

# Report

## MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

**MEETING DATE:** December 5, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Del Taco LLC. Drive-thru Restaurant  
CUP 11-844

### **Recommendation**

Conditionally approve the replacement of an existing retail/restaurant building with a drive-thru restaurant.

### **Background**

The Planning Commission hearing scheduled for September 6, 2011 was continued due to unresolved design issues between the applicant, property owner, and City Staff, including the height and design of the drive-thru screen wall, building materials, and re-configuration of the parking lot.

### **Introduction**

The project proposes the construction of a 2,452 square foot drive thru restaurant within the Palomar Plaza shopping center located at the northeast corner of Rancho Santa Fe Road and San Marcos Boulevard. The shopping center has a main building and two stand alone buildings that front along Rancho Santa Fe Road (a bank and a vacant 2,026 square foot building that will be demolished to accommodate construction of the drive thru restaurant). Parking for the facility will be provided through shared parking with the Palomar Plaza shopping center.

### **Discussion**

The site is zoned Commercial (C) and has a General Plan designation of Commercial (C). The project site is surrounded by commercial shopping centers to the south and east. Palomar Estates East Mobile Home Park is located to the north and west of the site. Drive-thru restaurants are a permitted use within the Commercial (C) zone subject to the approval of a Major Conditional Use Permit per Section 20.56.020 of the San Marcos Municipal Code (SMMC).

Palomar Plaza recently completed the remodeling of the main building by incorporating tower elements, awnings, and upgraded architectural lighting. The outbuildings were not included in the upgrade. The applicant is proposing an enhanced architectural style by incorporating a metal arched roof, metal canopy over the entry and drive thru window, rectangular tower elements with trim cap, and an exterior finish consisting of stucco and stone materials. Originally, the applicant had proposed ledge stone veneer as the accent material for tower elements and the building base. However, with input from the property owner, the applicant ultimately decided to replace the ledge stone veneer with a reddish natural stone to better compliment and blend in with the recently remodeled center.

Although the proposed drive-thru restaurant's design differs from the architectural style of the shopping center, the style, materials, and color of the new building will enhance the architectural style and character of the center as a whole given its unique design.

The drive-thru lane and window are located on the east side of the building facing Rancho Santa Fe Road. With the demolition of the existing structure, existing mature trees located along the Rancho Santa Fe Road frontage will also be removed. The project has been conditioned to replace the trees with 36" box evergreen trees in like amount. The project will also be required to construct a screen wall/fence along the length of the drive thru fronting the project building and will be designed with a combination of tubular steel and pilasters that will incorporate stone to match the building. In order to provide maximum screening, the project will also be required to plant dense landscaping along the front of the fence/wall in order to provide screening of the drive thru activities in addition to blocking headlights of the vehicles in the drive thru from projecting onto Rancho Santa Fe Road. It should be noted that the height of the screen wall is an outstanding issue with the applicant, primarily due to the applicant's desire for maximized visibility of the building and project cost. Staff had originally recommended a 5-foot screen wall/fence height while the applicant proposed a 3-foot screen wall/fence height. Working with the applicant, staff has agreed to determine the final height of the wall (ranging from 3 feet to 5 feet) during the project's construction phase by using story poles to demonstrate the wall height relative to the framed height of the building. In addition to determining the final wall height by use of story poles, the use of a tubular steel/pilaster design approach will reduce the cost of the wall/fence. This approach has also been used to screen two existing drive thru restaurants at the Creekside Marketplace shopping center.

Staff has also added a condition requiring the trash enclosure to be architecturally compatible with the building by use of matching colors, materials, style, and finishes. All roof mounted equipment is required to be screened from view from Rancho Santa Fe Road and all onsite parking areas.

The project will have access via three (3) driveway entries off of Rancho Santa Fe Road, and two (2) secondary driveways off of San Marcos Boulevard. With demolition of the existing commercial building onsite and construction of the new drive-thru restaurant, the project is estimated to generate an additional 176 average daily trips (ADT) (700 trips per 1,000 square feet) to the site from the current estimated ADT. The additional ADT will not change the existing Level Of Service (LOS) of Rancho Santa Fe Road, which is functioning at a LOS "B" or the LOS for San Marcos Boulevard (between Viewpoint Drive and Rancho Santa Fe Road), which is LOS "C".

