

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
APRIL 18, 2024

PROJECT TITLE

Giffen Building One

APPLICANT

Katherine Clark

ADDRESS/LOCATION

2711 Giffen Ave

PROPERTY OWNER

Giffen Avenue Property, LLC

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

010-450-008

FILE NUMBERS

DR22-042

APPLICATION DATES

September 2, 2022

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATES

March 21, 2023

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

Major Design Review

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Building Permit

PROJECT SITE ZONING

IL – Light Industrial

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

General Industry

PROJECT PLANNER

Kristinae Toomians

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

TO: CHAIR JONES-CARTER AND MEMBERS OF THE DESIGN
REVIEW BOARD
FROM: KRISTINAE TOOMIANS, SENIOR PLANNER
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: GIFFEN BUILDING ONE
AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Design Review Board, by resolution, approve Major Design Review for Giffen Building One, a new 37,520-square-foot industrial shell building within an existing industrial campus, more specifically located at 2711 Giffen Avenue.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The applicant proposes to construct an approximately 37,520-square-foot, two-story industrial shell building, which will replace the former "Building One," which was demolished. The proposed "Giffen Building One" will be the seventh addition to an existing industrial campus known as "Giffen Avenue Properties," which consists of six buildings and accessory structures, enclosed by a 12-foot-tall perimeter security fence. Site work will include new paving and parking associated with the future use(s) of the shell building.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Predominantly Business Park and some small-lot residential
South: Industrial campus
East: Industrial campus
West: Business Park

The project site is predominantly surrounded by industrial park and business park type uses. A small portion of the site to the north is adjacent to a small-lot single-family residential neighborhood (Richard’s Manor Subdivision 2).

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The project will be a new addition to the existing 12-acre industrial park that is currently developed with six industrial buildings, accessory structures and parking lot. Except for a visitors’ parking lot on Lombardi Lane, the industrial campus is not open to the public and the perimeter is enclosed by a security fence.

4. Project History

Nov, 2021	Development Review Pre-Application Meeting
Feb 17, 2022	Concept Design Review
May 5, 2022	2 nd Concept Design Review
Sep 22, 2022	Application Submitted

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

The [General Plan](#) addresses issues related to the physical development and growth of Santa Rosa and guides the City's planning and zoning functions. The project site is located within the General Industry General Plan Land Use designation. General Industry provides areas for manufacturing and distribution activities with potential for creating nuisances, along with accessory offices and retailing. Unrelated retail and service commercial uses that could be more appropriately located elsewhere in the city are not permitted. Uses may generate truck traffic and operate 24 hours a day.

The most relevant applicable General Plan goals and policies with Staff’s analysis are included in the table below.

Land Use and Livability	
LUL-K: Protect industrial land supply and ensure compatibility between industrial development and surrounding neighborhoods.	Consistent. The proposed industrial building will complement the existing industrial park in terms of size, design, and materials, and will be set furthest away from any residential uses.

2. Zoning

The [Zoning Code](#) implements the goals and policies of the General Plan by classifying and regulating the use of land and structure development within the City.

Surrounding Zoning Districts:

North: Business Park (BP) and Low-Density Residential (R-1-6)

South: General Industrial (IG)

East: General Industrial (IG)

West: Business Park (BP)

The [Zoning Code](#) implements the goals and policies of the General Plan by classifying and regulating the use of land and structure development within the City.

The project site is zoned Light Industrial (IL), which is applied to areas appropriate for some light industrial uses, as well as commercial service uses and activities that may be incompatible with residential, retail, and/or office uses. Residential uses may also be accommodated as part of work/live projects. While the IL Zoning District is consistent with the Light Industry General Plan designation and not consistent with the current General Industry General Plan land use classification, the existing and proposed uses are consistent with the General Industry General Plan and the IL Zoning designations.

The proposed building is a “shell” building that will be limited to uses allowed in the IL Zoning District.

Building Height

The maximum allowable building height in the IL zoning district is 55 feet. The proposed two-story building has an approximate height of 40 feet.

Setbacks

Per [Section 20-24.040](#), the required front setback and side setback for IL zoning district is 7.5 and 5 feet when adjacent to a residential zone or residential use, and set by Conditional Use Permit approval elsewhere. The Design Review process may require larger setbacks. While the northeast portion of the 12-acre parcel shares 113 linear feet with a residential subdivision, the project site is along the southeast portion of the parcel, more than 450-feet away. The site plan shows the front setback from Lombardi Lane being approximately 140 feet and the side setback along Giffen Avenue being approximately 6 feet, measured from the property lines.

