

From: [Adam Supernant](#)
To: [-- City Clerk](#)
Subject: Comment on Overlay Workshop
Date: Monday, November 18, 2024 11:50:10 AM

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Dear City Clerk,

I am writing to note my support for the modification to the downtown overlay. Specifically, I believe the hotel project is a great way to transform an idle plot of land into a true asset to the town.

A pedestrian-friendly hotel will be a great way to generate foot traffic for businesses across downtown. Guests can park at one of our large public parking garages, and spend the rest of their visit on foot. Other hotels, like the Courtyard on Caulfield, require guests to drive downtown to access amenities. This increases traffic and is bad for the environment.

The hotel will also bring additional tax revenue and jobs to the city - both from the hotel itself, as well as the businesses that guests will visit.

I believe Petaluma's best days are ahead of us, and no city ever got better by staying exactly the same. Let's look towards a future where more people can enjoy all that our beautiful town has to offer.

Regards,

Adam Supernant
District 5

From: [Debi Richardson](#)
To: [-- City Clerk](#)
Subject: Proposed Overlay and Hotel
Date: Monday, November 18, 2024 2:34:21 PM

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To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my support for the proposed general plan overlay and for the hotel proposed for Petaluma Blvd and B Street. I applaud the thoughtful and well-communicated work done by the city council and city departments.

I attended what I think were early meetings about the overlay and was impressed by the improvements in the proposal over time. In particular, I appreciate the setback requirement so that the upper floors will be less visible from the street and the feeling of mass of the building will be reduced. I also appreciate the requirement for higher first floors with lots of glass and public areas.

I know that there has been concern about how the building will affect the look and historic integrity of the downtown area. As I walk the proposed building site, I see chain link fences, abandoned buildings, more chain link and a 7-11/Laundromat combination. This is the entrance to our historic downtown! The hotel will certainly be an improvement.

If you look at a broader picture of our downtown, let's consider the Petaluma Hotel. We love the Petaluma Hotel, but if you just looked at a picture of it, you might not record it as a beautiful building. Still, we love and enjoy it in our downtown area. I believe that the footprint of the new hotel is very similar to the Hotel Petaluma and the height of the building, as visible from the street will look very similar. It seems like the two hotels would be satisfying bookends to the downtown area, bringing vitality and visual interest to the south end of the boulevard. As I understand it, the new hotel has 2 fewer rooms and 53 more parking places than the Hotel Petaluma.

Things I wonder about - why doesn't anyone object to squat one story boxes built along the Boulevard? Additionally, my understanding is that empty lots are taxed at ridiculously low rates, providing no incentive for owners to pursue development. How long will we have these chain link fences as the entrance to our historic area? Can we make changes to make it less attractive for property owners to leave land undeveloped or leave abandoned buildings to decompose year after year? Surely, tax rates could be raised to encourage improvements over vacancy and dereliction. Why is it that no one seems to care about or object to the decay and ugliness that surrounds our downtown? Surely it is not the vital and bustling image we want to project as we welcome people to our city.

Finally, I appreciate the public outreach about changes to the general plan. I am encouraged to know that our city is looking forward into the next 20 years to see what our city COULD be. Rather than constrain our vision by the limits of the way we currently live, we are being encouraged to think about ways we MIGHT live. Why are we constrained always by the thought about what we will do our cars? Thanks for the SMART train, for Luma Go, for

bicycle rental, for safe bike paths, for caring about our climate, for visioning a city where we can breathe and move and walk and see our neighbors. I look forward to toasting the future from the rooftop lounge at the new hotel!

Deborah Richardson



From: krebillot@
To: -- City Clerk
Subject: Public comment - Downtown Overlay
Date: Monday, November 18, 2024 1:57:48 PM

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City Council Members and Mayor McDonnell,

This comment is in addition to my signature on the public comment from Petaluma Urban Chat, which was submitted separately.

I am in favor of the Overlay – for the reasons submitted by Petaluma Urban Chat

In addition: I have had conversations with a number of people who took vacations to Europe this summer. *Everyone* I talked to commented about how much they enjoyed being in environments where people were on the streets at all hours of the day/evening, where shopping in small stores was active and where pedestrians and cyclists could use the streets safely. Those are downtowns for people, not automobiles.

I'd love that for Petaluma. I think many others (even some of those opposing the Overlay) want that too. In order to get there, we need people who call downtown home. We need to establish "opportunity sites" where entrepreneurs/business owners would be encouraged to add to our unique sense of place. Vacant lots and chain link fences won't get us there. The overlay would signal our commitment to move in that direction.

