

REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION



DATE: January 14, 2020

TITLE: Development Permit No. 19-18: A Request to Amend the Approved Plans and Project Phasing for the Vintage Trailer Resort Located on the Back Portion of the Aqua Soleil Hotel Property at Palm Drive and Park Lane

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Reviewed by: Rebecca Deming, Community Development Director

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) **Staff Report;**
- 2) **Entertain Questions of Staff from Planning Commission;**
- 3) **Open the Public Hearing;**
- 4) **Take testimony from the Applicant;**
- 5) **Take public testimony from those in favor;**
- 6) **Take testimony from those opposed;**
- 7) **Take testimony from those in a neutral position;**
- 8) **Opportunity for Applicant Rebuttal;**
- 9) **Close the Public Hearing;**
- 10) **Planning Commission discussion and questions to Staff; and**
- 11) **Approve Development Permit No.19-18 for revisions to the vintage trailer resort project located at 14500 Palm Drive.**

PRIOR ACTIONS

On January 8, 2019, the Planning Commission approved Development Permit No. 12-18 to add 32 vintage recreational vehicle rental units to the back portion of Aqua Soleil Hotel & Spa.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 18, 2019, the applicant, TT Group Inc., filed an application to amend the Planning Commission approved plans for the new Air Heart Vintage Trailer Resort located on the back portion of the Aqua Soleil Hotel & Spa property at 14500 Palm Drive. The revisions include a change in the phasing of the project to enable the property owner to open for business as soon as possible for the upcoming season (January 2020 – April 2020). This will take some of the financial burden off the initial phase of the project. Other changes to the project include a change in the orientation of the trailers on each individual site, a change in layout of the restaurant building, deferring construction of the clubhouse until phase two, removal of the entertainment pavilion, and the addition of up to five more rental units along with other minor changes. The applicant has provided a detailed explanation of the project, outlining the proposed construction timeline and the changes that are being proposed (attached as Exhibit No. 23).



BACKGROUND

The proposed project is in the rear lot of the Aqua Soleil Hotel and Spa located at 14500 Palm Drive in the Residential Visitor Serving High Density Zoning District (R/VS-H). The Aqua Soleil Hotel and Spa is an existing three (3) story hotel that was constructed in the early 1980's. The applicant is not proposing any changes to the existing hotel and spa.

SETTING

The Zoning and General Plan land-use designations, and the current land uses for the surrounding properties are as follows:

Table 1: Surrounding Land Uses

	<u>Zoning & General Plan Designations</u>	<u>Current Land-Use</u>
North	Neighborhood Commercial (C-N)	County of Riverside Service Center
West	Residential Mobile Home Park (R-MH)	Single-Family Homes/ Vacant
South	Residential Low Density (R-L)	Vacant
East	Parks Open Space (OS/PP)	Open Space/Park

Conformance with the City's Zoning Code

The project proposes to develop the site with a maximum of thirty-seven (37) new trailer suites in accordance with Section 17.08 of the DHSMC, which allows this land-use with approval of a Development Permit. The project will be subject to Chapter 3.20-Transient Occupancy Tax (T.O.T.) of the Desert Hot Springs Municipal Code and staff has added a condition that requires the proprietor to collect T.O.T. as required by the City's Municipal Code (added as Condition No. 3). In addition, the occupancy of the vintage trailers will be required to remain commercial and guests will be limited to a maximum stay of thirty days (added as Condition No. 4).

Site, Coverage, Setbacks and Height

The proposed development of the project site is consistent with the development standards of the R/VS-H (Residential Visitor Serving, High Density) District in building height, rear setbacks, and lot coverage. However, the project does not comply with the required street side yard setback (10 feet) and the front yard setback (20 feet). The inconsistency in the front yard setback is due to the placement of the existing carport/entry structure along the Palm Drive frontage. This was constructed as part of the original hotel development. Since this was legally constructed to the approved plans this structure is considered a legal non-conforming structure and will be allowed to remain so long as no changes are made to this side of the hotel. Currently none are proposed.

The inconsistency with the street side yard setback along the Park Lane frontage is due to the placement of existing parking spaces adjacent to hotel (which will be allowed to remain) and the placement of several new trailers along the north side of the project site. Staff has added a condition requiring that all new trailer units shall be located outside of the yard setbacks (added as Condition No. 8).

