



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: SEPTEMBER 17, 2013

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN SCREENING GPS-13-03 - FOR PROPOSED STRIP OF LAND AS AN EXTENSION OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 320 E. 18TH STREET

DATE: SEPTEMBER 3, 2013

FROM: PLANNING DIVISION/DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PRESENTATION BY: MINOO ASHABI, PRINCIPAL PLANNER

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: MINOO ASHABI, PRINCIPAL PLANNER
(714) 754-5610, minoo.ashabi@costamesaca.gov**

RECOMMENDATION

Accept or deny General Plan amendment request for processing to amend the land use designation from Public and Institutional (P&I) to Medium Density Residential (MDR) related to development of a two-unit residential project.

REQUEST

The applicant is proposing to amend the General Plan Land Use designation for a 20-foot x 63-foot strip of land to be included in the development of a two-unit residential common interest development. The project site (with the exception of the new extension) was approved in 2008 for the two-unit development; the added area will not change the proposed density for the site. If the General Plan screening is approved, the project approval will be subject to the following:

- General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation from Public and Institutional (P&I) to Medium Density Residential;
- Rezone to change the zoning from I&R (Institutional and Recreational) to R2-MD (Multiple Family Residential – Medium Density);
- Design/site plan review; and,
- Tentative Parcel Map.

BACKGROUND

Project Site/Background

The project site is located on the east side of Santa Ana Avenue (Attachment 2). It is bounded by a church (Lighthouse Coastal Church) and the church parking lot on the north and east. Properties to the east and south of the site are zoned R1 (Single-Family Residential) and R2-MD (Multiple Family Residential – Medium Density) respectively.

The site is proposed to be added to a development site approved for two units in May of 2008. The entitlement involved the following:

- **General Plan Amendment GP-08-01**– General Plan Amendment to change land use designation from Public/Institutional to Medium Density Residential.
- **Rezone R-08-01**-- Rezone from (I&R) Institutional and Recreational to R2-MD (Multiple-Family Residential – Medium Density).
- **Planning Application PA-08-06** – Design Review for a 2-unit, two-story, single-family, detached, small-lot residential common interest development including a variance from rear yard lot coverage (25% required – 30% proposed), an Administrative Adjustment for 2nd story rear setback (20 feet required, 12 feet proposed), and a Minor Modification to allow an 8-foot perimeter wall (maximum 6-foot height allowed, 8-foot proposed).

The approved project received three time extensions; however, it was not constructed. The last request for a time extension was approved by the Planning Commission in 2012 that extended the approval to May 20, 2013.

SCEL recently acquired the property and would like to proceed with the development with a larger footprint for the project site with slightly larger units and open space areas. Therefore, approval of a General Plan Amendment and Rezone will be required to add the additional 20 feet to the rear of the site. In addition, the requested general plan amendment and rezone will also eliminate the need for a variance for the rear yard coverage approved with the previous entitlement.

Proposed Project

The proposed project submitted for screening to the City Council involves a *General Plan Amendment* to rezone this area to Medium Density Residential to allow a two-unit residential development, with an extension of 1,260 square feet added to the overall project site. The extension is proposed so that the project can comply with the development standards for a common interest development with respect to the rear yard setback; provide adequate back up distance from the garage for the rear unit, and to provide additional private open space. The proposed site plan is currently developed with a structure that has been vacant since 2008, when Kline School moved to their current location at 1620 Adams Avenue.

The proposed land extension is an unused portion of the parking lot for the church site; however, it is not striped or counted toward their parking requirements.

ANALYSIS

General Plan Amendment Screening Criteria

City Council Policy 500-2 sets forth the criteria to evaluate General Plan amendment requests. Council takes action on whether or not a proposal should be accepted for processing by using these criteria as guidance.

City Council Policy 500-2 also establishes a procedure for processing privately initiated General Plan amendments (Attachment 1). The policy also acknowledges these criteria are only guidelines and City Council may accept an application which does not meet the criteria if it finds there are overriding reasons to do so.

A project summary sheet is attached for the screening request. This summary sheet provides the following information:

- Potential Project Description, Land Use, and Traffic Evaluation.
- Justification for approval or rejection of application for further processing.

