

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 10, 2018

PROJECT TITLE

Hampton Inn & Suites

ADDRESS/LOCATION

No street address available

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

058-011-018

APPLICATION DATE

June 14, 2017

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

Conditional Use Permit

PROJECT SITE ZONING

CO-G-RC (Commercial Office, within both the Gateway and Resilient City combining districts)

PROJECT PLANNER

Susie Murray

APPLICANT

Theraldson Investments

PROPERTY OWNER

Heritage Inn of Santa Rosa LLC

FILE NUMBER

PRJ17-076

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE

September 20, 2017

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Final Design Review

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Office

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

Agenda Item #10.4
For Planning Commission Meeting of: May 10, 2018

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: CHAIR EDMONDSON AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION
FROM: SUSIE MURRAY, CITY PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: HAMPTON INN & SUITES

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Planning Commission, by resolution, approve a major Conditional Use Permit to allow a lodging use and the construction of the Hampton Inn & Suites, a 55-foot tall, 100-room hotel, on Accessor's Parcel No. 058-011-018.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hampton Inn & Suites project (Project) proposes to construct a four-story, 100-room hotel on Accessor's Parcel No. 058-011-018, which is located at the northwest end of Airway Drive. The project involves a minor Conditional Use Permit (MUP) to allow a lodging facility in the CO (Commercial Office) zoning district, and a major Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow 55' in height where 35' is otherwise allowed in the CO district. The Project also involves a major Design Review because the structure will be greater than 10,000 square feet, which is scheduled before the Design Review Board on May 3, 2018.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The Project involves the construction of a 100-room hotel at the north end of Airway Drive, next door to the Sutter Pacific Medical Foundation building and adjacent to Piner Creek. The location is highly visible from Highway 101, and the site is within an area designated as a Gateway. The hotel will also include a fitness room, an outdoor swimming pool, a walking path along the creek, parking and associated site improvements.

The project involves a request for Design Review to construct a commercial structure greater than 10,000 square feet. The project is scheduled for review by the DRB on May 3, 2018. Staff will provide an update to the Commission during the May 10, 2018, meeting.

The hotel use is allowed on the site with a MUP, which by itself would be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator. The structure is proposed to reach 55 feet at its tallest point, which requires a CUP and must be reviewed by the Commission. As is frequently the practice when two levels of use permit are required, both are reviewed by the Commission.

This layout of the site plan will require the relocation of six parking spaces and a landscape endcap at the east end of the southern-most parking lot planting strip. The parking spaces have been relocated across the drive aisle.

The conceptual planting plan includes a mix of native and ornamental trees, and a variety of shrubs, vines, grasses and groundcover, with plant water needs ranging from very low to moderate.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Office; currently developed with a medical office building.

South: Medium Density Residential (8-18 units per acre) and Retail and Business Services; previously developed with multi-family residential units towards the west, which was destroyed in the October 2017 firestorm, and a vacant parcel to the east, which has an approved project to construct a 90-unit senior care facility.

East: Office, Retail and Business Services and Highway 101; currently developed with a department store.

West: Low Density Residential (2-8 units per acre); currently developed with single-family residential structures.

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The approximately four-acre site is currently undeveloped. The property is generally flat and vegetated with a mix of grasses and trees. Much of the existing landscaping experienced damage during the October 2017 fire.

4. Project History

On October 25, 2016, the City Council approved a Zoning Code Text Amendment to allow lodging uses (hotel or motel) within the CO (Commercial Office) zoning district with the approval a MUP.

On April 20, 2017, the DRB reviewed the project as a concept item. The meeting

minutes are attached.

On June 14, 2017, an application for Design Review was submitted to Planning and Economic Development.

On September 20, 2017, a companion application for CUP was submitted to Planning and Economic Development.

On January 25, 2018, the Project materials were reviewed by the Waterways Advisory Committee (WAC).

On May 3, 2018, the Project is scheduled for review by the DRB. Staff will update the Planning Commission at the May 10, 2018, Planning Commission meeting.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW (Indicate N/A if not applicable)

Not applicable.

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

The General Plan land use designation is Office, which is intended for sites developed for administrative, financial, business, professional, medical, and public offices. The following General Plan goals and policies relate to the Project.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

- 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-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.

LAND USE AND LIVABILITY

- 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.

URBAN DESIGN

- UD-C Enhance and strengthen the visual quality of major entry routes into the city, as well as major corridors that link neighborhoods with downtown.
- UD-C-6 Require that buildings, sound walls, and other structures highly visible from Highway 101 or Highway 12 and adjoining neighborhoods be designed to enhance and improve scenic character.

OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION

- 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.
- OSC-D-10 Orient development and buildings toward creeks while providing privacy, security, and an open transition between public and private open spaces.
- OSC-D-11 New development along channelized waterways should allow for an ecological buffer zone between the waterway and development. This buffer zone should also provide opportunities for multi-use trails and recreation.
- OSC-D-12 New development should maintain an adequate setback from channelized waterways to recognize the 100-year flood elevation and allow for stream corridor restoration. Setbacks identified in the Zoning Code should serve as minimum setbacks. Larger setbacks are encouraged in accordance with Restoration Concept Plans to meet restoration and enhancement goals.

