



STAFF REPORT 7/6/2022

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Gabriel Perez, Development Services Director

SUBJECT: Coachella Sunline Transportation Hub (Architectural Review No 21-13)

SPECIFICS: The Sunline Transit Hub will serve as a transit center for Sunline Transit Agency services (Line 111, Line 91, Line 92, Line 95) and will include a 540 sq. ft. breakroom/office building for the use of Sunline Transit Agency staff, three bus shelters, landscape improvements, and a corner focal point for a future public art installation located at the Southeast corner of Cesar Chavez Street and 4th Street.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Sunline Transit Agency (Sunline) requests Planning Commission approval of the Coachella Sunline Transportation Hub (Transit Hub) for bus service that includes a 540 sq. ft. Sunline Transit Agency breakroom/office building, 5 bus shelters, landscape improvements and a corner focal point for a future public art installation located at the Southeast corner of Cesar Chavez Street and 4th Street (APN 778-080-021).

BACKGROUND:

The subject site is a .86 acre vacant property, part of the Pueblo Viejo Villas Transit-Oriented Development. The site is proposed as a transit center and associated with the construction of the 105-unit Pueblo Viejo Villas multi-family apartment project. The Pueblo Viejo Villas was completed May 2022 and is currently occupied by tenants. The City Engineer authorized a Lot Line Adjustment (LLA 2018-02) that created the alignment for a one-way loop street that would provide an exit to Cesar Chavez Street and full access from 4th Street for the Transit Hub and the Pueblo Viejo Villas development. The loop street also provides access to angled parking in from of the multifamily residential building.



The transit hub is funded through the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Grant from the California Department of Housing and Community Development for \$14.8 million,

of which \$1,813,500 is designated for transit hub design and construction. The grant also provides funding for 4 Sunline buses, 40 vans, \$696,500 in street improvements, and an \$8,395,407 housing loan for the Pueblo Viejo Villas project.

The project was first presented to the Planning Commission on January 19, 2022 and the Commission requested that staff recommended revisions be integrated into the project and that restrooms be incorporated. The item was presented to the City Council at their regular meeting on February 9, 2022 as a presentation update. Councilmembers expressed concerns about the project design and also reaffirmed Planning Commission's recommendations for a public restroom. The applicant proposes new revisions to the project design with an estimated construction cost \$1,774,859, within the designated budget for the transit hub. The estimated construction cost of the previous project design was \$1,163,000.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The surrounding land uses and zoning designations are as follows:

- North:** Fourth Street and Chevron gas station and convenience store (C-G, General Commercial).
- South:** Pueblo Viejo Villas apartment development. (C-G PUD, General Commercial – Planned Unit Development).
- East:** Apartment complex and Department of Public Social Services (C-G, General Commercial).
- West:** Cesar Chavez Street and Rite Aid Pharmacy (C-G, General Commercial).

Site Plan

The transit hub is accessed by vehicles entering the Mario Lazcano Drive loop road from 4th Street to pick up and drop off bus riders at the bus shelter locations and exit back onto Cesar Chavez Street or onto 4th Street. The original site plan identified a bus shelter island with two bus shelters with seating and overhead canopy. The revised plans in figure 2 identify one large “swoosh” shaped canopy to replace the two smaller bus shelters. Three bus shelters were originally proposed near the Cesar Chavez Street sidewalk, which can be serviced by buses in the planned bus turnout on Cesar Chavez or the driveway within the transit hub. The revised design as shown in figure 2 identifies two large “swoosh” shaped canopies instead of the original three smaller canopies. Sidewalks throughout the transit center are largely 6 feet in width (natural gray concrete) and provide pedestrians access to the transit hub. Sidewalks are wider at about 8 feet in width near the proposed lounge building.

A 540 sq. ft. Sunline Transit Agency lounge and breakroom building is proposed at the south portion of the transit hub. The building is not available for public use and will be used exclusively by Sunline Transit Agency staff. The floor plan for the building includes a mechanical room, unisex bathroom, breakroom, janitor room, and office. Bike racks are located adjacent to two sides of the building. A public restroom is not incorporated into the project design. Streetscape furniture and amenities include:

- Ten (10) site benches
- Five (5) trash receptacles
- Six (6) bike racks
- A bicycle service stand

Figure 1: Original rendering of transit hub



Figure 2: Revised rendering of transit hub



On-site storm water retention is provided by an above ground retention basin of approximately 12,300 sq. ft. in area that also provides storm water retention for the Department of Public Services building. The retention basin construction is complete with an existing chain link fence. Staff was under the impression that a wrought iron fence would replace the chain link fence upon completion. The proposed renderings identify the retention of the chain link fence for the project and painting it a black color.

