



## Legislation Text

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**File #: 22-678, Version: 1**

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Report regarding consideration of a Use Permit, Design Review, Tentative Parcel Map and Transportation Demand Management Plan and Addendum to the 2009 Environmental Impact Report to subdivide the property to create a total of three parcels, construct one new multi-family residential building containing 183 residential units, three Office/R&D buildings totaling approximately 750,000 square feet, ancillary uses and associated parking at 180 El Camino Real (Assessor's Parcel Number 014183110) in the El Camino Real Mixed Use (ECRMX) Zoning District. *(Billy Gross, Principal Planner)*

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission conduct a public hearing and take the following actions:

1. Adopt a resolution making findings and recommending that City Council make a determination that the 180 El Camino Real Residential/R&D Project is fully within the scope of environmental analysis in the 2009 Environmental Impact Report and that the 2022 Addendum to the EIR is the appropriate environmental document for the Project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15162 and 15164; and
2. Adopt a resolution making findings and recommending that City Council approve the entitlements request for Project P21-0126, including Use Permit (UP21-0013), Design Review (DR21-0045), Transportation Demand Management Plan (TDM21-0012), and a Tentative Parcel Map (PM21-0003), subject to the draft Conditions of Approval.

### **MOTIONS FOR THE COMMISSION TO ADOPT STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

- (1) Move to adopt the resolution recommending adoption of the Addendum.**
- (2) Move to adopt the resolutions recommending approval of planning entitlements.**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The subject site is the former Safeway Shopping Center, which is a 14.5 acre lot with frontages on El Camino Real, South Spruce Ave and Huntington Ave. In December 2020, the Planning Commission approved entitlements that included the demolition of the previously existing 145,000 square foot shopping center, subdivision of the lot into two parcels (a 3.28-acre development parcel and an 11.24-acre remainder parcel), and development of approximately 74,600 square feet of commercial uses, including a new Safeway store and ancillary commercial uses on the development parcel. The shopping center building has been demolished, and construction on the Safeway project is scheduled to begin in the coming months.

Steelwave has submitted an entitlement application to develop a mixed-use, multi-family residential and life

sciences campus project (180 ECR Residential/R&D Project) on the 11.24-acre remainder parcel. This project site is within the El Camino Real Mixed Use (ECRMX) Zoning District and is located approximately 1/2 mile from the San Bruno BART station. The proposed project includes 183 residential units, approximately 750,000 square feet of Office/R&D uses and 25,000 square feet of other supporting non-residential area, and a parking structure. The project is designed as a transit-oriented development, and includes pedestrian, bicycle, and a series of publicly-accessible open space amenities. The project architecture and site plan are intended to activate the street level along both El Camino Real and South Spruce Ave. The applicant is requesting a height and floor area ratio increase and is proposing a range of amenities and community benefits per the ECRMX incentive program.

The San Mateo City / County Association of Governments (C/CAG) reviewed this project for consistency with the San Francisco International Airport Land Use Consistency Plan (ALUCP) and found the project to be inconsistent with the policies of the 2012 ALUCP, due to its location within the airport noise contours. The project is requesting City Council approval through the Local Agency Override process, consistent with Public Utilities Code Section 21675.1(d). While the Planning Commission is not tasked with making a recommendation to the City Council on the Override process, this staff report contains a description of the ALUCP policies and process, to provide project background and context.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

### ***Site Overview***

The project site is an 11.24 acre, irregularly-shaped site that will ultimately comprise the addresses of 180-188 El Camino Real and 415 South Spruce Ave (Assessor's Parcel Number 014-183-110). The project site formerly contained an approximately 145,000 square foot shopping center; the vacant building was demolished earlier this year. A new Safeway and ancillary commercial uses were entitled in late 2020 on the new 3.28-acre parcel located at the intersection of El Camino Real and South Spruce Ave.

The property is surrounded by See's Candies warehouse/retail center and single-family residences to the north, across South Spruce Ave; two office buildings to the northeast; commercial and light industrial uses to the east, across Huntington Ave; commercial businesses and a soon to be constructed multi-family residential project to the south; and commercial businesses and single-family residences to the west, across El Camino Real.

The City of South San Francisco General Plan designates the proposed project site as El Camino Real Mixed Use, and the site is zoned El Camino Real Mixed Use (ECRMX). The project site is also located within the San Francisco Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan Area.

### ***Project Description***

The applicant, Steelwave, is seeking entitlements to develop a mixed-use residential and Office/R&D development (180 ECR Residential/R&D Project). The 11.24-acre remainder parcel would be further subdivided into three separate parcels.

