



**Design Review Board  
Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, June 6, 2023 7:00 P.M.  
AGENDA**

**Participate In-Person:**

**San Rafael City Council Chambers  
1400 Fifth Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901  
Or**

**Participate Virtually:**

**Watch on Webinar: <https://tinyurl.com/drb-2023>  
Telephone: 1 (669) 444-9171  
Meeting ID: 885 6816 1418**

This meeting will be held in-person. The public may attend in-person or participate virtually using Zoom.

How to participate in the meeting virtually:

- Submit public comment in writing before 4:00 p.m. the day of the meeting to [PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org)
- Join the Zoom webinar and use the 'raise hand' feature to provide verbal public comment.
- Dial-in to Zoom's telephone number using the meeting ID and press \*9 to raise your hand, and \*6 to unmute yourself, then provide verbal public comment.

If you experience technical difficulties during the meeting, please contact [PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org)

Members of the public may speak on Agenda items.

**CALL TO ORDER**

**RECORDING OF MEMBERS PRESENT AND ABSENT**

**APPROVAL OR REVISION OF ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS**

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF MEETING PROCEDURES**

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Remarks are 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.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

The Consent Calendar allows the Board to take action, without discussion, on Agenda items for which there are no persons present who wish to speak, and no Board members who wish to discuss.

- 1. Approval of the Design Review Board Meeting Minutes of April 18, 2023**  
*Recommended Action – Approve minutes as submitted*

## **ACTION CALENDAR**

- 2. 513 Francisco Blvd. E. – Lexus Dealership Expansion**

A 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); Permit # ED23-018, PLAN22-069

**Project Planner:** Renee Nickenig ([renee.nickenig@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:renee.nickenig@cityofsanrafael.org))

*Recommended Action – Review and provide input on items discussed in staff report*

## **STAFF COMMUNICATION**

## **BOARD COMMUNICATION**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*Any records relating to an agenda item, received by a majority or more of the Commission less than 72 hours before the meeting, shall be available for inspection online. Sign Language interpreters may be requested by calling (415) 485-3066 (voice), emailing [city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org) or using the California Telecommunications Relay Service by dialing “711”, at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Copies of documents are available in accessible formats upon request.*



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**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Kovalsky called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Chair Kovalsky then invited Staff & Senior Planner Jeff Ballantine to call roll.

**RECORDING OF MEMBERS PRESENT AND ABSENT**

Present: Chair Sharon Kovalsky  
Vice Chair Jeff Kent  
Board Member Michael Alexin  
Board Member Stewart Summers

Absent: Board Member Sarah Rege  
Alternate Board Member Donald Blayney

Also Present: Jeff Ballantine, Staff, Senior Planner & DRB Secretary

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF MEETING PROCEDURES**

Chair Kovalsky invited Staff & Senior Planner, Jeff Ballantine, to inform the public that members they can provide public comment either in person in the Council Chambers, by telephone or via zoom with the raise hand feature. Written comments submitted prior to the meeting time would be read aloud into the record during the public comment portion of each item.

Chair Kovalsky reviewed the procedures for the meeting.

## **URGENT ORAL/EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Chair Kovalsky called for any comments from the public on items NOT on the agenda. There were no public comments.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

Chair Kovalsky invited public comment on the Consent Calendar. There was no comment on the Consent Calendar.

### **1. Approval of the Design Review Board Meeting Minutes of April 18, 2023**

Member Alexin moved and Member Kent seconded to approve the Minutes as submitted.

AYES: Members: Alexin, Kent, Summers

NOES: Members: None

ABSENT: Members: Rege

ABSTAIN: Members: Kovalsky

Motion passes.

## **ACTION CALENDAR**

Chair Kovalsky introduced the Action Calendar and invited staff to present the Staff Report.

### **2. 323 Prospect Drive – Retaining Wall**

Request for recommendation to City Staff on an Administrative Environmental and Design Review Permit application for a maximum seven-foot-tall retaining wall with a three foot five inches tall railing within the required front yard on a hillside property; APN 011-033-09; Residential District (R5); Permit # ED23-012, PLAN22-175

**Project Planner:** Renee Nickenig ([renee.nickenig@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:renee.nickenig@cityofsanrafael.org))

*Recommended Action – Review and provide input on items discussed in staff report*

Assistant Planner, Renee Nickenig, provided a staff presentation on the project.

Applicant Team gave a presentation on the project.

Applicant Team and Staff responded to questions from the Board Members.

Chair Kovalsky asked for public comments. The property owners of 323 Prospect Drive provided public comment.

Board Members provided comments.

Member Summers moved, Member Alexin seconded recommendation that City Staff approve the project City Staff confirms with the Fire Department that they do not have concerns if a vehicle were to park in the area proposed for grading in front of the proposed retaining wall.

