



City Council Report

Subject: Sunset Station, General Development Plan Amendment
Design Review, and Oak Tree Preservation Plan Permit

Date: March 10, 2020

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Department: Community Development Department

- A. ADOPT A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN APPROVING A NOTICE OF EXEMPTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS (Sunset Station / PDG2019-0002, DR2019-0009, TRE2020-0001)
- B. INTRODUCE, WAIVE THE FULL READING AND READ BY TITLE ONLY, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN AMENDING THE STANFORD RANCH GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO REMOVE THE FLOOR AREA MAXIMUM ON OFFICES AND CLINICS, INCLUDING FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, WITHIN THE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICT, (Sunset Station / PDG2019-0002)
- C. ADOPT A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN APPROVING A DESIGN REVIEW AND AN OAK TREE PRESERVATION PLAN PERMIT (Sunset Station / DR2019-0009, TRE2020-0001)

Proposal/Application Request

This application is a request for approval of entitlements to develop a 2-acre commercial/office center. The project proposes a General Development Plan Amendment to the Stanford Ranch General Development Plan to remove the floor area maximum on offices and financial institutions, thereby allowing stand alone “banks” to be permitted within the Planned Development Commercial (PD-C) zoning district. The project also proposes a Design Review for site development of the property, to include a 6,064 s.f. multi-tenant building, including a drive-thru bank, a building pad for future development, drive aisles, and associated lighting and landscaping, as well as an Oak Tree Preservation Plan Permit to remove existing oak trees on the site.

Project Location

The project site, which totals approximately 2 acres, is located north of the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Pebble Creek Drive. The project site is currently comprised of one parcel, with an approved Tentative Parcel Map to subdivide the site into two lots which has not yet been recorded. There is currently a single access point onto Pebble Creek Drive. See **Figures 1 & 2**.

