DATE: February 27, 2019

AGENDA ITEM # 3

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Complete Streets Commission

FROM: Zachary Dahl, Planning Services Manager

SUBJECT: 425 First Street – New Multiple-Family Residential Building

RECOMMENDATION:
Recommend approval of Multi-Family Design Review Application 18-D-05 to the Planning Commission

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a Design Review application for a new multiple-family development at 425 First Street. The proposed project is a three-story residential building with 20 condominium units and a one-level underground parking garage that includes a mechanical parking lift system with 29 parking spaces. The project site is designated as Downtown Commercial in the General Plan, zoned CD/R3 (Commercial Downtown/Multiple-Family) and is 11,894 square feet (0.27 acres) in size.

The existing site, which is located on the northeast corner of First Street and Lyell Street, includes a two-story commercial building currently occupied with office uses and surface parking at the rear adjacent to Lyell Street and the alley.

The project's transportation impact analysis (TIA) is included as Attachment A and a condensed version of the project plans that focuses on the project's bicycle, pedestrian, circulation and parking amenities is included as Attachment B.

BACKGROUND

Within the development review process, the Complete Streets Commission considers projects at a public meeting and acts in an advisory capacity to the Planning Commission and City Council on bicycle, pedestrian, parking and traffic matters. For Commercial/Multi-Family Design Review applications, the Commission shall review and provide a recommendation on the elements of the application that pertain to bicycle, pedestrian, parking and traffic issues.

With regard to traffic analysis, the Circulation Element in the General Plan includes an implementing program (C8) that outlines the criteria for reviewing traffic and circulation for new development as follows:

> Evaluate development proposals and design roadway and access improvements based on established Level of Service standards and vehicle trip distribution to minimize impact on local residential and collector streets:
>
> 1) Require public review of any development project or other proposal that causes an intersection to degrade by one or more levels of service (e.g., LOS A to B, LOS B to D);

2) Require a transportation analysis for all development projects resulting in 50 or more net new daily trips. The analysis shall identify potential impacts to intersection and roadway operations, project access, and non-automobile travel modes, and shall identify feasible improvements or project modifications to reduce or eliminate impacts. Impact significance should be consistent with the criteria maintained by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. City staff should have the discretion to require focused studies regarding access, sight distance, and other operational and safety issues;

3) As part of the development review process, the primary access for major traffic generators should be established on arterial roadways, and overall access should be designed to minimize traffic intrusion to residential neighborhoods; and

4) Only after preparation of an environmental impact report with associated findings, accept Level of Service E or F operations at City-monitored signalized intersections after finding that no practical and feasible improvements can be implemented to mitigate the lower levels of service. A proposed development that causes or exacerbates LOS E or F operations and causes a significant intersection impact should be considered for approval if it will provide a clear, overall benefit to the City (e.g., library expansion or relocation, new community center).

With regards to bicycle parking standards, the City does not have an adopted ordinance, but does rely on the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Bicycle Technical Guidelines as a recommended bicycle parking guideline. For general multi-family dwellings, VTA recommends one Class I space per three units and one Class II space per 15 units. A Class I space is defined as one that protects the entire bicycle and its components from theft, vandalism or inclement weather and is appropriate for long-term parking (two hours to all day). A Class II space is defined as a rack to which the frame and at least one wheel can be secured with a user provided U-lock or padlock and cable and is appropriate for short-term parking (less than two hours).

DISCUSSION

Traffic and Parking

The site includes an existing 4,500 square-foot office building that generates 81 average daily trips (ADT). The proposed project, with 20 new dwelling units, will generate 146 ADT, which results in a net increase of 65 ADT. Since this is over the City's threshold of 50 net new daily trips, a full transportation impact analysis (TIA) was prepared for the project (Attachment A). However, based on the fact that vehicles trips from multi-family residential uses are more dispersed throughout the day than office uses, the project's AM and PM peak hour trips will both be slightly reduced as compared to the existing office use. Therefore, the TIA found that the project will not have any impacts on the existing levels of service (LOS) at any of the nearby intersections that will be used by vehicles entering and existing the site.

