

Planning Commission Agenda Report

March 14, 2018
Item 6.a.

SUBJECT: P17-0941

**APPLICANT/
PROPERTY OWNER:** City of Pleasanton

PURPOSE: Application for Design Review approval to demolish an existing fire station and construct an approximately 8,870-square-foot fire station and related site/landscaping improvements for the Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department.

LOCATION: 3200 Santa Rita Road

GENERAL PLAN: High Density Residential

ZONING: RM-2,500 (Multi-Family Residential) District

EXHIBITS:

- A. [Draft Resolution and Conditions of Approval](#)
- B. [Project Plans dated "Received February 15, 2018"](#)
- C. [Arborist report dated January 3, 2018](#)
- D. [Location and Notification Map](#)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt the attached resolution approving Case No. P17-0941, subject to the draft conditions of approval listed as Attachment 1 in Exhibit A.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Pleasanton requests Design Review (DR) approval to demolish an existing fire station and construct an approximately 8,870-square-foot fire station with apparatus bays, living quarters, and related site/landscaping improvements for the Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department (LPFD) at 3200 Santa Rita Rd. New public service facilities require DR approval. As proposed and conditioned, staff believes the proposed design would be an aesthetic upgrade for the site and be compatible with the surrounding buildings. Conditions of approval have been included which will ensure all City requirements are met.

BACKGROUND

Originally constructed in 1969 and renovated in 1989, Fire Station No. 3 faces existing and growing operational deficiencies, code deficiencies, and structural deficiencies ranging from ingress/egress difficulties caused by equipment and apparatus changes over time, interior layout issues such as open dorm style sleeping quarters and restrooms/showers that do not allow for gender separation, accessibility issues, equipment failures such as generators not

running correctly, inadequate lighting, structural integrity issues due to an existing drainage problem, and tree root intrusion into the foundation.

As such, the City proposes to demolish the existing facility and construct a new 8,870-square-foot fire station with apparatus bays, living quarters, and related site/landscaping improvements.

The subject site is zoned RM-2,500 District. This zoning district conditionally allows public service facilities. The existing Fire Station No. 3 currently operates under a previously approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and the new fire station would operate under the same CUP. However, the construction of a new public service facility requires DR approval. Accordingly, this application is before the Planning Commission for consideration.

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The project site is located at 3200 Santa Rita Rd., on the northeast corner of the intersection of Santa Rita Road and W. Las Positas Boulevard, is approximately 0.67 acres in area, is generally rectangular in shape, and is relatively flat. Figures 1 and 2 provide an aerial photograph and street-scene view of the subject site and the existing Fire Station No. 3. The existing single-story building, which is accessible by three driveways (two on Santa Rita Road and one on W. Las Positas Boulevard) is approximately 6,195 square feet in area and is oriented toward Santa Rita Road; however, the building is prominent along the W. Las Positas Boulevard frontage. Additionally, a small detached accessory building is located towards the rear of the building along W. Las Positas Boulevard. Five- to six-foot tall wood perimeter fencing is installed along the north, south, and east sides of the project site. 13 mature trees are scattered throughout the project site. Six of the existing trees, a Shammel Ash, a Monterey Pine, an Aleppo Pine, a Hackberry, and two Raywood Ash, qualify as Heritage Trees. The immediately adjacent uses include multi-family residential units, commercial uses (Santa Rita Square shopping center), and Stanford Healthcare.

PROPOSED PROJECT

Site Plan/Layout

The existing building, all accessory structures, landscaping (including all, except one, on-site trees), hardscape, and any other existing site improvements (excluding perimeter fencing along the northern and eastern property lines, but including fencing along W. Las Positas Boulevard) would be demolished to accommodate the project. An approximately 8,870-square-foot, two-story fire station with apparatus bays, living quarters, and related site/landscaping improvements, including an outdoor patio partially surrounded by an approximately five-foot tall solid wall, would then be constructed to replace all existing improvements. Please refer to Figure 3 for the site plan. Complete project plans are included as Exhibit B.

The on-site circulation would generally remain unchanged. The two existing driveways on Santa Rita Road would be replaced by one wider consolidated driveway shifted slightly north on the site from its current location and the existing driveway on W. Las Positas Boulevard would remain in the same location. Fire apparatus/vehicles would continue to enter the project site from the Santa Rita Road driveway and exit the project site via the driveway on W. Las Positas Boulevard. Employee vehicles and parking would continue to be accessed via the driveway on W. Las Positas Boulevard. A new driveway and parking lot is proposed on/along W. Las Positas Boulevard, to the west of the existing driveway.