During the October 2017 firestorm, multiple hotels were destroyed. In addition to providing much needed facilities for city visitors (tourism and reconstruction), the proposed hotel will provide jobs.

The DRB reviewed the project plans as a concept item and provided plan revision recommendations, which are addressed in the Design Review section of this report.

The hotel is oriented toward Piner Creek and the Project includes a pedestrian pathway along the creek. The Project will be required to comply with current SUSMP (Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan) requirements, which will be reviewed by City staff for regulatory compliance.

2. Santa Rosa Citywide Creek Master Plan

The site is located adjacent to north fork of Piner Creek. This area of the creek is considered a culvert from Highway 101 to Airway Drive, where it daylights as a Modified-Natural type channel. Downstream of the confluence with the North Fork of Piner Creek, the creek is owned and maintained for flood control by the Sonoma County Water Agency.

3. Zoning

The project is located within the CO-G-RC (Office Commercial, within the Gateway and Resilient City combining districts) zoning district. This district is intended to support a mix of administrative, business, financial, medical, professional, and public office uses, together with similar and related compatible uses. In 2016, the City Council approved a Zoning Code Text Amendment to allow hotel uses within the CO (Commercial Office) zoning district.

The Project proposes a four-story hotel, 55' tall hotel, which exceeds the allowable 35' height for structures within the CO (Office Commercial) zoning district. Pursuant to Zoning Code Table 2-6, Lodging is allowed within the CO district with the approval of a MUP. Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 20-30.070(D)(2), additional height may be approved through the CUP process. As such, the project includes a request for a CUP, which must be reviewed by the Planning Commission.

Zoning Code Section 20-28.030 discusses areas designated by the General Plan as visual entries into the City, and provides special design criteria for proposed development at each entry. The Project meets the design standards, including setbacks and landscaping.

- Pursuant to Zoning Code Table 3-4, the Project is required to provide 100 parking spaces. The Project provides 104 spaces, a surplus of four parking stalls.
- Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 20-28.030(D)(1)(a), structures along the Highway 101 corridor that are within the Gateway combining district have a required 100-foot setback from the freeway right-of-way. The hotel structure is well over 200 feet from the freeway.
- Zoning Code Section 20-28.030(D) requires(1)(b) requires landscaping within setbacks shall provide a minimum of 20 feet on onsite planting in addition to any existing or proposed freeway landscaping. Given the unusual shape of the parcel, the Preliminary Landscape Plan shows the project will meet the intent of the landscape requirements pursuant to Zoning Code Chapter 20-34.

- Zoning Code Section 20-28.030(D)(1)(c) discussed required screening for trash receptacle bins/storage areas and allows that screening may be made by landscaping. The Project trash storage area is located along the west elevation, which is out of site from the highway corridor.

The hotel structure would be located on the east side of the parcel, away from a residential neighborhood located on the west side, adjacent to and south of the property. The hotel will be approximately 300 feet from the nearest residential structure. Hotel visitors will access from the east off Airway Drive, and all parking areas will be buffered by landscaping.

Because the Hampton Inn & Suites is located adjacent to Piner Creek, the project is subject to the Creekside Development standards, pursuant to Zoning Code Section 20-30.040. Since the neighboring properties in the vicinity of the property are developed, the setback required from the top of bank would be 30 feet. The site plan identifies the footprint of the proposed structure and associated hardscape site improvements. The design is respectful of the required 30-foot setback, including a permeable surface in the portion of the pathway that extends into the setback area.

4. Design Guidelines

The hotel is proposed along Piner Creek and treats the creek as an amenity by including a pathway adjacent to the creek, which may be used by hotel guests and employees. The applicant has incorporated recommendations from the DRB, including screening for the trash enclosure and changes to the landscaping.

The site circulation supports use by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. It includes a clearly marked pedestrian path of travel from the street, along the creek, and through the parking lot. The landscape design screens parking areas from Highway 101 and a nearby residential neighborhood.

The Project proposes the removal of several trees. Pursuant to City Code Chapter 17-24, the Preliminary Landscape Plan incorporates several native oak trees to replace them adjacent to Piner Creek, and the parking areas next to the hotel have been designed with orchard-style parking. Because the firestorm damage existing tree, the Project has been conditioned to provide an updated, post-fire arborist evaluation with the plans submitted for building permits. A revised planting plan will also be required if fire-damaged trees are removed or replaced.

A trash receptacle area is located along the west elevation of the hotel. The trash enclosure has been designed with brick to match the finish of the hotel.

The application materials include both a preliminary Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) report and a lighting plan. The Project will be required

to comply with current SUSMP requirements prior to issuance of grading permits. A standard condition of approval prohibits lighting spilling over to neighboring properties.

5. Neighborhood Comments

No comments have been received as of the date this report was prepared.

6. Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

Refer to the Planning and Economic Development, Engineering Development Services Exhibit A, prepared by Larry Lackie, dated July 17, 2017, which is attached to the draft resolution, for a comprehensive list of required improvements.

FISCAL IMPACT

Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Project has been found in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):

- a. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183, the project is consistent with the General Plan and zoning, for which an Environment Impact Report (EIR) was certified by Council in 2009. The EIR analyzed impacts to traffic, air quality & greenhouse gases, and noise for implementation of the General Plan.

On October 25, 2016, the City Council approved a Zoning Code Text Amendment to allow lodging uses (hotel or motel) within the CO (Commercial Office) zoning district with the approval a MUP. The Council found that a hotel use would have similar impacts to the uses considered in the scope of the General Plan 2035 Environmental Impact Report.

The subject site is surrounded by commercial buildings with similar massing. The applicant has provided renderings which indicate minor visual impacts. Tree removal due to construction will be done in compliance with City Code Chapter 17-24, including trees that experienced fire damage in the October 2017 firestorm.

Based on the similar level of intensity of development evaluated under the Office land use designation and supplemental analyses of project-specific impacts, staff has determined that no further environmental review is necessary.

- b. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332, the Project qualifies for a categorical exemption as in-fill development.
- The Project is consistent with the General Plan land use designation of Office, which allows development of administrative, financial, business, professional, medical and public facilities, and it complies with the CO-G-RC (Commercial Office, within both the Gateway and Resilient City combining districts) zoning district development standards (refer to discussion under CEQA Guideline Section 15183).
 - It occurs on a site that is less than five acres within City limits, and is substantially surrounded by urban uses.
 - The site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species. In a Biological Resources Assessment prepared by Lucy Macmillan M.S., dated 1/2018, the site does not provide any value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species. The report does identify the site as having potential for nesting birds. The project has been required to qualified biologist shall perform a pre-construction survey for nesting birds within 14 days prior to any tree removal and/or ground-breaking activities, which is a standard condition of approval.
 - Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic. A study conducted by W-Trans, dated December 27, 2017, found that the affected intersections are expected to continue operating acceptably with project traffic added. As discussed previously in this section (Guideline 15183), the EIR certified for the General Plan analyzed impacts air quality, greenhouse gases, and noise, for implementation of the General Plan. The project has been conditioned to comply with the City's Low Impact Development standards, which will treat stormwater runoff generated by a one-inch storm over a 24-hour period.
 - The Project site is in area developed for commercial uses. It can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services. City staff has revised the plans and conditioned the Project appropriately.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On April 20, 2017, the DRB reviewed the project as a concept item. As summarized in the meeting minutes, the DRB's recommendations are listed below:

- Screening for the trash enclosure, and screening/ landscape screening and shade at the swimming pool.

- Livelier colors, and appreciated the lighter color at the top portion of the building, and prefers the deeper color of brick as shown on renderings.
- Way-finding and attention to pedestrian circulation, and use of pavement and signage to slow cars down.
- Replacing purple plum trees with another tree species (such as purple smoke bush), and replace annual plantings with perennials.

On January 25, 2018, the WAC reviewed the Project plans. The following recommendations were made:

- Landscape between creek and path should include native plants & trees; should not restrict visibility to the creek from any direction; should not include lawn.
- Include landscape furniture along pathway – should be placed on the side away from the creek.
- The existing path is highly traveled. During construction, an alternative/temporary path should be provided so people can still walk.

Pat Gothard, a representative from the Sonoma County Water Agency, attended and added the following comments:

- The ADA path of travel should be designed to connect to the path on the neighboring site.
- If/when the hotel allows pets, a dog-waste station shall be located at the creek path.

NOTIFICATION

Pursuant to Zoning Code Chapter 20-66, all required public noticing was done, including the installation of three public hearing signs at the Project site, a mailed Notice of Public Hearing to property owners within 400 feet of the Project site, and a Notice of Public Hearing published in the Press Democrat.

ISSUES

There are no unresolved issues.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Disclosure Form

Attachment 2: Location & Vicinity Maps

- Attachment 3: Project Narrative, Plans & Site Analysis, prepared by Designcell, dated September 13, 2017
- Attachment 4: Preliminary Landscape Plan, prepared by MacNair & Associates, dated June 13, 2017
- Attachment 5: Preliminary Grading & Drainage Plan, prepared by Adobe Associates, Inc., dated September 18, 2017
- Attachment 6: Photometrics Plan, prepared by CREE, dated September 14, 2017
- Attachment 7: Traffic Study, prepared by W-Trans, dated December 27, 2017
- Attachment 8: Biological Resource Assessment, prepared by Lucy Macmillan, M.S., dated January 2018
- Attachment 9: Aerial Photograph (post-fire)
- Attachment 10: Visual Analysis
- Attachment 11: Council Ordinance ORD-2017-017
- Attachment 12: Public Correspondence

Resolution: Conditional Use Permit

CONTACT

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