AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING OF THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
May 5, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.
VIA TELECONFERENCE
https://elcerrito.webex.com/elcerrito/j.php?MTID=m839eccb34f53b3b42f7fe3b897e206b4
Event ID: 187 783 6986
Event Password: Planning
Or Join by Phone: 1-408-418-9388
Access code: 187 783 6986

7:30 p.m. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

1. ROLL CALL – Chair Ben Chuaqui; Vice-Chair Wenlin Li; Members Andrea Lucas, Gyan Singh and John Thompson

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

3. COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISON ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS
The City Council Liaison or City staff may report on matters of general interest to the Design Review Board, Council policies, priorities and significant actions taken by the City Council.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC
Remarks are typically limited to three minutes per person, and may be on anything within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body. Remarks on non-agenda items will be heard first, remarks on agenda items will be heard at the time the item is discussed.

5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES
Adoption of the November 18, 2020 meeting minutes

6. ADOPTION OF MEETING SCHEDULE
Adoption of the 2021 regular meeting schedule.

7. COMMUNICATION/CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE
This time on the agenda is reserved for Design Review Board members to disclose communications from individuals regarding specific agenda items or to state a potential conflict of interest in relation to a specific agenda item.

8. PUBLIC HEARING: REVISION TO 10963 SAN PABLO AVENUE (CERRITO VISTA)
Application: PL21-0045
Applicant: Liane Garcia, Josehart Construction
Location: 10963 San Pablo Avenue
APN: 509-110-015
Zoning: Transit Oriented Mixed Intensity Mixed Use district (TOMIMU)
General Plan: Transit Oriented Mixed Intensity Mixed Use district (TOMIMU)
Request: Design Review Board consideration of an amendment to Tier II Design Review approval of application PL17-0084 to allow modification to the exterior elevations.
CEQA: This project has been found to be consistent with the Program Environmental Impact Report prepared for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15168(c) and 15182.

9. ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Staff Liaison, Jeff Ballantine at 510-215-4330. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I).

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the members regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at City Hall during normal business hours.
MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
November 18, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

This meeting was be held via teleconference.

7:30 p.m. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

1. ROLL CALL – Chair Ben Chuaqui; Members Carl Groch, Gyan Singh, and John Thompson. Boardmember Li was absent.

2. COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISON ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS
Mayor Pro Tem Quinto provided an update on the City’s budget and on the Contra Costa County Health Order regarding COVID.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC
No speakers addressed the Board.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

5. COMMUNICATION/CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE
Chair Chuaqui indicated that the applicant of 11690 San Pablo Avenue is a client of his architecture firm, Van Meter Williams Pollack, and that he will recuse himself from this item. Member Groch indicated that the applicant of 5730 El Dorado Street is a client of his and that he will recuse himself from this project. Member Thompson disclosed that he previously worked for the architecture firm, Lowney Architecture, that prepared the plans for 11690 San Pablo Avenue but that he is no longer works for this firm and that he does not have conflict of interest on this project.

6. PUBLIC HEARING: 11690 SAN PABLO AVE. TIER IV DESIGN REVIEW
Application: PL20-0025
Applicant: Sarah White, Bridge Housing
Location: 11690 San Pablo Avenue
APN: 502-062-031
Zoning: Transit-Oriented Higher-Intensity Mixed Use (TOHIMU)
General Plan: Transit-Oriented Higher-Intensity Mixed Use (TOHIMU)
Request: Design Review Board consideration of Tier IV Design Review for two alternative projects, pursuant to the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. One alternative includes a new 6-story building containing 69 affordable units. The other alternative includes a new 6-story building containing 74 affordable units for seniors. Both alternatives include revisions to a
previously approved project at this location for a new 5-story building containing 67 affordable units.

CEQA: A 2017 Initial Study Checklist for the previously approved project determined that the project was found to be consistent with the Program Environmental Impact Report prepared for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 and Public Resources Code Section 21166. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15164, an Addendum to the Initial Study Checklist, determined that the proposed project would not result in new or substantially more adverse significant environmental effects.

Senior Planner Jeff Ballantine presented the staff report and answered questions from the Board.

The applicant, Sarah White, and project architect, Nickolos Gomez, presented the project and answered questions from the Board.

The public hearing was opened.

No comments were provided.

The public hearing was closed.

**Moved/Second:** Boardmember Groch/Singh. **Action:** passed a motion to approve the project with the addition of the following conditions of approval:

1. The applicant shall make the following revisions to the plans, for review and approval by the Zoning Administrator, prior to issuance of a building permit:
   
   a. Relocate the Knott Avenue ground floor entrance to San Pablo Avenue.
   b. Revise the proposed west elevation to incorporate two main body elements above the ground floor instead of three body elements, with regards to massing. In addition, explore revising the ground floor of the west elevation to have only one color and material.
   c. Revise the proposed butterfly roof at the northwest corner of the building into a flat or inclined roof and explore incorporating a change in materials and/or colors for the upper couple of feet of the wall for this corner of the building.
   d. Reduce the depth of the roof eave for the middle portion of the north elevation or delete the overhang entirely from the middle portion, such that the parapet wall is flush with the building wall below.
   e. Revise the windows on the northwest corner for the fifth and sixth floors, such as combining and/or enlarging some of the windows to more clearly indicate that the interior space is a living room and not bedrooms.
   f. Move the proposed two bicycle racks at the northwest corner of the building towards the east along Knott Avenue.
   g. For the Traditional Housing Alternative, to the extent that the project is still able to comply with transparency standards in the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, utilize transparent glass for the portion of the Bike Room windows that is approximately 8 feet above the ground and translucent glass for the remaining portion of the windows.

**Ayes:** Boardmembers Groch, Singh, Thompson. **Noes:** Groch. **Abstain:** Chuaqui. **Absent:** Li.
7. PUBLIC HEARING: 5730 EL DORADO STREET DESIGN REVIEW

Application: PL19-0036
Applicant: Eva Wu and Stanley Wu
Location: 5730 El Dorado Street
APN: 510-045-006
Zoning: RM (Multi-Family Residential)
General Plan: High Density Residential
Request: Design Review Board consideration of a Design Review application for a proposed new 3,389 square foot triplex and a proposed new 1,646 square foot duplex on a vacant lot, pursuant to Chapter 19.38, ECMC.

CEQA: This project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15332 of the CEQA Guidelines, Class 32: In-Fill Development Projects.

Senior Planner Jeff Ballantine presented the staff report and answered questions from the Board.

The applicant, Eva Wu, presented the project and answered questions from the Board.

The public hearing was opened.

No comments were provided.

The public hearing was closed.

Moved/Second: Boardmember Singh/Thompson. Action: passed a motion to approve the project with the addition of the following conditions of approval:

1. The applicant shall make the following revisions to the plans for review and approval by the Zoning Administrator, prior to issuance of a building permit:
   a. Increase the size of the window on the front (north) elevation of the ground floor of the triplex building that serves the Study for Unit A.
   b. Explore adding some windows on the front (north) elevation of the triplex building where the interior stairs are located for Unit A.
   c. Enhance entrances for both units in the duplex building and for the front unit (Unit A) in the triplex building. For instance, a small roof could be added to Unit A of the triplex building and Unit 1 of the duplex building. The landing and roof for the entrance of Unit 2 of the duplex building could also be enhanced.
   d. Add more plants in the patio area.
   e. Specify the proposed color(s) for the fascia boards for both buildings.


