



CITY OF SAN MATEO

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Agenda Report

Agenda Number: 2

Section Name: STUDY SESSION

File ID: 19-1607

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Ron Munekawa, Chief of Planning
PREPARED BY: Community Development Department, Planning Division
MEETING DATE: September 10, 2019

SUBJECT:
Hayward Park Train Station Parking Lot Pre-Application - 401 Concar Drive (PA-2019-005)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Planning Commission review the proposed project on a preliminary basis, receive public comments, and provide input to the applicant and staff pertaining to the project.

BACKGROUND:

Project Description

The project involves development a 3.18-acre parcel currently serving as a 225 space surface parking lot for Caltrain's Hayward Park Station. The project proposes 189 rental apartments comprised of studio, one-, two-, and three- bedroom units located within two five-story residential buildings totaling approximately 311,396 gross square feet (sf) and includes 232 parking spaces on two levels of above-grade garage parking. A total of 28 below market rate (BMR) units are included in the proposal. The proposal features on-site amenities for its residents including a clubroom, fitness center, two courtyards, an open barbeque area, and collaborative workspace.

The proposed architectural style is contemporary in design, incorporating strong angular forms, articulated vertical bays, modulated facades, and recessed window fenestration. The material choices maintain the modern motif utilizing painted cement plaster, horizontal fiber cement siding accents, aluminum framed storefronts along segments of the street-facing ground-floor, and metal meshed screening along both podium garage levels. Project Plans are included in [Attachment 1](#).

Site Description

The subject site is a 3.18 gross acre triangular-shaped lot located within the San Mateo Rail Corridor Plan's Hayward Park Station Transit Oriented Development Area and is bounded by Concar Drive, Station Park Green mixed-use development, and the Hayward Park Station train platform and railroad tracks. The actual project area proposed for development consists of a 2.81 net acre (or 122,538 sf) portion of the lot which extends to the limits of the property lines with exception to an approximately 16,000 sf portion of land that spans along the west property line. This area demarcated by the lease hold interest line indicated on Sheet L-4 (Conceptual Site Sections) and Sheet C-1 (Site Survey) of the project plans is reserved by the Joint Powers Board as part of a 140 foot right-of-way to operate the railroad as agreed upon in the terms of lease with the applicant.

The project site carries the same General Plan and zoning district designation of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). The project site is surrounded by various building heights and uses in its vicinity including Station Park Green's four- and five-story mixed-use buildings to the east, a highway overpass (State Route 92) and four-story office building (WeWork, Medallia, and Snowflake) to the south and southeast, and railroad tracks and Hayward Park Station's boarding platforms to the west. A Location Map is included as [Attachment 2](#).

Applicable Code and Policy Review

General Plan and Zoning

The General Plan Land Use Diagram designates the project site as TOD, implementing the San Mateo Rail Corridor Transit-Oriented Development Plan (Rail Corridor Plan). General Plan Land Use Policy LU 3.4.: Rail Corridor Transit-Oriented Development Plan also speaks to implementing the Corridor Plan. The property is located in the TOD zoning district which refers to development standards policies and guidelines specified in Rail Corridor Plan.

The project has been designed to generally conform with General Plan and be consistent with the Zoning Code. The formal planning application submittal will be required to provide further clarification and/or documentation as necessary to ensure conformance with all applicable policies and guidelines. A preliminary list of applicable General Plan policies is included in Attachment 3 and compliance with Zoning Code requirements included as Attachment 4 Factual Data Sheet.

San Mateo Rail Corridor Transit-Oriented Development Plan (Rail Corridor Plan)

As noted above, the project is subject to the Rail Corridor Plan which provides the transit supportive development densities, building heights, and design guidelines specific to the Hayward Park Station TOD Overlay Zone. This overlay zone is comprised of three land use and development density zone areas. The project site is located within the Station Area, which was intended to have the most intensive development occur closest to Hayward Park Station, allowing a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 3.0 and residential density up to 50 units per acre. The project proposes a gross floor area ratio (FAR) of 2.54, and lot density of 67.25 units per acre, as provided by the State Density Bonus detailed in the following subsection of this report. The buildings are proposed at a height of 54 feet at the highest point, as measured from the existing grade to the top of the building's highest plate line; the maximum allowable building height is 55 feet.

