

*City of Albany*  
**Planning and Zoning Commission**  
**Staff Report**

**Meeting Date:** June 24, 2008

**Prepared by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Agenda Item:** 4b

**Reviewed by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject:** 800 San Pablo. Continuation of Planning Application 08-008. Design Review. A request for Design Review approval to allow construction of a new canopy over the station pumps.

**Applicant/  
Owner:** Jeanne M. Chiang, Architect for Jasminder Sikand

**Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission approve the request to allow a new canopy over an existing gas pump station and new vinyl labels on the pumps.

**Previous Action**

No recent major improvements have been made to the property.

**Project Description**

This project was first reviewed at a public hearing of the Planning and Zoning Commission on March 25, 2008 where the project was continued to allow the applicant to propose a more comprehensive plan that includes improving the pumps stations, stores, as well as adding a new canopy. The applicant has submitted revised plans and is requesting Design Review approval for the new plan. The subject property has a gas station and mini mart at the corner of San Pablo Avenue and Washington Avenue, which is highly visible while traveling on San Pablo Avenue. There are four pumps located near the center of the lot and the mini-mart is located towards the rear of the lot.

The applicant would like to construct a canopy that is 1,232sq.ft. in area and has a maximum height of 18'-6" over the station pumps. The canopy is 3'-9" from the eastern property line and 4'-12" from the northern property line. There are two support columns that are proposed to be constructed of metal cladding, painted white. The awning is approximately 2'-6" in width and proposed to be constructed of acrylic with a vinyl overlay and internally lit. Along with the revised awning the applicant has proposed a logo and branding program that includes primarily a navy blue color with green hills in a circle with "Albany Hill Mini Mart" written in white along the edge. The applicant has also proposed pump station logos that will cover tops and bottoms of the pumps. The original proposal had steel columns with and a composite panel awning, which was approximately 3' in width. The entire structure had no verbiage and was white in color.

### **Background on Application**

The application was submitted on February 19, 2008. The application was deemed complete on March 13, 2008. The project was first reviewed at a public hearing of the Planning and Zoning Commission on March 25, 2008 where the project was continued. The applicant submitted revised plans on May 22, 2008 and is requesting Design Review approval for the new plan.

### **Environmental Analysis**

Staff has determined that the proposed project is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA per Section 15303, "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" of the CEQA Guidelines, which exempts small additions.

### **Identification of Key Issues**

#### Design Review

Most modern gas stations have canopies to provide protection for patrons pumping gas. It is rare to find a gas station that does not have a canopy. There is no predominate architectural style or design of the building at the site or in the neighborhood; therefore, the applicant has flexibility and room for creativity in the proposed design.

The applicant has responded to the Commission's request to consider a more comprehensive plan for the overall site. The proposed logo is simple, clean, and easily recognizable. It is not used in excessive proportions like logos often found on sites with similar uses. It is used consistently on the pumps and the awning in a tasteful size and manner; a majority of the pumps and awning are navy blue in color with a small logo. The awning will be internally lit and because it is predominately navy blue in color it will be subtle and visually unobtrusive. The columns have a stone finish base, which adds mass to the bottom of the columns and visually balances them out.

Staff believes that the proposed upgrades will be an aesthetic improvement to the site. For financial reasons the applicant has not proposed any improvements to the mini mart at this time. Staff believes the proposed plan is attractive and appropriate for the site; therefore recommends approval of the project. Two project specific conditions of approval are recommended: 1) Design review is required of any future improvements to the building on the site, which includes staff review and approval; and 2) A lighting plan, showing all pole, awning and building lights shall be submitted, subject to staff review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit. Staff would also like to note that the applicant has proposed a plan that is uniquely attractive and unobtrusive plan for such a use.

Finally, because of the small scale of the project staff recommends that the Commission require specific green building requirements such as efficient lighting, recycled materials, etc, as an alternative to compliance with one of the green building checklists.

**Appeals:**

The Albany Municipal Code provides that any action of the Planning and Zoning Commission may be appealed to the City Council if such appeal is filed within 14 days of the date of action. Appeals may be filed in the Community Development Department by completing the required form and paying the required fee.