Table 2: Comparison to Development Standards:

Development Standards		
Standard	R/VS-H Zone	Proposed
Height	Max. 35 feet	Trailer: 8 feet Clubhouse: 17 feet 1 inches Covered Decks: 11 feet 8 inches

Front Setback	Required: 20 feet	Legal Non-Conforming along Palm Drive
Side Setbacks	Required: 5 feet	10 feet
Side Street Setback	Required: 10 feet	Legal Non-Conforming along Park Lane Street Side Setback
Rear Setback	Varies	10 feet
Building lot coverage	Varies	About 17 percent

Architecture

The overall character of the vintage RV resort will be that of a well-maintained park-like resort with refurbished vintage recreational vehicles. The property will incorporate amenities for the guests including an outdoor concrete pool and spa and an artificial recreation lawn. The clubhouse will be constructed using an architecture style reminiscent of mid-century modern architecture, incorporating clean building lines with raised flat corrugated metal roofing with wood and metal roof trusses exposed to the interior of the building. The exterior will utilize stained wood lap siding and painted smooth stucco finishes. The building will also have large circular, porthole type, windows adding to the overall character of the building. Other building materials include stained wood eaves, aluminum clad doors and windows, and white translucent multiwall polycarbonate panels. Pictures and 3D renderings of the proposed architecture and building materials can be found on Exhibit Nos. 26-28. The final materials that will be utilized on the project site will be subject to Planning Department review and approval (added as Condition No. 6).

The vintage travel trailers will vary in dimensions, floor plans, color and style which will enhance the overall character of the resort. Each vintage trailer site will provide amenities including new composite decking, alumawood patio covers, privacy shades/lattices, mineral water hot tubs, and lighted concrete pathways.

Fencing

The applicant is requesting to change the approved perimeter block wall to a silver corrugated metal fence. A picture of the proposed fencing can be found on Exhibit No. 26.

Landscaping

Landscaping is being proposed throughout the vintage trailer resort. The proposed landscape will consist of a combination of trees, small shrubs, small accent plants, large accent plants, and groundcover plants. The perimeter landscaping, the use of concrete stepping stone walkways, and gravel throughout the site will help improve the visual design and quality in a manner that is compatible with the local desert environment. Landscaping has been designed to balance aesthetics and water use. Staff has added a requirement that the applicant provide Irrigation Plan/Schedule and a Plant Schedule with the type/names, quantity, size, and the water usage of the plants that the applicant is proposing (added as Condition No. 7).

Parking

The applicant proposes to have a total of seventy-two (72) parking spaces, with two (2) ADA parking spaces and two (2) temporary parking spaces for food trucks and event catering. Although the proposed entertainment pavilion and stage area have been removed from the plans there is still a proposed bar/lounge and flex area that will host events. Staff has added a condition that the events be limited to guests of the resort so that there is not an increased demand for parking. The existing parking lot will remain, but necessary repairs/resurfacing/rebuilding are being proposed. Section 17.48.040 of the Desert Hot Springs Zoning Code requires 1.1 parking space for each bedroom and 1 space per 75 square feet of gross floor area for indoor and outdoor seating area. Pursuant to Section 17.12.020 a minimum

of 58 parking space are required. The project provides for an additional 72 parking spaces as part of the vintage trailer resort. Therefore, the project is in compliance with the City's minimum parking requirement.

Table 3: Parking Analysis

Parking Calculations			
Use	Ratio/Requirement	Number of Space Required	Number of Spaces Provided
Trailer Suites	1.1 spaces/room	41 (40.7)	41 spaces
Utility	1 space per 750 SF	1 (0.3)	1
Office	1 space per 250	3 (2.8)	3
Clubhouse Seating / and Outdoor Seating	1 space per 75 SF`	27 (26.7)	27
		Total Required	Total Provided
		72	72

Lighting

Outdoor lighting (Solar Tree Up Lights, Solar Pole Lights, Solar Bollards, and Pool Lights) are being proposed to illuminate all exterior doors, signs, walkways, and parking areas. The applicant needs to provide detail Lighting Plans and Photometric Plan that indicate wattage/style, illuminance, distance, and beam width (added as Condition No.9). Lighting will have adequate shielding to prevent spillage on adjacent properties.

Phasing

The first phase will include development of the site with the parking area, new pool & spa, reception area and office, and 12 rental units. The second phase seeks to develop the site with 17 additional rental units along with the artificial turf recreation area and construction of the clubhouse. The third and final phase will development the site with 6-10 additional units, another pool, and re-incorporating the events pavilion back into the project.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

Development Permit Findings

- 1. That the proposed use is permitted within the subject land use district and complies with all of the applicable provisions of this Zoning Ordinance, including prescribed development standards and design guidelines;***

The development permit is to establish up to 37 trailer suites to the back lot of the existing Aqua Soleil Hotel & Spa. This use is identified in Section 17.08 of the City of Desert Hot Springs Zoning Code as an allowable use in the Residential Visitor Serving, High Density (R/VS-H) subject to a Development Permit. Conditions of Approval have been prepared and are recommended to assure the proposed use will comply with applicable Zoning Ordinance provisions. Staff recommends this finding.

