

**DATE ISSUED:** September 23, 2004 **REPORT NO. PC-04-150**

**ATTENTION:** **Planning Commission, Agenda of September 20, 2004**

**SUBJECT:** A1 SELF STORAGE - MIDWAY – PROJECT No. 31369. PROCESS 4.

**REFERENCES:** PC-04-084, Pacifica Self Storage – Project 5891  
P-03-210, Resco Self Storage – Project 3533  
P-03-088, Riviera Del Sol Self Storage – Project 2678  
P-01-172, Hancock Street Self Storage – Project 41-0508

**OWNER/APPLICANT:** Caster Family Enterprises – Tom Kearney

### **SUMMARY**

**Issue:** Should the Planning Commission approve a Planned Development permit to allow construction of a 124,019 square foot self-storage facility?

#### **Staff Recommendation:**

1. CERTIFY Addendum to Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 31369 and ADOPT Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program; and
2. APPROVE Planned Development Permit (PDP) No. 85412.

**Community Planning Group Recommendation:** The Midway Community Planning Advisory Committee considered the project at their meeting on May 12, 2004 and voted to unanimously approve the project 9-0-0.

**Environmental Review:** A Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for project Number 31369 and finalized September 3, 2004 in accordance with the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. A Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program (MMRP) will be implemented to reduce to below a level of significance, the potential environmental impacts identified from the environmental review process for the following resource areas: air quality, and historical resources (archaeology).

**Fiscal Impact:** The cost of processing this application is paid for by the applicant.

**Code Enforcement Impact:** None with this action.

**Housing Impact Statement:** The Inclusionary Housing Ordinance requires all new residential development of two units or more to provide affordable housing. This project does not propose any residential units. No housing would be demolished as part of the construction. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact housing supply or affordability.

## **BACKGROUND**

The 1.1 acre site is located at 3911 Pacific Highway in the Midway-Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan and the North Bay Redevelopment Project Area. The project site comprises an “L”-shaped portion (approximately 65%) of the city block bounded by Pacific Highway Frontage Road, Noell Street, Kurtz Street, and Estudillo Street. The project site has approximately 100 feet of frontage along Pacific Highway Frontage Road and is approximately 300 feet deep. The rear property line runs approximately 300 feet along Kurtz Street.

The project site is in an industrial/commercial area between Pacific Highway and the Marine Corps Recruit Depot to the southwest, and the San Diego Northern Railway (SDNR) Coaster rail tracks and Interstate 5 to the northeast. The primary use of the existing project site is an unused two-story commercial building formerly used as a clothing retail outlet. Adjacent land uses include commercial and industrial to the east (Noell Street), commercial office buildings to the west (Estudillo Street), a rail corridor to the north (Kurtz Street), and Pacific Highway to the south. The adjacent property to remain is R.W. Little (powder coating) light industrial. The project site has been used for commercial purposes for the past 50 years. Prior to commercial development, the site was open, undeveloped land.

The site is designated as Light Industrial in the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan and is zoned IS-1-1 (Industrial Small Lot). The IS-1-1 zone (Industrial – Small Lot) allows for small-scale industrial activities within urbanized areas to promote economic vitality and neighborhood scale development. The development regulations of the IS zone are intended to accommodate activities by providing reduced lot area, landscaping, and parking requirements.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Project Description:**

The proposed self storage facility would include demolition of the existing 48,000 square foot two-story building, excavation of approximately 8,500 cubic yards of soil, and construction of a new 124,019 square-foot three-story over basement self-storage facility providing approximately 900 storage units. The project requires a Planned Development Permit (PDP) to reduce the required parking and circulation. The project proposes 16 parking spaces in two surface parking lots. The project is proposed on an approximately 1.1 acre site at 3911 Pacific Highway. Addresses of existing buildings include: 3490 Noell Street, 3492 Noell Street, and 1945 Kurtz Street.

The proposed design and architectural style of the proposed structure is contemporary. The project's elevations show architectural features, such as trellises, roof overhangs, and buttresses. The three-story building with a basement would contain storage rooms and a management office. One surface parking lot containing five parking spaces with one driveway is proposed along Noell Street and one parking surface parking lot containing twelve parking spaces and two driveways is proposed along Kurtz Street.

Site work includes the construction of three new driveways (one to access the office from Noell Street, and two driveway entries to surface parking and loading from Kurtz Street), sidewalk underdrains, surface parking lots, pedestrian ramps, landscaping, and excavation for the basement and utilities. The project scope includes 6,600 square feet of landscaping over approximately 14% of the project site. The project scope includes enhanced corner treatment at Pacific Highway Frontage Road and Noell Street, and at the corner of Noell Street and Kurtz Street. Bollard lighting would be provided at each corner. An outdoor picnic area would be provided at the corner of Noell Street and Kurtz Street.

