



## **STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION**

**DATE:** Regular Meeting of August 6, 2018

**TO:** Hercules Planning Commission

**SUBMITTED BY:** Holly Smyth, Planning Director  
Robert Reber, Adjunct Planner

**SUBJECT:** Sycamore Crossing project to develop a 12.88-acre site with approximately 29,600 square feet of retail space, a 105-room hotel, 126 multi-family residences, and 2.54 acres of creek, wetlands, and open space.

**APPLICANT:** Sycamore Land Developers LLC (represented by Sam Miller and Doug Mull) and Hercules Hospitality LLC

**LOCATION:** South side of Sycamore Avenue and northwest side of San Pablo Avenue east of Tsushima Street (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 404-020-057 and -058)

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

No formal action is recommended at this time. The project applicants will present proposed site plans and architecture for the commercial area of the site, after which the Planning Commission should invite public comments and then discuss the proposed layout and design.

## **BACKGROUND:**

In October 2016, the Successor Agency to the Hercules Redevelopment Agency sold the two legal parcels composing the project site to Sycamore Crossing Land Developers LLC (Lewis Group) through a Purchase and Sale Agreement. In May 2017, the City approved a lot line adjustment (LLA #17-01) between the two parcels. Shortly thereafter, the Lewis Group sold to Hercules Hospitality LLC one of the redrawn parcels (Lot 1) that is intended for the development of a hotel and associated surface parking lot.

In September 2017, Lewis Group submitted applications to develop the entire Sycamore Crossing site as a horizontally mixed-use project that would include the following land uses:

- Retail/Commercial — approximately 29,600 square feet of retail space on 3.4 acres;
- Hotel — a 105-room, 4-story hotel on 1.77 acres;
- Residential — approximately 60 single-family residences, since then revised to 126 multi-family residences on 5.17 acres;
- Open Space — creek, wetlands, and open space on 2.54 acres.

The proposed project will require the following planning actions and entitlements:

- a) General Plan Amendment – Land Use (GPA #17-02) and Rezoning (RZ #17-02) to change western half of site from General Commercial to Planned Commercial–Residential, in order to accommodate residential uses and four-story hotel;
- b) Vesting Tentative Tract Map (to be assigned);
- c) Initial/Final Planned Development Plan #17-01;
- d) Design Review Permit #17-04;
- e) Conditional Use Permit #17-04 – for hotel, shopping centers, retail stores more than 2,000 sq. ft., drive-through services, restaurants with liquor service, and outdoor sales;
- f) Master Sign Program; and

- g) CEQA Addendum (Initial Study #17-02) – As required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Initial Study checklist (expected to be available in September 2018) is being prepared to determine whether the proposed project would result in any new significant impacts or a substantial increase in severity of any significant impacts previously identified in the Hercules Updated 2009 Redevelopment Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (State Clearinghouse #2008112049). The findings of the Initial Study will determine what, if any, additional environmental review may be required by CEQA.

At this time, the application is incomplete. The applicant/property owner has been working with City staff to respond to Planning Commission and community comments—including comments from the June 25, 2018, Planning Commission workshop specific to residential development—as well as directions from City staff and other agencies (e.g., Rodeo–Hercules Fire District and WestCAT). The applicant anticipates submitting to the City in late August a complete application with revised plans that respond to workshop comments. A final comprehensive project workshop with the Planning Commission is tentatively planned for Tuesday, September 4, 2018 (the regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, September 3, will be cancelled due to City holiday), to be followed by formal project hearings in October.

#### **DESCRIPTION:**

This item is presented as a public workshop to present and comment specifically on the proposed commercial plans for the Sycamore Crossing project. On October 16 and again on December 4, 2017, the Planning Commission held public workshops to discuss the developers' plans for the entire 12.88-acre project site, i.e., the combined commercial, hotel, residential, and open space areas of the project. Planning Commission questions and comments at these first two workshops covered a broad range of topics but primarily related to the viability of the proposed uses and the nature of the residential component.

In response to these Planning Commission comments, as well as feedback from City staff, Lewis and its partners—Woodley Design Group (architects) and the New Home Company (builders)—changed the residential concept and design from single-family residences to multi-family condominium residences. The revised

residential plans were presented to the Planning Commission at a workshop on June 25, 2018. The applicants acknowledge the Planning Commission's residential-related questions posed at the June 25 meeting and are working with staff toward a comprehensive response to each question. The applicants anticipate at least one more workshop to focus on residential development, design, and parking, as well as the hotel design.

The project applicants have requested this August 6 workshop to focus primarily on the commercial area (east side) of the project. The current draft project plans (see Attachment 1) include the following changes relative to previously provided plans:

1. In response to Commission's request, Exhibits AC-3.1 through AC-3.4 have been updated to better identify and more accurately depict the material palette.
2. The entry drive from San Pablo Avenue and the drive-through around Pad 1 have been slightly relocated/reconfigured (see Exhibits AC-2.3 and AC-3.3).
3. The street side elevations for the CVS building have been revised to include additional glazing (see Exhibits AC-3.4 and AC-3.5).
4. New exhibits have been added to show roof plans and building cross sections (see Exhibits AC-6.1 – AC-6.4 for roof plans; see Exhibits AC-7.1 – AC-7.4 for building sections).
5. The retail frontage along San Pablo Retail has been revised (see Exhibits AC-4.5 and L-4.2).
6. The residential exhibits (including floor plans, elevations, and site plans) are entirely new since the June 25 workshop and in their early stages of development (provided for reference).

## **DISCUSSION:**

Additional commercial considerations about which the applicants and staff are seeking insight and guidance from the Commission and community include:

- General site layout of the retail area, in particular:
  - Physical and visual connection with adjacent streets and surrounding area;
  - Design of pharmacy drive-through, including queueing length, screen wall, and adjacency to street frontage;
  - Plaza design, including open overhead structure;
- Building architecture, in particular:
  - Design of CVS tower at corner of Sycamore and San Pablo Avenues;
  - Exterior building color and materials;
  - Articulation of building facades;
  - Sufficiency of window glazing;
- Pedestrian connections to neighboring uses;
- Landscaping and street fixtures;
  - Street bollards (proposed nautical design vs. raised planters or public art opportunities).

Additionally, the applicants and staff will be requesting Commission feedback regarding:

- The revised circulation plan, including the extension of Ohlone Creek Place as a through street from Sycamore Avenue to San Pablo Avenue, with two driveway connections to the hotel site and one connection to the residential portion of the site. The plan also would provide for a residential connection to Tsushima Street. (The preliminary traffic analysis indicates no adverse impacts to any intersections or road segments of roads; final traffic analysis is expected to be available in late August/early September).
- The anticipated work schedule leading to formal hearings in the fall.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Sycamore Crossing Project Plans – Draft – 7-26-2018