



MINUTES

Regular Meeting

Reno City Planning Commission

Thursday, December 05, 2024 • 6:00 PM

Reno City Council Chamber, One East First Street, Reno, NV 89501

Commissioners			
Harris Armstrong, Chair 326-8859			
Kerry Rohrmeier, Vice Chair	326-8864	J.D. Drakulich	326-8861
Manny Becerra	326-8860	Alex Velto	326-8858
Christina Del Villar	326-8862	Sylvia Villanueva	326-8863

1 Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Velto led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2 Roll Call

Commissioner Villanueva was absent.

3 Public Comment (This item is for either public comment on any action item or for any general public comment.)

Correspondence received was forwarded to the Planning Commission and entered into the record.

4 Public Hearings – Any person who has chosen to provide his or her public comment when a Public Hearing is heard will need to so indicate on the Request to Speak form provided to the Secretary. Alternatively, you may provide your comment when Item 3, Public Comment, is heard at the beginning of this meeting.

- 4.1 Staff Report (For Possible Action): Case No. **LDC25-00013 (APWF at American Flat)** - A request has been made for a conditional use permit to allow: 1) a non-single family use (quasi-public utility) within the Sky Vista Planned Unit Development (PUD); 2) operating hours between 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.; 3) nonresidential development adjacent to residentially zoned property; and 4) disturbance to a major drainageway. The ±52.58 acre site is comprised of four parcels located on the northwest and

southwest corners of Military Road and Lear Boulevard. The site is zoned Planned Unit Development (Sky Vista PUD) and Public Facilities (PF) and has Master Plan land use designations of Suburban Mixed-Use (SMU), Public/Quasi-Public (PQP), and No Land Use (NOLU). **[Ward 4]**

Jeff Foster, Associate Planner, presented the staff report including staff analysis of the request.

Joe Coudriet, City of Reno Senior Civil Engineer, presented an overview of the project.

Lydia Teel, Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA), gave a presentation on the advanced purified water facility.

Disclosures: familiar with the site, communicated with the applicant

Public Comment: Correspondence received was forwarded to the Planning Commission and entered into the record.

Questions:

Commissioner Becerra asked about contingencies to address potential delays in the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) coordinated Military Road improvements.

Dave Diegle, TMWA, discussed their coordination with RTC to make sure their projects have synergy.

Commissioner Del Villar asked about plans to address lighting impacts on nearby residents.

Mr. Foster explained that limited lighting is proposed at the back side of the building and all lighting will comply with the dark skies Reno Municipal Code (RMC) lighting standards.

Commissioner Del Villar asked for more information on the effluent flow to Swan Lake.

Mr. Coudriet explained the current discharge from the water reclamation facility and confirmed that this project will have a positive impact on Swan Lake.

Discussion:

Commissioner Becerra stated this project enhances water reliability and protects the environment. It is good for the community.

Commissioner Rohrmeier expressed appreciation for the amount of work and level of detail here.

It was moved by Manny Becerra, seconded by Kerry Rohrmeier, to approve the conditional use permit, subject to the conditions listed in the staff report. Motion Pass.

RESULT:	Approve [6 TO 0]
MOVER:	Manny Becerra, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kerry Rohrmeier, Vice Chair
AYES:	Armstrong, Becerra, Del Villar, Drakulich, Rohrmeier, Velto
NAYS:	
ABSENT:	Silvia Villanueva
ABSTAIN:	
RECUSED:	

- 4.2 Staff Report (For Possible Action): Case No. **LDC25-00014 (Webb Data Center)** - A request has been made for a conditional use permit to allow: 1) development of a data center, and 2) business operations between 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. The ±6.02 acre site is comprised of three parcels located on the north side of North Virginia Street ±1,170 feet east of its intersection with Stead Boulevard. The site is zoned Mixed-Use Suburban (MS) and has a Master Plan land use designation of Industrial (I). **[Ward 4]**

Jeff Foster, Associate Planner, presented the staff report including staff analysis of the request.

Veronica Bardhan, Tectonics Design Group, presented an overview of the project.

Disclosures: familiar with the site, read submitted materials, spoke with the applicant's representative

Public Comment: Correspondence received was forwarded to the Planning Commission and entered into the record.

Questions:

Commissioner Del Villar asked for more information on the applicant's job creation projection.

David Harty, Ellis Partners, explained they think of job creation in a number of

different ways. Jobs created will include construction labor, onsite staff once the data center is up and operating, and service agreements with local mechanical, electrical and plumbing contractors for service and maintenance of the equipment that will serve the data center.