AYES: Members: Alexin, Kent, Kovalsky, Summers

NOES: Members: None

ABSENT: Members: Rege

ABSTAIN: Members: None

Motion passes.

### **3. 50 Merrydale Road – New 12-Unit Residential Building**

Request for a Conceptual Design Review of a new, 12-unit residential building. The project includes a proposed lot split of the property on which there is an existing 16-unit residential building and a density bonus request which would result in waivers to deviate from the existing development standards; APN 179-221-03; High Density Residential Zoning District (HR1.8); Permit # CDR23-001, PLAN22-180

**Project Planner:** Renee Nickenig ([renee.nickenig@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:renee.nickenig@cityofsanrafael.org))

*Recommended Action – Review and provide input on items discussed in staff report*

Assistant Planner, Renee Nickenig, provided a staff presentation on the project.

Applicant Team gave a presentation on the project.

Applicant Team and Staff responded to questions from the Board Members.

Chair Kovalsky asked for public comments. No public comment was provided.

Board Members provided the following comments on this conceptual design review:

1. Consider providing more articulation on the exterior walls of the garage such as increasing the number and/or size of windows and/or providing window trim.
2. Consider proposing trees and landscaping along the eastern edge of the property to provide an improved buffer between the freeway and the proposed building. For example, consider proposing taller evergreen hedges for the planters located east of the proposed building.
3. Consider improving ADA accessibility such that someone in a wheelchair can access the street from the proposed building.
4. Consider providing additional private and/or common open space.
5. Provide paint samples for DRB to confirm that the proposed “Timber Bark” color of the lap siding of the upper levels is compatible with the proposed “Warm Gray” stucco siding of the garage level.
6. Show proposed amenities for common outdoor areas on the project plans.

### **DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Jeff Ballantine provided an update on Planning Commission’s consideration of an Environmental and Design Review Permit application for 1515 4<sup>th</sup> Street during their April 11, 2023 meeting.

### **BOARD COMMUNICATION**

Member Alexin requested Staff to confirm the attendance policy of the DRB at the next DRB meeting. Member Summers expressed a desire to remove the hybrid option for DRB meetings and require all attendees to participate in person.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Kovalsky adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

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JEFF BALLANTINE, Senior Planner



**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**

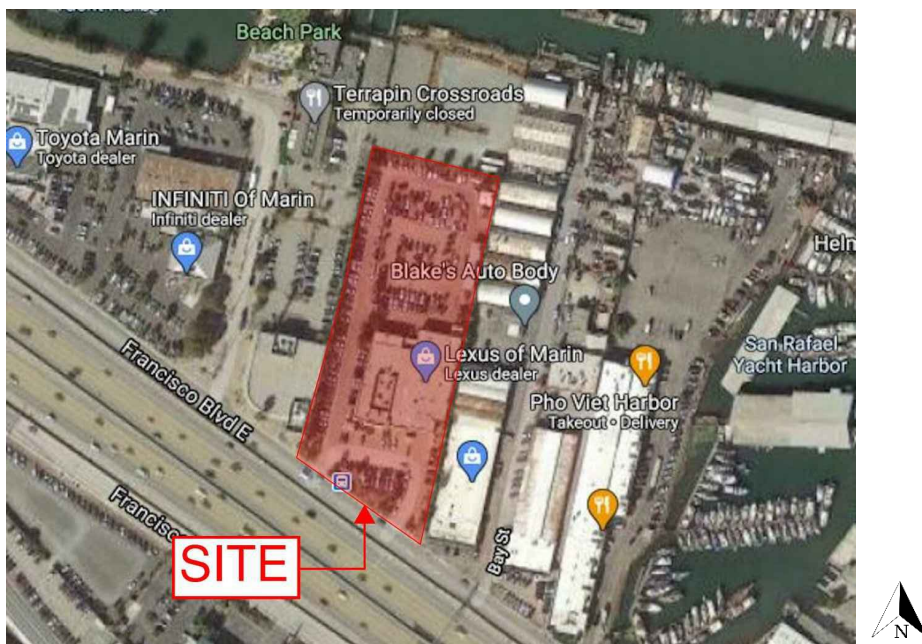
The project site is located to the north of Highway 101 and Francisco Blvd. E., and west of Bay Street. The site is approximately 130,680 square feet in area and is occupied by an approximately 19,402 square-foot automobile dealership with a repair shop and associated parking.

