



Agenda Item

Design Review Committee

Item #: 4.1.

7/7/2022

File #: 22-0370

TO: Chair and Members of the Design Review Committee

THRU: Anna Pehoushek, Assistant Community Development Director

FROM: Tiffany Chhan, Assistant Planner

1. SUBJECT

Design Review No. 5060-21, Rapids Express Carwash, 1325 West Katella Avenue

2. SUMMARY

Recommendation to the Planning Commission.

The applicant proposes to demolish an existing restaurant and construct a new automatic drive through, express carwash facility with associated vacuum stalls.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Applicant/Owner: Rapids Express Corp (Geoff Von Der Ahe)/Gladys E. Prothero and Family LLC

Property Location: 1325 West Katella Avenue

General Plan Designation: Commercial Recreation (C-R)

Zoning Classification: Urban Mixed Use (UMIX)

Existing Development: Stand alone restaurant

Associated Application: Zone Change No. 1305-21, Conditional Use Permit No. 3154-21, Minor Site Plan Review No.1074-21

Previous DRC Project Review: None

4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant, Rapids Express Corp., proposes to demolish an existing restaurant and construct a new 13,860 square foot automatic carwash facility and associated vacuum areas. The carwash building is composed of three areas: 1) an east tower control office, 2) a carwash tunnel and equipment room, and 3) a west tower for storage and equipment. The vacuum areas will have fabric canopies with incorporated vacuum hoses. The proposed building is long in order to house the tunnel component of the carwash facility. The applicant has also designed a large queuing area which is three lanes wide that will be partially screened by three canopies extending towards Main Street. There are 30 proposed vacuum stalls with four standard parking stalls along with a queuing capacity for 20 vehicles.

A Zone Change is also being requested to establish consistency with the City's General Plan.

Architecture

The rectangular one story building has a maximum height of 32 feet and one inch. The building design incorporates a contemporary architectural style with features including varied flat roof lines, alternating wall planes, and curved canopies. The exterior materials and colors also contribute to the design including fine sand finished stucco in Navaho White, Brazilian Walnut (Ipe) composite wood accent to be wrapped around the tower elements. The canopies would feature dark gray porcelain tiles, clear glass walls, acrylic roof panels, trim, and flashing accented in red.

Landscaping

Preliminary landscape plans provided show water efficient landscaping along the property frontage and the street side property line. The planting plan includes Brisbane Box, African Sumac, Crape Myrtle, and Dwarf Magnolia trees. A four foot Privet hedge will extend between the right-of-way of Main Street and Katella Avenue and the queuing lane. Groupings of shrubs and ground cover include Cats Claw Vine, Lily, Agave, New Zealand Flax, Fox Tail Agave, Compact Xylosma, Double Yellow Day Lily, and Blue Chalk Sticks. The total landscape area is 6,715 square feet (13.9% of the site).

The project as proposed meets all development standards of the Urban Mixed Use zoning district, except for a minimum floor area ratio (FAR) requirement of 1.5 which is discussed in the Analysis section of this report.

5. EXISTING SITE

The project site is a 1.109 acre property which contains a 6,123 square foot full service restaurant (Katella Grill) and parking lot.

6. EXISTING AREA CONTEXT

The subject property is located at the northeast corner of Katella Avenue and Main Street, due east of the Stadium Promenade. The area is part of the commercial and mixed use corridor running along Katella Avenue, dividing the bordering industrial district to both the north and south. The project site is bordered to the west by commercial restaurants, to the south by the Mazda of Orange dealership, and to the east and north by warehouses and industrial uses.

7. ANALYSIS AND STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

Issue 1 Compatibility with the Surrounding Developments:

The proposed project is not located in an area of the City with any specific adopted design standards or guidelines. However, the project must be evaluated to determine whether it upholds community aesthetics through implementation of an internally consistent and integrated design theme.