Parking

Vehicular access for the proposed project would occur from two driveways: one entrance along Giffen Avenue and one entrance along Lombardi Lane. There is a

public parking area on Lombardi Lane, but the rest of the campus is not open to the public and is enclosed by a security fence and gates.

Pursuant to Zoning Code [Section 20-36.040](#), Table 3-4, “warehousing, wholesaling and distribution” requires one space for each 1,000-square-foot, or as determined by Conditional Use Permit approval.

The proposed project would provide 21 parking spaces for its own use. The proposed project would include 7 bicycle parking spaces. The entire industrial campus is overparked with 198 vehicle parking spaces when only 175 parking spaces are required.

Outdoor Lighting

Site lighting will be downlit in the form of exterior wall sconces. There are existing wall sconces on the other buildings on campus, as well as light poles in the visitor parking lot.

Findings

Pursuant to Zoning Code [Section 20-52.030](#) the Design Review Board must make the findings shown below before granting Design Review. As demonstrated on the attached draft resolution, staff’s analysis has determined that these findings can be met:

- 1) The design and layout of the proposed development is of superior quality, and is consistent with the General Plan, any applicable specific plan, applicable Zoning Code standards and requirements, the City’s Design Guidelines, architectural criteria for special areas, and other applicable City requirements (e.g., City policy statements and development plans).
- 2) The design is appropriate for the use and location of the proposed development and achieves the goals, review criteria and findings for approval as set forth in the framework of Design Review (Design Guidelines, Introduction, subsection C).
- 3) The design and layout of the proposed development will not interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future developments.
- 4) The architectural design of the proposed development is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- 5) The design of the proposed development will provide a desirable environment for its occupants, visiting public, and its neighbors through the appropriate use of materials, texture, and color, and would remain aesthetically appealing and be appropriately maintained.

- 6) The proposed development will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare or materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity.
- 7) The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Staff analysis along with the required findings are included in the Resolution, attached to this Staff Report.

3. Design Guidelines

The [Design Guidelines](#) are the primary design criteria under which discretionary review is conducted. The most relevant applicable Design Guidelines goals and policies include:

<i>Design Guidelines Goal or Policy</i>	
Residential, Commercial & Industrial Beyond the Core Area	
<p>3.4.I.B: To encourage business and light industrial parks to respect the existing natural features of a site</p> <p>3.4.II.A.1: Incorporate existing natural features such as trees, topography, creeks and riparian vegetation into the site plan. These and similar natural elements should be considered when developing a site plan. Every effort should be made to preserve dominant elements, such as mature trees, for example. When trees must be removed mitigation may be required</p>	<p>The proposed project would provide landscaping adjacent to all parking areas, buildings, and walkways. The project preserves the site’s natural features, vegetation, and trees by incorporating landscape design and revegetation with plants that are appropriate for both driveway zones and stormwater retention areas. The project site is relatively flat necessitating minimal overall grading.</p>
<p>4.4.I.G: To design projects and storm drainage systems that comply with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) standards.</p>	<p>The project site complies with the goal of managing, maintaining, and improving stormwater drainage and capacity by constructing several stormwater retention areas on the project site that would treat all stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces, covering the cost of drainage facilities needed for new developments, implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce pollutants discharge, and</p>

complying with the Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) in order to reduce pollutants and runoffs flows from the project site.

The architectural design for the industrial building would be of Type VB construction, site cast, tilted concrete panels with a variety of enhancements. The typical wall panels would be enhanced with reveals and a textured elastomeric, multicolored coating system. The areas around the building entries would also be enhanced with tinted glazing in aluminum frames with overhead steel-framed painted canopies. The placement of these enhancements would be in locations most visible from the public roadways. The proposed project would be landscaped using plants that would be appropriate for both access and driveway zones and stormwater retention areas. The proposed project would provide landscaping adjacent to all parking areas, buildings, and walkways in accordance with the City's Design Guidelines. The use would assist in maintaining the economic viability of the area while ensuring compatibility with the surrounding area. Staff finds that the proposed project is consistent with applicable goals and policies of the Design Guidelines.

4. Summary of Public Comments

There have been no neighborhood comments received at the time of writing this staff report. Any new comments received will be shared with the Design Review Board at the Design Review Board meeting.

