



Item No: 1
Meeting Date: Jan. 28, 2014

To: Planning Commission

Date: January 22, 2013

Authorized By: Ron Munekawa
Chief of Planning
City of San Mateo

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Subject: PA 13-059 HILLSDALE INN REDEVELOPMENT PRE-APPLICATION, preliminary review for demolition of the existing Hillsdale Inn and construction of 180 residential condominium units. 477 E. Hillsdale Boulevard. San Mateo; APNs: 040-102-580, 040-102-620 and 040-102-630.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission review the proposed residential project on a preliminary basis and provide input to the applicant and staff.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The project site is approximately 3 acres. It is located off East Hillsdale Boulevard at the location of the existing Hillsdale Inn near the 101 or Bayshore Freeway (Attachment 1, Location Map). The existing Hillsdale Inn is an 88 unit motel that was built in approximately 1962. The site is predominately covered with buildings and paving. Several accessory uses also occupy the project site which include Ryan's Sports Bar, Enterprise Rent-A-Car and a self-service coin operated car wash. The project site is immediately adjacent to a variety of uses including commercial and multi-family uses. The property is zoned C2-.5 (Regional/Community Commercial with a Floor Area Ratio of .5). This zoning requires Special Use Permit approval to allow residential units to be developed on the project site in accordance with High Density Multiple-Family Dwelling development standards of the R4 zoning district (MCS 27.24.040).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project includes the construction of 193,586 square feet of residential buildings containing a total of 180 residential units. The existing two-story Hillsdale Inn is to be demolished along with ancillary commercial, office and restaurant uses which also occupy the site. The proposed multi-family buildings range from three to four stories. The proposed units include a mix of studios, and one, two and three bedroom units ranging from 507 to 1,209 square feet. Pedestrian access to the units is proposed via interior corridors within the residential buildings. Vehicle access to the units is proposed via a single access point proposed off E. Hillsdale Court which leads to a ramp down to the below grade parking garage (Attachment 2, Project Plans).

The project includes a below grade parking garage containing 330 parking spaces and 14 surface parking spaces which exceeds the minimum requirement by 3 spaces. The project proposes a circular entry court for visitor parking, drop-off and pick-up.

Since the project is in the conceptual design stage, at this time, details are limited on the architecture but a modern or contemporary architectural style and materials are proposed as the rough sketches, elevations, and inspiration images on the plans indicate. The applicant's project summary also further elaborates on the proposed style and materials (Attachment 3).

Density Bonus: The applicant will be requesting a floor area increase under the State Density Bonus and Other Incentives Law – State Government Code Section 65915. The City, to comply with the state density bonus law (California Government Code section 65915) and to implement the housing element of the San Mateo General Plan, provides increased residential densities and an “incentive or concession” for projects that guarantee that a portion of the housing units will be affordable to very low, low, or moderate-income households, provide senior citizen housing, or include child care facilities.

The project is proposing to provide 10% or 18 of the 180 units to low income residents and as a result is proposing 60 units per acre which is a 20% percent density increase from the 50 units per acre allowed in the R4 zoning. By providing 10% low income units, the applicant is allowed an increase in density and one concession or incentive. The applicant is therefore requesting a higher Floor Area Ratio (FAR) than permitted in the Zoning Code. The C2 zoning allows a .5 FAR while a 1.45 FAR is requested. For comparison the R4 zoning allows a 1.5 FAR. In order to grant the increased maximum Floor Area Ratio as a concession or incentive the project must be consistent with the City's General Plan and any applicable design guidelines (MCS 27.16.060(d)(2)(C)). At this time the applicant has not expressed an interest in utilizing the Statewide Density Bonus Parking Standards.

ISSUES

Residential Use in Commercial Zone: The site is zoned commercial (C2); however, residential uses are allowed with the approval of a special use permit. In recent years the City amended the permitted uses for C1, C2 and C3 zoning districts to require a special use permit for residential uses in certain commercial zones. The discretionary review process helps ensure that overall a proper balance of commercial and residential land uses are maintained throughout the City and that residential uses are permitted in commercial zones on a case-by-case basis when appropriate.

Traffic: A Traffic Impact Analysis will be prepared to examine project impacts including but not limited to analysis of the nearby signalized intersection at Saratoga Avenue and E. Hillsdale Boulevard.

Design Review: The project will require design review by the City's design review consultant. This review will focus on conformance with the City's Urban Design Element and Multi Family Design Guidelines as applicable.

Historic Review: The proposed demolition of the existing Hillsdale Inn will require review by the City's Historic Architect to avoid any significant impact that could be associated with demolishing a historic resource.

Bike and Pedestrian Improvements: The applicant is working closely with the City's Public Works Department staff to ensure proposed bike improvements in the vicinity such as the future highway 101 bike overpass and other improvements in the right-of-way to the sidewalks and on-street parking are carefully planned for and accommodated by the proposed project (Attachment 4).

NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

City Staff attended the applicant's formal neighborhood meeting which was held on December 12, 2013 along with twelve attendees from the neighborhood (Attachment 5, Neighborhood Meeting Minutes). The applicant presented the scope of work proposed and engaged with the attendees in a general question and answer session regarding the proposed scope of work, neighborhood concerns, feedback, and process.

