



AGENDA MEMO - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CITY COUNCIL MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2024
DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
ITEM DESCRIPTION: APPLICANT: CITY OF LAS VEGAS - OWNER: SAHARA RANCHO 008, LLC

**** STAFF RECOMMENDATION(S) ****

CASE NUMBER	RECOMMENDATION	REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL
23-0443-GPA1	Staff recommends APPROVAL.	

**** NOTIFICATION ****

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS NOTIFIED 23

NOTICES MAILED 304 (by City Clerk)

PROTESTS 15

APPROVALS 0

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**** STAFF REPORT ****

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Las Vegas is requesting a General Plan Amendment for the General Designations for APNs: 162-04-412-002 through 004, and 006 through 009, totaling 15.28 acres at the northeast corner of Sahara Avenue and Rancho Drive, from TOC-2 (Transit Oriented Corridor - 2) to TOD-1 (Transit Oriented Development - 1).

ISSUES

- The TOC-2 (Transit Oriented Corridor - 2) General Plan Designation allows densities up to 30 dwelling units per acre. The TOD-1 (Transit Oriented Development - 1) General Plan Designation allows densities more than 40 dwelling units per acre.
- A Site Development Plan Review (23-0074-SDR1) for seven-story mixed-use development consisting of 352 residential units and 5,980 square feet of commercial space for the subject site follows this application, but is not contingent on this application.

ANALYSIS

The subject sites, APNs: 162-04-412-002 through 004, and 006 through 009, constitute the Sahara Rancho Office Park (herein after referred to as 'the subject site'). The subject site is within the Downtown Las Vegas Area of the 2050 City of Las Vegas Master Plan. The subject site is on the periphery of Downtown Las Vegas and is separated by Interstate 15 from the Downtown Las Vegas Design District.

Staff is requesting to change the General Plan Designation to TOD-1 (Transit Oriented Development - 1). This change in General Plan Designation would change the allowed density from up to 30 dwelling units per acre, to more than 40 dwelling units per acre. An associated Site Development Plan Review (23-0074-SDR1) application is in review by the City of Las Vegas for a mixed-use development on a portion of the subject site, APNs: 162-04-412-004 and -006 through -009. That associated Site Development Plan Review (23-0074-SDR1) is compliant with the existing General Plan Designation, TOC-2 (Transit Oriented Corridor - 2), however the proposed General Plan Amendment (23-0443-GPA1) would allow for further infill projects in the Sahara Rancho Office Park.

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The vision for the Downtown Las Vegas Area as set forth in the 2050 Master Plan is to balance preservation with infill development, including in historic neighborhoods. For that infill development, the Master Plan focuses on higher density transit-oriented development to achieve a more compact and vibrant urban environment. In the

Downtown Las Vegas Area, the majority of the future units projected for this Master Plan Area, 10,191 of the 10,276 projected new units, are Multi-Family residential units. As has been proposed in the associated Site Development Plan Review (23-0074-SDR1), mixed-use development with the vertical integration of commercial and residential development will encourage walkability along with supplying much-needed housing stock. The ideal locations to accommodate those desired higher densities are in the walkable core of the Downtown area, or along major thoroughfares such as Rancho Drive and Sahara Avenue. These major thoroughfares are planned for a high capacity transit network which will improve access and mobility within the growing downtown and improve connection to the suburbs of the city.

The subject site had a General Plan Designation of GC (General Commercial) prior to May 2021. GC (General Commercial) generally permits higher intensity retail, service, wholesale, office, mixed-use developments with a residential component or other general business uses; may include commercial activities with outdoor storage, noise, lighting or other characteristics not generally compatible with residential areas. With the General Plan Amendment (21-0029-GPA1) in 2021, the subject site was redesignated to TOC-2 (Transit Oriented Corridor - 2). TOC-2 (Transit Oriented Corridor - 2) is designated for high to moderate intensity linear mixed-use corridors. The proposed General Plan Designation, TOD-1 (Transit Oriented Development - 1) generally permits high to moderate intensity mixed used, transit oriented developments. TOD-1 (Transit Oriented Development - 1) and TOD-2 (Transit Oriented Development - 2) General Plan Designations are ideally located where corridors intersect to create hubs of activity that are conducive to a high capacity transit network.