Additionally, acceptance of a proposal for screening is not a commitment to approve the General Plan amendment. This action represents that Council would like to consider the request for processing, and subsequently explore alternatives prior to making a final decision on amending the General Plan.

ALTERNATIVES

In addition to providing general feedback on the proposed project, City Council would need to take action on the General Plan amendment screening request.

1. Accept processing of the General Plan Amendment request. This will require amending the General Plan to allow a two-unit common interest development in place of an existing vacant school building.
2. Deny General Plan Amendment request from further processing. Denial of this request would require the project to be redesigned for a smaller site resulting in fewer deviations from the residential development standards and residential design guidelines.

FISCAL REVIEW

Fiscal review is not required for this item.

LEGAL REVIEW

The City Attorney's office has considered the proposal and determined that a General Plan Amendment is necessary in order for the project to proceed as proposed.

CONCLUSION

Staff believes the proposed development meets the goals and intent of the City's General Plan and regional land use plans in that the extension of the residential land use will provide a better site plan for development of the proposed two units without affecting the parking lot for the church site.

MINOO ASHABI, AIA
Principal Planner

GARY ARMSTRONG, AICP
Economic and Development Services
Director

Attachments: [1. Summary Sheet](#)
 [2. Council Policy 500-2](#)
 [3. Vicinity Map](#)
 [4. Zoning Map](#)
 [5. Site Photos](#)
 [6. Applicant's submitted plans](#)

cc: Chief Executive Officer
Assistant Chief Executive Officer
Director of Economic & Development/Deputy CEO
Public Services Director
City Attorney
Transportation Services Manager
City Engineer
City Clerk (9)
Staff (7)
File (2)

Susan McDowell
RSI Development LLC
620 Newport Center Drive, 12th FL
Newport Beach, CA 92660

September 16, 2013

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK

13 SEP 17 PM 12:02

City of Costa Mesa
City Council
P.O. Box 1200
Costa Mesa, CA 92628

CITY OF COSTA MESA
BY _____

Reference: General Plan Screening GP-13-03 – For Proposed Strip of Land as an Extension of Property located at 320 E. 18th Street

I request that you deny the recommended action described in the City Council Agenda Report dated September 3, 2013 to accept the General Plan Screening Request GP-13-03, to amend the General Plan Land Use designation from P&I to MDR and a rezone from I&R to R2-MD. By accepting the recommended action, the 20-foot x 60-foot strip of land, which is currently part of Master Plan PA-00-56 for the Lighthouse Coastal Community Church property located at 300/301 Magnolia, will create a reduction in the current on-site parking for the church.

The staff report is incorrect that the 20-foot x 60-foot proposed land extension is an unused portion of the church parking. The 20-foot x 60-foot strip of land is currently used by the Lighthouse Coastal Community Church for parking. The gravel area is used for parking of a commercial vehicle and part of the 20-foot strip encroaches into the Church's asphalt parking lot area which contains nine straight-in parking spaces. A portion of the nine parking spaces is used by the church to store a small church trailer. If this request is approved, in addition to the lost parking spaces, parking space for the commercial vehicle and the trailer will further reduce the on-site parking for the church.

The 20 foot x 60 foot strip was previously occupied by a modular building used by the Kline School and located on church property. After the modular building was removed and the church opened their preschool, residents requested that the space be used for parking to alleviate the over-flow parking problem. In 2006, the City Council modified the Master Plan to require that the area where the modular building was located could only be used for parking. At that time, the church pastor assured residents that it would not be a problem. Since that time, a portion of the space has been paved with asphalt and marked for parking with the remaining gravel area used by the church for parking.

Due to a parking shortage on E 18th Street, a portion of the church parking lot near the 320 E. 18th Street property is currently used for resident overnight parking. Resident parking on Magnolia utilizes most of the available on-street parking. As a result, there is usually a shortage of on-street parking available for residents and their visitors whenever the church or preschool are in use attendees fail to use the parking lot. Since Magnolia Street is closer to the church and preschool entrances, attendees park on the street in front of resident's homes instead of in the parking lot. For special events such as holiday church services or preschool programs, both parking lots are full and on-street parking is used as overflow parking, creating a severe parking shortage and making it next to impossible for residents to find on-street parking.