I also agree with Petaluma Urban Chat's comments on problems with the "process" by which the proposed overlay has come into being. The public has not been well served by it. Change is difficult and it is coming, one way or another (climate change, anyone?). We need to find a way to keep moving forward in the midst of it.

Thanks for your consideration and for your commitment to our city.

Kris Rebillot

From: [Leif Ortegren](#)
To: -- City Clerk
Subject: Comment for Downtown Housing and Economic Overlay Nov. 18
Date: Monday, November 18, 2024 2:53:00 PM

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Dear Mayor and Council Members.

My wife and I have led tours of the historic downtown with The Petalumans of Yesteryear, and in association with the Historic Library and Museum for over ten years. About half the people who come on our tours are Petaluma residents, but the other half are from outside the area and often from far away places. They are a diverse group, but they have one thing in common; they are impressed enough with our beautiful and historic downtown to want to spend a few hours or their weekend learning more about it.

I spent 40 years in industries that were construction related, and I realize we desperately need more housing, and I'm not against a hotel in the proposed site, but it's vitally important that it not detract from what we already have. I believe the hotel is out of scale for its surroundings and a bland design that does not reflect our town, and the overlay is a terrible idea, full stop. Leaders who push this through will not be well regarded by future generations!

Your legacy is at stake!

Leif Ortegren

[REDACTED] s
Petaluma [REDACTED]

City Council Public Workshop on the DHEO Overlay / November 18, 2024

Public Comments Submitted by Lydia Asselin

To: Mayor McDonnell, Council Members Barnacle, Cader Thompson, Healy, Nau, Pocekay, and Shribbs, and Planning Commissioners Mozes, Racusen, Frye, Hooper, McErlane, Newell, City Clerk Corley, Planning Commission Clerk Orozco

From: Lydia Asselin / Petaluma Historic Advocates

RE: Public Comment for Nov. 18 City Council Overlay Workshop

As part of the Overlay Workshop at the Nov. 18 City Council Meeting, I would like to add my public comments regarding the Conditional Use Permit section of the Overlay. I believe the CUP process needs more "teeth", and the CUP criteria must be more specifically defined and strengthened. I have suggested additional clarifications in red, below, that I believe support strengthening the CUP language.

The first set of CUP findings allows for an increase in building height from 45 feet to 60 feet. All five of these criteria must be met. Some of these five are quantifiable, and some are completely subjective; I would advocate for adding language that further defines some of these vague or subjective descriptions:

1. The additional height is consistent with the purposes of the Overlay.
 - o I would certainly add language to the CUP that defines the purpose of the Overlay:
 - o To incentivize housing, mixed-use, or commercial development while providing opportunities for future development that complements the city's historic downtown character.
2. The additional height makes a positive contribution to the overall character of the area, and the building is compatible with its surroundings.
 - o This one is truly subjective—How can you really quantify positive contributions and compatibility?
 - o While the current language calls for a combo of visual studies, line-of-sight drawings, photo simulations, 3-D modeling, and view shed analysis, the City and/or Planning Commissioners must be **participatory** in selecting a series of required viewpoints.
 - o For major projects there should also be an opportunity to require drive-by videos.
3. The additional height would not cause an adverse change in the significance or integrity of a historical resource onsite or adjacent to the site.
 - o Again, this is subjective—Since the current list of downtown historical resources and contributing buildings has not been updated in years, there are not any current tools for either designers or decision-makers to assess adverse changes in integrity to historical resources.
4. The additional height will not restrict access to light and air or be detrimental to public health and safety.
 - o Add language saying this will be assessed through a series of shadow studies at various times of day at each equinox and solstice.
5. The building design expresses a relationship to an existing datum line or lines of the street wall or an adjacent historic resource.
 - o Add language to require full-block elevations or renderings that show the overall context of a proposed building alongside its existing neighbors, and the relationship of proposed datum lines to existing structures.

The second set of CUP findings allows an increase in height from 60 to 75 feet. These findings are noted as “**Community Benefits**”, and only **three of the seven** listed benefits must be achieved. It also seems that some of these so-called community benefits are actually requirements in our building and zoning codes. Should a code requirement qualify as an additional community benefit?

