



STAFF REPORT

DATE: January 9, 2024
PL21-0057 – 335 N. Quince Street

PROJECT NUMBER / NAME: PL21-0057 - 335 N. Quince Street / North County Transit District - Fleet Parking

REQUEST: A Conditional Use Permit to allow for the fleet vehicle storage and support to an existing bus maintenance facility owned and operated by the North County Transit District, East Division Maintenance Facility. The request also includes removal of existing site remnant foundations, site fences, pavement, lighting, and vegetation, and replacement with new parking lot paving, restriping, perimeter walls, lighting, access, and landscaping.

PROPERTY SIZE AND LOCATION: The 1.24-acre site is located at the southwest corner of N. Quince Street and Norlak Avenue and directly north of the Escondido Creek Channel, addressed as 335 N. Quince Street (Assessor's Parcel No. 232-091-20-00)

APPLICANT: North County Transit District (NCTD)

GENERAL PLAN / ZONING: GI (General Industrial/ M-1 (Light Industrial)

PRIMARY REPRESENTATIVE: Jason Yeager, Project Manager

DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS REQUESTED: Conditional Use Permit

PREVIOUS ACTIONS: Adjacent property - 2005-59-PPL for the existing NCTD maintenance and operations facility

CEQA RECOMMENDATION: Categorical Exemption – CEQA Guidelines Section – 15332, Class 32 (In-Fill Development Project)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval

REQUESTED ACTION: Approve Planning Commission Resolution No. 2024-02

CITY COUNCIL HEARING REQUIRED: ☐ YES ☒ NO

REPORT APPROVALS: ☐ Chris McKinney, Interim Director of Development Services

☒ Veronica Morones, City Planner



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BACKGROUND

The City approved prior site improvements to the property located immediately west of the project site (under 2005-59-PPL) for North County Transit District's ("NCTD") existing maintenance and operations. A Conditional Use Permit is required for the proposed expansion of NCTD's existing maintenance and operations into the project site for fleet vehicle storage and is subject to Section 33-1114 of Article 57 (Miscellaneous Use Restrictions). The 1.24-acre site is located at the southwest corner of N. Quince Street and Norlak Avenue and directly north of the Escondido Creek Channel, which is addressed as 335 N. Quince Street (Attachment 1).

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

North County Transit District ("Applicant") has submitted a request for the expansion of their existing maintenance and operations, referred to as the Breeze Operations East Site, into the project site, located easterly adjacent to the existing site, to serve as fleet vehicle storage and support to the existing NCTD maintenance facility. The Applicant proposes to remove the existing remnant foundations, ramps, various site fences, broken pavement; remove three (3) existing street entrances (one from Quince Street and two along Norlak Avenue); and remove perimeter vegetation. To accommodate the fleet vehicle storage expansion, the Applicant proposes to activate this underutilized light industrial property by improving the site with new parking lot paving, restriping, perimeter screening walls, lighting, landscaping, sidewalks, and creating access points from the existing maintenance and operations site for internal circulation.

A site plan showing general location of improvements, perimeter enhancements, and reoriented internal circulation, and the site photographic integration of the new fleet parking are provided under Attachment 2.

SUPPLEMENTAL DETAILS OF REQUEST

1. Property Size: 1.24 acres
2. Foundation/Walls/Paving: Remove remnant foundations, ramps, driveways & paved areas. Replace with new paved parking lot, restriping, and new internal circulation access points.
3. Lighting/Signs: Remove existing on-site light poles, street lights, and signs. Replace with light fixtures and required street lights. Signs will be processed under a separate permit.
4. Landscaping: Remove the existing landscape elements and replace with upgraded landscaping, parkway enhancements, sidewalks, screening, and fourteen street trees. A new irrigation system will be installed.
5. Hours of Operations: Maintenance facility operates 24 hours per day and 365 days a year.
6. Proposed Setbacks: Front: 10'-0", Street: 10'-0" with side and rear at 0'



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PROJECT ANALYSIS

1. General Plan Conformance:

The General Plan land use designation for the project site is General Industrial (GI), which allows for manufacturing, warehouse and distribution, assembly, and wholesale industrial opportunities. This includes outside storage, and supporting products or services for a primary-businesses.

One of the General Plans strategies related to industrial growth and integration that the proposed project compliments and embraces is Goal 10 as shown below. The proposed project provides a compatible use in that it expands an existing local transit agency use in immediate proximity of a Major Transit Stop and is scaled appropriately to the size of expansion. The proposed project would include enhanced landscaping, closure of existing curb cuts, as well as other site improvements that will enhance continuity between the project site and the existing operations adjacent to the west.