8. ADJOURNMENT

9:52 p.m.
2021
Regular Meeting Schedule

Location: City Council Chambers
Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m.

### Design Review Board

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CERRITO VISTA AMENDMENT

DETAILS

Application Number: PL21-0045

Applicant: Liane Garcia, Josehart Construction

Location: 10963 San Pablo Avenue

APN: 509-110-015

Zoning: Transit Oriented Mixed Intensity Mixed Use district (TOMIMU)

General Plan: Transit Oriented Mixed Intensity Mixed Use district (TOMIMU)

Request: Design Review Board consideration of an amendment to Tier II Design Review approval of application PL17-0084 to allow modification to the exterior elevations.

CEQA: This project has been found to be consistent with the Program Environmental Impact Report prepared for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15168(c) and 15182.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project now known as Cerrito Vista was approved by the Design Review Board on May 2, 2018. The project was constructed from 2019 to 2021.

Upon inspection of the building, City staff became aware that changes had been made to the south elevation which were never submitted to the City for approval. The changes include a substantial reduction of ribbed metal panels and the elimination of sunshades over several windows. These changes are considered major changes and require approval of the Design Review Board.

Based on the information contained in this report, staff is recommending approval of the amendment.
Background

Site Location and Layout

The project site is approximately 0.43 acre (18,259-square-foot lot) and is located at 10963 San Pablo Avenue, on the southwest corner of San Pablo Avenue and Jefferson Avenue. The project site comprises 0.49 acres.

The project site is designated Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed Use (TOMIMU) in the City’s General Plan, and is zoned as TOMIMU in the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan as well.

Vicinity Map

Previous Entitlements

The project now known as Cerrito Vista is located at 10963 San Pablo Avenue. The project was approved by the Design Review Board on May 2, 2018. A building permit application was submitted on May 25, 2018, and the building permit was issued on May 9, 2019. The project was constructed during 2019-2021, and a Certificate of Occupancy was granted on February 25, 2021. The building is currently occupied.

Adjacent Land Uses

North: A four-story, 64-unit senior assisted living facility.

East: An apartment complex, consisting of six three-story buildings, with related covered parking; to the south of this site is the City of El Cerrito Midtown Activity Center (MAC).

South: A mixed use development with ground floor commercial uses, and 22 apartment units.

West: A six-unit multi-family apartment building (within the City of Richmond).
Analysis

Project Amendment

The constructed project consists of a five-story building, with approximately 3,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space, a 34-space off-street parking garage, and 50 residential units. Photos of the building are included below:

*East Elevation (from San Pablo Ave)*

*North Elevation (from Jefferson Ave)*

*South Elevation*
Project Amendment

The proposed amendment consists of changes to the approved south elevation of the building. Upon inspection of the building, City staff became aware that changes had been made to the plans after the issuance of the building permit. These changes were never submitted as revisions to the issued building permit. Notably, the siding on the south elevation had been extensively modified from the approved plans. The approved plans featured ribbed metal panels which extended approximately 70 feet on the south elevation, starting at the front corner of the building. This siding material would have encompassed three banks of windows, with two banks of window featuring sunshades above them. The constructed building contained less than 25 feet of the ribbed metal panels. This change encompasses only one bank of windows and the sunshades have been deleted from the other windows.
Amendment Process

Section 19.32.110 of the El Cerrito Zoning Ordinance specifies the procedures for amendments to prior approvals. The Zoning Administrator is permitted to approve minor changes to plans which have been approved by the Design Review Board.

The Zoning Administrator typically approves minor changes to projects that have occurred during construction or that are discovered during the inspection process. For example, in the case of this project, the Zoning Administrator approved changes to the landscape plan to account for conditions that
only became known after approval: the building footing limited the area for planting and the plants that had originally been approved would not have survived. The changes to the south elevation are considered major changes. The changes dramatically reduce the amount of ribbed metal panels on this elevation, noticeable modifying the approved building elevation. Due to the lower height of the building to the south, the south elevation of Cerrito Vista is prominent in the northbound direction on San Pablo Avenue.

Compliance with the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

The proposed amendment does not alter the building compliance with the standards of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. For reference, the staff report from the April 4, 2018 Design Review Board meeting is included as Attachment 3. This staff report documents the compliance of the approved project with the standards of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.

Public Notice and Comment

The required public notice for the project was published in the East Bay Times, mailed to owners of property within 300 feet of the project site and posted at the site on April 14, 2021.

No comments were received prior to the publication of this report.

Environmental Review

An Initial Study Checklist was prepared for the approved project. The approved project was determined to be consistent with the program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. The proposed amendment does not change any of the information presented in the Initial Study Checklist, nor does it represent any potential new impact of the project. The project remains consistent with the program EIR for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.

General Plan Compliance

The amendment is consistent with and will implement the following policies of the El Cerrito General Plan:

**CD5.1: Design Review Process.** Continue design review and approval process for all new development, changes, additions, and modifications of existing buildings (except for single-family homes on existing lots).

The proposed modification requires an amendment to the prior Design Review Board approval. The Design Review Board will consider this amendment.

Required Findings

Pursuant to Section 2.03.08.01.02.D.4 of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, in acting to approve or conditionally approve an application for a Tier IV application, the Design Review Board shall make the following findings:

a. That the project complies with all applicable Specific Plan design standards;

As discussed in the staff report and the attachments, this amendment does not alter the project’s compliance with the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, and project’s compliance with the Specific Plan is documented in the attached staff report.

b. That the amendment implements applicable goals and policies of the El Cerrito General Plan.
As discussed in this report, this amendment will implement the following goals of the El Cerrito General Plan: CD5.1, Design Review Process.

The approved project implements the following goals of the El Cerrito General Plan:


Staff Recommendation

Based on the information contained in this report, staff recommends approval of Planning Application No. PL21-0045, as conditioned by the draft resolution in Attachment 1.

Proposed Motion

Move adoption of Design Review Board Resolution DRB 21-01 granting and amendment to a prior Tier II Design Review approval for Planning Application No. PL17-0084, a project that includes a 5-story residential building containing 50 dwelling units located at 10963 San Pablo Avenue.

Appeal Period

Within ten (10) working days after the date of the decision, the Design Review Board action may be appealed to the Planning Commission.

Attachments

1. Draft Resolution
2. Project Plans
3. April 4, 2018 staff report
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF EL CERRITO DESIGN REVIEW BOARD AMENDING A PRIOR TIER II DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL FOR A BUILDING CONTAINING 50 RESIDENTIAL UNITS AT 10963 SAN PABLO AVENUE.

WHEREAS, the site is located within the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area;

WHEREAS, the General Plan land use classification of the site is Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed Use;

WHEREAS, the zoning district of the site is Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed Use (TOMIMU), and the project is located on a Community Street and a Neighborhood Street;

WHEREAS, the General Plan land use designation of the site is Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed Use (TOMIMU);

WHEREAS, the site is located at 10963 San Pablo Avenue;

WHEREAS, on May 2, 2018, the Design Review Board adopted Resolution DRB 18-03, approving a project containing 50 residential units at 10963 San Pablo Avenue; and

WHEREAS, on May 5, 2021, the Design Review Board, after due consideration of all evidence and reports offered for review, does find and determine the following:

1. The project is consistent with the Program Environmental Impact Report certified for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15168(c) and 15182.

