



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Action on a new data center at 1111 Comstock Street

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Attachments: 1. Conditions of Approval, 2. Development Plans, 3. Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, 4. Response to Comments, 5. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, 6. Agenda Report

| Date | Ver. | Action By | Action | Result |
|-----------|------|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| 11/4/2020 | 1 | Development Review Hearing | | |

REPORT TO DEVELOPMENT REVIEW HEARING

SUBJECT

Action on a new data center at 1111 Comstock Street

File No.(s): PLN2019-13941 and CEQ2020-01079

Location: 1111 Comstock Street, the 1.38-acre project site is located on the north side of Comstock Street; APN: 224-08-092; property is zoned Light Industrial (ML).

Applicant / Owner: Prime Data Centers

Owner: Jim Khosh Revocable Living Trust

Request: Adoption of a **Mitigated Negative Declaration** and a **Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program**; and **Architectural Review** to develop a 121,170 square-foot four-story data center building, and Minor Modification to increase the building height to 87 feet and reduce the parking space requirements.

Project Data

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Lot Size: 1.38 acre | 60,064 square feet | | |
| | Existing Floor Area (sq.ft.) | Demolish (sq.ft.) | Proposed (sq.ft.) |
| Gross Floor Area | 23,765 | -23,765 | 121,170 |
| Lot Coverage | - | - | 29,646 / 60,064 = 49 |
| F.A.R. | - | - | 121,170 / 60,064 = 2 |
| Height | - | - | Roof - 80' Parapet - 98' |
| Parking | Surface Parking | | 24 spaces • 23 standard ADA space |
| Bicycle Parking | None | | Bicycle Parking Class II: 2 |
| Flood Zone | X | | |

Points for Consideration

- The project proposes the demolition of an existing 23,765 industrial building with surface parking and the construction of a new 121,170 square-foot four-story data center with surface parking, landscaping, and associated site improvements.
- Six 3,000-KW diesel-fueled engine generators and one 500-kW diesel-fueled engine generator would be located within a generator room on the first floor of the building. Fuel for the generators would be stored in two 30,000-gallon underground storage tanks which would feed individual 160-gallon daytanks located adjacent to each generator. An outdoor generator yard is not proposed.

Zoning and General Plan

- The project site is currently designated Low Intensity Office/R&D in the City of Santa Clara 2010-2035 General Plan (General Plan) and is zoned Light Industrial (ML). The proposed use is consistent with the General Plan and zoning designations for the property.
- The proposed FAR for the project is 2.02, exceeding the base FAR of 1.0 set by the City of Santa Clara General Plan. However, the General Plan's FAR limitations are intended to control employment density, and the project's employment density would not conflict with the allowed uses or assumed employment intensity for the Low Intensity Office / R&D.
- The height of the proposed building at the top of the parapet is approximately 87 feet, which exceeds the 70-foot maximum permissible height in ML zoning district. The project will require a Zoning Administrator Modification to allow the proposed height.

Mitigated Negative Declaration

- A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared for the project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and publicly circulated between September 21, 2020 and October 13, 2020. The IS/MND evaluated the potential environmental impacts that may result from the construction and operation of the project, and proposed mitigation measures in the areas of Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, and Noise. With implementation of mitigation measures identified in the MND and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) would reduce the potentially significant impacts to less than significant.
- One public comment letter was received from Adams Broadwell Joseph & Cardozo during the public comment period. A Response to Comments is included as an attachment to this report.

Building Design

- The façade design and materials for the proposed building consist of varied materials colors and textures to create interest. It includes gray cementitious finishes and varying shades of spandrel glass.
- The applicant has worked with staff to improve the view that will be visible from Comstock Street by making the ground floor design more commercial in nature with glass walls and a metal canopy.
- Screening of rooftop equipment with metal plank panels along the rooftop perimeter from view along the public right-of-way are integrated into the site and building design.
- The project provides pedestrian connections to neighboring development with the construction of a complete street section (4' landscape strip and 5' sidewalk) with large canopy trees along the project frontage.

Parking

- A total of 24 on-site parking spaces are proposed where a total of 30 are required. The applicant

proposes a Minor Modification to reduce the parking requirement from the 1:4,000 parking requirement for data center uses in the zoning code to 1:5,000.

- A total of 9 Class I bicycle spaces and 2 Class II bicycle spaces are provided on the site.

Trees and Landscaping

- Construction of the proposed data center and parking lot would require removal of 24 trees with nine trees to remain protected in place.
- The City's General Plan (Policy 5.3.1-P10) requires new development to include new street trees and at least a 2:1 on- or off-site replacement for removal of existing trees. While the proposed project would need to plant a minimum of 48 trees, the landscape plan shows five new trees would be planted on the project site. Therefore, the project must comply with off-site planting and mitigation.
- Final tree removal and landscape plans, including potential off-site replacement, would be subject to review and approval by the Community Development Department with consultation with the City Arborist.

Community Outreach

- A notice of development was posted on the property at least 10 days prior to the scheduled public hearing.
- The notice of public hearing for this item was posted within 300 feet of the site and was mailed to property owners within 1,000 feet of the project site.
- The City has received no comments on the project.

