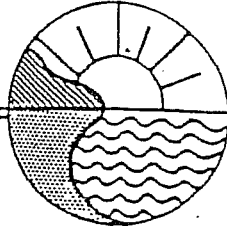


AGENDA



Planning Commission – City of Pacifica

DATE: March 1, 2010

LOCATION: Council Chambers
2212 Beach Boulevard

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION

AGENDA

1. **Discussion of Land Uses along Northern Palmetto Avenue (Northern Commercial Area)**

The purpose of a study session is to offer an opportunity for informal discussion with the Planning Commission. Any statements made by a Commissioner or staff member at a study session are informal only and are not to be considered commitments or guarantees of any kind.

The City of Pacifica will provide special assistance for disabled citizens upon at least 24-hour advance notice to the City Manager's office (738-7300). If you need sign language assistance or written material printed in a larger font or taped, advance notice is necessary. All meeting rooms are accessible to the disabled.

CITY OF PACIFICA

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 1, 2010

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Michael Crabtree, Planning Director 

SUBJECT: **Study Session Item No. 1:** Discussion of Land Uses along Northern Palmetto Avenue (Northern Commercial Area)

Background – This item was originally scheduled to be discussed at the Commission’s study session of February 1, 2010, but due to time constraints and other items on that agenda discussion was deferred to tonight’s study session.

The Planning Commission has requested a study session to discuss land uses along Northern Palmetto Avenue. Land use for the area in question, which extends from Ingrid B. Lacy School in the south to the RV Park in the north, is controlled by the applicable provisions of the zoning code and the City’s Local Coastal Land Use Plan (LUP). The LUP refers to the area as the “Northern Commercial Area”.

Existing Land Use – On the eastern side of Palmetto, from south to north, existing land uses in the Northern Commercial Area include a combined use of retail/office in front with self storage behind (or to the east), self storage, self storage, residence, a transmission/auto shop, a painting shop, vacant parcel, an auto body shop, and contractor’s offices. On the western side of Palmetto, from south to north, existing uses include the mobile home park, a residence with truck storage behind (or to the west), a bakery with a residence behind, a towing company with a residence behind, a radiator/auto repair shop, an animal clinic with a muffler shop behind, a recycling yard, an office, an auto wrecking business, a vacant lot, a public parking lot, and the RV Park. It should be noted that one of these uses (the truck storage business) does not have proper planning permits and is under code enforcement. The vacant lot south of the public parking lot is also subject to code enforcement action.

Zoning - With the exception of the mobile home park, which is zoned R-2 (Two-Family Residential) and the retail/office uses fronting the self storage facility, zoned C-2 (Community Commercial), all properties in the Northern Commercial Area are zoned C-3 (Service Commercial). The C-3 district is considered the City’s “light industrial” district and allows the following uses by right (meaning no use permit would be necessary, although because the area is located in the Coastal Zone, other discretionary permits such as a Coastal Development Permit would be required):

- (1) Warehouses and storage facilities;

- (2) Shops, such as glass, welding, cabinetry, sheet metal work, paint mixing, upholstery, machine shops, and sign shops;
- (3) Large-scale crafts production, including the use of a heating source or chemicals for the production of goods;
- (4) Car washes and service stations; and
- (5) Retail sales in conjunction with any of the above uses.

The following uses would be allowed with a conditional use permit (and other permits as required due to location in the Coastal Zone):

- (1) Processing, manufacture, or assembly plants or plants for the production of goods or the performance of services for wholesale distribution;
- (2) Auto body repair, paint, and upholstery;
- (3) Auto wrecking;
- (4) Refuse operations and recycling centers;
- (5) Full service or specialty auto repair not in conjunction with service stations;
- (6) Wholesale nurseries and lumber yards; and
- (7) All uses allowed as permitted or conditional uses in the C-1 and C-2 Districts, unless otherwise permitted in the C-3 District, and except residential uses.

