



County of Monterey Planning Commission

Item No.

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

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February 26, 2025

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PLN210306 - CARMEL SELF STORAGE LLC

Public hearing to consider construction of a 68,760 square foot two-story self-storage facility with an office and bathroom (5 buildings), removal of one oak tree, and associated drainage, driveway, and fencing improvements partially within 200 feet of the Carmel River floodplain.

Project Location: terminus of Center Street near corner with Berwick, Carmel Valley, Carmel Valley Master Plan

Proposed CEQA action: Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to Section 15074 of the CEQA Guidelines

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the County of Monterey Planning Commission adopt a Resolution:

1. Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to Section 15074 of the CEQA Guidelines
2. Approve a Combined Development Permit consisting of:
 - a. Use Permit for a 68,760 square foot two-story self-storage facility with an office and bathroom (5 buildings);
 - b. Administrative Permit and Design Approval for development in the Site Plan Review and Design Control zoning overlay districts, colors and materials consist of various grays on metal and cement; and
 - c. Use Permit to allow development within 200 feet of the Carmel River floodplain; project includes the removal of one oak tree; and
3. Adopt a Condition Compliance and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan.

A draft resolution, including findings and evidence, is attached for consideration (**Exhibit B**). Staff recommends approval subject to 31 conditions.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Agent: Gail Hatter, Anthony Lombardo and Associates

Property Owner: Carmel Self Storage LLC

APN: 169-131-024-000

Parcel Size: 2.04 acres

Zoning: Heavy Commercial with Design Control, Site Plan Review and Residential Allocation
Zoning District overlays (HC-D-S-RAZ)

Plan Area: Carmel Valley Master Plan

Flagged and Staked: Yes

Planner: Mary Israel, (831) 755-5183, israelm@countyofmonterey.gov

SUMMARY:

The project is located at the terminus of Center Street near the intersection with Berwick Drive, Carmel Valley, adjacent to the Berkwick Manor subdivision, and is subject to the policies of the County of Monterey 2010 General Plan (General Plan), Carmel Valley Master Plan (CVMP) and regulations of the Monterey County Inland Zoning Ordinance (Title 21). The narrowest property boundary of the subject parcel fronts Carmel Valley Road. The proposed project includes construction of an 68,760 square foot two-story self-storage facility comprising of 5 buildings with an office and bathroom within; removal of one protected oak tree; and installation of drainage facilities, driveway, onsite wastewater system, and fencing. The proposed entrance is directly from Center Street.

At it's October 30, 2024 meeting, the Planning Commission considered the proposed project and continued the project to allow the applicant time to address concerns raised in the hearing. Key concerns to be addressed included project size and bulk, public trail access across the property, and conflicts between project parking and the access easement to the neighboring property. Three months have passed since the first hearing of this project by the Planning Commission on October 30, 2024. In that time, the applicant has redesigned in several ways to meet the Commisioners' requested changes and needed clarifications in order to bring the project forward at this meeting. HCD-Planning received and reviewed more than one resubmittal since the first hearing to ensure the design and presentation best meets the Commissioners' requests for redesign and clarification.

As shown in the updated plans (**Exhibit B**), the applicant created a walking access area between the top of slope and Building A with a minimum width of 6 foot and at other places wider than 10 feet by reducing the footprint of Building A by approximately 5 feet on the west end and by approximately 5 feet on the south end and amending the angle of the buildings away from the south property line. The change in size and orientation of Building A also made more room in the entrance/access easement area. Finally, the total height of Building A was reduced from 35 feet to 28 feet, 4 inches above average natural grade. The lowest building height is 26 feet, 7 inches. EHB staff reviewed the changed position of Building A with respect to the proposed onsite wastewater system and found it would be supportable. HCD Environmental Services staff reviewed the project redesign with Title 16 and state regulations and found it consistent. HCD Engineering Services reviewed the entrance design and found sufficient space for the parking lot and entry of larger vehicles. Staff find the proposed development can be supported as now proposed.

