

CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT SEPTEMBER 2, 2020

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 6.1 **Public Hearing for Consideration of a Planned Community Permit and a Development Review Permit to Construct a New Four-Story, 75,358 Square Foot, 153-Room Hotel, Replacing an Existing 71-Room Hotel; a Provisional Use Permit to Allow a Hotel Use and a Parking Reduction; and a Heritage Tree Removal Permit to Allow Removal of a Tree on a 0.97-Acre Site Located at 2300 West El Camino Real**

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution Recommending that the City Council Conditionally Approve a Planned Community Permit and a Development Review Permit to construct a new four-story, 75,358 square foot, 153-room hotel, replacing an existing 71-room hotel; a Provisional Use Permit to allow a Hotel Use and a Parking Reduction; and a Heritage Tree Removal Permit to allow removal of a tree on a 0.97-acre site located at 2300 West El Camino Real (Exhibit 1 to the EPC Staff Report).

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The Commission's agenda is advertised on Channel 26, and the agenda and this report appear on the City's Internet website. All property owners within a 750' radius and other interested stakeholders were notified of this meeting. A separate notification of the City Council public hearing will occur for this project.

BACKGROUND

Site Location and Characteristics

The approximately 0.97-acre project site is located on the north side of West El Camino Real, between Ortega Avenue and South Rengstorff Avenue. The surrounding land uses include four two-story, multi-family buildings to the north, single-story commercial buildings to the west, a four-story apartment complex to the east, and a Carl's Jr. restaurant and a two-story, multi-tenant commercial building across El Camino Real to the south.



Figure 1—Project Location

The site is currently developed with two three-story hotel buildings (totaling approximately 31,072 square feet), which would be demolished to accommodate the proposed project.

Previous Entitlements

This project was previously reviewed by the [EPC on May 3, 2017](#) and approved by the [City Council on June 6, 2017](#) (see Exhibit 2 and Exhibit 3). Due to issues with construction drawings, the applicant was unable to complete the building permit process, and the original planning permit expired.

The current application for the same project remains relatively unchanged with minor modification to the central open-space programming and a reduction in the number of rooms from 157 to 153. The proposed changes are minor, and the proposed design continues to comply with the El Camino Real Precise Plan and General Plan.

ANALYSIS

This report outlines the project's consistency with the General Plan and El Camino Real Precise Plan; describes the proposed development; evaluates the project architecture, open space, landscaping, trees, sustainability, and transportation; and provides a summary of the environmental review process which was completed for the project.

General Plan

The project site has a General Plan Land Use Designation of Mixed-Use Corridor for the parcels fronting El Camino Real, which allows heights up to four stories. The Mixed-Use Corridor designation envisions a diverse mix of commercial and residential uses making the transit corridor a vibrant, landscaped, comfortable, and convenient place for gathering. Buildings in this area are required to transition appropriately to adjacent residential neighborhoods. The proposed project is consistent with the Mixed-Use Corridor designation and the following General Plan policies:

- *LUD 3.1: Land use and transportation. Focus higher land use intensities and densities within one-half mile of public transit service, and along major commute corridors.*
- *LUD 6.3: Street presence. Encourage building facades and frontages that create a presence at the street and along interior pedestrian paseos or pathways.*
- *LUD 8.2: Streets friendly to bicyclists and pedestrians. Encourage a network of streets friendly to bicyclists and pedestrians that create a safe and comfortable environment and include convenient amenities and features.*

Zoning

The project is located in the El Camino Real Precise Plan in the Medium-Intensity Corridor sub-area, which allows a base floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.35 and maximum height of 45' or three stories. This zoning designation allows a Tier 1 bonus up to 1.85 FAR and height up to 55' or four stories, if the project includes public benefits. The proposed Tier 1 project has a FAR of 1.80, height of four stories, and a community benefit contribution of \$443,512, which is further discussed later in this report. Additionally, hotel use is a provisionally permitted use in this zoning district.

Project Overview

The applicant is proposing a four-story, 153-room, U-shaped hotel building fronting on El Camino Real with a below-ground parking garage (see Exhibit 4—Project Plans). The underground parking garage takes access from a single driveway off of El Camino Real, which is reduced from the current two-driveway configuration for the existing hotel on-site.

