



July 1, 2021

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Community Development, Planning & Zoning
CITY OF IRVINE
1 Civic Center Plaza
Irvine, CA 92606

RE: METROLINK ORANGE COUNTY MAINTENANCE FACILITY

This Letter of Justification is to request that the City of Irvine issue a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) for construction of the Metrolink Orange County Maintenance Facility (hereafter referred to as "OCMF" or "Project"). Metrolink, a commuter rail service which is operated by Southern California Regional Railroad Authority (SCRRA), currently has three maintenance facilities across its service area which are at full capacity. The current facilities include a Central Maintenance Facility (CMF) in Los Angeles, an Eastern Maintenance Facility (EMF) in San Bernardino County, and North County Transit District's (NCTD's) Stuart Mesa Facility in northern San Diego County. Metrolink is anticipating expansion of service in the future and since a significant portion of the fleet will be operating in Orange County, a maintenance facility located along the Metrolink route through Orange County would be the optimal location as it would reduce operating costs by limiting non-revenue moves to the existing and more distant maintenance facilities.

The Project is located on a 21.3-acre parcel owned by the OCTA in the City of Irvine. The property is located immediately adjacent to an existing active rail corridor. The site is part of a closed military base (Marine Corps Air Station [MCAS] El Toro) formerly owned by the United States Department of the Navy. The site is currently mostly vacant; however, it is already used for limited railroad related activities which includes a 1000' long railroad storage track and stored miscellaneous railroad equipment. The Project is located within Planning Area 51 of the updated City of Irvine General Plan, adopted in June 2015. Per the City's zoning ordinance, the proposed use is a conditionally allowable use under the existing zone; therefore, OCTA is submitting this CUP application.

Project Description

The OCMF will provide storage tracks and other necessary facilities to conduct daily maintenance which includes: inspections of brakes and all operational parts of the train; wheel sanding, which is used to improve the adhesion in both breaking and traction of the trains; train washing, which will be an automatic system similar to a car washing system; interior cleaning, including restroom dump stations; and fuelling of trains. Other preventative maintenance work is performed at intervals mandated to maintain safety and operational standards and includes the following: 3-, 6-, and 12-month light repairs (i.e., oil changes, brake inspections, component inspections and HVAC skid inspection/repairs). The OCMF site will accommodate up to 15 trains made up of 8 coaches and one (1) or two (2) locomotives. These trains would enter the OCMF at the end of the day, would be serviced and stored overnight and go back out the next morning. The site will be operational



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twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week. It will include infrastructure improvements to support the operational requirements of the OCMF including the extension of Ridge Valley Road from Marine Way for primary access, traffic intersection and signal improvements at Marine Way and Ridge Valley Road, interior circulation drive isles that meet Orange County Fire Authority standards, parking lot areas, and all utility connections to the site. It includes a 6-foot-tall wall on top of a retaining wall along the eastern property line with drainage facilities adjacent to the wall located outside of the property line. These drainage facilities are required to intercept run-on from the adjacent County property and will be built per the agreement developed between OCTA and the County of Orange.

The Project will construct the following features with the following functionality:

FACILITY	FUNCTION
7,495 S.F. Transportation Building	Office and meeting space for crews and staff, emergency dispatch area, locker rooms, and break room
11,110 S.F. Train Wash Building	Automated train wash and blower/water stripper
40,392 S.F. Maintenance Building	Light maintenance and inspections (e.g. brake and component inspections/repairs, HVAC inspections/exchanges). Includes: Service Bays, Inspection Pit w/Platforms, Inspection Gauge Pit, Support Shops, Parts Storage, Loading Platform, Maintenance Offices, Locker Rooms, and Break Room
Service & Inspection ("S&I") Area	Open air pits with canopies on each end for service & inspection. Includes toilet dumping facilities, service bays, refuelling (including Diesel Exhaust Fluid [DEF]), and sandbox fill stations
981 S.F. Utility Building	HazMat storage, battery storage, lube pump room, and compressor room
Sanding Tower	Sand silo storage for wheel sanding adjacent to S&I
Above-Ground Storage Tanks	UL2085 AST fuel storage for fuelling trains (120k gal capacity total; 4@30k each), and 10k gallon vertical DEF storage tank
Diesel Exhaust Fluid Tank	Tank for accepting and storing diesel exhaust fluid ("DEF")



