN ANGLE OF 11°02'20", AN ARC DISTANCE OF 364.98 FEET TO THE EASTERLY TERMINUS OF SAID CURVE.

EXCEPT THAT PORTION OF SAID LAND DESCRIBED IN SAID PARCEL 2 OF SAID DIRECTOR'S DEED.

ALSO EXCEPT THEREFROM ALL OIL, OIL RIGHTS, MINERALS, MINERAL RIGHTS, NATURAL GAS, NATURAL GAS RIGHTS, AND OTHER HYDROCARBONS BY WHATSOEVER NAME KNOWN THAT MAY BE WITHIN OR UNDER THE PARCEL OF LAND HEREINABOVE DESCRIBED, TOGETHER WITH THE PERPETUAL RIGHT OF DRILLING, MINING, EXPLORING AND OPERATING THEREFROM AND REMOVING THE SAME FROM SAID LAND OR ANY OTHER LAND, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO WHIPSTOCK OR DIRECTIONALLY DRILL AND MINE FROM LANDS OTHER THAN THOSE HEREINABOVE DESCRIBED OIL OR GAS WELLS, TUNNELS AND SHAFTS INTO, THROUGH OR ACROSS THE SUBSURFACE OF THE LAND HEREINABOVE DESCRIBED AND TO BOTTOM SUCH WHIPSTOCKED OR DIRECTIONALLY DRILLED WELLS, TUNNELS AND SHAFTS UNDER AND BENEATH OR BEYOND THE EXTERIOR LIMITS THEREOF AND TO REDRILL, RETUNNEL, EQUIP, MAINTAIN, REPAIR, DEEPEN AND OPERATE ANY SUCH WELLS OR MINES, WITHOUT, HOWEVER, THE RIGHT TO DRILL, MINE, EXPLORE AND OPERATE THROUGH THE SURFACE OR THE UPPER 100 FEET OF THE SUBSURFACE OF THE LAND HEREINABOVE DESCRIBED OR OTHERWISE IN SUCH MANNER AS TO ENDANGER THE SAFETY OF ANY HIGHWAY THAT MAY BE CONSTRUCTED ON SAID LANDS, AS EXCEPTED BY WALTER A. ROLL, A WIDOWER, IN DEED RECORDED DECEMBER 24, 1959 AS INSTRUMENT NO. 552, AS TO LOT 51 AND AS EXCEPTED BY C.E. GRANT, IN DEED RECORDED JUNE 28, 1957 AS INSTRUMENT NO. 2226 AND BY DEED FROM GIACONO TRANI, ET AL., RECORDED DECEMBER 8, 1959 AS INSTRUMENT NO. 911, AS TO LOT 50.