With the demolition of the existing stand alone structure and replacement with a drive-thru restaurant, the on-site circulation of the shopping center will be modified. Therefore, staff has conditioned the project to revise the on-site circulation on the west side of the building to allow for through circulation from each of the Rancho Santa Fe driveways. Originally, the property owner was unwilling to revise the onsite circulation on the west side of the building due to concerns over the loss of parking stalls. Working with the property owner, it was agreed to allow for the installation of compact parking stalls to make up for the loss of parking stalls along the east end of the main shopping center building. Based on the drive thru component and the number of employees for the restaurant, a total of twenty-seven (27) parking spaces are required to accommodate the use per the City's Parking Ordinance. Currently, the center has 289 parking spaces onsite; and, with construction of the drive thru restaurant and improved circulation, the number of parking spaces will be

reduced to 272. The City's Off-Street Parking Ordinance requirement for the center (based on the current mix of tenants' onsite) is 358 parking spaces, which leaves a theoretical shortage of 86 parking spaces. In order to make the finding that there will be adequate parking available, a parking study was prepared by KHR Associates. The study concluded that an adequate amount of parking will be available onsite to accommodate the proposed drive-thru restaurant use and shopping center. The study took parking counts during "peak" parking times within the shopping center, which indicated the maximum number of vehicles observed on site was 88. During the 4 days surveyed, there were never less than a total of 188 parking spaces that were available. To further validate the study, parking counts were adjusted to reflect a "worst case scenario" taking into consideration the theoretical parking demand of vacant tenant spaces, which elevated the number of occupied parking spaces to 117. Given the "worst case scenario of full occupancy" adjustment, the number of parking spaces available would be 155, which exceeds the drive thru restaurant and shopping center parking demand. The study also factored in demand that may theoretically occur during a full occupancy and holiday season; the conclusion was that there would still be sufficient parking at a peak period (106 spaces available).

Staff received one (1) e-mail and one (1) letter (Attachment "F") from the public regarding the current traffic flow at the intersection of Rancho Santa Fe Road and San Marcos Boulevard. In response to both concerns, staff notified the individuals and explained that the proposed project would not add additional driveways onto Rancho Santa Fe Road or San Marcos Boulevard which may interfere with traffic flow. Additionally, the traffic flow would remain at a level of service "B" on Rancho Santa Fe Road and a level of service "C" on San Marcos Boulevard, and is therefore not seen to be a significant impact. It was also noted that the proposed project will be required to annex into Community Facilities District 2011-01 (Congestion Management), which will assist in the reduction of City-wide traffic congestion.

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**Attachment(s)****Adopting Resolution**

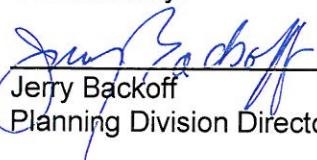
- A- Requested Entitlements
- B- Site & Project Characteristics
- C- Aerial Map
- D- Negative Declaration 11-813
- E- Parking Study
- F- Public Comments

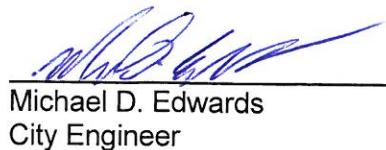
PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

December 5, 2011

**Page 4 of 10**

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**ATTACHMENT A**  
Requested Entitlements

- Conditional Use Permit (CUP 11-844) to allow for the construction of a drive-thru restaurant within the Commercial (C) zoning district

**ATTACHMENT B**  
Site & Project Characteristics

<u>Property Subject</u>	<u>Existing Land use</u>	<u>Zoning</u>	<u>General Plan Designation</u>
North	Palomar Plaza Shopping Center/Vacant Bldg	C	Commercial
South	Palomar Estates MHP	R-MHP	Res. 4-8 du/ac
East	San Marcos Albertson's Plaza shopping center	C	Commercial
West	San Marcos Rancho Village shopping center	C	Commercial
	Palomar Estates MHP	R-MHP	Res. 4-8 du/ac
Flood Hazard Zone		<u>yes</u>	<u>x</u> no
Resource Conserv. Area		<u>yes</u>	<u>x</u> no
Redevelop. Proj. Area 2B2		<u>x</u> yes	<u> </u> no
Sewers		<u>x</u> yes	<u> </u> no
Septic		<u> </u> yes	<u>x</u> no
Water		<u>x</u> yes	<u> </u> no
Gen. Plan Conformance		<u>x</u> yes	<u> </u> no
Land Use Compatibility		<u>x*</u> yes	<u> </u> no

\*with approval of CUP 11-844 to allow for a drive-thru

Development Standards per the San Marcos Municipal Code (SMMC):

<u>Setbacks</u>	<u>Required</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Front	10'	25'
Rear	0'	300'+
Side	0'	300'+
Height	60' allowed	24'
Parking	358	272

\*shared parking shopping center; See Parking Demand Study

**ATTACHMENT C**  
Aerial Map

