

County of Fresno

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PLANNING STEVEN E. WHITE, DIRECTOR

Planning Commission Staff Report Agenda Item No. 2 November 18, 2021

SUBJECT: Variance Application No. 4116

DESCRIPTION: Variance to allow for the installation of a 43'-9" high nitrogen tank

mounted on a 12' concrete pad for Cargill Fresno Facility (Beef Processing) on a 56.49-acre parcel located within the AE-20 (Exclusive Agricultural 20-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District.

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LOCATION: The subject parcel is located on the north side of W. North Avenue

between W. North Avenue and S. Fig Avenue, adjacent southeast from the City of Fresno. (511 W North Avenue) (APN: 329-020-69)

(Sup. Dist. 1).

OWNER/

APPLICANT: Julian Morales

STAFF CONTACT: Elliot Racusin, Planner

(559) 600-4245

David Randall, Senior Planner

(559) 600-4052

RECOMMENDATION:

Deny Variance Application No. 4116; and

• Direct the Secretary to prepare a Resolution documenting the Commission's action.

EXHIBITS:

- 1. Conditions of Approval and Project Notes
- Location Map
- 3. Existing Zoning Map
- 4. Existing Land Use Map

- 5. Site Plans and Detail Drawings
- 6. Applicant's Variance Findings

SITE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONAL INFORMATION:

Table 1

Criteria	Existing	Proposed
General Plan Designation	Exclusive Agricultural	No Change
Zoning	AL-20 (Exclusive Agricultural, 20- acre minimum parcel size)	No Change
Parcel Size	56.49-acres	No Change
Structural Improvements	N/A	Installation of a 43'-9" high nitrogen tank mounted on a 12' concrete pad
Nearest Residence	Single family Residential: 300' northeast of property Exclusive Agricultural: western and southern adjacent	N/A
Surrounding Development	Fully developed single-family residential neighborhood north and east of subject parcel Exclusive Agricultural: western and southern adjacent\	N/A

EXISTING VIOLATION (Y/N) AND NATURE OF VIOLATION: N

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

It has been determined pursuant to Section 15303 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and is not subject to CEQA.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Notices were sent to 110 property owners and interested parties within 600 feet of the subject parcel, exceeding the minimum notification requirements prescribed by the California Government Code and County Zoning Ordinance.

There were no public correspondences.

PROCEDURAL CONSIDERATIONS:

A Variance may be approved only if four Findings specified in the Fresno County Zoning Ordinance, Section 873-F are made by the Planning Commission.

The subject parcel is located within the City of Fresno Sphere of Influence (SOI) and adjacent to the City of Fresno's incorporated boundary. As such, the proposed Zone Variance application was routed to the City of Fresno for consideration of annexation and review of the project.

The decision of the Planning Commission on a Variance Application is final, unless appealed to the Board of Supervisors within 15 days of the Commission's action.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The subject parcel is in the AL-20 (Limited Agricultural, 20-acre minimum parcel size) Zone District which requires a minimum lot size of 20-acres.

Findings 1:

There are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved which do not apply generally to other property in the vicinity having the identical zoning classification.

Table 3

	Current Standard:	Proposed Operation:	Is Standard Met (y/n)
Setbacks	Front: 35 feet Side: 20 feet Street Side: 35 feet Rear: 20 feet	No change	Y
Lot Dimensions	Lot width: 165 feet Lot depth: 180 feet	No change	Y
Parking	One covered parking space	No change	Y
Lot Coverage	30% lot coverage	No change	Y
Space Between Buildings	6 feet	No change	Y
Wall Requirements	6 feet	No change	Y
Septic Replacement Area	100 percent of the existing system	No change	Y
Water Well Separation	Building sewer/septic tank: 50 feet. disposal field:100 feet; seepage pit/cesspool: 150 feet	No change	Y

	Current Standard:	Proposed Operation:	Is Standard Met (y/n)
Height Requirement	35-foot heigh limit maximum	43'-9" high nitrogen tank mounted on a 12' concrete pad	N

Reviewing Agency/Department Comments Finding 1:

There were no comments from reviewing agencies or County Departments regarding the project other than advisory statements about required regulations that have been noted under the Projects Notes section of Exhibit 1.

