

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
December 21, 2023

PROJECT TITLE

Northpoint Commerce Center

APPLICANT

McNeill Real Estate Services Inc

ADDRESS/LOCATION

1408, 1416, 1420 Thunderbolt Way

PROPERTY OWNER

Optical Coating Laboratory, Inc.

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS

035-530-023, 035-530-024, 035-530-025
& 035-530-057

FILE NUMBERS

DR23-007

APPLICATION DATES

March 7, 2023

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATES

October 24, 2023

PROJECT SITE ZONING

General Industrial (IG)

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

General Industry

PROJECT PLANNER

Suzanne Hartman

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

For Design Review Board Meeting of: December 21, 2023

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
FROM: SUSIE MURRAY, SUPERVISING PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
SUZANNE HARTMAN, CITY PLANNER

SUBJECT: NORTHPOINT COMMERCE CENTER

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Design Review Board, by resolution, approve the Design Review Permit application for the proposed development of the Northpoint Commerce Center building, located at 1408, 1416 and 1420 Thunderbolt Way, Assessor's Parcel Nos. 035-530-023, 035-530-024, 035-530-025 & 035-530-057 (File No. DR23-007).

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

Jose McNeill of McNeill Real Estate Services, Inc., proposes to develop an approximately 114,884-square-foot industrial building, Northpoint Commerce Center, at 1408, 1416 and 1420 Thunderbolt Way. The project site is 6.81 acres and is currently undeveloped. The building is proposed to be used as a commerce center and is expected to generate 545 daily trips by approximately 150 employees, as well as customers and delivery trucks.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

The Northpoint Commerce Center project site is undeveloped land that is surrounded by industrial and residential land uses. The project site is bounded by Northpoint Parkway to the north, Thunderbolt Way to the west, and Kingfisher Way to the east, and a single-family residential neighborhood to the south.

North: Medium Density Multi-Family Residential (8-30 units per acre) and Low Density Residential (2-8 units per acre); currently developed; currently developed with small lot detached residential units. General Industrial; portions of developed and undeveloped lots.

South: PD (Low-Density Residential Planned Development); currently developed with a few larger lot residential properties and designated open space. There is also vacant land that is zoned as Open Space-Recreation (OSR). The OSR zoning district is applied to public park and recreation sites and areas within the City.

East: Business Park (visually attractive centers for businesses that do not generate nuisances); currently developed.

West: General Industrial; currently developed with larger lot properties.

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The project site contains some grass and shrub vegetation in the northern and southern portions, and a strip of impervious pavement toward the center of the site, which served as an airport runway for the no longer active Santa Rosa Air Center. To the north, Northpoint Parkway contains no pedestrian walkways but provides two vehicle lanes and a bicycle lane in each direction, with a separator between travel directions. Thunderbolt Way and Kingfisher Way are cul-de-sacs bordering the site to the east and west; each cul-de-sac provides a sidewalk only on the opposite side of the street from the project site; no pedestrian walkways are provided along the site boundary.

4. Project History

July 27, 2022	Neighborhood Meeting Conducted
February 3, 2022	The proposed project was presented to the Design Review Board for Concept Design Review.
April 4, 2023	Application Submitted
May 12, 2023	Notice of Application Distributed
June 22, 2023	The Planning & Economic Development Department requested that the Waterways Advisory Committee (WAC) advise the Design Review Board as to whether the proposed project is consistent with the applicable Citywide Creek Master Plan, General Plan goals and policies, and Design Guidelines for development near waterways.

October 24, 2023	Planning staff deemed the application complete.
December 8, 2023	Notice of Public Hearing Distributed

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

The [General Plan](#) addresses issues related to the physical development and growth of Santa Rosa and guides the City's planning and zoning functions.

The General Plan land use designation for the site is General Industry which is intended primarily for industrial and manufacturing activities, warehousing, wholesaling and distribution uses. The total acreage of the development sites is 6.81 acres, and the project proposes to construct an approximately 114,884-square-foot industrial building.