It should be noted the Rail Corridor Plan provides general design guidelines rather than defined parameters (i.e. minimum and maximum requirements) for most aspects of building design and site planning. The preliminary design generally conforms with the development standards, design guidance, and policies specified for the overlay zone and Rail Corridor Plan overall. The formal planning application submittal will be required to provide further clarification and/or documentation as necessary to ensure conformance with all applicable policies and guidelines.

The Rail Corridor Plan provides policies which guide development within the Plan area and are intended to encourage walking, biking, and transit usage with the larger goal of reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips. The applicant will be required to submit a Transportation Management Plan (TDM) that includes trip reduction strategies and parking management plan to help achieve an overall reduction in new vehicle trips of at least 25 percent Corridor-wide. Additionally, all new development within the TOD zone is required to participate as members of the Rail Corridor Transportation Management Association (TMA), which monitors project compliance of approved TDM plans.

State Density Bonus/San Mateo's Inclusionary Below Market Rate (BMR) Program

California Government Code Section 65915 provides for a density bonus (an increase over the otherwise maximum allowable residential density) for development projects that include specified percentages of affordable housing. The project proposes 28 affordable rate units, including 16 very low income units and 12 moderate income housing units. The project's provision of very low income housing units equates to 11 percent of the of the project's proposed density (141 units) and entitles the project to a 35 percent density bonus and up to two additional development incentives or concessions per the provisions of Government Code Section 65915, the State Density Bonus and Other Incentives Law. The percentage of very low income housing units also satisfies the City's Inclusionary BMR Program requirement that at least 10 percent of rental units in new housing developments of 11 or more units be affordable to very low income families. The 12 moderate income housing units are being provided voluntarily by the applicant.

In addition to a density bonus, this project is entitled to seek 1) incentives or concessions and 2) waivers of development standards. Section 65915(k) defines an "incentive or concession" to include a reduction in site development, zoning code, or architectural design standards, approval of mixed-use zoning, or other regulatory incentives or concessions proposed that result in cost reductions. Based on the provision of affordable rate units the project is entitled to two (2) incentives or concessions. The applicant is currently not proposing to utilize any development incentives or concessions but reserves its

right to do so as necessary. Please see the applicant's Density Bonus Request Letter included in [Attachment 5](#). Government Code Section 65915(e) prohibits cities from applying development standards that will have the effect of physically precluding the construction of a proposed development that qualifies for a density bonus. The applicant has noted they may request a waiver for the following development standard:

- Stormwater Treatment: This project is required to comply with the C.3 requirements of the Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit of which the City of San Mateo is subject to. Provision C.3 requires regulated projects to treat stormwater runoff with low impact development (LID) treatment measures, unless the project is eligible for LID treatment reduction credits. Prior to the City granting LID treatment reduction credits, the applicant and City must establish the infeasibility of treating 100 percent of the runoff with LID treatment measures. The applicant anticipates the project will not be able to provide 100 percent LID treatment, and therefore may formally request a waiver at the time of formal submittal.

Per Government Code Section 65915, the City need not grant a requested development standard waiver if it would have a specific, adverse impact (as defined in Government Code Section 65589.5) upon health, safety, or the physical environment and there is no feasible method to mitigate or avoid the impact. Government Code Section 65589.5 defines a "specific, adverse impact" as a "significant, quantifiable, direct, and unavoidable impact, based on objective, identified written public health or safety standards, policies, or conditions."

Government Code Section 65915 also provides that a city may deny a requested development standard if the waiver would be contrary to state or federal law. Since the City's stormwater treatment requirements are implementing state law, it is staff's opinion that granting a waiver would be contrary to state law.

Housing Accountability Act

This project is subject to the state Housing Accountability Act (HAA), which became law in 2017 and is codified at Government Code Section 65589.5. The HAA was intended by the State Legislature to curb the capability of cities to deny, reduce the density of, or render infeasible housing development projects. For all housing projects, whether affordable or not, the key provision requires that if a housing project complies with all "objective" general plan, zoning, and subdivision standards, the decision-making body may only deny or reduce the density of a housing development project that is consistent with the City's objective development standards if it makes certain findings.

Additional Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Policies

The project will be evaluated for consistency with the City's Pedestrian Master Plan and Bicycle Master Plan.