Figure 1 – Aerial Vicinity Map

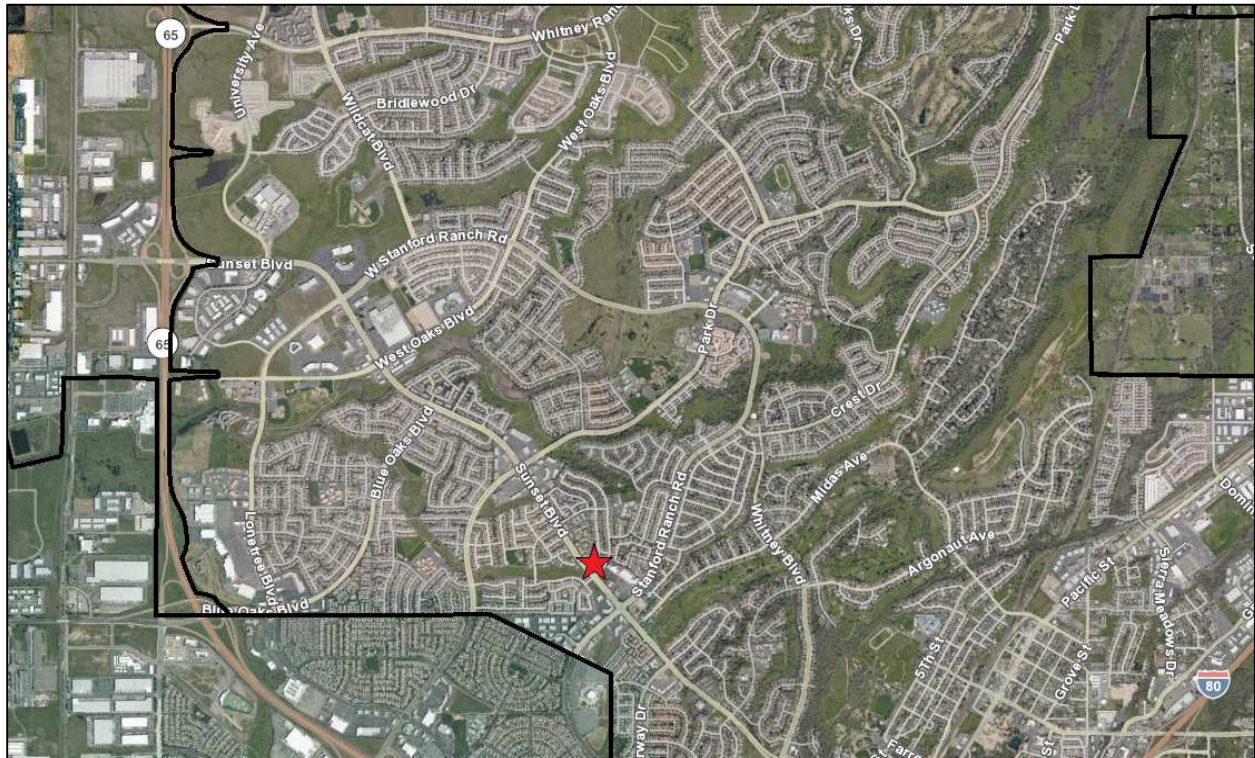


Figure 2 – Project Site



The property had been previously utilized as a Park & Ride facility, but this use was discontinued several years ago and the site returned to the original Stanford Ranch developer. The site is currently vacant of any structures and contains a parking lot, landscaping, and lighting improvements.

Owner/Applicant

The owner and applicant is SR95-VP, LLC – Denton Kelley.

Summary of Planning Commission Hearings and Action

On February 18, 2020, the Planning Commission considered the proposed project. During public comment, one resident addressed the Commission to ask questions about tree placement, fence height, traffic, and parking. The Planning Commission discussed the questions with staff and determined that no project changes were needed.

During deliberation, the Planning Commission was generally supportive of the project. It was stated that the applicant had done a good job to lay out the design of the lot in a way that would not be obtrusive to the neighboring residential property owners. It was also stated that the General Development Plan Amendment could be supported, as it would provide additional flexibility to commercial properties within Stanford Ranch, consistent with other areas of the City.

The Commission voted 3-0 (Commissioners McKenzie and Whitmore excused) to recommend approval of the Notice of Exemption, General Development Plan Amendment, Design Review, and Oak Tree Preservation Plan Permit to the City Council.

Background and Site Characteristics

The project site was originally conveyed in fee to the City of Rocklin for public purposes per the final map for the Stanford Ranch Area A-1 Subdivision in 1986. The specific purpose for this conveyance was to fulfill a City transportation management objective required by a state statute, which has since been repealed.

Subsequent to the construction and operation of the Park & Ride facility, the City identified that the site was severely underutilized for its intended purpose, and that it had become a maintenance burden on the City, while not providing the public benefit it was intended to serve. In 2014, the City proposed to re-convey the property back to Stanford Ranch I, LLC, on condition that they would utilize the site for the construction of a use which would be of positive benefit to the City's tax base.

Tentative Parcel Map

On October 16, 2018, the Planning Commission approved a Tentative Parcel Map to subdivide the 2-acre site into two parcels. No improvements or physical modifications of the site were proposed as a part of the map. The map has not yet been recorded. The project is consistent with the approved map.

Surrounding Land Uses

The project site is located within a substantially developed area. A single family residential neighborhood is located to the north and a high density residential apartment complex is located to the west. To the south and east are various commercial developments on the opposite sides of Sunset Boulevard and Pebble Creek Drive. **Table 1** contains the existing uses, as well as the current zoning and general plan land use designations for the subject property, as well as surrounding properties.

Table 1 – Site and Surrounding Uses

	General Plan	Zoning	Existing Use
Site:	Mixed Use (MU)	Planned Development Mixed Use (PD-MU)	Park & Ride (Closed)
North:	Medium Density Residential (MDR)	Planned Development Residential, 6 dwelling units per acre (PD-6)	Single-Family Residential
South:	Retail Commercial (RC)	Planned Development Commercial (PD-C)	Commercial Development
East:	Retail Commercial (RC)	Planned Development Commercial (PD-C)	Commercial Development
West:	High Density Residential (HDR)	Planned Development Residential, 20 dwelling units per acre (PD-20)	Apartment Complex

General Plan and Zoning

Although the site had been developed as a Park & Ride facility, the underlying General Plan land use designation for the site had remained High Density Residential (HDR). In order to allow maximum flexibility for redevelopment of the property after re-conveyance back to Stanford Ranch I, LLC, the City amended the General Plan land use designation of the site to Mixed Use (MU) and rezoned it to Planned Development, Mixed-Use (PD-MU). Allowed uses and development standards within the PD-MU zone include those specified in the PD-20 (Planned Development, Residential Maximum 20 dwelling units per acre) and the Planned Development, Commercial (PD-C) zones within the Stanford Ranch General Development Plan.