“GOAL 10: A variety of industrial uses located and designed to assure compatibility with adjoining land uses offering diverse jobs for the community.”

“Industrial Land Use Policy 10.7

Correlate the scale and amount of required improvements with the size of the project for businesses expanding their operations.”

2. Zoning Conformance:

The Light Industrial (M-1) zoning designation allows for a variety of light industrial activities such as assembling, manufacturing, storage warehousing and distribution, research/development, and support and service uses. Outdoor storage is permitted as an accessory use but is limited in scale and must be screened consistent with the requirements of Section 33-1114 of Article 57. The proposed project operations would conform to the operational requirements of Article 57, which include storage of vehicles in working order and in visibly ordered condition; prohibition of vehicle sales; and limitations of 48-hours for storage of non-operational vehicles. The proposed project includes site modifications consistent with the required development standards outlined within Article 57 and the Light Industrial (M-1) zoning district in that the existing maintenance facilities is the primary use and the proposed ancillary fleet storage as support to the overall operations; project site screening through construction of a 6'-0" perimeter wall; and enhanced landscaping of 10' feet wide and with fourteen (14) street trees.

Article 57 provisions:

Section (e) Fleet storage and tow yard storage. Fleet storage and tow yard storage shall be allowed as provided in any Permitted and Conditionally Permitted Principal Use Matrix and shall comply with the development standards of the zoning district, general development standards of subsection (a) above unless specified herein, and this section. No fleet storage or tow yard storage project shall be granted a permit unless the following requirements are satisfied:



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- (1) A vehicle that is not in working order shall not be stored on such premises for more than forty-eight (48) hours. Vehicles shall not be wrecked or dismantled; shall have hoods, trunks and doors closed; shall not be dirty or dusty; and shall not be parked or stored on public property or public rights-of-way. Junkyards and dismantling services are regulated by Chapter 15 of the Escondido Municipal Code.
- (2) Sale prohibited. No vehicle or any component of a vehicle shall be parked on public or private property advertising the vehicle or any other service or merchandise for sale.
- (3) Required building. A building shall be required to support tow yard storage services, if the use is maintained as a principal use, consistent with the general development standards of subsection (a) of this section; however, a building is not required to support fleet storage as a principal use.
- (4) Screening. Perimeter screening shall be by a solid, uniform fence or wall with a maximum height as specified in the ordinance of the zoning district. Solid fencing or walls shall be constructed of brick, block, stone or frame-stucco. An ornamental masonry wall shall be provided along all property lines that abut property used or zoned for residential purposes. Screening shall minimize the visual impact to the extent appropriate, through means of placement, barrier, or camouflage. Screening shall be designed to blend into the surrounding architecture or landscape so that the object or land use is not apparent to the casual observer. The face of all screen walls facing public rights-of-way shall be landscaped with shrubs, trees, and climbing vines. Use of walls and screening techniques shall meet crime prevention standards and provide graffiti deterrence elements.
- (5) Landscaping required. A five (5) foot wide planting area with trees shall be provided along the interior sides of screen wall. A separate landscaped planter shall be provided on-site with a minimum of five (5) feet wide dimensions along all street frontages, subject to Water Efficient Landscape Standards and street tree planting standards.
- (6) Tow trucks for tow yard storage. Storage or tow trucks is considered an integral part of the tow truck dispatching service which is the main permitted use. When subject to the conditions of the M-2 Zone or the WM General district of the South Centre City Specific Plan, the storage of these trucks must be located in the rear half of the lot and be enclosed by a six (6) foot high solid wall or fence with solid gates.
- (7) Fleet storage as a principal use. Demand analysis and mitigation as specified in section 33-1125 of this article.
- (8) Fleet storage as an accessory use. Accessory fleet storage areas must be incidental to a principal land use activity, and the accessory storage is located on the same site or lot as the primary use, and is considered an integral part of that business. Accessory outdoor fleet storage and must be located in a manner that minimizes the visual impact of the fleet storage through means of placement, barrier, or landscape screening to the extent appropriate. Accessory fleet storage shall not include any of the following: (A) a tow truck, tractor, trailer or semi-trailer, designed to pull or transport passenger automobiles; or (B) accessory display of rental, leasable, or for-sale vehicles or equipment. The accessory storage or display of such is permitted only if they are otherwise permitted in the zone in which the facility is located.