Finding 1 Analysis:

In support of Finding 1, the applicant states there are exceptional circumstances applicable to the property involved. The existing 511 W. North Ave Building currently produces a large amount of beef patties. The new exterior tank will be used to store nitrogen which is a form used for cooling batches of beef product. This contingent cooling source is needed in case the existing cooling source experiences shortage.

The conditions of the subject parcel do not appear to be exceptional. There are not conditions applicable to the property which do not apply generally to other properties in the same area and zoning. There is not any physical constraint that requires this tank to be of this height the existing tanks located next to it are lower in height and there is amply area onsite for reconfiguration of the installation.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

None

Conclusion Finding 1:

Finding 1 cannot be made, there is not an extraordinary circumstance relating to the property that does not apply to other properties in the same zone classification.

Finding 2:

Such Variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant, which right is possessed by other property owners under like conditions in the vicinity having the identical zoning classification.

Reviewing Agency/Department Comments Finding 2:

Fresno Fire Department Comments: Nitrogen tanks are very common for freezing or air purging in the meat packaging process and we have other facilities within our jurisdiction that have similar systems. Granting of the Minor Variance ensures the owners right to build in substantial conformance with current Development Standards.

Analysis Finding 2:

The applicant asserts that need for nitrogen as part of the cooling process for the beef constitutes a substantial property right. This does not constitute a substantial property right, the height limitation does not preclude the property from being used for its intended use, it is just an inconvenience for the applicant.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

None

Conclusion Finding 2:

Finding 2 cannot be made based on the above analysis as the height requirement does not in this circumstance create a situation where it creates a loss of a substantial property right of the applicant, which right is possessed by other property owners under like conditions

Finding 3: The granting of a Variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property and improvement in the vicinity in which the property is located.

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	Surrounding Parcels					
	Size:	Use:	Zoning:	Nearest Residence:		
North:	19.55-acres 0.41-acre	Agriculture Single Family Residential	Residential (City of Fresno)	382 feet		
West:	17.50-acres	Exclusive Agriculture	AE-20	1,100 feet		
	20.00-acres	Exclusive Agriculture	N/A	N/A		
	30.00-acres	Exclusive Agriculture	N/A	N/A		
South:	0.36-acre	Exclusive Agriculture	AE-20	300 feet		
East:	0.11-acre	Single Family Residential	Residential (City of Fresno)	390 feet		

Reviewing Agency/Department Comments:

Fresno County Environmental Health: The construction project has the potential to expose nearby residents to elevated noise levels. Consideration should be given to the County of Fresno noise ordinance.

There were no other comments from reviewing agencies or County Departments regarding the project other than advisory statements about required regulations that have been noted under the Projects Notes section of Exhibit 1.

Analysis Finding 3:

The applicant stipulated the new nitrogen tank will be located within the existing Cargill facility and directly adjacent to the existing 511 W. North building (see photographs of existing facility and drawings attached). The new tank will not create any unsightly appearance, nor create any solid or liquid waste.

The comment from the Fresno County Environmental Health points to potential noise but did not consider the potential significant enough to require a noise analysis. The nearest residence is 382 feet from the property. Hence, the County Noise ordinance is adequate to address the situation.

No other concerns were expressed by commenting agencies and departments.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

None

Conclusion Finding 3:

Finding 3 can be made as granting the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property and improvement in the vicinity in which the property is located.

<u>Finding 4</u>: That the proposed development is consistent with the General Plan.

Reviewing Agency Comments Finding 4:

The Development Services and Capital Projects Division, Policy Planning Unit states:

The subject parcel is not enrolled in the Williamson Act Program. General Plan:

The subject parcel is located within the City of Fresno Sphere of Influence (SOI) and adjacent to the City of Fresno's incorporated boundary. As such, the proposed Zone Variance application must be routed to the City of Fresno for review.