5. Public Improvements

For a comprehensive list of on- and off-site improvements, refer to the attached Exhibit A, provided by Engineering Development Services, dated March 7, 2023.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of the Project will not have an effect on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332, the project is categorically exempt as infill development. The Class 32 "Infill" Categorical Exemption (CEQA Guideline Section 15332), hereafter referred to as the "Class 32 Exemption," exempts infill development within urbanized areas if it meets certain criteria. A Class 32 Exemption consists of infill projects that are consistent with the General Plan and zoning requirements. A Class 32 Exemption is not intended for projects that would result in any significant traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality impacts. A Class 32 Exemption may apply to residential, commercial, industrial, and/ or mixed-use projects. A Class 32 Exemption applies to a

project characterized as in-fill development meeting all the conditions described below:

General Plan and Zoning Consistency: As discussed in this report, the project site is designated as Light Industrial in the Santa Rosa General Plan 2035. The development of a 37,520-square-foot industrial shell building within an existing, 12-acre industrial campus is consistent with the City's General Plan 2035 policies for the reasons noted above in this report.

The project site is zoned IL – Light Industrial. The proposed industrial shell building is a permitted use; however, a Design Review application must be approved by the Design Review Board prior to construction of the project for the intended use. The project is conditioned to comply with all applicable City Ordinances and regulations of the City Code.

Project Area: The development of the vacant area at 2711 Giffen Avenue for an industrial shell building is no more than five acres and is substantially surrounded by urban uses, with uses permitted in the Light Industrial zoning district on all sides.

Habitat Value: While the project parcel is located within a Critical Tiger Salamander (CTS) Habitat area, per the biological assessment that was prepared by Dana Riggs (Principal Biologist) on November 6, 2023, the project site is located within a "No Effect" area as designated by the US Fish & Wildlife Services (USFWS) in their 2020 Santa Rosa Plain Programmatic Biological Opinion Action Plan and as such, mitigation for loss of critical habitat is not required. While the site is within 2,200 feet of potential breeding habitat and contains marginal upland estivation habitat (i.e., mammal burrows or other refugia), dense commercial development, roads, and parking lots likely preclude CTS from dispersing onto or across the project site. Therefore, no mitigation measures are recommended for the proposed project at this time. The project area has no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species.

Traffic: In 2020, Senate Bill 743 established a change in the metric to be applied in determining traffic impacts associated with development projects. Rather than the delay-based criteria associated with Level of Service (LOS) analysis, the change in total Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as a result of a new project is currently the basis for determining CEQA impacts with respect to transportation and traffic.

An Updated Focused Traffic Study, prepared by W-Trans on August 29, 2023, concluded that since the project site is located in an area that has been identified as having a VMT that is at least 15 percent below the countywide average, as indicated through use of the City's VMT screening map, the project would be presumed to have a less-than-significant transportation impact on VMT. The California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) in its publication Technical Advisory on Evaluation Transportation Impacts in CEQA, December 2018, provides guidance for assessing VMT with respect to development projects. With respect to assessing employment uses, a project generating vehicle travel that is 15 or more percent below the existing regional work-based VMT per employee may indicate a less-than-significant transportation impact.

The City of Santa Rosa has prepared draft guidelines for VMT analysis in their June 2020 document Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Guidelines. This draft document contains much of the same guidance as in the OPR Advisory, including the less-than-significant presumption for projects in areas with VMT that is 15 or more percent below the regional average. The VMT Guidelines include a screening map of areas that have an estimated “work based VMT” per employee that is 15 percent or more lower than the countywide average as estimated in the 2019 Sonoma County Travel Model. The project site is within an area that has been prescreened as having a VMT below the significance threshold and therefore the project would be presumed to have a less-than-significant impact with regard to VMT.

The focused traffic study also indicates that the project would be expected to generate an average of 64 trips daily, including 6 trips during the morning peak hour and 7 trips during the evening peak hour.

Noise: The project will be required to implement the Performance Standards listed in City Code Section [§20-30.090](#) to address construction noise. By limiting the hours of construction activity with a standard condition of approval, temporary construction noise impacts would be less than significant. Long term operation of the project would not result in machinery and equipment noise in exceedance of the City standards, measured at nearby property lines. Project-related traffic would not result in ambient noise level increases along streets in the project area beyond those already analyzed in the City’s General Plan 2035 EIR. Ground-borne vibrations generated by the project during short-term construction activities and during long-term operation would be less than significant. The project would not expose persons working in the project area to excessive noise. The project is conditioned to comply with the City’s Noise Ordinance, including any noise during construction.

