

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION
JUNE 22, 2017

PROJECT TITLE

Santa Rosa AC Hotel Off-site Parking

APPLICANT

Jeff Blackman, Bedford Lodging

ADDRESS/LOCATION

201 6th Street

PROPERTY OWNER

6th And Davis, LLC

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

010-086-008, 010-086-014

FILE NUMBER

CUP17-031

APPLICATION DATE

April 14, 2017

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE

May 24, 2017

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

Conditional Use Permit

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Design Review

PROJECT SITE ZONING

TV-R-SA (Transit Village – Residential;
Station Area Overlay)

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Transit Village Medium

PROJECT PLANNER

Patrick Streeter

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: CHAIR CISCO AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION
FROM: PATRICK STREETER, SENIOR PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: SANTA ROSA AC HOTEL OFF-SITE PARKING

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Department of Planning and Economic Development that the Planning Commission, by resolution, approve a Conditional Use Permit for off-site parking for the Santa Rosa AC Hotel project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Santa Rosa AC Hotel is a proposed 5-story, 142-room hotel with a fitness facility, small meeting rooms, a public restaurant and lounge, and approximately 1000 square feet of commercial retail space to be developed on a parcel located at 210 5th Street, which is presently operating as a parking facility. The hotel itself is permitted by right and received Preliminary Design Review approval at a joint meeting of the Design Review Board and Cultural Heritage Board on February 21, 2017. The hotel project will provide 26 on-site parking spaces and proposes a valet program to utilize 102 spaces in a nearby lot located at 201 6th Street. Because the off-site parking program would accommodate development that is consistent with the General Plan and specifically identified in the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan, staff is recommending approval.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The project proposes construction and operation of a surface parking lot at 201 6th Street to accommodate the valet parking program for the proposed AC Hotel at 210 5th Street. The proposed lot would be surrounded by fencing and the access gate would be controlled by a card reader. In addition to the 102 parking spaces, the site would include protected trees, a new curb cut onto 6th Street, and a stormwater bioretention area.

Guests arriving at the hotel by car would leave the vehicle with a valet attendant. The car would then be relocated either to one of the 26 on-site spaces or to the proposed off-site parking lot. Because of the one-way street patterns in the area, all turns into or out of the off-site parking lot driveway are anticipated to be right-turns.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Highway 101 right-of-way
South: Parking lot for a commercial building
East: Highway 101 right-of-way
West: Downtown Santa Rosa off-ramp; offices and single- and multi-family residential uses

The project site is located on the northern edge of the Railroad Square commercial district. Development south of the site is characterized by smaller scale retail and service establishments. The proposed lot is nested in a wedge between a raised portion of Highway 101 and the Downtown Santa Rosa off-ramp. To the west, across Davis Street is a mix of office and residential uses. The proposed off-site parking lot is located approximately 350 feet away from the proposed hotel.

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The project site is presently developed with a single-story duplex that records indicate was constructed in 1928. The vacant residential building fronts on 6th Street and the remainder of the property is largely graded, but unpaved and has been used for vehicle storage. Much of the site is vegetated with non-native shrubs, trees, and grasses, though native coast live oak trees can be found along the periphery of the property. Drainage of the site is by sheet flow into the City's municipal stormwater system.

4. Project History

On October 27, 2007, the Planning Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit and adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for a proposed five-story, mixed use retail and office building on the site of the proposed AC Hotel.

On November 15, 2007, the retail and office building project received Preliminary Design Review approval at a joint meeting of the Design Review Board and the Cultural Heritage Board (Boards). Subsequently, the Design Review Board granted Final Design Review approval at its December 6, 2007, meeting. Entitlements for the retail and office building have since expired.

On August 18, 2016, the AC Hotel by Marriot project was presented to a joint meeting of the Design Review Board and the Cultural Heritage Board as a concept item.