Analysis Finding 4:

The applicant states the new tank will be located within the existing Cargill facility and directly adjacent to the existing 511 W. North building (see photographs of existing facility and drawings attached). There are currently other existing tanks directly adjacent to the existing building.

The General Plan includes policies relating to the use and size of parcels but does not include guidance on height restrictions. Therefore, staff believes that the proposal is consistent with the General Plan.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

None.

Conclusion Finding 4:

Finding 4 can be made as stipulated by the above analysis that the proposed development is consistent with the General Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

SUMMARY CONCLUSION:

Staff believes that required findings 1 and 2 cannot be made based on the factors cited in the analysis. Staff therefore recommends denial of Variance No. 4116.

PLANNING COMMISSION MOTIONS:

Recommended Motion (Denial Action)

- Move to determine that the required Findings 1 and 2 cannot be made (as stipulated by Staff) and move to deny Variance Application No. 4116; and
- Direct the Secretary to prepare a Resolution documenting the Commission's action

<u>Alternative Motion</u> (Approval Action)

- Move to determine the required Findings can be made (state basis for making the findings) and move to approve Variance Application No. 4116, subject to the Conditions of Approval listed in Exhibit 1; and
- Direct the Secretary to prepare a Resolution documenting the Commission's action

Recommended Conditions of Approval and Project Notes:

See attached Exhibit 1.

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EXHIBIT

EXHIBIT 1

Variance Application No. 4116 (Including Conditions of Approval and Project Notes)

	Conditions of Approval		
1.	Development shall be in accordance with the site plan as approved by the Planning Commission.		

	ring Notes reference mandatory requirements of Fresno County or other Agencies and are provided as information t
e projec	t Applicant.
1.	Development will be subject to the requirements of the current Fire Code and Building Code when a building permit or certificate of occupancy is sought.
2.	For property within flood zone shaded x, any future/proposed building pad must be elevated above the existing ground to at least a minimum of twelve inches (12") and/or the finish floor elevation must be elevated above the crown of the adjacent street.
3.	Any work performed within the County road right-of-way will require an encroachment permit.
4.	For property within flood zone shaded x, any future/proposed building pad must be elevated above the existing ground to at least a minimum of twelve inches (12") and/or the finish floor elevation must be elevated above the crown of the adjacent street. Furthermore, any future/proposed associated electrical equipment/electrical system components (e.g., panels, meters, switches, outlets, electrical wiring, walk-in equipment cabinets, generators, bottom of the lowest edge of the solar array, pool-associated motors and water heater, receptacles, junction boxes, inverter, transformers, etc.) in the shaded flood zone x must be elevated above the finish floor elevation. All electrical wiring below the flood elevation shall be in a watertight conduit or approved direct burial cable. All sides of the future/proposed building shall be sloped 2% for 5' to provide positive drainage away from the building.
5.	Any additional storm water runoff generated by future development of this site cannot be drained across property lines or into the County road right-of-way, and must be retained on- site, per County Standards unless FMFCD specifies otherwise.
6.	Any existing or future access driveway should be set back a minimum of 10' from the property line.
7.	Any existing or future entrance gate should be set back a minimum of 20' from the road right-of-way line or the length of the longest truck entering the site and shall not swing outward.
8.	A 10' x 10' corner cut-off should be improved for sight distance purposes at any existing driveway accessing Behymer Avenue if not already present.

