

ZONING / PERMIT PROCESSING
831/420-5100 • FAX 831/420-5434
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING
831/420-5180 • FAX 831/420-5101



INSPECTION SERVICES
831/420-5120 • FAX 831/420-5434
PLANNING ADMINISTRATION
831/420-5110 • FAX 831/420-5101

PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

809 Center Street • Room 206 • Santa Cruz, CA 95060 • www.cityofsantacruz.com
Juliana Rebagliati, Director

August 19, 2013

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

RE: La Bahia Hotel

To Interested Agencies and Persons:

The City of Santa Cruz, as the lead agency, is preparing an Environmental Impact Report on the project described herein. Please respond with written comments regarding the scope and the content of the EIR as it may relate to your agency's area of statutory responsibility or your areas of concern or expertise. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project, if any is required. **Responses are due within 30 days of the receipt of this Notice, as provided by State law.** The contact person's name and address are listed below. Please include the name and phone number of a contact person at your agency in your response.

*****A public scoping meeting to take comments on the EIR scope of work will be held on September 9, 2013 at 7PM at Police Dept. Community Room, 155 Center Street, in Santa Cruz. You or members of your agency or organization are invited to attend.*****

- 1. Project Location.** The approximate 1.4-acre project site is located at 215 Beach Street across from the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk (APN 005-213-02, -03) in the city of Santa Cruz; see the attached map. The site is within the *Beach and South of Laurel Comprehensive Area (B/SOL)* Plan area in an area characterized by a mix of hotels, beach tourist, commercial and residential uses. The site is bordered by Beach Street on the south, Main Street on the west, First Street on the north, and Westbrook Street on the east. The project site slopes from north to south. The La Bahia Apartments, a large, Spanish Colonial Revival style building, occupies the entire block of Beach Street between Main and Westbrook. The primarily two-story building has 44 units that provide short-term rental housing to University of California Santa Cruz students during the school year and to Boardwalk employees during the summer.
- 2. Project Description.** The proposed project consists of demolition of the existing 44-unit La Bahia apartment complex and construction of a 165-room hotel. The southeastern portion of the existing building that has the bell tower will be retained and restored or rehabilitated. Hotel amenities include approximately 4,350 square feet of meeting and banquet space, a 2,500 square foot restaurant, 2,500 square feet of retail space, a day spa, and a swimming pool. The

facility also includes 2,695 square feet of space for business administration and 20,375 square feet of support space. Access to the project will be provided by a check-in entrance off Beach Street and an entrance/exit on Westbrook Street with an exit onto Main Street. A total of 210 parking spaces are provided, including 49 valet spaces, within a parking garage that is partially underground.

The following approvals and permits will be required from the City of Santa Cruz: Residential Demolition Authorization Permit, Historic Demolition Permit, Historic Alteration Permit, , Coastal Permit, Planned Development Permit, Administrative Use Permit, and Design Permit. The Planned Development Permit modification is proposed to allow an increase in building height.

3. Project Applicant.

OWNER: La Bahia, LLC, c/o Joseph Rossi, 460 Beach Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

REPRESENTATIVE: French Resources Group, Inc., Craig French, 911 Center Street, Suite B, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

4. Probable Environmental Effects of the Project. After completing a preliminary review of the project, as described in Section 15060 of the CEQA Guidelines, and preparing an Initial Study for the project, which is attached (or available on the City's website at: <http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/index.aspx?page=1775>), the City has determined that an EIR should be prepared to assess the potentially significant environmental impacts of this project. The City has identified the following possible effects of the project as topics for analysis in the EIR, which are further described below: aesthetics, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, historical resources, geology and soils, traffic, and water supply. The City will consider the written comments received in response to this Notice of Preparation in determining whether any additional topics should be studied in the Draft EIR.

- Aesthetics. Maps developed for the City's *General Plan 2030* and included in the General Plan EIR identify panoramic views from the Wharf, West Cliff Drive and East Cliff Drive, which would include the project site. The Municipal Wharf, areas along West Cliff Drive path, the ocean bluff on the east side of the San Lorenzo River, and a view from the Oceanview Park also are identified as "scenic viewpoints and panoramas" in the City's Local Coastal Program (LCP), and West Cliff Drive and Bay Street are identified as "scenic drives". The site is visible from the Main Beach, the Wharf, portions of West Cliff Drive, and a small segment of East Cliff Drive. Building heights will be a maximum of approximately 43 feet in accordance with heights allowed with a Planned Development permit. The proposal will retain a portion of the existing bell tower structure and demolish the remaining existing structures to develop the new hotel.