The Pedestrian Master Plan requires a minimum five foot through width and minimum four-foot wide planter strip for Residential new development. The project as proposed exceeds the minimum through width with a 14 foot multi-use path that continues the Class I multi-use path proposed from Station Park Green to the Caltrain Station. However, the planting strip proposed is not continuous due to the proposed drop off/loading area and to support the existing SamTrans shuttle service stop, as well as obstructions within the 14 foot path which conflict with the intent of providing a safe and usable pathway for bicyclists and pedestrians. These existing sidewalk issues will need to be addressed at the time of formal application. Please see [Attachment 6](#) for an illustrative graphic of a Residential Type C pathway design for new development.

The project proposes to provide a new eight-foot wide multiuse pathway that would connect to the existing Class I bike and pedestrian path that currently terminates at the north end of the parcel. The new connection would provide a safer access route for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling from the Sunnybrae neighborhood onto Concar Drive and Pacific Boulevard, which is consistent with the stated policies of the Rail Corridor Plan (Policy 4.9-4.10) referenced by the Bicycle Master Plan.

Items for Discussion

Site Plan and Parking

As previously noted in this report, the project proposes to develop the existing Caltrain's Hayward Park Station parking lot without replacement of any of the 225 parking spaces available to the public for park-and-ride use of the train station. While the TOD district is supportive of pedestrian and bicycle uses and intended to provide an integrated mix of land uses which support transit use through site design, the Rail Corridor Plan does provide policy language (Policy 6.9) that specifically speaks to Hayward Park Station serving as a local transit hub that accommodates multiple modes of transportation, including park and ride users.

Staff has met with the applicant team on multiple occasions throughout the pre-application process and indicated that the lack of any transit parking is a fundamental issue to be addressed. The lack of publicly available parking conflicts with the intent and stated policies of the Rail Corridor Plan; has the potential for increasing on-street parking in the surrounding neighborhoods adjacent to the site; and does not comport with Caltrain's own 2040 Vision Business Plan which projects increased levels of service and weekday boardings at the station under each of its projected growth scenarios which could result in increased demand for park-and-ride. A parking study performed by a third-party independent consultant will be part of the overall environmental analysis that will be submitted with the formal application and will serve in part to quantify the parking demand at the site.

Regarding parking for the residential project itself, the applicant intends to utilize a by-right provision specified in Government Code Section 65915 (p)(2) which allows for a reduced parking ratio of 0.5 parking spaces per bedroom for new housing developments provided the project includes the maximum percentage of very low income units, is within one-half mile of a major transit stop, and has unobstructed access to a major transit stop without natural or constructed impediments. Based on the reduced parking ratio the project would only be required to provide 141 total spaces of off-street parking. It should be noted the project proposes to provide 232 parking spaces, or 1.23 parking spaces per unit for the exclusive use of the residents.

Site Circulation

The project proposes to divide the residential development into two detached five-story buildings comprised of 115 units in Building A and 74 units in Building B. The two buildings span approximately 900 feet across the lot and are separated by approximately 60 feet between each building's lobby. Staff has concerns regarding the efficiency of the site's circulation when the entirety of the project's parking is located under one building (Building A). In this proposed layout, a tenant living in Building B would park their vehicle in one of the two garage levels in Building A, walk through the drive aisle of the garage and either down the stairs or directly out the lobby, across the uncovered concourse between buildings into Building B and up the stairs or elevator to their unit; in certain scenarios the distance between a given apartment unit and parking stall could approach up to approximately 850 feet. The described path of access would be increasingly inconvenient for someone carrying bags of groceries, walking with infants or children, or moving large or heavy items such as furniture. Utilization of the hammerhead turnout area between buildings would be problematic if used by tenants and delivery services as a defacto loading area, as it is required for firetruck and service vehicle access and turnaround.