		Notes
	9.	A grading permit or voucher is required for any future grading proposed with this application.
	10.	If the variance is approved, a parcel map application will have to be filed with Fresno County to affect the property division.
	11.	It is recommended that the applicant consider having the existing septic tanks pumped and have the tank and leach lines evaluated by an appropriately licensed contractor if it has not been serviced and/or maintained within the last five years. The evaluation may indicate possible repairs, additions, or require the proper destruction of the system.
	12.	Any new sewage disposal systems shall be installed under permit and inspection by the Department of Public Works and Planning Building and Safety Section. Contact Department of Public Works and Planning at (559) 600-4540 for more information.
	13.	The future construction project has the potential to expose nearby residents to elevated noise levels. Consideration should be given to the County of Fresno noise ordinance and the City of Clovis Municipal Code.
EXHIBIT 1 Page 2	14.	At such time the applicant or future property owner decides to construct a water well, the water well contractor selected by the applicant will be required to apply for and obtain a Permit to Construct a Water Well from the Fresno County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division. Please be advised that only those persons with a valid C-57 contractor's license may construct wells. For more information, contact the Water Surveillance Program at (559) 600-3357.
	15.	As a measure to protect ground water, all water wells and/or septic systems that exist or have been abandoned within the project area should be properly destroyed by an appropriately licensed contractor.
	16.	Should any underground storage tank(s) be found during the project, the applicant shall apply for and secure an Underground Storage Tank Removal Permit from the Fresno County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division. Contact the Fresno County Hazmat Compliance Program at (559) 600-3271 for more information.
	17.	Should the structures have an active rodent or insect infestation, the infestation should be abated prior to demolition of the structures to prevent the spread of vectors to adjacent properties.
	18.	In the process of demolishing the existing structures, the contractor may encounter asbestos containing construction materials and materials coated with lead-based paints.
	19.	If asbestos containing materials are encountered, contact the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District at (559) 230-6000 for more information.

	Notes
20.	If the structures were constructed prior to 1979 or if lead-based paint is suspected to have been used in these structures, then prior to demolition and/or remodel work the contractor should contact the following agencies for current regulations and requirements: California Department of Public Health, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch, at (510) 620-5600 United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9, at (415) 947-8000 State of California, Industrial Relations Department, Division of Occupational Safety and Health, Consultation Service (CAL-OSHA) at (559) 454-5302.
21.	If approved, the subdivision will require a that a Tentative Parcel Map be prepared in accordance with the Professional Land Surveyors Act, the Subdivision Map Act and County Ordinance. The Tentative Parcel Map application shall expire two years after the approval of said Tentative Parcel Map.
22.	Upon approval and acceptance of the Tentative Parcel Map and any Conditions imposed thereon, a Final Parcel Map shall be prepared and by a Professional Land Surveyor or Registered Civil Engineer authorized to practice Land Surveying in accordance with the Professional Land Surveyors Act, the Subdivision Map Act and County Ordinance. Recordation of the Final Parcel Map shall take place within two years of the acceptance of the Tentative Parcel Map unless a Map extension is received prior to the expiration date of the approved Tentative Parcel Map. Failure to record the Final Parcel Map prior to the expiration of said Tentative Parcel Map may void the Parcel Map application.
23.	If surface water is proposed, it must come from a reliable source and the supply must be made "firm" by water banking or other suitable arrangement. If groundwater is proposed, a hydrogeologic investigation may be required to confirm the availability of water in amounts necessary to meet project demand. If the lands in question lie in an area of limited groundwater, a hydrogeologic investigation shall be required.
24.	If use of surface water is proposed, its use must not have a significant negative impact on agriculture or other water users within Fresno County. If use of groundwater is proposed, a hydrogeologic investigation may be required. If the lands in question lie in an area of limited groundwater, a hydrogeologic investigation shall be required. Should the investigation determine that significant pumping-related physical impacts will extend beyond the boundary of the property in question, those impacts shall be mitigated.
25.	A determination that the proposed water supply is sustainable or that there is an acceptable plan to achieve sustainability. The plan must be structured such that it is economically, environmentally, and technically feasible. In addition, its implementation must occur prior to long-term and/or irreversible physical impacts, or significant economic hardship, to surrounding water users.