Commissioner Del Villar asked if the applicant has considered using other existing warehouses in Reno and developing this land for something other than a big box.

Mr. Harty stated they have considered that but it is very difficult to fit a data center into an existing building. It needs to be a purpose-built facility in order to get the energy efficiency it needs for the business model to work.

Commissioner Rohrmeier asked staff what the city is looking for from NV Energy related to finding 4 regarding the availability of public services.

Mr. Foster acknowledged that they are forging new ground in terms of what is required to be analyzed for a data center. There is not a requirement to have a full vetting with NV Energy as part of the standard conditional use permit process. The applicant did indicate in their application that they have a full commitment from NV Energy to provide energy to this data center. A will serve letter from NV Energy was provided and is part of the application record.

Commissioner Rohrmeier asked if there are any other land uses in the area that require this amount of energy.

Mr. Foster stated he does not have that research as part of the staff analysis on this application.

Mr. Harty stated there are industrial uses that use a substantial amount of energy. Data centers are one of the larger power users per square foot for industrial uses.

Commissioner Becerra asked staff if there were specific Master Plan goals and policies that were key in supporting a recommendation for approval.

Mr. Foster explained the analysis that was done and noted there is no language that specifically addresses data centers as a use in the current Master Plan.

Commissioner Becerra referenced the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan and asked if there are specific opportunities for renewable energy integration that were explored for this project.

Mr. Harty explained that solar is not economically feasible for this project. He explained their evaluation of how the project fits with sustainability goals. This data center will be significantly more energy efficient than typical data centers.

Mr. Foster explained for Commissioner Del Villar that the substation that will provide energy to this site has already been approved.

Mr. Harty explained that they are funding the purchase of the equipment for the substation and it should be online in the year 2029. The first phase of the data center is planned to be online sooner than that and there is existing power available that will help get the project started until the substation comes online.

Commissioner Rohrmeier asked the applicant if they have explored the idea of a clean transition tariff to ensure that 100% of the energy is renewable.

Mr. Harty stated they have not explored that. It is not something they have needed or that has been required for the project.

Mr. Foster confirmed for Commissioner Becerra that the Fire Department did evaluate this application and staff did not receive any specific feedback for anything out of the ordinary.

Mr. Foster explained for Commissioner Del Villar that the requested conditional use permit is specific to the data center use. If another industrial use came along, it would require its own separate entitlement as appropriate.

Commissioner Rohrmeier asked what the contingency plan is to keep 30 mega-watts going if NV Energy de-energizes lines for things like wildfires or strong winds.

Mr. Harty stated there is redundancy within the grid and there are also multiple feeds coming into the building. He also explained why battery storage is not an option.

Commissioner Becerra asked staff about their conversations with NV Energy and if we are setting ourselves up as a community to be reactionary in the future for how we sustain the energy demand when we set the bar for something new like this. Would NV Energy be able to meet the demand if three more data centers came online in the next few months? He also asked what the incentive is for companies to go all in on sustainability like solar without local ordinances in place to do it.

Mr. Foster stated he has not had direct conversations with NV Energy on this. He has had conversations internally with staff that they may need to bring in

other elements of a larger policy discussion with regard to data centers and energy usage as the current process does not include a finding that requires that energy documentation. The overall concurrency process documented in the Master Plan does require at the building permit stage that various infrastructure elements be provided and documented prior to issuance of building permits.

Commissioner Becerra expressed concern that they do not have something more solid to work off of in Title 18.

Mike Railey, Planning Manager, explained that prior to January of this year, they did not define a data center use in code. They receive numerous inquiries from developers looking to locate data centers so in January staff set some basic standards for a data center use and identified zones where data centers would be permitted along with a process that requires a conditional use permit. In that process, they did not go into power uses or sustainability.

Commissioner Becerra stated we as a city have had ample time since January to explore those areas in order to be set up for more success tonight with not just guidelines but a policy.

Discussion:

Commissioner Rohrmeier stated she appreciates the difficulty of being first with this new use. There is nothing in Reno, Sparks and Washoe County that is comparable to this in terms of energy needs so there is nothing to compare this to. She has spoken to NV Energy and the PUCN says that you have to be served but there is no time frame or detail provided to us if it can be served in the next year, 5 years or 10 years. So, it is very challenging to make a case for the conditional use permit finding 4 regarding public infrastructure services being available to serve the project. This is the equivalent of power for 5,000 homes. The demand for data centers is incomparable and I am not clear on findings 4 and 5.

