

City of Costa Mesa

Inter Office Memorandum

To: City Council

From: Mel Lee, Associate Planner *ME*

Date: August 20, 2004

Subject: **RETAIL CENTER AT 101 THROUGH 105 EAST 17TH STREET
(GROWER'S DIRECT)**

This memo has been prepared in response to Council member Cowan's request for a review of the site/corner location of Growers Direct. She expressed concern about parking and traffic circulation in the center, asked if the center is overbuilt for the site, if it is consistent with the City's General Plan, and what steps could be taken by the City to improve conditions.

Parking and Traffic

Zone Exception Permit ZE-76-197 and Redevelopment Action RA-31 were approved in 1976 for the center, which included a 5,000 sq. ft. restaurant pad (Denny's), a 4,990 sq. ft. bank pad (now Grower's Direct), and 19,590 sq. ft. of in-line retail shops. The request included variances from parking (164 spaces were required and 142 spaces were provided, a 22-space shortage), building setbacks, landscaping, and signage. The project was approved by Planning Commission with the requested variances.

Three to four parking spaces were eliminated when the drive approach on Newport Boulevard was added, reducing the number of on-site parking spaces to 138. Required parking was reduced by 5 spaces when the bank left and Grower's Direct went in (25 spaces @ 5/1000 ratio for the bank vs. 20 spaces @ 4/1000 ratio for Grower's Direct). However, the site is 30 spaces short of meeting current parking requirements.

One of the biggest problems related to access and parking is the fact that Grower's Direct has no truck delivery/loading area. Trucks typically unload in the drive aisle in front of the store and take the deliveries through the front of the store. Also, most of the driveways entering the site are right turn in/right turn out only, making access into the center difficult considering the volume of

traffic on the surrounding streets. The new driveway access to Newport Boulevard helped improve site access, and on-site congestion will be further reduced when Grower's Direct relocates to a new site.

Zoning and General Plan

The property is zoned C1 and has a General Plan designation of General Commercial. The development complies with the zoning and general plan, and does not exceed the maximum allowable FAR (Floor Area Ratio) for the site.

Property Condition

Staff visited the site and did not observe any property maintenance problems. The landscaping, parking areas, and buildings appear to be properly maintained. There is a freestanding sign on the E. 17th St. frontage that is missing a sign panel, which was forwarded to code enforcement for action.

Recommendation

To reduce on-site parking and traffic congestion problems, if Grower's Direct moves across the street, a similar use (i.e., a market), should be discouraged from occupying the building since the building cannot accommodate a separate truck loading area.

cc: City Manager
City Attorney
City Clerk (2)
Staff (4)
File (2)