



**CITY OF SANTA CLARITA
PLANNING COMMISSION
AGENDA REPORT**

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PLANNING MANAGER APPROVAL: _____

DATE: October 4, 2016
SUBJECT: Master Case No. 16-155: Conditional Use Permit 16-008, Development Review 16-014, Initial Study 16-003. Oliver Hotel Proposal
APPLICANT: Asset Builders Valencia, LLC
LOCATION: 26501 McBean Parkway (APN: 2861-062-040)
CASE PLANNER: David Peterson

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Planning Commission:

1. Open the public hearing;
2. Receive information and materials that constitute Master Case No. 16-155
3. Close the public hearing; and
4. Adopt Resolution P16-13, adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approving Master Case No. 16-155, including Conditional Use Permit 16-008, Development Review 16-014 and Initial Study 16-003, with the associated conditions of approval (attached).

REQUEST

The applicant is requesting to construct a 101,950 square-foot, 134 room, five-story, hotel that is proposed to be 60 feet in height. The proposal also includes a 4,000 square-foot, free-standing restaurant. The subject property is located at 26501 McBean Parkway (APN: 2861-062-040) in the community of Valencia on the northwest corner of McBean Parkway and Valencia Boulevard. The property was formerly occupied by the Greens miniature golf course and the associated pro-shop and restaurant.

BACKGROUND

In 2008, Sheraton proposed a 136,559 square-foot, 200-room hotel that was seven stories and 88 feet in height. The project had been approved by the Planning Commission on July 21, 2009 and subsequently appealed to the City Council on September 8, 2009 at which time the City Council requested that the applicant conduct additional public outreach. The former applicant was unresponsive to City Council's direction and did not return to a future meeting so the appeal remained open.

In March of 2016, a new application was submitted by Asset Builders Valencia, LLC (applicant) including the 101,950 square-foot hotel project as described above. The applicant took ownership of the subject property in the summer of 2016 and then withdrew the former Sheraton project, effectively ending the appeal. As a result, the current proposal included in Master Case No. 16-155 is the only project being considered.

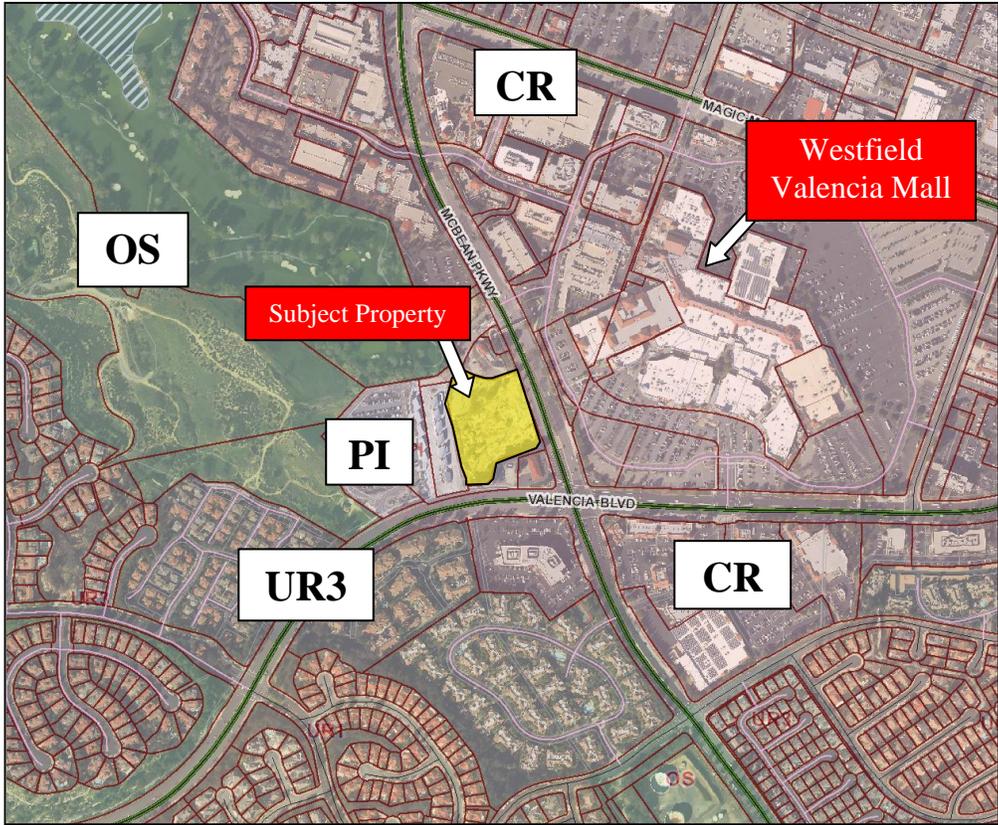
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project consists of a 101,950 square-foot, 134 room, five-story hotel, proposed to be 60 feet in height. The proposed height of the structure requires a Conditional Use Permit. The proposal also includes a 4,000 square-foot, free-standing restaurant. The subject property is located at 26501 McBean Parkway (APN: 2861-062-040) in the community of Valencia in the Regional Commercial (CR) zone. The hotel would provide extended-stay services to guests. The proposed restaurant would operate independently of the proposed hotel, would be open to the public and would not be affiliated with the hotel ownership.