Commissioner Velto stated that data centers are good for society but not good for the community they reside in. They are super intensive and don't normally create jobs. He does not think any of that is relevant to his analysis. He also stated they are getting far afield from what they should be looking at. Data centers are a recognized use with a conditional use permit. There are no data centers in the area so it makes it impossible to determine if it is compatible with the surrounding area. His view on being able to make conditional use permit finding 5 is whether it generally fits with what is around it and in this area there are a lot of warehouses that look similar to what is being proposed here. We should not look at what they are doing in the building to make a determination as to whether or not it is compatible with the surrounding area. With regard to

conditional use permit finding 4, if NV Energy can't serve the project, that's on the applicant. We are being told that there is a will serve letter from NV Energy and that is sufficient to be able to make finding 4. Beyond that, we should not be making value statements on whether there should or should not be data centers. That is a policy decision for City Council.

Commissioner Del Villar stated Ward 4 is disproportionately impacted by these massive buildings. Yes, there are already warehouses there but how many more warehouses or massive buildings are we going to put into Ward 4. She has concerns with that and the public feedback showed that as well. This is the first one so we are setting precedence and there are still questions out there about the guidelines and what the policy should be. She expressed concern about what the balance is between this being the first one and setting precedence and making sure they have thought this through from a more sustainable standpoint.

Commissioner Becerra stated that when Commissioner Velto said we should go with what's before us and not overreach, he takes that to heart and appreciates that. In this particular case though we don't have a policy to go off of. Since we do not have a policy, the best thing we can do is what we are doing tonight and try to find that balance and serve in the best advisory capacity that we can.

Mr. Railey clarified that there are development standards for data center uses. They defined what a data center is and there are limitations on what that use is. There are not specific policies in the Master Plan related to data centers but there are other uses within the code that there are not specific policies for.

Commissioner Becerra stated it seems there are some areas that might cover it, but there are still some potential critical gaps that need policy language around them.

Commissioner Rohrmeier asked to see the will serve letter from NV Energy.

Ms. Bardhan provided a copy of the letter on her phone and it was shown on the presentation screen.

Commissioner Rohrmeier stated the last sentence does not demonstrate enough information to make finding 4.

Commissioner Velto asked Commissioner Rohrmeier if there is something else they could get that would be more concrete than this from NV Energy.

Commissioner Rohrmeier stated there are studies and things that can be

presented that would tell us timeframes and loads that could be served. TMWA (Truckee Meadows Water Authority) has what is called a Discovery Level 1 and Discovery Level 2 Phase Investigation that a preliminary project would submit for application and then give a thorough report. This letter feels a little light for us to be deciding groundbreaking new land uses.

Commissioner Velto asked why the Planning Commission should refuse to take the risk of approving this when it would be the applicant that would suffer if NV Energy ended up not being able to serve their project.

Commissioner Rohrmeier stated she appreciates that point of view. There is so much interest in data centers and this is the first of many to come and there is no code asking us to look at cumulative effects. We have to have discernible information and a standard of detail about what utility demands this entails and when the service can be provided. She also wondered if the conditional use permit would expire long before the project will ever get built.

Commissioner Velto asked if there is a way to condition it to require service for it to be operational.

Commissioner Rohrmeier stated staff made a good point about what is required in the building permit stage of the process but the Planning Commission does not need to be reviewing case after case without set standards on what to look for in the application. We need a certain level of detail beyond a will serve letter because there is nothing else we have to compare it to.

Commissioner Velto asked the applicant to weigh in on this discussion.

Mr. Harty stated he has planning memos that include detailed information about the service sizes, in-service dates, infrastructure required, and lead times.

Commissioner Velto stated all that information would not assist him in determining whether or not they would have sufficient energy. His point is that no matter what the applicant tells him, he is only going to care about whether or not NV Energy says they are going to get power. He can't do analysis on the details of the power needs. All that is required under the law is making the conditional use permit findings. We should not have a process for applicants to come in and apply with a conditional use permit and then move the goal post and create additional hurdles once they get here by saying we need to see all this other information.

Commissioner Rohrmeier stated she respects that opinion but that information is asked of them for sanitary sewer, storm drainage, water supply, and every

other utility so why should that same level of detail not be required here.

Commissioner Velto asked if they do get more than will serve letters for those utilities.

Commissioner Rohrmeier stated yes. The appendices are full of sewer studies, hydro studies, noise studies, and traffic studies.