### **Community Plan Analysis:**

The project is within the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan, adopted May 28, 1991 by the San Diego City Council and amended by the San Diego City Council on January 19, 1999. The project has been determined to be consistent with the community plan which designates the site as "commercial" and "light industrial." The project conforms to the goals of the community plan as follows:

- The Midway community plan has guidelines for rooftop appurtenances and mechanical equipment which are visible from the public right-of-way and other public spaces. Rooftop appurtenances would be visually screened.
- Parking areas should be located toward the rear of the lot not directly visible from along Pacific Highway.
- The building signage facing Pacific Highway would be close against the exterior walls.
- Building bulk would be reduced through landscaping and building design through use of vertical buttresses, landscaped trellises, azurlite glass panels, and bollard lighting on the two primary corners (Pacific Highway Frontage Road and Noell Street; and Noell Street and Kurtz Street).

The existing community plan is currently undergoing update in coordination with the draft North Bay Conceptual Plan -- a vision for the Midway Area developed by the North Bay business community. The Project has also been reviewed for consistency with this draft plan.

- The project location is within the Dutch Flats neighborhood of the Conceptual Plan characterized as future commercial and mixed-use.
- Design themes for this area are proposed as warehouse/loft and neo-modernist recognizing that the Mediterranean/Mission style prevalent at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) and the Naval Training Center (NTC) may not be suitable for all types of new construction in the Midway Pacific Highway Corridor area. The Warehouse/loft style implies large-scale buildings appropriate for the major corridors with overall massing effect tempered with articulating surfaces and plane changes.

- The primary project corner at the corner of Pacific Highway and Noell Street would have transparent glass glazing to emphasize a pedestrian-friendly orientation. The pedestrian orientation would also be achieved through use of street-level trellises and off-sets in the building articulation at the street level.

### **Environmental Analysis:**

A Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for project Number 5891 as finalized March 23, 2004 in accordance with the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. A Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program (MMRP) will be implemented which will reduce, to below a level of significance, the potential environmental impacts identified from the environmental review process for the following resource areas: air quality, and historical resources (archaeology). Each of these impact areas are summarized below and further discussed in the attached Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study documents.

Geology - The project site is located within Geologic Hazard Zone 31 (high seismic hazard due to liquefaction and shallow water table). The geologic hazards have been adequately addressed by the "Report of Geologic Reconnaissance, Proposed A-1 Self Storage Project, 3911 Pacific Highway, San Diego, California," as prepared by Christian Wheeler Engineering, dated June 9, 2004. The geological reconnaissance report concludes that no geologic hazards of sufficient magnitude exist to preclude development of the site as proposed. Construction in conformance with the Uniform Building Code following recommendations of a qualified geotechnical engineer would satisfy the seismic design requirements.

Water Quality - A Water Quality Technical Report and Drainage Study were prepared to identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize runoff during construction, and runoff from post-construction conditions. Catch basin fossil filters would be used to treat stormwater runoff. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan will specify controls necessary to reduce runoff during construction. The site is not within the 100-year floodplain.

Air Quality – Site grading would occur over all of the 1.1 acre site; therefore, mitigation for dust would be required.

Health and Safety – The San Diego County Department of Environmental Health has no known cases files for the project site. No past activities are known to have produced environmental site contamination.

Historical Resources (Archaeology) - The project site has been previously identified as near the location of an archaeological site. Given that some portions of the project site may be previously undisturbed, mitigation monitoring is specified during site grading.

Historical Resources (Architectural) - The project would demolish the existing commercial building built in 1958. However, this property is not listed as potentially historic in the North Bay Redevelopment EIR. As such, no further historical evaluation was required.

## **Project-Related Issues:**

**Municipal Code Conformance** - A Planned Development Permit is required as the project proposes approval of two deviations: (1) to reduce the required parking from 124 to 16 spaces; and (2) to reduce the separation between the two proposed driveways connecting to Kurtz Street from 45 feet to 36 feet. All other aspects of the project conform to the requirements of the Municipal Code.

**Deviation for Parking Standards** – The project proposes deviation from the requirements of the Municipal Code for standard parking by proposing 16 parking spaces where 124 spaces would be required with strict adherence to the Code requirements. The Planning Commission has found this deviation appropriate for similar self-storage facility projects in the past because the self storage function does not lend itself to high trip generation rates and high parking requirements. The proposed 124,020 square foot self-storage facility is expected to generate approximately 248 average weekday trips (ADT), at a rate of two ADT/1000 square feet, with 15 a.m. peak hour trips and 22 p.m. peak hour trips. Because of this low projected traffic volume, a formal traffic study was not required. The minimum parking requirement for this 124,020 sq ft self storage facility is 124 spaces at a rate of 1 parking space/1000 sq ft (per SDMC Table 142-05F-for wholesale, distribution, and storage uses). The SDMC does not differentiate the parking requirement for self-storage facilities from other storage uses which generally have much less parking demand (approximately 1 parking space/10,000 sq ft). For a self-storage facility, the project proposes an acceptable number of 16 on-site parking spaces (1 space/7,750 sq ft). Staff supports this deviation. Six similar storage facility projects were analyzed each of which provided substantially reduced parking. The studies indicate that the average reduced parking rate is approximately one parking space per 8,600 square feet. If this rate were applied to the project, the parking requirement would be 15 spaces (at a rate of 1 space per 7,000 square feet).