2. The project complies with all applicable standards of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. The project complies with the standards for the San Pablo Avenue Commercial Street type and Neighborhood Street type, the standards for the Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed Use district, and all other applicable standards of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. The amendment does not alter the project’s compliance with the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.

3. The project will implement the following goals of the El Cerrito General Plan: LU1.5: Suitable Housing, LU2.1: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area, LU4.1: Mixture of Uses, LU6.2: Circulation Alternatives, CD1.9: Building Design, CD2.1: Street Frontages, CD2.3: Streetscape Improvements, CD3.2: Usable Open Space, CD3.3: Site Landscaping, CD3.12, Landscape species; CD4.2 Building Articulation; CD5.1, Design Review Process; T2.1: Land Use Patterns, T2.2: Project Design, Policies H2.2, and H2.3 of Housing Element Goal H2: New Housing Development. The amendment does not alter the project’s consistency with the El Cerrito General Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that after careful consideration of maps, facts, exhibits, correspondence, and testimony, and other evidence submitted in this matter, and, in consideration of the findings, the El Cerrito Design Review Board hereby approves Application No. PL21-0045, subject to the following conditions:
Planning Division:

1. The project will be constructed substantially in conformance with the plans submitted on March 9, 2021. Minor changes may be approved by the Zoning Administrator. All improvements shall be installed in accordance with these approvals. Once constructed or installed, all improvements shall be maintained as approved.

2. If Applicant constructs the building or makes improvements in accordance with these approvals, but fails to comply with any of the Conditions of Approval or limitations set forth in these Conditions of Approval and does not cure any such failure within a reasonable time after notice from the City of El Cerrito, then such failure shall be cause for nonissuance of a certificate of occupancy, revocation or modification of these approvals or any other remedies available to the City.

3. These Conditions of Approval shall apply to any successor in interest in the property and Applicant shall be responsible for assuring that the successor in interest is informed of the terms and conditions of this approval.

4. All Conditions of Approval of Resolution DRB 18-03 remain in effect.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this resolution was adopted by the El Cerrito Design Review Board at a regular meeting held on May 5, 2021, upon motion of Boardmember ____, second by Boardmember ______:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

_________________________
Sean Moss, AICP
Planning Manager
DESIGN REVIEW Tier II Staff Report
April 4, 2018

10963 San Pablo Avenue

DETAILS

Application Number: PL17-0084

Applicant: Brian Williams, Studio KDA

Location: 10963 San Pablo Avenue

APN: 509-110-015, and 017

Zoning: Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed Use (TOMIMU)

General Plan: Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed Use (TOMIMU)

Request: Design Review Board consideration of Tier II Design Review, pursuant to the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, for a new 5-story building containing 50 residential units, and 3,000 of commercial square feet.

CEQA: This project has been found to be consistent with the Program Environmental Impact Report prepared for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15168 and 15182.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The requested entitlement for Design Review Board review consists of a Tier II Design Review project, pursuant to the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.

The project requires Tier II Design Review approval from the Design Review Board. This review includes authority over the following elements only:

- Exterior building colors, materials, and textures
- Landscaping
- Site Plan
- Building facades and articulation
- Relationship of the development to adjacent public rights-of-way
- Signs
- Locations and footprints of bioretention facilities as required for stormwater management

The project proposes a new 5-story building containing 50 residential units, and 3,000 of commercial square feet. Thirty-four (34) on-site parking spaces are proposed.

The building features a mixture of traditional and contemporary design elements. The ground floor entry for the commercial space is proposed along San Pablo Avenue. The main residential lobby access is from Jefferson Avenue. This entry integrates public art and is immediately abutting a public open space. The San Pablo Avenue and Jefferson elevations share similar design elements. Both ground floor elevations are to be clad in white and gray ceramic tile and board formed concrete. The upper floors of the both elevations are to be a combination of wood siding, and cement plaster, and standing seam metal on the Jefferson Avenue elevation. The railings are to be of wood, metal and a polycarbonate panel. Black anodized aluminum windows are proposed throughout the project. The landscape design features several native, drought-tolerant species.

Based on the information in this report, which supports the required findings, staff recommends approval of the project.
Background

Site Location and Layout

The project site is located within the San Pablo Avenue corridor that is predominantly developed with commercial, retail uses and multi-family residential uses.

The project site is approximately 0.43 acre (18,259-square-foot lot) and is located at 10963 San Pablo Avenue, on the southwest corner of San Pablo Avenue and Jefferson Avenue. The project site is generally level and consists of two parcels between the City of El Cerrito (APN 509-110-015-5), and the City of Richmond (APN 509-110-017-1). Together, these two parcels comprise a .49 acre site. The El Cerrito parcel is on the eastern portion of the site and is an approximately 0.35-acre parallelogram shaped parcel of land with an approximately 9,360-square-foot one-story commercial building and associated paved and landscaped areas. The Richmond portion of the site is 3,092 square feet and approximately 0.070 acre bordering Jefferson Avenue to the west, and is used primarily for parking.

Pursuant to Section 2.03.02.04, parcels which lie across jurisdictional boundaries shall be subject to the entitlement process of the jurisdiction in which it has the most land acreage. The other jurisdiction will remain a responsible agency and projects may be subject to additional design review. In this case, the staff of El Cerrito and Richmond have worked collaboratively in the review of the project and comments have been integrated into the current proposal. See Unique Considerations Section.

Vicinity Map

The project site’s bordering streets are Jefferson Avenue to the north, and San Pablo Avenue to the east. There is a “no build” easement on the southern edge of the property limits that is approximately 140 feet long and 10 feet wide.

The project site is designated Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed Use (TOMIMU) in the City’s General Plan, and is zoned as TOMIMU in the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan as well. The TOMIMU designation allows for mixed use development with a 55-foot height limit.
Regional vehicular access to the project site is provided by Interstate 80 (I 80) located to the west of the site; the El Cerrito del Norte BART Station is located 0.7 mile south of the site. AC Transit bus service is located within 0.25 mile of the project site.

Existing Public Right-of-Way

The overall site is bounded by two streets: San Pablo Avenue, and Jefferson Avenue. Vehicular access is proposed from a new off-street garage on Jefferson Avenue. The Jefferson Avenue frontage is 175 feet in length, and the frontage along San Pablo Avenue is 101 feet in length. San Pablo Avenue features an existing AC Transit bus stop (Lines 72 and 72M).

Existing/Previous Land Use

The existing one-story commercial building is currently occupied by three businesses, including a doughnut shop, a hair salon, and an arcade/museum. The site is generally flat and slopes west to east and south to north. There is approximately 7,000 square feet of asphalt and concrete utilized as a parking lot, which is accessible from a driveway along Jefferson Avenue. A total of 20 striped parking spaces are currently on the site. A concrete access ramp is located on the south side of the building, and a wooden access ramp is located on the building’s west side. Approximately 1,700 square feet of landscaped area is primarily on the site’s western perimeter of the building. The sparse vegetation on the site consists of street trees lining the sidewalks and patches of grass and shrubs around the perimeter and throughout the site.

