

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
December 16, 2021

PROJECT TITLE

West Coast Self-Storage

ADDRESS/LOCATION

970 Piner Road

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

051-680-053

APPLICATION DATE

February 9, 2021

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

Design Review

PROJECT SITE ZONING

IL (Light Industrial)

PROJECT PLANNER

Monet Sheikhal

APPLICANT

Summit Engineering

PROPERTY OWNER

Steve Tangney

FILE NUMBER

DR21-004

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE

August 9, 2021

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Light Industry

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

TO: CHAIR WEIGL AND MEMBERS OF THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
FROM: MONET SHEIKHALI, CITY PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: WEST COAST SELF STORAGE
AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Economic Development Department recommends that the Design Review Board, by resolution, approve Design Review for the construction of a three-story, approximately 66,200 square-foot, self-storage building on the property located at 970 Piner Road.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

West Coast Self Storage proposes the development of a three-story, approximately 66,200 square foot building on a 0.95-acre parcel for use as a Personal Storage Facility. A Personal Storage Facility contains generally small, individual, compartmentalized stalls or lockers rented as individual storage spaces and is characterized by low parking demand. The proposal also includes associated site improvements, including a drive aisle, emergency fire lane, landscaping, and security fencing.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The project consists of a three-story, climate-controlled building which will contain various sizes of storage units and would be constructed of various materials. A manager's office and toilet rooms would be located on the ground floor near the project entry. Storage units will have predominantly interior access. Upstairs units will be accessed from two elevators centrally located in a covered loading/parking bay. One unit will be designated as the trash unit and will contain 64-gallon trash and recycle bins that will be rolled out to the curb weekly. The trash enclosure that is located inside the building is to reduce storage tenants from overwhelming the trash cans with unwanted items.

Primary access to the site is obtained by a single existing driveway from Piner

Road. A 20-foot reciprocating access easement is proposed on the shared boundary between 970 and 990 Piner Road, to be used for an emergency fire lane only. The improvements along the project frontage include a new driveway apron, relocation of an existing power pole, new landscaping, and lighting.

The site plan shows the 20-foot emergency fire lane with a gate, landscaping, and onsite stormwater management facilities proposed on the south side of the site between the building and Russell Creek. The proposed building is set back 50 feet from the top of the Russell Creek bank. The site contains six coast live oak trees (four immature and two mature trees) along the Russell Creek trail.

Site drainage, including roof drainage, will be collected in underground storm drainpipes and conveyed to the bioretention facility on the south side of the building. Overflow from the bioretention facility will discharge into the existing drainage inlet at the rear of the property and maintain the current drainage pattern.

The Piner Road facing elevation would be comprised of a significant percentage of glass design. The color scheme would consist of grays and blues, and the choice of durable materials would include CMU steel and glass.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Vehicle services – Auto repair

South: Russell Creek and residential

East: Vehicle services – Auto repair

West: Vehicle services – Auto repair

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The 0.95-acre project site is currently vacant and is located in an industrial area with various industrial uses. The previous structure and the parking lot have been demolished because of an open Code Enforcement Case. Despite being fenced, the project site has been the subject of trespassing, loitering, and littering.

The site is relatively flat with minimum elevation change across the property. On July 1, 2020, a Parcel Map was recorded to subdivide the parcel addressed as 990 Piner Road into two legal lots with addresses 970 and 990 Piner Road that resulted in a 0.95-acre lot for 970 Piner Road.

4. Project History

On October 13, 2020, a Pre-application Meeting was held with City staff, designed to offer applicants an interdepartmental staff review of preliminary or conceptual design applications.

On January 21, 2021, the Design Review Board reviewed the Project as a concept item.

On February 9, 2021, the Design Review application was submitted to Planning and Economic Development.

On April 22, 2021, the Waterways Advisory Committee (WAC) reviewed the proposed project. WAC comments are discussed in the Committee Review and Recommendations section of this report.

On July 20, 2021, an Issues Letter was sent to the applicant.

On September 14, 2021, the applicant resubmitted plans addressing issues.

PRIOR CITY, COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable.