The most relevant applicable General Plan goals and policies with Staff's analysis are included in the table below.

Santa Rosa General Plan 2035

Land Use and Livability	
LUL-A: Foster a compact rather than a scattered development pattern in order to reduce travel, energy, land, and materials consumption while promoting greenhouse gas emission reduction.	The proposed project would be located in a mixed industrial, business park, and adjacent to a residential neighborhood for a compact development pattern. The proposed project would provide 19 bicycle parking spaces and eight electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. The proposed project would also provide convenient connections to bus stops for Routes 2 and 15 within 0.5 mile.
LUL-K: Protect industrial land supply and ensure compatibility between industrial development and surrounding neighborhoods.	The proposed warehouse design is compatible with other the surrounding industrial/commercial uses in the area.
LUL-S: Develop an attractive, safe, and extensive network for pedestrian and bicyclist movements.	The proposed project would include the construction of pedestrian sidewalks on adjacent streets, thus expanding the City's pedestrian network. The proposed project would also provide 19 bicycle parking spaces and provides access to existing bicycle

	facilities, including bike lanes on Northpoint Parkway, which is classified by the General Plan a Class II Bicycle Lane.
Economic Vitality	
EV-A-5: Maintain diversity in the types of jobs available in Santa Rosa to lessen the impact of economic cycles.	The proposed project would assist in maintaining the economic viability of the area; broaden the available positions for both full and part time employment within the City; while ensuring compatibility with the surrounding neighborhoods through proposed facility design.

The Northpoint Commerce Center would assist in maintaining the economic viability of the area; broaden the available positions for both full and part time employment within the City; and provide a viable and desirable industrial service, while ensuring compatibility with the surrounding area through proposed facility design.

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

Creek Master Plan

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 project site is located within a predominantly industrial area, directly adjacent to Roseland Creek Reach 4 to the south. The proposed structure, the required parking and the exterior landscape improvements outside of the 30-foot creek setback.
OSC-H: Conserve significant vegetation and trees and plant new trees. The proposed project would conserve significant vegetation and trees.	The proposed project will be landscaped, using plants that are appropriate for the site, and adjacent to all parking areas, buildings, and walkways in accordance with the City’s Design Guidelines. The proposed project will also include tree planting according to project design plans.

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

Roseland Creek, Reach 4, Background:

The project site is adjacent to Roseland Creek (Reach 4), which is a part of the Southern Santa Rosa Creeks Watershed. Roseland Creek flows more than six miles westward across the Santa Rosa Plain, from its headwaters southwest of the Highway 101 and Highway 12 interchange to its confluence with the Laguna de Santa Rosa southeast of Sebastopol near the Laguna Treatment Plant. The creek runs through predominantly private property to Burbank Avenue.

This reach of Roseland Creek is characterized by a grass-lined flood control channel, consisting of long pools and glides, with very few riffles. Some trees and shrubs are present within a narrow riparian zone, but they do not provide shade to the channel. Dominant plant species include cattail, rice cut-grass, Himalayan blackberry, and nutsedge, with some plantings of live oak, valley oak, big leaf maple, and toyon at the top of bank. A few willow and cottonwood trees have come into the reach naturally. Invasive species present include Himalayan blackberry and pampas grass.

The Creek Master Plan recommends habitat restoration for this reach to allow for channel enlargement to accommodate a meandering low-flow channel, instream habitat structures and replanting of native vegetation. The Sonoma County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan 2010 proposes a Class 1 bike path along the creek from Stony Point Road to Ludwig Ave, which would also continue downstream to Llano Road.

2. Zoning

The [Zoning Code](#) implements the goals and policies of the General Plan by classifying and regulating the use of land and structure development within the City.

The project is within the General Industrial (IG) zoning district and is consistent with the General Industry land use classification of the General Plan. The IG zoning district is applied to areas appropriate for industrial and manufacturing activities, warehousing, wholesaling and distribution uses.

