



Agenda Report

File #: 18-2233

PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: 11/13/2018

TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Community Development Department

APPLICATION REQUEST:

SUF2018-0001: Request for a similar use finding that metal punching and pressing of small components is considered similar to uses permitted in the M-1 (Light Manufacturing) Zone, such as the use machine shop, the manufacturing of goods made from metal, and the manufacturing of electronic equipment, components, and products. (Applicant: Nicholas Ravlich of Ravlich Enterprises, LLC 10550 Lawson River Avenue Fountain Valley, CA 92708).

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Planning and Housing Commission **GRANT SUF2018-0001**, and adopt Resolution No. 2526 based on the analysis and findings made pursuant to Section 17.88.050 of the Corona Municipal Code that metal punching and pressing of small components is permitted in the M-1 (Light Manufacturing) Zone and similar to the use machine shop, the manufacturing of goods made from metal and the manufacturing of electronic equipment, components, and products.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Similar Use Finding 2018-0001 is an application from Nicholas Ravlich of Ravlich Enterprises, LLC requesting that metal punching and pressing of small components be considered similar to various light industrial uses already permitted in the M-1 (Light Manufacturing) Zone and not be considered the same as metal stamping, which is not permitted. Based on advanced technology used in the field of manufacturing from metal, the applicant considers the nature of their operation similar to a machine shop, and to the manufacturing of goods made from metal and the manufacturing of electronic equipment, components, and products. All of these uses are permitted in the M-1 zone. Although the Corona Municipal Code clearly indicates metal stamping is not permitted in the M-1 Zone, it does not make a distinction between the different forms of metal stamping. Ravlich Enterprises, LLC creates small metal parts from thin raw metals using hydraulic presses. This type of technology does not create ground vibrations or loud noises associated with traditional metal stamping equipment that creates parts from heavy duty metal. Therefore, SUF2018-0001 is intended to clarify that small metal components created from using punching and press machines is similar to the aforesaid uses already allowed in the M-1 Zone.

BACKGROUND

Ravlich Enterprises, LLC, dba Neutronic, is currently operating in the City of Fountain Valley and is looking to relocate to the City of Corona. The owner is seeking to lease an industrial building located at 100 Business Center Drive in the M-1 Zone. Neutronic's primary operation involves metal cutting and forming to manufacture terminal pins that can be found in computers, automobiles, airplanes and medical equipment. The vast majority of the products are made from copper alloys. The thickness of the metal used ranges from .025 inches to .0315 inches with an average width of 1.50 inches. Because of their small size and slenderness, an average person can hold thousands of terminals in the palm of their hand.

Section 17.44.030 of the Corona Municipal Code lists the permitted uses for the M-1 (Light Manufacturing), M-2 (General Manufacturing), M-3 (Heavy Manufacturing) and M-4 (Industrial Park) Zones. Pursuant to this section, metal stamping is listed as not permitted in the M-1 or M-4 Zones because the zones are intended to provide for manufacturing uses that are generally passive and can possibly be located next to non-manufacturing uses, such as commercial and residential. Traditional metal stamping is normally considered an operation that uses drop forge hammers on large heavy metal pieces to change the shape of metal. The force used in this type of machine creates immense ground vibrations and escalated noise levels. For these reasons, the Corona Municipal Code permits metal stamping in the M-2 and M-3 Zones, which allows general and heavy manufacturing uses that have the likelihood to produce noise, dust, and frequent truck activity. Both zones are typically located away from residential and commercial areas.

Neutronic creates metal parts from metal punching and forming operations using Bruderer Presses. Because of the lack of a definition for metal stamping, the use is considered to fall within the realm of metal stamping. However, based on the information provided by the applicant, the use of punching and press machines can also be considered similar to machine shops. The Bruderer Presses have dampeners on all press legs to eliminate vibration. The noise level in the press room is comparable to that of a blender or motorcycle. Neutronic's machine shop and tool room service the company's punching and cutting operations using electric discharge machines, grinders, and small band saws and lathes. The applicant has also indicated that no ear protection is required for employees. During peak production hours, the noise level is approximately 69 dBA which is below the city's maximum allowable exterior noise level of 70 dBA for industrial zones. This measurement was taken by the applicant at their existing facility in Fountain Valley.

REASON FOR THE SIMILAR USE FINDING

Section 17.44.030 allows other similar uses that are not listed in a particular industrial zone to be permitted by the Planning and Housing Commission based on a similar use determination. The applicant is requesting that the Commission make the determination that Neutronic's manufacturing operation, which involves metal punching and pressing of small components, be found similar to the following light industrial uses which are permitted in the M-1 Zone:

- Machine shops, provided that all operations are done indoors.
- Manufacturing, assembly, fabrication of goods from metal.
- Manufacturing of electronic equipment, components, and products.

