

Planning Commission Agenda Report

April 25, 2018
Item 6.a.

- SUBJECT:** PUD-125
- APPLICANT/
PROPERTY
OWNER:** Mark Taylor
Carpenters Training Trust Fund
- PURPOSE:** Application for Planned Unit Development (PUD) development plan to demolish an existing, approximately 68,000-square-foot building and construct an approximately 87,000-square-foot two-story Carpenter's Training Center (CTC) building and outdoor training and storage yard with associated site improvements. (Public Hearing continued from March 14, 2018)
- LOCATION:** 2350 Santa Rita Road
- GENERAL PLAN:** Retail/Highway/Service Commercial/Business and Professional Offices
- ZONING:** Planned Unit Development – Office/Central Commercial (PUD-O/C-C) District
- EXHIBITS:**
- A. [Draft Resolution Recommending Approval](#)
 - B. [Project Plans dated "Received April 9, 2018"](#)
 - C. [December 13, 2017, Planning Commission Agenda Report](#)
 - D. [March 14, 2018, Planning Commission Agenda Report](#)
 - E. Minute Excerpt of the [July, 26, 2017](#), [December 13, 2017](#), and [March 14, 2018](#), Planning Commission hearings (to follow)
 - F. [Location and Notification Map](#)

RECOMMENDATION

At the Planning Commission's March 14, 2018 meeting, the Commission directed staff to prepare a resolution recommending approval of the project, and as such, the following actions are recommended:

1. Find that the proposed project is consistent with the development density established within the Pleasanton 2005-2025 General Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15183, that additional environment review is not required because there are no project-specific significant effects which are peculiar to the project or its site;
2. Make the PUD findings for the proposed PUD development; and

3. Adopt a resolution recommending approval of Case PUD-125, subject to the conditions of approval listed in Exhibit A, and forward the application to the City Council for public hearing and review.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This item was previously heard by the Planning Commission on Dec. 13, 2017, and March 14, 2018. At the Dec. 13, 2017, meeting, the Commission directed the applicant to consider alternative phasing options to allow the proposed building to be moved closer to the street and continued the hearing to a date uncertain. After the December meeting, the applicant revised their plan to eliminate a proposed office building from their proposal; however, no alternative site design or building location options were submitted and the Carpenter's Training Center building remained at the rear of the site. At the March 14, 2018, meeting, staff was not supportive of the proposed revisions and continued to recommend the building be moved closer to Santa Rita Road. Since the applicant had indicated they were not willing to make this change, staff recommended the Commission deny the application. After discussion and testimony from the applicant, the Commission determined that the placement of the building could be found to be acceptable and directed the applicant to revise the project to add additional landscaping and screening features along the Santa Rita Road street frontage to better screen the proposed parking lot from view, provide public art along the frontage, and to provide additional visual renderings to illustrate the future Santa Rita Road street frontage. Subject to consideration of these revisions, the Commission directed staff to draft a resolution recommending City Council approval of the project with conditions of approval.

BACKGROUND

The proposed project, to construct a new Carpenter's Training Center (CTC) facility to replace an existing facility on the same site, has been under review since March 2017. Process steps to date have included a Preliminary Review application, followed by a formal application in May 2017, Planning Commission workshop on July 26, 2017, and public hearings on Dec. 13, 2017 and March 14, 2018. During the workshop and hearing process, key issues have been the site design of the project, and particularly the location of the new building relative to Santa Rita Road, treatment of the frontage, and parking. Staff's recommendations supported the project overall, but reflected concerns that the new building sited on the southern portion of the property, would not provide a positive street presence along Santa Rita Road, and could be improved with a revised site plan. An iteration of the project presented to the Planning Commission at the Dec.13, 2017 public hearing proposed a secondary office building along Santa Rita Road to be built as a later project phase; however, the Planning Commission expressed concerns about the ability to provide sufficient parking for the additional use, and the uncertain timing for construction of the office building.

Additional information on the prior review process, and changes made to the project during that process, are outlined in more detail in the March 14, 2018 Agenda Report.

March 14, 2018 Public Hearing

For the March 14, 2018, public hearing, the applicant submitted revised plans eliminating the office building and adding four compact parking stalls to increase the total number of parking spaces from 332 to 336. Staff was supportive of the CTC's continued use of this site and its expansion to accommodate the growing needs of the organization and believed the proposed building architecture was attractive and appropriate. However, in staff's view, the site design

and building location were not compatible with surrounding land use patterns in the area and were inconsistent with the General Plan and purposes of the PUD district and, therefore, recommended that the Planning Commission recommend denial of the application. At the conclusion of the hearing, Commission had consensus that with additional landscaping and screening features along the Santa Rita Road street frontage to better screen the proposed parking lot from view, the project could be supported. By a unanimous vote, the Planning Commission continued the public hearing and directed the applicant to revise their plans to enhance the landscaping, public art, and site screening along the Santa Rita Road street frontage and provide new renderings to illustrate the frontage changes. The Commission directed staff to draft a resolution recommending approval of the project with conditions of approval. The March 14, 2018, Planning Commission hearing agenda report and minutes are attached to this report as Exhibits D and E.