- 2. That the subject site is physically suitable for the type and intensity of the land use being proposed;***

The project site has an existing hotel along the Palm Drive frontage with the proposed the vintage trailer resort located at the rear of the property. City staff has evaluated the proposed project, as has determined that, as conditioned, the project is physically suitable for the project site. The site is well situated for the type of development being proposed and will be consistent with the City's Zoning Code and General Plan. Staff recommends this finding.

3. *That the proposed development would be compatible with existing and future developments within the land use district and general area;*

Properties to the north, east, south, and west of the proposed vintage trailer suites consist of properties which are designated for neighborhood commercial uses (North), residential mobile home uses (West), low density residential uses (South), and public parks and open spaces. Staff has evaluated the project and found that the proposed uses are compatible with the current surrounding land uses (hotel, public park, county administration building, a mobile home park and vacant land) and will be compatible with any future lands uses based on an analysis of the adjacent Zoning and General Plan land use designations. Staff recommends this finding.

4. *That there are adequate provisions for water, sanitation, and public utilities and services to ensure that the proposed use is not detrimental to public health and safety;*

The project has been conditioned by City staff, the County Fire Department and by Mission Springs Water Districts to provide potable water, access to sewer line, adequate provisions for water, sanitation, and public utilities and services. This will ensure that the vintage trailer resort remains well-maintained and does not become detrimental to public health and safety. Staff recommends this finding.

5. *That there is adequate public access and roadway capacity to serve the subject proposal;*

The site has an existing hotel on the project site and the streets, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks are completed. The current project has been conditioned to ensure that adequate public access and roadway capacity serve the proposed site. Staff recommends this finding.

6. *That there are no significant harmful effects upon environmental quality and natural resources;*

The proposed vintage trailer resort does not introduce any hazardous materials or create any harmful effect to the environment or to the quality of natural resources. The proposed site has an existing hotel and an existing RV park at the rear lot of the hotel which will now be transformed into the vintage trailer resort. Staff has determined that the proposed project will not have any significant harmful effects upon environmental quality and natural resources. Staff recommends this finding.

7. *That any negative impacts of the proposed use can and shall be mitigated;*

Staff has not identified any significant impacts from the proposed project. The project has been conditioned to mitigate all negative impacts as part of the City approval. The vintage travel trailer suites have been conditioned to remain in compliance with the development standards of the Residential Visitor Serving, High Density (R/VS-H) district. Staff recommends this finding.

8. *That the proposed use is consistent with the General Plan; and*

The proposed project is located within the Residential Visitor Serving, High Density (R-VS/H) General Plan land use district, which is meant to increase tourist and visitor-related activities. The vintage trailers are compatible with the land use since the proposed development is meant to complement the existing hotel by providing unique short-term rental units for the visiting public. The proposed use will also be subject to Chapter 3.20

(Transient Occupancy Tax) of the Desert Hot Springs Municipal Code. Staff has evaluated the proposed project and found it to be consistent with the City's General Plan Goals & Policies. Staff has not identified any significant negative impacts to the surrounding neighborhood, subject to the implementation of the Conditions of Approval. Staff recommends this finding.

9. *That the proposed location, size, design, and operational characteristics of the planned use are not detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City.*

The proposed project is consistent with the City's Zoning Code & General Plan and has been conditioned by the Fire Department and the City Engineer. Additionally, the project will comply with the current California Building Code requirements. The applicant/developer will also be required to obtain all necessary permits and comply with all local, regional, and state laws. Staff recommends this finding.

GENERAL PLAN GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Staff has evaluated the project and identified the following goals, policies and programs that are relevant to the proposed project:

ADMINISTRATIVE GOALS & POLICIES

Policy 5

The City shall assure that properly filed development applications shall be processed in an expeditious and timely manner.

The application was filed on November 18, 2019, and since then staff has reviewed the project for consistency with the City's General Plan and the City's Zoning Code, and has prepared the staff report and has duly noticed the project for a Planning Commission public hearing. The hearing will be held on January 14, 2020, less than two months after the application was submitted. Therefore, the City finds that the project has been processed in a timely manner.

Policy 8

City shall provide opportunities for review and comment on development proposals through public hearing notices sent to owners of property located at least within 300 feet of development proposal sites.