Architectural Design

The original transit hub design features includes five (5) bus shelters consisting of two (2) hypar sail panels per bus shelter to provide shade for waiting bus riders. The revised design features include two (2) large “swoosh” shade structures 20’ by 40’ and one (1) small shade structure 15’ x 18’ with a brown colored frame and a “desert sand” fabric. The bus shelter designs are a more modern look and would be a departure from the Pueblo Viejo Villas design them. Two 96” long benches with a wood seat will be located beneath each bus shelter with a bronze powdercoat color. Five (5) litter receptacles are proposed with a bronze powder coat color. Decorative street lighting consistent with 6th Street lighting standards is incorporated.

Figure 3: Original Proposed Bus Hypar Shade Sail



Figure 4: New Proposed Bus “Swoosh” shade structure



The proposed Sunline breakroom building is a pre-fabricated building. Staff expressed concern about the original building design with a pre-fabricated exterior look that is incompatible with the Pueblo Viejo design guidelines. Sunline designers developed modified exterior elevations with a red tile roof, stucco exterior, exposed rafters tail and beams, wood doors, window iron work and a tile sign more in the character of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture as shown in figure 5. The applicant revised the building design further with with foam decorative pop-outs, digital sign, expanded mosaic features, and water fountain with bottle filter. Planning staff still has design concerns regarding the building and believe the architectural recommendations have not been incorporated.

Figure 5: Original Rendering of the Sunline Breakroom Building



Figure 6: Proposed Rendering of the Sunline Breakroom Building



Signage

Signage for the transit hub is proposed on the north elevation of the Sunline breakroom building consisting of a tile design identifying the “Coachella Transit Center.” A digital sign is also proposed as a new addition to the building design.

Landscape Design

The plant palette originally included 12 date palm trees would be planted at a 16 foot brown trunk height. The date palm trees were removed on a revised landscape plan and replaced with shade trees consisting of “Desert Willow” and “Texas Ebony.” The Pueblo Viejo landscape design guidelines suggests California Fan Palm, Hong Kong Orchid, or Chinese Elm for ornamental trees on Cesar Chavez Street. Proposed shrubs include trailing indigo bush, grey desert spoon, California Encelia, and Mexican Bush Sage. These shrubs or plants are not identified as recommended plant types in the Pueblo Viejo landscape design guidelines. Staff recommends that a combination of date palms and shade trees be incorporated into the landscape design to reduce heat island effects and that plants be substituted with the succulents, shrubs, and perennials recommended in the Pueblo Viejo design guidelines. Staff also recommends that the sidewalk along Cesar Chavez Street along landscape areas to create a landscape parkway to separate pedestrian traffic from street and allow for shade from afternoon sun and reduce heat island effect. Alternatively, place tree grates in proposed sidewalk area consistent with Pueblo Viejo Design Guidelines (page 4-180) that reduce heat island effect and provide shade from afternoon sun. Landscape surfaces will utilize decomposed granite, Baja Cresta Rubble (6”-12”) and Palm Springs Gold Boulders (3’-5’).

CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN

The proposed project is within the Downtown Center land use designation of the General Plan 2035 Land Use and Community Character Element. The Downtown Center is intended to bring the entire community together in a one-of-a-kind Coachella Center. The Coachella Sunline Transit Hub would accomplished the General Plan goals of brining the community together by created a transit center that bring visitors to the City’s Pueblo Viejo district from the City and throughout the Coachella Valley.

CONSISTENCY WITH ZONING

The subject site is zoned C-G PUD (General Commercial Planned Unit Development) zone. The project complies with the development standards of the Zoning Ordinance.

CONSISTENCY WITH PUEBLO VIEJO DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

The subject site is located within the Cesar Chavez Street Subarea of the Pueblo Viejo District Design Guidelines. The Guidelines provide for guidance in the design of the architecture, signs, streetscape, street furniture and landscaping and its application is explained throughout this report. The design guidelines have been identified below, along with recommendation on how the project may be modified to improve its consistency with each design guideline.

Spanish Colonial revival Architecture

3.3.1.2 Walls

- Smooth or sand-float finish concrete with tastefully placed adornments
- **Recommendation 1: Use a smooth trowel finish for stucco for Sunline building.**

3.3.1.4 Articulation and Decorative Elements

- Patterned Cutouts in smooth stucco used to decorate walls, chimneys, and vents.
- Terra-cotta or case concrete ornaments
- **Recommendation 2: Use terra-cotta tile ornaments**

3.3.1.5 Windows and Doors

- The window, grilles, and doors are typically earth tones such as dark brown, terra-cotta reds, and light greens.
- **Recommendation 3: Utilize decorative window grilles and incorporate light green window color.**



3.3.1.9 Lighting

Spanish Colonial Revival–style outdoor lighting fixtures with the features listed below include:

- Wrought iron lighting fixtures, including lanterns of many different shapes
- Clear glass shades to accent candle-shaped bulbs or amber shaded glass
- Grandly ornamented fixtures with scrolled metal accents
- Fixtures are either mounted to the wall or hung using chains
- **Recommendation 4: Include outdoor lighting features on the building consisting with 3.3.19.**

3.5.7 Perimeter Fences and Walls

- While security fences are allowed, chain link, barbed wire and razor wire, fences should not be used.
- The design of fences, walls, and other structural landscape features should be compatible with and complementary to the architecture of the building and the surrounding setting.
- All fences, walls, and other related features should be accompanied by landscaping to better integrate the structure within the site and reduce its visual impact.