Although RSI's proposed project would remove an eyesore and be a significant improvement to the neighborhood, the loss of on-site parking for the Church will have a more detrimental effect on the surrounding property owners. In a neighborhood which already has a parking shortage due to church and preschool operations, elimination of on-site parking for the church will result in additional on-street overflow parking which negatively impacts the property values of Magnolia and E. 18th Street property owners.

I have talked with both the planner and Susan McDowell from RSI concerning the issue of the loss of parking as well as the conditions of approval and land use restriction contained in the master plan for the church. I was assured by both that it was only the gravel area and would not affect parking. However, based on our determination of the property line and the location of the 20-foot x 63-foot strip boundary, this does not appear to be the case. It appears the 20-foot strip encroaches about 5 feet into the asphalt area containing marked parking spaces resulting in a loss of on-site parking for the church. Therefore, it appears that the property owner, developer and the city planner did not do their due diligence concerning the proposed land use extension.

Therefore, it would appear that no action should be taken on this request until the impact of changes to the master plan for the church is evaluated. It should be noted that at one time, the church owned all of the property from its eastern property line to Santa Ana Avenue between Magnolia and E. 18th Street. The neighborhood issues concerning a shortage of on-site parking have been created by the church as it has sold off its property in a piece-meal fashion over the years resulting in a site that is under parked and is considered legal non-conforming. Since the church does not meet the parking requirements, the surrounding property owners are forced to deal with the on-street overflow parking issue and decreased property values.

As a long-time Magnolia Street resident, I strongly support the currently approved project for two dwelling units on the property on the existing lot. In fact, my neighbors and I have spent considerable time, effort and money to insure the property was changed from I&R to R2-MD and the property would become residential once the Kline School relocated. We worked with the property owner, Newport Investment Strategies and the PRS Group, to revoke all prior entitlements granted to allow a private school or other business to operate at this location as well as supporting the rezone and variances required for the approved project. In addition, I have spoken at previous City Council and Planning Commission meetings in support of the project as well as the time extensions requested by Newport Investment Strategies and the PRS Group.

Although, I strongly support the development of this property as residential, I would urge the City Council to reject the applicant's request for the expansion of the property since it does not take into consideration the negative impacts on Master Plan PA-00-56 and the surrounding property owners. I would also suggest that the City Council encourage RSI to modify its design plan by reducing the size of the larger dwelling or consider requesting a possible small lot development in order to utilize the existing lot size at 320 E. 18th Street.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.