- Lot B, with frontage on South Spruce Ave, would be developed with a seven-story, 68 feet tall multi-

family residential building with 183 rental units. The residential building would contain 9 studio apartments, 109 one-bedroom units, 54 two-bedroom units and 11 two-bedroom plus units. The project includes 161 residential parking spaces and 126 bicycle parking spaces

- Lot C, with frontage on El Camino Real, would be developed with three six-story, 108 feet tall Office/R&D buildings with a total area of approximately 750,000 square feet (sf) for life science uses and 25,000 sf for ancillary commercial/retail uses. The buildings would be clustered around a central courtyard that is accessed from the ground floor of each building. Building 1 would also include a basement parking level with 87 parking spaces.
- Lot D would be developed with a seven-story, 82 foot tall parking structure with 1,475 parking spaces for the life science and residential uses.

The proposed site design, architectural details, and landscaping plans are all detailed in the project plans (Exhibit B to the Associated Entitlements Resolution).

### ***Building Architecture***

The 180 ECR Residential/R&D project's architectural design is intended to differentiate each of the separate components of the campus but still have a coordinated palette, including the previously entitled Safeway project. The residential building is articulated with two materials for visual depth and vertical balcony zones and includes the incorporation of the wood-tone material to relate to the adjacent Safeway facades. The R&D buildings reflects a contemporary design that includes a combination of materials and elements, adding character to the commercial corridor. The El Camino Real façade of Building 1 is the most prominent visual of these three buildings, and incorporates a three-part stepped massing and overhangs aligned with the street. The podium of this building has also been articulated into two masses with a central crossing, creating an interesting street presence on El Camino. Building amenities are located at the ground floor and will serve to help bring pedestrian interest along the street edge. Landscaping is also incorporated on the ground level, on the third story, and in the mechanical roof screens to provide visual relief on multiple levels.

### ***Landscaping and Open Space***

Along the frontages of the property, the El Camino Real and South Spruce Ave streetscapes have been designed to be consistent with the previously entitled Safeway project to create a unified palette, but also include unique aspects to differentiate each of the separate uses. These landscaped frontages will also draw into the interior of the site, where a series of outdoor spaces are organized for public access through the site. The most significant open space is the "Front Courtyard", which creates a large semi-public outdoor open space between Buildings 1 and 2 that faces the Safeway store across the internal driveway, providing open space that can be used by campus employees and Safeway patrons, as well as outdoor seating for the cafeteria in Building 1. As you move into the interior of the R&D campus, the next open space is "the Canyon", with informal groves of trees along the meandering spine between Buildings 2 and 3 to contrast with the openness of the Front Courtyard and leading to the next space, the "Back Courtyard". This space creates a semi-private outdoor open space between Buildings 2 and 3 and the parking structure. Each of the R&D buildings also includes second story terraces that create outdoor open spaces for the building tenants that overlook the surrounding landscape. The residential building has its own internal open space for use by all residential building tenants. All of the buildings in the

project are tied together through landscaping and open space, creating pedestrian and bike-friendly connections throughout the mixed-use campus.

The project will replace and widen the sidewalks along the project frontages on El Camino Real and South Spruce Aves. Additional pedestrian and public realm improvements include new street trees along both street frontages, landscaping improvements, trash receptacles, public bicycle racks and seating areas.

### ***Circulation and Loading***

The overall site has direct access from three surrounding roads. El Camino Real will provide access to two internal streets, the first which is an existing east-west road along the southern boundary, which will access the loading areas of Buildings 1 and 2 and the southern entrance to the parking structure, and the second which is a new east-west roadway that will bisect the site, with Safeway and the residential building to the north and the R&D buildings, amenities and parking structure to the south. Huntington Ave connects to two access driveways along the eastern perimeter of the site. These access points provide the most direct connection to the residential building and to the parking structure. South Spruce Ave provides access to the previously entitled Safeway parcel.

The Project site supports pedestrian activity by providing continuous sidewalks around the perimeter of each Project building that connect all uses to the shared open spaces and to the surrounding street network. The Project proposes a wide, high visibility crossing where the central courtyard connects to the Safeway along the northern internal street. Pedestrian and bicycle connections to local streets are provided via access points on El Camino Real, and Huntington Ave, and a separate pedestrian entrance to Building 1 is provided off El Camino Real.

The location proximate to the San Bruno BART station, the El Camino Real SamTrans corridor, and adjacent to several retail centers provides an excellent opportunity to develop this site as a transit-oriented development, with an emphasis on bicycle and pedestrian connections to BART and surrounding shops, restaurants and services. The applicant has also proposed significant streetscape improvements to El Camino Real and South Spruce Ave to enhance the connection to the BART station, including widened sidewalks and landscaping. The applicant has also submitted a draft TDM plan to support alternate transportation modes and reduce single-occupancy car trips (discussed in detail later in this staff report).