A total of 11 on-site parking spaces would be provided (15 spaces for existing facility); eight of the spaces would be oriented along the rear or eastern property line of the project site and three of the spaces (including one accessible space) would be located within the new parking lot along W. Las Positas Boulevard. Four of the spaces within the rear parking lot would be designated for Fire Department personnel and all remaining spaces would be for public use.

Two detached accessory buildings would be constructed near the rear or eastern property line of the project site. One of the accessory buildings, located at the northeast corner of the project site, would house an emergency standby generator and an above-ground fuel tank while the other accessory building, located at the southeast corner of the project site, would serve as the trash enclosure for the project. The existing 6-foot tall wood fence along the northern and eastern property lines would remain.

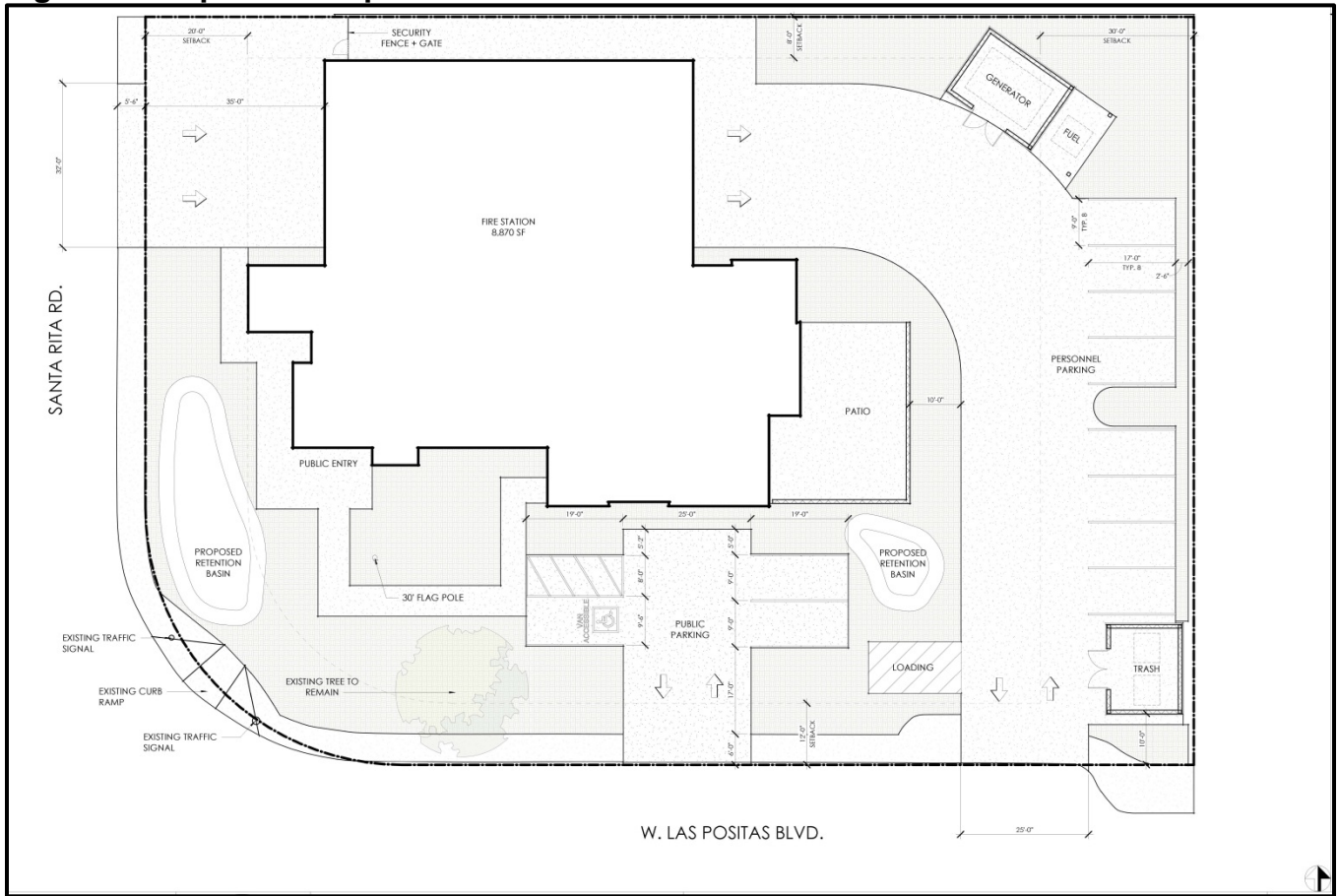
Figure 1: Aerial photograph of subject parcel



Figure 2: Street-scene view of subject parcel



Figure 3: Proposed site plan



Architecture

The architectural design for the proposed building and accessory buildings (Figures 4 and 5) would be contemporary in nature, but incorporates exterior finishes similar to those on existing buildings within the immediate vicinity including red brick (Stanford Healthcare), smooth stucco (Santa Rita Square shopping center), and real wood or simulated wood siding (Starbucks on Santa Rita Road (real reclaimed wood)). The design is typified by simplistic square and rectangular forms, clean lines, and flat roof elements with massing broken up by material changes, wall plane articulation, score lines, and metal trim caps. Building colors include red-colored brick, off-white stucco and gray trim/accents, and brown simulated wood siding.