General Development Plan Amendment

The PD-C zoning district within the Stanford Ranch General Development Plan was most recently amended in 2001 via Ordinance 843. Pursuant to the current PD-C district, *Offices and clinics, including financial institutions*, are only allowed provided that no more than 30% of the floor area of any individual building is used for office or clinic purposes (except under certain circumstances which do not apply to this site). Because the project proposes to construct a multi-tenant building which would utilize approximately 66% of its floor area as a financial institution, the project is currently inconsistent with the PD-C zoning district, and is therefore inconsistent with the subject property's PD-MU zoning district.

In order to address this, the project is proposing to amend the General Development Plan to remove the cap on floor area for financial institutions. The proposed amendment would modify the permitted use to read as follows:

Permitted Uses.

- i. Offices and clinics, including financial institutions, ~~provided that no more than 30% of the floor area of any individual building is used for office or clinic purposes except as provided for in XI.B.7.~~

The original intent of the office floor area maximum within commercial centers was to ensure that as much space as possible was available for brick and mortar retail uses. However, given the changing nature of retail due primarily to the increase in online sales, many commercial centers are struggling to fill tenant spaces. The removal of the cap would provide for additional flexibility to allow property owners to fill vacant spaces within these centers, and it would also be more consistent with other commercial zoning districts within the City. The total number of affected properties within the Stanford Ranch General Development Plan would be less than five. Therefore, the Planning Commission and staff support the proposed modification to the General Development Plan.

Design Review

General Site Layout

The project site is currently comprised of one parcel, with an approved 2-lot Tentative Parcel Map that has not yet been recorded. The site totals approximately 2 acres and is developed with a paved parking area and associated lighting and landscaping. Access to the site is currently provided via a single driveway onto Pebble Creek Drive. There is a bus turnout along Sunset Boulevard adjacent to the site.

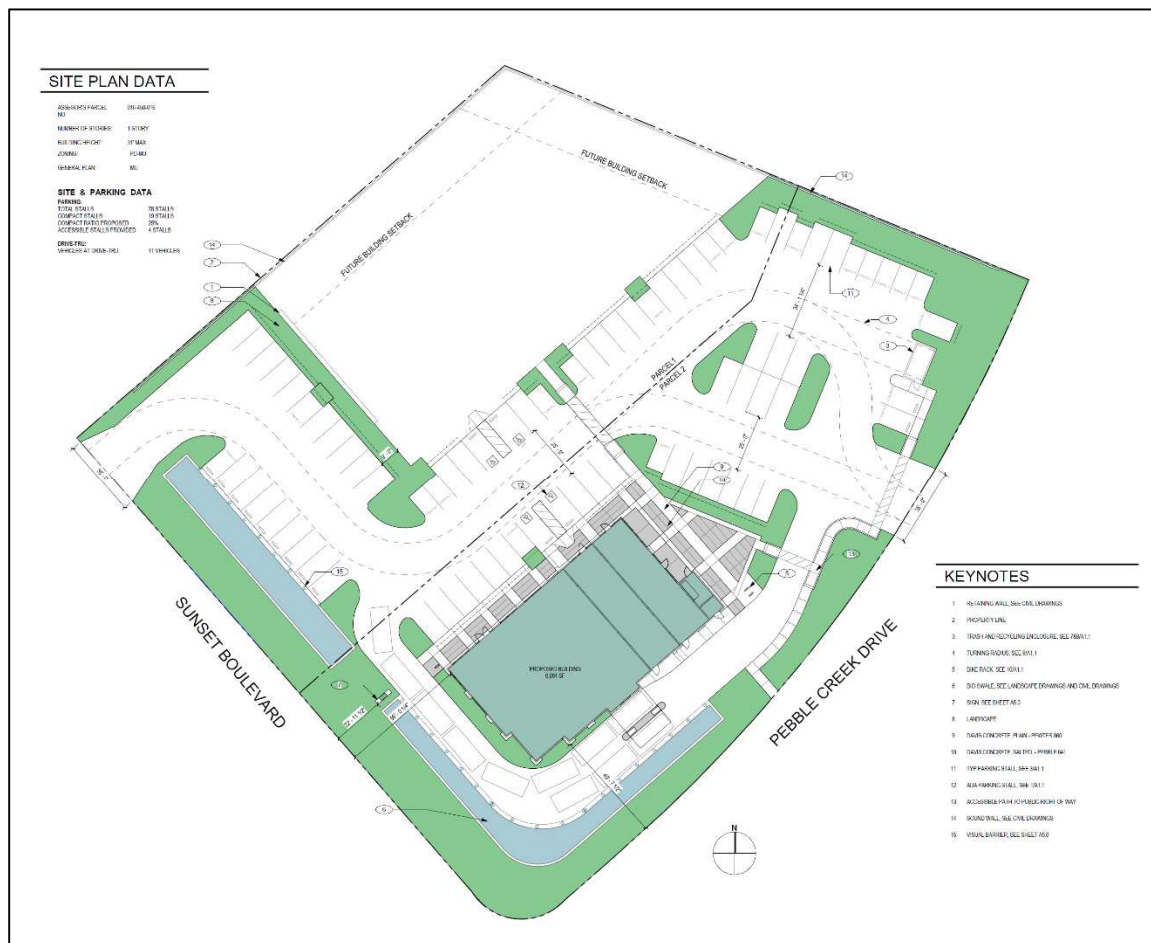
The project is proposing to construct a 6,064 square foot multi-tenant building on the southernmost portion of the site, near the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Pebble Creek Drive. The building would include a drive-thru aisle for the bank use along its southern side. No development is currently proposed on the northernmost portion of the property, other than parking and associated lighting and landscaping. Future development of this area would require approval of a separate Design Review. See **Figure 3** for the proposed project site plan.