Because technology has evolved, metal stamping in some operations do not require the use of large drop forge hammers or stampers. Neutronic and other modern manufacturers currently use small hydraulic presses in their operation to create smooth, thin metal parts. Hydraulic presses use high pressure localized at a specific point creating a static push to bend or punch holes in metal. This results in minimal vibration and noise. The hydraulic press used by the applicant is capable of producing very small parts and components with great precision from thin raw material. This is currently how the applicant produces terminal pins.

Furthermore, the applicant's business does not utilize hazardous materials on site or emit dust, smoke, odor, or glare. The building in Corona has one operational loading door which will be used for shipping and receiving products.

Therefore, SUF2018-0001 is considered similar to other light industrial uses listed in Section 17.44.030 of the Corona Municipal Code for the M-1 Zone.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

SUF2018-0001 was advertised in the Sentinel Weekly News and as of the preparation of this report the Community Development Department has not received any inquiries from the public regarding the application.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The applicant has been able to demonstrate that the use of hydraulic press machines to create small metal components is found to be similar to a machine shop and to the manufacturing of goods made from metal than to metal stamping. This type of operation is housed inside the building and thereby minimizes disturbances to other nearby businesses. Hydraulic press machines are designed to have dampeners on the press legs to absorb vibrations and prevent ground vibrations on the property and nearby properties. Also, the metal product produced by the hydraulic presses are precisely cut with clean smooth lines and used in a variety of markets that serve the automobile, electronics, telecom, aerospace and medical industries. Therefore, the applicant's operations would be compatible with other uses currently permitted in the M-1 Zone.

FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL OF SUF2018-0001

1. The proposed use in the M-1 zone is not inconsistent with the purposes and intent of Chapter 17.88 of the Corona Municipal Code, for the following reason:
 - a. *Chapter 17.88 recognizes that the development of a comprehensive zoning ordinance may have ambiguity concerning the appropriate classification for all uses; therefore, the City's similar use procedure is intended to determine the generally compatibility of uses that may be considered similar to permitted uses listed in said zones.*
2. The proposed use is similar to one or more uses permitted in the M-1 Zone, within which it is proposed to be located, for the following reason:
 - a. *Metal punching and pressing of small components is considered similar to various light industrial uses permitted in the M-1 Zone, such as the use machine shop, and the manufacturing of goods made from metal and manufacturing of electronic equipment,*

components and products.

3. The operation of the proposed use is compatible with other permitted uses within the M-1 zone, for the following reason:
 - a. *The technology used in hydraulic press machines to create metal components produce minimal noise and vibration, and the manufacturing operations would be conducted inside the building, similar to machine shop operations and businesses manufacturing parts from metal.*
4. The proposed use will further the objectives of the M-1 Zone for the following reason:
 - a. *The proposed operation will be conducted entirely within the building and is a clean operation that uses machines to create precisely cut metal pieces from thin raw metal.*
5. The proposed use will not cause substantial injury or impair the present or potential use of the properties in the M-1 Zone for the following reason:
 - a. *The hydraulic press machines are designed to prevent ground vibrations on the property and the noise level from the machines are within the decibel levels allowed for industrial zones during peak operating times. Additionally, this type of use does not emit glare, dust, smoke, or odor.*
6. The proposed use will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, convenience and welfare of the community for the following reason:
 - a. *The proposed use will be located in the M-1 zone, which is normally adjacent to other properties located in the M-1 zone or other industrial zones, such as the M-2 zone; therefore, the use would be compatible and similar to other industrial uses that may occupy the area.*
7. The proposed use will not generate substantial additional traffic congestion over other permitted uses in the M-1 Zone for the following reason:
 - a. *Industrial buildings are located in areas of the city that are intended for industrial land uses and the streets serving this land use are classified to serve the level of traffic associated with these types of uses. The proposed use is similar to other uses allowed in the M-1 zone and would not generate traffic above other uses established in the area.*
8. The proposed use will not adversely affect the intent of the City's General Plan for the following reasons:
 - a. *SUF2018-0001 implements General Plan Goal 1.12 to develop and maintain industries that provide job opportunities for Corona's residents and sustain the economy as the use will bring new employment and service opportunities for Corona's residents.*
 - b. *SUF2018-0001 implements General Plan Policy 1.12.1 to provide for the continuation*

of existing and development of new manufacturing, research, and development, professional office and similar uses in accordance with the Land Use Plan's designations and development policies.

FISCAL IMPACT

The applicant has paid all the required application processing fees.

PREPARED BY: LUPITA GARCIA, ASSISTANT PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: SANDRA YANG, SENIOR PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: TERRI MANUEL, PLANNING MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

EXHIBITS

1. Exhibit A - Corona Municipal Code Section 17.44.030 Permitted Uses.
2. Exhibit B - Applicant's letter dated October 3, 2018 describing the use and operations of the business.
3. Exhibit C - Environmental documentation

Case Planner: Lupita Garcia (951) 736-2293