“**Exceptional Architecture or Design**” is listed in the CUP language as merely one of these community benefits. First off, I would say that the city should require “Exceptional Architecture” to be **mandatory** in the Downtown Overlay Zones, not an optional Community Benefit. In the absence of any published design standards or design review board, Exceptional Design needs much more definition here. Note that I have elevated “Exceptional Architecture” to the top of the list:

1. **Demonstrate exceptional architecture/design.** “Exceptional” architecture/design may be demonstrated by **any** of the following five paths: **There should be a higher bar to clear, perhaps requiring at least two or three of the five paths instead of just one.**
 - a. **The use of innovative, creative, or original architectural concepts, materials, or building techniques.** **Vague wording here, and totally subjective. Do we perhaps want to add a wide range of examples, such as... Incorporating or maximizing views to the natural environment, mitigating noise pollution, upcycling of traditional architectural styles to promote contextual harmony, employing creative articulation of form and volume, etc.**
 - b. **The use of visual elements that contribute positively to the built environment, such as well-proportioned facades, pleasing materials, and unique features.** **Or, perhaps variation in building surfaces / planes? Different textures?**
 - c. **The use of innovative building systems or forms and/or the use of creative design, to increase building efficiency and to reduce energy consumption.** **Many of the elements of increased building efficiency and reduced energy consumption are mandated in our building code.**
 - d. **The use of low impact development and green infrastructure features in sustainable design and landscaping.** **Many of these elements are incorporated and required in our building code.**
 - e. **The use of high-quality building materials that contribute to long-term durability and visual quality.** **This assumes the designers would have already submitted samples of the intended materials prior to the CUP application.**
2. **Improve the existing streetscape by providing widened sidewalks, additional street trees, new mid-block walkways/paseos, public plazas, parks. etc. For a project that would widen the sidewalk by increasing the ground floor building setback, a public outdoor amenity space shall be included in the design, and this space shall be designed and configured to provide adequate space for pedestrian movement and activity.**
 - **THIS IS A WELL-DEFINED EXAMPLE OF A COMMUNITY BENEFIT.**
3. **Provide publicly accessible private open space, such as a street-level park or rooftop open space that is open to the public at least 8 hours per day and at least 120 days per year.** I’d like to note that this was originally in the CUP as 12 hours a day and 260 days a year.
 - **Why only 120 days a year? If being publicly accessible only four months a year or two days a week all year it’s HARD TO CLASSIFY THIS AS A TRUE COMMUNITY BENEFIT.**

From: [Maureen C \[REDACTED\]](#)
To: [-- City Council](#); [-- City Clerk](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: Feedback on Overlay and Hotel rezoning - City Council Meeting 11/18/2024
Date: Monday, November 18, 2024 3:01:08 PM

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Dear City Council,

Respectfully my position is that the rezoning of the historic district should be voted down by city council and the council should instruct the city to not proceed any further.

The rezoning that was up for consideration was costly to the taxpayers of Petaluma and completely premature. City council should request the city to focus on completing the general plan, set up a committee to provide building guidelines for the historic district, establish an architect review board and streamline business permits for small businesses immediately.

If we are going to build for our future we need to have a solid foundation to assist in making those decisions and encourage small businesses to thrive.

Regarding the proposed 6 story hotel, I am opposed to the increased floors over our current zoning. A small boutique hotel 4 stories or lower for example consistent with the Eldorado Hotel in Sonoma and Healdsburg Hotel in Healdsburg is more appropriate for our downtown area. Petaluma's heritage is part of what attracts visitors. With a large hotel and restaurant, it would dwarf everything that is around it. The adjacent neighborhoods would be impacted by increased traffic and the need for additional parking to support the hotel guests, visitors and hotel staffing, even with the proposed underground garage.

Two weeks ago I sat outside at Sugo on a Friday for dinner around 6pm. I watched traffic crawling on B Street and the Boulevard. A fire truck on its way to a call trying to get through the traffic. Now you add a large hotel at that corner and you are in absolute grid lock. The draft EIR did not even address the traffic and parking that would be added to an already significantly congested area.

Given the recent bankruptcy of Vintage Wine Estates and broader concerns about the wine industry's future remaining flat with inflation, investing in a large, high-end hotel with \$400-\$500 per night rooms seems risky. Sonoma County's average hotel occupancy rate is 60%, with a median room price of \$212.61 [Sonoma County Quick Facts](#). I am extremely concerned that the hotel would be able to even maintain that current occupancy rate. Most large high-end hotels in Sonoma County offer many amenities to attract their customers such as vineyards, spas, pools and hot springs. Due to the lot size this hotel would be limited in the additional amenities that it can offer their customer which will also factor into its ability to compete with other large high-end hotels in the area. This is also why the small boutique hotel with limited amenities is a better fit for the space. It will attract the clientele that wants that small town feel that Petaluma is known for at a more moderate hotel rate.

