



City of Westminster

Planning Commission Staff Report

8200 Westminster Blvd.
Westminster, CA 92673

Item #: 8.2

Meeting Date: March 5, 2025

SUBJECT

Case No. 2024-0277 (Development Review and Administrative Adjustment) – A request to construct a new approximately 69,498-square-foot industrial warehouse building within the C-M zoning district, located at 7474 Garden Grove Boulevard (APN 096-021-14).

From: Sheri Vander Dussen, Interim Community Development Director

Prepared by: Stephanie Tomaino, AICP, Contract Principal Planner

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Adopt PC Resolution No. 25-002 (Attachment 1) entitled, “A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Westminster, California, approving Case No. 2024-0277 for a Development Review to construct a new approximately 69,498-square-foot industrial warehouse building within the C-M (Commercial-Industrial) zoning district, and an Administrative Adjustment to allow a building height increase of up to 10% above the 35-foot height limit, located at 7474 Garden Grove Boulevard (APN 096-021-14).”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant proposes to demolish eight existing industrial buildings and construct a 69,498-square-foot single-tenant industrial warehouse building. The project includes 6,000 square feet of office space, 10 truck loading docks, and a secured rear yard area, with no specific tenant identified at this time. The project complies with all applicable development standards, except for building height, for which the applicant is requesting an Administrative Adjustment to allow an increase of up to 10% above the 35-foot height limit. The project meets the City’s Industrial Design Guidelines as the proposed building utilizes a high-quality, modern design with varied materials, architectural articulation, and massing techniques that enhance visual interest and break up building scale. A traffic analysis confirmed that the project’s trip generation is within allowable thresholds, and the project qualifies for a Class 32 categorical exemption, eliminating the need for further CEQA review. Therefore, staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt a resolution (Attachment 1) approving the project, subject to conditions of approval.

BACKGROUND

The approximately 3.34-acre site is located in the C-M (Commercial-Industrial) zoning district, which serves as a hybrid zone allowing a mix of commercial and light industrial uses. This zoning designation permits the development of both commercial shopping centers and light industrial buildings, blending elements of both zoning categories. The site contains multiple structures that were constructed primarily in the 1960s. Vehicular access to the site is provided via two driveways: a primary entrance at the signalized intersection of Garden Grove Boulevard and Western Avenue, and a secondary right-in/right-out driveway along Garden Grove Boulevard. Surrounding land uses and zoning districts are detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Surrounding Land Uses and Zoning Districts

Directions	Land Uses	Zoning Districts
<i><u>North</u></i>	Automotive and industrial uses, business park	Garden Grove city limits
<i><u>South</u></i>	State Route 22 (SR 22)	n/a
<i><u>East</u></i>	Public Storage, and other industrial and storage uses	C-M (Commercial-Industrial)
<i><u>West</u></i>	U-Haul, Extra Space Storage	C-M (Commercial-Industrial)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant and property owner, Seventh Street Development on behalf of 7474 BP, LLC, requests approval to demolish eight existing industrial buildings totaling 52,000 square feet and construct a new 69,498-square-foot single-tenant industrial warehouse building. The proposed industrial development includes approximately 6,000 square feet of office space, 10 truck loading docks, and a secured fenced yard area along the rear for operations. The project site was previously occupied by a heat-treatment and aerospace parts manufacturing facility (Bodycote Thermal Processing). The outdated industrial buildings are being replaced with a modern, tilt-up concrete warehouse facility designed to accommodate a range of potential industrial users. The building is speculative, meaning no specific tenant has been identified at this time. However, the flexible building layout and C-M zoning district allows for various uses, including warehouse/distribution, light industrial, manufacturing, research & development, office, and limited retail components (e.g., a furniture retail store). The development will also include site grading, landscaping, paving, and on-site parking improvements. The applicant provided a narrative describing the proposed project as Attachment 2. Project plans (including color renderings) are provided as Attachment 5.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Nonresidential projects over 1,000 gross square feet require a Development Review (DR) application. This application allows the city to comprehensively review proposed development projects to ensure compliance with the required standards, design guidelines, and ordinances of the City; minimize potential adverse effects on surrounding properties and the environment; and ensure quality development and protect the integrity and character of the residential, commercial and public areas of the City. DR applications are typically reviewed administratively and are subject to approval by the Community Development Director. However, in accordance with Westminster Municipal Code (WMC) Section 17.520.010.B, the Director has the discretion on a case-by-case basis to require public notification for any DR application and defer the application to the Commission for action. During the pre-application phase, the Director determined that, given the size and scale of the proposed development, the project should be elevated to the Planning Commission for review.

Development Standards Compliance

Development of the proposed light industrial building is subject to compliance with the Industrial District Development Standards contained within Table 2-7 of WMC Section 17.230.015. With the exception of the building height, the project complies with applicable development standards, including but not limited to zoning requirements within WMC Title 17 Land Use (“Zoning Code”); Public Works’ traffic engineering standards; and Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) and Midway City Sanitary District (MCSD) standards.

Parking:

Although a specific tenant has not been identified for the building, the applicant anticipates that the building will be occupied by a use most similar to a warehouse and distribution facility. In accordance with Table 3-5 of WMC Section 17.320.020, “warehousing and distribution facilities” require 1 parking space per 1,000 square feet of gross building area. This may include incidental office space up to 10%. The proposed floor plan includes 63,498 square feet of warehouse space and 6,000 square feet of incidental office space. The Zoning Code requires the development to provide 69 parking spaces. This parking requirement is met through 56 standard stalls, three accessible stalls, nine EV stalls, and two EV accessible stalls (70 parking spaces total).

