



Administrative Report

J.1., File # PC26-1012

Meeting Date: 8/20/2026

To: **PLANNING COMMISSION**

From: **DANIEL BESINAIZ, ASSOCIATE PLANNER**

TITLE

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON AN EXEMPTION DECLARATION AND VARIANCE TO EXCEED THE 30-FOOT MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT REQUIREMENT FOR THE INSTALLATION OF FOUR (THREE INITIALLY) BULK CRYOGENIC STORAGE TANKS WITH A PROPOSED HEIGHT OF APPROXIMATELY 38 FEET AT AN EXISTING MANUFACTURING FACILITY ON PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN AN INDUSTRIAL-COMMERCIAL (IC-1) ZONE.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Open public hearing, receive and file all documents and correspondence on the proposed project;
2. Accept all testimony from staff, applicant, and the public and deliberate;
3. Close public hearing;
4. Adopt a Resolution by title only approving an Exemption Declaration and granting a Variance to exceed the 30-foot maximum building height requirement for the installation of four bulk cryogenic storage tanks with a proposed height of approximately 38 feet at an existing manufacturing facility on property located within an Industrial-Commercial (IC-1) Zone.

BACKGROUND

An application for a Variance to exceed the height limit of 30 feet for the installation of four (4) Cryogenic bulk storage tanks with a proposed height of approximately 38 feet at 2477 Manhattan Beach Boulevard was submitted by Michael Gillway on behalf of Impulse Space on June 23, 2026.

The subject property is located at 2477 Manhattan Beach Boulevard, between Redondo Beach Avenue and Inglewood Avenue. The lot is approximately 4.43 acres in size with lot dimensions of 501 feet in width and 385 feet in depth. The zoning of the subject property is Industrial-Commercial (IC-1) as is the adjacent property immediately west of the subject property and also fronting Manhattan Beach Boulevard. The properties immediately adjacent to and north and further west of the subject property are zoned Industrial (I-1) and the properties south of the subject property and across Manhattan Beach Boulevard are zoned Single-Family Residential (R-1).

Impulse Space is an aerospace manufacturing company headquartered in Redondo Beach. Impulse manufactures space craft for the delivery of satellites into orbit. In addition to the subject location Impulse also has a similar facility located immediately east at 2651 Manhattan Beach Boulevard. The subject location at 2477 Manhattan Beach Boulevard will be used for manufacturing, assembly, integration, warehousing, and office operations associated with the development of spacecraft.

Primarily the facility will be used to manufacture, assemble and test components. Below is an area breakdown of the operations at 2477 Manhattan Beach Boulevard.

- Office: 52,240 SF
- Storage/IT Infrastructure/Restrooms: 20,520 SF
- Manufacturing: 126,580 SF
- Kitchen/Walkways: 51,260 SF
- Total: 250,600 SF

The applicant is proposing to install four cryogenic storage tanks required to support the existing manufacturing operations on site. The tanks will be used to store liquid nitrogen and liquid argon using vacuum-insulated double-wall designed tanks. The proposed tanks are specialized industrial equipment whose dimensions are determined by required storage capacity, engineering design, and safety standards associated with bulk cryogenic systems. The height and location of these vessels cannot be materially reduced or relocated without impacting their intended function, required access, and compliance with applicable safety requirements.

Because the height of the tanks is driven by technical, operational, and regulatory requirements rather than design preference, the applicant is requesting a variance to exceed the 30-foot maximum building height requirement for the installation of four bulk cryogenic storage tanks. The existing manufacturing structure conforms to the height regulations. The requested variance would allow the proposed storage tanks to exceed the maximum height requirement by 8 feet.

In addition to the standard “criteria” required for the issuance of a Variance as presented within the City’s zoning ordinance (§ 10-2.2510) staff identified two (2) additional potential issues of concern with the proposal which are discussed below, “Safety” and “Noise”.