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660 S.F. Water Treatment Room	To treat building runoff and effluent, includes Oil Water Separator
Trash Compactor	Compacting trash
678 S.F. Pump House	Pump skid, fuel dispensing station for rubber-tire trucks
15,000+ S.F. Materials and Equipment Laydown Area	Over 15,000 S.F. of paved area to maintain wheelsets, HVAC units, miscellaneous parts, and deliveries
Electrical Yard	Equipment to provide Electrical Service
Industrial Waste Treatment Area	Mechanical separator, lift station and tank to treat industrial waste
Equipment Shed	6' x 8' Shed for basic cleaning supplies and equipment

Benefit to the Community

The Project is needed to support rail service in Southern California by allowing better utilization of Metrolink’s existing fleet of rail vehicles and to support possible fleet expansion. It will meet rail vehicle servicing and storage needs to accommodate current and future operations to better serve the public’s transportation needs. With its location directly adjacent to the existing rail tracks near the freeway at the western edge of Planning Area 51, the site will not impact the general public and is necessary for the long-term maintenance of public facilities such as rail transportation. The Project will benefit the environment by reducing emissions associated with automotive transportation and reduce locomotive travel from the other maintenance facilities. The Project is proposed on a site with limited environmental sensitivity. The OCMF project is vital to the economic and general welfare of the public by serving commuter needs.

Conditional Use Permit Findings

- 1. The proposed location of the conditional use is in accord with the objectives of Chapter 1-1 of the ZO and the purpose of the zoning district in which the site is located.**

The objectives of Chapter 1-1 of the Zoning Ordinance are to protect, promote and enhance the public health, safety and general welfare, ensure that development is consistent with the General Plan, and promote the development of a safe, effective circulation and transportation network that accommodates the needs of all modes of transportation, to name a few. The purpose of the OCMF is to promote the development of a safe, effective circulation and transportation network by freeing up resources in other areas of the rail network to better serve the public. Due to projected population expansion within its service area, Metrolink will require an increased number of commuter rail services, as well as additional train storage and maintenance facilities associated with an increased fleet size. This project will meet that need.



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The proposed site is located within Zoning District 6.1, Institutional, which applies to land for public and quasi-public facilities. It allows utility buildings and facilities under a Conditional Use Permit. The OCMF’s intended use is consistent with the existing zoning for the site. It is also located within Planning Area 51, which permits maintenance facilities and structures (public facilities only) and includes a “commitment to long-term maintenance of public facilities” (ZO Chapter 9-51-3). This project is necessary for the long-term maintenance of rail transportation through Orange County and is therefore consistent with the intent of the Zoning District.

2. The proposed conditional use will not be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, nor be materially injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity.

The proposed project is located directly adjacent to existing railroad tracks at the western edge of Planning Area 51. It is somewhat isolated from the public and therefore, would not be detrimental to public health, safety or welfare and not be materially injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity. It is surrounded by parcels designated for the Orange County Great Park (i.e. active recreational use) and commercial uses.

The Project would conduct routine handling and use of petroleum products and hazardous materials that could leak or spill if equipment such as tanks are damaged from a seismic event, fire, or other unforeseen incident. To minimize potential impacts, containment and/or diversionary structures or equipment have been included to prevent an illicit discharge from an oil or hazardous materials spill. Furthermore, the facility will develop and implement a Hazardous Materials Business Plan and Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan before reportable quantities of hazardous materials/wastes or tanks/oil-filled equipment are handled or stored onsite. These measures will protect the public.

Water quality concerns will be addressed by constructing underground cisterns to channel runoff water to a cartridge media filter system for water treatment. After treatment, the collected stormwater can safely be discharged to flow to Marshburn Channel. In addition, Project studies concluded that the operation of the proposed project will not result in air quality or noise impacts.

3. The proposed conditional use is compatible with existing and future uses to the extent those are known and will comply with each of the applicable provisions of the ZO except for approved Variances and/or Administrative Relief per Sections 2-37 and 2-2.