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
<b>Project Site:</b>	<b>GC</b>	<b>GC</b>	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**



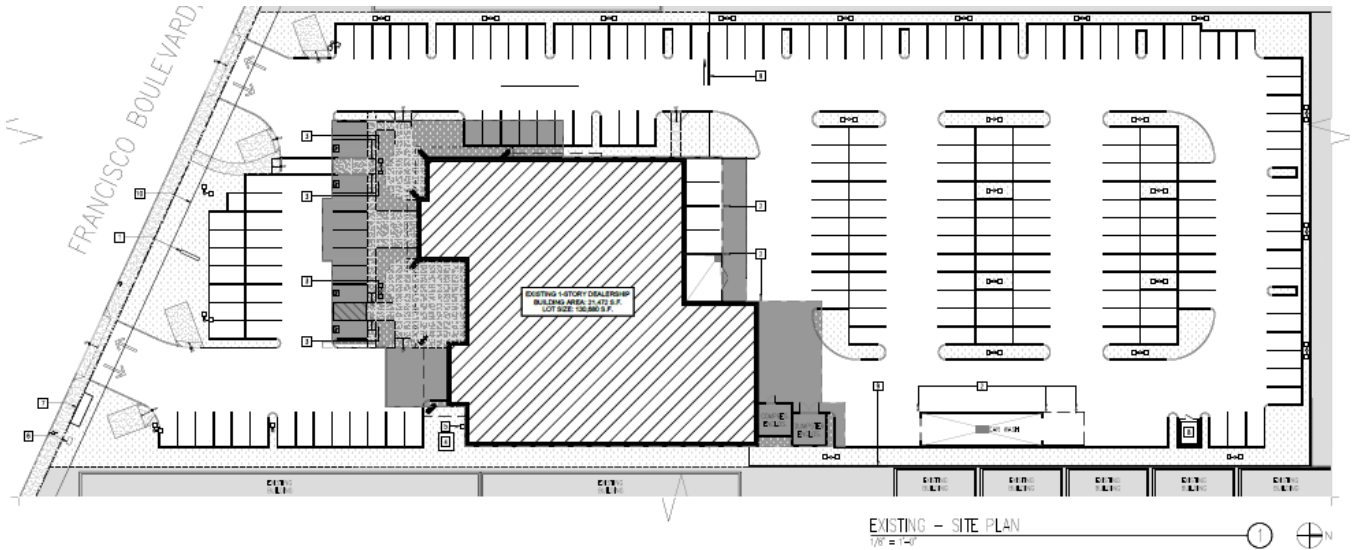
**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

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.

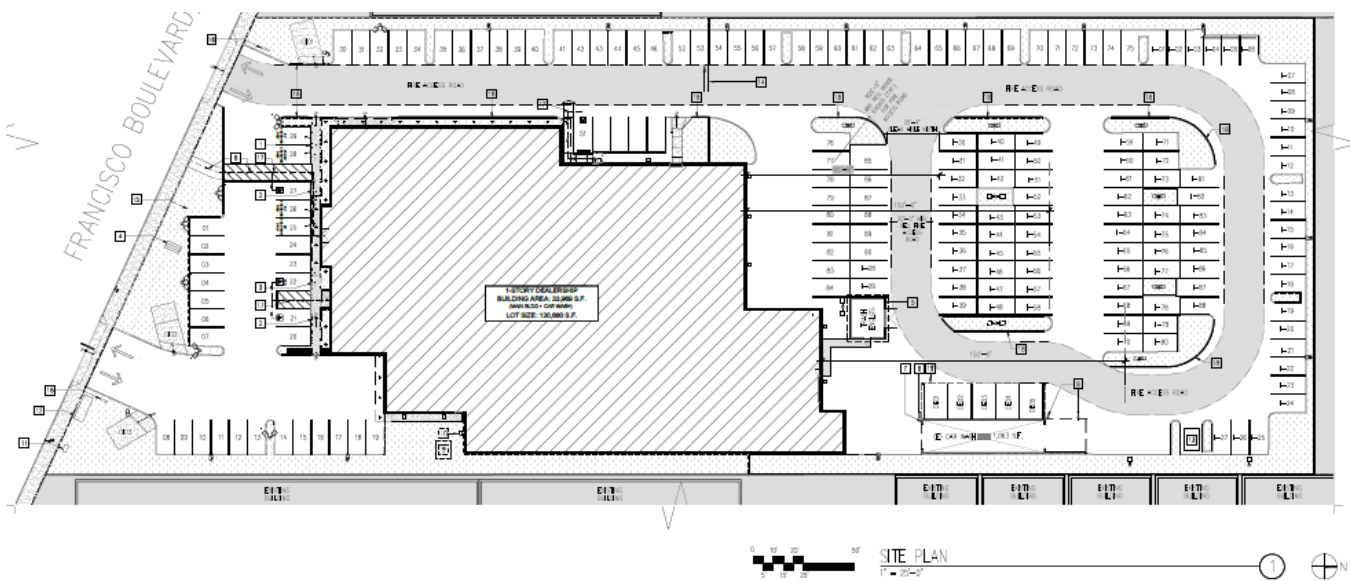
### Site

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).



## 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
<b>Parking</b>				
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			
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	241	<b>186</b>	<b>Yes</b>

### 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](#)