

CITY OF SAN MATEO  
Planning Commission  
Wednesday, January 29, 2020  
7:00 PM



COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mike Etheridge, Chair  
Ellen Mallory, Vice Chair  
John Ebner  
Ramiro Maldonado  
Margaret Williams

City Hall Council Chamber  
330 W. 20th Avenue  
San Mateo CA 94403

## MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER

Pledge Allegiance

Roll Call

**Present** 5 – Commissioner John Ebner, Commissioner Ellen Mallory, Commissioner Margaret Williams, Commissioner Ramiro Maldonado and Chair Mike Etheridge

### CONSENT CALENDAR

1. [Planning Commission - Meeting Minutes Approval](#)

Approve the Minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of December 10, 2019.

Commissioner Maldonado motioned to approve the minutes, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Ebner and approved on a voice vote (4-0-1), *Commissioner Mallory abstained*.

2. [2020 Planning Commission Calendar](#)

Adopt the REVISED 2020 Planning Commission Calendar.

Commissioner Ebner motioned to adopt the 2020 Planning Commission Calendar, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Mallory and approved on a voice vote (5-0). *(Noted that Commissioner Williams will not be at the September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting)*

### PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair opened the public comment period. There being no speakers, the public comment period was closed.

### STUDY SESSION

3. [1919 O'Farrell St. Real, SPAR Pre-Application \(PA-2019-038\)](#)

Lorraine Weiss, Contract Senior Planner, presented the project with a Powerpoint presentation. Rocky Shen, applicant and architect from DNA Design and Architecture, presented the project with a slide presentation.

**Public Speaker:** Ray Acevedo, San Mateo, Deborah Leizgold, San Mateo, Arnold Rodman, San Mateo, Drew, San Mateo.

**Public Comment and Questions:** Concerned about significant flooding that occurred during Winter rains in the Corte Bella townhomes. How will the project ensure flooding issues will be mitigated? Concerned with more traffic generated from proposed development coming out of cul-de-sac onto 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue plus traffic associated with Serra High School nearby. Concerned that no guest parking will be provided when already visitors to the area use the Corte Bella townhome guest parking spaces. What will the traffic study cover? Concerned about

traffic generated will impact Isabelle Street and use up homeowner parking spaces on that street. Concerned that the size of project is too big for the site and has residual impacts on surrounding neighborhood. Concerned that the project does not provide enough parking for those that will occupy the new units. Suggests that the project be reduced in size and density. Supports the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan which identifies a multi-path from Highway 92 with access on this site. Suggests that the developer provide a conceptual drawing to show how the bridge and access could be designed. Concerned that the project does not have a second residential elevator.

**Commission Questions:**

Is the applicant willing to develop a 100% residential project? Can some Redwood trees on the west side of the site be retained? Is the residential parking open or secured? Where is the easement that the pedestrian/bicycle bridge would have access and the location of the bridge relative to the heritage Redwood trees? Is there a way to restrict height of parking vehicles along 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue for line of sight distant issues?

**Commission Comments:**

Recommended creating a residential only development and not remove the heritage Redwood trees. Recommended providing vegetation along the strip adjacent to Highway 92 at the northern edge of the project site. Recommended incorporating more open space throughout the project.

Some Commissioners expressed encouragement to have the multi-path bridge located at the project site. Commissioners expressed various opinions about the architectural style. Some indicated that the design has a nice palette of colors and materials. Some Commissioners expressed concern that the architectural style should relate better to the existing residential architecture in the surrounding area and have softer edges and materials. Some Commissioners expressed support for a second residential elevator. A Commissioner recommended native and drought tolerant plantings in the landscape scheme. Recommended incorporating the City's Design Review Consultant's suggestions into the project including but not limited to retaining setbacks, preserving existing heritage trees, providing an enclosed lobby, eliminate commercial component of project, rotate units on the east side for better views. Recommended providing some guest parking spaces on the project site. Suggested that the pedestrian access be softened with different materials and more plantings to make it more appealing.

The Commission is interested in the analysis and results of the future traffic study.

This being a Study Session item, no formal action or vote was taken by the Planning Commission.

4. [2850 South El Camino Real Pre-Application \(PA-2019-021\)](#)

Wendy Lao, Associate Planner, presented the project with a PowerPoint presentation. Yen Chen, applicant and architect from YC+D Architecture, presented the project with a slide presentation.

**Public Speaker:** Eva Wilson, San Mateo; Drew, San Mateo; Stan Konrad, San Mateo.

**Public Comment and Questions:** Concern that underground parking might result in flooding Macy's Furniture store next door. Support of density bonus concession to not construct building up to the 10-foot build-to line. Support building height due to proximity to public transit and demand for housing. Request if local residents can park in the parking garage's employee and retail parking spaces overnight. How to ensure there is adequate parking for leasing office?

**Commission Questions:** Will the ground-floor remain retail in the long-term? Is the existing parking lot underutilized? Can the visitor, employee, and/or retail parking spaces be used for the public? In the vicinity map, is the Hillsdale CalTrain station in the existing or new location?

**Commission Comments:**

Many commissioners supported the density bonus concession to not construct the building up to the 10-foot build-to line. There did not appear to be concerns with the proposed building height; many commissioners were seeking a high-quality community benefit to be provided to the city. One commissioner requested one more below-market-rate unit. One commissioner recommended improving the pedestrian walkway for the public as part of the public amenity. A driveway off El Camino Real does not appear to align with City's General Plan and municipal code. The circulation is clear and equitable for all units. Many commissioners supported the concession to have less than a 20-foot separation between the two driveways along Edison Street. Many commissioners expressed support for the pedestrian walkway between Edison Street and El Camino Real. A commissioner appreciated the landscape plan which helps endangered butterfly species.

Some Commissioners expressed that the proposed design has the potential to meet 40-55-foot building height requirements but needs some improvements. Some Commissioners liked the exterior materials, but the office building appeared too boxy, as though it is not a part of the building. Some Commissioners felt that the overall appearance and corrugated metal appeared too industrial. Recommended a less industrial appearance for the overall building, more wood in certain places (such as office building) to provide warmth, and enlarging the windows on the south side. Recommended softening the elevation along Edison Street, but the upper story is stepped-back so it is not as critical. Recommended an alternative to concrete and asphalt, especially along the fire access lane, to create a more aesthetically-pleasing appearance. Some Commissioners disliked the exterior stairwells; one Commissioner recommended screening the stairwell further. Appreciates landscaping and seating areas. Design fits well with surrounding buildings. Needs improvements in front and back elevations. Concerned with parking along Edison Street. If stairs must be open, recommended adding glass, providing transparency, and be well lit to add sophistication. Recommended adding sun tunnels to provide natural light to all residential units. One commissioner expressed that the building appeared compatible with the multi-family dwellings, but uncertain about the Macy's furniture retail store. Many Commissioners expressed that the building height appeared compatible with surrounding heights.

This being a Study Session item, no formal action or vote was taken by the Planning Commission.

**REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ron MuneKawa, Chief of Planning summarized future projects and upcoming meetings.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.