The Project site is primarily vacant land, although portions are currently used for railroad related purposes. There is one established residential community located north of Marine Way along Ridge Valley Road, approximately 1,000 feet northwest of the site. Most of the existing land uses to the south and southwest are industrial with one exception of vacant land located southwest of the I-5. The Project lies within Planning Area 51 which encompasses 1,233,000 square feet of institutional land uses, specifically on public facilities. 122,500 square feet of which is for the OCTA facilities, 300,000 square feet for Orange County facilities; 263,000 square feet for warehousing for homeless providers; 468,000 square feet of uses; 26,000 square feet of sports park; and 53,500 square feet of remote airport terminal (City of Irvine General Plan, 2015). The Great Orange County Park



is planned northeast of Marine Way and a private recreational vehicle (RV) storage lot is planned directly adjacent to the northeast border of the Project site.

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While the Project would represent a change in visual character as compared to the existing site, it is located in an urban area that currently has a mix of open space, industrial and office buildings, residential homes, rail tracks and adjacent elevated freeway segments. The property will be visually separated by a 6-foot tall wall on top of a retaining wall. Views from residences may be interrupted by mature trees, existing and proposed walls, as well as any future development on the Orange County Property between Marine Way and the Project site (APN:580-761-04). Due to the urban and visual environment of the area surrounding the Project site, including various types of uses and structures, the visual change would be consistent with other developments in the vicinity.

The Project would comply with the applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. It would be consistent with the City’s General Plan goals to protect scenic corridors in the City and operation of the Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. The 6-foot-tall wall on top of the retaining wall would be built adjacent to the eastern property line and would be designed to blend or match existing walls to preserve and enhance the aesthetics of the communities within the project area. Project design will consider features such as light standards, or softscape treatments such as revegetation or other landscape treatments to reduce visual impacts and enhance the aesthetic quality of the various project components.

4. Based upon information available at the time of approval, adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and other necessary facilities exist or will be provided to serve the proposed use.

Both wet and dry utility connections to serve the OCMF would be part of the Project. Service providers include the Southern California Gas Company, Irvine Ranch Water District (potable water, recycled water, and wastewater), and Southern California Edison. The project site is in an urbanized area and major wet and dry utilities are currently provided to serve adjacent land uses.

Access to the site would come from the extension of Ridge Valley Road which is included as part of this Project’s construction.

5. The Project is not located within the Coastal Zone.

The OCMF project is not located within the Coastal Zone Boundary or the local Coastal Program Area as defined by the California Coastal Commission and will not be required to comply with the land use plan of the Certified Local Coastal Program.

Summary

The Project will provide a great benefit to Orange County passenger rail service. Projected population growth within Metrolink’s service area will require an increased number of commuter rail services and additional train storage and maintenance facilities associated with an increased fleet size to properly serve the community. The OCMF will provide equipment to inspect, clean, and maintain cars and locomotives on a regular and efficient basis, as well as office and welfare spaces for crews and facility staff, parts storage and management, water treatment, parking, access roads, and security. The Project is in



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accord with the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance because of its location within Planning Area 51 that permits maintenance facilities and structures and commitment to “long-term maintenance of public facilities”.

The design features of the Project are intended to make sure that the Project is not detrimental to the public’s health, safety, or welfare, nor injurious to adjacent properties. These features include hazardous materials controls, water quality protection, and aesthetics. The Project is compatible with existing and future land uses surrounding the site and all utilities and access features needed for the site will be provided by the Project. With its location immediately adjacent to the existing rail tracks and active rail corridor near the freeway and at the western edge of Planning Area 51, the site will not impact the general public and is necessary for the long-term maintenance of public facilities such as rail transportation. The Project is vital to the economic and general welfare of the public by serving commuter needs. For these reasons, a Conditional Use Permit for the OCMF should be approved.

Please contact me at (714) 560-5788 or by email (LCross@octa.net) if you have any questions or need additional information.

ORANGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Lora Cross

Lora Cross

cc: Barbara Bartholomae, AECOM
Jason Neff, Gannett Fleming