Site Photo
Adjacent Land Uses

North: A four-story, 64 unit senior assisted living facility.

East: An apartment complex, consisting of six three-story buildings, with related covered parking; to the south of this site is land owned by the City of El Cerrito, and the future temporary location of the El Cerrito Senior Center.

South: A mixed use development with ground floor commercial uses, and 22 apartment units.

West: A six-unit multi-family apartment building (within the City of Richmond).

Analysis

Project Description

The proposed project is to construct a new five-story building, consisting of approximately 3,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space, a 34 space off-street parking garage, and 50 residential units consisting of 4 studio, 20 one-bedroom, 20 two-bedroom, and 6 three bedroom units. The proposed building includes ground floor bicycle storage, an outdoor rear yard area of approximately 2,000 square feet, a roof deck of approximately 748 square feet at the western side of the proposed building, as well as four separate amenity areas on the second through fifth floors. All of these spaces are proposed to be 453 square feet in size and include a gym on the second floor, a yoga room on the third floor, and a shared office space on the fourth and fifth floors. Each of these spaces contains a full bath. There are two stairways, and one elevator to serve the residents of this building.

Unique Considerations

This project is unique in that the site is bisected by the boundary line between the cities of El Cerrito, and Richmond. Language in Section 2.03.02.04, Parcels in both Jurisdictions, of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, establishes an entitlement process for the jurisdiction in which has the most land acreage when parcels lie across jurisdictional boundaries. The other jurisdiction remains a responsible agency, and projects may be subject to additional design review. As this is the situation with this proposal, the City of El Cerrito is the jurisdiction with regulatory control, and has been coordinating with the City of Richmond regarding this proposal. Attachment 3 is the comment letter from the Design Review Chair of the City of Richmond.

A condition of approval has been prepared that requires the project applicant to submit an application for a Lot Merger (LM) to combine these two parcels prior to the issuance of a building permit from the City of El Cerrito. The Lot Merger combines these two parcels so a building permit can be issued, and does not affect the existing jurisdictional boundaries between the cities of El Cerrito and Richmond.

Vehicular Parking

If the proposed building is approved, 50 new dwelling units will be created. Thirty-four (34) on-site parking spaces are proposed, which results in a parking ratio of 0.68. The Transit Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed-Use (TOMIMU) district requires additional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures when the proposed parking ratio is between 0-1. The applicant prepared a TDM Plan with is included in Attachment 7. The Plan requires additional TDM measures consisting of: 1) subsidizing the purchase of Clipper Cards for each residential unit of the proposed building for one year. The subsidy is to be $3.00
per day per residential unit; and 2) designating the building management as the TDM Coordinator for the building; and 3) creating TDM marketing materials and providing tenant education on transportation options. These options include providing user focused maps, additional information about transit fare discounts, car and ride sharing options, carpool opportunities, and events that are focused on walking and bicycling. The conclusion of the TDM Plans states, “It is estimated that with the implementation of the strategies described above, the peak parking demand generated by Project residents would be reduced to between 31 and 46 parking spaces. Considering the 34 on-site parking spaces, it is estimated that Project would result in between a parking deficit of 12 spaces and a surplus of three spaces after implementation of the required and additional parking demand reduction strategies.”

Public and Private Open Space

A new public plaza, of 1,427 square feet, is proposed along Jefferson Avenue. This area consists of an informal seating area (that is adjacent to and outside of a commercial space) which can be used by patrons of this space or the public; a separate seating area that is part of an exterior landscape area; a bocce court, and a par course/exercise area. There is a shortage of 141.87 square feet of public open space which will be paid with an in-lieu fee for the required square footage of public open space.

There are private balconies for most of the residential units, a ground floor rear yard, and a fourth floor deck for private open space areas. These areas establish 5,588 square feet of private open space, which exceeds the requirement of 4,000 square feet required of the project (80 square feet per unit).

Compliance with the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

Chapter Two of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan establishes the land use regulations and development standards of the Specific Plan Area.

Some development standards apply throughout the Plan area. These include:

- Regulation by Street Type – which includes building placement, building form, and shadow analysis.
- Open Space Requirements – which includes private, common and public open spaces.

Other development standards vary by transect zone. The development standards that are related to the transect zone include:

- Use-Types of land use permitted, conditionally permitted or prohibited.
- Building Height- the minimums and maximums heights allowed.
- Parking of vehicles – the minimum and maximum number of spaces allowed.
- Parking of bicycles- the minimum number of spaces allowed.

This project is located in the Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed-Use (TOMIMU) Transect and meets all of the relevant development standards specified for its location in the Plan Area.

The tables below show the relevant Specific Plan standards and the compliance of the project with those standards. The project is located on the corner of San Pablo Avenue and Jefferson Avenue. This section of San Pablo Avenue is designated a Community Street. Jefferson Avenue is a Neighborhood Street.
**Regulation by Street Type:**  
**SPA Community Street**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Placement</th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sidewalk Amenity Zone</strong></td>
<td>6 ft. min</td>
<td>6 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sidewalk Pedestrian Zone</strong></td>
<td>8 ft. min</td>
<td>8 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sidewalk Activity Zone</strong></td>
<td>0 ft. min</td>
<td>0 ft. min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ground Floor Front Setback</strong></td>
<td>Min: distance needed to accommodate required zones; Max: Up to 10 ft. for non-residential uses; up to 15 ft. for residential uses</td>
<td>0 ft. min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Side Setback</strong></td>
<td>0 ft. min.</td>
<td>5 ft. min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rear Setback</strong></td>
<td>See Shadows</td>
<td>55 ft. (Meets shadow standards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedestrian Access</strong></td>
<td>Street facing ground floor units and spaces to have individual entries along front or side streets. Upper floor units and spaces to be accessed along the front or side streets.</td>
<td>2 entries to commercial spaces; 1 building access through a pathway and fence along the southern elevation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vehicular Access</strong></td>
<td>Max 20 ft. 2-way driveways, minimum 100 feet apart. Side access on corner lots.</td>
<td>(1) 20 ft. driveway on Jefferson Avenue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Building Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Form</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper Floor Setbacks</strong></td>
<td>See Shadows</td>
<td>Building is setback in compliance with required shadow standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ground Floor Ceiling Height</strong></td>
<td>14 ft. min.</td>
<td>14 ft. min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper Floor Ceiling Height</strong></td>
<td>9 ft. min.</td>
<td>9 ft. min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Length</strong></td>
<td>200 ft. max</td>
<td>101’ ft. along street frontage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ground Floor Transparency</strong></td>
<td>Non-residential 75% min</td>
<td>80% for Shop Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper Floor Transparency</strong></td>
<td>30% min</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Front Encroachments</strong></td>
<td>4 ft. max</td>
<td>0 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rear Encroachments</strong></td>
<td>4 ft. max</td>
<td>0 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allowed Frontage Types</strong></td>
<td>Min: 50% Flex</td>
<td>Shop Front (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Neighborhood Street</strong></th>
<th><strong>Required</strong></th>
<th><strong>Provided</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Placement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk Amenity Zone</td>
<td>5 ft. min</td>
<td>5 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk Pedestrian Zone</td>
<td>6 ft. min adjacent to commercial uses, 5 ft. min adjacent to residential uses</td>
<td>5 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk Activity Zone</td>
<td>0 ft. min</td>
<td>4 ft., 6 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor Front Setback</td>
<td>Min: distance needed to accommodate required zones Max: 10 ft. for non-residential uses, 15 ft. for residential uses</td>
<td>12 ft. 2 in. for residential use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian Access</td>
<td>Entries on front or side streets</td>
<td>Two (2) new building entries on Jefferson Avenue (one main lobby, one stairway)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicular Access</td>
<td>Max 20 ft. 2-way driveways. Side access on corner lots</td>
<td>One new curb cut that is 20 ft. wide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Form</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Floor Setbacks</td>
<td>See Shadows</td>
<td>35 feet on the side setback. Meets shadow standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor Ceiling Height</td>
<td>14 ft. min clear</td>
<td>14 ft. min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Floor Ceiling Height</td>
<td>9 ft. min clear</td>
<td>9 ft. min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Length</td>
<td>200 ft. max</td>
<td>175 ft. along Jefferson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor Transparency</td>
<td>Non-residential 50% min, Residential 30% min.</td>
<td>62% for non-residential; 31% for residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Floor Transparency</td>
<td>25% min</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Encroachments</td>
<td>2 ft. max</td>
<td>2 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Encroachments</td>
<td>4 ft. max</td>
<td>0 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowed Frontage Types</td>
<td>Front Yard, Forecourt (NE side), Flex (commercial), Shop Front (commercial)</td>
<td>Forecourt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: For the purposes of administering the development standards detailed above, the Zoning Administrator has determined that San Pablo Avenue is the front of the project site, and in the event of a conflict, the Community standards prevail.