Beth Refakes

Attachment 1 - Photos of Church Parking Lot

September 17, 2013

**City Council Meeting - GPS-13-03
Attachment 1**

Photos of Church Parking Lot

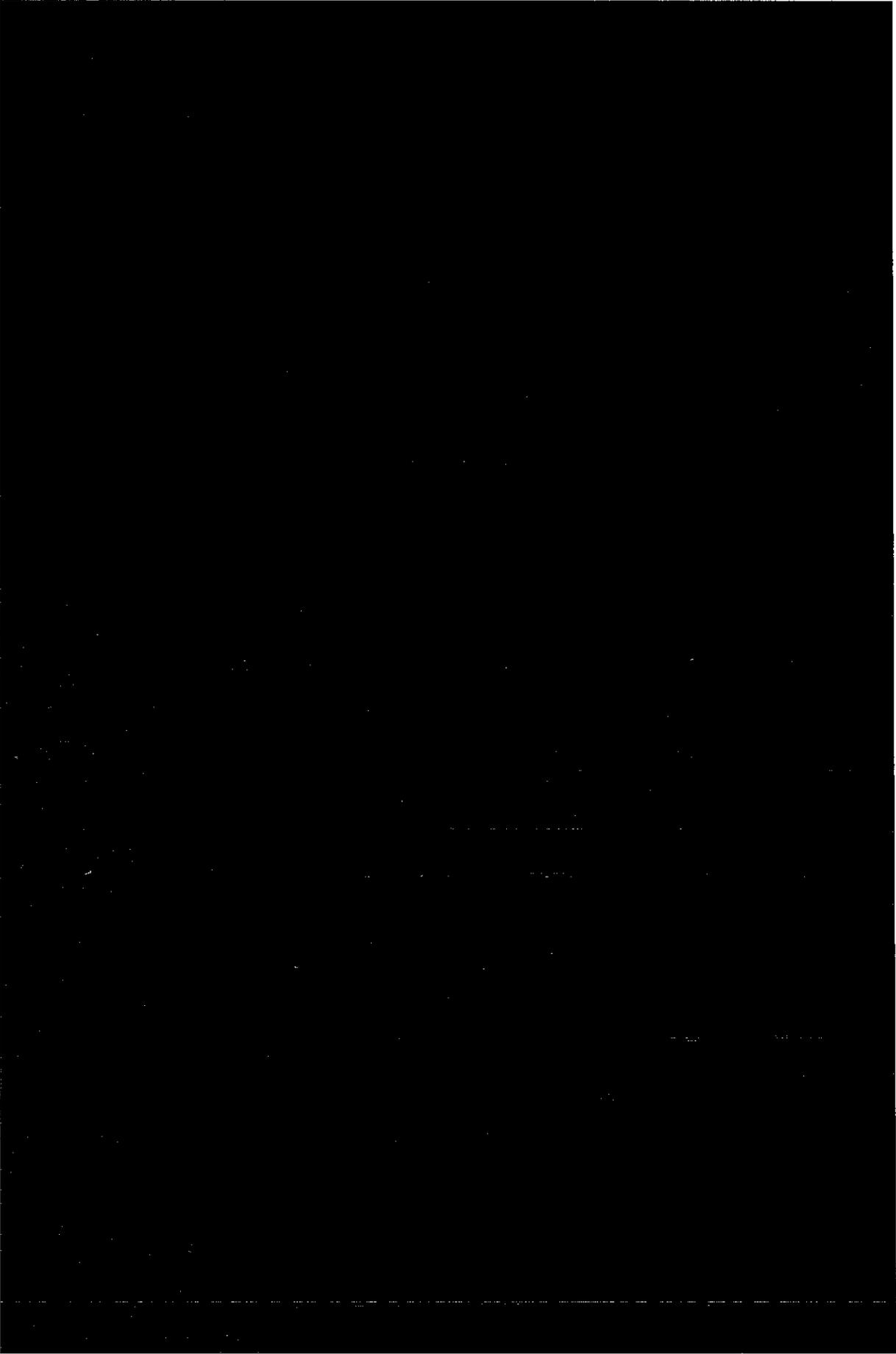
1. Occupied RV Parked Overnight in Church Parking Lot Next to 320 E. 18th Street (Photo Taken 09/17/13 6:49 a.m.)
2. Occupied RV Parked Overnight in Church Parking Lot Next to 320 E. 18th Street (Photo Taken 09/15/13 6:30 a.m.)
3. East 18th Street Resident Overflow Parking Next to 320 E. 18th Street (Photo Taken 09/11/13 6:38 a.m.)
4. Use of 20 ft. x 63 ft. Area by the Church for the Parking of Commercial Truck in Gravel Area and Trailer in Marked Parking Stall (Photo taken 09/06/13)
5. Red Line Indicates Location of Rear Property Line Between 320 E. 18th Street and Church (Photo Taken 09/15/13)
6. Red Line Indicates Location of Rear Property Line Between 320 E. 18th Street and Church and the Distance Between the Two Posts Indicates the Location of the 20-Ft Boundary (Photo Taken 09/15/13)
7. Red Line Indicates the Distance of 20 ft. Strip from Gravel Area of Church Parking Lot and Encroachment into Marked Parking Spaces (Photo Taken 09/15/13)
8. Red Line Indicates Upper Boundary of the 20 ft. Area Showing the Encroachment Behind the Wheel Stop into the Church Marked Parking Area Where the Modular Building was Removed (Photo Taken 09/15/13)

September 17, 2013

City Council Meeting - GPS-13-03



Occupied RV Parked Overnight in Church Parking Lot Next to 320 E. 18th Street (Photo Taken 09/17/13 6:49 a.m.)