The applicant has submitted revised plans and renderings (Exhibit B). The revised plans include new stone “gabion-style” (wire boxes filled with rock – shown in Figure 1 of this report) walls and weathered steel screen panels along the Santa Rita Street frontage, a new art piece, and new visual renderings illustrating the Santa Rita street frontage. In addition, the applicant has reconfigured the entry driveway to allow greater visibility of the building’s focal point from Santa Rita Road.

AREA AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The approximately 8.13-acre project site is currently developed with the existing CTC, including administrative offices, classrooms and vocational training facility. The site has approximately 607 linear feet of street frontage along Santa Rita Road. Additional detail on the area and site is provided in the Dec. 13, 2017, and March 14, 2018, agenda reports, included as Exhibits C and D.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project remains largely as previously proposed and reviewed by the Planning Commission in March 2018, including a proposal to demolish the existing 67,619-square-foot CTC building and construct an approximately 87,000-square-foot two-story CTC building with associated site improvements on an 8.13-acre lot. The new building would be located towards the southern portion of the site, with parking occupying the majority of the northern part of the site that fronts Santa Rita Road. A proposed outdoor training and storage yard would be located in the east corner of the property, behind the CTC.

Since the March 14, 2018, public hearing the applicant has revised the plans to include new gabion walls, weathered steel screen panels, and a new art piece along the Santa Rita Street frontage. Examples of the gabion walls and weathered steel screen panels are shown below in Figure 1. The gabion walls will range in height from 3-feet 6-inches to 5-feet tall. The steel panels will range in height from 3-feet to 4-feet 6-inches tall. The two features will span the entire parking lot frontage along Santa Rita Road, screening the parked cars from view. The art piece is proposed to be a bronze sculpture depicting a carpenter at work located on a raised pedestal with faux wood tile base. The art will be placed in front of three weathered steel panels as depicted further in the report in the rendering within Figure 3.

Figure 1: Streetscape Improvements



In addition to the streetscape improvements, the revised plans have reconfigured the entry driveway to allow greater visibility to the focal point of the proposed building and including a divided landscape planter as shown in Figure 2 below that illustrates the previous site plan and the revised site plan. The modified entry driveway is highlighted in red. The reconfigured drive aisle resulted in a slight change in the parking configuration and stall type (standard vs. compact) make-up; however, the overall number of parking stalls remained unchanged. The new view from the street can be seen in the revised renderings shown in Figure 3.