GENERAL PLANNING AND ZONING

The subject property is located within the Regional Commercial (CR) zone.

The subject property is surrounded by improved properties on all sides. To its north is an existing car wash, the six-story Hyatt Valencia, and the Valencia Country Club golf course. Located to the north of the car wash is a vacant lot that is entitled for a five-story mixed use development (VTC Square). Directly south of the project is a gas station and further south, across Valencia Boulevard, is a three-story medical office building. The Westfield Valencia Town Center Mall is east of the subject property, across McBean Parkway. West of the subject property is the City of Santa Clarita's McBean Regional Transit Center.



Surrounding Land Uses

Direction	Zone	Land Use
North	Regional Commercial & Open Space	Car Wash, Hyatt Valencia, Valencia Country Club Golf Course
South	Regional Commercial Urban Residential 3	Gas Station, Medical Office and Multi-Family Residential
East	Regional Commercial	Westfield Valencia Town Center Mall
West	Public Institution	McBean Regional Transit Center

ANALYSIS

Height

The proposed project includes the construction of a five-story, 60-foot hotel building. The proposed building would be constructed adjacent to the Valencia Town Center and compatible with the land uses in the area. The proposed hotel’s maximum height of 60 feet is consistent with

commercial development in the vicinity which ranges between three stories and six stories. By comparison the Hyatt, Edwards Theater, and Princess Cruises buildings are all 70 feet or higher. The tallest building in the vicinity, Princess Cruises #1, is 99 feet in height.

Architecture

The proposed project was reviewed by the City of Santa Clarita's architecture design consultant, the RRM Design Group. The project received two rounds of review. The proposed elevations are consistent with the City of Santa Clarita's Community Character and Design Guidelines. The project incorporates 360-degree architecture as well as both vertical and horizontal articulation elements. Articulation provides variability of wall planes and roof heights and creates a more pleasing appearance.

Noise

The proposed project involves the development of a hotel, which is considered a sensitive noise receptor. The City's General Plan Noise Element (Exhibit N-8) identifies the City's normally acceptable noise level for transient lodging (hotel/motel) areas to be at or below 80 dBA during the day and 70 dBA at night. Based on the City's Noise Contour Map (General Plan Exhibit N-6), the proposed hotel building would be placed within a 70 dBA contour area along McBean Parkway and Valencia Boulevard, and thus in an acceptable noise environment for commercial hotel uses. A large number of commercially zoned properties are located along McBean Parkway. The proposed project is consistent with the existing land uses in the area and would not produce noise levels in excess of standards established in the City's General Plan or Noise Ordinance or in excess of other agencies' applicable standards.

As a result of construction, the project would generate noise on site from increased human activity and from construction vehicle trips entering and exiting the site. Construction noise represents a short-term impact on ambient noise levels and is generated by construction equipment, including trucks, graders, bulldozers, concrete mixers, and portable generators. There would also be limited demolition of the existing structures on the project site, which consist of some structural remnants of the site's previous uses (rock walls, a small bridge, and decorative water accents). Demolition and grading activities would have similar noise levels. However, construction activities would not produce noise levels in excess of standards established in the City's General Plan or Noise Ordinance. Constraints on construction noise, hours of construction and days of the week construction can occur are identified in UDC Section 11.44.040, the City of Santa Clarita's Noise Ordinance. These requirements are also included in the proposed conditions of approval for the project.

Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The proposed project would generate short-term air pollutants from construction activities and long-term air pollutants from vehicle emissions and typical hotel operational emissions (i.e., natural gas combustion). A technical report demonstrates that neither the construction emissions nor the area and operational emissions of the proposed project would produce significant air quality impacts, per the South Coast Air Quality Management District standards.