The project would include approximately 442 private storage units of varying sizes (5 by 5 feet up to 10 by 30 feet) within 5 two-story buildings. The storage units would not include electrical outlets, lighting, or plumbing fixtures. Additionally, there would be no hose bibs available for renters or the public. Three employees would attend to the facility. The bathroom adjacent to the office would be accessible during office hours and would require a key from the staff. The mini-warehouse storage facility would employ three people. Office hours would be 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and gate hours would be 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., 7 days per week. On-site security measures include limited site access and exterior and hallway cameras. During operation, the project site would be accessible via two keypad operated vehicle gates and a keypad operated pedestrian gate on Center Street. The gates would require an access code and would be locked from 8:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. daily. Signs would be posted within the facility reminding visitors that there is a 5 miles per hours speed limit, the

direction of the exits, and requesting visitors no use the high beam headlight function on their vehicles. The project would provide four standard parking spaces and one accessible parking space adjacent to the office.

The subject property contains a 20-foot utility easement along the western property line and a 60 foot driveway and utility easement at the southwest corner of the parcel. In 2022, a Parking and Drive Easement and Maintenance Agreement was executed and recorded (Document No. 2022048093) which gave the owner of the subject property the exclusive right to access and park vehicles on a certain portion of the 60 foot easement (see sheet C4, **Exhibit A, plans**). HCD-Planning and HCD-Engineering staff has reviewed the site plan of the proposed project for potential conflict between the parking area and the access area as shown in sheet SU1.1 of the attached project plans (Exhibit B). Staff found conformance with this easement and found no conflicts exist.

The project site is within 200 feet of the Carmel River top of bank for which a Use Permit has been applied. The plans have been revised since the Planning Commission's first hearing of the project to add clarity. They now show the limits of the 100-year flood zone (FEMA area "AE" which Title 21 section 21.64.130.C.4 defines as "floodway fringe") and the extent of the area between 100-year flood and 500-year flood (FEMA area "shaded X," 2 percent annual chance of flooding, which Title 21 does not define) while still indicating the the 200 foot distance from the river's top of bank by a green line. No development is proposed in the floodway fringe. All structures are in the 500-year flood zone (FEMA area "unshaded X") which has minimal flood hazard. The structures are designed to have a final floor elevation more than 10 feet above the 100-year floodplain. A project-specific biological report (HCD Library Document No. LIB220332) found that proposed development is located at a distance from the Carmel River riparian corridor where it would not directly impact environmentally sensitive habitats. However, during environmental review (see discussion below) potential indirect impacts that could result during construction were identified. Mitigation measures and Best Management Practices are applied to ensure protection from inadvertent impacts to the riparian corridor, amphibians and reptiles that have the possibility to be present, and raptor/protected avian species nest avoidance during construction phase.

Public Comment

The County received oral comments at the October 30, 2024, Planning Commission hearing and written comments since the hearing (**Exhibit I**) which are discussed in **Exhibit A**.

DISCUSSION:

A detailed discussion is attached as **Exhibit A**.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21083 and CEQA Guidelines Sections 15063(a) and 15063(b)(2), the County of Monterey as Lead Agency completed environmental review to determine if the project may have a significant effect on the environment. The County prepared an Initial Study and draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for this project (**Exhibit E**). The MND was filed with the County Clerk on June 21, 2024, and circulated for public review and comment from June 21 to July 22, 2024 (SCH No. 2024060941).

The Initial Study and draft MND identified potentially significant impacts to biological resources and archaeological/tribal cultural resources. Staff has proposed mitigation measures to reduce the identified impacts to a level of less than significant. Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-5 (Condition Nos. 19 through 23) would reduce the potentially significant impacts to California red-legged frog, Western pond turtle, and riparian habitat due to construction activities through the implementation of best management practices and habitat protection fencing, preconstruction survey and avoidance measures. Mitigation Measures CR-1, CR-2 and TCR-1 (Condition Nos. 24 through 26) address the potentially significant impact to unknown archaeological resources that were not found during a Phase II survey but may be accidentally uncovered and disturbed through monitoring by a contracted archaeologist and a Tribal Cultural Monitor, as well as the groundwork for a site-specific Cultural Resources Discovery Response Plan in the event that resources are discovered.

