

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION
April 19, 2018

PROJECT TITLE

Session Climbing & Fitness

ADDRESS/LOCATION

965, 983 South A Street

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

037-121-019, -020

APPLICATION DATE

January 11, 2018

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

Preliminary and Final Design Review

PROJECT SITE ZONING

CG (General Commercial)

PROJECT PLANNER

Patrick Streeter

APPLICANT

Kevin Jorgeson

PROPERTY OWNER

South A Properties, LLC

FILE NUMBER

DR18-003

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE

March 13, 2018

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Building Permits

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Retail and Business Services

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

TO: CHAIR BURCH AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
FROM: PATRICK STREETER, SENIOR PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: SESSION CLIMBING & FITNESS

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Design Review Board, by resolution, approve Preliminary and Final Design Review for Session Climbing & Fitness, an indoor rock climbing and fitness gym, at 965 and 983 South A Street.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Session Climbing and Fitness is a proposed indoor rock climbing and fitness gym. The facility will be approximately 55 feet in height with approximately 23,000 square feet of floor area. The 1.12-acre project site consists of two parcels and will include a building footprint of approximately 18,500 square feet. The remainder of the site will be improved with site circulation, landscaping, and 61 parking spaces.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The project is located on a vacant site in southeast Santa Rosa and includes construction and operation of a new indoor rock climbing and fitness gym. The proposed Sessions Climbing and Fitness facility would be a single-story plus a mezzanine level with a maximum roof height of 55 feet. The building footprint would be approximately 18,500 feet in area with maximum dimensions of 153 feet by 130 feet and would equate to approximately 23,000 square-feet of building area. In addition to the building, site development includes a paved surface vehicular parking area with 61 parking spaces, vehicular/pedestrian circulation, and landscaping areas.

The proposed business is anticipated to have 30 total employees with a minimum

of five employees working at one time. The climbing facilities would include differing climbing terrain (roping and bouldering), traditional and alternative fitness areas, a social lounge area, and work/study areas. Classes for all skill levels of climbers will be offered, as well as youth programming.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

North:	Car wash; Residential and Caltrans right-of-way/Highway 12 corridor beyond
South:	Multi-family residential; automotive uses; wholesale/delivery uses
East:	Ambulance dispatch facility; automotive uses; retail
West:	Caltrans right-of-way/US Highway 101 corridor

The Highway 101 corridor and associated right-of-way constitutes the entirety of the western property frontage and the Highway 12 corridor is located beyond the project site to the north. A pedestrian overcrossing connects South A Street to the residential neighborhood west of Highway 101. The majority of the surrounding land uses are commercial or industrial in the project area. Automotive repair, service and sales, and wholesale/delivery uses can be found to the south and east of the project site and a car wash operates immediately to the north of the site. An ambulance dispatch is located east of the project site, as well as retail uses. Single- and multi-family residential uses are located to the north of the project site along Earle Street. A multi-tenant residential development is located immediately to the south of the project site.

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The relatively flat project site is presently vacant and contains the remnants of a surface parking lot and a building foundation on the south end of the site. A sound wall borders the project site's western property line adjacent to Highway 101 and a chain-link security fence has been installed along the property's other boundaries. The site is vegetated by non-native grasses and shrubs.

4. Project History

On November 16, 2017, the project went before the Design Review Board as a concept item. During the meeting, the Board discussed color variety, building materials, and building articulation, as well as landscaping.

On January 11, 2018, an application for Major Design Review was submitted to the Department of Planning and Economic Development.

On February 5, 2018, a Notice of Application was distributed to property owners within 400 feet of the site.

The applicant re-submitted application materials to respond to staff comments on March 13, 2018.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

None

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

The site is designated Retail and Business Services on the General Plan Land Use Diagram and allows a variety of commercial uses including retail and service enterprises, offices, and restaurants, as well as regional commercial centers. The proposed uses in the project (indoor climbing gym and fitness) are also allowed in the Retail and Business Services Land Use Designation. The following General Plan goals and policies are applicable to the proposed project:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 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. |
| UD-A | Preserve and enhance Santa Rosa's scenic character, including its natural waterways, hillsides, and distinctive districts. |
| UD-A-5 | Require superior site and architectural design of new development projects to improve visual quality in the city. |
| UD-C-6 | Require that buildings, sound walls, and other structures highly visible from Highway 101 or Highway 12, including the planting of trees in the back of developments and along the edge of the CalTrans rights-of-way. |
| EV-A | Maintain a positive business climate in the community. |
| PSF-A-1 | Provide recreation and park facilities and services needed by various segments of the population – including specific age groups, persons with special physical requirements, and groups interested in particular activities – and make these facilities and services easily accessible and affordable to all users. |

The project is consistent with and implements several of the applicable goals and policies of the General Plan in that it proposes new, attractive commercial development along a major regional transportation corridor. The project would create a new, specialized recreation and educational facility in an area of the City that is presently underserved.

2. Zoning

North:	General Commercial
South:	General Commercial
East:	General Commercial
West:	Highway 101 Corridor

The project site is entirely within the CG (General Commercial) district. This zoning district is intended to provide for a range of retail and service land uses that primarily serve residents and businesses throughout the city, including shops, personal and business services, and restaurants. The proposed land uses proposed as a part of this project are permitted by right within the zoning district.