The project contains a combined loading area for Buildings 1 and 3 accessed from the southern internal roadway. The loading area for Building 2 is accessed from the northern internal roadway and is adjacent to the parking structure. Loading for the residential building is provided in the same area as the residential garage access. The applicant has been working closely with South San Francisco Scavenger to design trash removal areas and as a Condition of Approval will be required to receive a will-serve letter from South San Francisco Scavenger prior to receiving building permits.

### ***Entitlements Request***

The project is seeking the following entitlements:

- Conditional Use Permit for:
  - Height increase from 80 feet to 108 feet per incentive program
  - Floor area ratio increase from 2.5 to 2.84 per incentive program
  - Parking reduction
  - Exception to allow a building dimension greater than 125' (for Building 1)
  - Hours of operation for the R&D Buildings between 12:00 midnight - 6:00 a.m.
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program
- Design Review
- Tentative Parcel Map
- Affordable Housing Agreement
- Approval of an Addendum to the 2009 South El Camino Real GPA EIR
- Request for the City Council to approve the project through the Local Agency Override Process (discussed in this staff report for informational purposes only)

## ZONING CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS

### El Camino Real Mixed-Use Zoning District

In 2010, the City Council adopted the South El Camino General Plan Amendment (GPA), Zoning Ordinance Amendments and Design Guidelines to create the El Camino Real Mixed-Use (ECRMX) district. The purposes of the ECRMX District are:

- Develop the South El Camino area as a vibrant corridor with a variety of residential and nonresidential uses to foster a walkable and pedestrian-scaled environment;
- Ensure that active uses are located along and oriented towards El Camino Real to provide an engaging pedestrian-scaled environment;
- Ensure that new mixed-use development is designed to minimize traffic and parking impacts on surrounding residential neighborhoods and is appropriate to the physical characteristics of the site and the area where the project is proposed;
- Offer additional opportunities for housing for residents as well as improve access to a greater range of facilities and services for surrounding residential neighborhoods; and
- Encourage the development of mixed-use projects that incorporate environmentally sensitive features and amenities to benefit the public as well as meet the needs of project occupants.

In September 2021, the ECRMX zoning district was amended to no longer allow R&D uses within the corridor, with the following exception in footnote 9 to Table 20.090.002: “Research and development uses may still be established if a development project submits a pre-application prior to the effective date of the ordinance enabling this note nine and follows with a complete application within 180 days of that effective date.” The applicant submitted a pre-application on August 23, 2021, prior to the October 8, 2021 effective date of the ordinance, and was deemed complete on April 1, 2022, within 180 days of the ordinance effective date.

The proposed 180 ECR Residential/R&D project will provide a transit-oriented mixed-use development that

will revitalize an underutilized and vacant property; provide active street frontages and open space amenities; focus on pedestrian and bicycle linkages; and establish a high-quality design precedent in the South El Camino area, consistent with the goals of the General Plan and Zoning District.

### ***Height and Floor Area Ratio Increases***

The ECRMX zoning district includes maximum base development standards for height and floor area ratio (FAR), as well as increases to these standards with an incentive program, approved with a Conditional Use Permit:

- FAR: 2.5 base / 3.5 with incentives
- Building height: 80 ft. base / 120 ft. with incentives

The 180 ECR Residential/R&D project proposes a total Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.97 across the entire remainder parcel. Subject to the proposed parcellation, the Residential parcel would have a FAR of 2.5, consistent with the base FAR, and the R&D parcel would have a FAR of 2.84, which would require approval of the incentives program. In regard to building heights, the residential portion of the project has a building height of 68 feet, consistent with the base height, and the maximum height of the R&D portion of the project is 108 feet, which would require approval of the incentives program.

SSFMC Section 20.090.004 (El Camino Real Mixed-Use Development Standards) provides a tiered system for the review and approval of increased FAR and height:

1. .5 FAR and/or 20 ft. of height for the incorporation of TDM measures
2. .5 FAR and/or 20 ft. of height for the following, subject to Planning Commission approval:
  - a. High quality, innovative design and product type, and maximum provisions for pedestrian and bicycle use.
  - b. Off-site Improvements, which may include off-site amenities and/or infrastructure (other than standard requirements and improvements) such as funding for public safety facilities, libraries, senior centers, community meeting rooms, child care or recreation, or new or enhanced public spaces.
  - c. Green building measures over and above the applicable green building compliance threshold required pursuant to Title 15 (“Building and Construction”) of the South San Francisco Municipal Code.

The proposed FAR of the R&D parcel is less than 0.5 above the base maximum, and therefore can be accommodated by the incorporation of TDM measures per (1) above. The proposed height increase from the base allowed height of 80 feet to a maximum height of 108 feet is more than a 20 foot increase and therefore must meet the requirements of both (1) and (2) outlined above. Following is a brief summary of the benefits package that is proposed to allow the increased FAR and height:

- TDM plan to meet the requirements of (1) (discussed further in detail in the TDM section of this staff report), designed to achieve a 40% peak hour trip reduction.

