Vaidica Vidyā Ganapathi Center, Inc. (VVGC)

Project Description

The proposed project is to amend the current Use Permit to allow a place of assembly Vaidica Vidyā Ganapathi Center, Inc. (VVGC) to expand the current 2 small buildings, one 746 square foot previously called building “A”, which will be used as offices and one 401.19 SF previously called building “B”, which will primarily be used as silent meditation hall, to accommodate growing number of follower/devotees by erecting two new buildings, one 6000 Square Foot main worship/meditation hall, to be called building “C” and one 4000 SF Kitchen/dining hall, to be called building “D”. In addition, a separate small 25’X20’ “Overflow Restrooms” building will be constructed to be used few times in a year, only on special occasions. The proposed buildings will be pre engineered steel structures which only require a 6’ to 8’ slab (per the attached drawings) for a foundation and does not require extensive digging like regular foundations. These structures will have minimal natural & environmental impact.

The right to build, buy or lease a place to assemble for worship is an indispensable part of religious freedom. Religious groups simply cannot exercise their faiths without facilities adequate for their needs, but houses of worship and religious schools often face discrimination from local zoning authorities, or face unjustifiably burdensome restrictions on their ability to use their property for worship and religious instruction.

The 2010 United States Census reported that Santa Clara County had a population of 1,781,642. The ethnic makeup of Santa Clara County was 836,616 and Indians were approx. 6.6% of that population and it will be safe to assume that now the population is near 2 million with Indians comprising at least 20% and as evident from the attached letter of support from local Indian Association of South County (IASC), a nonprofit organization based in 725 Barrett Ave, Morgan Hill, more than 200 Indian families now live in South County unincorporated areas of Morgan Hill, San Martin & Gilroy supporting VVGC in its temple expansion project and with the kind of response & support we are getting, it will be safe to assume that at least additional 10% of that Indian population now resides in rural unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County from Morgan Hill to Gilroy, that are currently unaware of VVGC temple project. We have noticed that majority of these devotee have to travel a long distance to come to San Jose or other parts of Bay Area to worship due to lack of local facilities, which in turn greatly affect the local population, traffic and parking in Urban areas, thus adding to congestion on already burdened areas. By expanding and providing the religious and social facility in San Martin, we will not only help save a lot of time and reduce traffic flow to cities, we will also be of a great help to local community by providing all the services Free of Cost to all, regardless of their faith, color or creed.

Vaidica Vidyā Ganapathi Center, Inc. (VVGC) was established in 2003 at 32 Rancho Drive, San Jose, which follows Sanatan Dharama to its core, with the goal of offering religious services to Hindu community living in south/south east region of San Jose with a purpose of primarily serving local San Jose Urban community. Sanatan Dharama does not rely only on the
orthodoxy of some books, prophets and rituals. It accepts all faiths and even atheist and has no difference of opinion with any. The Sanatna Dharma Says “follow your Dharma and reach your Goal”. All Paths are like Rivers running to merge into an Ocean.

In the last 11 years, the VVGC has evolved into an established institution as a place of worship with the needed services for the community. Due to growing demand of a similar facility in San Martin Area by local Indian community living in greater Santa Clara region of Morgan Hill, San Martin, Gilroy and other neighboring communities, VVGC acquired the facility located at 11355 Monterey Hwy, San Martin, CA to primarily serve our rural & local San Martin community. The vision of Youth and Education at the Vaidica Vidhya Ganapathi Center, Inc. (VVGC) in San Martin is:

To establish a full-fledged Learning Center which includes a library, teaching the local community about anatomic self treatment and conducting regular classes for enabling religious, cultural and spiritual learning for Asian-Indian children, youth and adults in the Greater Santa Clara County Community.

The key elements of the center will include:

- To educate & Provide Anatomic Self treatment. It’s a popular ancient Indian technique that teaches natural & healthy ways to live life. Among many other benefits, it teaches us about how to breath properly, how to eat, how to work, how to drink, how to sleep, how to differentiate between various tastes and above all, its impact and wonders of supporting human organs by strengthening the mental balance.
- Teaching the devotees & local community about the benefits of Yoga as it has been proved time and again that regular and proper practice of yoga can cure many diseases & illnesses. Free yoga classes will be provided to anyone willing to learn.
- Providing Meditation guidance and services.
- To provide the facility to local community for various social and community events such as hosting local festivals, pumpkin patch, Christmas events, Farmers market, birthday parties, etc and for any and all events that can be benefited from the facility.
- Educating children about domestic farm animals like Cows, goats, Hens and other animals that will be kept on the site, in a separate designated area, and will allow the children to interact with animals like a petting zoo.

The participation and support of the devotees keep the Vaidica Vidhya Ganapathi Center, Inc. (VVGC) momentum going. The VVGC, Inc. is sustained by the generosity of its devotees. In keeping with strict Hindu beliefs, this property will be strictly vegetarian & environmental friendly in nature.

This facility will generally be open from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon on week day mornings and 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm on evenings and 10.00am to 8.00 pm on weekends, seven days a week. Weekday uses will include worship services, meditation, and religious studies/reading.
Also, the management has proposed to install solar panels on property to make itself reliant on energy and also proposes to donate the excess power to local city/County at no cost.