**Attachments:**

1. Analysis of Zoning Requirements
2. Findings
3. Conditions
4. Application, Project Plans

**ATTACHMENT 1 - ANALYSIS OF COMPLIANCE WITH ZONING REQUIREMENTS**

20.12 Zoning Districts And Permitted Uses

General Plan: San Pablo Commercial  
Zoning: SPC

20.16 Land Use Classifications

Single family residential

Surrounding	North - Commercial	East - Commercial
Property Use	South - Commercial	West - MFR

20.20.080 Secondary Residential Units.

Not applicable.

20.24.020 Table Of Site Regulations By District.

Not applicable.

20.24.030 Overlay District Regulations.

Not applicable.

20.24.040 Hillside Residential Regulations.

Not applicable.

20.24.050 Floor-Area-Ratio.

Not applicable.

20.24.060 Setback Areas, Encroachments.

Not applicable.

20.24.100 Distances Between Structures.

Not applicable.

20.24.110 Fences, Landscaping, Screening.

Not applicable.

20.24.130 Accessory Buildings.

Not applicable.

20.28 Off-Street Parking Requirement.

Not applicable.

20.40 Housing Provisions

Not applicable.

20.44 Non-conforming Uses, Structures and Lot

Not applicable.

20.48 Removal of Trees

Not applicable.

20.52 Flood Damage Prevention Regulations

Not applicable.

20.100.030 Use Permits.

Not applicable.

20.100.040 Variances.

Not applicable.

20.100.010 Common Permit Procedures.

Public notice of this application was provided on June 13, 2008 in the form of mailed notice to property owners and occupants within a 100-foot radius, and posted in three locations.

20.100.050 Design Review.

See Summary of Key Issues

ATTACHMENT 2 - FINDINGS

**Findings for Design Review approval (Per section 20.100.050.E of the AMC)**

<i>Required Finding</i>	Explanation
<p>1. <i>The project conforms to the General Plan, any applicable specific plan, applicable design guidelines adopted by the City of Albany, and all applicable provisions of this Chapter.</i></p>	<p>The General Plan designates this area for commercial development. Additionally, the project meets City zoning standards for location, intensity and type of development.</p>
<p>2. <i>Approval of project design is consistent with the purpose and intent of this section, which states "designs of projects...will result in improvements that are visually and functionally appropriate to their site conditions and harmonious with their surroundings, including natural landforms and vegetation. Additional purposes of design review include (but are not limited to): that retention and maintenance of existing buildings and landscape features are considered; and that site access and vehicular parking are sufficient."</i></p>	<p>The proposal is in scale and harmony with existing development in the vicinity of the site. The architectural style, design and building materials are consistent with the City's San Pablo Design Guidelines. The proposed project will provide safe and convenient access to the property for both vehicles and pedestrians. The project will not remove any significant vegetation and will not require significant grading. The project will not create a visual detriment at the site or the neighborhood.</p> <p>The applicant has made a contentious effort to propose an attractive, appropriate improvement plan for the existing gas station. The proposed logo is simple, clean, and easily recognizable. It is not used in excessive proportions like logos often found on sites with similar uses. It is used consistently on the pumps and the awning but is used in a tasteful size and manner; a majority of the pumps and awning are navy blue in color with a small logo. The awning will be internally lit and because it is predominately navy blue in color it will be subtle and visually unobtrusive. The columns have a stone finish base, which adds mass to the bottom of the columns and visually balances them out.</p>
<p>3. <i>Approval of the project is in the interest of public health, safety and general welfare.</i></p>	<p>The proposed project will not be detrimental to the health, safety, convenience and welfare of those in the area and would not adversely impact property, improvements or potential future development in the area. The project meets all development requirements. The awning will be internally lit and because it is predominately navy blue in color it will be subtle and visually unobtrusive. The improvements will have positive impact on the aesthetic of the site, prominently visible corner and neighborhood.</p>

<p>4. <i>The project is in substantial compliance with applicable general and specific Standards for Review stated in Subsection 20.100.050.D.</i></p>	<p>The project as designed is in substantial compliance with the standards as stated, including access, architecture, natural features, coordination of design details, and privacy</p>
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