The ground floor of the hotel includes a restaurant with outdoor patio, guest lounge, and reception areas which face El Camino Real. From the center to the east side of the ground floor are supportive uses such as hotel offices, restrooms, and entry lounge. Guest rooms are located on all four floors. A fitness area, a spa and fire pit with lounge seating is proposed in the central courtyard. Landscaping is proposed along the perimeter of the project site and in the central courtyard.



Figure 2—Site Plan

Architecture

The proposed architectural design is modern in style, with materials consisting of two types of trespa panels, smooth plaster walls, smooth plaster frames, and metal frame trellises. The front elevation along El Camino Real has smooth plaster-framed vertical elements which break up the four-story building mass and provides an attractive building articulation. Along the ground floor, a mix of decorative wood trespa paneling, a prominent and well-defined hotel entrance, and storefront windows provide an attractive and welcoming pedestrian experience.



Figure 3—View to the Northeast from El Camino Real

The project uses commercial setbacks for the restaurant portion of the building and is designed as per the commercial building design requirements set forth in the Precise Plan. The building steps down to two stories at the rear to conform to zoning requirements. This creates a good transition to the two-story apartments abutting the rear property line.

The project complies with the development standards and guidelines of the Precise Plan, including FAR, lot coverage, building placement, building massing, and height, with one minor exception to allow side-yard encroachments by the upper-level balconies. The Precise Plan provides flexibility in meeting the development standards if this results in a superior project design which meets the intent of the Precise Plan.

The Precise Plan calls for minimum 15' building side-yard setback for all the upper floors. The applicant requests an exception to allow 1'4" balcony projections into the side-yard setback area along the western property line. The Precise Plan allows upper-floor architectural projections, such as balconies and porches, to encroach up to 2' into the side-yard setback area. The balconies have an open design which softens the appearance of the encroachment in the setback area. Staff finds that the requested exception is reasonable given the site constraints, open design of the balconies, and that the balconies provide architectural interest along the western facade.

Open Space and Landscaping

The project proposes 44 percent or 18,536 square feet of open area, which complies with the minimum requirement of 40 percent per the Precise Plan. Proposed amenities consist of a spa with lounge seating, an outdoor patio, fitness area, and a fireplace feature with surrounding seating. Landscaped open spaces and pedestrian pathways can be found surrounding the proposed building, softening the hardscapes and providing shade and visual interest.



Figure 4—Landscape Plan

Proposed plant species have low-water-use demands, complying with the City's Water Conservation in Landscaping requirements.

Open areas along the project street frontages are consistent with an urban streetscape, featuring outdoor dining and pedestrian walkways. In-ground plantings in these areas are limited to street trees and intermittent landscape buffers given the minimal building setbacks and the Precise Plan's recommended streetscape design.

Trees

An arborist report was prepared by certified arborist Donald W. Cox to evaluate the existing trees on-site and consider options for preservation. The site has six existing trees, including five Heritage trees. The Heritage trees are in fair to poor condition and are scattered throughout the project site. Some of these trees are located within the proposed excavation area for the garage, the footprint of the proposed building, or in the area where on- and off-site improvements will take place. Because of this, the arborist report recommends removal of one Heritage tree and relocation of two other Heritage trees to the eastern portion of the project site, while retaining the remaining two Heritage trees.

The City arborist has reviewed the report and agrees with the consulting arborist's recommendations. Approximately 17 new 24" box trees will be planted throughout the project site.

The existing canopy coverage of the site is 1 percent. After project construction and the planting of the proposed landscape improvements, the anticipated tree canopy coverage after five years of planting would be 4 percent and at maturity or 15 years would be approximately 11 percent of the site.

Parking

The proposed project provides 131 parking spaces, including 19 spaces at ground level and 112 spaces in the underground garage. The underground garage is proposed to include 96 tandem spaces. These spaces would not be available for self-parking. The applicant has agreed to provide full-time valet service at the proposed hotel, allowing all the spaces, including tandem and stacker parking spaces, to be fully utilized.

The City's parking standards require a total of 167 parking spaces (153 spaces for hotel guests and 14 spaces for 28 employees). A parking study evaluated conditions

at similar hotels in the area as well as the expected effects of the project's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan and found actual parking demand is estimated to be no more than 114 parking spaces on weekdays and 123 parking spaces on weekends; therefore, the applicant's proposal of 131 spaces should provide sufficient vehicle parking.