Figure 2: Site Plan

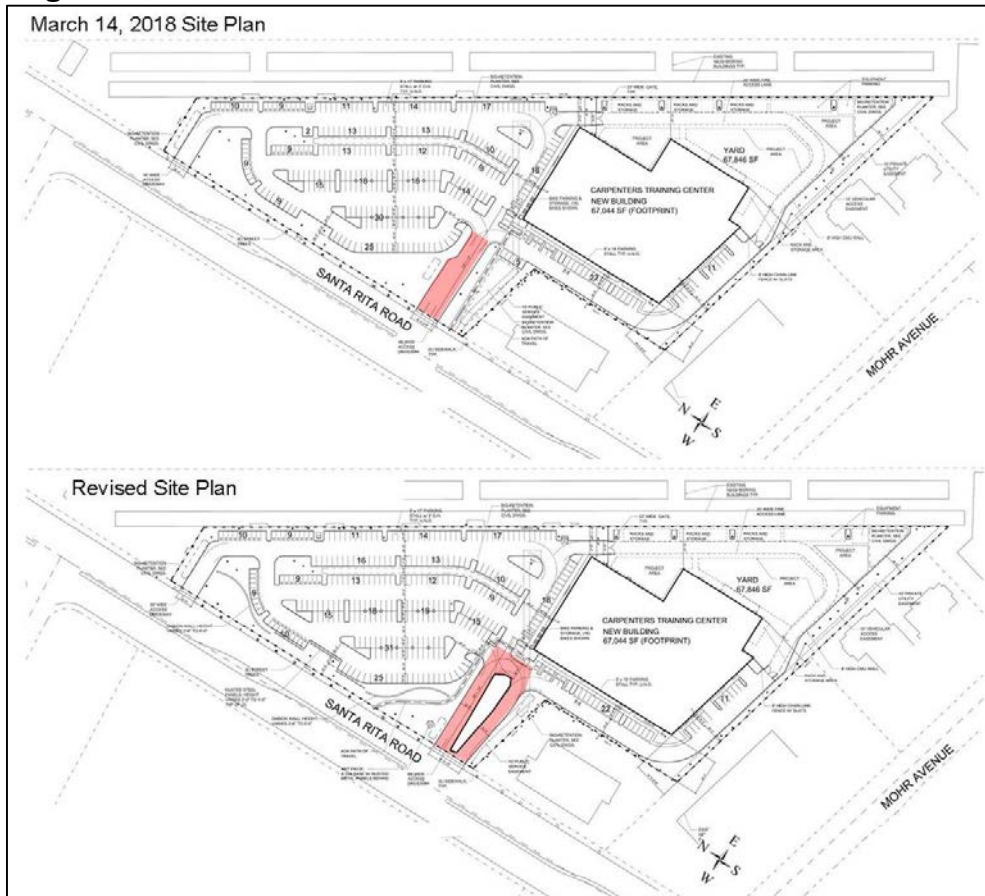


Figure 3: Revised Entry Views



As requested by the Planning Commission, the applicant has submitted additional visual simulations illustrating the revised landscaping and streetscape enhancements at a pedestrian and street level view from Santa Rita Road as shown in Figures 3, 4 and 5.

Figure 4: Pedestrian Street View



Figure 5: Motorist Street View



As proposed, the site would include a total of 336 parking spaces. Parking stalls would include a mixture of standard stalls (290 spaces, 86 percent of total spaces) and compact stalls (46 spaces, 14 percent of total spaces). The attached Planning Commission agenda reports (Exhibits C and D) presents a more thorough discussion of the project areas that have remained unchanged, which include: the site layout; access; circulation, traffic, and parking; architecture and design; floor plan and operations; grading and drainage; and landscaping.

ANALYSIS

Conformance with General Plan

The General Plan land use designation of the subject property is “Retail/Highway/Service Commercial/Business and Professional Offices.” The proposed commercial use is consistent with this land use designation. Below are some of the applicable General Plan Goals, Programs, and Policies:

- Land Use Element Program 2.2: Encourage the reuse of vacant and underutilized parcels and buildings within existing urban areas.
- Land Use Element Policy 4: Allow development consistent with the General Plan Land Use Map.
- Economic and Fiscal Element Goal 2: Sustain the community’s quality of life with a vigorous and diverse economy.
- Economic and Fiscal Element Policy 5: Focus City efforts on supporting and assisting Pleasanton businesses success.
- Community Character Element Policy 15: Encourage new commercial area development and redevelopment, including stand-alone retail buildings, restaurants, and hotels, to incorporate attractive architectural and site-design features.
- Community Character Element Program 15.3: Require developers to include the following features, as feasible, in the development of new and the redevelopment of existing commercial areas:
 - Pedestrian amenities such as landscaping, benches, trellises, fountains, public art, and attractive lighting
 - Orientation of buildings to transit facilities, where applicable
 - Shared parking
- Community Character Element Policy 22: Encourage the installation of public art in residential and commercial developments.
- Community Character Element Program 22.1: In new developments, encourage project applicants to work with the City’s Planning Department and Civic Arts Commission on the installation of art visible from public rights-of-way.

In order to approve the project, it must be found to be consistent with the General Plan, including the site’s land use designation, and applicable General Plan goals and policies. At the March 14 public hearing, staff had identified several general plan policies with which the project may be inconsistent, including the above-listed Community Character Element Policy 1.5, requiring new commercial buildings to incorporate attractive architecture and site design; Program 15.3, requiring pedestrian amenities and orientation of buildings to transit; and Policy 22 and Program 22.1, encouraging public art. The agenda report also referenced general provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, which implements the General Plan, related to fostering harmonious land use patterns, and enhancing the appearance of the city.

However, the Planning Commission did not agree with this determination, instead concluding that the project, with enhancements to the landscaping and street frontage, and given the relative length of the frontage to the entire Santa Rita Road corridor, would not raise these General Plan consistency concerns; staff was thus directed to prepare a resolution for approval of the project, which would include the necessary findings of General Plan conformance.

It should be noted that the General Plan includes a broad range of policies, reflecting and supporting various community values and priorities. These values and priorities are sometimes competing or need to be considered in balance – for example, supporting economic development and new investment, while also controlling the amount, type, character, and location of new development, which might be more costly or restrictive for the developer. A determination of policy consistency can also be to some degree subjective, with, ultimately, the Planning Commission and City Council determining whether the findings can be made, based on facts and information in the record.