During public review of the IS/MND, the County received comments from Deborah Castles of Anthony Lombardo and Associates (agent representing the project) expressing a number of edits to the public draft and a comment letter from staff at Monterey Bay Air Resources District (**Exhibit F**). The comment letters proposed edits which staff found did not meet the criteria for recirculation under CEQA Guidelines Section 15073.5.a and b. Therefore, and as discussed in detail in **Exhibit A**, staff prepared a redline version of the IS/MND to address public comment through clarification and amplification (**Exhibit G**). The MND concluded that the proposed mitigation measures and conditions of approval effectively address all project issues and will mitigate all potentially significant impacts to less than significant.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The project was reviewed by the appropriate groups within Housing and Community Development (HCD-Planning, HCD-Engineering Services, HCD-Environmental Services) as well as the Environmental Health Bureau and Monterey County Regional Fire District. The respective agencies have recommended conditions and mitigation measures, where appropriate, to ensure that the project will not have an adverse effect on the health, safety, and welfare of persons either residing or working in the neighborhood.

LUAC:

The project was referred to the Carmel Valley Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) for review. The LUAC reviewed the project at a duly noticed public meeting on May 1, 2023 and voted in a unanimous vote (5 yes, 0 no, 1 absent) to recommend approval of the project with recommended changes (see **Exhibit D**). The committee suggested the developer reduce the project size for visual impact and to offer a social trail as public access on the rear of the property. The LUAC suggested the developer add oak trees on the south boundary of the property and to adjust the design to be in keeping with a rural character. The applicant was present and agreed to consider the recommendations but did not find formalizing the social trail at the time with explanation given in a letter staff about the steep slope and environmentally sensitive habitats at the rear of the property (**Exhibit J**). With additional feedback from the Planning Commission in the last hearing, the applicant reduced the size of Building A and altered its orientation to accommodate the social trail on flatter terrain and added a painted crosswalk in the entry area outside of the path of access for the adjacent

parcel, APN 169-131-025-000. A red-striped area on the plans indicates where public will be allowed to pass freely on a relatively flat area outside Building A. Responsive updates to exterior colors, façade design, building height and the landscaping plan are also shown in the current plans.

Prepared by: Mary Israel, Supervising Planner

Reviewed and approved by: Melanie Beretti, AICP, Chief of Planning

The following attachments are on file with the HCD:

Exhibit A - Discussion

Exhibit B - Draft Resolution, including:

- Recommended Conditions of Approval
- Site Plan, Floor Plans, Elevations & Colors and Materials

Exhibit C - Vicinity Map

Exhibit D - Carmel Valley LUAC Meeting Minutes for May 1, 2023

Exhibit E - Public Review Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

Exhibit F - CEQA Comments

Exhibit G - Redline Version of the IS/MND

Exhibit H - CalAm Fire Safety Service Letter

Exhibit I - Public Comments received after the first Planning Commission Hearing

Exhibit J - Letter from applicant on possible trail, aesthetic concerns of the LUAC

Exhibit K - Board Reso. 04-029 approving the storage facility on the adjacent parcel

cc: Front Counter Copy; Planning Commission; Monterey County Regional Fire District; HCD-Engineering Services; HCD-Environmental Services; Environmental Health Bureau - Land Use; Mary Israel, Planner; Fionna Jensen, Principal Planner (WOC); Carmel Self Storage LLC, Property Owner; Gail Hatter, Agent; Patricia and Tracy Kaufman, Interested Party; Carmel Valley Association, Interested Party; Michael Spicer, Interested Party; Mary Lou Gomez, Interested Party; K.F. Mayer, Interested Party; Jackie Menke, Interested Party; Joe Moita, Moita Law, Interested Party; Michael Hagerty, Interested Party; Karen Wood, Interested Party; The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); Laborers International Union of North America (Lozeau Drury LLP); LandWatch; Project File PLN210306