The Planning Commission hearing was duly noticed to all property owners within 300 feet of the project on Thursday December 20, 2019 and was noticed in the Desert Star Weekly (public of local circulation) on Friday December 27, 2019 to meet the City & State noticing requirements.

GENERAL GOALS & POLICIES

Policy 6

All land use development proposals shall be consistent with all applicable land use policies and standards contained in the General Plan.

The project has been evaluated for consistency with the goals & policies of the City's General Plan

COMMUNITY DESIGN GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Program 2 A

Encourage the use of site-sensitive planning in new development, varying setbacks with adequate minimums, and varying designs, elevations and facade articulations.

The proposed Vintage RV Resort will create a park like setting with amenities for the guests including a clubhouse, a recreation lawn, a pool and space, a bar/lounges as well as individual site amenities next to the vintage RV's. The project has a well-balanced site utilizing varying elements, designs and uses of materials that results in a well-designed project

Policy 4

Commercial development and mixed use projects shall consist of integrated designs that incorporate safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian-oriented circulation, safe and convenient ingress and egress, shared parking, screened outdoor storage/loading and other noisy or unsightly areas, and protected outdoor seating areas, lighting, signage and the planting of mature landscaping to provide an immediate effect of permanency and quality.

The proposed Vintage RV Resort will create a park like setting with amenities for the guests including a clubhouse, a recreation lawn, a pool and space, a bar/lounges as well as individual site amenities next to the vintage RV's. The project has a well-balanced site utilizing varying elements, designs and uses of materials that results in a well-designed project. The project has also been conditioned to provide safe and convenient ingress and egress, a shared parking area for guests, protected outdoor seating areas, site lighting, and planting of mature landscaping.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Program 5 B

All development interests, including residential, resort, commercial and industrial project proponents, shall be responsible for their fair share of on-site and off-site improvements required to support the development proposal. Improvements required may include, but are not limited to, street construction.

Policy 6

Preserve and enhance the community's marketable and unique qualities through thoughtful redevelopment and control of new development, protecting and enhancing the desert character of the community.

The City is well known for its hot mineral waters and unique desert environment and development of new spa hotel facilities with all the amenities is expected today in quality resorts. The City has made major investments in promoting the hot mineral water resource and its origins and vintage RV resorts have become an emerging trend in tourism within the Coachella Valley. The proposed project would bring together both of those elements. The proposed RV resort could prove to be a popular attraction for visitors to Desert Hot Springs and to the Coachella Valley. The project will also provide additional revenues with transit occupancy taxes. Staff also would like to note that the project is being conditioned in such a manner to make this a good project for both the City and the developer and has determined that the project is consistent with the goals, policies and programs of the City's General Plan.

NOTICING REQUIREMENT

The project was noticed to neighboring property owners within a 300-foot radius of the project site (on Thursday, December 19th, 2019) and was advertised in the Desert Star on Friday, December 27th, 2019 per State noticing requirements. No public comments have been received as of this writing.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

In accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), Section 15303 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) and Section 15311 (Accessory

Structures), Class No. 3, the project is found to be Categorically Exempt from further environmental review.

FISCAL IMPACT

The applicant has paid all required fees for the review and entitlement process and will be subject to all building permit fees. The property owner/proprietor shall also be responsible for collecting and paying all Transient Occupancy Taxes to the City.

EXHIBIT(S)

- 1) Draft Conditions of Approval
- 2) DP 12-18 Approved Site Plan
- 3) DP 12-18 Approved Camper Suite Plan
- 4) DP 12-18 Approved Lounge Plan (site)
- 5) DP 12-18 Approved Lounge Plan (elevations)
- 6) DP 12-18 Approved 3D Views
- 7) DP 12-18 Approved 3D Detail Views
- 8) DP 12-18 Approved Materials
- 9) DP 12-18 Approved Lighting Plan
- 10) DP 12-18 Approved Landscape Plan
- 11) DP 12-18 Approved Landscape Materials
- 12) Proposed Phase One Plan
- 13) Proposed Phase Two Plan
- 14) Existing Building Elevations
- 15) Existing Building Proposed Floor Plan
- 16) Proposed Clubhouse Elevations
- 17) Proposed Clubhouse and Flexspace Elevations
- 18) Proposed Clubhouse Floor Plan
- 19) Proposed Flex Space Options
- 20) Proposed Roof Plan
- 21) Proposed Typical Camper Suite Plan
- 22) Propose Landscape Plan
- 23) Letter of Intent
- 24) Proposed Final Project Site Plan
- 25) Site Topographic Survey
- 26) Material & Reference Plan
- 27) 3D Renderings A
- 28) 3D Renderings B