



Agenda Report

21-534

Agenda Date: 4/28/2021

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Action on a Conditional Use Permit for Twisters Gymnastics to allow a youth gymnastics center at 2800 Bowers Avenue.

REPORT IN BRIEF

Project: Use Permit to allow a youth gymnastics center (recreational use)

Applicant: Sarah E. Ebner, See Architecture

General Plan: High Intensity Office / R&D; Exception Area for Places of Assembly and Entertainment Uses

Zoning: Light Industrial (ML)

Site Area: 1.05 acres

Existing Site Conditions: One existing one-story industrial building

Surrounding Land Uses

North: Industrial uses

South: Industrial uses

East: Industrial uses

West: Single Family Residential

Issues: Consistency with the City's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance

Staff Recommendation: Adopt the resolution approving the Use Permit, subject to conditions of approval

BACKGROUND

Sarah Ebner filed an application on May 22, 2020 to request a Use Permit for recreational use to allow Twisters Gymnastics, Inc to operate a youth gymnastics center within a 10,674 square foot unit in a 21,106 square foot industrial building. Twisters Gymnastics, Inc. ("Twisters") was previously located in Sunnyvale, CA and is now seeking to operate in Santa Clara at the property located at 2800 Bowers Avenue. Twisters currently employs 7 full-time employees and 20 part-time employees. Twisters will offer quality sports instruction and entertainment services to youth ages 18 months to 18 years of age. Twisters will also provide after school activities and shuttle services for youth in the local Santa Clara community. The industrial building at 2800 Bowers Avenue is also in close proximity to other recreational centers such as Sky High Sports, Pump It Up, City Beach, and K-1 Speed.

A gymnastics center is not permitted by right in the Light Industrial (ML) zoning district. Pursuant to Section 18.48.040(e) of the Santa Clara City Code, uses that are not permitted by right but that are

appropriate for an industrial area, such as lodges and bingo halls, can be conditionally permitted in the ML zone, provided that the proposed use and structure would not be objectionable or detrimental to adjacent properties or to the industrial area in general by reason of traffic, parking, noise, inappropriate design or signs. The Planning Commission has granted CUPs for similar recreational uses in the City's industrial zones in the past.

The project site is located on the west side of Bowers Avenue. There is a one-story industrial building on-site with a total of 51 striped surface parking spaces. The site is surrounded by industrial warehouse and office uses. The site is zoned Light Industrial (ML). The General Plan land use designation is High Intensity Office / R&D and the site is in a General Plan Exception Area for Places of Assembly and Entertainment Uses.

DISCUSSION

The project proposes to convert 10,674 square feet of the existing industrial building to a youth gymnastics center. The youth gymnastics center holds classes from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday to Friday and from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays. The youth gymnastics center will also occasionally operate on Saturdays from 1:45 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. and on Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. to host special events that are limited to 30 people per party.

Based on a statement from Twisters, on average, the youth gymnastics center has approximately 6 students and 2 staff members between 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday. Twisters, on average, also has approximately 74 students and 8 employees from Monday to Friday during the peak hours of 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. It is noted that these numbers represent the total number of students and employees throughout this time period.

The primary issues for the project are consistency with the City's General Plan and Zoning Code and parking requirements.

General Plan Conformance

This classification is intended for high rise or campus like developments for corporate headquarters, R&D and supporting uses, with landscaped areas for employee activities. Permitted uses include offices and prototype R&D uses. Data-centers under this designation are limited to those that serve the use on site. Medical facilities, except pharmacies, are not allowed. In addition, manufacturing uses are limited to less than ten percent of the building area. Accessory, or secondary, small scale supporting retail uses that serve local employees and visitors are also permitted. Parking is typically structured or below grade. The maximum FAR is 2.00, excluding any FAR devoted to supporting retail uses.

The Site is also located within a General Plan "Exception Area for Places of Assembly and Entertainment Uses." General Plan Policy 5.5.1-P14 provides: "For properties designated High or Low Intensity Office/Research and Development, allow places of assembly and entertainment uses on parcels within the designated Exception Area identified on the Land Use Diagram." There are other gyms already located within the Exception Areas, including Bravo Rhythmic Gymnastics at 2911 Mead Avenue and FNS Training Center at 2342 Walsh Avenue.

Zoning Conformance

A gymnastics center is not permitted by right in the Light Industrial (ML) zoning district. Pursuant to Section 18.48.040(e) of the Santa Clara City Code, uses that are not permitted by right but that are appropriate for an industrial area, such as lodges and bingo halls, can be conditionally permitted in the ML zone, provided that the proposed use and structure would not be objectionable or detrimental to adjacent properties or to the industrial area in general by reason of traffic, parking, noise, inappropriate design or signs.

Parking

Section 18.74.020 of the Santa Clara City Code does not specify parking requirements for gyms. Based on the most similar listed use and parking demand, the Zoning Administrator determined that parking shall be provided on the same basis as required for recreational enterprises, which is one parking space per 200 square feet. Based on 10,674 square feet of instruction and staff office areas, a total of 48 parking spaces are required. However, as the parking lot is shared between the two units on-site, 2800 and 2810 Bowers Avenue, a total of 62 parking spaces are required. Therefore, the applicant is requesting a Zoning Administrator Minor Modification to allow a 22% reduction to the required parking.

To support this request, the applicant provided a parking study prepared by Hexagon Transportation Consultants, Inc. (Attachment 1). The report noted that the facility would offer morning classes from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for preschool students, with class sizes of 6 students or less. The facility would offer afternoon and evening classes for all ages from 3:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., with class sizes up to 14 students. Furthermore, during the morning peak hour, no students or parents would arrive or exit the sports facility. Hexagon concludes that the total number of daily trips would equal 278 and that trips generated by the existing warehouse on the site can be subtracted. Based on this parking study, staff supports the Zoning Administrator Minor Modification request for reduced parking.

Conclusion:

The proposal contributes to the variety of private service uses available in the industrial area of the city and is designed to be compatible with the industrial offices, with sufficient parking to support the proposed use. A non-industrial use, such as a youth gymnastics center, may only be conditionally permitted when the use is appropriate for an industrial area and would not be objectionable or detrimental to the industrial area or adjacent properties. Based on the operational description of the proposed use provided by the applicant, the use would be compatible with the adjacent land uses.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines (Class 1 - Existing Facilities), in that the use is confined within an existing on-site facility. The proposed activity consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing private structures involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the City's determination.

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.

COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

PUBLIC CONTACT

On April 15, 2021, a notice of public hearing of this item was posted in three conspicuous locations within 300 feet of the project site and mailed to property owners within 500 feet of the project site. Planning Staff has not received public comments for this application.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution to Approve a Use Permit to allow a youth gymnastics center located at 2800 Bowers Avenue, subject to conditions of approval.

Prepared by: Tiffany Vien, Assistant Planner
Reviewed by: Alexander Abbe, Assistant City Attorney
Approved by: Reena Brilliot, Planning Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Parking Study
2. Project Data
3. Development Plans
4. Resolution Approving a Use Permit
5. Conditions of Approval
6. Applicant Letter