**Driveway Separation Distance** – The project proposes primary parking and unloading at the rear of the project site consistent with the goals of the community plan. To provide for improved on-site circulation, two driveway entries off Kurtz Street are proposed. This would allow separate entry and exit paths to minimize disruption from loading and unloading activities. However, to appropriately configure the parking areas and unloading areas, a slightly reduced driveway separation distance is proposed. The Municipal Code normally requires 45 feet of full-height curb between driveways (SDMC 142.0560(j)(6)). The project proposes 36 feet between the two driveways along Kurtz Street. Staff supports this deviation given that Kurtz Street is one-way and traffic volumes are minimal.

**Airport Approach Overlay Zone (AAOZ)** - The project site is within the Airport Influence Area (AIA) and Airport Approach Overlay Zone (AAOZ), but not within the Airport Environs Overlay Zone (AEOZ) for Lindbergh Field operations. The subject property is within the 60 - 65 dB or greater Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL). In accordance with the Municipal Code at Chapter 13, Article 2, Division 2, "Airport Approach Overlay Zone" Table 132-02A, the project is exempt from the AAOZ regulations because the new structures would not exceed 30 feet. Because the subject property is outside of the 65 dB or greater Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL), an aviation easement is not required in accordance with Section 132.0309 of the Municipal Code.

Lindbergh Field Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) - The project scope complies with the land use planning guidelines of the Lindbergh Field Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP). The project would not pose a substantial hazard due to above-ground use or storage of large quantities of flammable or explosive substances on a site located beneath the airport approach surfaces delineated in the AAOZ. Storage facility operations would prohibit such storage in this facility. The proposed project would not intensify human occupancy of the site to an extent greater than 110 percent of the average intensity of existing uses within one quarter mile radius of the project site. Human occupancy would be limited to intermittent access to the storage facility site and the site employees.

North Bay Redevelopment Project Area - The project area is within the Redevelopment Area of the North Bay Revitalization project. As previously analyzed in the North Bay Environmental Impact Report (EIR), the project fits the broader redevelopment goals of the project area to eliminate and prevent the spread of urban blight and deterioration, attract growth, improve the vitality of the area, and enhance infrastructure facilities which improve the community. The proposed self storage facility would add increased presence along an industrial stretch of Pacific Highway. The exterior of the building has been designed with a pedestrian orientation in mind by providing exterior articulation and seating areas at the corner of Kurtz and Noell.

As identified in the North Bay Redevelopment EIR, the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor community is identified as an area for gradual change from conversion of vacant and underutilized properties to better use of the land through future redevelopment increasing density and intensity of development by converting commercial and industrial land uses to multiple uses. The Midway area was once considered almost exclusively industrial. However, rising land values have caused a shift from industrial to commercial. Today, most of the industrial land has been encroached upon by commercial uses. SANDAG growth estimates for the Midway/Pacific Highway Corridor community project an 80% increase in population from 2000 to 2030. Provision of a self storage facility in this location will serve the planned growth.

### **Conclusion:**

Staff finds that the project has been designed and adequately conditioned to ensure consistency with the recommended land use, design guidelines, and development standards in effect for this site per the adopted Midway Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plan, North Bay Redevelopment Plan, IS-1-1 zone, Coastal Height Overlay, Airport Influence Area, and Airport Approach Overlay Zone. Staff finds evidence to support the requested parking deviation and driveway separation deviation due to the design and operational parameters unique to the self-storage land use proposed. The project, when considered as a whole, will benefit the community by allowing for the development of a self-storage commercial use that will service the businesses in the immediate area and an anticipated large growth in the community over the next several years.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Approve Planned Development Permit No. 85412 (Project No. 31369) with modifications.
2. Deny Planned Development Permit No. 85412 (Project No. 31369) if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed.

**Respectfully submitted,**

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**Marcela Escobar-Eck**  
**Deputy Director, Project Management Division**  
**Development Services Department**

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**Cory Wilkinson, Project Manager**  
**Development Project Manager**  
**Development Services Department**

Attachments:

1. Aerial Photograph
2. Community Plan Land Use Map
3. Project Location Map
4. Project Data Sheet
5. Project Site Plan
6. Elevations
7. Sections
8. Floor and Roof Plan
9. Landscape Development Plan
10. Landscape Area Exhibit
11. Grading Plan
12. Street Cross Sections
13. Draft Permit with Conditions
14. Draft Resolution with Findings
15. Community Planning Group Recommendation
16. Ownership Disclosure Statement (*verified by applicant as current as of September 20, 2004*)
17. Project Chronology