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

The site is designated Light Industrial on the General Plan Land Use Diagram. This classification is intended to accommodate light industrial, warehousing, and heavy commercial uses. Uses appropriate for this land use category include auto repair, bulk or warehoused goods, general warehousing, manufacturing/assembly with minor nuisances, home improvement retail, landscape materials retail, freight or bus terminals, research oriented industrial, accessory offices, and employee-serving commercial uses, and services with large space needs, such as health clubs. The following General Plan goals and policies are relevant to the proposed project:

- EV-D** Maintain the economic vitality of the downtown, business parks, offices and industrial areas.
- 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-K** Protect industrial land supply and ensure compatibility between industrial development and surrounding neighborhoods.
- LUL-K-1** Require industrial development adjacent to residential areas to provide buffers, and institute setback, landscaping, and screening requirements intended to minimize noise, light, and glare and other impacts.
- UD-A-4** In new developments, minimize overall grading by limiting site grading to the minimum necessary for driveways, parking areas, and understructure areas.
- UD-A-10** Relate Landscape design to the natural setting. Require that graded areas within new development be revegetated.
- UD-A-12** Promote green building design and low impact development projects.

The following are policies and objectives shown in the Creek Master Plan that are applicable to the project:

- EC-1-1** Where discretionary approval for new development is sought adjacent to the creek, that development shall, to the extent possible, be consistent with and support the Master Plan. Planners and decision-makers will look for consistency between proposed projects and the Master Plan. The overall intent of this policy is to incorporate the creek into the project design.
- WQ-2** Use a combination of Storm Water Best Management Practices (BMPs), constructed devices, and biological systems, to remove pollutants and protect water quality.
- WQ-2-1** Require implementation of Best Management Practices to reduce drainage system discharge of non-point source pollutants originating from streets, parking lots, residential areas, business, industrial operations and those open space areas involved with the application of chemicals. Continue implementation of the Integrated Pest Management program.
- WQ-2-2** Implement the Storm Water Low Impact Development Technical Design Manual to reduce pollutants and runoff flows from new development and redevelopment projects.
- OSC-E** Ensure local creeks and riparian corridors are preserved, enhanced, and restored as habitat for fish, birds, mammals, and other wildlife.
- OSC-E-4** Require incorporation of native plants into landscape plans for new development, where appropriate and feasible, especially in areas adjacent to open space areas or along waterways.
- OSC-D-9** Ensure that construction adjacent to creek channels is sensitive to the natural environment. Ensure that natural topography and vegetation is preserved along the creek, and that construction activities do not disrupt or pollute the waterway.

The site is located within an industrial corridor that is heavily dominated by automotive, manufacturing, and warehouse uses. Russell Creek on the southern boundary of the site creates a buffer between the existing residences and industrial uses along Piner Road.

The facility will serve the needs of neighbors, as well as regional clientele. The proposed building will be a climate controlled and energy efficient facility. The use would assist in maintaining the economic viability of the area while ensuring compatibility with the surrounding neighborhoods. The project includes a bioretention area on the south side to reduce pollutants and runoff flows from new development. Landscaping with diverse plants along the fence next to the creek will be provided with the preservation or replacement of the exiting oak trees.

Staff finds that the proposed project is consistent with applicable goals and policies of the General Plan and the Creek Master Plan.

2. Zoning

The project site is located within the Light Industrial (IL) zoning district and is surrounded by IL zoned properties to the north, east, and west which support various manufacturing, processing, wholesale, retail, or general services uses. The IL zone, which is consistent with the Light Industry General Plan land use designation, is applied to areas appropriate for light industrial uses, as well as commercial service uses and activities that may be incompatible with residential, retail, and/or office uses.

As explained below, the proposed project complies with each of the land use and development standards of the Light Industrial Zoning District.

Personal Storage Regulations

Per Zoning Code [Section 20-42.180 \(A\)](#), a storage facility shall be approved only on a regional street. As the project site is located on Piner Road, a regional street classified in the Circulation Element of the General Plan, the project meets this requirement.

Lot Size

In the IL zoning district, minimum lot size is determined by Conditional Use Permit. The Parcel Map subdivided the parcel into a 0.95-acre lot and did not include any percentage for the lot coverage. However, the proposed building will result in 52 percent lot coverage.

