

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION  
**April 13, 2017**

**PROJECT TITLE**

College Station

**APPLICANT**

Glen Ellen Properties

**ADDRESS/LOCATION**

6 & 80 College Avenue

**PROPERTY OWNER**

Glen Ellen Properties

**ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER**

010-121-020, 010-121-024, 010-121-025

**FILE NUMBER**

CUP16-045

**APPLICATION DATE**

June 9, 2016

**APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE**

June 9, 2016

**REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS**

Conditional Use Permit

**FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED**

Final Design Review

**PROJECT SITE ZONING**

CG-SA (General Commercial-Station Area)

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION**

Retail and Business Services

**PROJECT PLANNER**

Amy Nicholson

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approval

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: CHAIR CISCO AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION  
FROM: AMY NICHOLSON, CITY PLANNER  
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: COLLEGE STATION

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

---

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Planning Commission, by Resolution, approve the Conditional Use Permit for the College Station drive-through located at 6 & 80 College Avenue.

---

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The College Station project proposes to develop a 0.95-acre site as a neighborhood shopping center. The center features two commercial buildings totaling 9,147 square feet, outdoor dining, landscaping, and on-site parking. Both commercial buildings are located toward College Avenue to allow for the surface parking lot to be located behind the buildings. The smaller of the two proposed buildings includes a drive-through, anticipated to serve a coffee shop or bank tenant. A drive-through use requires a Conditional Use Permit from the Planning Commission. The Commission is acting on this entitlement after feedback and support from the Design Review Board related to site design. Staff finds the proposal is consistent with the General Plan, Downtown Station Area Specific Plan, Zoning Code, and Design Guidelines, and as such, recommends approval of the Conditional Use Permit.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The College Station project proposes the redevelopment of a property currently occupied by a vacant industrial building, parking lot, and a vacant restaurant building. Two commercial buildings are proposed on the 0.95-acre site, comprising a total of 9,147-square feet of building area. The 4,155-square-foot building, proposes a drive-through service area, providing egress to Cleveland

Avenue through a one-way drive isle. The larger of the two buildings, at 4,992-square feet, is located on the northwestern portion of the site. Each building features an outdoor patio area. The drive-through tenant has not yet been identified, therefore, tenant specific days and hours of operation have not been reviewed as a part of this Use Permit. However, both City staff and the W-Trans Traffic Study dated January 3, 2017, anticipate operations typical of retail uses allowed by the General Commercial zoning district. These times include the hours between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m., covering a.m. and p.m. peak hours for traffic, 7 days a week.

A surface parking lot is proposed, which contains 41 vehicle spaces, low impact development features for storm water treatment, and landscaping. Pedestrian pathways are located throughout the site and two bicycle parking spaces are located adjacent to each building.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Retail and Warehousing  
South: Automotive Repair and Wholesale Retail  
East: Automotive Repair  
West: Wholesale Retail

The site is located in a developed area of the City planned to transition from more heavy commercial and light industrial uses to higher density residential and retail uses.

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The project site is comprised of three parcels totaling approximately 0.95 acres. There are two vacant structures on the site that are proposed for demolition in anticipation of redevelopment. The wood-framed warehouse, located on the western portion of the site, was constructed around 1927. The warehouse was severely compromised by several earthquakes in 1969. A converted single-family dwelling, built in 1955, is located on the eastern portion of the site. Both College and Cleveland Avenues provide access to the site. One Coast Live Oak tree is planned for preservation in the southeast corner of the site. The Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (S.M.A.R.T.) rail line is located immediately west of the site boundary.

4. Project History

On December 8, 2015, a Pre-Application meeting was held for the proposed project with City staff.

On May 10, 2016, an application for Design Review was submitted to the Planning and Economic Development Department.

On June 9, 2016, an application for a Conditional Use Permit was submitted to the Planning and Economic Development Department.

On June 13, 2016, a Notice of Application was distributed to property owners within 400 feet of the site.

On March 2, 2017, the Design Review Board unanimously approved Preliminary Design Review, and delegated Final Design Review approval to Staff.

### PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable.

### ANALYSIS

#### 1. General Plan

The project site is designated Retail and Business Services under the City of Santa Rosa General Plan.

The following goals and policies are applicable to the proposed project:

- LUL-E Promote livable neighborhoods. Ensure that everyday shopping, park and recreational facilities, and schools are within easy walking distance of most residents.
- LUL-I Maintain vibrant, convenient, and attractive commercial centers.
- 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-I-2 Encourage region-serving, high volume retail outlets to locate near freeway access (generally within one-half mile of Highway 101) to minimize traffic on city streets. Do not allow regional-serving uses in residential neighborhoods.
- LUL-I-3 Allow neighborhood centers that include small grocery stores, cleaners, and similar establishments, where they can be supported, within walking distance of residential uses. Ensure that neighborhood centers do not create unacceptable traffic or nuisances for residents

due to the hours and nature of their operation, and are designed to facilitate walking and bicycling.

- LUL-M Ensure new development and streetscape projects provide pedestrian and bicycle circulation improvements.
- 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.

Staff finds the proposal consistent with the General Plan in that the project will create an attractive neighborhood and regional serving retail space, in close proximity to residences and Highway 101. The project furthers the goal of providing vibrant commercial centers through the proposed outdoor patios and buildings abutting the sidewalk. Despite the drive-through use that is anticipated to attract regional customers, the addition of contiguous sidewalks with tree wells along College and Cleveland Avenues, and the designation of a Class II bike lane along College Avenue, are likely to promote the site as a neighborhood destination for pedestrians and bicyclists. Further, the drive-through use is anticipated to contribute to the convenience and economic vitality of the commercial center.

## 2. Other Applicable Plans – Downtown Station Area Specific Plan

The project site is located within the Railroad Corridor Sub-Area, as identified in the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan (Plan). This area was historically influenced by commercial railway operations. Many of the land uses existing in the Railroad Corridor Sub-Area are low intensity uses such as warehousing or storage. The area presents an opportunity for a diverse mix of multi-family housing, live-work housing and mixed-use residential with neighborhood serving retail.

The Plan identifies Cleveland Avenue as an entryway street type, intended to mediate between the small scale residential and the larger scale development and to create a pleasantly landscaped street. Development height and orientation standards for the entryway street type include a minimum of two story height for new buildings, and a minimum of 12 feet floor to ceiling height for ground floor non-residential. The Plan requires that at least 60% of the buildings on the street frontage be located on the build-to line. In addition, the Plan prohibits parking within 20 feet of street frontage. The ground floor frontages are required to have a minimum of 25% transparency and entries must face the street.

The Downtown Station Area Specific Plan does not regulate land uses. However, the following policies relate to the College Station Project in its entirety:

Policy SP-LU-1.2: Improve pedestrian, bicycle and bus transit connections from surrounding areas to the Downtown SMART Station site as well as between neighborhoods surrounding the SMART Station site.

Policy SP-LU-1.3: Create pedestrian friendly environments and provide convenient connections to the transit facility for all modes of transportation.

Goal SP-LU-6: Encourage development projects that will improve the quality of life in the Plan Area and draw new residents into the core of Santa Rosa.

Policy SP-LU-6.9: Encourage development of neighborhood serving retail uses in areas adjacent and accessible to residential neighborhoods. These retail uses should be compatible with the character of the immediately surrounding area and include “mom and pop” pedestrian-oriented stores. Larger scale, auto-oriented enterprises are discouraged.

Staff recognizes that the drive-through use can be defined as auto-oriented. However, the project in its entirety is not viewed as a large scale, auto-oriented enterprise. While the drive-through use is geared toward automobile users, the development proposes small scale tenant spaces, with a pedestrian-oriented environment provided through the outdoor patios, and siting of the buildings abutting the back of sidewalk. In addition, the project has been designed to meet the development standards of the Plan related to height, building location, and transparency. Overall, Staff finds the project successfully balances the intent of the Plan by providing neighborhood serving retail with pedestrian components, designed to screen the drive-through use through thoughtful site planning.