Site Access/Circulation

Site access is proposed to be provided via two access points; the existing access driveway off of Pebble Creek Drive and a new access driveway off of Sunset Boulevard, near the northwestern corner of the project site. The driveway on Pebble Creek Drive will continue to provide for full turning movements in and out of the project. The new driveway on Sunset Boulevard would be restricted to right turns in and out of the site by the existing raised median. As part of development, off-site improvements have been recommended by the project's Transportation Impact Analysis, which are discussed in detail below.

Interior circulation within the site consists of drive aisles with minimum widths of 25 feet. The drive-thru lane, which is to be constructed on the south side of the proposed building, would allow for stacking of 11 vehicles. While the Rocklin Municipal Code (RMC) does not have a vehicle stacking standard for drive-thru lanes, the proposed length and stacking queue is consistent with similar projects and is considered adequate for the proposed use.

Figure 3 – Project Site Plan



Project Architecture

The project site is not located within any of the City's adopted Architectural Districts, and is therefore subject only to the architectural requirements of the Citywide Design Review Guidelines and the Rocklin Municipal Code.

The architectural design of the proposed 6,064 square foot building utilizes a modern architectural style. The proposed building includes parapet walls with varied roof heights. The parapet heights would screen roof mounted equipment from adjacent roadways and properties. The building will utilize a variety of materials, including stucco, metal, aluminum, and glass. See **Figures 4 and 5** for the proposed project renderings of the building's north and south sides. See **Figure 6** for the architectural elevations of the building's east and west sides.

Figure 4 – Building Rendering (North)



Figure 5 – Building Rendering (South)



Figure 6 – Building Elevations (East and West)



The design of the project avoids blank walls through utilization of wall articulation and varying materials. The building incorporates offsetting planes, including variation in roof planes and variations of exterior building walls. It also includes a variety of colors, which are internally consistent and consistent with other commercial buildings within the area. The Planning Commission and staff find that the proposed architecture is consistent with the RMC and with the Citywide Design Guidelines.

Parking

Per Section 17.66.040 of the RMC, commercial and professional offices shall provide a minimum of five parking spaces per thousand square feet of gross floor area. Therefore, for the proposed 6,064 square foot building, the project is required to provide a minimum of 31 parking spaces. As proposed, the project is proposing to install 78 total parking spaces, which exceeds the parking requirements of the RMC by 47 spaces. It is anticipated that this additional parking would be utilized for the future building on the northern portion of the site, which has not been proposed. The parking needs of this development would be reviewed upon submittal of that future application. However, based on the 47 surplus parking spaces, the future building could total approximately 9,000 square feet in floor area and still achieve the minimum parking requirements specified in the RMC.

