

Harvest Properties

PA22-023 407 - 445 S. B St. (Bespoke/Talbots)

Summary of Pre-Application Community Meeting

Date: September 1, 2022

Time: 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Location: Virtual Zoom

Meeting

Community Attendees: David Light, Frank Garritano, Drew, Pat & Janet Wentworth, Daniel, Judith Paton, Christine, Laurie Watanuki, Maxine Terner, Janet Wentworth, Vicky Wong, Debbie Soon, Bruce Beiser, Shirley, GH, Christine, Keith Weber, Marcus Gilmour, Frances Liu, Francie Souza, Steve DeAndre, Maggie Mui, Lorenzo, Maurine Killough (CCHT), Lola

City Staff Attendees: Julia Klein, Manira Sandhir, Kathy Kleinbaum, Eloiza Murillo-Garcia

Applicant Attendees: Preston O'Connell, Tyler Issadore, Claire Wang, Danielle Friend, Evan Fraser, Ryan Stone, Charlie Brucker, Chris Jew, Jonathan Stone, Don Peterson, Anni Chung, Jennifer Wong, Carlos Castellanos

Community Feedback

Question/Comment:

I like the senior center, the low-income housing, and the sustainability aspect of the project, but the building looks to me like another steel and glass building. Does the City have an overall vision for buildings being developed in San Mateo? Can the façade fit in with the neighborhood context a little more?

Harvest Response:

One of the things we are very excited about is that there isn't going to be much steel in the building. The whole building including the structural elements are actually constructed with wood which creates very warm and natural tones and aesthetics. Mass timber is also a highly sustainable and regenerative building material. In terms of the design process, we are in the pre-application stage and will be going in front of the Planning Commission on October 11th. That's when we start a longer dialogue with the City about what design elements might need to be revised to reference some other design vernacular in the area and how we can make sure this project will be a very exceptional building in the downtown.

Question/Comment:

Will there be any solar panels on the building?

Harvest Response:

As part of our efforts to achieve LEED Gold, Carbon Neutral Design, WELL-Ready Certification, and other sustainability certifications, we are working with solar panels and various other technologies to help reduce the building energy loads ie. efficient air handling units, potential operable windows, solar panels etc. We will dive deeper into those different technologies and measures in the Major Application stage to make a very cutting-edge project in terms of sustainability and wellness initiatives.

Question/Comment:

Appreciate the excellent presentation. Some of the things I personally really appreciated are the thoughtful approach with the setbacks, the widened sidewalks to encourage and facilitate pedestrian use, traditional materials such as the bricks and the wood, the way the building was designed, the corner plaza, curb extensions and the inclusion of the affordable housing. It might be beneficial to increase the number of residential parking stalls for the 60 units even given the transit-oriented location.

Harvest Response:

We are providing 37 stalls in our garage specifically dedicated to the residents and additionally the project site is one block away from the new 5th Avenue Garage which will have about 500 new stalls . We will also be doing a parking demand study for the project to understand exactly what the parking needs are as future steps of the analysis.

Question/Comment:

Is there an overarching plan that currently exist for B Street that will unify the multiple developments that are in progress for the area?

City Response:

The City doesn't have a plan of that nature; but does have the [Downtown Retail Core Design Guidelines](#) which is available on the City's website. The City is working with the developers and sharing that information with the development team. The input received from this meeting and at the Planning Commission Study Session will all be taken into consideration as part of the City's review process.

Question/Comment:

This building will be a great bookend to the South B Street and its future pedestrian expansion. The project should take into consideration of sound insulation on the Railroad track side with the potential of the tracks becoming elevated maybe 20 years from now. The sidewalks along the Railroad Avenue will likely be used for the grade separation which could become problematic for the garage entrance. The sidewalks could be widened a little more along Railroad Avenue. Some variations could be added to the residential façade.

Harvest Response:

Thank you and acknowledged.

Question/Comment:

What are the plans for noise abatement given the current proximity of Caltrain?