On October 12, 2016, a pre-application neighborhood meeting was held to introduce the hotel project to members of the neighborhood and gather feedback.

On October 13, 2016, an application for Design Review for the hotel building was submitted to Planning and Economic Development.

On February 21, 2017, the Cultural Heritage Board and the Design Review Board held a joint meeting to consider Preliminary Design Review for the AC Hotel project. Following a public hearing, the Boards voted unanimously (two abstaining) to adopt Resolution No. 17-946, approving Preliminary Design Review for the hotel project.

On April 14, 2017, a Conditional Use Permit application and supporting materials for the proposed off-site parking were submitted to Planning and Economic Development.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

In October of 2007, the Council adopted the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan (Specific Plan), which envisions a transit-oriented downtown district, supported by the future Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) station. In November of 2009 and August of 2010, the General Plan and the Zoning Code respectively, were updated to reflect land use changes initiated by the Specific Plan. The proposed hotel is within an area zoned TV-M-H-SA (Transit Village – Mixed-Use, Historic and Station Area overlays) with a Transit Village Mixed-Use General Plan land use designation and the off-site parking lot is within an area zoned TV-R-SA (Transit Village – Residential with a Station Area overlay) with a Transit Village Medium General Plan land use designation.

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

The proposed hotel site is designated for Transit Village Mixed-Use in the General Plan and the off-site parking is within the Transit Village Medium designation. Both land use designations envision mixed use development that capitalize on their proximity to transit facilities. Some General Plan goals and policies associated with the hotel development that would be accommodated through the proposed off-site parking program include:

- LUL-I-1 Provide a range of commercial services that are easily accessible and attractive, that satisfies the needs of people who live and work in Santa Rosa and that also attracts a regional clientele.
- LUL-O Provide recreational and cultural facilities for visitors and residents of the [Downtown Station] specific plan area.
- UD-A-2 Strengthen and emphasize community focal points, visual landmarks, and features that contribute to the identity of Santa Rosa using design concepts and standards implemented through the Zoning Code, Design Guidelines, Preservation District Plans, Scenic Road Policies, the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan, and the Citywide Creek Master Plan.
- UD-A-5 Require superior site and architectural design of new development projects, to improve visual quality in the city.
- UD-D Avoid strip patterns of commercial development.
- UD-D-2 Maintain a uniform setback of structures from the street. Require parking areas to be placed to the side or rear of structures, not in front.
- EV-A-5 Maintain diversity in the types of jobs available in Santa Rosa to lessen the impact of economic cycles.
- EV-B Facilitate the retention and expansion of existing businesses and provide sufficient land for business expansion and attraction of new employers that utilize the area's existing labor pool.
- EV-C Promote new retail and higher density uses along the City's regional and arterial corridors.
- EV-D-1 Continue to promote Santa Rosa's role as a regional center.
- EV-D-6 Pursue expansion of the number of hotel rooms and conference facilities in order to attract more meetings and conventions to the city. Aggressively promote the city to the visitor and convention markets.

Because of its unique location between a raised freeway and a downtown off-ramp, the project site would be challenging to develop, from both an environmental and a marketability standpoint, with the mixed residential and commercial uses envisioned in the General Plan. By providing much of the required parking for the proposed hotel however, the off-site parking program permits development on the hotel site that is in line with the vision presented in the General Plan without being encumbered by the space needed for on-site parking. The proposed hotel would accommodate a greater volume of visitors to downtown Santa Rosa and the proposed retail, restaurant, and lounge spaces would increase pedestrian activity at the street level.

