



HAWTHORNE PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: May 19, 2021
FROM: Greg S. Tsujiuchi, Director of Planning and Community Development
SUBJECT: 11519 Acacia Avenue - Hotel Modification Interpretation

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Summary: The proposed project consists of two (2) hotel developments being replaced by a single hotel development for a property located at 11501 (APN 4047-001-015/029?), 11519 (APN 4047-001-016), 11527 (APN 4047-001-017), and 11535 (APN 4047-001-018), Acacia Avenue. Staff is seeking interpretation from the Planning Commission for a requested modification of the project to be located at the address locations and to be known solely as 11519 Acacia Avenue.

Project Location: 11519 Acacia Avenue

Project Applicant: Mohamad Pournamdari

I. BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

A. BACKGROUND

On January 18, 2017, the Planning Commission approved a Best Western Hotel project to be located at 11501 Acacia Avenue. On December 5, 2018, the Planning Commission approved a second Garden Inn Hotel project south of the Best Western Hotel to be located at 11519 Acacia Avenue, which also effectively amended the Best Western Hotel project by requiring that the two hotels have shared access and connection by vehicle traffic and parking access. In effect, the Commission's intent, despite the hotels being branded differently, was to combine the two hotel projects so as to appear as a single development to bring continuity and improve the planned use of land for the project.

In March 2021, the project applicant sought staff's assistance in pursuing a better planned hotel project by replacing the two hotel projects with a single Hilton Garden Inn/Home2 Hotel project. The applicant has stated that there is a risk of losing the hotel license for the single hotel project and would like approval for modification to the project to enable him to

obtain the necessary building permits and submit a building permit application by December 2021 (entitlement expiration).

In April 2021, preliminary project plans were submitted to staff for review and comparison in order to determine the level of modification being requested. Section 17.06.100 (Modification) of the Hawthorne Municipal Code (HMC) allows modifications to projects at two levels:

- Modification – Essentially a “New Project” that would require the applicant to resubmit the modification as if it were subject to the same procedures (new application, fees, hearings, conditions, 3 years expiration, etc.) as the original application or;
- Minor Modification – The Planning Director may determine that the request be considered “minor” which would not trigger the new project application process.

The HMC does not contain a provision regarding a modification formula for guidance in determining the level of project modification, as it does, for example, in Section 17.42.060 for yard depths in residential zones. However, HMC Section 17.06.020(A) allows for the Planning Director to refer any issue of interpretation to the Planning Commission for their interpretation, and HMC Section 17.06.020 (Interpretation) does provide some broad guidance in the following subsections:

17.06.020(C) - In interpreting and applying the provisions of this title, they shall be held to be the minimum requirement for the promotion of the public health, safety, comfort, convenience and general welfare.

17.06.020(E)(2) - In the case of a specific plan adopted by the city, the provisions of the specific plan shall control.

B. DISCUSSION

The difference between the single hotel and combined two hotel plans are outlined in a table below. In summary, the single larger Hilton Garden Inn Hotel is slightly larger in foot print dimension by 10% (4,200 sq. ft.), increases the number of available on-site parking stalls by 45% (64 spaces), is one story higher (from 5 to 6 stories), maintains the same driveway access points, has an increase of rooms by 13% (35 rooms), encompasses the parcel containing a swimming pool already built for the Holiday Inn Express to the north, and internal design/layout differences (ie. lobby area, parking layout, etc.).

The larger foot print from 38,080 sq. ft. to 42,280 sq. ft. (<10% difference or 4,200 sq. ft.) would require an approximate 10' wide street vacation running the length of the hotel along Acacia Avenue (302') to enable the larger dimensioned hotel. Planning staff has

already met with Engineering staff and they have no issues in allowing for the street vacation to accommodate the project. Furthermore, the single hotel project would not increase any traffic, noise, or other environmental concern in comparison to the previously two approved hotel projects.

Site Plan Differences:

	2021 Hilton Garden Inn/Home2		2018 Garden Inn	2017 Best Western	Combined
Property Dimensions	140' x 302'		140' x 146'	140' x 126'	140' x 272'
Ground floor design	Includes parking spaces and rooms that straddle the Garden Inn site and the Best Western. The rooms are located in the middle of the building		Includes parking spaces and rooms entirely within the footprint of the Garden Inn site. And the rooms are in the southeast corner of the building	Except for an elevator and entry area, there are no rooms on the ground floor. Just parking spaces and a driveway entrance	Two lobbies – one for each hotel and on different levels (1 st and 2 nd Floors), including parking spaces and rooms.
Driveway access	One driveway from the Best Western hotel site on Acacia north of the cul-de-sac and one driveway from 116 th St		Only one driveway from 116 th Street.	The driveway has moved about 30 feet further south. This is the revised driveway shown on the Feb 16 site plan.	One driveway from the Best Western hotel site on Acacia north of the cul-de-sac and one driveway from 116 th St
On-Site Parking Stalls	147		41	27	68
Entrance lobby	One Entry from Acacia on the portion of the Best Western hotel		From Acacia near the southeast corner	From Acacia via elevator/stairs to the second floor lobby area.	Two entries both from Acacia

II. CONCLUSION

The single hotel project is an improved plan of development for the Hospitality Commercial area identified in the Downtown Hawthorne Specific Plan, and works toward the development of a Hotel Hub area. Based on the information provided, staff is seeking an interpretation by the Planning Commission to determine whether the single hotel project would be considered a minor modification or a modification “new project” in order to move forward with this project.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Aerial Site View
- 2) Combined Gardena Inn & Best Western Site Plan
- 3) Hilton Garden Inn / Home2 Site Plan