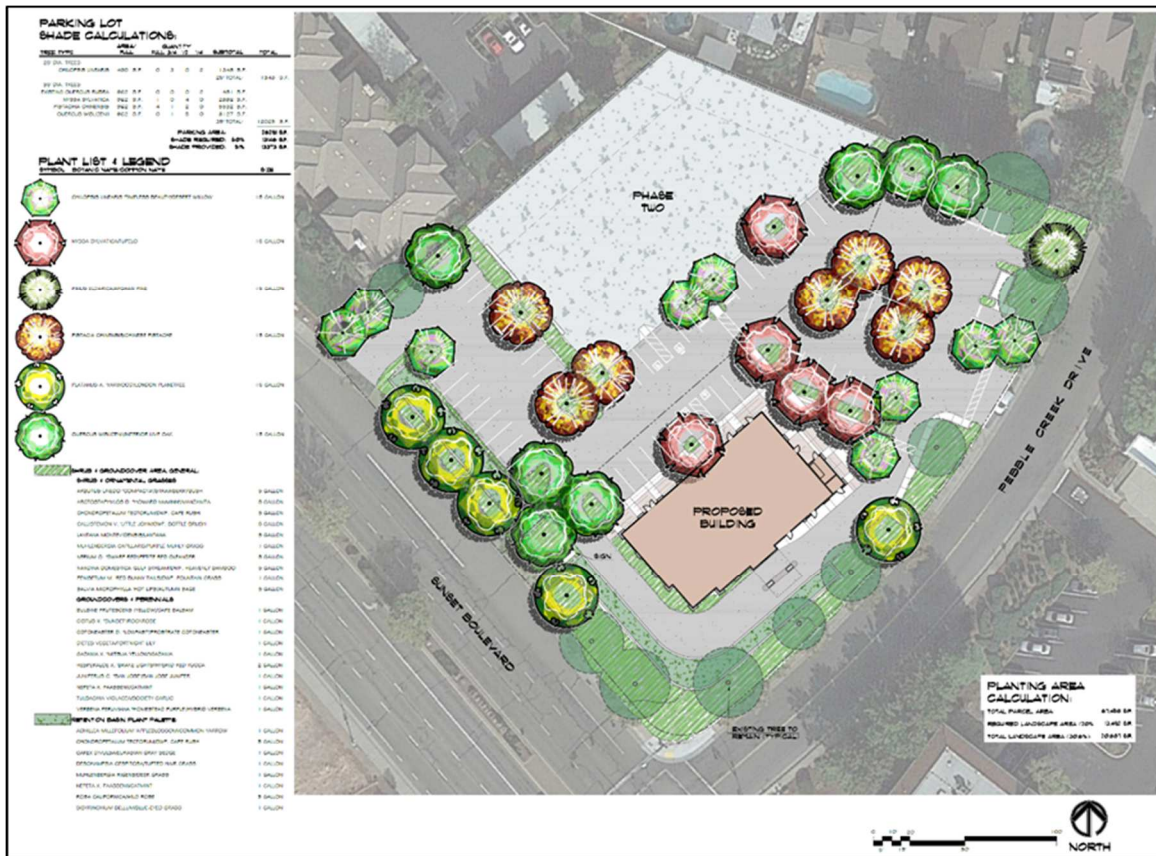
Landscaping

Along Sunset Boulevard, the existing landscape buffer would be modified and the steps which access the site from the Sunset Boulevard public ROW would be removed. Additionally, the existing sidewalk/ramp site access from Sunset Boulevard would be eliminated to provide the space for easements required by the South Placer Municipal Utility District (SPMUD). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access from the site to the ROW is now proposed from the plaza north of the building to the sidewalk at Pebble Creek. This has been reviewed by the Chief Building Official, and has been determined to be acceptable and in compliance with ADA requirements.

The project proposes a mix of groundcovers, shrubs, and trees around the perimeter of the site, around the building, and interspersed throughout the parking lot. The landscape plan provides for the use of a variety of trees, such as Desert Willow, Tupelo, Chinese Pistache, and Live Oak, as well as shrubs and other groundcovers, including Strawberrybush, Manzanita, and Bottle Brush. The proposed preliminary landscape plan is included as **Figure 7**.