Parking

Zoning Code Section 20-36.040(F) discusses parking requirements for uses not specifically listed on Table 3.4. The provision reads as follows:

Use not listed. A land use not specifically listed in Table 3-4 shall provide parking as determined by the Director. The Director shall use the requirements of Table 3-4 for similar uses as a guide in determining the minimum number of parking spaces to be provided and may require the applicant to fund a parking study to determine parking demand.

In the case of this project, similar uses, such as Commercial Recreation Facility and Health Club/Fitness Facility, are useful as a guide, however, have fundamental differences from the climbing gym land use proposed. A parking assessment was prepared by TJKM and, based on the off-street parking inventory of existing similar facilities and using square footage of climbing wall terrain instead of gross square feet as a metric, recommends 56 spaces as the minimum number of off-street parking spaces to be provided. Staff has reviewed the analysis in the parking assessment and has determined that the 61 parking spaces proposed will be adequate to meet peak parking demand for the project.

Development Standards

The CG zoning district permits 100% lot coverage and a maximum building height of 55 feet. The lot coverage maximum, height limit, and setback requirements have been met for the proposed project.

3. 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:

Building Design

- 3.3 I A Encourage “superior design” in new buildings in commercial districts.
- 3.3 I E Promote buildings that are of an original design, specific for the site, and not repeated as a template or prototype.
- 3.3 II B 4 Provide attractive and inviting pedestrian scale features, spaces and amenities.
- 3.3 II B 7 Building materials adjacent to pedestrian walkways are to be pedestrian friendly, authentic, rich in detail with visual interest, and durable.
- 3.3 II B 8 Embellish the entrances to the buildings at the ground level by creating a minimum zone that is paved with brick, granite, and concrete with exposed aggregate or precast pavers, or approved alternate.
- 3.3 II E 2 Provide a five-foot-wide planter planted with ground cover and street trees along a typical frontage street.
- 3.3 II E 6 Wall design at perimeter of projects should complement the architecture of the building.
- 3.3 II F 2 Provide light standards or poles that are no taller than 16 in a parking lot.
- 3.3 II F 4 Light spill-over onto neighboring properties should be insignificant. Provide light fixtures with shielded light sources and cutoff optics.
- 3.3 II F 5 Illuminate pedestrian pathways with a light source that is closer to the ground than parking lot lighting.
- 3.3 III A 1 Design buildings specifically for the sites they are intended to occupy. Designs should be unique to Santa Rosa.
- 3.3 III A 2 Design buildings to fit into the character and context of the surrounding area in terms of scale, style, use of materials and form. Buildings should not be stylized or ornamental in a garish and conspicuous manner.
- 3.3 III A 4 Design buildings to provide visual interest and articulate facades to reduce the massive scale and uniform impersonal appearance of large buildings.

- 3.3 III A 5 For facades greater than 50 feet in length incorporate significant wall plane projections or recesses to reduce the massive and uniform look typical of these types of projects.
- 3.3 III A 7 Divide buildings into increments with columns or the like, to create a rhythm that breaks up the wall plane.
- 3.3 III A 13 Use variations in roof lines to add interest to, and reduce the massive scale of large buildings.
- 3.3 III B 1 Use high-quality, durable and low maintenance materials, particularly at the first story.
- 3.3 III B 2 Select building colors to establish continuity and compatibility with the neighborhood.

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 7 Provide perimeter landscaping that will create a buffer and provide a screen between development and adjacent properties at least five feet in width.
- 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.

The project has been reviewed for and found consistent with the Design Guidelines by staff. Additionally, the Design Review Board reviewed the project as a concept item and provided guidance in line with the Design Guidelines to which the applicant has responded with the current design.

4. Neighborhood Comments

A Notice of Application was mailed on February 5, 2018. Neighbors have expressed support for the project, but identified existing traffic patterns and on-street parking as issues in the neighborhood. One neighbor stated a desire to see a residential component included in the project.

5. Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

In addition to construction of the climbing gym, the project site will be improved with a 61-space parking lot and vehicle and pedestrian circulation. The South A Street frontage will be improved with a contiguous 6-foot sidewalk. Curb cuts will

be installed at the north and south ends of the parking lot.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project qualifies for a Class 32 exemption, per CEQA Guidelines 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.

Staff has reviewed the exceptions to the categorical exemptions set forth in CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2 and has concluded that no exceptions are applicable and there is no reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. The project is a stand-alone development, on a site that has not been identified to have potential for an environmental impact of hazardous or critical concern. The project site is not adjacent to scenic highways and no historic resources have been identified which could be affected by this project.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The project was considered as a concept item before the Design Review Board (the Board) on November 16, 2017. The Board provided guidance regarding the planting plan, color and materials, glazing, and four-sided architecture. The applicant team's response to the Board's comments is attached to this report.

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

There are no outstanding issues with the project at this time. During the course of review, the applicant team worked with City staff to address concerns about easements across the site, stormwater management, and applicable standards for parking.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Disclosure Form
- Attachment 2 - Location Map
- Attachment 3 - Zoning and General Plan Map
- Attachment 4 - Project Plan Set, dated received March 13, 2018

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- Attachment 5 - Design Concept Narrative, dated received January 11, 2018
 - Attachment 6 - Design Review Board Minutes, August 18, 2016
 - Attachment 7 - Applicant response to Concept Design Review, dated received January 11, 2018
 - Attachment 8 - Parking and Traffic Assessment, prepared by TJKM and dated December 23, 2017
 - Attachment 9 - Comments from the public
- Draft Resolution - Preliminary and Final Design Review

CONTACT

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