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EXHIBIT 2

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City

of

Fresno





AP1 - APARTMENT

C - COMMERCIAL

C# - COMMERCIAL

CHU - CHURCH FC - FIELD CROP

I - INDUSTRIAL

ORC - ORCHARD

SF#- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE

V - VACANT

VIN - VINEYARD

LEGEND:

Subject Property



Ag Contract Land

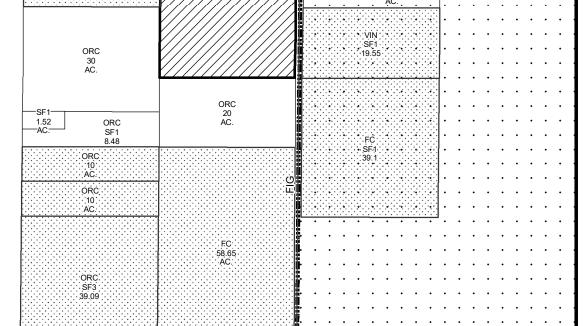
EXHIBIT 4

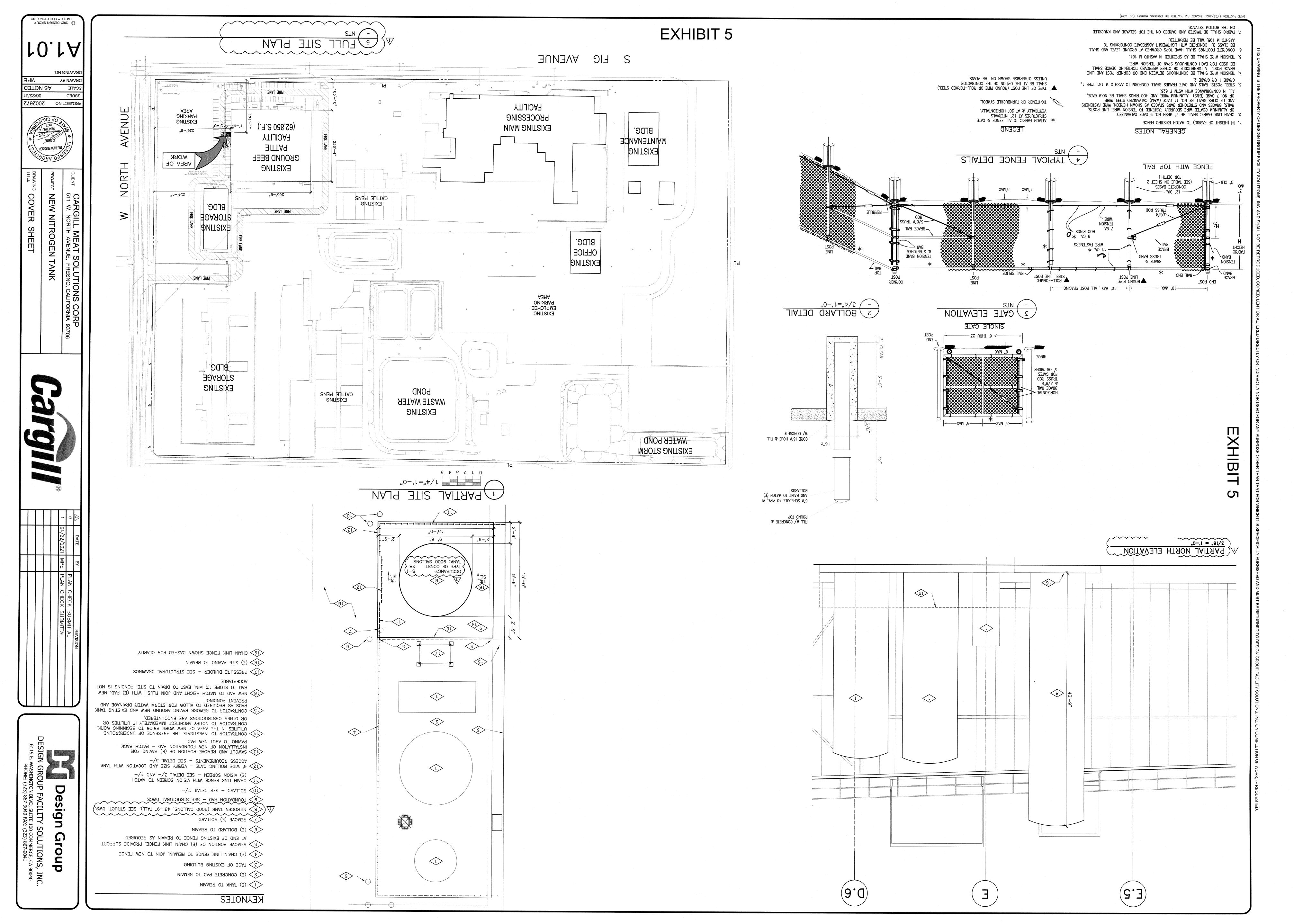


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Department of Public Works and Planning **Development Sevices Division**

Map Prepared by: DM G:\4360Devs&Pln\GIS\ Maps\Landuse\







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October 20, 2021

Department of Public Works and Planning Development Services and Capital Projects Division **Attn: Elliot Racusin, Planner; Ober S. Ramirez, Planner** 2220 Tulare St. 6th Floor Fresno, CA 93721

Re: Variance Findings for Cargill Project – New Exterior Nitrogen Tank added to an existing

building, located directly adjacent to such building.

Job Address: 511 W. North Avenue, Fresno CA 93706

Plan Check No.: 21-0185

Mr. Racusin,

On behalf of Cargill Meat Solutions, we are providing this Variance Findings Document as requested related to the new Nitrogen Tank project which is to be added to the existing 511 W. North Ave Building within the existing Cargill Fresno Facility.

The following numbering follows the numbering included in the Variance Findings Handout

1. There are exceptional circumstances applicable to the property involved. The existing 511 W. North Ave Building currently produces a large amount of beef patties. Due to existing and recent CO2 supply constraints, operations explored other methods of chilling beef product during processing in an effort to meet customers demands and ultimately provide essential food for various communities. Implementing a contingent method of chilling beef allows us to further ensure our employees have full time work as it has been impacted through the ongoing shortage of CO2. The solution that meets the food safety requirements/regulations was ultimately utilizing Nitrogen to chill beef product during processing. Operations could not explore having more CO2 due to the fact that there is a supply shortage of such material in the entire Central Valley. Note: the industry best practice to