### Open Space Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private/Common Open Space</strong></td>
<td>80 sq. ft./unit min 50x80=4,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>5,588 provided. Overall surplus for the project of 1,588 sq. ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Open Space</strong></td>
<td>25 sq. ft./1,000 sq. ft. of building for buildings &gt;25,000 sq. ft. (Total of 1,613.87 sq. ft. required)</td>
<td>1,472 sq. ft. of public open space provided; an in-lieu fee of $14,470.74 will be provided to the City for the public open space.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed Use Zone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parking</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto Parking</td>
<td>Up to 1.5 spaces/unit (Reductions and increases allowed with Zoning Administrator approval)</td>
<td>0.68 space per unit (total of 34 new garage spaces).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle Parking</td>
<td>Min 1 short-term space/20 units 50/20=2.5 (3) Residential 2,989 sq. ft. = 2 short term Commercial Min 1.5 long-term spaces/unit 1.5x50=75</td>
<td>6 short-term spaces Surplus 2 spaces 76 long-term spaces Surplus 1 space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Building Height

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum Height</strong></td>
<td>55 ft. max</td>
<td>55 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum Height</strong></td>
<td>3 stories residential, 2 stories commercial</td>
<td>5 residential stories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the project will implement the following strategies of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan:

**Strategy A.3**: Optimize Placemaking in all developments.

The project addresses San Pablo Avenue with entries onto the street and improvements within the public-right-of-way. The project will enhance San Pablo Avenue, as a place, in conformance with the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.

**Strategy B.1**: Maximize TOD potential (BART and AC Transit).

The project will provide 50 new housing units in close proximity to existing AC Transit lines. The project includes bike parking as required by the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan and will face San Pablo Avenue, providing a pleasant pedestrian environment along the street.
Strategy B.2: Stimulate investment in vacant/underutilized sites at key focus areas.

The project utilizes an under-utilized site that contains a one-story commercial building is currently occupied by three businesses, including a doughnut shop, a hair salon, and an arcade/museum in a small building. There is 7,000 square feet that is a surface parking lot with 20 parking spaces. The proposed project will provide 50 new housing units in close proximity to public transit.

Strategy C.3: Allow ground floor residential development to provide flexibility and expand the Specific Plan Area’s residential base.

The project proposes ground floor commercial space and will contribute to the range of small neighborhood retail or eating establishments. The balance of the project expands the residential base within the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area.

Strategy E.1: Promote infill development through increased land use intensity close to existing transit infrastructure.

The project will provide 50 new housing units in close proximity to existing public transit infrastructure.

Design Review Process

Pursuant to Section 2.03.08.01.02.B of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, Tier II Design Review is the entitlement process for new projects that have been designed in full-compliance with the design standards of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.

The Design Review Board is the body of decision for Tier II Design Review. The discretionary scope of Tier II Design Review includes the following components:

- Exterior building colors, materials, and textures
- Landscaping
- Site Plan
- Building facades and articulation
- Relationship of the development to adjacent public rights-of-way
- Signs
- Locations and footprints of bioretention facilities as required for stormwater management

Architectural Design

The building’s architecture incorporates a strong contemporary aesthetic. The building will feature a traditional-looking ground floor and street presence. The upper floors feature balconies that express a more contemporary aesthetic. The materials for the balconies on the north, west and east elevations are varied – using either a true cedar/redwood or a similar wood material, an exterior grade polycarbonate semi-translucent panel in lime green or metal railings (on the southern elevation) to create visual interest for the balconies. There are also a variety of colored Hardie panels which are used vertically on the San Pablo and Jefferson Avenue frontages to add interest to the building. The other materials of the building will be two different grey colors of the cement plaster, and vertically installed grey standing metal seam panels. The southern elevation also uses a bright blue colored cement plaster and standing seam metal panel to accentuate this elevation. The same bright blue colored cement plaster will be installed as the background color for the exterior stairway on the Jefferson Avenue elevation. The project features a flat roof. The ground floor would be clad in an exterior grade ceramic tile that is to be white and grey. Board formed concrete will also be used on the ground floor. The
project proposes to use black anodized aluminum windows for the ground floor commercial spaces, and black vinyl windows (VPI Quality Windows) for the residential units. The building integrates differing window shapes and sizes at appropriate locations, to create a consistent architectural language.

Project Renderings

West Elevation
Landscape Design

Seven street trees exist along the San Pablo and Jefferson Avenue elevations. Four of these trees – three Chinese Hackberry and one Sweet Gum – are to be removed as part of the project. Additionally, two smaller Ornamental Pear trees along Jefferson Avenue are to be removed as they interfere with the site work that is required for the project. Eight new 24” box Maidenhair trees are to be planted along the two streets. Eight new 15 gallon Red Maples are to be planted along the southern (rear) elevation. The two existing Ornamental Pear trees along this elevation will remain. A climbing vine, Boston Ivy, is proposed along the western and southern property lines to provide screening and to enhance the perimeter landscape. Additional species to be installed on the ground floor are Fern Pine, New Zealand Flax, Bulbine, Berkeley Sedge, and Mat Rush. The ground floor flow through planters are to have Dwarf Coffeeberry, Berkeley Sedge, Barberry, Deer Grass, Black Elderberry, and Yarrow. With the exception of Berkeley Sedge, and Barberry, the same four species described above are to be installed on the second floor through planter. The rooftop planting is to be Bamboo and grass.