Commissioner Drakulich stated there are some solid point on both sides. When he first read the staff report with staff recommending approval, he could make the findings and did not have any true concerns. It is tough that we don't have data center policies to go by. He asked how staff would have handled this application if it came through before January of this year.

Mr. Railey stated they would have likely classified it as a warehouse and it would have gone through the conditional use permit process for 24 hour operation and they would likely be at the same point we are now.

Commissioner Drakulich stated he is going to follow staff's recommendation for approval. He understands the consequences of that decision and respects the other perspective. To the point of compatibility, there is not going to be any residential or housing in the area and retail is not a good fit. This is probably as good as it gets for this parcel.

Mr. Harty stated that with regard to electrical capacity he can only speak to their project and not others that may be coming. He explained that they are funding in advance the construction of a substation. It is already under construction and they have commitments from NV Energy for the power allocation. That substation will also provide an additional 30 MVA of power to serve any number of uses throughout the North Valleys.

Mr. Railey stated that this project would not be issued a building permit from the City of Reno if they could not demonstrate that they have service from NV Energy.

Commissioner Becerra expressed concern that City Council would not have a policy to go off of to evaluate an appeal on this if one ended up being filed. We owe applicants and the public predictability and we don't have that tonight. I cannot make the findings. He discussed a previous project from NV Energy in the North Valleys where the project is at a standstill related to being able to provide long-term resiliency so that is a factor to consider.

Commissioner Del Villar stated the North Valleys is in a unique situation. She has concerns that this will not bring a lot of employment, granted it won't bring

a lot of traffic with that. She expressed concern about setting a precedent, especially in terms of the energy usage and sustainability with other projects coming forward.

Mr. Foster stated for clarification that there is an existing entitlement for a warehouse on this site and in theory that could move forward.

Commissioner Del Villar stated that would at least employ more people.

Mr. Foster continued and stated that he would have a problem with this staff recommendation if the substation were not already approved.

Commissioner Del Villar asked what kind of position the City is going to take going forward and if they are going to require that a certain amount of power will be used or put more sustainability in place for different forms of energy.

Commissioner Becerra suggested continuing this item to ask City Council to rally to help us out here and get some standards set in place.

Commissioner Rohrmeier stated she can support continuing to allow time for more information to be provided.

Mr. Railey asked for clarification on exactly what they would be looking for with a continuance. He heard two things suggested, one being time for more information to be provided and one for policy direction from City Council.

Commissioner Becerra suggested both additional information and policy direction from Council.

Chair Armstrong stated he does not know how practical it is for City Council to formally contemplate this in the timeframe being suggested.

Commissioner Velto stated if a vote on this item ends up being 3 to 3, it would be a technical denial and the applicant would have the option of appealing to City Council. He asked if the applicant would rather have a continuance and gather more information or have a vote today and risk a technical denial.

Commissioner Drakulich expressed confusion regarding how much time they are talking about if they are going to ask City Council to weigh in. That could take six months.

Commissioner Rohrmeier clarified her request stating that in a couple of weeks the applicant could provide some additional information from the utility that would provide clarity on her questions.

Mr. Harty asked if they are asking for clarity and more certainty on the provision of the power or if there will be new standards that would be applied to their project.

Commissioner Velto explained that different commissioners have different perspectives. One is seeking more information about the ability to service the project with energy and one would like to get more input from City Council.

Mr. Harty asked if new standards would be applied to a project that was submitted and meets and exceeds code requirements.

Mr. Railey stated that the project is reviewed under the standards in place at the time it was submitted so the development standards do not change.

Mr. Harty asked for confirmation that new standards would not apply to their project.

Karl Hall, City Attorney, confirmed that is correct. They will not change the standards for discussion of this application. He also stated that any policy changes made down the road will not affect this application.

There was discussion regarding documentation of the agreements the applicant has with NV Energy and Commissioner Rohrmeier stated that kind of documentation would be helpful.

Commissioner Velto asked if it is possible to see those documents from NV Energy tonight and suggested pausing this item until after other agenda items are addressed to allow the applicant time to provide the documents tonight.

Chair Armstrong asked Commissioner Rohrmeier what specific language she needs to see.

Commissioner Rohrmeier stated the code does not tell the applicant what studies to provide. Staff tells the applicants which technical documents are helpful in the application process.

Mr. Railey clarified that the conditional use permit application has a submittal check-list of studies that are required.

Commissioner Rohrmeier asked for clarification that it is not required in Title 18 but it is staff's determination.

Mr. Railey clarified that some of it is in code and some of it is not.