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East 18th Street Resident Overflow Parking Next to 320 E. 18th Street (Photo Taken 09/11/13 6:38 a.m.)



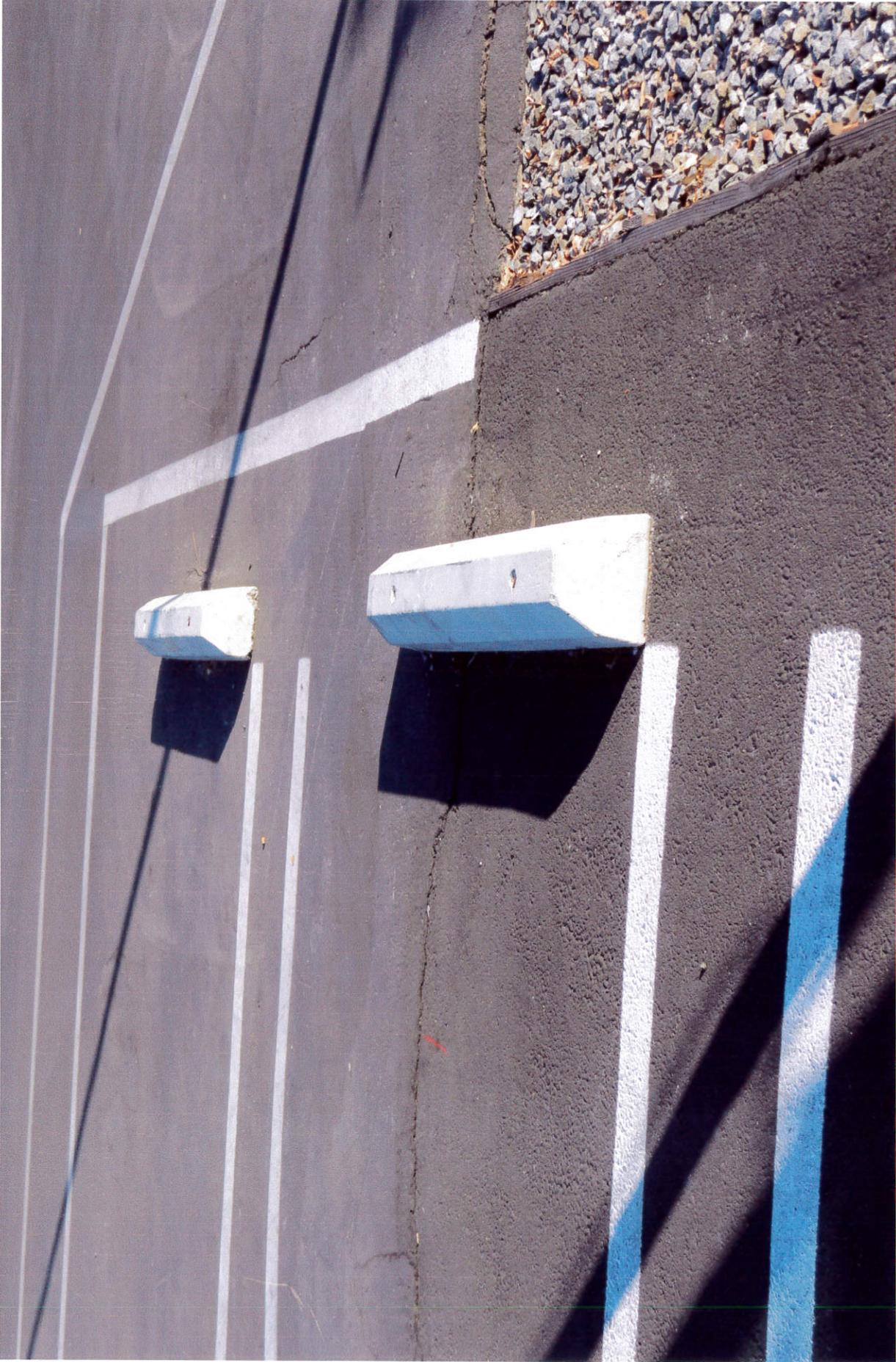
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