The proposed project is located within the Katella Avenue Corridor, a Land Use Focus Area identified in the City's General Plan which functions as a solid commercial district for the City. The subject site is located at the prominent corner of Katella Avenue and Main Street within a commercial and mixed use corridor just east of the Stadium Promenade. Adjacent uses include a sit down restaurant, a gas station, Mazda of Orange, the Orange County Badminton Club, and general industrial uses for warehousing. The general area has gone through multiple general plan and zone changes over the last 30 years which has subsequently placed this area within a transitional period. Until the early 1990s, the subject site had been zoned as Industrial Manufacturing (M-2), then the area had been zoned as Commercial Recreation (C-R). In 2020, the area underwent a zone change to Urban Mixed Use (UMU). Due to these changes, development in this area is shifting from industrial to mixed use

and the design of this area is in flux.

Issue 2 Floor Area Ratio:

The project does not meet the minimum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of the General Plan Land Use Element. The required FAR for this subject property is between a minimum of 1.5 and a maximum of 3.0 reflecting the City's long-term vision of the Katella Corridor transitioning to an urban district. The proposed FAR for the project is 0.28, which is higher than the current FAR for the Katella Grill (0.12 FAR). The site is currently legal non-conforming with respect to FAR and the proposed project reduces the degree of non-conformity on the site. Without a multiple story building, it is not possible for the site to reach the minimum FAR; however, the proposed project is supporting the UMU zoning district by more than doubling the current FAR. In addition, the extension of the canopies towards Main Street and the proposed height creates a building massing effect for the street level appearance, accommodating greater conformance with the spirit of the UMU development standards.

Issue 3 Landscaping:

The existing Katella Grill has a concentration of trees located in the southwest corner of the site, along the frontage of Katella Avenue and Main Street, and the landscape planters around the perimeter of the parking lot are generally void of plant materials except for a couple of palm trees located in the northeast corner of the lot. The trees on the Katella Avenue frontage contribute to the Katella streetscape while the trees along the Main Street frontage are in decline or are structurally challenged. The applicant proposes to remove all existing trees as almost all existing trees would also intrude into the queuing lane or interfere with proposed structures. The applicant may be amendable to retaining some existing palm trees which integrate into the new design of the facility.

The proposed project would better distribute trees around the perimeter of the site. OMC Section 17.16.160.C(1) requires that trees be provided within any setback area adjacent to a street at a rate of one tree for every thirty lineal feet of landscape area and OMC Section 17.16.160.C(3)(b) requires that trees throughout the interior parking area be provided at a rate of one tree for every four parking spaces. The number of trees required for the project is 17 and the proposed landscape plans show a total of 21, all of them are a minimum of 24" box or larger at the time of planting. The UMU zoning district also requires that all unused areas of a project site that do not have a specific use be landscaped and that all ends of parking aisles have landscape islands.

The spacing of the trees and landscaping are located into landscape areas that better suit the operational characteristics of the site. Staff supports the location of trees on the property due to the design of the proposed building, drive through lanes, and the vacuum canopies.

The proposed trees are of smaller stature species than those presently on the site; however, their medium stature and canopy form make a positive contribution to the aesthetics of the site and provide shading to the vacuum stall area as an incremental improvement to parking area shading. Given the proposed removal of the larger stature trees from the site, staff is seeking confirmation from the Design Review Committee regarding the proposed tree species included in the landscape palette.

The proposed main drive aisle width ranges from 42 feet and six and a half inches to 36 feet, wider than the 25 feet as required by the OMC. Staff recognizes that reducing the drive aisle width may result in a larger landscape planter. However, due to the operational nature of the carwash facility, the additional width allows patrons to easily back up and maneuver around stalled vehicles. The wider drive aisle also serves as part of the contingency plan for overflow vehicle queuing. Staff seeks

guidance from the Design Review Committee regarding the balance between the onsite operations and the landscape design.

8. ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION

Staff reviewed the application on December 15, 2021, on April 13, 2022, and on May 25, 2022 and recommended approval of the project to the Design Review Committee and Planning Commission on May 25, 2022.

9. PUBLIC NOTICE

On June 27, 2022, 38 notices were mailed to adjacent property owners and tenants for the Design Review Committee Hearing.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Final Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) No. 1815-09 for the Comprehensive General Plan Update was certified on March 9, 2010 and prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act. The proposed change in zoning is within the scope of the previously approved General Plan and is adequately described in the previously certified General Plan Program EIR for purposes of CEQA.

Categorical Exemption: The proposed building and associated structures is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per State CEQA Guidelines 15332 (In-fill Development Projects) because the project site is less than five acres, the project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species, the approval of this project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality, and the site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services. No public review is required.

11. STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND REQUIRED FINDINGS

Findings for DRC applications come from four sources:

- The Orange Municipal Code
- The Infill Residential Design Guidelines
- The Historic Preservation Design Standards for Old Towne (commonly referred to the Old Towne Design Standards or OTDS)
- Orange Eichler Design Standards (or OEDS)

The Findings are applied as appropriate to each project. Based on the following Findings and statements in support of such Findings, staff recommends the DRC recommend approval of the project to the Planning Commission with recommended conditions.

- The project design upholds community aesthetics through the use of an internally consistent, integrated design theme and is consistent with all adopted specific plans, applicable design standards, and their required findings (OMC 17.10.07.G.3).

The project upholds community aesthetics in that the adjacent properties contain an eclectic mix of styles and design. The site design and capacity of the queuing lanes will accommodate a large amount of vehicles on site. The placement of landscaping and the paneled enclosure on the canopies adequately screens the queuing lane from the street and provides shading for customers. The building architecture consistently uses contemporary designs with clean lines and varies the use of materials such as stucco, glass, and acrylic with aluminum and wood accents. The proposed building and design may establish a new phase of design. Few sites in

the area have fully developed any project using the UMU development standards. Over time, the Katella Avenue Corridor will fully develop into a more urban setting focused on retail, office, and services thereby strategically maximizing the development potential of the area, as intended by the City's General Plan.

12. CONDITIONS

The approval of this project is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to building permit issuance, City required irrigation and landscape inspection notes, in accordance with the City of Orange Landscape Standards and Specifications, shall be placed on the final landscape plan, to the satisfaction of the Public Works Director or designee in coordination with the Community Services Director or designee.
2. Prior to certificate of occupancy, all landscaping improvements shall be completed according to the approved plans, the City of Orange Water Efficient Landscape Guidelines, and City of Orange Landscape Standards and Specifications. The project landscape architect shall submit documentation certifying compliance with this requirement (Appendices B and E of City of Orange Landscape Standards and Specifications) for review and approval by the Community Development Director or designee, in coordination with the Public Works Director or designee.
3. Landscape maintenance shall be performed in such a manner as to allow all trees to retain their full canopy height for screening and full canopy breadth for shade at point of maturity, except as required for public safety purposes.
4. This project is approved as a precise plan. All work shall conform in substance and be maintained in general conformance with the plans included as Attachment 2 (date stamped May 31, 2022) of this report, including modifications required by the conditions of approval, and as recommended for approval by the Design Review Committee. Any changes from the approved plans shall be subject to subsequent review and approval by the Design Review Committee.
5. After any application has been approved, if changes are proposed regarding the location or alteration of any use or structure, a changed plan may be submitted to the Community Development Director for approval. If the Community Development Director determines that the proposed change complies with the provisions and the spirit and intent of the approval action, and that the action would have been the same for the changed plan as for the approved plan, the Community Development Director may approve the changed plan without requiring a new public meeting.
6. The applicant agrees to indemnify, hold harmless, and defend the City, its officers, agents and employees from any and all liability or claims that may be brought against the City arising out of its approval of this permit, save and except that caused by the City's active negligence.
7. The final approved conditions of approval shall be reprinted on the first or second page of the construction documents when submitting to the Building Division for the plan check process.
8. Construction permits shall be obtained for all future construction work, as required by the City of Orange, Public Works Department's Building Division. Failure to obtain the required building permits will be cause for revocation of this permit.
9. The project approval includes certain fees and/or other exactions. Pursuant to Government Code Section 66020, these conditions constitute written notice of the fees and/or exactions. The applicant is hereby notified that the ninety (90) day protest period commencing from the date of approval of the project has begun. If the applicant fails to file a protest regarding these conditions or requirements, the applicant is legally barred from later challenging such

exactions per Government Code Section 66020.

10. If not utilized, project approval expires 24 months from the approval date. Extensions of time may be granted in accordance with OMC Section 17.08.060.

13. ATTACHMENTS

- Vicinity Map
- Architectural, Civil, and Landscape Plans date stamped May 31, 2022
- Site Photographs
- Renderings
- UMU Development Standards Reference Table