Building Height

The maximum allowable building height in the IL zoning district is 55 feet. The proposed storage facility has a height of an approximately 38 feet along Piner Road and 30 feet on the rear side.

Setbacks

Per [Section 20-24.040](#), the required front setback for IL zoning district is 7.5 feet adjacent to a residential zone or use. The site plan shows the front setback is 15-foot and 7-inch, measured from the back of the sidewalk. The required side setback is 5 feet adjacent to a residential zone or use, and the proposed site plan shows the east side setback is 25 feet and 7 inches, and the west side setback is 12 feet and 5 inches. The required rear setback is 10 feet adjacent to a residential zone or use, and none is required elsewhere. This project's proposed rear side setback is 43 feet and 7 inches measured from the property line. As proposed, the project meets all required setbacks.

Additionally, [Section 20-30.040](#) of the Zoning Code requires a 50-foot setback from waterways for new structures. The setbacks provide reasonable protection to owners of riparian property and the public from the hazards of stream bank failures and flooding, while allowing owners of property near waterways reasonable use of and the opportunity to improve their properties consistent with

general safety.

This portion of the Russell Creek is channelized and per [Section 20-30.040 \(D\)\(3\)](#) Santa Rosa Zoning Code, "Where a fully channelized waterway exists, structures may be closer to the top of the bank than a distance of 2.5 times the depth of the bank plus 50 feet, subject to the following standards: the setback encroachment will not obstruct or impair the channel's hydraulic functions; impede City or Sonoma Water access or maintenance of the channel; impair the stability of the slope, bank, or maintenance of the channel; or impair the stability of the slope, bank, or creekbed fountain, all as determined by and approved by the Planning and Economic Department, the Water Department, and additionally Sonoma Water for projects adjacent to Sonoma Water owned or controlled channelized waterways." Santa Rosa Planning and Economic Department and Santa Rosa Water have approved of the proposed project design. Sonoma Water has received project plans and no comments were received that would prohibit the development as proposed.

The project plans show that the proposed self-storage building is placed well outside of the 50-foot creek setback. The applicant has incorporated the appropriate fire truck access lane with gates into the project site per the comments received from the Fire Marshal. The proposed fire lane will go around the building, and the 20-foot wide lane behind the building will be located within the 50-foot creek setback. The required fire access is approximately 20 feet from top of the bank and the existing fence is 19.94 ft from top of the bank. The proposed fire access in the existing fence are located in an area that is currently paved. A proposed biorientation area will be placed between the fire lane and the self-storage. Some landscaping will be added along the fence on the project site.

Parking

Pursuant to Zoning Code [Section 20-36.040](#), Table 3-4, self-storage (personal storage and mini warehouse facilities) requires two (2) spaces for manager or caretaker unit, one (1) of which must be covered, and a minimum of five (5) customer parking spaces located adjacent or in close proximity to the manager's unit.

A total of seven (7) parking spaces are provided for the proposed project, including four spaces outside of the gate and next to the manager's office with one ADA compliant parking space. Three covered spaces are inside the gated area, which two of them being oversized loading stalls to accommodate trucks such as U-haul trucks and one compact space. Therefore, the project is compliant with City parking requirements. Additionally, two bicycle parking spaces next to the manager's office are provided.

Outdoor Lighting

A photometric plan and light fixtures demonstrate compliance with the lighting standards of Zoning Code [Section 20-30.080](#). Per the plans, the proposed outdoor lighting utilizes energy-efficient fixtures with a minimum one-foot candle of light at ground level during the hours of darkness.

3. Design Guidelines

The following is a list of applicable design guidelines and/or policies from the City of Santa Rosa Design Guidelines.