The majority of the landscaping is proposed along the perimeter of the building, and along the western and southern property lines. The rooftop area of the proposed building illustrates an outdoor cooking area, and three outdoor seating areas. There is a shed roof at the western end of the fourth floor outdoor roof area and an additional landscaping area, consisting of bamboo, to create a physical buffer to the adjacent residential use.

Art in Public Places

The project is required to comply with Chapter 13.50, Art in Public Places of the El Cerrito Municipal Code. The applicant will be constructing a sculptural element above the entryway into the building along Jefferson Avenue. This sculptural element is to be of exterior grade polycarbonate semi-translucent panels in Lime Green. This same lime green polycarbonate material is used as the railing feature on some of the balconies of the proposed building.

Monetary Contributions to the Community

To understand the direct and indirect contributions to the community, staff has created a list illustrating the financial contributions that will be made by the applicant related to this project. Some are directly submitted to the City of El Cerrito. Others are submitted to community agencies such as the West Contra Costa Unified School District and West County Transportation Advisory Committee. These contributions are over and above what is required for their fair share of impacts to the Complete Streets
component of the Specific Plan referenced below, any fees paid to the Stege Sanitary District and any building and planning user fees needed for processing the entitlement, plan review and inspection of the project during the construction phase.

1. An in-lieu fee of $14,470.14 to meet the required public open space that is not being provided by the project. While this is a development standard, since it is being paid as an in-lieu fee, the money will be given to the Public Works Department to further enhance existing and proposed public open space.

2. Estimated* West Contra Costa Unified School District fee of $5.02 per square foot are assessed on gross square footage of the project. (64,555 sq. ft. x 5.02= $324,066.10) This money is collected by the School District to help fund both modernization and new construction of school facilities.

3. Estimated* West County Sub Regional Transportation Mitigation Program (STMP Fee) of $1,648 per multi-family dwelling unit. (50 du x $1,648= $82,400) This is collected by the City and transferred to West County Transportation Advisory Committee to assure that new development in West County pays its fair-share toward regional circulation and transit improvements that are proportional to the traffic impact the new development will generate. The local fees collected in West County provide congestion relief to mitigate traffic on regional routes and through improved transit service.

Total community contribution of this project is estimated to be $420,936.84.

*Denotes that these fees change on a periodic basis and are due at building permit. As construction plans typically take 12 to 18 months to complete, these fees may have changed by the time payment is due.

**Complete Streets Plan**

The project will be required to make a fair-share contribution toward the improvements contained in the Complete Streets chapter of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. These improvements will be made as funds become available. For San Pablo Avenue, which is a Community Street, the improvements include installing landscaped pedestrian bulb-outs, creating a crosswalk which decreases the crossing distances for pedestrians, and providing a new bicycle lane.

**Comment from the City of Richmond**

Attachment 3 is the comment letter from the City of Richmond Design Review Chair about the project. The Design Review Chair is very supportive of the project, and Form Based Codes, and provides recommendations about specific design details:

1. The possibility for additional landscaping along Jefferson Avenue, and softening the transition along the western elevation of the building to the residential units along this street.

   Staff notes installing additional landscaping along Jefferson would require the public plaza area to be redesigned. These public spaces are encouraged by the Specific Plan, and staff and the applicant worked to create an inviting public plaza area for the project.

2. The potential to install an espalier (landscaping against a building) along this elevation to address the proposed stucco wall adjacent to the apartment building to the west.

   Staff notes an espalier feature along the proposed building would have little visual impact to soften the appearance of the western elevation of the proposed building. There is a 5 foot setback between the existing and proposed building, with a pathway that wraps around the western and southern elevations of the project. Staff does not believe that this additional landscaping feature is appropriate at this location.
3. Reducing the boxy feel of the building with more artful roof overhangs.

   Staff notes that the art piece above the entry on Jefferson is a distinguishing feature on the building for the shape, color and materials to be used. There are no other overhangs proposed for the building. There are many aspects of articulation along the building elevations with the recessed area along Jefferson Avenue, and recessed areas along the southern elevation. Additionally, there is a variety of materials and colors along all elevations to created visual interest on the building.

4. Making the art/entry structure warmer and more organic, and of a human scale design. Use IPE wood that is shown on the balconies at this location.

   Staff notes that the wood balconies are to be either a cedar/redwood or similar acetylation wood material, and not IPE. There is a variety of colors and materials proposed for the building, with a wood or similar grain material that adds warmth to the proposed building. The scale and design of the art/entry overhang is meant to shield residents and patrons from the weather, and be the interface between public and private space. Staff appreciates the interesting use of a sleek material at this location for the public art for the project as well as a distinctive accent element that identifies the residential entry to the building.

5. West elevation needs warmth.

   Staff notes that the design of the proposed building anticipates a proposed transition between the adjacent residential properties with balconies on the second floor of the proposed building. These private balconies soften the transition between these adjacent properties with open areas, and add warmth to the proposed building.

6. Any LED lighting needs to be 2500-3000K max, and building lighting shall be indirect (either up or down lighting).

   Staff notes that the City has performance standards in the Section 19.21.050(A), General Site Standards, of the Municipal Code that requires that all exterior lights shall be shielded to prevent glare across property lines. This standard must be incorporated on plans that are submitted for building permit issuance.

Public Notice and Comment

The required public notice for the project was published in the East Bay Times, mailed to owners of property within 300 feet of the project site and posted at the site on March 14, 2018.

Staff received written correspondence from two parties. Copies of the correspondence are attached to this staff report and staff summary responses are included below.

RANC Comment Letter (Attachment 4)

Staff received a comment letter from the Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council (RANC) dated February 5, 2018. These comments are related to the proposed project (10963 San Pablo Avenue), and a project that is under review at 10919 San Pablo Avenue. Thematically, the letter was separated into three parts:
1. It recommends the inclusion of items such as site plan, elevations, parking, photo simulations, and a traffic impact analysis.

   Staff notes all of these items are included in the development proposal’s plan set and supporting documentation.

2. It notes how neighboring municipalities approach the integration of a taller building next to a residential neighborhood with lower building heights.

   Staff notes that the project is fully compliant with the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, including the building stepping back to meet the required daylight plane and to avoid unacceptable shadow impacts.

3. It recommends that the project provide at least one vehicle parking space per unit; differentiation of parking ratios between intensive commercial uses and less intensive commercial uses; and the inclusion of guest parking.

   Staff notes that the project is fully compliant with the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan in terms of parking. The Plan does not require guest parking to be accommodated on site, it also does not require parking for commercial spaces less than 3,000 square feet. Staff agrees that the residential parking ratio is less than one vehicular space per dwelling unit. However, the applicant has agreed to measures listed in the Transportation Demand Management Plan, included in Attachment 2, which was prepared by a registered transportation engineering firm. The TDM Plan notes that with these measures, the project should be able to accommodate its parking requirements on site. A detailed discussion regarding the issue of vehicular parking is included in this staff report.

**A key Comment Letter (Attachment 5)**

This correspondence is also related to the proposed project (10963 San Pablo Avenue), and a project that is under review at 10919 San Pablo Avenue. Thematically, the letter was separated into six parts:

1. Private property lines and drainage;

   Staff notes that private property line issues and private drainage agreements between properties are a civil matter.

