



SAN RAFAEL
THE CITY WITH A MISSION

Community Development Department –
Planning Division

Meeting Date: June 6, 2023

Case Numbers: ED23-018 (PLAN22-069)

Project Planner: Renee Nickenig, Assistant
Planner

Agenda Item: 2

REPORT TO DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

SUBJECT: 513 Francisco Blvd. E. – ED23-018 (PLAN22-069) Request for Zoning Administrator recommendation for an Environmental and Design Review Permit for a proposal to renovate and expand the existing Lexus automobile dealership and repair center from approximately 19,400 square feet to 34,000 square feet; APN: 179-221-03; General Commercial Zoning District (GC); Bay Automotive Properties and Heitzinger Associates, Owner; Patrick Wirz, AIA, Applicant.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed project is being referred to the Design Review Board (Board) for review of an Environmental and Design Review permit for the renovation and expansion of the existing Lexus automobile dealership and repair center. The project includes renovation of the interior to update customer areas, and the inclusion of additional service bays. The expansion will result in the loss of some existing parking and landscaping but will meet all development standards, described in Table 2 below. Staff seeks confirmation from the Design Review Board that the project complies with all applicable design criteria, described in the analysis section below.

Previous Approvals

The existing automobile dealership was conditionally approved by the Planning Commission under Resolution 99-20 (Exhibit 2). The approved Use Permit (UP99-14) and Environmental and Design Review Permit (ED99-15) included the construction of a 19,400 square foot automobile dealership with 18 service bays, a parts department, office and show room located at 513 Francisco Blvd. E.

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

The proposed project is subject to review, and approval of the entitlements described below:

- **Use Permit Amendment (UP23-012).** Pursuant to San Rafael Municipal Code (SRMC) Section 14.05.020, a motor vehicle sales and service use with more than five vehicles displayed or stored on-site requires a Use Permit approval by the Planning Commission. Pursuant to Condition of Approval no. 64 of Planning Commission Resolution 99-20, an amendment to Use Permit (UP99-14) shall be subject to review by the Design Review Board and approval of the Zoning Administrator.
- **Environmental and Design Review (Minor) (ED23-018).** Pursuant to SRMC Section 14.25.040.B.2.j.b, additions to existing nonresidential structures where the addition is forty percent (40%) or less of the existing square footage and no greater than one thousand two hundred fifty (1,250) square feet are considered Minor Physical Improvements and require approval by the Zoning Administrator. Condition of Approval no. 64 of Resolution 99-20 also

stipulates that any addition, expansion, or remodeling of this automobile dealership is subject to review by the Design Review Board.

PROPERTY FACTS

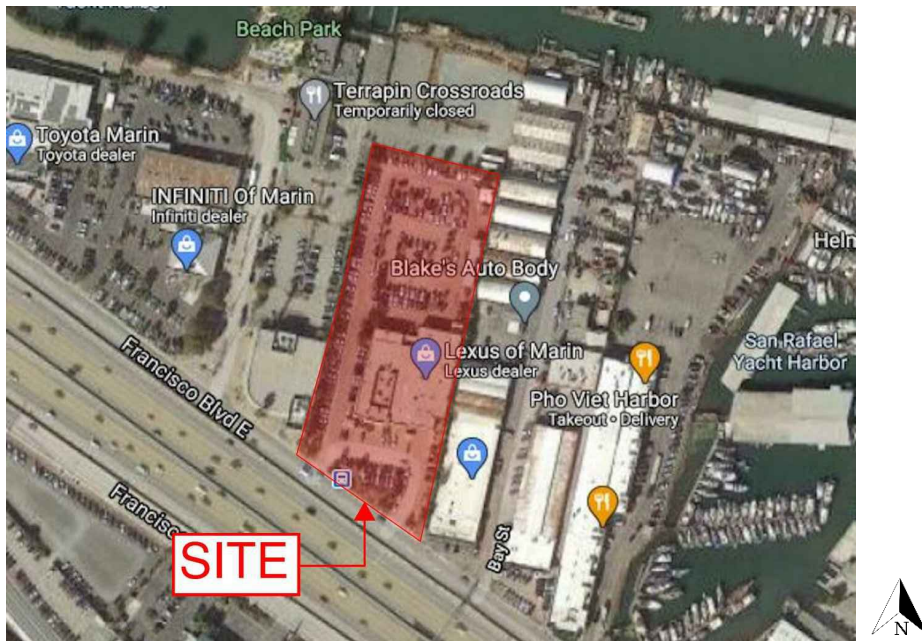
The project site is located to the north of Highway 101 and Francisco Blvd. E., and west of Bay Street. The site is approximately 130,680 square feet in area and is occupied by an approximately 19,402 square-foot automobile dealership with a repair shop and associated parking.