City standards require that the parking be shaded by tree planting at a distribution that achieves 50% shading of the paved area at tree maturity (15 years). Parking lot trees are required to be large canopy trees to maximize the amount of shade. The project has included shade calculations as part of its plan submittal, which state that the calculated total tree shade for the site would be 13,373 total square feet at maturity throughout the 26,291 square feet of paving area. This would provide a shade total of 51%, which is consistent with the requirements of the RMC.

Figure 7 – Preliminary Landscape Plan



Fences and Walls

A solid six-foot-tall wood fence currently exists along the northern property line and a substantially open six-foot-tall metal fence currently exists along the eastern property line. In order to comply with requirements of the Stanford Ranch General Development Plan, the project has been conditioned that masonry walls be constructed along the northern and western property lines, in order to properly screen the commercial site from the residential properties beyond. These walls are shown on the project plans.

The project also includes a three-foot-tall fence/visual barrier along the parking/drive-thru lane to separate this lane from the landscaping easement. At the corner of this aisle, the feature steps up into a four-foot-tall barrier which includes the “Sunset Station” name of the center as a corner element. These fences/barriers are shown in **Figure 8**.

Figure 8 – Proposed Barriers



Signage

The proposed project is not within an adopted Uniform Sign Program, and would therefore be subject to signage requirements set forth in Chapter 17.75 of the RMC. While the anticipated locations of future wall signage are shown on the elevations, this is for illustrative purposes only. All wall signage will be subject to review under a separate sign/building permit. The project has been conditioned so that no illuminated signage is allowed on the north side of the building, which faces the existing single-family residential neighborhood.

The project includes a single monument sign, which is proposed to be located along Sunset Boulevard, approximately 23 feet from the public ROW. The sign is consistent with the colors/materials and overall building design and complies with height and area requirements of the RMC.

Oak Tree Preservation Plan Permit

The original Park & Ride project included approximately 50 landscape trees, including several oak trees. While many of the perimeter trees along Sunset Boulevard and Pebble Creek Drive would be retained, numerous interior trees within the existing parking lot are proposed for removal. Pursuant to the City's Oak Tree Preservation Guidelines, the removal of native oak trees requires mitigation. Based on materials provided by the applicant, 17 Coast Live Oaks totaling approximately 236 inches of Total Diameter at Breast Height (TDBH) have been proposed to be removed as part of project development. The project has been conditioned that, prior to issuance

of improvement plans or grading permits, the applicant shall work with staff to mitigate for the total number of healthy oak trees which would be removed as part of site development.

Traffic Improvements

The Sunset Station Transportation Impact Analysis (Analysis) was prepared by the firm Fehr & Peers in order to analyze potential traffic impacts which may result from development of the project site. Although the proposed project only includes the bank and retail space in a single building, the Analysis assumed that the remaining portion of the property would also be developed with some type of nonresidential use. A daycare center was chosen, given that it would fit within the remaining property and its relatively high trip generating characteristics would provide for a conservative analysis. The Analysis discussed the following items, as well as recommendations to minimize project-related issues:

Bus Turnout

According to the Analysis, there are potential impacts at the Sunset Boulevard driveway related to the interaction of project-related traffic with buses at the existing turnout and bicyclists traveling on northbound Sunset Boulevard. As proposed, the Sunset driveway is to be situated at the very northerly edge of the project site, approximately 250 feet north of the Pebble Creek Drive intersection. The Sunset driveway would be restricted to right turns by the existing raised median. The bus stop sign is currently located approximately 180 feet north of Pebble Creek Drive, less than 75 feet south of the proposed Sunset project driveway.

The Analysis states that it is not uncommon for bus stops to be situated directly downstream of an intersection with a private driveway located a short/moderate distance beyond the bus stop. Although such conditions could temporarily cause a sight distance limitation for motorists exiting the driveway, the clear and obvious presence of the bus provides a visual cue to motorists to pay careful attention to this situation. In this particular case, one bus per hour is expected at this stop, and typically would only be present for a short duration.

In order to reduce potential conflicts with the bus stop, the study has provided the following recommendations:

- 1) Convert the bus turnout into a combined bus turnout/deceleration lane.
- 2) Relocate the bus stop closer to Pebble Creek Drive, in order to provide greater distance between stopped buses and the project driveway.
- 3) Stripe the Class II bike lane within the left edge of the bus turnout/deceleration lane.