The subject site is on a major intersection and bordered on three sides, to the east, west, and south, by more intense land uses that are compatible with the proposed General Plan Amendment to allow higher densities. Sahara Avenue and Rancho Drive are each major arterials, and an interchange for Interstate 15 is west of the subject site. The Palace Station Hotel and Casino is in the southwest corner of Sahara Avenue and Rancho Drive. A US Bank Center is in the northwest corner. The major thoroughfares and larger developments make the proposed increase in allowable density compatible with the surrounding land uses and zoning districts near that intersection.

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The subject site is zoned C-1 (Limited Commercial). The site is subject to Title 19 development standards. Title 19 development standards, specifically the Residential Adjacency Standard, will safeguard the lower density development north of the subject site. To the north of the subject site, there are Single-Family Residential neighborhoods in the R-1 (Single Family Residential) zoning district. The blocks north of the subject site include the 'Glen Heather' neighborhood south of Oakey Boulevard and the 'Scotch 80s' neighborhood north of Oakey Boulevard, both traditional suburban neighborhoods with over 100 years of rich Vegas history.

Developments adjacent to lower density zoning districts including the R-1 (Single Family Residential) zoning district area are subject to the Residential Adjacency Standard set forth in Title 19.08.040(H). The Residential Adjacency Standard protects low density residential neighborhoods in relation to their established building heights and setbacks. The requirements of that standard may be waived by City Council for any Mixed-Use development that contains a significant residential element as has been requested in the associated Site Development Plan Review (23-0074-SDR1).

Staff recommends approval, as the proposed General Plan Designation advances the vision for the Downtown Las Vegas Area as set forth by the City of Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan, and can be developed in a harmonious manner with surrounding land uses.

Corridor Mixed Use

Connecting the regional centers together are mixed-use corridors – major arterials that join different parts of town, streets like Charleston, Decatur, Sahara, Rancho, and Eastern. The key feature of these areas – designated as transit oriented corridors – is that they are linear and span the entire length of a street. The designations TOC-1 and TOC-2 (Transit Oriented Corridor - 2) are high to moderate intensity linear mixed-use corridors. Many of these currently include strip malls, drive-throughs, and other auto-oriented uses; they are also along corridors that even today, with the pandemic, still have high bus ridership on the RTC Transit system.

Mixed Use Centers

Where corridors intersect, there are opportunities to create mixed-use centers – nodes and hubs of major activity and destinations, transit usage, and a wider array of nearby housing. TOD-1 (Transit Oriented Development - 1) and TOD-2 (Transit Oriented Development - 2) are designated as high to moderate intensity mixed used, transit oriented developments. Some of these locations have large under-utilized surface parking lots; others may be empty shopping centers or standing vacant; others may be successful shopping centers that provide essential services to the surrounding area

FINDINGS (23-0443-GPA1)

Section 19.16.030(I) of the Las Vegas Zoning Code requires that the following conditions be met in order to justify a General Plan Amendment:

- 1. The density and intensity of the proposed General Plan Amendment is compatible with the existing adjacent land use designations,**

The General Plan Designations adjacent to the subject site are L (Low Density Residential) and TOC-2 (Transit Oriented Corridor - 2). The proposed General Plan

Designation will allow for development that is compatible with the existing adjacent land use designations and other plans for the Sahara Avenue and Rancho Drive corridors. Development standards within Title 19 will regulate development to protect the adjacent L (Low Density Residential) density. Therefore, the proposed General Plan Amendment can be compatible with the existing adjacent land use designations.

- 2. The zoning designations allowed by the proposed amendment will be compatible with the existing adjacent land uses or zoning districts,**

To the north of the subject site, there is a Single-Family Residential neighborhood in the R-1 (Single Family Residential) zoning district. Developments adjacent to the R-1 (Single Family Residential) zoning district area subject to the Residential Adjacency Standard in 19.08.040.H. to protect those residential neighborhoods in relation to their established building heights and setbacks.