Review of project impacts upon scenic views will be evaluated as a part of an EIR analysis based on the currently proposed site plan and building heights. The overall height, scale, massing, and general design of the project also will be evaluated in the EIR with regards to project impacts on the visual character of the area, including review of project photosimulations. Mitigation measures should be identified, if needed, to ensure that the project does not substantially degrade the existing visual character of the surrounding area or substantially increase nighttime lighting.

- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The project would generate air emissions through new regional vehicle trips. In accordance with directives in the *General Plan 2030* and EIR, project emissions will be calculated and evaluated in an EIR. The analysis will include calculation and analysis of project emissions, including PM₁₀ emissions associated with the demolition of the existing building and project excavation and grading, as well as review of whether carbon monoxide thresholds would be exceeded. The analysis will include review of project GHG emissions generated by the project and determination of significance based on significance thresholds being considered by the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District and/or review of the project with the City's adopted "Climate Action Plan."
- Historical Resources. The existing La Bahia Apartments complex is included in the City of Santa Cruz' Historic Building Survey. The project includes demolition of the existing La Bahia structures, except that the bell tower building in the southeastern portion of the site will be retained and restored/rehabilitated. The effects of rehabilitation of the retained building and potential historic impacts due to demolition of the portions of the site's structures require further evaluation in an EIR.
- Traffic. The project site is located along Beach Street. A traffic analysis will be prepared and included in the EIR to include identification of existing weekday PM peak traffic volumes at vicinity intersections based on new traffic counts at 16 intersections, project trip generation and distribution, project impacts upon intersection and highway levels of service, cumulative impacts, and identification of mitigation measures. The review should also consider temporary truck traffic during construction due to demolition and offsite haul trips. Intersections to be analyzed include:
 - Pacific Avenue/Beach Street
 - Beach Street / Main Street
 - Beach Street/Westbrook Street
 - Beach Street/Cliff Street
 - Riverside Avenue/Leibrandt Street
 - West Cliff Drive/Beach Street
 - West Cliff Drive/Bay Street
 - Riverside Avenue/San Lorenzo Blvd.
 - Bay Street/Mission Street
 - Ocean Street/Water Street
 - Front Street/Laurel Street
 - Ocean Street/Soquel Avenue
 - Ocean Street/Broadway
 - Ocean Street/San Lorenzo Blvd.
 - Highway 17/Ocean Street
 - Highway 1/Highway 9

The traffic study will also address access and parking requirements pursuant to the City's traffic study requirements. The parking analysis will consider potential loss of off-street parking.

- Water Supply. The EIR shall provide an analysis of project water demand and effects upon water supply.
- Geology & Soils. The 2008 geotechnical study also identified a potential for liquefaction and potential inducement of either lateral spreading or lateral surge. The study included special foundation recommendations, which would mitigate the effects of liquefaction induced lateral spreading on the foundation system. Implementation of all recommendations of the geotechnical investigation and geologic report were required. The former geotechnical investigation concluded that the former proposed hotel project could have been constructed with implementation

of recommendations set forth in the geotechnical report. Since the building design has been changed, an update to the geotechnical investigation will be necessary.

- Land Use. The proposed project is consistent with the land use designation in the *General Plan 2030*, LCP and zone district, as well as the intensity of development supported in the *Beach and South of Laurel Comprehensive Area Plan* (B/SOL Area Plan). Review of potential project conflicts with General Plan, LCP and B/SOL Area Plan policies and recommendations will be provided in an EIR.

4. Contact Person Name and Phone Number:

Ryan Bane, Senior Planner
City of Santa Cruz Planning and Community Development Department
809 Center Street, Rm. 206
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Phone: 831 420-5141
Email: RBane@cityofsantacruz.com

Responses to this Notice of Preparation are due by **September 19, 2013**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ryan Bane", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ryan Bane
Senior Planner

Attachments:

Location Map

Initial Study (Online at: <http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/index.aspx?page=1775>)

LOCATION MAP