The proposed project would be consistent with the City's General Plan and UDC. Because goals, objectives, and policies approved under the General Plan are forecast to meet the GHG emission reduction targets mandated by AB 32, development projects that are able to demonstrate consistency with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance are by association consistent with the City's Climate Action Plan and would result in less than significant impacts.

Parking

UDC Section 17.43.010 requires hotel uses to provide parking at a rate of 1 space per room. The proposed hotel includes 134 rooms, resulting in 134 required parking spaces. In addition, the UDC requires restaurants to provide parking at a rate of 1 space per 100 square feet (including outdoor dining space). The proposed restaurant is comprised of 4,000 square feet of internal square footage plus 720 square feet of outdoor seating area resulting in 47 parking spaces. The cumulative on-site parking demand is, thus, 181 spaces. The proposed project includes 220 parking spaces, therefore the project complies with the City's parking requirements and includes a surplus of 39 spaces.

Site Restrictions

The subject property contains two site constraints that impact the buildable area of the property. A restricted use area (RUA) occupies approximately one-half of the property on the southwestern side. No building is permitted in the RUA due to seismic hazard. The other is a 25 foot storm drain easement that runs along the northeastern edge of the property adjacent to McBean Parkway and turns southwest continuing to the opposite corner near Valencia Boulevard. This easement allows Los Angeles County access to the storm drain system should they need to make improvements or conduct maintenance activities to the system. The proposed project does not include any structures within the RUA or easement.

Current Site Condition

The subject property currently includes structures associated with the previous use of the property. These include a restaurant/retail building and associated exterior structures as well as extensive improvements included in the miniature golf use. These structures would be demolished prior to the construction of the proposed project.

Findings

Section 17.06,130(B) of the City of Santa Clarita Municipal Code identifies specific findings that the Planning Commission must make in order to approve a Conditional Use Permit. The proposed project is consistent with these findings as follows:

1. The proposal is consistent with the General Plan:

The General Plan identifies numerous Goals, Objectives and Policies that provide guidance for development within the City of Santa Clarita. The proposed project is consistent with several of these including, but not limited to:

Policy LU 4.1.1: Promote expansion and enhancement of the Valencia Town Center to provide a focal point for cultural, civic, educational, and shopping activities serving the entire Santa Clarita Valley.

The proposed project would expand and enhance the Valencia Town Center area, and provide additional opportunities for business travelers and tourists in Santa Clarita. This, in turn, will serve to promote and enhance the local economy by bringing additional foot traffic to the Town Center area and throughout the Santa Clarita Valley.

Policy LU 1.2.2: In Valencia, promote business development, job creation, and expansion of regional commercial, civic, cultural, and entertainment uses, to create a vibrant Town Center serving as a community focal point for the entire Santa Clarita Valley.

The extended-stay format of the hotel will be used primarily by long-term business travelers. As a result the proposed project supports greater opportunity for business within the City and for greater foot traffic in the Town Center area and throughout the Santa Clarita Valley.

Policy LU 1.1.5: Increase infill development and re-use of underutilized sites within and adjacent to developed urban areas to achieve maximum benefit from existing infrastructure and minimize loss of open space, through redesignation of vacant sites for higher density and mixed use, where appropriate.

The subject property is an existing vacant commercial lot that was formerly occupied by a miniature golf course and restaurant. The proposed project is adjacent to and consistent with developed urban areas and would provide a regional draw from a market area encompassing the entire Santa Clarita Valley and Southern California Region.

2. The proposal is allowed within the applicable underlying zone and complies with all other applicable provisions of the code:

The subject property is within the Regional Commercial (CR) zone. The CR zone is the most intensive commercial zone within the City. Section 17.34.030 of the City of Santa Clarita's UDC contemplates the following for the CR zone:

"The designation is intended to promote the development of regional focal points for commercial, entertainment, cultural, and business uses serving the public and drawing from a market area encompassing the entire Santa Clarita Valley."

The proposed hotel use is contemplated within the CR zone with a Minor Use Permit. However, the UDC requires any structures in the CR zone exceeding 35 feet in height to receive a Conditional Use Permit. The project complies with all pertinent sections of the UDC including, but not limited to, 17.34.030 (Regional Commercial Zone), 17.51 (Property Development Standards) and 17.53 (Commercial Standards).