Harvest Response:

One of the studies required as part of the CEQA/environmental review is a noise study which happens during the formal Planning Application process to make sure that the decibel level within the residential and working spaces are within the appropriate range.

Question/Comment:

Will the project include solar panels, electrical vehicle charging, heat pump heating vs gas heaters/air conditioning? Any moderating plans for the homeless people in the common areas?

Harvest Response:

The project will include solar panels, electrical vehicle charging, no gas per the San Mateo reach code which requires MEP systems to be all electrical. We will work within the City's guidelines to make sure that the common spaces are managed and used appropriately so everyone feels welcome, safe and open to everyone.

Question/Comment:

Really appreciate the use of noble materials and the exposed timber but the building looks similar to some of the other buildings being built in San Mateo in the recent years. Understand that it needs to be a modern building, but it would be nice if it can be further melded in with the buildings in San Mateo while being more differentiated from some of the other more recent developments. Will the parking space be available to the public other than the 37 exclusive residential stalls? How would they be priced? What's the height limit?

Harvest Response:

We will continue to explore ways to harmonize the building more with the downtown fabric and will continue as we go through the Planning Commission and more community meetings.

We will conduct a parking demand study to understand true demands which considers the project specific conditions and proposed uses. We are really early in the process to determine the costs and management of the parking. Opening up the parking to the public during off hours is definitely something we will put a lot of thoughts into at the right stage.

City Response:

75' is the height limit under the current zoning for the commercial portion and residential may be permitted to go above 75' under provisions of the State Density Law.

Question/Comment:

San Mateo is rapidly becoming a food desert. There aren't many choices for families in the area with no cars and I hope the retail component will address this need.

Harvest Response:

Thank you and we hope so to.

Question/Comment:

Is bike parking planned for?

Harvest Response:

Absolutely. We will have extensive bike parking throughout the residential and commercial buildings.

Question/Comment:

The architectural style should assimilate better with some of the downtown historic buildings. The entrances/exists for the garage should be located on 4th Avenue to mitigate traffic on residential streets and preserve street parking. What are the other incentives you are going to provide so that the office tenants will take Caltrain?

Harvest Response:

As part of the planning application process, we are working on a Traffic Demand Management plan (TDM) which is a combination of services, incentives, facilities, and actions that reduce single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips to help relieve traffic congestion, parking demand, and air pollution problems. As part of that plan, we work with the office tenants to implement voucher systems, educational programs, carpooling systems, and promote the use of bikes/public transit to provide a whole menu of options to incentivize people to take the alternative modes of transportation to reduce traffic in the area.

Question/Comment:

Very much in support of the affordable housing building but would like to increase parking for the residents. Really like many things about this project ie. the widened sidewalks to encourage more street and pedestrian activities. At the corner plaza, will there be any restaurants or coffee shops? Consider pushing the building more into the corner plaza, widening the sidewalk with direct access to the future retail. I like that there will be a variety of businesses. We want small businesses. Glazing is concentrated in the corner that's closer to the historic buildings. The affordable housing building needs to look more attractive; the façade feels very flat but it is wonderful to have the 60 affordable housing units going in there. If the building does need to be glassy, make the lower floors more opaque, so we don't see the backs of computers and office desks. Love the wider sidewalks.

Harvest Response:

Thank you and acknowledged.

Question to the Community:

Will there still be street parking or only in parking lots/garages?

Harvest Response:

Yes, there will be street parking.

Question to the Community:

Is there any plan to make use of the rooftop space to do something, such as public gardens or other types of public space?

Harvest Response:

On the commercial side we will have the elevated terraces available for the tenants. The affordable housing has a lot of its private amenity spaces on an elevated terrace as it's exclusive for the residents. The residential outdoor amenity space includes children's play areas for different age groups and landscaped seating areas. The challenge with having public assembly spaces on the upper levels is that it requires a lot of additional emergency egress and fire protections. It can start to limit the functional spaces within the building and the building becomes very expensive. We are trying to find the balance between having a lot of great amenities but also making sure the project stays competitive for state and federal and other public sources of financing so that we could maximize the affordable housing opportunities.