

Application No: 1737

APN: 017-161-51

Applicant: Ceiba

Hearing Date: February 28, 2023

ZONING MAP FINDINGS (WMC § 14-12.708)

The following findings apply to changing the project site's Zoning District from IG (General Industrial) to N (Institutional) on the Zoning Map.

- 1. That the proposed amendment is consistent with the policies embodied in the General Plan.**

Supportive Evidence

Public and quasi-public uses, such as junior and high schools, are not intended for land designated as Industrial and not allowed in the IG Zoning District. The proposed amendment to the General Plan land use designation from Industrial to Public/Quasi-Public and corresponding amendment to the Zoning Map from IG to N would enable the formal recognition of the existing school use on the premises. The proposed amendment is also consistent with the following General Plan goals and policies concerning children and youth, safe and efficient vehicle and pedestrian travel, flood hazard reduction, and industrial land preservation for reason discussed further below:

- ***Children and Youth Element Goal 7.1 Children and Youth*** – *Ensure a secure, healthy, and safe environment for the children and youth of the City of Watsonville and provide opportunities for them to develop to their fullest potential.*
- ***Children and Youth Element Policy 7.A Planning for Children, Youth, and Families*** – *The City of Watsonville is committed to providing and promoting a safe, secure, protective, healthy, and stimulating community environment for its children, youth, and families. With regard to both existing and future conditions, the City of Watsonville shall bear this commitment in mind as it considers the direct and indirect impact of its actions on children, youth, and families as it makes decisions and during the planning processes in all areas of land use, development, zoning, transportation, human services, social services, health services, and mental health services.*
- ***Children and Youth Element Policy 7.E Educational and Training Systems*** – *The City of Watsonville shall collaborate with the Pajaro Valley [Unified] School District, area community college districts, private schools, and the University of California in order to maximize educational, developmental, and learning opportunities for all children, youth, and parents. Through joint use of facilities, cooperative agreements for staffing, sharing of expertise, and provision of programs and services, the City of Watsonville shall participate in the development of innovative methods by which developmentally appropriate*

activities, educational opportunities, and training can be provided. The City of Watsonville is committed to working with educational, health care, social service, and recreational organizations to provide training opportunities for those professionals who work with children, youth, and families.

The existing public charter school currently provides education services to approximately 500 children. Approval of a Special Use Permit for this project would allow Ceiba to continue to prepare students for college at its current location on a permanent basis, and thereby provide opportunities for academic development.

- ***Transportation & Circulation Element Goal 10.1 Street and Highway Facilities*** – *Plan and provide for a safe, efficient, and environmentally sensitive network of streets and highways for movement of people and goods.*
- ***Transportation & Circulation Element Policy 10.A Street & Highway Improvements*** – *The City shall pursue a program of regularly scheduled maintenance and street improvements, accompanied by the planned extension of roadways to serve new development.*
- ***Transportation & Circulation Element Goal 10.5 Pedestrian Circulation*** – *Recognize the importance of pedestrian travel, alone, or in combination with other travel modes, and to encourage walking.*
- ***Transportation & Circulation Element Policy 10.M Pedestrian Travel*** – *The City shall plan for, and implement a comprehensive network of safe pedestrian facilities in order to promote pedestrian travel.*
- ***Transportation & Circulation Element Policy 10.O Walkway Aesthetics & Safety*** – *Pedestrian walkways should be designed to promote walking by providing a safe and aesthetically pleasing path of travel.*
- ***Transportation & Circulation Element Policy 10.P Pedestrian Access*** – *Access for pedestrian travel shall be maintained where it already exists and provided where it does not, in order to prevent or eliminate barriers to pedestrian travel.*

As part of the conditions of approval of the Special Use Permit for the project, the applicant is required to install street improvements for identified nearby intersections and enhance the walkway from the sidewalk into the site to be in compliance with the State's accessibility standards, the adopted Complete Streets to School Plan (2020), and the City's General Plan aforementioned goals and policies and Implementation Measures 10.N.1 (Construction/Improvement), 10.N.2 (Design of Walkways), 10.O.3 (Accessible Pedestrian Areas) and 10.P.3 (School-Related Walkways).

- ***Public Safety Element Goal 12.3 Flood Hazard Reduction*** – *Reduce the potential for loss of life and property damage in areas known to be flood prone.*

- **Public Safety Element Policy 12.D Flood Hazard Reduction** – *The City shall pursue the protection of new and existing development from the impacts of flooding up to the 100-year event.*

As part of the approval of a Special Use Permit for the project, the applicant is required to flood proof the existing building, in conformance with the provisions for flood hazard reduction in the City's Floodplain Management Ordinance, the guidelines of FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program, and General Plan Goal 12.3, Policy 12.D, and Implementation Measure 12.D.1 (Flood Protection).

- **Land Use Element Goal 4.4 Industrial Land Use** – *Achieve economic diversification, living wage employment, the preservation of the agricultural economic base of the Pajaro Valley, and maintain a balance among jobs, housing, and other urban land uses.*
- **Land Use Element Policy 4.D: Industrial Land Use** – *The City shall promote modernization of existing industrial plants and the location of new industrial facilities on lands planned for industry in Watsonville 2005 General Plan.*
- **Land Use Element Implementation Measure 4.D.4: Industrial Reserve** – *The City shall maintain a reserve of industrial land sufficient to meet the long-term job creation goals and to enable the City to maximize economic opportunities consistent with the city's Comprehensive Economic Development Action Plan.*

The conversion of this small site does not compromise the reserve of industrial land in the City. The 2.1-acre project site represents approximately 0.4 percent of the 558.1 acres of land designated as Industrial in the General Plan. In addition, the existing site is not currently used for industrial activities. Therefore, changing the designation would reflect the existing school use and represent a small, marginal adjustment to the overall Land Use Plan with minimal changes to the City's industrial base and the ability to maintain a robust number of jobs in the City.

2. **That the proposed amendment is compatible to the extent possible with the actual and general planned use of the adjacent properties.**

Supportive Evidence

The proposed amendment to the General Plan Land Use Diagram and Zoning Map would enable the issuance of a Special Use Permit to allow the permanent establishment of the existing school use for Ceiba to continue to operate a public charter school serving 525 students in grades 6-12. The change in the land use designation from Industrial to Public/Quasi-Public on the General Plan Land Use Diagram and corresponding change from IG (General Industrial) to N (Institutional) on the Zoning Map would be compatible with the actual and planned use of the adjacent properties which are Residential and Industrial.

With regard to the Residential uses, the school may be deemed compatible with existing residences nearby with implementation of conditions of approval included as part of the Special Use Permit for the project that address past complaints and health and safety concerns. The City has received nuisance complaints from

residents on Locust Street regarding traffic congestion during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times, odors from the trash enclosure, and use of the vacant property at 228-234 Locust Street for recreational activities. Conditions of Approval Nos. 27, 28, 29, 30, 41, and 50 for the Special Use Permit are designed to address these issues.

With regard to Industrial uses, the school is near to a beverage distribution facility and two construction trade contractor's yard. While schools are not often located in industrial areas, these types of business do not represent heavy industrial uses and, therefore, do not generate excessive noise, odor, dust, dirt, smoke, vibration, heat, glare, heavy traffic, and other objectionable influences and from fire, explosion, fumes, radiation, and other hazards. In addition, the school may be considered compatible with these nearby existing industrial uses in that the City has not received any complaints from or about the adjoining industrial uses.