**Detail of activities and usage of areas**

The building is proposed to be used as a religious facility by devotees of Vaidica Vidhya Ganapathi Center (VVG-C). Additional parking spaces will be provided/installed as per the attached plans. The Main prayer room and dining room will be used by the same people and not at the same time. It is a linear movement through the facility. The Meditation room is for quiet contemplation. Everyone coming to the temple first goes to the main prayer room and then to any other area. Very few people will be using the meditation room and the same would have been counted in Main prayer room.

Additionally, a separate enclosed children pay area is proposed for recreational purpose as specified in plans and another proposal being discussed is to convert/designate 2 acres to create a separate area to house domestic farm animals and also to be used like a petting zoo for children to educate them about interacting with domestic animals.

**Signs:**

New signage is proposed as specified per the plans attached.

**Existing structure on site:** Two (2)

**Proposed new structures:** Three (3)

**Days of Operation:** 7 days a week, year round.

**Hours of operation:** 10.00am to 12.00pm & 6.00pm to 8.00pm daily.

**Number of employees:** Three (3).

**Music or Amplified noise:** None

**Prayer hall and multipurpose hall**

A central area for daily prayers would operate everyday with 50 attendees at a time, up to (max) 200 persons total at any given time on weekends. On special occasions, the maximum number of people will not exceed over 400 at any given time.

**Drainage:**

Uninterrupted flow of water in swales and natural courses on the property or any access road will be allowed. We will be responsible for the adequacy of any drainage facilities and for the continued maintenance thereof in manner that will preclude any hazard to life, health or
damage to adjoining property. Existing property storm drainage facilities are in accordance with criteria as designated in the County drainage Manual.

**Water:**

The property has one well and 2 water tanks of 5000 gallons each, one dedicated for fire use and 1 tank of 5000 gallons for domestic use, which is should be sufficient for the proposed needs.

**Fire Tanks:**

New Fire Tanks will be added as per Fire Marshal’s requirements for the new buildings.

**Noise:**

All activities will comply with the Santa Clara County Noise Ordinance at all times.

**Peak Waste Water Discharge:**

According to study & plans attached.

**Rest Rooms:**

Property currently has one restroom. The new rest rooms are being proposed to serve 200 people for weekend use and a separate facility is being proposed with additional rest rooms for 200 people to be used only for special occasions.

**Septic Tanks:**

Property currently has 2 huge septic tanks and 2 new septic systems are proposed as per the plans attached.

**Effect on Traffic:**

Based on a review of the existing conditions along Monterey Road, an analysis of the potential trip generation associated with the proposed project operations, and an evaluation of project access, it is concluded that the VVGC project will not significantly impact local traffic operations along Monterey Road. In fact, this project will help in a significant reduction of the traffic flow to Bay Area cities by providing this facility in San Martin for the Indian and local population living in that area.

**Surface:**

All driving surfaces are, and will be all-weather and capable of sustaining 65000 pound gross
vehicle weight.

**Gates:**

Existing gates will not obstruct the required width or vertical clearance of the driveway.

All fire apparatus access roads meeting the minimum width will have permanent "No parking fire lane" signs located so that all access roads are clearly identified and required clearance maintained as per CFC 503.3.

**Project On-Site Parking**

A new parking lot for the use for up to 200 attendees is being proposed as per the plans attached. For special occasion, the over flow traffic will be accommodated on the flat gravel areas to be specifically created for this purpose. Current on-Site parking can provided for a total of 25 (24 plus 1 Handicap) vehicles. All parking associated with the facility operations shall be accommodated on-site and no parking will be allowed on Monterey Road (designated No Parking Zone). "No parking Any Time" signs will be installed along the west side of Monterey Road adjacent to the project site.

**Special Events**

Below are the 10 special events & their religious significance that will be held annually:

1). **GANESH CHATHURTHI OR VINAYAKA CHATHURTHI** (Lord Ganesha’s Birthday). August End or September.
2). **KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI** (Lord Krishna’s Birthday)
3). **NAVARATHRI VIJAYA DASAMI DASSARA** (Most auspicious day in Hindu calendar for starting any new project or important life decisions). September end or October.
4). **DEEPAWALI DIWALI FESTIVAL** (Triumph of Good over evil when Lord Krishna killed Narkasura (Evil)). October or early November.
5). **NEW YEAR ENGLISH** – English New Year- December 31st-January 1st.
6). **MAKARA SANKARANTHI** (Celebration of Transition of Sun God according to Hindu religion). January 13th or 14th.
7). **MAHA SHIVARATHRI** (Very auspicious day for prayer of Lord Shiva). February end or Early March.
8). **TELUGU /KANNADA/MARATHI** (New year celebration of Hindu new year’s according to Lunar Moon per Hindu Calendar). March end or April.
9). **TAMIL/BISHAKI NEW YEAR** (New Year celebration of Hindu New Year’s according to Solar Hindu calendar). April 13th or 14th.
10). **SRI RAMA NAVAMI** (Celebration of Lord Rama’s birthday) March End or early April.
**Miscellaneous:**

Property is located within South Santa Clara County District Fire response area.

**Acknowledgement of locating within an industrial area**

*Vaidica Vidhya Ganapathi Center, Inc.* VVGC (applicant) acknowledges that we are moving within an industrial area that may result in higher level of noise, traffic, and exposure to hazardous materials than would normally be encountered in non-industrial areas.