The following table provides an overview of General Plan and Zoning designations for the project site and immediate surrounding area as well as existing developed land uses.

Table 1: Designations and Existing Uses			
Location	General Plan Designation*	Zoning Designation**	Existing Land-Use
Project Site:	GC	GC	Commercial - Improved
North:	MAR	GC	Commercial - Unimproved
South (opposite Hwy 101):	GC	FBWC	Commercial - Improved
East:	GC		Commercial - Improved
West:	GC	M-C; GC; W	Commercial - Improved

* Community Commercial Mixed Use (GC); Marine Related Mixed Use (MAR)
 ** Francisco Boulevard West Commercial District (FBWC); Marine (M); Canalfront Review Overlay (C); GC; Water District (W)

Figure 1: Project Location



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project consists of the renovation and expansion of the existing automobile dealership, including an expansion of the showroom floor and the additional service bays. The exterior of the building will be altered to flatten the existing mansard roof and add a rectangular fin to reflect current Lexus design standards.

Site

The proposed expansion of the auto dealership will increase the primary building footprint from approximately 19,402 sq. ft. to 33,969 sq. ft.. The existing car wash (1,063 sq. ft.) will remain and a new trash enclosure will be constructed behind the primary building. The building expansion will require minimal grading to even the flat site and will result in some tree removal and landscape reduction.