To the south and east of the property, there is commercial development in the C-1 (Limited Commercial) zoning district. The Palace Station Hotel and Casino is in the southwest corner of Sahara Avenue and Rancho Drive. An US Bank Center is in the northwest corner. Encouraging higher density mixed-use development is compatible with those existing uses and consistent with the General Plan's vision for this area.

To the west of the subject site is an interchange allowing access to Interstate 15. This increases the accessibility of the subject site to other areas throughout the city and further supports higher intensity uses and higher densities at this location. Overall, the proposed General Plan Amendment can be compatible with the existing adjacent land uses and zoning districts.

- 3. There are adequate transportation, recreation, utility, and other facilities to accommodate the uses and densities permitted by the proposed General Plan Amendment; and**

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Sahara Avenue is a 100-foot wide Primary Arterial and Rancho Drive is an 80-foot wide Major Collector, both subject to the Master Plan of Streets and Highways. These streets are major thoroughfares and can accommodate the proposed additional densities without negatively impacting adjacent roadways or neighborhood traffic.

The subject site is within 2,500 feet of the Bob Baskin Park, a 6.18-acre City of Las Vegas park with playground and tennis facilities, and within 2,600 feet of Stupak Park, a half-acre City park with playground and soccer facilities.

4. The proposed amendment conforms to other applicable adopted plans and policies.

The proposed General Plan Amendment is consistent with the adopted 2050 City of Las Vegas Master Plan by allowing for increased density to support transit-oriented development along major corridors.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

<i>Related Relevant City Actions by Planning, Fire, Building, Code Enforcement, etc.</i>	
10/17/15	The City Council approved a Site Development Plan Review (SDR-59931) for two proposed commercial buildings totaling 18,611 square feet on 12.61 acres at the northeast corner of Rancho Drive and Sahara Avenue. The Planning Commission and Staff recommended approval.
03/30/16	Staff administratively approved a Site Development Plan Review (SDR-63869) for a Minor Amendment to a previously approved Site Development Plan Review (SDR-59931) to reduce an approved building by 1,600 square feet from 14,000 square feet to 12,400 square feet on 1.64 acres at the northeast corner of Rancho Drive and Sahara Avenue.
05/10/16	The Planning Commission approved a Petition to Vacate (VAC-63920) a 20-foot wide public sewer easement at the northeast corner of Sahara Avenue and Rancho Drive. Staff recommended approval.
11/13/17	Staff administratively approved a Site Development Plan Review (SDR-71834) for a parking lot reconfiguration and addition on 12.61 acres at the northeast corner of Rancho Drive and Sahara Avenue.

Related Relevant City Actions by Planning, Fire, Building, Code Enforcement, etc.	
05/19/21	The City Council approved a General Plan Amendment (21-0029-GPA1) to adopt the City of Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan and to amend the General Plan/future land use designation from various categories to transit-oriented future land use designations, including TOD-1 (Transit Oriented Development - 1), TOD-2 (Transit Oriented Development - 2), TOC-1 (Transit Oriented Corridor - 1), and TOC-2 (Transit Oriented Corridor - 2).
10/10/23	The Planning Commission voted (6-0) to HOLD IN ABEYANCE a Land Use Entitlement project request FROM: TOC-2 (TRANSIT-ORIENTED CORRIDOR) TO: TOD-1 (TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT) on 15.28 acres at the northeast corner of Sahara Avenue and Rancho Drive (APNs 162-04-412-002 through 004, and 006 through 009), Ward 1 (Knudsen).
01/09/24	The Planning Commission voted (6-1-0) to recommend DENIAL For possible action on a Land Use Entitlement project request FROM: TOC-2 (TRANSIT-ORIENTED CORRIDOR) TO: TOD-1 (TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT) on 15.28 acres at the northeast corner of Sahara Avenue and Rancho Drive (APNs 162-04-412-002 through 004, and 006 through 009), Ward 1 (Knudsen)

Most Recent Change of Ownership	
12/28/17	A deed was recorded for a change in ownership.