Safety

The proposed storage of liquid nitrogen, liquid argon, and liquid oxygen utilizes established cryogenic storage technology that has been widely implemented in industrial, medical, manufacturing, and research settings. The tanks are designed with multiple layers of containment and safety controls, including vacuum insulation, double-wall construction, and automatic pressure-relief systems. The proposed installation would be subject to applicable industry and regulatory standards governing the design, construction, installation, and operation of cryogenic storage systems. These tanks are manufactured to ASME BPVC Section VIII, Division 1 (BPVC.VIII.1) standards, pressure relief devices are certified to CGA S-1.2 (11th Edition, 2024), and the installation will comply fully with NFPA 55, OSHA 29 CFR 1910.101, and all applicable local building and fire codes.

The materials proposed for storage present hazards that are well documented and can be effectively managed through appropriate equipment, operational procedures, and emergency response measures. The use of standardized engineering controls and regulatory requirements provides safeguards against potential releases, pressure-related incidents, and other foreseeable hazards. Given the established use of this technology and the regulatory framework governing its installation and operation, the proposed tanks can be safely accommodated subject to compliance with all applicable codes, standards, and permit requirements. Attached to this Administrative Report is a “Safety & Compliance Report” that includes additional information demonstrating that these tanks are

safe when installed and managed per industry standards. Below is a summary of the site-specific safety measures that have been added to the conditions of approval within the attached resolution.

Physical Safeguards

- Vehicle impact protection around all cryogenic storage equipment as required
- Positive grading/drainage from storage pad - prevents ponding of cryogenic liquids or water
- NFPA 704 hazard diamond signage at all access points per applicable code requirements
- Perimeter fencing with locked access gate - prevents unauthorized access

11.2 Operational Controls

- Written operating procedures developed and posted at the storage area
- Written established safety procedures for all filling and transfer operations

11.3 First Responder Coordination

- Local fire department notified of cryogenic installation and provided a copy of this document
- Facility addresses and cryogenic storage location clearly marked for emergency vehicle access
- 24-hour emergency contact number posted at facility entrance
- Site map showing vessel locations, exclusion zones, and access routes available at facility entrance

Staff has also consulted with the City's Fire Department and their assessment of the potential safety issues related to this project are consistent with the conclusions presented in this report. A representative from the Fire Department will be present at this public hearing if additional questions concerning safety are raised.

Noise

The proposed cryogenic storage tanks are expected to generate minimal noise during normal operation. Noise associated with periodic tank filling would primarily result from the delivery vehicle and transfer equipment, with deliveries anticipated approximately once per week and lasting about one hour. The tanks shall also be equipped with silencers on the pressure-relief valves, which will further reduce potential operational noise. Given the infrequency and limited duration of deliveries, and the facility's location near the building which is roughly 130 feet away from Manhattan Beach Boulevard where vehicle and commercial activity are already present, the anticipated noise is not expected to be an issue or impactful on any adjacent properties.

ANALYSIS

Variance

Section 10-2.2510 of the Zoning Ordinance permits the Planning Commission to grant variances from development standards contained within the Ordinance in those instances where it is demonstrated that there are special circumstances applicable to the property including the size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings such that the strict application of the zoning provisions deprives such property of privileges enjoyed by other property in the vicinity and under identical zone designation;

and where the variance does not constitute a grant of special privileges.

In this instance, a Variance is being requested to exceed the maximum allowable building height requirement of 30 feet with the installation of cryogenic storage tanks at a height of approximately 38 feet. There are a number of special circumstances applicable to the project property including the following:

- The proposed tanks are specialized industrial equipment whose dimensions are determined by required storage capacity, engineering design, and safety standards associated with bulk cryogenic systems.
 - The height and location of these vessels cannot be materially reduced or relocated without impacting their intended function, required access, and compliance with applicable safety requirements.
- Due to the existing development of the site, required circulation patterns, utility infrastructure, fire department access, and safety clearances, no feasible location has been identified to install the required bulk cryogenic storage system while complying with the existing height limitation.
 - Without the requested variance, the property would be unable to utilize essential industrial support infrastructure commonly used by similar industrial facilities in the surrounding area.
- Nearby industrial properties with an industrial designation that allows the same uses as the subject property, including the adjacent Northrop Grumman facility located approximately 350 feet from the property boundary, utilize bulk storage tanks that exceed the height of the proposed installation.
 - An adjacent data center located approximately 150 feet from the property line contains rooftop mechanical equipment exceeding the height of the proposed bulk storage tanks.
- Nearby properties with similar industrial general plan and zoning designations and uses have similar bulk storage tanks and buildings that exceed far exceed the 30' height limit of the subject property.