- 3.4.I.B** To encourage business and light industrial parks to respect the existing natural features of a site.
- 3.4.I.F** To accommodate bicyclists.
- 3.4.I.H** To promote energy efficient design.
- 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.
- 3.4.II.B.5** Design the buildings and landscaping to enhance the streetscape and create an inviting pedestrian experience along the sidewalk fronting the project.
- 3.4.II.D.1** Provide an 8 foot planter between the curb and the sidewalk with ground cover and street trees along typical frontage streets.
- 3.4.II.E.1** Provide a uniform lighting level which assures safety and security at night.
- 3.4.III.A.1** Design buildings specifically for the sites they are intended to occupy. Designs should be unique to Santa Rosa.
- 3.4.III. A.2** Design buildings to fit in to the character and context of the surrounding area. Buildings should not be stylized or ornamented in a garish and conspicuous manner.
- 3.4.III.B.4** Choose materials and colors thoughtfully and carefully detail connections and joining of materials. Avoid “false” or “decorative” facade treatments where unrelated materials are haphazardly placed on the building.
- 3.4.III.C.2** Utilize doors and windows in an organized pattern to articulate wall surfaces.
- 4.1.I B.** To provide visual enhancement of sites by creating a harmonious visual composition in combination with the architecture.
- 4.1.I E.** To develop landscaping that is easily maintained and conserves water.
- 4.1.I II.1** Integrate landscaping into all site development.
- 4.1.II.2** Provide special attention to incorporation of trees in all landscape design.

- 4.1.II.3** Provide landscaping that exhibits a strong design concept and creates a harmonious composition.
- 4.1.II.4** Existing site features should be incorporated into landscape design. Elements such as mature trees, tree groupings, and rock outcroppings should be considered as principal features of any landscape plan. Trees considered to be an important part of a property or a neighborhood's history should be identified and incorporated in proposed site plans.
- 4.1.II.5** Landscaping incorporated in a development should reflect or improve on the landscaping already present in the neighborhood.
- 4.1.II.6** Select landscape materials and plants that are appropriate in scale and function to the locations in which they are placed.
- 4.1.II.10** Select planting materials that are appropriate for local climatic conditions and historic continuity.
- 4.1.II.12** Maintainability is an important consideration in landscape design. To this end care should be taken to ensure that plants are selected which, at maturity, do not outgrow their planting site. Other factors to be considered include exposure, microclimate, soil condition and type, irrigation to be used, and the impact of plantings on pedestrian traffic.
- 4.1.II.13** Automatically controlled irrigation systems with multiple programs and repeat start times, are required.
- 4.3.I.A** To provide for continuity of design between existing and new development.
- 4.3.I.B** To ensure that projects are designed in such a way as to reduce to a minimum possible negative consequences, such as: loss of privacy, noise, increased traffic and lighting overspill that infill development may have on existing neighbors.
- 4.3.II.1** Integrate new development carefully into existing neighborhoods with respect to scale, level of detailing, use of materials, landscaping, and other characteristics of the neighborhood.
- 4.4.I.A** To preserve existing creeks and riparian vegetation along creek corridors.
- 4.4.I.B** To prevent contamination and sedimentation of creeks.
- 4.4.I.E** To encourage development along creek corridors by treating the corridors as open space amenities rather than undesirable elements with back-on treatment.
- 4.4.I. F** To accommodate storm drainage requirements without damaging the natural character of a creek corridor.

- 4.4.I. G** To design projects and storm drainage systems that comply with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) standards.
- 4.4.II.A.1** Preserve waterways in their natural state.
- 4.4.II.B.2** Incorporate filtering recharge techniques such as detention basins, natural swales and rock filtering to clean pollutants out of storm water collected on a site before the water enters the City's waterway system.

The proposed project is of a superior architectural design consisting of a variety of materials. A significant percentage of glass is integrated into the design along the street frontage, which presents an attractive design and improves the vacant site. The design is appropriate for the intended use, consistent with the site's industrial zoning classification, and contextually appropriate for the vicinity.

The building will have a compatible color scheme consisting of grays and blues, which are not high chroma in keeping with the local vernacular and enhancing the visual character of the environment. In addition, the street façade includes two "glass tower" elements that help offset the non-street side of the building.

The project incorporates a 15-foot-wide landscaped area along the frontage to soften and create a harmonious frontage compatible with the neighboring properties. The landscape plans along the creek consider the existing oak trees on site. The two mature coast live oak trees will remain and be incorporated into the landscape along the Russel Creek Trail. The remaining four small coast live Oak trees may be removed due to the proximity of the emergency access road. If removal of any tree is required, that tree will be replaced in accordance with the tree ordinance.