The onsite vehicle circulation includes a new driveway ramp from rear alley to access the underground parking. To ensure that the alley width is sufficient to provide for vehicle ingress and egress, the project will be providing a two-foot access easement along its rear frontage to widen the alley from 16 feet to 18 feet, which will provide the minimum clearance necessary to accommodate two-way traffic. The City's long-term plan is to obtain a two-foot access easement/dedication on both sides of the existing alley to widen it from 16 to 20 feet for the full length between Lyell Street and Whitney Street to improve the vehicle circulation in the alley and accommodate the additional traffic that this and other future projects will generate.

The TIA also analyzed the project's site access, garage ramp design, garbage collection design and mechanical parking lift system and did not identify any design or functionality issues with these elements. The drive aisles and turning radiuses meet minimum dimensions to be accessible and usable for a range of residential vehicle sizes and types, and the proposed driveway ramp grade of 20 percent, with a 10 percent slope at each transition, is consistent with the City's "Parking Standards Exhibit A," which allows for a driveway ramp grade of up to 20 percent.

For multi-family projects that include at least 10 percent affordable (below market rate) units, the Zoning Code requires one on-site parking space for each one-bedroom unit and two onsite parking spaces for each unit with two or three bedrooms. Since the project is proposing 12 studio and one-bedroom units, and eight two-bedroom units, a minimum of 28 onsite parking spaces is required. The project is providing a total of 29 parking spaces, which includes one van accessible (ADA) space and 28 spaces in the Klaus TrendVario 4300 mechanical parking lift system. Since the project is providing affordable housing units, additional on-site guest parking is not required. However, there will be six on-street parking spaces along Lyell Street and First Street, and it is anticipated that these can be used to accommodate the project's guest parking demands.

The only issue identified in the TIA is related to the fact that full size sport utility vehicles (SUVs) will not be able to fit in the mechanical lift system due to the 5.5-foot height clearance. The mechanical lift system stalls exceed the City's minimum dimensions for width (nine feet) and depth (18 feet) but does not appear to meet the minimum clearance height of seven feet. However, in recent conversations with the applicant, it appears that the lift system can be designed to achieve a clearance of seven feet and additional details to support this will be provided at the meeting.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

As recommended by the VTA guidelines, the project should provide at least seven Class I bicycle parking spaces and two Class II spaces. As specified on the Garage Floor Plan (A3.0), a total of 28 secure bike storage spaces in the underground parking garage are proposed. In addition, a U-shaped bicycle rack with two spaces (Class II) is proposed at the buildings rear entrance along the public alley (see sheet L1.01). To serve the front entrance, staff is recommending that a second U-shaped bicycle rack be placed along the project's First Street frontage in proximity to the front entrance. Overall, with the staff recommendation, the project will exceed the VTA Guidelines for bicycle parking spaces for both residents and guests.

The project will be replacing the five-foot wide public sidewalk along its First Street and Lyell Street frontages, adding a bulb-out at the corner, restriping the crosswalk on Lyell Street, adding a new crosswalk on First Street, adding a bulb-out and a new crosswalk at the alley pedestrian crossing and adding new street trees and landscaping along its frontages and in the street right-of-way. The improvements will maintain six on-street parking spaces while improving sight-visibility at the Lyell intersection with First Street and at the alley intersection with Lyell Street. At the back of sidewalk along First Street, two new park benches are proposed. The project will also remove the existing driveway on Lyell Street and relocate it to the alley, which will improve pedestrian safety along Lyell Street. Overall, the project's bicycle and pedestrian amenities and improvements appear to meet or exceed all applicable City policies and guidelines.

Environmental Review

It is anticipated that this project will be categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15332 of the California Environmental Quality Act because it is an in-fill development on a site in an urban setting that is under five-acres in size. A more detailed analysis will be conducted prior to the Planning Commission public hearing, which is tentatively scheduled for March 21, 2019.

Attachments:

A. Transportation Impact Analysis, Hexagon Transportation Consultants
B. Project Plans