Public Benefits

The Precise Plan requires Tier 1 developments to provide significant public benefits for all square footage above the base 1.35 FAR. This is provided through community benefit contribution at the rate of \$24.01¹ for net new square footage above 1.35 FAR. The project is proposing a 1.80 FAR, which amounts to a total of \$443,512 in community benefits. The Precise Plan identifies the provision of new affordable housing and pedestrian improvements as the highest-priority area for community benefit contributions. The project public benefit contribution is proposed to go towards the City's Affordable Housing Fund.

Transportation

Traffic Study

A site-specific traffic analysis was prepared by Hexagon Transportation Consultants, Inc., for the proposed project and provides a supplemental traffic analysis which builds upon the El Camino Real Precise Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) certified in November 2014. Potential impacts were evaluated in accordance with standards set forth by the City and the VTA Congestion Management Program (CMP).

In accordance with SB 743, the City has recently adopted standards and thresholds related to Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) in preparation for replacing the level of service (LOS) significance criterion with VMT. According to the CEQA Guidelines, projects within one-half mile of either an existing major transit stop or stop along an existing high-quality transit corridor should be presumed to cause a less-than-significant transportation impact. The project is located within one-half mile of the existing stops along high-quality transit stops such as VTA Routes 22 and 522 running on El Camino Real with 15-minute and 12-minute headways, respectively, during peak commute hours. Therefore, the project is expected to have a less-than-significant impact of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).

¹ El Camino Real Precise Plan Community Benefit rate for Fiscal Year 2019-20.

Supplemental LOS analysis was conducted for informational purposes to understand the intersection-level operating conditions. The LOS analysis at the intersection of El Camino Real and Distel Circle was supplemented with an assessment of the need for signalization of the intersection. The analysis revealed that the traffic volumes on the minor stop-controlled approaches would not satisfy the signal warrant. Based on the significance criteria applied to unsignalized intersections, the project impact on this intersection was determined to be less than significant.

For these reasons, the proposed project was determined not to result in any new or substantially increased intersection impacts than those described in the El Camino Real Precise Plan EIR; would not conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance, or policy established measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system; and complies with the Santa Clara County Congestion Management Program.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

The Precise Plan requires all Tier 1 developments to develop and implement TDM plans to reduce vehicle trips associated with new development consistent with the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program (GGRP). The GGRP requires a 4 percent reduction in peak-hour drive-alone trips. The project applicant has proposed a TDM plan that includes free transit passes for employees and guests, financial incentives to employees who use other transportation modes, and free shuttle services for guests. The project is also conditioned to join the Mountain View Transportation Management Agency (TMA) and remain a member for the life of the project.

The proposed TDM measures are expected to result in a reduction in peak-hour drive-alone trips. To ensure the long-term effectiveness of the TDM plan and its ability to meet the requirements, a monitoring program will be established for the site. Failure to meet the established reduction would result in corrective actions being required and may result in fines.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project qualifies as Categorical Exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 15332 (“In-fill Development Projects”) because it is characterized as an infill development which is consistent with the applicable General Plan and zoning designation; is on a project site that is less than five acres; contains no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species; would not

result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; and the site can adequately be served by all required utilities and public services.

NEXT STEPS

Following a recommendation from the EPC at this public hearing, the project and EPC recommendation will be considered at a City Council public hearing, tentatively scheduled for September 22, 2020.

CONCLUSION

The proposed redevelopment of the project site with a four-story, 75,824 square foot, 153-room hotel and a one-level underground parking structure is consistent with the General Plan and Zoning requirements and would result in a project which furthers the vision and goals for the development of the El Camino Precise Plan area. The site layout and architecture of the building, including colors, materials, and architectural elements, are well-designed and compatible with the surrounding area. Additionally, approval of the project would not result in significant environmental impacts with implementation of the conditions of approval; therefore, the proposed project would not have a significant impact on the environment.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Recommend approval of the project with modified conditions.
2. Refer the project back to the Development Review Committee for additional consideration.
3. Recommended that the City Council deny the project.

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DP/2/CDD
807-09-02-20SR

- Exhibits:
1. Resolution Recommending Approval of the Planned Community Permit, Provisional Use Permit, Development Review Permit, and Heritage Tree Removal Permit with Conditions
 2. [EPC Staff Report – May 3, 2017](#)
 3. [City Council Report – June 6, 2017](#)
 4. Project Plans