Commissioner Rohrmeier stated the issue here for her is that the checklist of required studies has not been created for data centers and they are different than anything else we have encountered.

Mr. Harty asked if they can have one of their colleagues call in to the meeting via Zoom to show the agreements they have with NV Energy.

Commissioner Rohrmeier stated she thinks there should be consideration for a 2 to 3 week continuance to hash this out.

Commissioner Velto asked the applicant if they would prefer a continuance or a vote with the opportunity to appeal if it is not approved.

Ms. Bardhan asked for a legal perspective regarding Commissioner Rohrmeier's comments that the conditional use permit process does not recognize data centers and is not a sufficient review process in terms of checklists for documents that need to be provided.

Mr. Hall stated that Commissioner Rohrmeier's issue with the application is that she does not know that you will have the ability to make finding 4 which is that public services and facilities are available to serve the project. She is looking for that information to make her findings. Commissioner Velto is asking if you want a continuance tonight to provide further information or a vote with the opportunity to appeal the decision to City Council.

Mr. Harty stated that if they are allowed to, they would like to show the agreements tonight and then have a vote.

Commissioner Velto stated he thinks the reality is they would continue it to the next meeting in two weeks.

Commissioner Rohrmeier confirmed for the applicant that she is open to meeting with city staff and the applicant to look at their documentation to determine if it is the appropriate information to guarantee that the project is going to be served by NV Energy, that there is sufficient capacity, and to make sure that we have documents that are the kind of information that going forward other applications for data centers can provide for review to make a decision.

Commissioner Del Villar confirmed for the applicant that she feels the same.

Commissioner Becerra also confirmed he agrees and stated that the other things he would like are aspirational and will come in due time.

It was moved by Alex Velto, seconded by Kerry Rohrmeier, to continue to the next meeting with a date certain of December 18, 2024. Motion .

RESULT:	Continue [6 TO 0]
MOVER:	Alex Velto, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kerry Rohrmeier, Vice Chair
AYES:	Armstrong, Becerra, Del Villar, Drakulich, Rohrmeier, Velto
NAYS:	
ABSENT:	
ABSTAIN:	
RECUSED:	

- 4.3 Staff Report (For Possible Action - Recommendation to City Council)
Case No. **LDC25-00019 (Orrcrest Drive Zoning Map Amendment)** -
A request has been made for a zoning map amendment from the Large-Lot Residential (1 Acre) (LLR-1) zoning district to the Mixed Employment (ME) zoning district. The ±1.18-acre site is located on the north side of Orrcrest Drive approximately 240 feet east of its intersection with Carson Lane. The subject site has a Master Plan land use designation of Mixed-Employment (ME). **[Ward 4]**

Recess at 10:12 p.m. Meeting resumed at 10:25 p.m.

Daniel Martoma, Associate Planner Specialist, presented the staff report including staff analysis of the request.

Disclosures: familiar with the site, read comment

Public Comment:

Voice Message from Alicia Tapia

Questions:

Mr. Martoma confirmed for Commissioner Becerra that this amendment is a procedural cleanup and will bring the parcel's zoning into master plan conformance.

Commissioner Becerra referenced the traffic concern expressed during public comment and asked if there are conditions that can be added to address that issue.

Mike Railey, Planning Manager, stated this is a zoning map amendment and they cannot condition zoning. Regardless of what is built on this site in the

future, it will trigger a site plan review for residential adjacency so there would be discretionary review.

Commissioner Del Villar asked for an explanation on how this amendment is bringing the site into conformance with the master plan when there is already residential surrounding it.

Mr. Martoma explained that this parcel and the parcels around it were assigned the master plan land use designation of Mixed Employment through the ReImagine Reno master plan update. With that there are some inconsistencies with some of the current zoning and master plan land use designations. This request allows bringing this site's zoning in conformance with the master plan.

Commissioner Del Villar expressed concern that Ward 4 is looking for more housing and services, not more warehouses and light industrial. She asked if someone could build housing here.

Mr. Railey explained that the parcels in this area that were developed were developed in the unincorporated county before it was in the City of Reno. As part of the ReImagine Reno update this entire area was seen as a transition between heavy industrial and residential so Mixed Employment was assigned. In order to build housing here it would take a master plan amendment to change it back to residential.

It was moved by Manny Becerra, seconded by Kerry Rohrmeier, to recommend that City Council approve the zoning map amendment by ordinance. Motion Pass.

