



Legislation Text

File #: 17-1136, **Version:** 1

Informational report regarding Chief Planner Design Review approval to allow exterior modifications of the Safeway Shopping Center at 180 El Camino Real Avenue (*Billy Gross, Senior Planner*)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the information in this staff report. This is an information item only. There are no actions for consideration at this time.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

Site History

The project site is a 14.5 acre lot with frontages on El Camino Real and South Spruce Avenue. The existing shopping center on the site was constructed in 1965, and the most recent tenants included Safeway, Bally's Total Fitness, CVS, and Bedroom Express.

The site is bordered by commercial uses to the south, Brentwood Shopping Center and single-family residential to the west across El Camino Real, See's Candies and single-family residential to the north across South Spruce Avenue, and office and other general commercial uses to the east across Huntington Avenue. The subject site does not extend all the way to Huntington Avenue - there is a surface parking lot, a dental office and a Salvation Army building abutting the eastern edge of the property.

In March of 2014, the City Council approved a Development Agreement and related planning approvals to allow the construction of a mixed-use project including approximately 222,000 square feet of commercial space, up to 284 residential units, a parking structure and surface parking, and other on- and off-site improvements to replace the existing shopping center. Subsequent to this approval, the Council also approved two amendments to the Development Agreement, primarily to extend the deadline to start construction of Phase 1 of the project. However, the project applicant ultimately determined that the residential portion of the project was economically infeasible, and on June 21, 2017, submitted a letter requesting termination of the Development Agreement.

Project Description/Design Review Application

On July 5, 2017, Roberto Davidsohn, on behalf of Shamaim Inc. ("Applicant") submitted a Design Review application for the Safeway shopping center at 180 El Camino Real to allow the following:

- Exterior modifications to the existing nonconforming building, including an updated façade along all four elevations; and
- Revised landscaping throughout the site.

The building is designed to have a more modern appearance; the front (west) elevation, which faces toward the parking lot and El Camino Real and contains all of the business entrances, is designed to appear as distinct buildings, with glass storefronts that are framed by decorative brick and plaster. The side and rear elevations, which support loading and back-of-house functions, incorporate design elements from the front elevation to

provide architectural interest on all four sides.

The applicant is also proposing to revise the parking layout to make the circulation more efficient throughout the site. In conjunction with this, significant landscaping changes will be incorporated throughout the site. All street frontages will have a mixture of ground cover, shrubs and trees that will provide an improved aesthetic along El Camino Real and South Spruce Avenue, and will assist in screening the parking lot.

Design Review Board

The Design Review Board has reviewed this project on two separate occasions; the Board has been supportive of the overall building architecture, but requested revisions to specific aspects of the project. Following are the specific comments from each meeting:

July 18, 2017 Review

1. The proposed building architecture for the front (west) façade is supported. The rear (east) façade, which is visible from Huntington Avenue, should be revised to have more architectural interest. The side elevations should also have more articulation. All four elevations should be aesthetically coordinated.
2. Revise the site plan to include the following information:
 - a. Accessibility improvements (accessible routes, accessible stalls, etc)
 - b. Stormwater (C.3) improvements
 - c. Revised parking layout
 - d. Trash enclosure(s)
 - e. Lighting
3. Revise the landscape plan to include taller trees along the south and east sides. Tree locations should also be increased closer to the building frontages. Include a total of four-five tree species that will grow well in South San Francisco (i.e. New England Christmas Tree, Brisbane Box, etc).
4. Revise the site plan/landscaping plan to redesign the area where the former Firestone building was located in the northwest corner of the site.
5. Remove the following species from the landscape plan: *Westringia Fruticosa* (Coast Rosemary); *Muhlenbergia Rigens* (Deer Grass); and *Tulbaghia Violacea* (Society Garlic).

September 19, 2017 Review

1. Revise the landscape plan to provide the required number of trees and tree locations, per the Zoning Ordinance standards, and to space the *Metrosideros Excelsa* tree species at 30 feet on center.
2. Revise the building elevations so that the three tower elements are more similar in total height. The proposed Safeway corner should be reduced in total height.
3. Reduce the letter height proposed for the Ross sign to be in keeping with the Safeway signage. Please note that no specific signage proposals are included as part of this Design Review application.
4. Review the landscaping plan, as some of the species selected will not survive the SSF elements.
5. Consider adding solar panels to the project.

Chief Planner Decision

The Applicant submitted revised drawings on October 12, 2017, responding to the comments made by the Design Review Board. Based on the revised drawings, which are attached to this staff report, the Chief Planner determined that the application was in compliance with the Municipal Code and Design Guidelines, and approved the Design Review application on October 30, 2017.

Next Steps

The Applicant is currently preparing construction documents for building permitting. Once the Applicant

receives permits to commence construction, it is anticipated that site work and tenant improvements would take approximately one year. Based on this timeframe, occupancy by Safeway and other potential tenants would occur in early 2019.

Attachments:

1. Approved Design Review Project Plans
2. Chief Planner Approval Letter dated October 30, 2017