- Community benefits package of ~\$2,400,000 for use towards a new community facility (Fire Station, for example) and to complete median improvements on El Camino Real between South Spruce Ave and Country Club Dr. (in keeping with the recent median improvements that were installed between South Spruce Ave and Noor Ave).

Staff has reviewed the proposed benefits package and believes that they are sufficient to recommend approval of the proposed FAR and height increases and will provide benefits to the project and to the community.

### ***Additional Development Standards***

The ECRMX zoning district also includes a variety of general development standards and supplemental regulations that apply to the proposed project. The attached conformance checklist (Associated Entitlements Resolution, Exhibit C) verifies project compliance. The applicant is seeking exceptions from the ECRMX development standards, discussed in detail below.

#### ***Building Length and Separation Exception***

SSFMC Section 20.090.006 (A) (ECRMX Supplemental Regulations, Building Length and Separation) requires the maximum dimension of the portion of a building above 45' from finished grade shall not exceed 125', and must be separated from another building by 30'. Exceptions and modifications to dimensional standards of up to 10% may be granted by the Chief Planner, based on the finding that adequate design features have been incorporated to create visual variety and avoid a large-scale, bulky or monolithic appearance. Exceptions beyond 10 percent are subject to Planning Commission approval.

The life science buildings in the 180 ECR Residential/R&D project all propose a building length greater than 125'; the most visible is Building 1, which has a length of 266' facing El Camino Real (detailed in Page 37 of the Plan Set, Associated Entitlements Resolution Exhibit B). R&D buildings are designed to have modular floorplates that allow for flexibility in where office and lab functions can be located; this modular design typically results in rectangular building shapes. Because Building 1 has been sited so that the longer side is facing towards El Camino Real, the building façade has been designed to have multiple stepbacks, transparency throughout the building, open space terraces on the third-floor level, and multiple building openings to prevent a monolithic and bulky appearance. Staff has reviewed the site plan and has determined that given the site plan organization and architectural design features, this is an appropriate exception to the required building length for Building 1.

### ***Parking Requirements***

#### ***Vehicle Parking***

The project is seeking a parking reduction as part of the Conditional Use Permit. Given that the development is located in close proximity to transit and residential uses, the project's proposed parking ratio for the employment uses is intended to bridge the high parking ratio (2.86 spaces per 1,000sf) under existing zoning and the low ratio (1.5 spaces per 1,000sf) contemplated for the 2040 General Plan, ensuring that the Project avoids constructing excessive parking that may undermine achievement of TDM goals. The proposed parking ratio of 1.65 spaces per 1,000sf is the same that was recently approved for the Southline Development project

to the east of this project site.

#### Proposed Parking for Non-Residential Element of Project

- Research and Development: 1.65 spaces per 1,000sf of floor area
- Community Assembly: 1 space per 50sf of seating area
- Coffee/Restaurant: 1 space per 100sf of seating area
- Athletic Club: 1 space per 150sf of floor area

Using these base non-residential parking requirements, the non-residential portion of the Project would be required to provide a minimum of 1,433 parking spaces.

For the residential component, SSFMC Section 20.330.007(A) (Downtown Parking: Required Parking) is the most appropriate parking requirement given the sites proximity to transit, and includes the following parking requirements:

#### Residential

- Studio and less than 500 sq. ft.: 1 space per unit maximum
- One-bedroom (up to 1,100 sq. ft.): 1 space minimum, 1.5 spaces per unit maximum
- Two-bedroom (up to 1,100 sq. ft.): 1.5 spaces minimum, 1.8 spaces per unit maximum

Using these base parking requirements, the residential portion of the project would be required to provide a minimum of 216 parking spaces (1.18 spaces / unit) and a maximum of 290 parking spaces (1.58 spaces / unit). The applicant is proposing to provide the maximum allowed residential parking. Combined, the maximum number of parking spaces allowed for the residential and non-residential uses is 1,723 spaces. The applicant team has designed the parking structures to meet this requirement.

SSFMC Section 20.330.006(D), Other Parking Reductions, provides an opportunity for parking reductions for any use, through the approval of a Conditional Use Permit if the following criteria are met:

- Special conditions-including but not limited to the nature of the proposed operation; proximity to frequent transit service; transportation characteristics of persons residing, working, or visiting the site; or because the applicant has undertaken a transportation demand management program-exist that will reduce parking demand at the site;
- The use will adequately be served by the proposed on-site parking; and
- Parking demand generated by the project will not exceed the capacity of or have a detrimental impact on the supply of on-street parking in the surrounding area.