RESULT:	Approve [6 TO 0]
MOVER:	Manny Becerra, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kerry Rohrmeier, Vice Chair
AYES:	Armstrong, Becerra, Del Villar, Drakulich, Rohrmeier, Velto
NAYS:	
ABSENT:	Silvia Villanueva
ABSTAIN:	
RECUSED:	

- 4.4 Staff Report (For Possible Action): Case No. **LDC25-00015 (Reno Housing Authority at Carville Master Plan and Zoning Map Amendments)** – A request has been made for: 1) a Master Plan Amendment from Mixed Neighborhood (MX) to Multi-Family Neighborhood (MF); and 2) a zoning map amendment from Multi-Family Residential - 14 units per acre (MF-14) to Multi-Family Residential – 30 units per acre (MF-30). The ±0.75 acre site is composed of four parcels located at the northeast corner of Sutro Street and Carville Drive, extending

±250 feet east along the north side of Carville Drive, south of Hillboro Avenue. **[Ward 1]**

Carter Williams, Associate Planner, presented the staff report including staff analysis of the request.

Stacie Huggins, Wood Rodgers, gave a brief overview of plans for a future project.

Disclosures: familiar with the site, read and reviewed material, visited the site, spoke to traffic police, spoke to the applicant's representative

Public Comment: none

Questions:

Commissioner Becerra asked what will happen with the current tenants.

JD Klippenstein, Reno Housing Authority, stated there are currently six occupied units and all of those tenants would receive relocation assistance and financial assistance to cover all moving costs.

Commissioner Del Villar asked about parking and how that is being evaluated.

Mr. Williams explained that this is a zone change and there is no project being presented. When they do come forward with a project, they will have to meet the standards.

It was moved by J.D. Drakulich, seconded by Christina Del Villar, to adopt the Master Plan amendment by resolution and recommend that City Council approve the Master Plan and zoning map amendments, subject to conformance review by the Regional Planning Commission. Motion Pass.

RESULT:	Approve [6 TO 0]
MOVER:	J.D. Drakulich, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Christina Del Villar, Commissioner
AYES:	Armstrong, Becerra, Del Villar, Drakulich, Rohrmeier, Velto
NAYS:	
ABSENT:	Silvia Villanueva
ABSTAIN:	
RECUSED:	

- 4.5 Staff Report (For Possible Action): Case No. **LDC25-00016 (Plumas Redevelopment)** - A request has been made for a conditional use permit

to allow for: 1) a 273-unit multi-family apartment complex; and 2) grading resulting in fills greater than ten feet. The ±9.48 acre project site includes three parcels and is located on the southeast corner of Plumas Street and South McCarran Boulevard. The site is located in the General Commercial (GC) zoning district and has a Master Plan land use designation of Suburban Mixed-Use (SMU). **[Ward 2]**

Leah Piccotti, Associate Planner, presented the staff report including staff analysis of the request.

Andy Durling, Wood Rodgers, gave an overview of the project.

Disclosures: familiar with the site, spoke with applicant's representative and residents, received and read emails

Public Comment:

Correspondence received was forwarded to the Planning Commission and entered into the record.

Voice messages from the following were played during the meeting:

Brett Glover

Karen Raits

Lori Glover

Sandra Bankston

Live Public Comment:

Kim Bacchus – via zoom

Terry Ruppert

Steve Topol

Laura Menotti

Marianne Merriam

Questions:

Commissioner Becerra asked staff by what measure or measures these findings are evaluated.

Ms. Piccotti explained that when staff analyzes the findings, they look at the surrounding uses and if the new use can exist there without conflict. There is no quantifiable standard. Staff is looking at the types of uses that are generally permitted in a Neighborhood Commercial, General Commercial Residential type of area and if they can coexist and function the same as other uses around it.

Ms. Piccotti confirmed again for Commissioner Becerra that there is no quantifiable standard. She also confirmed that there are other examples of

multi-family projects adjacent to single family uses and the applicants have worked hard to exceed Reno Municipal Code standards and that increases the compatibility.

Commissioner Velto referred to public comments with concerns regarding the access off of Lakeside and asked if this project can be developed without that and have only the Plumas access.

Mr. Durling stated they have had extensive discussions with city engineering staff about that. The traffic study anticipated that 90% of the traffic would use the Plumas access and that is a shared driveway with the adjacent property. It was determined that the second access is needed.

Commissioner Velto asked if they considered having both access points on Plumas.

Mr. Durling explained that there is not enough room to have two access points on Plumas.

Commissioner Del Villar asked if the Fire Department has come to check out the access.

Mr. Durling confirmed that the design accommodates the requirements for fire truck access.