2. Fencing between the properties. Specifically that the project’s fence be contained completely on its own property, that it be seven feet in height and be made of materials specified for a project proposed at 10919 San Pablo Avenue.

   Staff notes that the proposed fence for the project shall be required to be located completely on its own property. The fence is currently proposed to be six feet in height and made of wood, however, if the Board would prefers, the fence could go up to eight feet in height and could be made of masonry, stucco or plaster. Staff recommends that the aesthetic of the proposed fence should reflect the proposal on the subject property.

3. Proposed tree planting along the southern property line could provide maintenance concern.

   Staff notes that the trees proposed along the southern property line serve as a buffer between the two properties and provide color, shade and privacy during the spring and summer months. The proposed planting plan shows leaving two ornamental pear trees and adding a line of eight Red Maples.
4. Site security during construction.

Staff notes that security fencing is allowed/required during the construction process. Further, the El Cerrito Police Department will work with the development team to help identify ways to secure the site, to the extent possible as issues are identified.

5. Parking should be set at one space per dwelling unit.

Staff notes that the project is fully complaint with the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan in terms of parking. Staff agrees that the residential parking ratio is less that one vehicular space per dwelling unit. However, the applicant has agreed to measures listed in the Transportation Demand Management Plan, included in Attachment 2, which was prepared by a registered transportation engineering firm. The TDM Plan notes that with these measures, the project should be able to accommodate its parking needs on site. A detailed discussion regarding the issue of vehicular parking is included in this staff report.

6. Noise and dust control; and

Staff notes that noise and dust control is addressed in the environmental document. Additionally, conditions of approval that are mitigation measures of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the review of the Specific Plan area included in the draft Resolution.

7. Hours of construction.

Staff notes that the El Cerrito has citywide regulations limiting the duration of construction activities. This information is also included in the draft Resolution. Construction activities (including the loading and unloading of materials and truck movements) and excavating, grading, and filling activities (including warming of equipment motors) shall be limited to the hours of 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM on weekdays and to the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM on Saturdays. Work shall be prohibited on Sundays and Holidays.

Environmental Review

A Program Environmental Impact Report (program EIR) was certified for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan in 2014. This type of environmental documentation is authorized by section 15168 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines for use in documenting the environmental impacts of specific plans, and other planning "programs." As explained in the CEQA Guidelines, a program EIR is useful in evaluating the potential environmental impacts of a project that involves a series of interrelated actions that can reasonably be characterized as a single project. Subsequent activities that fall within the scope of the program may not be subject to further environmental review if the environmental effects of the subsequent activity have been adequately addressed in the program EIR. CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c)(4) recommends using a written checklist or similar device to confirm whether the environmental effects of a subsequent activity were adequately covered in a program EIR.

An Initial Study Checklist has been prepared for this project (Attachment 2). The responses contained in the checklist confirm that the project is considered within the scope of the evaluation completed for the program EIR. No new impacts were identified and no new mitigation measures are required.

Several conditions of approval have been included in the draft resolution to ensure that key mitigation measures of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Program EIR are implemented with regard to this
project. The inclusion of these conditions ensures that the project will not have environmental effects which have not previously been addressed in the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan EIR.

### Intent of the Specific Plan

The project will implement the following strategies of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan:

**Strategy A.3:** Optimize Placemaking in all developments.

*The project addresses San Pablo Avenue and Jefferson Avenues with entries onto these two streets and landscaping improvements within the public-right-of-way. The project will continue to enhance the San Pablo Avenue corridor, as a place, by bringing more residential units to this location of El Cerrito. A new public plaza area along Jefferson has been created to activate pedestrian activity on this street, and to create a gathering spot for residents of the proposed building as well as the existing Jefferson Avenue residents.*

**Strategy A.4:** Attract pedestrian activity to key nodes to foster community and identify places of interest.

*The project site fronts onto San Pablo Avenue, a Community Street, and Jefferson Avenue, a Neighborhood Street. The project creates a relationship to the variety of small retail uses, and personal services (United States Post Office, personal services consisting of a bank, and veterinary service to the north of the proposed building), and two local churches in the immediate neighborhood. The proposed project will enhance the existing commercial environment along this area of San Pablo Avenue.*

**Strategy B.1:** Maximize TOD potential (BART and AC Transit).

*The project will provide 50 new residential units in close proximity to existing AC Transit lines and the two El Cerrito BART stations. The project includes bike parking as required by the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan and will provide a pleasant pedestrian environment along Jefferson Avenue.*

**Strategy B.2:** Stimulate investment in vacant/underutilized sites at key focus areas.

*The project utilizes a large portion of an underdeveloped lot with a surface parking lot area. The proposed project will provide 50 new residential units in close proximity to public transit in the San Pablo Avenue, and the mid-town zone.*

**Strategy B.3:** Build on recent and planned private and public investments.

*The applicant proposes to add 50 new residential units to an underdeveloped parcel with existing businesses, and a surface parking area into housing. Additionally, a new outdoor public plaza area and public art, both proposed for Jefferson Avenue, will enhance the proposed project. Private open space is proposed with balconies and a fourth floor roof deck.*

**Strategy E.1:** Promote infill development through increased land use intensity close to existing transit infrastructure.

*The project will provide 50 new residential units by converting an existing underdeveloped commercial building and surface parking area into a new building in close proximity to existing public transit infrastructure.*
General Plan Compliance

The project is consistent with and will implement the following policies of the El Cerrito General Plan:

**LU1.5: Suitable Housing.** Promote suitably located housing and services for all age groups within the city. Within the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan area, allow ground floor residential development and increased land use intensity close to existing transit infrastructure to promote residential infill development and catalyze mode shift.

The project will provide 50 new housing units on San Pablo Avenue with close proximity to public transportation and commercial uses.

**LU2.1: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area.** Promote retail, office, and mixed uses within the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area to provide more tax revenues to the city.

In accordance with the goals of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, the proposed project will add housing units to San Pablo Avenue which will promote a balanced mixture of land uses in the corridor. The new residents of the project will support new and existing businesses along San Pablo Avenue.

**LU4.1: Mixture of Uses.** Encourage a mix of uses that promotes such community values as convenience, economic vitality, fiscal stability, public safety, a healthy environment, and a pleasant quality of life.

The proposed project will enhance the mixture of uses along San Pablo Avenue. The location of the project will provide the residents with convenient access to businesses, parks, schools, public transit and the Ohlone Greenway. The design of the project will allow for surveillance of the street, enhancing public safety.

**LU6.2: Circulation Alternatives.** To the extent possible, encourage alternatives to the use of private automobiles. Encourage a full range of transportation options – driving, transit, walking and biking – without allowing any one to preclude the others. On San Pablo Avenue, in many constrained right-of-ways, it is not possible to provide optimum facilities for all user groups and in the event that trade-offs are necessary, transit users and pedestrians are the highest priority.

The location of the project provides convenient access to frequent public transit along San Pablo Avenue as well as the two El Cerrito BART stations. The location also provides convenient walking access to local businesses.

**CD1.9: Building Design.** A variety of attractive images will be achieved by encouraging a variety of building styles and designs, within a unifying context of consistent “pedestrian” scale along streets and compatibility among neighboring land uses.

The proposed project is designed at a pedestrian scale and is compatible with the existing residential uses to the south, east and north of the site.