The project applicant has been in contact with Placer County Transit (PCT) regarding the proposed project and the addition of the Sunset Boulevard driveway. PCT has indicated that, with

the driveway being at the very end of the 125-foot straightway portion of the turnout, the bus stop will be able to operate safely without any alterations to the turnout.

In order to comply with the recommendations of the Analysis, the project includes a condition of approval which requires the applicant to work with Placer County Transit to develop an acceptable bus turnout configuration, with the ultimate configuration to be approved by the City Engineer prior to issuance of permits.

From time to time, the City receives grant monies to install bus shelters. As this is a designated transit stop, if and when money is available, this would be an advantageous location for bus shelter. To that end, the Planning Commission and staff recommend that the project be required to provide the City with a 5' x 10' easement to accommodate construction of a future bus shelter adjacent to the existing bus turnout. A condition to this effect has been included in the draft resolution for approval of the project design review.

Sunset Boulevard

As part of the Sunset Station Transportation Impact Analysis, a queueing analysis was completed to determine the maximum queue for the southbound left-turn and westbound left/through/right movements at the Sunset Boulevard/Pebble Creek intersection. Based on PM peak hour conditions at this intersection, it was determined that there are some queueing issues which would be increased by the construction of this project, as well as the future project on the northern portion of this site.

As a solution, the Analysis recommends that the project lengthen the southbound left-turn lane on Sunset Boulevard at Pebble Creek Drive from the existing 225 feet to 350 feet of full-width vehicle storage. This may be accomplished by replacing a portion of the landscaping within the 21-foot-wide median with the lengthened turn lane.

The applicant has expressed concerns to staff regarding the timing of the project and the cost associated with the lengthening of this lane. As stated previously, the Analysis assumed the development of the entire project site, including the remainder portion which is not included as part of this project. The timing for construction of this second pad is currently unknown. Due to this uncertainty, staff is not anticipating a need to lengthen this turn lane until the remainder of the project is built out. Therefore, rather than require construction of this improvement as part of the project development, the project has been conditioned to pay an in-lieu fee for half of the cost of the future extension of the turn lane from 225 feet to 350 feet. This 50% fee is based on the estimated cost of building these improvements today and totals approximately \$62,650.

Pebble Creek Drive

The project driveway would utilize the existing curb cut on Pebble Creek Drive. According to the Analysis, the current design of the project driveway provides for a limited line of sight for outbound motorists looking to the left. The sight distance limitations discussed in the report are due to shrubs growing in the northern edge of the site (which have since been removed) as well as the trunk of a large tree. In addition, Pebble Creek Drive features a horizontal curve to the north of the driveway, which also limits sight distance.

To address this site distance concern, staff has agreed to work with the applicant to accomplish the following, unless it is determined during the process by the Community Development Director/City Engineer that any of these items are not necessary:

- 1) City to install an all-way stop-control at the Pebble Creek Drive/Strand Road intersection, which is situated 275 feet north of the project driveway.
- 2) City to install centerline striping and a Class II (on-street bike lane) on Pebble Creek Drive north of the project driveway to position oncoming vehicles in a more visible location.

In addition, based on the Analysis, the project has the potential to cause the Sunset Boulevard/Pebble Creek intersection to worsen from Level of Service (LOS) C to D under cumulative peak hour conditions. In order to address this concern, the Analysis recommends that the project restripe the Pebble Creek Drive approach to consist of a shared left/through lane and a dedicated right-turn lane. This can be accomplished by restriping the approximate 40-foot roadway width and no widening of the roadway would be required.

As with the Sunset Boulevard improvements discussed above, staff is not anticipating the need for this improvement until the second pad of the project is developed. Therefore, the project has been conditioned to pay a fee for 50% of the estimated cost for the restriping of the Pebble Creek Drive approach. This 50% fee is based on the estimated cost of building these improvements today and totals approximately \$12,500.

All recommendations from the Analysis are shown on **Figure 9**.

Figure 9 – Traffic Impact Analysis Recommendations



Environmental

The City of Rocklin's Environmental Coordinator has reviewed the proposed project and determined that it is categorically exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to Sections 15303 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures and 15305 – Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations. For a more in-depth discussion of the environmental evaluation and conclusion, please refer to the Notice of Exemption attached to the Resolution prepared for the proposed project.

Recommendation

The Planning Commission and staff recommend approval of the Sunset Station project as proposed and conditioned.

Prepared by Nathan Anderson, Senior Planner