The attendees provided several comments on the following topics:

- Interest in having future public notices mailed to every single-family homeowner and occupant in the Village neighborhood.
- Concern about traffic generated by the proposed project and adequacy of surface parking available on site.

- Concern the project will impact the intersection of Saratoga Ave. and Hillsdale Blvd.
- Concern that the project will make seasonal traffic to and from the Hillsdale Mall worse.
- Concern of overflow parking in the single family neighborhood.

There was a lively and lengthy discussion at the neighborhood meeting in general about the intersection at Saratoga Avenue and Hillsdale Boulevard and its existing conditions which need improving, as well as, concern for how the project will impact existing conditions. City Staff noted that a traffic and parking study while not prepared at this time (during the Pre-Application stage) would be performed as part of the project's next steps. Four letters of public comments have been received to date (Attachment 6).

ZONING AND GENERAL PLAN COMPLIANCE

Zoning Code and General Plan compliance will be reviewed in its entirety during the formal application review process. At this time, during the Pre-Application stage, the proposed project appears to meet zoning code standards detailed on the attached project data form related to setbacks, height, and vehicle parking requirements; with the exception of the proposed density and FAR. The project site is zoned C-2; therefore the C-2 regulations apply with respect to setbacks and floor area. However with a special use permit the R-4 regulations will apply with respect to density. The maximum density permitted in the R4 district is 50 units per acre. The proposed project includes a 20% density increase or 60 units per acre.

As discussed above in the "Project Description" section of the staff report, the State's density bonus law permits additional density and one concession or incentive for projects that guarantee that a portion of the housing units will be affordable to very low, low, or moderate-income households, provide senior citizen housing, or include child care facilities. The concession or incentive requested in this case is for increased maximum Floor Area Ratio (Attachment 7, Data Form). The maximum allowable FAR for the project is governed by the C2 FAR limit of .5; however, the applicant is requesting an FAR of 1.45. For comparison this is less than the maximum FAR for R4 zoning districts which is 1.5.

While the City does not have discretion on the 20% increased density the Zoning Code does require that in order to grant a concession or incentive for increased maximum Floor Area Ratio a project must be consistent with the City's General Plan and any applicable design guidelines.

The applicant submitted a Build It Green Multifamily Greenpoint Checklist that documents a total of 158 targets points which is anticipated to be in compliance with the California Green Building Standards Code (Attachment 8). The CALGreen Code replaces the City's Green Building Ordinance which was rescinded effective January 1, 2014. Green buildings components identified in the Checklist include but are not limited to exceeding Title 24 minimums, the use of drought tolerate landscaping, water efficient plumbing, and low VOC paints and coatings.

The Zoning Code requires project developers to assist with the relocation of existing residential rental tenants displaced by development projects. The Zoning Code requires the following to be provided by the developer to each household prior to any notice of relocation as follows:

- a) A list of available comparable housing within San Mateo County; and
- b) A relocation allowance in cash or check equivalent to three (3) months' rent; and
- c) Other reasonable assistance and allowance, as determined by the final approval body in a condition of approval.

City staff will be reviewing the applicability of Tenant Relocation assistance for the hotel guests further in conjunction with the formal Planning application.

As presently designed, the project requires Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR) for the demolition of existing buildings and uses and the construction of 180 residential multi-family units, a Site Development Planning Application for tree removal; a Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow a residential use in a commercial zone and a Vesting Tentative Map to subdivide the units for sale (note at this time, the project may include apartments. Sample findings for these entitlements are included as Attachment 9.

The General Plan Land Use Diagram designates the project site as commercial but the project would be consistent with the land use if a special use permit was granted by the planning commission to allow a residential land use in a commercial zone district. Applicable General Plan policies have been attached for your reference, review, and feedback (Attachment 10).

NOTICE PROVIDED

In accordance with Government Code section 65090, notice of this hearing was published in the Examiner newspaper 10 days before this Study Session. In accordance with Government Code section 65091 and the City's Municipal Code noticing requirements, this hearing was noticed to the following parties ten days in advance of the December 12, 2013 neighborhood meeting:

- 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 E-Notify 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.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

There are a number of environmental issues that need to be addressed during the formal review of the project including traffic, historic resources, noise, air quality and greenhouse gas

emissions, and any issues raised at the neighborhood meeting. Once additional materials are submitted to complete the application packet, staff will assess the level of environmental review required.

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

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

- Special Use Permit – to allow a residential use in a commercial zone district.
- Site Plan – including site layout of residential buildings, interior courtyards, vehicle access, and below grade parking garage.
- Preliminary Design – architectural style, materials, massing, interior residential entries, and building form.

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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Location Map
2. Project Plans
3. Applicant's Project Summary
4. Sidewalk Standard from Citywide Pedestrian Master Plan
5. Neighborhood Meeting Minutes, dated December 12, 2013
6. Public Comments
7. Project Data Form
8. Green Point Checklist
9. Sample Findings for Approval (SPAR, SDP, SUP, Vesting Tentative Map)
10. Applicable General Plan Policies

CC (AR and attachments (hardcopy) via USPS First Class Mail)

Property Owners
Applicant

CC (AR only (hardcopy) via USPS First Class Mail)

CC (Website link to AR and attachments via Email)

Interested Parties (if email address was provided)