### 3. Zoning

North: IL-SA and CG-SA (Light Industrial-Station Area and General Commercial-Station)

South: CG-SA (General Commercial-Station Area)

East: CG (General Commercial)

West: TV-R-SA-LIL (Transit Village Residential-Station Area-Limited Light Industrial)

The subject site is zoned CG-SA (General Commercial-Station Area), a district designed to implement the Retail and Business Service land use classification, within the boundaries of the Downtown Station Area Plan. The CG zoning district is applied to areas appropriate for a range of retail and service land uses and

primarily serves residents and businesses throughout the City. These uses include, but are not limited to shops, personal and business services, and restaurants. The Station Area combining district is intended to enhance distinctive characteristics within the boundaries of the Plan area, and sets the development standards applicable to this project.

The project, as conditioned, satisfies the standards, requirements, and procedures set forth in the Zoning Code. The following sections address specific sections of the Code that are applicable to the proposed development.

#### *Drive-through Retail and Service Facilities*

Zoning Code Section 20-42.064 discusses the standards for drive-through retail and service facilities. In addition to setting dimensional standards, site planning requirements, and wayfinding requirements, the Zoning Code states that the drive-through should be appropriately screened to prevent headlight glare from impacting adjacent streets and parking facilities. The adequacy of queuing capacity and location of transaction facilities is left to the discretion of the review authority.

The proposed drive-through facility is located along the south side of the proposed retail building and is screened from visibility from Cleveland and College Avenues based on the proposed building siting and the existing Quonset structure to the south. A 12-foot green screen living fence is proposed to soften the side of the existing building on the adjacent parcel, and is anticipated to reduce visual and audible effects of the drive-through. The Traffic Study prepared by W-Trans concludes the drive-through and parking areas have been designed to limit interference between on-site circulation and automobile stacking in the drive-through queue.

#### *Parking*

Consistent with Table 3-4 of the Zoning Code, a total of 30 on-site parking spaces are required for the proposed development (1 space per 300 square feet of commercial floor area). The project proposes 20 standard parking spaces, 18 compact spaces, 2 accessible and 1 loading parking spaces, for a total of 41 on-site parking spaces. No street parking is proposed for this development.

#### *Development Standards*

The project is consistent with development standards for the CG and SA districts. The two commercial buildings meet the minimum two story building height requirement, and all development observes the required setback distances including the build-to property line requirements along street frontages, the 20-foot setback for the parking spaces, and lot coverage requirements. Pathfinding lights, exterior illumination, and parking lot lights are conditioned to meet the

Zoning Code standards for outdoor lighting.

4. Design Guidelines

The following is a summary of the most appropriate City of Santa Rosa Design Goals and Guidelines which apply to the proposed project:

*General:*

- 3.4.III.C.1. Use building entries to protect people from the elements and create a “sense of entry” or focal point for the building.

*Building Design:*

- 3.2.III.A.1. Break up the mass of larger structures with articulation of the form, use of color and the use of multiple materials, including: horizontal wood, cement fiber and composite siding, vertical wood siding, stucco, wood shingles, real and cultured masonry.
- 3.2.III.A.4. Avoid dressing up fronts of building with higher quality materials and switching to less expensive siding material on the sides and back. Design all four sides of buildings.
- 3.2.III.C.1. Incorporate features such as balconies, cantilevers, dormers, bay windows, patios, entries, accent materials, etc. to provide articulation and interest.
- 3.2.III.C.2. Avoid buildings with a massive appearance. Divide buildings into segments that break down the scale.

*Landscaping:*

- 4.1.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.8. Utilize planting areas to break up large expanses of paving, to visually separate masses of parked cars, and to provide a shady canopy. These planting areas within paved areas should be a minimum of 5’ wide.

*Off-Street Parking:*

- 4.2.II.B.1. Landscape parking lots with shade trees to provide a canopy over the parked cars and reduce solar heat gain in the summer. The



City's preference is for "orchard" style planting, typically a minimum of one tree should be planted for every five parking spaces.

- 4.2.II.B.2. When a parking lot abuts a public street, provide a landscaped planter strip. This planter strip should be no less than 15 feet wide (from the back of sidewalk or street curb).