Figure 2: Existing Site Plan

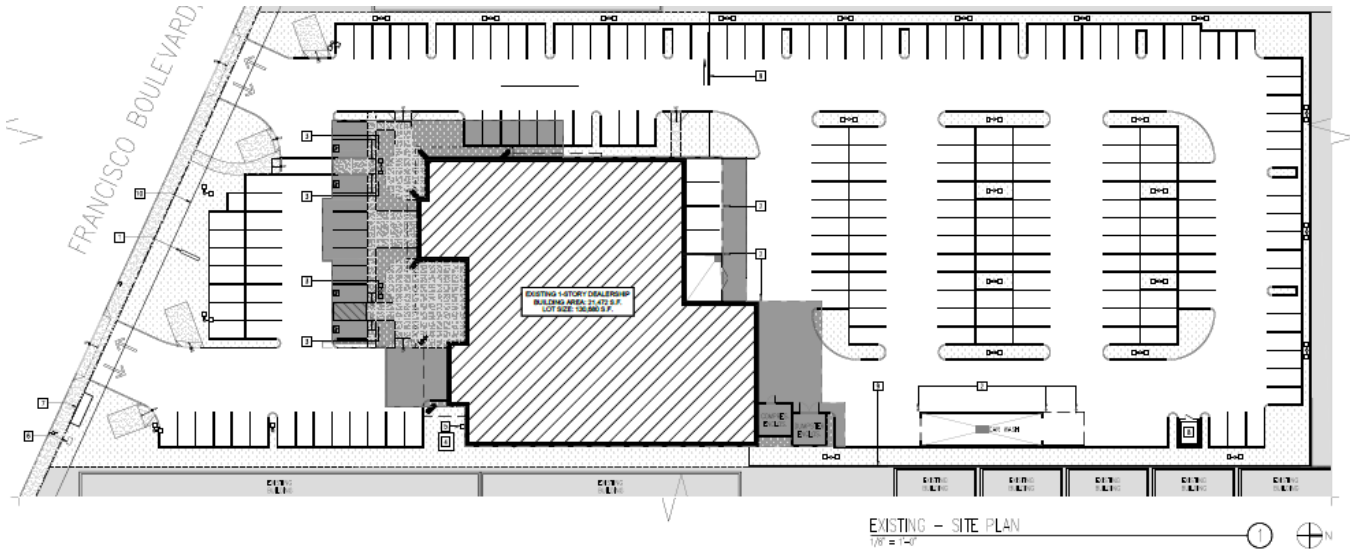
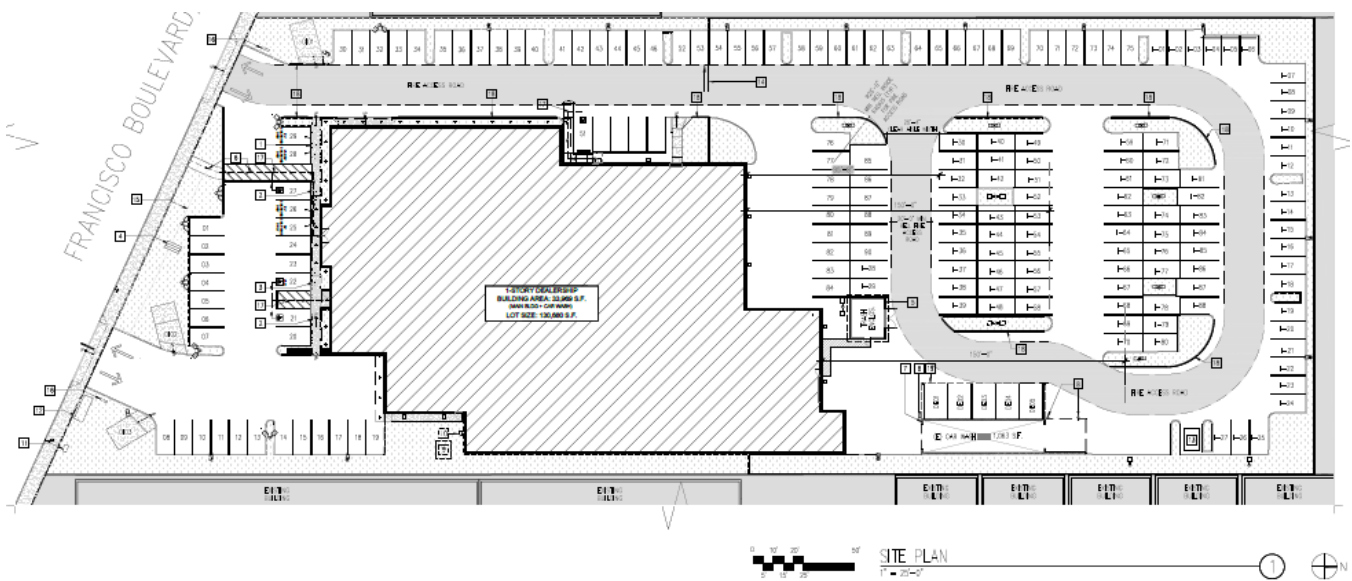


Figure 3: Proposed Site Plan



Landscaping

Some existing landscaping will be removed to accommodate new construction and parking configuration but will mostly remain or be replanted. Most of the existing trees at the site will remain, and the new planting will be primarily comprised of low shrubs and bushes. The predominant plants proposed are California Fescue and California Gray Rush.

Lighting

The existing building and parking lot lighting will be upgraded with LED fixtures.

Architectural Features

In addition to the proposed expansion of the primary building, the remaining portions will be renovated for consistency with the new design. The overall building height will remain the same, but a significantly taller blade wall will be installed at the south elevation oriented perpendicular to the public street. The overall design reflects a more modern and streamlined design with sharp edges and rectangular paneling and is appropriate for the existing setting.

Figure 4: Existing South (Front) Elevation (looking northeast)



Figure 5: Proposed South (Front) Elevation (looking northwest)



Figure 6: Proposed South (Front) Elevation (looking northeast)



The south (front), north (rear), and west elevations are articulated with large window bays, smaller paired windows, and roll-up metal doors (Figures 7-9). The east elevation is flat in contrast, but visibility will be limited from the public street, save for the blade wall (Figure 10).

Materials and Colors

The overall color palette proposed is neutral with varying shades of gray. The exterior will be primarily finished with cement plaster in a light gray. The fascia surrounding the edge of the building and the blade wall would be aluminum panels, at the window curtain walls at the south and west elevations will be tinted glass with metal mullions. The roll-up service door at the south and west elevations will be a combination of glass and metal, and the roll-up service doors at the north elevation will be solid metal.