Commissioner Del Villar referred to public comments with concerns regarding “bait and switch” of proposed plans for the site. Her understanding is that Thompson Thrift has not purchased the property yet and she asked what the process is for Thompson Thrift at this point.

Mr. Durling explained that there is an existing approved project for this site for 314 condos. Thompson Thrift came in and is offering to buy the property to develop their business model. Their purchase is contingent upon these approvals.

Commissioner Rohrmeier asked about the justification for the proposed large over-parking.

Mr. Durling explained that some of it is market-based. Thompson Thrift is a nation-wide developer and knows their product and this is their model. When the previous project came through there was concern that there was not enough parking and that there would be spill out of on-street parking on Plumas.

Mr. Durling confirmed for Commissioner Rohrmeier that there will be some garages and carports that will provide shaded parking.

Commissioner Del Villar asked staff what the height is of the Lakeridge Apartments to the east of this site.

Ms. Piccotti stated she does not know but that MF21 zoning district has a maximum building height of 45 feet.

Commissioner Velto asked if the Planning Commission is supposed to consider this request compared to what has already been approved when making the findings.

Ms. Piccotti explained that if this request was done as an amendment to the previously approved project, then they would be looking at that as well. However, this is a completely separate project and staff recommends that it be looked at with fresh eyes. The history of the previously approved project was included in the staff presentation to show that this site has been zoned and vetted for this type of use already and the findings were made at that time.

Mr. Durling confirmed for Commissioner Velto that they share staff's sentiment on that.

Commissioner Rohrmeier asked staff what the EV requirements are for multi-family.

Ms. Piccotti stated they do not currently require EV parking stations in code. It is under the purview of the Planning Commission to add a condition of approval requiring that.

Commissioner Rohrmeier asked the applicant if they are open to something like that.

Mr. Durling stated the applicant does incorporate EV charging into some of the garages and they would have some spaces dedicated with EV charging. At this point it is market driven and they would prefer not to have a specific condition on that.

Commissioner Rohrmeier asked if there is some ordinance work on this topic.

Mike Railey, Planning Manager, stated there is some internal discussion but so far nothing is being carried forward. What they have found as projects come forward is that it is market driven. If the tenants demand it, then it can be installed.

Commissioner Becerra asked what sustainability approaches around the Reno Sustainability and Climate Action Plan staff asked the applicant to meet.

Ms. Piccotti stated she needs a few minutes to review the Master Plan for sustainability information.

Garrett Gordon stated the applicant would agree to a condition to add EV charging stations for 5% of the required parking.

Commissioner Becerra asked if the applicant would be open to adding solar on the parking structures.

Commissioner Velto stated that he likes solar power and electric vehicles but he is very concerned that they might be overstepping what they are allowed to do by placing these conditions unless they are tied to the findings.

Commissioner Becerra noted that staff did say it is at the Planning Commission's discretion to ask for those things.

Mr. Gordon stated that solar is more complicated than agreeing to charging stations and he is not in a position to answer that today, other than stating that the applicant will use their best efforts to incorporate solar if possible.

Chair Armstrong asked staff if there has ever been a condition added by the Planning Commission or City Council to put solar on any residential or commercial development.

Ms. Piccotti stated she has not seen that condition added in the three years she has been with the city.

Chair Armstrong expressed concern with overstepping their bounds as a body with respect to adding conditions if there is no precedent for it. He asked Legal Counsel for an opinion.

Karl Hall, City Attorney, stated he does not think it is appropriate to add conditions if they are not related to the findings before them.

Commissioner Del Villar asked how the future widening of McCarran would consolidate what is at the site now.

Mr. Durling stated they have looked into that and it is some of the rationale for why they have such a wide landscape proposed. There is room to accommodate an additional lane.

Commissioner Del Villar referenced public comments regarding the proposed design and asked if the applicant would consider a different design.

Mr. Durling discussed the proposed design and stated they would not consider changing that.

Ms. Piccotti responded to Commissioner Becerra's earlier question and stated there is a section in Reno Municipal Code labeled Sustainability and it says "coming soon", so there are no sustainability codes in Title 18. When they did the Master Plan in 2021, alongside that they wanted to do a Sustainability and Climate Action Plan. The sustainability standards would in turn come from that plan. To her understanding, that has not been completed yet.

Commissioner Becerra asked how staff currently would tie sustainability initiatives to the findings for any project.

Ms. Piccotti stated when they looked at the findings they were not analyzing sustainability.