Due to the location proximate to the San Bruno BART station, as well as the rapid bus service on El Camino Real and proximity to retail and services, the applicant is requesting a parking reduction, and is proposing to provide 1,723 parking spaces. To further support the parking reduction, the project is incorporating a variety of TDM measures intended to reduce the need for residents to own cars, and to support transit, bicycle, and

pedestrian modes. Staff supports the proposed parking as adequate for the transit-oriented development and finds it consistent with SSFMC requirements.

### Bicycle Parking

The 180 ECR Residential/R&D project includes short-term and long-term bike parking options for residents, visitors, and employees.

SSFMC Section 20.330.008 includes standards for bicycle parking:

- Short-term for multi-family residential and commercial projects: ten percent of the number of required automobile parking spaces (172 bicycle spaces required and provided)
- Long-term for multi-family residential projects: A minimum of one bicycle parking space shall be provided for every four units (46 spaces required, 92 spaces provided)
- Long-term for commercial projects: five percent of the number of required automobile parking spaces (64 required and provided)

The project is meeting the required amount of bicycle parking required by the zoning ordinance, and parking is provided throughout the project site, in both secure and publicly accessible locations. The project also includes bike lobbies and repair stations, to encourage residents to commute by bicycle.

### **Affordable Housing Agreement**

The City adopted the requirement for residential projects to provide fifteen percent (15%) of the proposed dwellings as affordable to low- and very low-income households (SSFMC 20.380 “Inclusionary Housing Regulations”). The applicant is proposing to construct a base density of 183 units and provide 18 units (10% of base density) at the low-income 80% AMI and an additional 9 units (5% of base density) at the very-low income 100% AMI for a total of 27 affordable housing units. A condition of approval provides that prior to building permit issuance, the applicant will execute an Affordable Housing Agreement in accordance with the requirements contained in SSFMC 20.380 approved by the City Attorney and City Manager.

### **Transportation Demand Management Plan**

The 180 ECR Residential/R&D project is required to implement a TDM plan to achieve the increased height, FAR and the trip count of the non-residential portion of the project, as well as to support the requested parking reduction. The proposed TDM Plan (Associated Entitlements Resolution, Exhibit D) outlines a range of measures designed to reduce the number of peak hour vehicle trips, auto dependency, and the need for vehicle ownership for project employees and residents. The proposed TDM plan is designed to achieve a 40% peak hour trip reduction target; this is greater than the requirements of the City’s existing TDM ordinance (SSFMC Section 20.400) but is more in line with the goals of the General Plan Update that is scheduled to be adopted later this Fall and matches the reduction of the recently approved Southline project, which is in close proximity to the site. The applicant will provide the City with annual reports regarding the efficacy of the TDM program and will adjust program components as necessary to achieve the peak hour trip reduction goal (included as a Condition of Approval).

The project's location lends itself to successful TDM implementation, as it is accessible to BART, SamTrans bus routes, and the project provides pedestrian and bicycle facilities and improvements. The project itself is a mixed-use development with residential, commercial and employment uses, and it is also within walking distance to several other large retail centers containing shops, restaurants, entertainment and services (Brentwood Shopping Center across El Camino Real, Tanforan Center and Tanforan Mall approximately 1/4 mile and 1/2 mile, respectively, to the south), and is in close proximity to the Centennial Trail. A Condition of Approval is included to ensure TDM continued implementation and compliance.

### **Tentative Parcel Map**

As part of the overall entitlements, the applicant has submitted a Vesting Tentative Parcel Map, prepared by Ware Malcomb and their consultant team, dated August 10, 2022, to separate the existing single parcel into three separate lots:

1. Lot B, totaling 1.90 acres, consisting of the multi-family residential building.
2. Lot C, totaling 6.06 acres, fronting on El Camino Real and including the three life sciences buildings.
3. Lot D, totaling 3.25 acres, consisting of frontage on the internal streets and one of the access ways from Huntington Ave, and the proposed location of the parking structure.

All of the proposed lots are detailed in the project plan set, on Sheet C1.0, Entitlements Resolution, as Exhibit B). Per Section 20.090.004 of the SSFMC, the minimum lot size in the ECRMZ zoning district is 20,000 sq. ft., with a minimum lot width of 50 ft. Each of the proposed lots meets the development standards. The Engineering Division has reviewed the Vesting Tentative Parcel Map application and has included relevant conditions of approval.

### **GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS**

The General Plan Land Use Designation for the 180 ECR Residential/R&D project site is El Camino Mixed Use. This designation is intended to accommodate high-intensity active uses and mixed-use development in the South El Camino Real area, and includes the following guiding policy:

- 3.4-G-7: Develop the South El Camino area as a vibrant corridor with a variety of residential and non-residential uses to foster a walkable and pedestrian-scaled environment.