Findings supporting the Staff Recommendation

1) *That any off-street parking area, screening strips and other facilitates and improvements necessary to secure the purpose and intent of this title and the general plan of the City are a part of the proposed development, in that;*

- The development proposed a Minor Modification to reduce the on-site parking requirement from the Zoning Code requirement of 1:4000 to 1:5000, resulting in 24 on-site spaces. As data centers are a low intensity employment use, this reduction is reasonable and will not result in spillover parking in the public right-of-way.
- The project includes off-site public improvements along the public right of-way fronting the project site and on-site landscape improvements in the parking areas. A four-foot clear landscape strip adjacent to the curb with a five-foot sidewalk behind are proposed to link adjacent properties and provide pedestrian access to the site consistent with complete streets design. The project also includes landscaping within the front building setback and parking areas in conformance with the development standards for the ML zoning district. At grade outdoor equipment and rooftop equipment would be screened from the public right-of-way by metal plank panels.

2) *That the design and location of the proposed development and its relation to neighboring developments and traffic is such that it will not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood, will not unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring developments, and will not create traffic congestion or hazard, in that;*

- The development is generally consistent with the City's Design Guidelines. Exterior building façade provides a mix of materials and textures to create interest.
- The project invests in the site improvements that will enhance the streetscape and increase property values by replacing derelict buildings, asphalt surface parking areas, and minimal landscaping on-the site and provide a catalyst for future investment for enhancement and development opportunities in the project area.
- The project site is located within the ML zoning district. Data centers generate few employees

and relatively infrequent delivery of materials; consequently, the project is not anticipated to produce many vehicle trips. Moreover, a data center is a permitted use within the ML zoning district.

- Sufficient parking is provided to accommodate employee parking demands on-site and prevent spillover parking onto the public right-of-way. Vehicle ingress and egress would be provided by two new driveways along Comstock Street.

3) *That the design and location of the proposed development is such that it is in keeping with the character of the neighborhood and is such as not to be detrimental to the harmonious development contemplated by this title and the general plan of the City, in that;*

- The proposal is to redevelop and improve the project site with construction of the data center with a strong, contemporary urban design that would improve the visual character of the zone. The project would include a loading dock, circulation and parking, and landscape improvements in conformance with the ML zoning district development standards and consistent with the development of data centers throughout the City.
- The project provides setback and landscaping along the street frontage consistent with surrounding properties.

4) *That the granting of such approval will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, materially affect adversely the health, comfort or general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of said development, and will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injuries to property or improvements in said neighborhood, in that;*

- The project is generally consistent with adjacent industrial and commercial development in terms of visual character and quality.
- The data center use and associated parking are self-contained within the limits of the property. There are no residential developments immediately adjacent that would be impacted with privacy concerns.
- The project includes conditions of approval and would be subject to the City Code and the mitigation measures set forth in the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program with project development to minimize impacts of development on neighboring properties.

5) *That the proposed development, as set forth in the plans and drawings, are consistent with the set of more detailed policies and criteria for architectural review as approved and updated from time to time by the City Council, which set shall be maintained in the planning division office. The policies and criteria so approved shall be fully effective and operative to the same extent as if written into and made a part of this title, in that;*

- The development is a modern data center facility that is permitted in the ML Zoning District. The proposed development provides for an aesthetically attractive building.
- The project supports high quality design in keeping with adopted design guidelines for industrial development and the City's architectural review process consistent with General Land Use Plan Policy 5.3.1-P3 as follows:
 - i. The building design avoids the orientation of equipment yard, service areas, and large expanses of blank walls facing toward the street.
 - ii. The bulk, scale and height of the building is appropriate for the industrial sector and approved data centers within the City.
- Façade elements and treatments are incorporated in the exterior building design to enrich the building appearance.
- Driveway entrances are appropriate in number and location and are emphasized by landscaping to provide a suitable focus and identification.
- The project provides pedestrian connections to neighboring development with the construction of a complete street section (4' landscape strip and 5' sidewalk) along the project frontage.

- Screening of rooftop equipment from view along the public right-of-way are integrated into the site and building design.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared for the project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and publicly circulated between September 21, 2020 and October 13, 2020. The IS/MND evaluated the potential environmental impacts that may result from the construction and operation of the project, and proposed mitigation measures in the areas of Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, and Noise. With implementation of mitigation measures identified in the MND and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) would reduce the potentially significant impacts to less than significant.

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FISCAL IMPACT

There is no impact to the City for processing the requested application other than administrative staff time and expense typically covered by processing fees paid by the applicant.

PUBLIC CONTACT

On October 23, 2020, a notice of public hearing of this item was mailed 1,000 feet of the project site and mailed to property owners within 1,000 feet of the project site. Planning Staff has not received public comments for this application.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; and Approve the Architectural Review to develop a 121,170 square-foot four-story data center building, and Minor Modification to increase the building height to 87 feet and reduce the parking space requirements.

Prepared by: Rebecca Bustos, Senior Planner, Community Development Department

Approved by: Gloria Sciara, Development Review Officer, Community Development Department

ATTACHMENTS

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2. Development Plans
3. Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
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