

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 13-017 approving Conditional Use Permit No. UP13-0007 for an 890 sq. ft. dental laboratory, subject to conditions of approval

Motion/Second: Commissioners Sandhu/Mohsin

AYES: 7

NOES: 0

X. NEW BUSINESS

X-1. Study Session on California Circle land use and future vision.

California Circle study area encompasses approximately 110 acres that is bounded by Interstate 880 to the west, Dixon Landing Road to the north, Penitencia Creek to the east, and residential uses to the south. This area was currently zoned Industrial Park.

Planning Director Steve McHarris addressed the Commissioners, recognizing City staff Planner Cindy Hom and Traffic Engineer Steve Chan, who assisted him with the preparation for this study session topic.

This would be an opportunity to review site conditions, opportunities, interests, land use, and planning possibilities, while also seeking Commissioner input and comments. There were older industrial buildings in this area, with high vacancy rates. One project application was anticipated for a residential project for 80 homes, in the California Circle area. It would need to come before the Commission at a future meeting for a possible General Plan amendment.

Chair Mandal wondered what was happening in the city, where industrial was often converting to residential homes. He wanted to learn if there was any way to develop in a different way, to keep residential in residential zones. Also he asked what could be done to attract more business to Milpitas in commercial/industrial areas.

Alternate Member Morris agreed completely with the Chair, and to look at all possible uses in California Circle area.

Commissioner Madnawat asked if the future proposal was for the whole study area and staff replied no. He felt housing was so easy and profitable for builders. Mr. Madnawat saw the need to keep industrial/commercial areas and to increase resistance toward housing, especially right next to a freeway. He preferred commercial use for this site.

Commissioner Sandhu stated this was one of the only areas that was industrial, still available. There was also a need for a place for community to gather, such as his own Gudhwara temple gathering. He sought to keep industrial use at the site discussed. He also referred to an idea for Indian temples concentrated in one area of the city.

Vice Chair Ciardella wanted to know the percentage of industrial versus housing and retail, citywide. Staff could reply later. He asked if California Circle was built out completely and staff replied nearly, yes, such that new projects would be considered infill. Mr. Ciardella also wished to know percent of vacancies (updated per chart).

Commissioner Mohsin agreed with Commissioner Sandhu's comments. There was a need for more religious places and a need for mixed use spaces. She encouraged faster response from staff on religious use applications and providing information to religious use applicants.

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Commissioner Barbadillo stated a need to put brakes on housing in the City. A business friendly approach must be done. He referred to EP5 program, to pursue getting business here. Staff Mr. McHarris suggested more business development with promotion not focused on housing, but more on business, may be needed.

Chair Mandal pointed out this study session was for visioning of the study area.

Commission Mohsin remarked that growth was connected to everything, and to consider that housing was an industry in the marketplace.

Chair Mandal suggested keeping in mind schools, when projects come forward. There was an issue of capacity, adding population and kids to the City.

Commissioner Luk expressed the strong need for a sustainable vision in Milpitas. It could be a long journey to reach the needed vibrant community setting. Also, he saw the need for space for R&D in Milpitas. He thought it would be a good idea to tour the site under discussion at this meeting.

Commissioner Madnawat pointed out there was no school at this site, and that was a problem for this site. A need for long term planning was demonstrated.

Planning Director McHarris continued with his presentation, identifying five constraints and many opportunities, seven specifically listed. He reported that there were many inquiries to City staff about land use for California Circle.

Chair Mandal noted some history: Milpitas offered San Jose several million to remove the waste facility 25 years ago, in order to develop. That did not work out, however. So at this time, with California Circle, there was a great opportunity for planning in this area.

Mr. McHarris explained what “infill transitioning” was and why it would be needed.

Alternate Member Morris asked for staff to define mixed-use, and the optimum balance of industrial, commercial and residential use for this area.

Mr. McHarris identified city interests in a listing of six items. Potential land uses were: residential (density feedback needed), residential/commercial mixed-use, and parks/trails/open space use. Land use and zoning options were listed as well.

Commissioner Mohsin asked if this topic would come back to the Commission and staff responded if that was the desired feedback from Commissioners. She also asked if density could be changed. Different types of mixed uses could be here. Staff could reply about viable commercial uses, based on specific density if residential was part of mix.

Vice Chair Ciardella asked about a creek that ran in the study area, which had flooded years ago. Staff would study a possible rising of the levy. Mr. Ciardella sought more detailed information on any formula about how high to raise homes, if a school would be built nearby and other factors related to a flood area.

Mr. McHarris revealed the planning possible for California Circle with visioning in five steps; with a specific plan designed in several steps. Staff sought input, as to whether the process identified conformed to what Commissioners would like to do.

Chair Mandal commended the Planning Director and his staff. It was good to come and talk conceptually, with a need for visioning in this study area.

Commissioner Mohsin felt the last part of the presentation should have been first. It made sense to understand mixed use process, and what good uses could be allowed. She emphasized a place where community could meet.

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Alternate Member Morris wanted to better understand the appropriate mix for mixed-use.

Vice Chair Ciardella remarked that when he recently drove through California Circle, the properties and the area was not kept up as well as it should be.

Chair Mandal invited speakers to the podium.

Mr. Cary Matsuoka, Superintendent of Milpitas Unified School District, was concerned about rate of development in the City overall. The School District appreciated being a stakeholder with the city. He responded on numbers of housing units in the development process and numbers being built presently. He quoted numbers of new students in next few years, and in the next decade anticipated. Four elementary schools were full at this time and there was an identified need for a K-8 school in the Transit Area. He suggested the City slow the approval of residential development projects.

Rob Means, 1421 Yellowstone, felt the industrial demand for space was low, based on national policies. He discussed statistics of a jobs-to-housing ratio. Ideal services were available near that Interstate 880 corridor, and there would soon be new lighted billboard signs at California Circle. Other topics of concern to Mr. Means related to density, parks/open space, and creek flooding gap that was remedied.

Elizabeth Ainsworth, President-elect of Milpitas Chamber of Commerce and a Milpitas resident, was very familiar with this area and had lived in Mill Creek Park when she first came to the city. There was a golden opportunity to put something beautiful, in a spot right in between the two new BART stations under construction. A “riverwalk” idea as shown by staff would be great, noting that north of California Circle and Milpitas (into Fremont) was all industrial.

A unanimous vote was taken to “close the public hearing” and was considered to be the conclusion of this segment of the Planning Commission meeting.

Alternate Member Morris requested the current jobs-to-housing ratio, and also to get the figures that the Superintendent was talking about from the school district.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM to the next meeting of June 26, 2013.

Motion to adjourn to adjourn the meeting

Motion/Second: Commissioners Madnawat/Luk

AYES: 7

NOES: 0

*Meeting Minutes drafted and submitted by
City Clerk Mary Lavelle,
acting as Recording Secretary*

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