*Perimeter Fence Examples. SOURCES:
Top- Thomas1313; Bottom- C&CGabrielle*



- **Recommendation 5: Incorporate decorative wrought iron fencing at the retention basin consisting with Pueblo Viejo Design Guidelines**



Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossings (page 4-173)

- Decorative crosswalks typically made with bricks or other specialty paving are encouraged. “exampled of acceptable treatments include brick lattice patterns, paving bricks, paving stones, setts, cobbles, or other resources designed to simulate such paving. Acceptable colors for these materials would be red, rust, brown, burgundy, clay, tan or similar earth tone equivalents....”
- **Proposed design provides one crosswalk with interlocking pavers (Sandstone color)**

Benches (page 4-178)

- Benches in commercial areas should follow the palette established by the Sixth Street streetscape design: 96-inch Classic series bench, model c-196, bronze powder coat color with IPE wood seat.
- **Proposed design is consistent with Guidelines.**

Bench Used in Sixth Street Streetscape. SOURCE: Victor Stanley



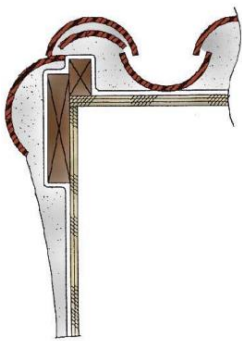
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONSIDERATION

The City of Coachella has determined that the proposed project qualifies for a CEQA exemption under Section 15332. Class 32 consists of projects characterized as in-fill development meeting the conditions described in this section; (a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations; (b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site where no more than five acres are to be developed and substantially surrounded by urban uses; (c) The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species; (d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; (e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services. Therefore, the City has acknowledged that the project is exempt from CEQA.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff can support the project as proposed incorporating the following recommendations, in addition to those noted above to improve the overall appearance of the project. Staff believes it is important that the transit hub make a welcoming entry statement to the Pueblo Viejo District and be demonstrate compatibility with the Pueblo Viejo Villas as contemplated as a transit-oriented development. Some design recommendations may result in additional costs beyond those budgeted for the project and require further appropriation from the City Council. Staff seeks the Planning Commission's comments and welcomes additional comments and recommendations.

1. Slake the stucco at the edge of the gable roof on the Sunline building to encapsulate the tile.



This creates an attractive shadow pattern



Source: San Clemente Architectural Design Guidelines

2. Add a decorative feature along the expanse of the Sunline building wall to avoid appearance of a long blank wall. Features such as cornice trim with terra-cotta or decorative tile accents similar to the Veteran's Park restroom serves as an example of added decorative features to an otherwise blank wall expanse.



3. Setback the sidewalk along Cesar Chavez Street along landscape areas to create a landscape parkway to separate pedestrian traffic from street and allow for shade from afternoon sun and reduce heat island effect. Alternatively, place tree grates in proposed sidewalk area consistent with Pueblo Viejo Design Guidelines (page 4-180) that reduce heat island effect and provide shade from afternoon sun.
4. Widen 6 foot sidewalk areas to 8 feet to enhance pedestrian access.

5. Incorporate date palm tree with the landscape design and substitute trees and plants with the types recommended in the Pueblo Viejo design guidelines.
6. Add trees and plants at the retention basin between fencing and curb where landscaping is currently sparse.
7. Utilize a larger caliper groundcover material similar to that used at Veteran's Park.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) Adopt Resolution No. PC 2022-01 approving Architectural Review No. No. 21-13;
- 2) Adopt Resolution No. PC 2022-01 approving Architectural Review No. No. 21-13 removing design and landscape conditions of approval 7-21;
- 3) Deny the proposed project;
- 4) Continue this item and provide staff and the applicant with direction.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):

Staff recommends alternative #1.

Attachments:

1. PC Resolution No. 2022-01 for AR No. 21-13
Exhibit A - Conditions of Approval for AR No. 21-13
2. Vicinity Map
3. Site Plan and Civil Plan
4. Landscape Plan
5. Original Transit Hub Architectural Renderings
6. New Revised Transit Hub Architectural Renderings
7. Updated Building Design presented to Planning Commission January 19, 2022
8. Original Sunline Building Design with Floor Plan
9. Bus Shelter Examples
10. Veteran's Park Building Photo Examples
11. Existing Site Conditions
12. Pueblo Viejo Design Guidelines
13. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes January 19, 2022