Air Quality: The project will be required to implement the Performance Standards listed in City Code Section [§20-30.090](#) to address dust from short-term construction activities and/or long-term operations for odor and other air emissions. The project includes the following design features, as shown in the attachments to this report, intended to meet the requirements the City’s Climate Action Plan (CAP):

- i. The project would be all electric and would not include natural gas or natural gas plumbing.
- ii. The project would comply with 2022 CALGreen Tier 1 nonresidential measures.

Appendix E of the Climate Action Plan states that, “To be in compliance with the CAP, all measures denoted with an asterisk are required in all new development projects unless otherwise specified. If a project cannot meet one or more of the mandatory requirements, substitutions may be made from other measures listed at the discretion of the Community Development Director.” The CAP Checklist provided by the applicant and included as Attachment 8 demonstrates compliance with all provisions with an asterisk. Therefore, the project is in compliance with the City’s CAP.

Water Quality: The project is conditioned to incorporate all Low Impact Development

(LID) Best Management Practices as part of the Initial Storm Water LID (SWLID) Report. Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers prepared preliminary hydrology and hydraulics report, dated August 25, 2023, which included a hydrology study (see Attachment 8). The report demonstrates that the proposed project is designed to meet the City's stormwater treatment and flow requirements. The proposed project includes stormwater quality treatment and infiltration through the construction of a series of bioretention basin with drains to existing storm water facilities. Ongoing BMP maintenance of the bioretention planter system will be assured with a covenant maintenance agreement that will be recorded with the City prior to issuance of building permits. Altogether, the project is in compliance with the NPDES Permit, the [City of Santa Rosa 2017 Storm Water Low Impact Development Technical Design Manual](#) and the [California Stormwater Quality Association \(CASQA\) BMP Handbooks](#). The implementation of these regulatory compliance measures will ensure that the proposed project will not cause a significant impact to water quality.

Utilities and Public Services: The Project site is located in an urban, developed area. The site can be adequately served by all required and necessary utilities and public services. It is within less than a mile from Fire Station 10, operated by the City of Santa Rosa. City staff has reviewed the plans and conditions the project appropriately to insure adequate public services and utilities are provided.

In conclusion, the project meets the CEQA Class 32 Exemption criteria outlined in CEQA Guidelines §15332 and no further environmental review is necessary.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the February 3, 2022, Concept Design Review meeting, the Design Review Board provided the following nonbinding comments, recommendations, and considerations:

- The proposed color, form and massing of the building are appreciated.
- The site layout and building orientation are appreciated.
- Consider proposing more materials for the building in order to provide more depth and relief.
- Consider proposing more landscaping at the rear (south) property line, such as evergreens, to provide more of a natural buffer between the project site and the residential properties.
- Consider proposing a sound barrier at the south property line to mitigate noise pollution.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The project was noticed as a public hearing per the requirements of Chapter 20-66 of the City Code. Notification of this public hearing was provided by posting an on-site sign, publishing notice in a newspaper of general circulation, mailed notice to surrounding property owners and occupants, electronic notice to parties that had

expressed interest in projects taking place in this geographic area of Santa Rosa, and bulletin board postings at City Hall and on the City website. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65091, where necessary, the City has incorporated notice procedures to the blind, aged, and disabled communities. These procedures include audio amplifier/assistive listening device support at public meetings, closed captioning, and optical character recognition conversion of electronic notices.

ISSUES

There are no unresolved issues with the project at the time of writing this report.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Disclosure Form
- Attachment 2 – Neighborhood Context Map
- Attachment 3 – Color Site Photographs
- Attachment 4 – Design Concept Narrative
- Attachment 5 – Plans
- Attachment 6 – Focused Traffic Impact Study (W-Trans, Aug 29, 2023)
- Attachment 7 – CTS Biological Assessment (Sol Ecology, Nov 6, 2023)
- Attachment 8 – Climate Action Plan Checklist
- Attachment 9 – Hydrology & Hydrolics Report (Brelje & Race, Aug 25, 2023)
- Attachment 10 – SWILD Report (Brelje & Race, June 29, 2022)
- Attachment 11 – Feb 17, 2022 DRB Minutes
- Attachment 12 – May 5, 2022 DRB Minutes

CONTACT

Kristinae Toomians, Senior Planner
(707) 543-4692, ktoomians@srcity.org