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The project site is located adjacent to other light industrial uses, as described below.

Proximity to other Light Industrial properties:

Northeast - Existing light industrial uses.

Southeast - Across Escondido Creek is the Downtown Specific Plan Area, subject to specific land uses.

Southwest - Existing light industrial uses.

Northwest - Existing light industrial uses.

SITE DESIGN

The Project consists of adding 56,100 square foot of paved area for fleet vehicle storage. The existing topography of the site is relatively flat and associated grading would include removal of existing foundations, ramps, landscaping, paving, and minor drainage improvements and BMP installation, which would be minimal. The project site is directly adjacent to the existing NCTD maintenance and operations site. The integration of the project site with the adjacent NCTD facility would allow for more efficient operations of the maintenance and operations, and provide consolidated fleet parking and vehicle storage areas. Proposed site improvements include the closure of three street curb cuts (one on Norlak Avenue and two on Quince Street) and replacement sidewalks; removal of fencing/gates and replacement with a 6'-0" concrete masonry perimeter wall; removal and replacement of landscaping (such as screening, parkways, street trees, etc.), as well as site lighting and street lights.

Fleet vehicle circulation would be reoriented internally between the project site and existing NCTD facility, with the main access provided from Norlak Avenue. The proposed expansion of the fleet vehicle storage consists of twenty-two full size van stalls (Revenue) and sixty-two vehicles (Non-Revenue) stalls for a total of eighty-four new parking stalls. No employee parking is proposed with the project, as the proposed expansion would not result in any new staff on-site. Due to the proximity to Escondido Creek an additional 10'-0" landscape buffer is proposed along with south perimeter fencing.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Guidelines list classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and as a result are exempt from further environmental review under CEQA. The project qualifies for an exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15332, Class 32 "In-fill Development Project" and staff prepared a Notice of Exemption for the project (Attachment 3). The project qualifies for the exemption as described further in the Findings of Fact, attached as Exhibit "C" to Resolution 2024-02 (Attachment 4)

PUBLIC INPUT

The Planning Division noticed the proposed project consistent with the requirements of both the Escondido Zoning Code and the State Law. Staff has not received any correspondence from the public regarding the project as of the preparation of this report.



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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff's review concludes the proposed project is consistent with the guiding principles identified in the Land Use and Community Form Element of the Escondido General Plan. The proposed project is designed in conformance with the applicable development standards, design guidelines, and the project will contribute to the revitalization of an underutilized site.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the proposed Conditional Use Permit, as described in this staff report. The draft Planning Commission Resolution No. 2024-02, including Exhibits A, B, C, and D thereto, is incorporated into this staff report as Attachment 4.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Location, General Plan Map, and Zoning Map
2. Site Photos and Simulation
3. CEQA Notice of Exemption
4. Draft Planning Commission Resolution No. 2024-02 including Exhibits A, B, C, and D