The General Plan also includes implementing policies specific to the South El Camino Real area, which helped shaped the 180 ECR Residential/R&D project organization and design:

- 3.4-1-17: Require that any redevelopment of the low-intensity commercial uses in this area is in the form of pedestrian-oriented high intensity active use or mixed-use development (with active uses fronting El Camino Real and other Arterial/Collector streets in the corridor at the ground level and a range of compatible uses at upper levels and behind active uses.)
- 3.4-1-18: Require any development/redevelopment on sites larger than 20,000 square feet at an FAR of no less than 0.6, exclusive of substantially above-grade structured parking, of which a minimum 0.3 FAR shall be devoted to active uses. The requirement for a minimum 0.3 FAR of active uses does not apply to projects where 30% of the units are restricted and affordable to low- or low-moderate-income

households.

- 3.4-1-20: Encourage concentrated higher-intensity activity on highly visible locations-such as corner sites around intersections, and adjacent to the Centennial Way Linear Park-to provide foci and identity to the South El Camino Real area as a vibrant walkable and pedestrian-scaled environment.
- 3.4-1-21 Establish development standards in the Zoning Ordinance for South El Camino Real:
  - Require a minimum percentage of the frontage of a site to be devoted to active uses.
  - Ensure that depth and height of the provided space is adequate to accommodate a variety of tenants and provide flexibility for the future.
  - Allow buildings up to 80 feet by right, and up to 120 feet (along with a higher FAR as specified in Chapter 2) based on discretionary design review and approval by the Planning Commission.
  - Maintain a consistent building base/streetwall along El Camino Real and side streets.
  - Maintain build-to lines, with step-backs to minimize bulk. Require buildings to be finely articulated and visually engaging.
- 3.4-1-24: Promote visually intricate development, using horizontal and vertical building articulation that engages pedestrians; and diversity in color, materials, scale, texture, and building volumes.
- 3.4-1-25: Maintain an open, walkable environment throughout the area by providing space at the ground level for enhanced pedestrian connections, either through open promenades or internal semi-public pathways.
- 3.4-1-26: Limit curb cuts along pedestrian routes, so that pedestrian circulation and safety are not compromised by vehicle access to parking.
- 3.4-1-27: Locate parking so that it is not a dominant visual feature of the pedestrian environment. Encourage underground parking by including all areas of a building substantially above-grade devoted to parking in maximum FAR calculations.

The proposed project will implement the General Plan by constructing a transit-oriented mixed-use development that includes residential, commercial and employment uses, by improving the pedestrian environment and providing active uses along street frontages. The project also utilizes a variety of architectural detailing and materials to accentuate the buildings, providing an example of high-quality development in the South El Camino area. Moreover, the project provides a public open space amenity, enhances connections to the BART station, and is consistent with the City’s Design Guidelines as it relates to building design, form and articulation.

#### AIRPORT LAND USE CONSISTENCY

The 180 ECR Residential/R&D project site is located approximately 2 miles northwest of the San Francisco Airport (SFO) and is located within the Airport Influence Area B (AIA B), the “Project Referral” area. California Government Code Section 65302.3 states that a local agency General Plan, Zoning Ordinance and/or any affected specific plan must be consistent with the applicable airport/land use criteria in the relevant adopted Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP). The SFO ALUCP was amended in 2012, and the updated noise contours included in the 2012 plan created inconsistencies with the City’s General Plan and Zoning, which had previously designated areas within the ECRMZ zoning district (including the 180 ECR Residential/R&D

project site) for mixed-use residential development. Since the City's General Plan and Zoning are not consistent with the ALUCP, all proposed development projects within the Project Referral area are subject to review by the San Mateo County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC), for a determination of compatibility with the ALUCP. In accordance with these requirements, the City submitted the 180 ECR Residential/R&D project to the ALUC for review. The ALUC application and supporting ALUCP exhibits are attached to this staff report, for reference (Attachment 1).

The ALUCP contains three sets of airport/land use compatibility policies related to development projects:

- Noise compatibility policies and criteria;
- Safety policies and criteria; and,
- Airspace protection policies.

The project's compatibility with all three sets of these policies is discussed in detail in the ALUC application.

The ALUC reviewed the project in July 2022, and found that due to its location, the project is inconsistent with the noise compatibility policies and criteria in the ALUCP, is consistent with the safety policies and criteria if the City makes a finding that there is no feasible alternative for the proposed inclusion of biosafety level 2 uses on the site, and is consistent with the airspace protection policies. The ALUC resolution is attached to this staff report (Attachment 2).