4. Neighborhood Comments

One email was received at the time the project was scheduled for the Waterways Advisory Committee meeting on April 22, 2021. A concern was expressed that no rainwater catchment for landscaping is being proposed. Additionally, a question was posed regarding the filtration of stormwater runoff from the project to Russell Creek and if the facility would allow the storage of toxic materials.

Staff response: The project does not currently propose rainwater catchment infrastructure. However, the project does include a bioretention basin that will catch the stormwater and assist in groundwater penetration. In addition, no storage of toxic materials is being proposed onsite.

5. Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

A comprehensive list of on and offsite improvements are included the Engineering Development Services Exhibit A, prepared by Jesus McKeag, dated November 16, 2021, and can be found attached to the draft resolution. Below are the three main frontage improvements along Piner Road:

- a. Two City Standard 250 A drive approaches along the frontage.
- b. Sidewalk per City Standard 231 shall be installed behind the drive approaches if a minimum 4-foot landing behind each drive approach can't be otherwise achieved.
- c. Any broken curb, gutter and/or sidewalk shall be replaced per City Standards 235, 237, and 241.

FISCAL IMPACT

Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332, the project qualifies for a categorical infill exemption described below:

- A. The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations. The General Plan designation for the site is Light Industry and the zoning district is also Light Industrial. Self-storage use is an allowed use within this zoning district.
- B. The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses. The project is proposed on a 41,382 square foot (.95 acres) parcel. Surrounding parcels are also light industrial activities.
- C. The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species. The vacant lot was previously developed with an office building and associated parking. Based on the previous activities of the site and those surrounding it, the site has no value as a habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species. Further, a review of the City's General Plan Environmental Impact Report and Geographic Information System does not indicate the site as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species.
- D. Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects related to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.
 - Traffic. Based on the Trip Generation Study for the proposed self-storage prepared by W-Trans, on February 8, 2021, the proposed Project is anticipated to generate an average of 58 net new daily weekday trips with two new trips during the a.m. peak hour and six new trips during the p.m. peak hour after accounting for the existing office building. Because the proposed Project would be expected to generate fewer than 50 trips during either the AM or the PM peak hours, a complete traffic impact study is not required per the City's guidelines, and there are no foreseeable adverse traffic impacts as a result of the Project.
 - Noise - The proposed use will operate within the proposed building, which

will not result in excessive noise on the exterior of the building. The hours of operation for the facility will be 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, which is within the City's regular and transitional business hours of operation between 6:00 am and 11:00 pm.

- Air Quality – The project is an allowed use with IL Zoning District and implements the General Plan Land Use Designation of Light Industry for which the General Plan has a certified Environmental Impact Report that anticipates uses such as a personal storage facility, which is a low volume use. The proposed use of the project site would result in minimal impacts to air quality due to low traffic generation as identified by the trip generation report by W-trans. Per the Bay Area Air Quality Management District guidelines for construction-related impacts, the construction of the project is anticipated to result in a less-than-significant impact from criteria air pollutant and precursor emissions.
- Water – Site drainage including roof drainage will be collected in underground storm drainpipes and will be conveyed to the bioretention facility located on the south side of the building. Overflow from the bioretention facility will discharge into the existing drainage inlet at the rear of the property and maintain the existing drainage pattern. Therefore, there will be no impact to water quality.

No exceptions to the exemptions apply and there is no reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. (CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2.).

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On April 22, 2021, the Waterways Advisory Committee (WAC) reviewed the proposed project. The WAC provided generally favorable feedback. Comments included, but were not necessarily limited to the following:

- Consider adding more windows on the back of the building in spirit of the eyes on the creek
- Oak tree preservation is appreciated
- Provide detail for all proposed fencing included in the project
- Provide more plant diversity along the rear fence to mask the chain link fence
- Consider evergreen plants along the fence
- Add more trees to provide shade along the creek

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.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1	Disclosure Form
Attachment 2	Location Map
Attachment 3	Project Narrative, received on August 9, 2021
Attachment 4	Project Plans, received on September 14, 2021
Attachment 5	Photo Rendering
Attachment 6	Photometric Plan, received on February 9, 2021
Attachment 7	Public Comments
Attachment 8	Trip Generation Study, received on February 9, 2021
Resolution	Design Review with Engineering Development Services Exhibit A

CONTACT

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