

January 5, 2021

Town of Los Gatos
Attn: Jennifer Armer
Planning Dept
110 E Main St
Los Gatos, CA
95030

Dear Jennifer,

This letter serves as the project description and letter of justification for our application for a zone change and general plan amendment for the property located at 4 Tait Ave, APN # 510-44-054. Pursuant to the request for proposals the Town of Los Gatos released for the repositioning of the Town owned museum properties, Tait Firehouse LLC is requesting the re-zoning of the aforementioned property to C-2:LHP to achieve the goal of attracting a commercial use to locate at the property. Concurrently we are requesting a General Plan Amendment to Central Business District designation to be consistent with the requested zoning. Given the nature of the building and its proximity to the commercial core, it is not feasible to occupy the property with a residential use as currently zoned. This project is the administrative re-zoning to achieve the agreed upon goal, with the associated necessary general plan amendment.

The rezoning to C-2: LHP is consistent with the General Plan, referencing the following sections:

- LU-14, Paragraph 2, Bullet 3 “Encourages a mixture of community-oriented commercial goods, services and lodging unique in its accommodation of small-town style merchants and maintenance of small-town character.”
 - The proposed zone change is not intended for a redevelopment project. The project maintains the character of the existing structure in order to attract a small-town oriented commercial use.
- LU-14, Paragraph 2, Bullet 5 “Integrates new construction with existing structures of historical or architectural significance and emphasizes the importance of the pedestrian.”
 - The proposed zone change is not intended for a redevelopment project. The project maintains the character of the existing structure in order to maintain the historic nature of the structure. Due to the location of the property and its proximity to the Central Business District as well as the residential neighborhood, this is a key link to the walkability of residents to the local businesses.
- LU-21, G, Goal LU-1 “To preserve, promote, and protect the existing small-town character and quality of life within Los Gatos.”
 - The project complies with this goal as it is restoring a historic building from a blighted vacant use, to a cared for active commercial use, and preserves the historic nature of the Town.
- LU-21, G, Policy LU-1.4 “Infill projects shall be designed in context with the neighborhood and surrounding zoning with respect to the existing scale and character of surrounding structures, and should blend rather than compete with the established character of the area.”

EXHIBIT 5

- This project does not intend to damage the character of the old firehouse, but restore it and activate it. The nature of the structure is the perfect link between the residential neighborhood as it is a residential style building from a design and massing standpoint, however we will improve it to accommodate commercial uses as the street transitions into the commercial district.
- LU-25, Policy LU 6.2 “Allow non-residential activity in residential areas only when the character and quality of the neighborhood can be maintained.”
 - As previously mentioned, the style and character of the structure will not change. The uses in C-2:LHP are compatible as the zoning of the adjacent property is C-2:LHP and is already in place, making this the perfect transition from residential to the central business district.
- LU-27, Policy LU 7.3 “Infill projects shall contribute to the further development of the surrounding neighborhood (e.g. improve circulation, contribute to or provide neighborhood unity, eliminate a blighted area) and shall not detract from the existing quality of life.”
 - The project will make a new use available for the neighborhood, including but not limited to an office, a business, or another service that will be a walkable amenity to both the nearby residents and businesses. The existing structure has been unoccupied for several years and is borderline considered a blight to attract unwanted activity. Breathing new life into the property will benefit the area.
- LU-27, Policy LU 7.4 “Infill projects shall be designed in context with the neighborhood and surrounding zoning with respect to the existing scale and character of surrounding structures, and should blend rather than compete with the established character of the area.”
 - The style and historic character of the existing building will be maintained and is currently compatible with the surrounding structures.
- LU-28, Policy LU 9.6 “Encourage development that maintains and expands resident-oriented services and/or creates employment opportunities for local residents consistent with overall land use policies of the Town.”
 - Brining a commercial use in close walkable proximity to the residential neighborhood provides a new opportunity for employment and the resulting business will serve the neighborhood.
- CD-3, Policy CD 1.1 “Building elements shall be in proportion with those traditionally in the neighborhood.”
 - The style and historic character of the existing building will be maintained and is currently compatible with the surrounding structures.
- CD-3, Policy CD 1.2 “New structures, remodels, landscapes, and hardscapes shall be designed to harmonize and blend with the scale and rhythm of the neighborhood and natural features in the area.”
 - The style and historic character of the existing building will be renovated to enhance the character of the building, eliminate blight, and harmonize with the balance of the neighborhood in a greatly improved manner.

- CD-11, Policy CD-10.1 “Encourage the preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, reuse, and maintenance of existing buildings Downtown.”
 - This policy exactly describes the project. Restoration, Rehabilitation, Reuse, and ongoing maintenance of a historic building, achieved through change of use.
- CD-18, Policy CD 12.1 “Avoid demolishing historic buildings, unless the Planning Commission finds, based on substantial evidence, that there is no feasible means to ensure the preservation of the structure.”
 - This project would preserve an existing historic structure.
- CD-18, Policy CD 12.2 “ Encourage the preservation, maintenance, and adaptive reuse of existing residential, commercial, or public buildings.”
 - This project would accomplish this policy by preserving and reusing an existing historic structure.
- CD-19, Policy CD 12.3 “Preserve and protect historic structures, including those that have been designated or are contributors to existing historic districts. Use special care in reviewing new buildings or remodels in the vicinity of historic structures to address compatibility issues and potential impacts.”
 - This project would protect a historic building in the downtown/almond grove historic districts.
- CD-20, Goal CD-13 (and every policy thereunder) “To support and encourage thoughtful rehabilitation or reuse of historic structures.”
 - This project will maintain the historic architecture of the structure, renovate a damaged structure, and comply with all the necessary historic guidance set forth by the Town.

There are many other applicable goals, policies, and actions in the general Plan that apply to this project. In Summary, we are re-zoning the property to attract a viable use to the building, and in connection with that effort, restoring and renovating the historic Tait Firehouse. The project meets the goals of the Town and will provide a major benefit to both the neighborhood and the central business district by adding a compatible use where otherwise we are left with a vacant blighted structure.

A subsequent tenant improvement project application will follow after the appropriate zoning and general plan designation is in place. Please reference the minutes from the Town Council Meeting on August 4, 2020 and that certain Lease Agreement by and between the Town of Los Gatos and Tait Firehouse, LLC for previous Town Council direction and additional details on this effort.

Thank you,

Jim Foley



Tait Firehouse, LLC
(408) 813-7490

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