#### Local Agency Override Process

State law, in Section 21675.1(d) of the Public Utilities Code, provides that local agencies may override airport land use commission disapprovals of proposed land use policy actions or development proposals. Since the ALUC found the proposed project inconsistent with the ALUCP's noise policies, the project applicant is applying for a Local Agency Override, to be reviewed by the City Council. In order to approve the Override, the City Council will have to make specific findings that approval of the project is consistent with the purposes of the applicable provisions of the Public Utilities Code; namely, that approval of the project provides for the orderly development of land uses in the vicinity of airports, including preventing the creation of new noise and safety problems and protecting the public health, safety, and welfare by minimizing public's exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards. Staff believes that these findings can be made considering the design and configuration of the Project, as discussed in more detail below.

#### Noise Compatibility

As shown in Attachment 1 to this staff report, a large portion of the 180 ECR Residential/R&D project site is located within the 70-75 decibel (dB) noise contour, including the residential building. The ALUCP designates that multi-family residential development is "Not Compatible" within that contour, unless at the time of adoption of the SFO ALUCP (2012) the site had been zoned exclusively for residential use, which is not the case with the subject development site, as it is zoned for mixed-use development. Thus, while the City has designated this site for mixed-use residential development, the ALUCP finds that this site is incompatible for residential uses, due to airport noise concerns.

The applicant has submitted a site-specific noise study for the site prepared by Salter and Associates (an Exhibit within Attachment 1 - ALUC Application). While the project is not consistent with the ALUCP noise contours, recent site-specific data shows that the airport noise patterns are changing over time, and that the project site is currently less impacted by airport noise than at the time the ALUCP was adopted. The Salter Noise Study also confirms that the project interiors can be reduced to less than 45 dB through construction techniques, consistent with the ALUCP requirements and the City's General Plan policies and Zoning Ordinance requirements.

The following draft conditions of approval are included to mitigate noise issues and associated effects (Exhibit A to the associated Entitlements Resolution):

- Construction and design features to meet acoustic performance standards recommended in the noise study to reduce interior noise to 45 dB;
- Granting of an aviation easement to the City and County of San Francisco, in accordance with ALUCP Policy NP-3, prior to issuance of building permits;
- Requirement of an indemnification agreement with the City prior to issuance of building permits, ensuring that liability related to noise is assumed by the project; and,
- Requirement to include real estate disclosures in leases disclosing the presence of an airport within two miles of the property.

In addition to noise related findings, the proposed draft ALUC findings also discuss consistency with ALUCP safety and airspace protection policies. It should be noted that the proposed research and development portion of the project is located within ALUCP Safety Zone 4. Within Safety Zone 4, hazardous uses such as biosafety level 2 uses (which the majority of research and development uses are considered) are determined to be “not incompatible” but are classified as uses that should be “avoided unless no feasible alternative is available”. Based on this, the ALUC requires that the City make specific findings that there is no feasible alternative for the proposed inclusion of biosafety level 2 uses on the site. The draft findings indicate that no feasible alternative for the proposed inclusion of a biosafety level 2 use is available on this site because the majority of life science users blend Biosafety Levels 1 and 2 in facilities, making it too difficult for a landowner to compete for laboratory tenants if a facility is restricted to Biosafety Level 1. Per ALUCP requirements, staff has also included a draft condition of approval related to Biosafety Level 2 facilities:

- Any structures within the project that are located within Safety Zone 4 and that contain a use classified as biosafety level 2 shall be provided with at least 50% more exits than required by applicable codes.

#### SUSTAINABILITY / CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

The proposed project is consistent with recent sustainability regulations that have been adopted at State and local levels. Examples include Senate Bill 375, passed in 2008, which aims to create more efficient communities by providing alternatives to using single occupancy vehicles. Projects that link higher density development to transit help meet this goal. At the local level, the General Plan policies and implementing zoning for this area focus on linkages to BART, other regional transit including SamTrans, and community amenities. The project is envisioned as a high-density mixed-use development, located adjacent to pedestrian and bicycle facilities that provide direct link to the San Bruno BART station and well as multiple SamTrans bus

routes.

The building design incorporates a variety of green building features such as passive ventilation and cooling, large windows to provide natural daylight, robust insulation, high performance glazing, low-water landscaping, a selection of sustainably-produced materials, and electric vehicle charging spaces.

In February 2014, the City adopted a Climate Action Plan (CAP), which serves as South San Francisco's greenhouse gas reduction strategy. As currently designed, the proposed project will comply with the CAP standards above.

### DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

The Design Review Board (DRB) initially reviewed the project on March 28, 2022, and requested revisions to the building architecture and to the general site planning and landscaping. The DRB reviewed the proposed revisions on May 17, 2022 and were generally supportive of the project, recommending approval with minor revisions to the landscape plan, and with a request to determine if an alternative fire access lane could be provided on the interior of the site to allow for more substantial trees to be planted along the El Camino Real frontage. The applicant team was able to determine a compromise that allowed substantial trees to be planted along the northwest corner of Building 1 along the El Camino frontage, and the DRB is supportive of the revised plans. A condition of approval is included, to ensure that the applicant incorporates the Board's final comments and recommendations in the building permit submittal. The complete DRB meeting minutes included in Attachment 3 to this staff report.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING**

The applicant held a virtual community meeting on July 19, 2022. The applicant team provided an overview of the proposed project, and members of the community could ask questions and provide input about the proposed project. Members of the public that attended included commercial property owners on South Spruce Ave and residential property owners from the Francisco Terrace neighborhood and on Noor Ave. The meeting attendees had questions about construction impacts and potential traffic calming measures, and generally supported the proposed development project.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The City Council certified a programmatic Environmental Impact Report prepared in 2009 (2009 EIR) (State Clearinghouse #2009062070) for the South El Camino Real General Plan Amendment and associated Zoning Ordinance amendments, which collectively established new land use, development, and urban design regulations for the Planning Area for a 20-year planning period. The City Council also adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations in 2010, which carefully considered each significant and unavoidable impact identified in the 2009 EIR and found that the significant environmental impacts were acceptable in light of the economic, legal, social, technological and other benefits associated with implementation of the South El Camino General Plan Amendment.

For the proposed 180 ECR Residential/R&D project, buildout of the project site with uses allowed in the El

Camino Real Mixed Use land use designation was generally evaluated within the 2009 EIR. The 2009 EIR evaluated buildout of the Planning Area with 840 housing units and approximately 300,000 sf of non-residential development. The 180 ECR Residential/R&D project would involve the development of approximately 183 housing units and up to 797,069 sf of non-residential development on a site located within the Planning Area. Therefore, the proposed project would involve a greater non-residential development intensity compared to what was already analyzed in the 2009 EIR. Other non-residential development has not been implemented on other sites within the Planning Area to date, and the development of 300,000 sf of non-residential development was previously approved upon certification of the 2009 EIR. Thus, the net addition of up to 497,069 sf of non-residential development was evaluated to determine if it would result in any additional impacts beyond those that were identified in the 2009 EIR.

An Addendum to the 2009 EIR was prepared (2022 Addendum) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines sections 15162 and 15164 to evaluate whether preparation of a Subsequent EIR or Negative Declaration is required. The 2022 Addendum concludes that the implementation of 180 ECR Residential/R&D project will not cause significant impacts, that it will not trigger any new or more severe impacts than were studied in the 2009 EIR that was previously certified, and that no significant information has come to light since the 2009 EIR was certified that shows new or more severe significant impacts. The 2022 Addendum further concludes that the project does not represent a substantial change to the 2009 EIR and that the project is fully within the scope of environmental analysis as described in the 2009 EIR. The City has reviewed the 2022 Addendum and supplemental analysis (Exhibit A to the CEQA resolution) and has determined that the project is consistent with previously adopted environmental documents and that no further environmental review is required pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15162 and 15164.

## **CONCLUSION**

The proposed project seeks to transform vacant parcels into a transit-oriented, multi-family residential and R&D development that will provide new opportunities for residents and employees, new publicly-accessible open space amenities, and improved pedestrian and bicycle connections to BART. In addition, the proposed development conforms to the vision articulated in the General Plan, and is consistent with the zoning standards and design guidelines of the ECRMX district, as applicable with the exception requests.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

- 1. Adopt a resolution making findings and recommending that City Council make a determination that the 180 El Camino Real Residential/R&D Project is fully within the scope of environmental analysis in the 2009 Environmental Impact Report and that the 2022 Addendum to the EIR is the appropriate environmental document for the Project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15162 and 15164; and,**
- 2. Adopt a resolution making findings and recommending that City Council approve the entitlements request for Project P21-0126, including Use Permit (UP21-0013), Design Review (DR21-0045), Transportation Demand Management Plan (TDM21-0012), and a Tentative Parcel**

**Map (PM21-0003), subject to the draft Conditions of Approval.**

***Attachments***

1. ALUC Application
2. ALUC Resolutions
3. Design Review Board Meeting Minutes, 03/28/22 and 05/17/22
4. 180 El Camino Real Community Benefits Proposal

***Associated Documents and Exhibits***

1. 180 ECR CEQA Resolution (File ID#22-679)
  - A. Addendum to the 2009 South El Camino Real GPA EIR (Addendum)
  - B. 2009 South ECR GPA EIR
  
2. 180 ECR Entitlements Resolution (File ID#22-680)
  - A. 180 ECR Draft Conditions of Approval
  - B. 180 ECR Residential/R&D Project Plan Set
  - C. Zoning Conformance Checklist
  - D. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program

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