Building Design

Specific policy and design guidance for neighborhoods, site planning, and building design are outlined in Chapter 6 - Community Character and Design Guidelines of the Rail Corridor Plan. The guidelines place an emphasis on improving the visibility of Hayward Park Station as a primary design goal, suggesting the use of corner landmarks or other special design features such as vertical design elements, special entries, hardscaped open spaces, and architectural treatments to distinguish the train station in the neighboring community. The outdoor "arrival plaza" located near the southeast corner of the lot presents an opportunity to further refine the current proposal to address this design goal. Policy 6.27 of the design guidelines speaks to incorporating plazas and small parks near Caltrain stations and mixed-use areas for the purpose of creating active and inviting urban open spaces and informal gathering areas near pedestrian circulation routes. The Rail Corridor Plan provides general guidance that "plazas should be no smaller than 5,000 sf." The plaza in the current

design proposal is approximately 1,050 sf in total area exclusive of the abutting sidewalk area along Concar Drive. Additionally, the design guidelines specify that buildings include a clearly defined base, middle and roof or cornice, with the design of the ground floor having the most influence on the pedestrian experience at street level. Further, it states the ground floors of residential buildings should provide visual interest and “Long blank walls lining parking areas should be avoided.” While the pedestrian pathways running parallel to the west and east property lines along Building A are not public streets, they will be trafficked primarily by pedestrians. As such, further attention to the proposed screening of the podium garage walls may be necessary to create a more engaging streetscape at the pedestrian level.

Upon submittal of a formal Planning Application, the project will be reviewed by the City’s design review consultant, Larry Cannon, of Cannon Design Group, for consistency with the General Plan’s Urban Design Element and the Rail Corridor Plan’s Community Character and Design Guidelines, as well as to address concerns expressed by the Planning Commission and comments received from the public pertaining to design.

ENTITLEMENTS

As proposed, the project is anticipated to require the following entitlement approvals:

- Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR) for the construction of 189 residential apartment units; and
- Site Development and Planning Application (SDPA) for the removal of major vegetation from a parcel of land in conjunction with its redevelopment.

Sample Findings for Approval for the above planning application types are included in [Attachment 7](#).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The applicant held a formal pre-application neighborhood meeting on July 31, 2019, in which approximately 30 community members attended. Questions and comments including the following were expressed:

1. Public Parking – Comments regarding where park-and-ride users will park, adequacy of parking for the project’s tenants, how will the project address the increased ridership projected in Caltrain’s business plan?
Affordable Housing – Comments related to whether more affordable housing units can be provided and what the anticipated rents will be?

A summary of the July 31, 2019, formal neighborhood meeting is included in [Attachment 8](#).

Additional public comments submitted into the City are included in [Attachment 9](#). Please note, personal information has been redacted from the correspondence unless prior permission was granted by the individual commenter.

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

At this time, staff is seeking Planning Commission comments and input on the following issues:

1. Site Plan and Parking – Evaluation of two parking design proposals to a) not provide replacement of any of the existing 225 parking spaces currently available to the public for park-and-ride users; and b) locate the entirety of the residential development’s off-street parking under one building (i.e. two levels of podium garage parking).
2. Building Design – The overall architectural style and design approach, including building materials, massing and building forms, as well as the provision of urban open space available for public use.

Following this study session, the applicant will revise the plans as necessary to respond to comments from staff and the Planning Commission and submit a formal planning application.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

In accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21065, the review of a pre-application is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because the Planning Commission is not taking action at this time. An environmental review will be conducted as part of the formal planning application in conformance with CEQA. The following are anticipated special studies to be prepared by a City-approved consultant as part of the comprehensive environmental analysis of the proposed project and site: Traffic Impact Analysis with TDM Plan, Design Review, Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analysis, Noise Report, Photometric Analysis, and any additional studies or reports deemed necessary.

NOTICE PROVIDED

In accordance with Government Code Section 65091 and the City's Municipal Code noticing requirements, this study session was noticed to the following parties more than ten days in advance of the neighborhood and Planning Commission meetings:

- Property owners, residential tenants and business tenants within 1,000 feet of the project site.
- The City's "900 List" which contains nearly 100 Homeowner Associations, Neighborhood Associations, local utilities, media, and other organizations interested in citywide planning projects;
- The City's Planning "Notify Me" email list; and,
- The interested parties list, which includes interested individuals who contacted the City and requested to be added to the project notification list.

ATTACHMENTS

Att 1 - Project Plans

Att 2 - Location Map

Att 3 - General Plan - Applicable Policies

Att 4 - Factual Data Sheet

Att 5 - Density Bonus Request Letter

Att 6 - Pedestrian Master Plan - A.5 Sidewalk Standard

Att 7 - Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

Att 8 - Sample Findings for Project Approval and Denials

Att 9 - Public Comments

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