Best,
Maureen Gottschall

4. Respect and/or preserve cultural, historical, or archaeological resources that exist or occur on-site or within the Overlay.
 - Respecting and preserving historical resources in the Overlay has already been discussed in the 45-feet -to-60-feet part of the CUP process.
 - Of course it is in our community's best interest to have new development that preserves and complements the character of our historic downtown, but this does not in and of itself add to the **COMMUNITY'S BENEFIT**.
5. Exceeds the minimum number of required Inclusionary Dwelling units.
 - Yes, **A COMMUNITY BENEFIT**
6. Exceeds the minimum number of required bicycle parking spaces required.
 - I'd say that in order to count as a **COMMUNITY BENEFIT**, the number of required bicycle parking spaces should be exceeded by a particular percent, say at least 10%?
7. Provides **all** required parking below grade.
 - Why is on-site parking below grade considered a **COMMUNITY BENEFIT** as opposed to a **PATRON OR RESIDENT BENEFIT**?

And finally, here are the CUP menu options for a lot coverage increase from 80% to 100%. A proposed project must meet at least one of the of the following criteria.

1. The development improves the existing streetscape by providing widened sidewalks, additional street trees, new mid-block walkways/paseos, public plazas, parks, etc.
 - This is an example of well-defined criteria
2. The additional lot coverage would reflect the prevailing development pattern established by the existing development within the block or abutting block.
 - This seems well defined, too
3. The development includes adequate provision for recycling and solid waste.
 - Isn't this required by code?
4. The development includes adequate space for street trees.
 - What is the definition of "adequate space"?
 - Most of the Overlay zones already incorporate street trees, and local regulations prohibit removal of trees unless they are replaced in kind.
5. The development includes other measures to enhance the pedestrian environment.
 - might want to insert language giving examples of other measures to enhance the pedestrian environment
 - What about benches or public seating; public art?

As a final comment, I would like to put in a plug to reinstating some sort of formal design review process much further upstream than at the point of a CUP consideration. A strong set of architectural design guidelines that would buttress and enhance the historic design guidelines we already have would work hand-in-hand to helping craft design expectations in the Overlay areas and around Historic Downtown.

Thank You for the opportunity to add to the discussion.

From: [Rod Williams](#)
To: [-- City Clerk](#)
Subject: Overlay Support
Date: Monday, November 18, 2024 11:57:59 AM

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Not everyone in Petaluma is against the Downtown,,, etc.... Overlay Amendment. If it allows the EKN Appellation hotel to go forward, I very strongly support it.

As a 42 year resident of Petaluma, I'm weary of the empty lot on the Blvd at B and think this hotel would be a strong asset to the city.

--

Rod Williams

[REDACTED]

Petaluma, CA [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [Sarah Grossi](#)
To: -- City Clerk; -- City Council
Subject: OPPOSITION to proposed downtown overlay and hotel on B Street and Petaluma Blvd North
Date: Monday, November 18, 2024 2:52:54 PM

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TO: Petaluma City Council; cityclerk@cityofpetaluma.org

FM: Sarah Grossi, resident Petaluma District 5

RE: Public comment - OPPOSITION to proposed downtown overlay and hotel on B Street and Petaluma Blvd North

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed downtown overlay and hotel proposals. The location is too small for a building of that height with 100% lot cover. Please note that none of the scale drawings show the proposed hotel from the perspective of a person located across B Street or looking towards the east. Such a perspective would show the proposed hotel dwarfing and shadowing Rex Hardware and other local businesses.

The project does not include sufficient parking for hotel guests, let alone employees and restaurant patrons. This will negatively impact residents and small businesses in the area. If the overly is allowed to pass, this will also fundamentally change the character of the historic downtown, despite the fact that Petaluma's unique historic character is a prime draw of tourists. We should not be emulating downtown Santa Rosa.

Please do not be short sighted and led by this developer whose primary interest is their own financial bottom line, NOT the future of Petaluma. I implore you to listen to the citizens whose neighborhoods would be most impacted by this change in zoning. At current count, the majority of voters in Districts 5 and 6 in the most recent election supported candidates who clearly articulated opposition to the overlay proposal.