More specifically, the height maximum makes it difficult to continue operations on the subject property according to the development standards for properties within the IC-1 zone. As per the Zoning Ordinance, if the applicant were to maintain the required 30-foot maximum height limit, it would inhibit the existing development to continue operations in a safe, well-regulated process.

For approval of the project, the Planning Commission must make the following findings in the affirmative. The following italicized text is the specific response to the individual criteria:

- a) There are special circumstances applicable to the property, including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings, such that the strict application of the zoning provisions deprives such property of privileges enjoyed by other property in the vicinity and under identical zone designation

The subject property's current use, and General Plan and Zoning land use designations illustrate unique inconsistencies not faced by other industrial parcels in the surrounding industrial neighborhood with a General Plan land use designation that allows the exact same uses. The subject properties General Plan land use designation (I-3) allows for the same "industrial uses" as the surrounding I-1 (Industrial) uses. Additionally, the actual use on the

subject property, aerospace manufacturing, is the same as the uses of many of the surrounding Industrial properties. The “special circumstances” applicable to this project are created due to the properties use and General Plan allowed uses which are the same as most of the surrounding industrial properties, however the Zoning development standards for the subject property are significantly more restrictive than those of all the surrounding industrial uses with a General Plan designation that allows for the exact same manufacturing/industrial uses. The surrounding industrial uses are allowed at heights of over 100’ where the subject property’s uses are limited to a height of 30’. Strict adherence to the zone district’s 30-foot height limit would eliminate the ability of the property owner to use the property for the existing manufacturing facility, while nearby similarly zoned properties (with a General Plan designation that allows for the exact same uses) are permitted at much greater heights. These physical hardships justify relief from the standard height restriction to afford the property the same development privileges as nearby properties with a similar zoning designation and a General Plan land use designation that permits the same uses. Additionally, the technical requirements of this required infrastructure in support of this aerospace manufacturing operation (permitted use) cannot be accommodated at a lesser height without resulting in significantly more frequent deliveries which have the potential for the greatest impact on the adjacent residential neighborhood south the subject property.

- b) The Variance granted shall be subject to such conditions as will assure that the adjustment thereby authorized shall not constitute a grant of special privileges inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and zone in which such property is situated.

The variance does not constitute a special privilege, as it allows development consistent with the existing industrial use and maintains compliance with the intent of the zoning district. The adjustment only allows for critical infrastructure with technical requirements that cannot be significantly altered that is common for the allowed use and that is required for some aerospace manufacturing operations without granting development rights unavailable to other similarly situated properties with similar General Plan and Zoning designations.

- c) The granting of a Variance shall not be contrary to the objectives of the Comprehensive General Plan.

Granting this variance supports the General Plan’s objectives of responsible economic development (Policy LU-6.1) and business retention and expansion (Policy LU-6.12). By allowing the existing business to install the proposed bulk cryogenic storage tanks, the City is supporting the business with specialized industrial support infrastructure necessary for the permitted industrial activities. Further, the granting of this variance supports the General Plan’s objective to maintain existing employers within the North Redondo Tech District (SPA-1). Thus, the variance aligns with, and does not conflict with the Comprehensive General Plan.

Based on a review of the plans by the Planning Division, approval of the project is recommended.

PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE

Staff received one public comment with concerns citing changes to the property such as the number of employees and public safety concerns. A copy of the public comment is attached. Additionally,

Staff did organize a meeting between the applicant and this concerned neighbor to further discuss and clarify the operations and safety associated with the business and the tanks.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Staff has determined that the proposed project is Categorically Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), under Article 19, Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) of the California Guidelines for Implementation of the CEQA. Specifically, the project includes installation of equipment necessary for the permitted manufacturing existing on the subject property.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the Exemption Declaration and grant the Variance subject to the findings and conditions contained within the attached draft resolution.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Draft Resolution

Attachment 2 - Site Plan

Attachment 3 - Project Renderings

Attachment 4 - Bulk Cryogenic Storage Safety & Compliance Presentation

Attachment 5 - CEQA Exemption Declaration

Attachment 6 - Public Comment