2. Downtown Station Area Specific Plan

The project is within the boundaries of the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan. The Specific Plan is consistent with the General Plan in envisioning a transit oriented downtown, supported by and supporting the anticipated SMART station. The introduction to the Specific Plan identifies one of the plan objectives to be an increase in the number of residents and employees within walking distance of the SMART site through the intensification of land uses in the plan area. The project is located within the Railroad Square sub-area which specifically identifies hotel and retail development as desired land uses. Many of the goals and policies within the Specific Plan mirror the General Plan in promotion of walkable, high density neighborhoods within the vicinity of the transit stop. The Specific Plan identifies development guidelines for the hotel parcel to include a minimum of two stories and a maximum of five, with ground floor retail. The 4th Street frontage is to include activity generating uses. Meeting the development guidelines for the hotel parcel may not be feasible if all of the required parking were to be provided on-site.

3. Zoning

The off-site parking lot site is zoned TV-R-SA (Transit Village – Residential; Station Area overlay) and is bordered on the north and east by highway right-of-way. Zoning districts to the west include a mixed-use Planned Development district the TV-R (Transit Village – Residential) district. Immediately adjacent to the off-site parking lot site is the TV-M-H-SA (Transit Village – Mixed-Use, Historic and Station Area Overlays), which is the same zoning district in which the proposed AC Hotel is located.

Both the off-site parking lot's and the hotel's zoning districts are intended to support a diverse mix of residential and commercial development that will act to stimulate the downtown shopping district and capitalize on the anticipated transit station under construction nearby.

Consistent with Table 3-4 of the Zoning Code, nonresidential uses within the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan boundaries are to require "one shared space for each 500 square feet of new floor area." The prescribed parking supply for the 77,000 square foot hotel building would therefore be 154 off-street spaces. A traffic impact study, prepared for the project by the engineering firm W-Trans and dated November 15, 2017, identifies a peak demand of 126 parking spaces for the project. A subsequent focused traffic and parking study prepared by W-Trans and dated February 13, 2017, identifies a total peak parking demand of 124 spaces on weekend evenings. Peak demand for the off-site parking lot is expected to be 88 spaces on weekdays and 98 spaces on weekends.

The hotel project proposes 26 on-site parking spaces and 102 off-site spaces for a total of 128 spaces. Pursuant to section 20-36.070 of the Zoning Code, off-site

parking is permitted with a Conditional Use Permit. Additionally, the Planning Commission may grant a parking reduction from the 154 parking spaces prescribed in the Zoning Code. If in the future, parking demand for the hotel should decline, the operator may amend this use permit to develop some or all of the off-street parking lot or to enter into an agreement with the City's Parking division to utilize surplus spaces.

4. Design Guidelines

The proposed hotel was evaluated for consistency with the City's Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Design, Building Design, Infill Development, and Highway Corridors. Staff determined that the hotel project utilizes variety in materials, stepping and articulation, and thoughtful architectural features to reduce massing while providing visual interest to what is currently an underdeveloped "edge" area of the Railroad Square commercial district. While not identified as being located in a formal Gateway area in the Zoning Code, the proposed hotel will be a visually prominent structure for vehicles and pedestrians approaching downtown Santa Rosa and Railroad Square in particular. In approving the Preliminary Design Review for the hotel, the joint Design Review Board and Cultural Heritage Board found the project to be of superior design. The off-site parking lot will be subject to Design Review before the Zoning Administrator and the hotel building will return to the Design Review Board for consideration of Final Design Review.

5. Neighborhood Comments

In correspondence and at public meetings, the overwhelming concern from neighbors of the project has been in regards to parking, both demand generated by the proposed hotel and the loss of inventory available to Railroad Square. Generally, neighbors have been supportive of the project design, but caution the need to analyze and account for traffic patterns along Davis Street and request assurance that parking concerns will be addressed. Additional comments that relate specifically to the off-site parking lot include concern for security of vehicles and for parking attendants, questions about employee parking, and consideration of the opportunity to utilize surplus parking spaces in the off-site lot as a resource to the other businesses in Railroad Square.

6. Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

The off-site parking lot will be paved to accommodate 102 parking stalls. The existing curb cut on 6th Street will be reconstructed to City standards and an existing light pole will be relocated.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval or denial of this Design Review application will not have a direct fiscal impact

on the General Fund. However, the new hotel rooms that this project would create could result in an increase to income generated through the City's Transient Occupancy Tax.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The project in its entirety is statutorily exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15183, in that the project is consistent with existing zoning and the Santa Rosa General Plan 2035, for which an environmental impact report (EIR) was certified and there are no project-specific impacts which are peculiar to the project or its site. The project is also consistent with the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan, for which an EIR was certified.

Additionally, the project qualifies for a Class 32 exemption, per Section 15332, as it involves an infill development on a site of less than five acres, within City limits, substantially surrounded by urban uses, with no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species, adequately served by necessary utilities and public services, and the project has no foreseeable significant adverse impacts.

This finding is supported for the off-site parking program, in particular, by an arborist report, a biological assessment, a historic resources study, and the two traffic studies identified earlier in this report.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Cultural Heritage Board and the Design Review Board held a joint meeting on February 21, 2017, to consider Preliminary Design Review for the AC Hotel project. Following a public hearing, the Boards voted unanimously (two abstaining) to adopt Resolution No. 17-946, approving Preliminary Design Review for the hotel project. Per the resolution, the Boards found that the project is of superior design and consistent with the General Plan, Downtown Station Area Specific Plan, Railroad Square Preservation district, the City's Design Guidelines, and zoning. The Boards further found the project compatible with surrounding properties and land uses and statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act. Resolution No. 17-946 outlines 16 design-related items that will be considered by the Design Review Board prior to issuance of final Design Review approval

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, 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.

ISSUES

Staff initially had concerns about the definition of parking facility and whether the Zoning Code would permit the proposed off-street parking use in the TV-R-SA district because neither parking facilities nor lodging were permitted land uses. The determination was made that the proposed off-site parking lot does not qualify as a parking facility by the Zoning Code's definition because it is not a publicly accessible facility operating for a fee. Additionally, it was determined that Zoning Code Section 20-36.070(A) sets forth the placement criteria for off-site parking facilities, specifically citing that they must be located within the vicinity of the parcel being served and bound by a recorded parking covenant to provide the required parking in perpetuity. The project site meets these criteria.

Approval of the hotel project is contingent upon the applicant's ability to demonstrate that adequate parking will be available for the life of the project. If the land use proceedings result in required changes to design of the proposed development, the project could return to the Design Review Board and/or Cultural Heritage Board for approval of modification to an approved design.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Disclosure Form
- Attachment 2 - Location Map
- Attachment 3 - General Plan and Zoning Map
- Attachment 4 - Proposal Statement, prepared by J. Kapolchok and Associates and dated received April 14, 2017
- Attachment 5 - Off-site parking site plan, prepared by BKF and dated April 12, 2017
- Attachment 6 - Off-site parking landscape plan, prepared by Stephanie McAllister and dated received April 14, 2017
- Attachment 7 - Arborist report, prepared by John C. Meserve and dated April 16, 2017
- Attachment 8 - Biological assessment, prepared by Kjeldsen Biological Consulting and dated April 2017
- Attachment 9 - Historical resources study, prepared by Tom Origer & Associates and dated February 28, 2017
- Attachment 10 - Traffic impact study for the AC Hotel, prepared by W-Trans and dated November 15, 2016
- Attachment 11 - Focused evaluation of the off-site parking lot, prepared by W-Trans and dated February 13, 2017
- Attachment 12 - AC Hotel Design Review plan set, dated received February 1, 2017
- Attachment 13 - Joint Design Review Minutes, February 21, 2017
- Attachment 14 - Design Review Board/Cultural Heritage Board Resolution No. 17-946 approving Preliminary Design Review for the AC Hotel

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Attachment 15 - Comments from the Railroad Square Project Review Committee dated May 8, 2017

Attachment 16 - Applicant response to comments from the Railroad Square Project Review Committee, dated May 25, 2017

Draft Resolution

CONTACT

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