**CD2.1: Street Frontages.** Encourage street frontages that are safe, by allowing for surveillance of the street by people inside buildings and elsewhere, and are interesting for pedestrians. Require buildings in the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan area to be directly abutting sidewalks, with window openings, entries and high levels of transparency along the pedestrian frontage.

The building will abut the sidewalk on San Pablo Avenue (and a portion of Jefferson Avenue) and features pedestrian and bicycle access onto both streets. A main door onto Jefferson Avenue provides lobby access to the residential units. Commercial space is located along San Pablo
Avenue; the Manager’s Office for the proposed building and the public plaza, with its variety of active uses, is along Jefferson Avenue. These different commercial and active uses allow residents of the proposed building, existing residents of the neighborhood, and patrons of the commercial space to assemble at this location. Residential units are above the ground floor and allow surveillance of the street from the units within the project.

**CD2.3: Streetscape Improvements.** Maintain an active program of street tree planting and improved roadway landscaping through both public and private means. Design guidelines shall describe appropriate types of trees for commercial areas – to enhance the shopping experience rather than detract from it.

The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan implemented standards and requirements for public right-of-way improvements. The project is consistent with the standards and will enhance the adjacent public rights of way in compliance with the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.

**CD3.2: Usable Open Space.** Require the provision of usable open space in the form of ground-floor patios, upper-floor decks, and balconies, as well as common recreational facilities and amenities.

The project features an open rooftop deck for common/private open space on the fourth floor of the proposed building. Private common open space is being created with balconies on many of the units. Shared common internal recreational spaces are proposed within the building with a gym and yoga room on the second and third floors. Two separate shared work spaces are proposed for the fourth and fifth floors.

**CD3.3: Site Landscaping.** Improve the appearance of the community by requiring aesthetically designed screening and landscaping on public and private sites. Ensure that public landscaping includes entry areas, street medians, parks, and schools. Require landscaping for all private sites, yard spaces, parking lots, plazas, courtyards, and recreational areas.

The project has provided landscaping in conformance with the standards in the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. New street trees will be installed Jefferson and San Pablo Avenues, at the ground floor level, along the western and southern property lines, and on the fourth floor roof deck area.

**CD3.12: Landscape Species.** Indigenous and drought-tolerant species that reduce water usage and are compatible with El Cerrito’s climate are encouraged.

The proposed plant palette includes native, drought-tolerance plants such as Maidenhair, Red Maples, Fern Pine, New Zealand Flax, Bulbine, Berkeley Sedge, and Mat Rush. Dwarf Coffeeberry, Barberry, Deer Grass, Black Elderberry, and Yarrow, and various succulents.

**CD4.2: Building Articulation.** Ensure that buildings are well articulated. Avoid large unarticulated shapes in building design. Ensure that building designs include varied building facades, rooflines, and building heights to create more interesting and differentiated building forms and shapes. Encourage human scale detail in architectural design. Do not allow unarticulated blank walls or unbroken series of garage doors on the facades of buildings facing the street or the Ohlone Greenway.

The proposed building is articulated in compliance with the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. The building includes a varied roofline and interesting building form. The building is designed at a human scale with residential entry along Jefferson Avenue, and commercial entry along San Pablo Avenue.
CD5.1: Design Review Process. Continue design review and approval process for all new development, changes, additions, and modifications of existing buildings (except for single-family homes on existing lots).

*The proposed project requires Tier II Design Review approval from the Design Review Board in compliance with the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.*

T2.1: Land Use Patterns. Recognize the link between land use and transportation. Promote land use and development patterns that encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use. Emphasize high-density and mixed land use patterns that promote transit and pedestrian travel. Where feasible, emphasize the following land use measures:

1. Promote conveniently located neighborhood complexes that provide housing and commercial services near employment centers and within transit corridors.
2. Promote land use patterns that maximize trip-linking opportunities by assembling uses that allow people to take care of a variety of daily needs.
3. Encourage pedestrian-oriented land use and urban design that can have a demonstrable effect on transportation choices.
4. Direct growth to occur along transit corridors.
5. Encourage retail, commercial, and office uses in ground floor space in combination with upper-floor housing along San Pablo Avenue.

*The project will provide 50 new residences in close proximity to public transportation and local businesses. In accordance with the goals of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, the project will add housing units along San Pablo Avenue, a major transit corridor.*

T2.2: Project Design. Projects should be designed to include features that encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use.

*The building will abut the sidewalk on San Pablo and Jefferson Avenues and features pedestrian and bicycle access onto both streets with a main door onto Jefferson Avenue for stairway and lobby access to the residential units.*

H2.2: Encourage the construction of transit-oriented developments (TODs) that seek to maximize opportunities for the use of public transit and transportation corridors through high-density residential and mixed-use projects along those corridors in accordance with the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan and the City’s Incentives Program (Chapter 19.23 of the El Cerrito Zoning Ordinance.)

*The project provides higher-density housing along a transit corridor consistent with the Transit-Oriented Mid-Intensity Mixed Use Transect Zone in the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.*

H2.3: Continue to enforce the sections of the Zoning Ordinance that increase density, reduce parking requirements, and establish design and development standards to create inviting, mixed-use neighborhoods around transit, and enforce the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.

*The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan reduced parking requirements and eliminated maximum density in the plan area. This project will enhance the mix of uses in the corridor adjacent to public transit. The project complies fully with the standards of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.*
Required Findings

Pursuant to Section 2.03.08.01.02.D.4 of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, in acting to approve or conditionally approve an application for a Tier IV application, the Design Review Board shall make the following findings:

a. That the project complies with all applicable Specific Plan design standards;

As discussed in the staff report, the project complies with all standards of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.

b. That the project implements applicable goals and policies of the El Cerrito General Plan.

As discussed in this report, the proposed project will implement the following goals of the El Cerrito General Plan: LU1.5: Suitable Housing, LU2.1: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area, LU4.1: Mixture of Uses, LU6.2: Circulation Alternatives, CD1.9: Building Design, CD2.1: Street Frontages, CD2.3: Streetscape Improvements, CD3.2: Usable Open Space, CD3.3: Site Landscaping, CD3.12, Landscape species; CD4.2 Building Articulation; CD5.1, Design Review Process; T2.1: Land Use Patterns, T2.2: Project Design, Policies H2.2, and H2.3.

Staff Recommendation

Based on the information contained in this report, staff recommends approval of Planning Application No. PL17-0084, as conditioned by the draft resolution in Attachment 1.

Proposed Motion

Move adoption of Design Review Board Resolution DRB 18-01 granting Tier II Design Review approval to Planning Application No. PL17-0084, a project that includes a 5-story residential building containing 50 dwelling units located at 10963 San Pablo Avenue.

Appeal Period

Within ten (10) working days after the date of the decision, the Design Review Board action may be appealed to the Planning Commission.

Attachments

1. Draft Resolution
2. Initial Study Checklist
3. Comment letter from Jonathan Livingston, City of Richmond Design Review Board Chair, received by the City of El Cerrito on March 21, 2018
4. February 5, 2018 comment letter from the Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council (RANC)
5. March 15, 2018 Comment Letter from Blair Akey
6. Project Plans, dated February 27, 2018
7. CEQA Appendices found here (see website)