The redesigned streetscape modifications have incorporated attractive and well-designed site features along the Santa Rita frontage, intended to meet the policy requirements of the General Plan. However, although additional landscaping and site screening is always encouraged, staff continues to have concern that that the proposed approach does not provide the same consistency or degree of street presence as would be provided by a structure or building along Santa Rita Road, a wide, multi-lane arterial. Staff continues to believe that the proposed site layout would continue to present an overly auto-oriented character along the corridor, replacing the existing street-fronting CTC building with an expanse of parking, and with setbacks inconsistent with the pattern of development along this portion of Santa Rita Road.

Nonetheless, as designed with the inclusion of the enhanced improvements and landscaping, (subject to review of the new landscape plan and exhibits), and based on the Planning Commission's prior direction, the draft resolution includes findings of conformance with the General Plan, including that the project, as revised, appears to be generally consistent with these goals, policies, and programs and the uses on the site are consistent with the land use designation. The project is located along Santa Rita Road, a main city thoroughfare, as revised will provide an enhanced streetscape along Santa Rita Road including landscaping with substantial new tree and shrub plantings, and decorative gabion walls and weathered steel panels that would provide visual interest along the street and would screen the new parking lot. The findings also note that the applicant is also proposing to install a new public art piece, subject to review and approval by the City's Civic Arts Commission prior to installation, along the Santa Rita Road street frontage as required by the General Plan.

In other respects, including building design, parking, and traffic, staff concluded that the project, as conditioned, would meet all General Plan and other related requirements. This analysis is provided in the Dec. 13, 2017 and March 14, 2018 Agenda Reports.

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Section 18.68.110 of the Pleasanton Municipal Code sets forth purposes of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) District and seven separate considerations to be addressed in reviewing a PUD development plan. These purposes and considerations are set forth in the Draft Resolution included as Exhibit A, and include whether the plan would be compatible with

developed properties in the vicinity. For similar reasons to those outlined with respect to General Plan conformance, above, staff concluded that the findings for PUD approval could not be made. However, the Planning Commission did not agree with staff's determination, and, based on the direction provided, the attached draft resolution for approval includes findings of conformance with the PUD considerations.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this application was sent to all property owners and tenants/occupants in Pleasanton within 1,000 feet of the site as shown in Exhibit F. At the time of report publication, staff received no public comments. Any public comments received after publication of this report will be forwarded to the Commission.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The proposed project is consistent with the development density established within the Pleasanton 2005-2025 General Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR) which was adopted and certified in July 2009. From environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15183, Projects Consistent with a Community Plan, General Plan, or Zoning, additional environment review is not required except as necessary to examine whether there are project-specific significant effects which are peculiar to the project or its site. The project involves the re-development of an existing developed property, including replacement of existing buildings and parking areas with new and reconfigured building and parking. A Traffic Impact Analysis and Noise Assessment were prepared for the project and determined the new CTC and expanded operations would not create any significant effects peculiar to the project on- or off-site, or create new or substantially greater impacts compared to those associated with the existing uses on the property. Therefore, no further environmental review is required.

ALTERNATIVES

As described above, staff has provided the attached resolution for Planning Commission consideration, recommending the City Council approve Case PUD-125. However, if the Planning Commission does not find that the revised plans have adequately addressed all concerns, the following alternatives may be considered by the Planning Commission:

1. Recommend the City Council approve PUD-125, reflecting the site plan presented by the applicant and dated April 9, 2018, with conditions requiring modifications to address any outstanding concerns.
2. After review of the new landscape plan and exhibits, find the necessary findings of General Plan conformance could not be made and recommend the City Council deny PUD-125, reflecting the findings and resolutions previously presented to the Planning Commission on March 14, 2018.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Staff is supportive of the CTC's continued use of this site and its expansion to accommodate the growing needs of the organization's vocational training functions and administration in Pleasanton. While the proposed building architecture is attractive and appropriate, in staff's view the site design and building location appears be inconsistent with land use patterns with development in the area, and despite the addition of enhanced landscaping and public art,

staff is concerned that the project would not provide an appropriate degree of street presence along Santa Rita Road.

Nonetheless, as designed with the inclusion of the enhanced improvements and landscaping, (and subject to review of the new landscape plan and exhibits), and based on the Planning Commission's prior direction, the draft resolution, attached, reflects a recommendation for approval to the City Council of Case PUD-125.

Primary Authors: Jennifer Hagen, Associate Planner, 925-931-5607 or jhagen@cityofpleasantonca.gov.

Reviewed/Approved By:

Steve Otto, Senior Planner

Ellen Clark, Planning Manager

Gerry Beaudin, Director of Community Development