Mr. Railey stated there are Master Plan policies related to transit oriented development and promoting higher densities along transit corridors and that sort of thing. When it comes to renewable energy, it does not mandate but encourages solar, wind and geothermal.

Discussion:

Commissioner Drakulich agreed that requiring solar would be overstepping. A lot of the concerns expressed when the previous proposal was considered have been addressed with the current proposal. He sees an overall better project and will support the request.

Commissioner Velto stated he largely agrees with what Commissioner Drakulich said and he can make the findings for the project. The applicant has done a good job improving it from what is currently approved. If we want to get to a place where we require solar, the ordinance needs to change before we can do that.

Commissioner Del Villar stated she was not here when the current project was approved and she is not originally from Reno so this is an area she is not as familiar with. She is listening to what the public is saying about safety and the look and feel of the project. Change is hard and development is going to happen. The question is if this is the right project for this space and she is still on the fence.

Commissioner Rohrmeier stated she appreciates that this is transit oriented development and that there is density going in at this location. She does not necessarily agree that over-parking isn't something that shouldn't be conditioned. That is a special circumstance, in which case mitigation would be something like EV parking chargers. This is not a brand new land use so maybe solar is not the appropriate ask, but EV chargers is something we should take this opportunity to get in print so that it has to be done.

Commissioner Becerra stated he does not necessarily want to mandate anything. His approach is how can we negotiate a better project and push us towards something that would take a lot longer if we don't speak up for the community and for the initiatives we want to push towards. Looking at this project with a fresh set of eyes, I am kind of on the fence, particularly because my line of questioning and conversation with staff in that there is not a tangible scorecard for making the compatibility. I am having a hard time making that tangible checkbox myself.

Chair Armstrong stated he thinks it makes perfect sense if the applicant is motivated and willing to condition for EV parking to put it in ink. He struggles to see how multi-family housing in this area would not be compatible. He does not have any issues with compatibility even though there is not a quantifiable scorecard. Common sense would suggest that it tends to fit.

Commissioner Velto stated he was persuaded by Commissioner Rohrmeier tying the EV charging stations to mitigation for traffic and over-parking. He agrees that this is compatible. For the commissioners that are on the fence, there is MF21 right across the street and there is a Wells Fargo building that is very high. This would be right in line with what is directly across the street so multi-family does fit there. There is an argument potentially for aesthetic compatibility but one of the apartment complexes in the area has a similar color so he is not sure where that plays into it. There is a lot of multi-family in the area and he can make the compatibility finding.

Merisa Harned, Headway Transportation, answered questions from Commissioner Becerra regarding the current and projected level of service for the intersection at Plumas.

Chair Armstrong read the appeal process into the record after the motion passed.

A recess was called at this time and Agenda Item 4.1 was heard upon reconvening at 7:50 p.m.

It was moved by Alex Velto, seconded by Kerry Rohrmeier, to approve the conditional use permit, subject to the conditions listed in the staff report, with the additional condition that 5% of the required parking have EV chargers. Motion Pass.

RESULT:	Approve [6 TO 0]
MOVER:	Alex Velto, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kerry Rohrmeier, Vice Chair
AYES:	Armstrong, Becerra, Del Villar, Drakulich, Rohrmeier, Velto
NAYS:	
ABSENT:	Silvia Villanueva
ABSTAIN:	
RECUSED:	

Public Hearing items were heard out of order with Agenda Item 4.5 heard first.

5 Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Liaison Report

Commissioner Rohrmeier reported that the Regional Planning Commission approved the update to the 2024 Regional Plan.

6 Staff Announcements

- 6.1 Report on status of Planning Division projects.
 - 6.2 Announcement of upcoming training opportunities.
 - 6.3 Report on status of responses to staff direction received at previous meetings.
 - 6.4 Report on actions taken by City Council on previous Planning Commission items.
- The Arrowleaf zone change and zoning code update will go to City Council next week.
- City Council provided input to staff on updates to the sign code and outreach will continue on that.
- Security Circle zone change will go to City Council on January 8, 2025.
- Staff is working on training sections that will be brought to the Planning Commission after the first of the year.

7 Commissioner's Suggestions for Future Agenda Items (For Possible Action)

Commissioner Rohrmeier requested a staff presentation on what other cities and counties are doing in terms of local ordinances for data center.

Commissioner Becerra requested information on how they can move forward on a sustainability

ordinance.

8 Public Comment (This item is for either public comment on any action item or for any general public comment.)

None

9 Adjournment (For Possible Action)

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

DRAFT