chill beef product is the use of either Nitrogen or CO2, there are no other known alternatives to use for this process. The size of the new Nitrogen tank was selected due to the logistical time needs in order to adequately keep the tank filled at a usable level for production needs. Due to the size of the required Nitrogen tank, it is not feasible to have a horizontal tank installed in an area within the required distance as it would be detrimental for various reasons removing additional parking spaces, impacting access to existing nitrogen and CO2 tanks for filling purposes, and potentially impacting the existing fire lane. Additionally, there is no feasible





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solution to locate a new nitrogen tank inside the existing processing building due to space constraints.

- 2. Based on Zoning Classification as well as Group Classification F-1 Food Processing (Beef Patties), we are operating within the parameters of utilizing common industry standard processes as we produce beef patties for the consumer market. Nitrogen is a common industry standard for chilling beef product which is what we are proposing for our project. The use of the specified nitrogen tank as a contingent method to cool beef product is necessary for the preservation of our business in order for us to continue to properly produce such beef product while meeting food safety standards. Additionally, see Finding #1 for reference and Operational Statement.
- 3. The granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property. The new nitrogen tank will be located within the existing Cargill facility and directly adjacent to the existing 511 W. North building (see photographs of existing facility and drawings attached). The new tank will not create any unsightly appearance, nor create any solid or liquid waste.
- 4. The granting of such variance will not be contrary to the objectives of the Fresno County general plan. The new tank will be located within the existing Cargill facility and directly adjacent to the existing 511 W. North building (see photographs of existing facility and drawings attached). There are currently other existing tanks directly adjacent to the aforementioned existing building.

Thank you for your assistance on this project,

Julian Morales Senior Project Manager





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