The entire C-3 section of the zoning code is attached hereto.

LUP – The City’s Local Coastal Land Use Plan (the Coastal Zone equivalent of the General Plan) designates the Northern Commercial Area as “Commercial” (except for the mobile home park which is designated “Medium Density Residential”). The type of commercial use recommended for a given site or area is stated in the narrative for the particular site or area. In this case, the LUP states, in part:

“The bluff-top portion of the northern commercial area is one of the few remaining areas available for service commercial uses. Existing development in the area includes light industrial and auto-related uses. In order to be consistent with the existing development pattern and meet an important community need, service commercial uses are appropriate for this area.

New uses in the area should include such things as warehouse and storage facilities, welding and machine shops, auto-related uses and other light industrial uses. Visitor-serving uses are also appropriate for the area and can complement the nearby RV park. Uses, such as a restaurant, sports shop, small grocery store, or RV-related uses, should be encouraged. Compatibility between service commercial and visitor-serving commercial uses can be ensured through site specific review.”

The narrative goes on to discuss such issues as sensitivity to the coastal bluff top location, including erosion and adequate set backs, the importance of beach access, the protection of public view corridors, improving the streetscape, and the importance of the area in helping to establish the “visual image” of the City. The narrative also states that the mobile home park should be preserved

as a source of affordable housing. The entire LUP section for the Northern Commercial Area, along with the LUP map, is attached hereto.

Discussion – Although sympathetic to the argument that light industrial uses, such as a radiator shop and an auto wrecking yard, are not the ideal land use for a coastal bluff top, staff believes such uses are important for a well rounded community, and if such uses are to be phased out or otherwise discontinued from the Northern Commercial Area, an alternative location for such uses should be identified. Currently, the City does not have an abundance of C-3 designated land. The only areas other than the Northern Commercial Area that have such zoning are the Crespi Center (on Crespi Drive east of the Community Center), the strip of land along the north side of San Pedro Terrace Road, and the Quarry. The Crespi Center is currently developed, although redevelopment might afford the opportunity to accommodate uses similar to those in the Northern Commercial Area. The San Pedro Terrace Road property has access difficulties, and the Planning Commission at a study session in the last year or so indicated a preference that this land not be developed with light industrial uses. Although the Quarry is zoned C-3, it is planned for visitor serving type commercial uses and in any event will have to be rezoned to Planned Development if and when it is developed. There may be other properties that are candidates for C-3 zoning, but that would necessitate a zone change and possibly a General Plan amendment as well.

Should the Commission wish to initiate changes to the zoning or LUP for the Northern Commercial Area (a process that would necessitate approval by both the City Council and the California Coastal Commission), the future of the existing land uses and the lack of appropriately zoned land to accommodate such uses would need to be addressed early on in the process. In that regard, the issue of “amortizing” land uses (requiring certain land uses to be discontinued by a certain date) is a complex one, and usually involves compensation to the land owner. Staff would not recommend such an approach for the Northern Commercial Area, but if the Planning Commission wished to pursue such a course, input would be needed from the City Attorney, and staff would need direction from the City Council to initiate research into the matter.

Staff recalls that in the mid to late 1980’s, the City proposed to change the land use designations in the Northern Commercial Area to C-1, or visitor-serving commercial. Under such a change, future C-3 uses would not be allowed, although the existing uses would have been allowed to continue as legal nonconforming. Due to objections from the existing businesses in the area (and perhaps other factors), the proposal was dropped and resulted in the existing LUP language (encouraging both visitor serving and light industrial uses).

Conclusion – The above is not intended to be an exhaustive analysis of the Northern Commercial Area land use issues, but is provided to help frame the issues for Commission discussion and determine what, if any, next steps might be taken.

Attachments:

1. Article 12 - C-3 Regulations
2. LUP Narrative for Northern Commercial Area
3. LUP Map of Northern Commercial Area