Pursuant to Zoning Code [Section 20-52.030](#) the Design Review Board must make the findings shown below before granting Design Review. As demonstrated on the attached draft resolution, staff's analysis has determined that these findings can be met:

1. The design and layout of the proposed development is of superior quality, and is consistent with the General Plan, any applicable specific plan, applicable Zoning Code standards and requirements, the City's Design

Guidelines, architectural criteria for special areas, and other applicable City requirements (e.g., City policy statements and development plans).

2. The design is appropriate for the use and location of the proposed development and achieves the goals, review criteria and findings for approval as set forth in the framework of Design Review (Design Guidelines, Introduction, subsection C).
3. The design and layout of the proposed development will not interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future developments.
4. The architectural design of the proposed development is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
5. The design of the proposed development will provide a desirable environment for its occupants, visiting public, and its neighbors through the appropriate use of materials, texture, and color, and would remain aesthetically appealing and be appropriately maintained.
6. The proposed development will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare or materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity.
7. The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Staff analysis along with the required findings are included in the Resolution, attached to this Staff Report.

Warehousing, Wholesaling and Distribution

Per [Table 2-10 Allowed Land Uses and Permit Requirements for Industrial Districts](#), the warehousing, wholesaling and distribution use is permitted by right in the General Industrial (IG) Zoning District.

Building Height

The maximum allowable building height in the IG zoning district is 55 feet. The proposed facility has an approximate height of 35 feet.

Setbacks

Per [Section 20-24.040](#), the required front setback and side setback for IG zoning district is 7.5 and 5 feet when adjacent to a residential zone or residential use, and set by Conditional Use Permit approval elsewhere. The parcels are not adjacent to a residential use. The site plan shows the front setback being approximately 26 feet and the side setback being a minimum of 26 feet, measured from the property lines.

Additionally, [Section 20-30.040](#) of the Zoning Code requires a 30-foot setback from waterways for new development that is surrounded by existing structures that were developed in compliance with applicable setback requirements in effect prior to September 3, 2004. 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. The plans show that the proposed building is more than 30 feet from Roseland Creek.

Parking

Vehicular access for the proposed project would occur from two driveways: one entrance along Kingfisher Way and one entrance along Thunderbolt Way. An internal drive aisle would exist for each entrance, with the exit of said drive aisle occurring on the opposing side of the site, connecting Kingfisher Way and Thunderbolt Way.

The proposed project would provide 166 parking spaces, including eight electric vehicle (EV) charging locations. The proposed project would include 19 bicycle parking spaces and would connect to existing bicycle paths along Northpoint Parkway.

Pursuant to Zoning Code [Section 20-36.040](#), Table 3-4, “warehousing, wholesaling and distribution” requires one space for each 1,000 sf., or as determined by Conditional Use Permit approval. The proposed project will provide 166 parking spaces, including eight electric vehicle (EV) charging locations. The proposed project will also include 19 bicycle parking spaces and would connect to existing bicycle paths along Northpoint Parkway.

Outdoor Lighting

Site lighting will be downlit in the form of exterior wall sconces.

3. Design Guidelines

The [Design Guidelines](#) are the primary design criteria under which discretionary review is conducted. The most relevant applicable Design Guidelines goals and policies include:

<i>Design Guidelines Goal or Policy</i>	
Residential, Commercial & Industrial Beyond the Core Area	
3.4.I.B: To encourage business and light industrial parks to respect the existing natural features of a site	The proposed project would provide landscaping adjacent to all parking areas, buildings, and walkways. The project preserves the site’s natural features, vegetation, and trees by incorporating landscape design and
3.4.II.A.1: Incorporate existing natural features such as trees, topography,	