Signage

The building signage will be updated to reflect current brand standards. The most significant increase from the current signage at the site will be the addition of the logo on the blade sign (Figure 10).

Figure 7: Proposed South (Front) Elevation

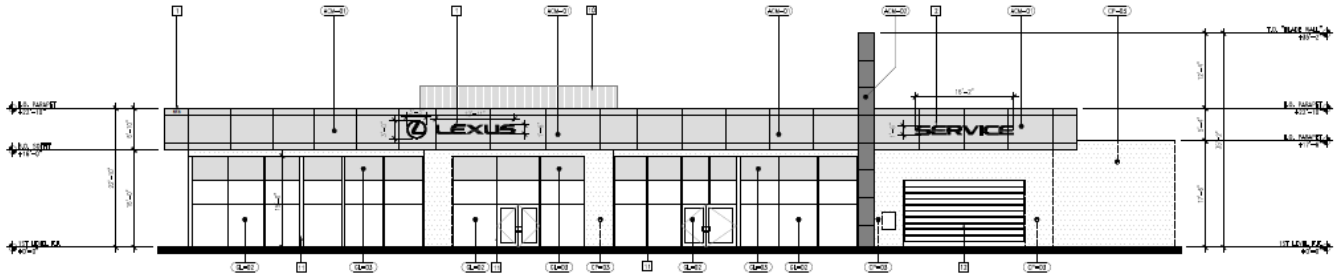


Figure 8: Proposed West Elevation

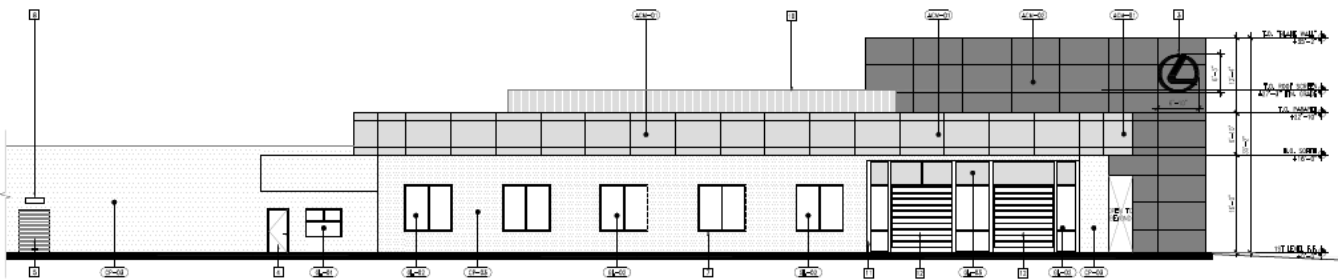


Figure 9: Proposed North (Rear) Elevation

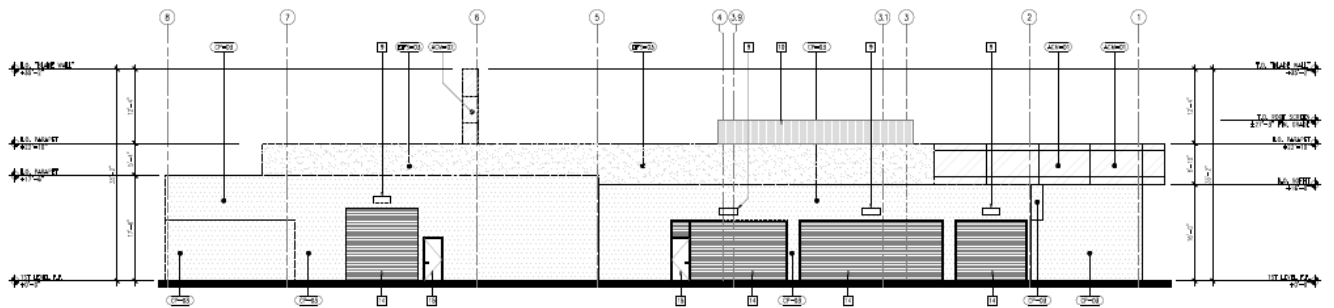
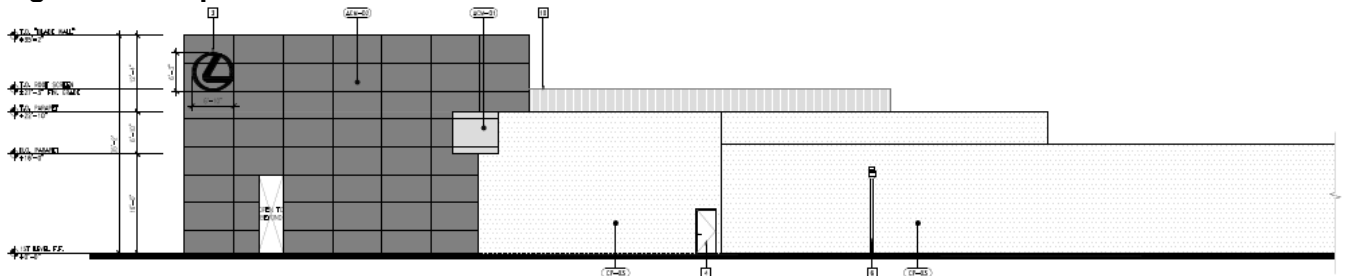