Related Building Permits/Business Licenses	
07/14/16	A Building Permit (C-308468) was issued for a restaurant building at 2480 South Rancho Drive.
	A Building Permit (C-308469) was issued for on-site improvements including a trash enclosure and parking lot lighting at 2480 South Rancho Drive.
03/16/18	A Building Permit (C18-00747) was issued for a parking lot reconfiguration at 2480 South Rancho Drive.

Pre-Application Meeting	
A pre-application meeting was not required, nor was one held.	

Neighborhood Meeting	
09/25/23	<p>A neighborhood meeting was held at the Palace Station Hotel and Casino Grand Ballroom, at 2411 West Sahara Avenue at 5:30 PM. The meeting was attended by two representatives for the applicant, two representatives from the Council Ward 1 Office. two Department of Community Development staff members, three Department of Public Works staff members, and more than 54 members of the public. The applicants gave an overview of the development application as well as the General Plan Amendment. Overall, the residents voiced their concerns over the traffic that the increase in density would create. Residents had questions on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the density limitation with Transit Oriented Development - 1? • Is there the infrastructure to support this? • Concerns with the increased density's impact on traffic on Rancho Drive. • Concern with overloading nearby grocers. • Concerns with impact on (a potentially historic) neighborhood. • Concern with increased land use encroaching into low-density neighborhoods. • It seems inappropriate to have apartments next to the freeway. • Is the City looking at developing empty lots along Martin L. King Boulevard? • Concerns with Fontainebleau Hotel Traffic as well as concerns with Universal Studio on Rancho Drive.

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Neighborhood Meeting	
09/25/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The location is too busy now, how is it possible to increase density further? • Why not use tunnels to move all these people? • Regarding the traffic study, does all the development in the area go into consideration when reviewing the traffic loads? • Develop east of the Interstate 15 underpass. • Are there any studies regarding retail or “social” infrastructure? Have you considered partnering with developers to bring in social benefits? • Have you considered adding mass transit? More development needs to occur at the intersections before moving forward with the General Plan Amendment (GPA). • Is there a request for Rezoning? Can this site be restricted to commercial only? • Trader Jones and Food 4 Less have left the area, what does this project bring to the community? • What considerations are made for schools and school buses? How do the kids living in the proposed development get off the bus? <p>Expected Rents: Studio/1 Bedroom: \$1,700 2 Bedroom: \$2,750 3 Bedroom: \$3,200</p> <p>The meeting was concluded by 7:30 PM.</p>

Field Check	
09/12/23	A routine field check was conducted of the subject site; staff found an existing commercial shopping center. The undeveloped portion of the site intended for the proposed development was partially enclosed with a temporary chain link fence. Light trash and debris were located along the enclosure area.

Details of Application Request	
Site Area	
Net Acres	15.28

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Surrounding Property	Existing Land Use Per Title 19.12	Planned or Special Land Use Designation	Existing Zoning District
Subject Property	Shopping Center	TOC-2 (Transit Oriented Corridor - 2)	C-1 (Limited Commercial)
North	Single Family, Detached	L (Low Density Residential)	R-1 (Single Family Residential)
South	Interstate 15	ROW (Right-of-Way)	ROW (Right-of-Way)
East			
West	Single Family, Detached	L (Low Density Residential)	R-1 (Single Family Residential)
	Shopping Center	TOC-2 (Transit Oriented Corridor - 2)	C-1 (Limited Commercial)

Master and Neighborhood Plan Areas	Compliance
Las Vegas 2050 Master Plan Area: Downtown Las Vegas	Y
Rancho Charleston Land Use Study	
Special Area and Overlay Districts	Compliance
A-O (Airport Overlay) District (175 and 200 Feet)	Y
Other Plans or Special Requirements	Compliance
Trails (Shared Use Trail on Rancho Drive)	Y
Las Vegas Redevelopment Plan Area – Area 2	Y
Interlocal Agreement	N/A
Project of Significant Impact	N/A
Project of Regional Significance	N/A

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Street Name	Functional Classification of Street(s)	Governing Document	Actual Street Width (Feet)	Compliance with Street Section
Sahara Avenue	Primary Arterial	Master Plan of Streets and Highways Map	100	Y
Rancho Drive	Collector Street	Master Plan of Streets and Highways Map	80	Y