<p>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</p>	<p>revegetation with plants that are appropriate for both driveway zones and stormwater retention areas. The project site is relatively flat necessitating minimal overall grading.</p>
<p>4.4.I.G: To design projects and storm drainage systems that comply with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) standards.</p>	<p>The project site complies with the goal of managing, maintaining, and improving stormwater drainage and capacity by constructing several stormwater retention areas on the project site that would treat all stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces, covering the cost of drainage facilities needed for new developments, implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce pollutants discharge, and complying with the Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) in order to reduce pollutants and runoffs flows from the project site.</p>

The architectural design for the industrial building would be of Type VB construction, site cast, tilted concrete panels with a variety of enhancements. The typical wall panels would be enhanced with reveals and a textured elastomeric, multicolored coating system. The areas around the building entries would also be enhanced with tinted glazing in aluminum frames with overhead steel-framed painted canopies. The placement of these enhancements would be locations most visible from the public roadways. The proposed project would be landscaped using plants that would be appropriate for both access and driveway zones and stormwater retention areas. The proposed project would provide landscaping adjacent to all parking areas, buildings, and walkways in accordance with the City’s Design Guidelines. The use would assist in maintaining the economic viability of the area while ensuring compatibility with the surrounding area. Staff finds that the proposed project is consistent with applicable goals and policies of the Design Guidelines.

4. Summary of Public Comments

There have been no neighborhood comments received at the time of writing this staff report. Any new comments received will be shared with the Design Review

Board at the Design Review Board meeting.

5. Public Improvements

For a comprehensive list of on- and off-site improvements, please refer to the attached Exhibit A, provided by Engineering Development Services, dated November 8, 2023.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of the Project will not have an effect on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and qualifies for a streamlining measure pursuant to CEQA Section 15183 (Projects Consistent with a Community Plan or Zoning). Section 15183 of the CEQA Guidelines mandates that projects which are consistent with the development density established by existing zoning, community plan or general plan policies for which a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) was certified (in this case, the Santa Rosa General Plan 2035 FEIR) shall not require additional environmental review, except as might be necessary to examine whether there are project-specific significant effects which are peculiar to the project or its site. A General Plan consistency analysis, prepared by First Carbon Solutions, FCS International, Inc., dated December 23, 2022, concluded that “the proposed project falls within the scope of the project evaluated in the General Plan FEIR and, therefore, no further environmental review is required.” The analysis further explained that California tiger salamander (CTS) has the potential to occur at the project site (See the Biological Resources Report, included as Appendix B),” for which mitigation credits have already been purchased.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the February 3, 2022, Concept Design Review meeting, the Design Review Board provided the following nonbinding comments, recommendations, and considerations:

- The proposed color, form and massing of the building are appreciated.
- The site layout and building orientation are appreciated.
- Consider proposing more materials for the building in order to provide more depth and relief.
- Consider proposing more landscaping at the rear (south) property line, such as evergreens, to provide more of a natural buffer between the project site and the residential properties.
- Consider proposing a sound barrier at the south property line to mitigate noise

pollution.

WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On June 22, 2023, the Planning & Economic Development Department requested that the Waterways Advisory Committee (WAC) advise the Design Review Board as to whether the project is consistent with the applicable Citywide Creek Master Plan, General Plan goals and policies and Design Guidelines for development near waterways. The WAC had the following recommendations for the proposed design and layout of the project:

- Consider removing the proposed sound wall along the south property line.
- Consider proposing a different orientation for the truck loading docs to mitigate noise that may affect the adjacent residential properties that are located south of the site.
- Consider proposing more landscaping along the south property line.

PUBLIC 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 remaining with the project.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Disclosure Form
- Attachment 2 - Project Description
- Attachment 3 - Location Map
- Attachment 4 - Neighborhood Context Map
- Attachment 5 - Color Site Photographs
- Attachment 6 - CEQA Documents
- Attachment 7 - Plan Set
- Attachment 8 - Material and Color Details Board
- Attachment 9 - Concept Design Review Project Plans
- Attachment 10 - Creek Exhibit

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Attachment 11 - Hydrology Study and Drainage Analysis

Resolution

Exhibit A

CONTACT

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