A vote for the overlay and the hotel is a vote to change Petaluma for the worse and an indication of how out of step this City Council is with its constituents. Please do not support the overly or hotel proposal.

This email is in lieu of public comment at the 11/18/2024 City Council Meeting.

Sincerely,

Sarah Grossi

[REDACTED]

Petaluma CA

From: [sherry s \[REDACTED\]](#)
To: [-- City Clerk](#); [-- City Council](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Proposed Downtown Overlay
Date: Monday, November 18, 2024 3:00:01 PM

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I am opposed to the proposed overlay for the following reasons:

- 1) The overlay was only proposed by the applicant after being advised by our own Planning Department that the 6+ story Appellation hotel could not be built without it. That is not a good reason to change 3 areas in our downtown zoning. It's backwards thinking.
- 2) Where are the signs on the proposed areas? I walk downtown almost daily and have not seen any other than the sign on the proposed hotel site at 2 Petaluma Blvd S.
- 3) Staff, City Council and Developers repeatedly say that a downtown hotel conforming to existing guidelines "won't pencil". Show us the calculations behind such statements or don't say it.
- 4) The draft EIR, which has already cost us \$161,000, does not address most of the suspected actual problems with this building. Every problem can be mitigated according to the report. That's not good enough. Our staff and city council should be researching parking, traffic, noise, air quality, loss of sunlight on the sidewalks, and utility (water, power, public services) impacts. Whether or not these issues are required to be investigated by CEQA, they should be investigated by our hired staff and elected council.
- 5) Has any cost benefit analysis been done with regard to the proposed hotel or other 6+ story buildings in proposed overlay zones? Show us an actual CBA before continuing to promote this scheme. Council Member Barnacle has said that the current hotel site owner only pays about \$340 in annual property taxes and the hotel will pay much more than that no matter how successful. Perhaps. But perhaps the developer will go broke before completion of the hotel and in the meantime existing downtown businesses may have to close. Talk about blight. Seen tahoe lately?

Show us the numbers please. Transparency is not a 4 letter word.

Thank you.

Sherry Sandberg
Petaluma taxpayer

From: [Stephanie Adams](#)
To: [-- City Clerk](#)
Subject: Overlay
Date: Monday, November 18, 2024 1:26:32 PM

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I am in favor of the overlay, for all of the reasons stated by the city. We need to have our downtown serve the needs of the entire city, not just the relatively few who live within the downtown itself.

Regards,
Stephanie Adams

From: [Suzanne Biaggi](#)
To: [-- City Clerk](#)
Subject: Downtown housing and economic overlay +EKN hotel
Date: Monday, November 18, 2024 11:56:22 AM
Attachments: [hotel_4_st.jpg.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

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I am opposed to the downtown housing and economic overlay for the following reasons:

The following questions have not been answered adequately or not at all.

- Has the case been made to achieve our yet undefined goals of “housing and economic opportunity” that we need to raise the height limit? If so, I haven’t heard or read about it yet
- How much housing do we want and need in downtown
- What type of housing?
- How many units can we fit into the core area – will they be affordable or more luxury?
- Can this be achieved within our 4 story height limit keeping our historic district intact? If not, I would need a details financial analysis
- Has it been proven that we really need to change the height limit to accomplish forward movement.
- Curiosity – how do Healdsburg and Sebastopol with very similar economic profiles in their downtowns have 4 story limits that pencil out.

Regarding the EKN hotel

- DEIR did not address issues such as conservation, views, safety and traffic circulation. And the elephant in the room is parking. It was passed on for approval much too hastily
- The public deserves to know how potentially significant environment impacts due to the project will be mitigated. These are issues not addressed in the draft EIR
- When this location became problematic due to public outcry, why weren’t other locations considered, such as Haystack Landing?
- I am for a hotel in that location with a different design and 4 stories

Final Comments re: opposition to the Overlay and Hotel

- An increased height limit will diminish our jewel of an historic downtown listed on the national register with the potential result of less tourist traffic
- I Want our historic center preserved for future generations with growth in scale to the existing buildings and with design of matching quality to our existing architecture. See attached examples.
- A “sneak preview” of what our town will look like, consider the design of the current EKN proposal and place similar building in the overlay zones.
- In our recent district elections – the public has spoken. Neither of the candidates that expressed support for the hotel and overlay received a majority of the votes.

Thank you for consideration of my concerns and opinions.

Suzanne biaggi



Petaluma



Note Roof top bar