Landscaping:

Pursuant to WMC Section 17.310.020, sites proposing new development shall provide a minimum of 15% site landscaping. The project complies with this standard by providing 22,018 square feet of landscaped area, or 15.1% of the total site area. The proposed site plan includes a 6-foot-wide landscaped strip along Garden Grove Boulevard, situated between the street right-of-way and parking area, to meet the City's requirements for parking lot perimeter landscaping and vehicle bumper overhangs. The project complies

with other applicable landscaping standards, including minimum number of trees (44 trees required and provided); tree container size; and groundcover and shrub requirements.

Administrative Adjustment:

The maximum building height in all industrial zones is 35 feet; however, a portion of the proposed building exceeds this limit. Specifically, the roof height at the front of the building along Garden Grove Boulevard is 35'-6", while the highest point, near the center of the building along the ridge line, reaches 37'-9". Due to variations in site grade, some portions of the building, such as the elevation facing the SR-22 freeway, remain below the height limit.

The applicant is requesting an Administrative Adjustment to allow an increase in the maximum allowable building height. Per Table 5-2 of WMC Section 17.555.010, an Administrative Adjustment may permit up to a 10% increase in building height, allowing a maximum of 38'-6" in industrial zones. According to the applicant's project narrative, the increased roof height is necessary to achieve a 32' interior warehouse clearance, which is the industry standard for a modern industrial facility of this scale, as well as to accommodate roof slope for drainage. Administrative Adjustments are typically issued by the Community Development Director but are elevated to the highest review authority when submitted in conjunction with other applications. Following a review of the proposed development, staff has determined that the requested building height increase meets the required findings for approval outlined in WMC Section 17.555.020. Therefore, staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the Administrative Adjustment request.

Design Guidelines Consistency

The proposed industrial building meets the City's Industrial Design Guidelines by incorporating high-quality materials, varied colors, and architectural articulation to create a visually appealing and well-proportioned structure. The design avoids long, unbroken façades by integrating building offsets, parapet height variations, and window placements, which add depth and shadowing while reducing the perception of mass. To further enhance visual interest, the building features contrasting material finishes, architectural reveals, and enhanced entryways with glazing and canopy elements. The use of parapet projections helps break up the roofline, while horizontal and vertical massing variations create a more dynamic façade. These design elements ensure that, despite its industrial function, the building maintains an attractive and modern aesthetic consistent with the City's guidelines.

Additionally, because the property abuts the SR-22 freeway and is highly visible, staff is recommending a condition of approval (COA #23) prohibiting unscreened storage within the fenced rear yard area. This requirement ensures that the rear yard remains orderly and is used as intended for vehicle parking, preventing long-term storage or visual clutter.

Traffic Analysis

A trip generation assessment (Attachment 3) was conducted by Fehr & Peers to evaluate potential traffic impacts based on various tenant scenarios. Since this is a speculative building with no identified tenant, multiple scenarios were analyzed to capture the range of potential land uses that may occupy the space in the future. Using trip generation rates from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual (11th Edition), the analysis compared potential future uses, including warehousing, manufacturing, distribution, office, and retail. The study determined that the project's net new trips under all tested tenant mix scenarios would remain below the City's established thresholds for requiring additional Level of Service (LOS) or Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) assessments. The highest tested scenario (93% manufacturing with 7% office) generated 110 net new daily trips, 14 AM peak hour trips, and 21 PM peak hour trips, all within the allowable screening criteria. Given these findings, no further transportation impact studies are required for the project's entitlement process.

To ensure that future traffic impacts remain consistent with this analysis, staff is recommending a condition of approval (COA #21) requiring the future tenant to submit a traffic analysis prior to the issuance of building permits for tenant improvements. This analysis must demonstrate that anticipated traffic volumes are consistent with the assumptions evaluated in this study. Because traffic volumes can vary significantly depending on the operational characteristics of the end user, this requirement provides an additional safeguard. For example, a distribution use may generate a higher volume of trips due to frequent deliveries by last-mile trucks, whereas a manufacturing use may have fewer but larger line-haul truck deliveries. This condition ensures that any deviations from the analyzed scenarios are properly assessed before permit issuance.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project was evaluated for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and staff determined that it qualifies for a Class 32 Categorical Exemption for in-fill development projects under CEQA Guidelines Section 15332. This exemption applies to projects that meet specific criteria, including consistency with the General Plan and zoning regulations, location within city limits on a site less than five acres substantially surrounded by urban development, lack of significant habitat value for endangered species, no significant traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality impacts, and adequate access to utilities and public services.

A detailed environmental analysis (Attachment 4) confirms that the project meets these criteria. The project site is currently developed with industrial uses and does not contain sensitive biological resources. Air quality modeling confirmed that both construction and operational emissions would remain below the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) significance thresholds. Noise impacts from the project are anticipated to be similar to existing conditions, and water quality measures, including the implementation of a vegetated modular wetland system, ensure compliance with stormwater management requirements. Additionally, none of the exceptions to categorical

exemptions listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply, as the project will not result in cumulative environmental impacts, significant effects due to unusual circumstances, or impacts on historic resources, scenic highways, or hazardous waste sites. Based on these findings, no further environmental review is required, and the project is categorically exempt from CEQA.

PUBLIC NOTICES

In accordance with WMC Section 17.630.010, a notice of public hearing describing the proposed project and date, time, and location of the hearing was mailed on February 20, 2025, to all property owners of record and occupants within a 500 foot radius of the project boundaries. Notices were also posted at the project site, City Council Chambers, City Hall, Westminster Branch Library, Community Services and Recreation Building, and on the city's website. As of February 26, 2025, staff has not received public comments related to the project.

Attachments:

1. Planning Commission Resolution No. 25-002
2. Applicant's Project Description
3. Trip Generation Study
4. CEQA Exemption Memo
5. Project Plans