Landscaping

New interior/perimeter landscaping would be installed along the front, sides, and rear of the proposed building and project site. The landscape plan includes a tree/plant palette of native and non-native species that are primarily drought tolerant, as well as some hardscape features, including all new concrete/paving for the existing and new driveway/parking lot surfaces.

Figure 4: Proposed building elevations



Figure 5: Proposed renderings

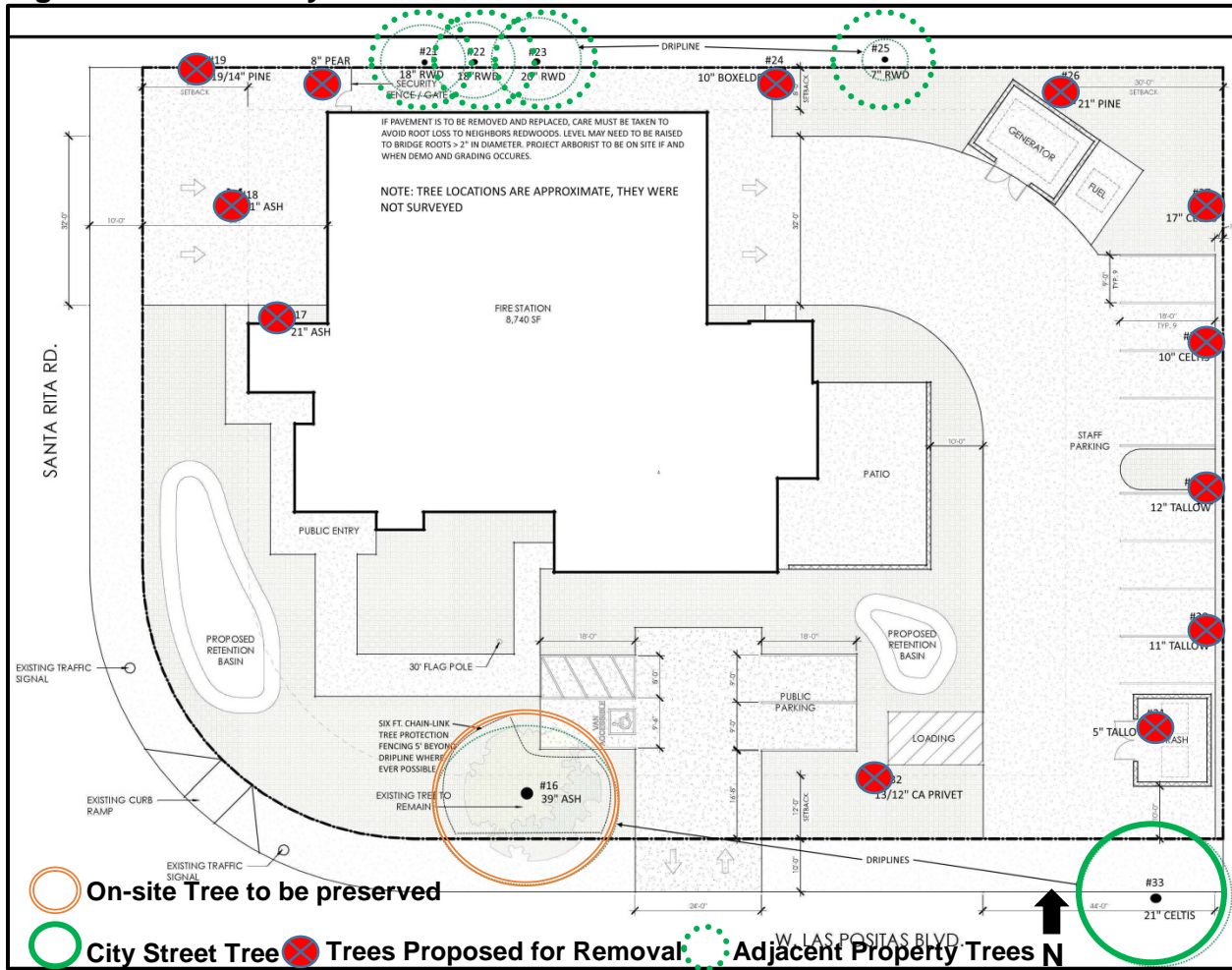


Trees / Tree Removal

An arborist report prepared for the project surveyed all trees measuring six inches and greater in diameter, within and adjacent to the project site. A total of 18 trees, comprising 10 species were surveyed (please refer to Exhibit C for the tree report and Figure 6 below for the tree survey map). Of the trees surveyed, 13 are on-site; with the remaining five being off-site either within the public right-of-way (one City street tree – Tree No. 33) or on the neighboring property to the north (tree Nos. 21, 22, 23, and 25). Six trees (Nos. 16, 17, 18, 19, 26, and 27) of the 13 on-site trees surveyed are Heritage-sized (as defined by the Pleasanton Municipal Code (PMC)).

Due to conflicts with building pad locations, driveway locations, and/or within areas where grading and/or infrastructure is proposed, 12 of the 13 on-site trees, including five Heritage-sized trees (Tree Nos. 17, 18, 19, 26, and 27), are proposed for removal (see Figure 6). Heritage-sized Tree No. 16, which is a Shammel Ash, would be preserved. The tree species to be removed include two Raywood Ash (Tree Nos. 17 and 18), a Monterey Pine (Tree No. 19), a Bradford Pear (Tree No. 20), a Box Elder (Tree No. 24), an Aleppo Pine (Tree No. 26), two Hackberry (Tree Nos. 27 and 28), three Tallow (Tree Nos. 29, 30, and 31), and a Privet (Tree No. 32). All trees on the neighboring property to the north (Tree Nos. 21, 22, 23, and 25), including three Heritage-sized trees, would be preserved and would be unaffected by the proposed project. The Heritage-sized City street tree (Tree No. 33) would also be preserved.

Figure 6: Tree survey



SCOPE OF PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

The DR process is intended to preserve and enhance the city’s aesthetic values and to ensure the preservation of the public health, safety, and general welfare. Planning Commission review and approval is required for various categories of projects including new structures within all zoning districts except the PUD District. PMC Section 18.20.030 outlines the scope of Design Review, indicating that the reviewing body shall review “site plans, landscape plans, building architecture, and other such plans as may be required to preserve and enhance the city’s aesthetic values and to