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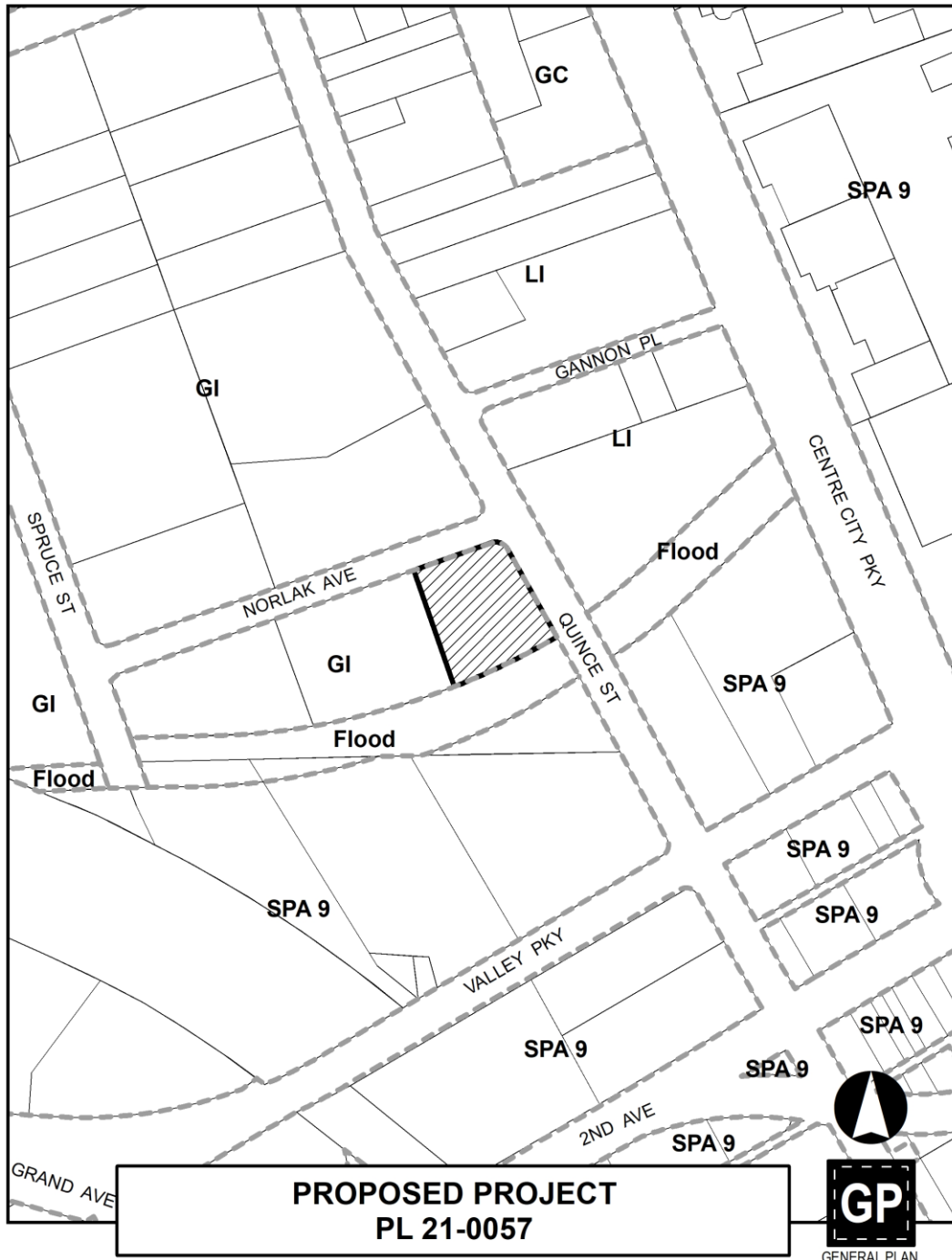
Attachment 1 Location Map, General Plan, and Zoning Map





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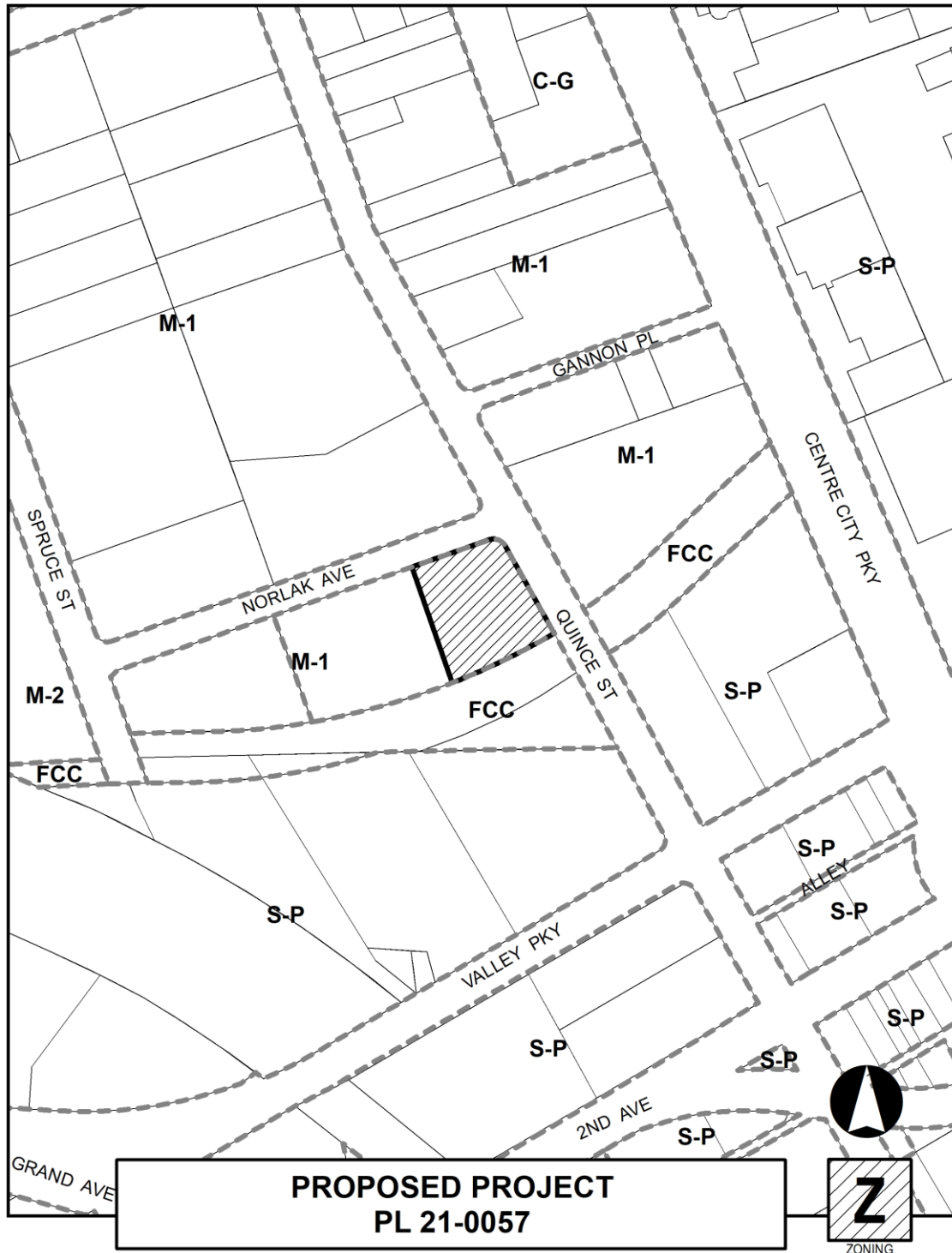
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ATTACHMENT 2 Existing Site Photos and Photo Simulation