3. The proposal will not endanger, jeopardize, or otherwise constitute a hazard to the public

health:

The initial study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) completed for the project concluded that the project will not result in significant impacts in the areas of public health and safety.

4. The proposal is physically suitable for the site:
 - a. The design, location, shape, size and operating characteristics are suitable for the proposed use:

The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan, and complies with the underlying zone and all pertinent portions of the UDC. The project is consistent with the intent of the CR zone for uses serving the public and drawing from a market area encompassing the entire Santa Clarita Valley. The project is consistent with the shape, size, massing, and operating characteristics, of other uses in the vicinity. These uses include several business towers, a hotel, a regional mall, and a movie theater.

- b. The highways or streets that provide access to the site are sufficient in width and are improved as necessary to carry the kind and quantity of traffic:

Highways and streets leading to and surrounding the subject property are consistent with the required cross sections identified in the General Plan and provide adequate access to the site. In addition, the initial study and MND prepared for the project determined that the project would result in less than significant impacts to traffic.

- c. Public protection services are readily available:

The initial study and MND prepared for the project determined that the project would result in less than significant impacts to utilities and that existing facilities are adequate to service the site.

- d. The provision of utilities is adequate to serve the site:

The initial study and MND prepared for the project determined that the project would result in less than significant impacts to utilities and that existing facilities are adequate to service the site.

ENVIRONMENTAL

An initial study was conducted and an MND prepared for the project by the City's environmental consultant, Michael Baker International. The document includes a Mitigation Monitoring Program for biological resources, cultural resources and geology and soils. With these mitigations in place, the project will not result in any significant impacts. Proposed mitigation measures are summarized as follows:

- Biological Resources:

Measure IV-1: Prior to conducting any clearing, grubbing, and/or ground-disturbing activities during the bird nesting season, a preconstruction clearance survey for nesting birds shall be conducted within 3 to 7 days prior to any such activities to ensure that no nesting birds will be disturbed during construction. As long as development does not cause direct take of a bird or egg(s) or disrupt nesting behaviors, immediate protections would not be required.

A biological monitor will be present to delineate the boundaries of the buffer area if an active nest is observed and to monitor the active nest to ensure nesting behavior is not adversely affected by the construction activity. Once the qualified biologist has determined that young birds have successfully fledged or the nest has otherwise become inactive, a monitoring report shall be prepared and submitted for review and approval prior to initiating construction activities within the buffer area.

- Cultural Resources:

Measure V-1: If archaeological resources are encountered during project construction, all construction activities in the vicinity of the find shall halt until an archaeologist certified by the Society of Professional Archaeologists examines the site, identifies the archaeological significance of the find, and recommends a course of action. Construction in the vicinity of the find shall not resume until the archaeologist states in writing that the proposed construction activities will not damage significant archaeological resources.

Measure V-2: If paleontological resources are encountered during project construction, all construction activities in the vicinity of the find shall halt until a paleontologist meeting the requirements of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History examines the site, identifies the significance of the find, and recommends a course of action. Construction in the vicinity of the find shall not resume until the paleontologist states in writing that the proposed construction activities will not damage significant paleontological resources.

Notably, the Tribal Historic & Cultural Preservation section of the Fernando Tataviam Band of Mission Indians consulted with the applicant in April, 2016 and concluded that the project site does not require Native American monitoring or inspections.

- Geology and Soils:

Mitigation Measure VI-1: To the satisfaction of the City of Santa Clarita's Geotechnical Engineer, the project's design and construction shall comply with the recommendations of Giles Engineering Associates, Inc. (Giles) as presented in the project's Geotechnical Engineering Exploration and Analysis Report.

The review period for the environmental document was held between September 14, 2016 and October 4, 2016.

NOTICING

All notices required by law were completed which consisted of a one-eighth page legal advertisement in The Signal newspaper on September 13, 2016. Public notices were mailed to all property owners within 1,000 feet of the subject property on September 13, 2016. A sign was posted on the subject property advertising the public hearing on September 19, 2016. As of the writing of this staff report, staff has received no correspondence from the community.

ATTACHMENTS

Resolution P16-13

Exhibit A: Proposed Final Conditions

Exhibit B: Site and Floor Plans

Exhibit C: Elevations

Exhibit D: Preliminary Landscape Plan

Exhibit E: Zoning Map

Exhibit F: Preliminary Grading Plan

Exhibit G: Photo Renderings

Mitigated Negative Declaration

Public Notice