ensure the preservation of the public health, safety, and general welfare.” Note that, even though a proposed project may comply with applicable zoning standards (e.g. setbacks, height limits) the design review process allows the reviewing body to approve conditions which may be more restrictive than normal Code standards, to ensure that the above objectives are met. As outlined in Section 18.20.030, the reviewing body’s scope of review shall include (but not be limited to) the following design criteria:

- Preservation of the natural beauty of the city and the project site’s relationship to it
- Appropriate relationship of the proposed building to its site, including transition with streetscape, public views of the buildings, and scale of buildings within its site and adjoining buildings

- Landscaping designed to enhance architectural features, strengthen vistas, provide shade and conform to established streetscape
- Appropriate relationship of the proposed building and its site to adjoining areas, including compatibility of architectural styles, harmony in adjoining buildings, attractive landscape transitions, and consistency with neighborhood character
- Preservation of views enjoyed by residents, workers within the city, and passersby through the community
- Architectural style, as a function of its quality of design and relationship to its surroundings; the relationship of building components to one another/the building's colors and materials

STAFF REVIEW/ANALYSIS

Green Building/ Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Compliance

Municipal Code Section (PMC) 17.50.030(K) defines any City-sponsored project as a “covered project” that must meet the current minimum LEED certified rating requirements. Compliance with the provisions of this Section has been included within the recommended conditions of approval for the project listed as Attachment 1 in Exhibit A.

Conformance with Zoning Standards

The property is zoned RM-2,500 (Multi-Family Residential). As shown in Table 1 below, the proposed project would conform to the applicable RM-2,500 development standards.

Table 1: City Zoning Requirements vs. Proposed Project

Site Development Standard	City Requirements	Proposed Project
Floor Area Ratio	50% max.	30.2%
Building Height	30 feet max. ¹	27 ft.
Setbacks		
<i>Front</i>	20 ft. min.	20 ft.
<i>Side / Aggregate Between the Two Sides</i>	8 ft. min / 20 ft. min.	8 ft. / 59 ft.
<i>Street Side</i>	16 ft. min.	51 ft.
<i>Rear</i>	30 ft. min.	70 ft.
Parking	4 spaces ²	11 spaces (4 employee spaces + 7 public spaces)

1. The height of a structure, as defined by the PMC, is measured from the average elevation of the natural grade of the ground covered by the structure to the highest point of the structure or to the coping of a flat roof.