*Infill Development:*

- 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.

The Design Review Board and City staff find the proposed commercial development considers the existing development, and provides aesthetic value through the implementation of architectural features and four-sided architecture. The proposed buildings utilize massing, glazing, and materials to provide visual interest. The parking area has been located to avoid dominating the streetscape, and although orchard style parking has not been provided, a ratio of 1 tree per 5 parking spaces, is proposed. In addition, the proposed trees and landscape areas have been placed thoughtfully throughout the site.

5. Neighborhood Comments

Three written neighborhood comments have been received in response to project noticing. One comment was supportive of the retail use and improvement of the site, and another comment was related to the width of sidewalk adjacent to the abutting property. An additional comment regarding potential traffic impacts to the area was received in response to the Design Review Board Public Hearing. Traffic impacts have been addressed in the Traffic Impact Study, prepared by W-Trans, dated January 3, 2017, which has been reviewed by the City's Traffic Engineering Division. The study concludes the intersection is expected to operate at an acceptable Level of Service, and includes several recommendations, which have been incorporated into the project design and conditions of approval.

6. Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

As indicated in the attached Engineering Development Services Exhibit "A," College Avenue would be improved as an Avenue that includes two travel lanes,

a 5-foot bike lane, and a left turn pocket for the intersection of College and Cleveland Avenue. Both Cleveland and College Avenues are planned to be improved with 10-foot contiguous sidewalks with City Standard Tree Wells.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and qualifies for a Class 32 exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332. The project meets the criteria for the Class 32 (In-fill) exemption in that it is consistent with the applicable General Plan designation and all applicable General Plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations, occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres, substantially surrounded by urban uses.

Further, the project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species, in that it has been previously developed, is surrounded by development, and is not identified as an area with sensitive biological species in the City's General Plan Environmental Impact Report or Geographic Information System. In addition, approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, in that impacts to traffic were reviewed in the W-Trans prepared Traffic Study, dated January 3, 2017, that determined the intersection of College and Cleveland Avenues would operate within acceptable levels of service upon project construction. The project is anticipated, and required, to operate within acceptable levels of sound as listed in the General Plan and the City's Noise Ordinance. Impacts to air quality, or water quality, are expected to be less than significant based on the project's consistency with the City's Climate Action Plan, and City standards related to stormwater and drainage. Upon review of the project, City staff determined the site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services. Finally, a Historic Resource Evaluation prepared by Alice P. Duffee, Historic Preservation Planner, determined that the two existing buildings on-site did not qualify as Historic Resources under CEQA.

### BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Preliminary Design Review was unanimously granted by the Design Review Board (Board) during the March 2, 2017, Public Hearing. During the Public Hearing, the Board appreciated the architecture, landscaping and site planning, and commented on the location of the drive-through, concluding the proposed and existing building siting would screen the isle well.

The Board had several comments regarding site circulation, and circulation to College Avenue. Consistent with the Traffic Study prepared by W-Trans, dated January 3, 2017, the Board recommended that the easterly driveway onto College Avenue be restricted to right-turn only. This was subsequently reviewed by City staff, and has been added as a condition of approval in the Engineering Development Services Exhibit A. The Board also recommended the elimination of several parking spaces in the southeast portion of the parking lot to allow for on-site traffic to more easily bypass an extended queueing

line. Minor changes were made to the site plan, resulting in two fewer parking spaces, to allow more free movements of on-site vehicles.

### 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 has no unresolved issues related to the proposal.

### ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Disclosure Form  
Attachment 2 – Location Map  
Attachment 3 – Site Analysis Map  
Attachment 4 – Site Plan  
Attachment 5 – Architectural Plans  
Attachment 6 – Landscape Plan  
Attachment 7 – Renderings  
Attachment 8 – Traffic Study  
Attachment 9 – Historic Resource Evaluation  
Attachment 10 – Public Correspondence  
Resolution / Exhibit A

### CONTACT

Amy Nicholson, City Planner, [anicholson@srcity.org](mailto:anicholson@srcity.org), (707) 543-3258