Southwesterly view of intersection



Westerly property line along Escondido Creek



Looking west at the corner of Norlak Avenue and Quince Street



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PHOTO SIMULATION

Looking at the Southwest Corner of Norlak Avenue and N. Quince Street





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ATTACHMENT 3 Notice of Exemption

To: Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk
Attn: Fish and Wildlife Notices
1600 Pacific Hwy, Room 260
San Diego, CA 92101
MS: A-33

From: City of Escondido
Planning Division
201 N. Broadway
Escondido, CA 92025

Project Title/Case No: North County Transit District Fleet Parking / PL21-0057

Project Location - Specific: The project is located at on the southwest of the intersection of Norlak Avenue and North Quince Street, addressed as 335 N. Quince Street, Escondido (APN: 232-091-20-00)

Project Location - City: Escondido

Project Location - County: San Diego

Description of Project: A Conditional Use Permit to allow for the fleet vehicle storage and support to an existing bus maintenance facility owned and operated by the North County Transit District, East Division Maintenance Facility. The request also includes removal of existing site remnant foundations, site fences, pavement, lighting, and vegetation, and replacement with new parking lot paving, restriping, perimeter walls, lighting, access, and landscaping.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Escondido

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Name: Jason Yeager, Project Manager

Address: 1055 W. 7th Street, Suite 2900, Los Angeles, CA 90017

Telephone: 213-952-9233

☐ Private entity ☐ School district ☒ Local public Agency ☐ State agency ☐ Other special district

Exempt Status:

The project is categorically exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15332 Class 32, ("In-fill Development).

Reasons why project is exempt: The proposed project qualifies for an exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15332, Class 32 In-fill Development. CEQA Guidelines lists classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and as a result are exempt from review under CEQA.

The proposed project or its circumstances would not result in any exceptions identified in CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2. Among the classes of projects that are exempt from CEQA review are those projects that are specifically identified as urban in-fill development. CEQA Guidelines, Section 15332, defines in-fill development (Class 32 exemptions) as being applicable to projects meeting the following conditions:


- The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.
- The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five (5) acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.
- The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.
- Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.
- The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.



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Lead Agency Contact Person: Greg Mattson, AICP, Contract Planner Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 760-839-4544

Signature: 
Greg Mattson, AICP
Contract Planner

November 28, 2023
Date

☒ Signed by Lead Agency

Date received for filing at OPR:

☐ Signed by Applicant



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ATTACHMENT 4

**Draft Planning Commission Resolution No. 2024-02
including Exhibits - A, B, C, and D**