2. One space per employee is required and a maximum of four employees on-site per shift is proposed.

Traffic, Circulation and Parking

As previously described, the on-site circulation would generally remain unchanged. The two existing driveways on Santa Rita Road would be replaced by one wider consolidated driveway shifted slightly north on the site from its current location and the existing driveway on W. Las Positas Boulevard would remain in the same location. One new driveway on W. Las Positas Boulevard is proposed to the west of the existing driveway. Staff has reviewed the project plans and believes the current and proposed circulation is adequate and would not create any adverse impacts on the transportation network given the small amount of daily trips, as well as

the existing AM/PM Peak trips generated by the existing fire station, and which would not change or increase with the proposed project. Additionally, staff believes adequate spacing has been provided between the new driveway on W. Las Positas Boulevard and the nearby intersection of that street with Santa Rita Road.

As indicated in Table 1, the project would provide 11 parking spaces where only four spaces are required.¹ Accordingly, a surplus of seven parking spaces would be available on-site at any given time which staff believes is adequate to address any public/visitor demand.

Architectural Design, Materials, and Colors

The proposed building is contemporary in style and would generally use high quality and durable finishes including brick, smooth stucco, simulated wood siding, metal trim caps, and tinted glass. In staff's view, the applicant has provided sufficient articulation on all building elevations to break up the two-story façades and provide visual relief. The proposed building height is also compatible with those of the surrounding neighborhood, which include a mix of one-story and multi-story healthcare, commercial, and residential structures. Staff also believes that the materials and colors are appropriate for the architectural style of the building. Overall, staff believes that the design of the proposed building is attractive and would complement the existing buildings in the area.

Staff notes the proposed building design underwent an extensive iterative process that included review of several preliminary design concepts with options including pitched roof designs and alternative materials prior to selecting the proposed design as the preferred option.

Staff believes it is also important to note that the proposed building height would be increasing to a maximum of 27 feet and would go from one-story to two-story. While two-story structures and the removal of existing mature perimeter landscaping can sometimes create privacy impacts for surrounding uses, such as the residential uses to the north and east in this case, staff believes the design and window placement of the proposed building are sensitive to this issue and privacy concerns should be minimized. For example, except for the stairwell window on the east elevation of the proposed building, there are no two-story windows on the north or east elevations that face the adjacent residential uses; thus, there would be limited sight lines from the proposed building onto the adjacent residential uses.

Grading and Drainage

Minor grading would be needed to prepare the new building pad and associated site improvements. As proposed, stormwater would be treated on-site with landscaped bioswales and then conveyed into the local stormdrain system per City requirements. Accordingly, the project would meet the City's grading, drainage and stormwater requirements.

Landscaping and Trees

A landscape plan has been provided which includes a variety of trees, shrubs, and groundcover for the site. The landscape plan would assist in softening the appearance of the proposed building and provide an attractive streetscape. Staff believes the proposed landscaping adequately mitigates the trees to be removed and is appropriate for the subject

¹ (1 space per employee per shift times 4 employees per shift = 4 parking spaces required minimum).

parcel. The proposed landscaping would be compatible with the surrounding parcels as it incorporates a similar plant palette found throughout the City.

Signs

Although signage is shown on the project plans (Exhibit B), signage is not under review with this Design Review application. All new signs would be required to obtain Sign Design Review approval under a separate application.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

Notices of this application were sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the site. Staff has provided the location and notification map as Exhibit D for reference. At the time this report was published, staff had not received any public comments regarding the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have the substantially same purpose as the structure replaced are categorically exempt (Section 15302, Replacement or Reconstruction) from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

ALTERNATIVES

As previously noted, staff recommends the Planning Commission approve the project, as proposed, subject to conditions of approval. However, the Planning Commission could consider the following alternative:

1. Direct modifications to the project design, to be incorporated as further conditions of approval or, or that would be brought back to the Planning Commission for review at a continued public hearing. Note that, due to the unique programming and functional needs of the fire station, it would be difficult to substantially modify the overall size or massing of the proposed building without substantially revising the program. Therefore, if necessary, design changes would need to be limited to the materials/exterior finishes, roof forms, or landscape.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

The project would replace a dated and functionally obsolete fire station building with a new state-of-the-art building to provide emergency services to City residents and businesses. The project would not adversely affect the site or surrounding uses and would enhance the site's appearance from the public right-of-way and adjacent properties. Staff supports the project and recommends the Planning Commission approve the project as proposed.

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