Figure 10: Proposed East Elevation



ANALYSIS

This section provides an overview of the project's compliance with applicable development standards set forth in SRMC § 14.05.030 for the General Commercial zoning district (HR1.8), as well as an analysis of the project against the Design Review Criteria set forth in SRMC § 14.25.050.

Table 2: Development Standards Summary (GC)

Development Standard	Required/ Permitted	Existing	Proposed	Consistent
Minimum lot area	6,000 sq. ft. (2.3 acres)	130,680 sq. ft. (3 acres)	No change	Yes
Floor area ratio (Max. nonresidential intensity)	.3	.15	.25	Yes
Minimum lot width (ft.)	60'	248'	No change	Yes
Minimum yards (ft.)	NR	N/A	N/A	Yes
Maximum Height (ft.)	36'	22' 6"	22' 10" (building) 35' 2" (blade wall)	Yes
Maximum lot coverage	NR	N/A	N/A	Yes
Minimum Landscaping	15%	16.8% (21,986 sq. ft.)	15% (19,569 sq. ft.)	Yes
Parking				
One (1) space per 400 gross building sq. ft. (excluding auto repair area) (16,576 sq. ft.)	42			
Three (3) spaces per service bay (24 bays)	72			
Total	114	241	186	Yes

Design Review Criteria (SRMC § 14.25.050)

The following additionally considers the San Rafael Nonresidential Design Guidelines.

Site/Landscape Design

The placement of the existing building and expansion is sensitive to the size and location of the property, providing reasonable access, circulation, and visibility from the site and from the public right-of-way on Francisco Blvd. E.

The proposed landscaping is appropriately minimal for the site and surrounding area and will provide a sufficient buffer between the parking area and primary building and the public sidewalk. All landscaping will be reviewed by the Marin Municipal Water District.

Architecture

The proposed streamlined design of the primary building is generally harmonious with the existing site features and surrounding buildings and properties. The strong angles of horizontal and vertical lines are offset by staggered elevations and the project roof. The projecting roof form provides a canopy for the primary elevation, which defines the entry in relationship to the building and site.

The blade wall proposed does not exceed the maximum allowed height for the zoning district and provides a distinctive feature at the site, and the gray color and non-reflective material will not be a nuisance to the public view.

Colors and Materials

The neutral color palette proposed is consistent and complimentary to the existing site features and surrounding buildings.

Lighting

The lighting will be required to meet the general light and glare standards required by SRMC Section 14.16.277.

NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENCE

Notice of hearing for the project was conducted in accordance with noticing requirements contained in Chapter 29 of the Zoning Ordinance. A Notice of Public Hearing was mailed to all property owners and occupants within a 300-foot radius of the subject site and all other interested parties, 15 calendar days prior to the date of all meetings, including this hearing. Public notice was also posted on the subject site 15 calendar days prior to the date of all meetings, including this hearing. Staff have not received any public comments as of the posting of this staff report.

CONCLUSION

Staff request that the DRB provide professional design analysis, evaluation and judgment as to the completeness, competence and appropriateness of this development proposal for the use and setting based on the applicable development standards and policies described in this staff report and consider providing a recommendation to the Zoning Administrator.

EXHIBITS

1. [Project Plans](#)
2. [Planning Commission Resolution 99-20](#)