

From: [Claudia Aron Ross](#)
To: -- City Council; [citymgr](#)
Subject: Proposed Hotel And Overly
Date: Saturday, November 16, 2024 7:44:39 PM

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I will insert here comments I made to our Mayor. My feelings are made clear by them and I request they be reviewed by and made a part of the record of the upcoming City Council meeting:

having worked in real estate law for many, many years, this is not the correct process. When a developer makes a proposal, or signs a letter of intent (which obviously has also not been done), they are next asked to provide full, current financial disclosures showing that they have the financial means to complete the proposed project. Petaluma has not asked for or received this assurance, and has already spent hundreds of thousands of dollars (\$160,000 for the EIR that was found incomplete as one expense). We are paying the M Group, which is the outside contractor called our planning department, their highest hourly rate for every meeting, every review of comment, every powerpoint display, for a project that NO ONE has determined the developer even has the means to see to completion. It is a gross dereliction of duty to your constituents and every Petaluma taxpayer who is footing the bills. Additionally, you, the City Attorney and the Council are leaving Petaluma wide open for legal action should this proceed.

Sincerely,

Claudia Aron Ross



Petaluma

From: CYNTHIA
To: -- City Clerk
Subject: The Overlay
Date: Thursday, November 14, 2024 1:50:01 PM

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Just say NO!

The constituency that is living anywhere near the proposed overlay and hotel is against it. Isn't that enough? Selling out our beautiful downtown to out of town developers is not what we want or need. Maintaining a quaint look is important but the impacts of parking are, alone, enough to cause me to be disinclined. The excavation necessary for the garage alone will ruin business for all surrounding spots for a long time. It isn't worth it.

The city council could have never anticipated the amount that recent property sales have added to the city coffers. Enough is enough.

Pay attention to the people that will end up really paying for this mess—your current constituents!

Sincerely,
Cynthia Langendorf

[REDACTED]
Sent from my iPad

From: [Ellen Obstler](#)
To: [-- City Clerk](#)
Cc: [Kevin McDonnell](#); [Dennis Pocekay](#); [Barnacle, Brian](#); [John Shribbs](#); [Janice Cader Thompson](#); [Karen Nau](#); [Mike Healy](#); [Peggy Flynn](#)
Subject: public comment re item 11 on agenda re overlay
Date: Sunday, November 17, 2024 10:43:36 PM

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Mayor and councilmembers,

I know you'll be inundated with comments and sorry to be another one. But in his run for council Blake Hooper made known he would approve an overlay only if Petaluma brought back the design review committee it disbanded in 2009 because of budget concerns.

Will the council please address and hopefully assure us that this committee will return? With a change in zoning it seems to be ever more necessary. The renderings of the planned hotel do not fit in with our historic downtown.

Thank you for considering,

Ellen Obstler

From: [james page](#)
To: [Kevin McDonnell](#); [John Shribbs](#); -- City Clerk; [Barnacle, Brian](#); [Janice Cader-Thompson](#); [Dennis Pocekay](#); [Karen Nau](#); [Mike Healy](#)
Subject: Overlay
Date: Friday, November 15, 2024 10:32:07 AM

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Dear Mayor and councilmembers,

Assuming that his lead holds, Alex DeCarli looks like he will be the new councilmember representing District 5. Given the close margin, I believe his victory can be attributed to his firm opposition to the overlay. I say this because I voted for him for this very reason whereas I would otherwise have voted for the more experienced Hooper.

I am firmly opposed to this overlay and the proposed hotel on B St. It incenses me that some celebrity wants to build there and some of our leaders are willing to disregard the long standing guardrails that have helped make downtown Petaluma a very highly regarded destination for visitors and a comforting and welcoming place for residents.

Not to mention that images of the proposed hotel do not fit the space and that the Soviet-like appearance is flat out ugly. This prime spot deserves something better and more in keeping with its surroundings.

Please protect our beloved downtown. Do not change our regulations and tell the developers that their proposals need to adhere to our existing rules.

Thanks you,
James Page

From: [Judith A \[REDACTED\]](#)
To: [-- City Clerk](#)
Subject: November 18th meeting regarding overlay
Date: Monday, November 11, 2024 10:33:36 AM

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I am unable to attend as I can no longer walk and am being scheduled for surgery on 11/27 but I wanted to put into the meeting notes that I greatly oppose the overlay allowing 75' heights in three downtown areas. I work at 1st and C Streets directly across from the new building going up for the winery. Its height is shocking and yet it is way below 75'. Adding another 30' on top is truly a shock creating shadows across the street and covering my building. Please reconsider and listen to all the Petalumans who oppose this change in the height limits in the historical downtown areas.
Sent from my iPhone

Date: 11/16/24

To: Petaluma Mayor McDonnell, Council Members Brian Barnacle, Janice Cader Thompson, Mike Healy, Karen Nau, Dennis Pocekay, John Shribbs (Vice Mayor)

CC: Caitlin Corley, City Clerk; Peggy Flynn, City Manager; Brian Oh, Community Development Director; Greg Powell, Principal Planner; Isabel Castellano, Historic Preservation Specialist; Olivia Ervin, Principal Environmental Planner

From: Katherine and Bill Rinehart

Re: Public Comment, City Council 11/18/24 Meeting Agenda item 11 Downtown Housing & Economic Opportunity Overlay Workshop

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

Petaluma's historic character is an asset that creates unique economic opportunity in its own right, and our economic vitality as a community depends on its preservation and protection. While we support downtown housing, increased density, taller buildings, and re-development of several parcels, we strongly believe the analysis provided to date is inadequate to fully understand or evaluate the overlay's potential impacts on Petaluma's historic resources.

Before determining whether the proposed downtown housing and economic opportunity overlay will, as stated in the staff report, "complement the City's historic downtown character," we must have updated information on what resources contribute to that character and the context within which they exist.

The U.S. Secretary of the Interior and The California State Office of Historic Preservation recommend that analysis for this level of planning activity within or around historic districts needs to include a "Historic Context Statement" and a detailed "Historic Resources Inventory" (including a survey, evaluation of potential significance, and designation of significant resources). For more information on the value, purpose, and standards for these analyses, go to https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=23317

Despite all the reports prepared as part of the overlay review process, none provide the appropriate level of understanding to move forward with confidence. It's surprising and disappointing to us that this was not undertaken as part of the EIR. As stated on the OHP website, these analyses are essential tools for planning in and around historic districts. They will benefit the city and potential developers in several ways, such as:

- Providing decision-makers (staff, Planning Commission and HCPC) with the data they need to make informed decisions about the potential impacts of specific projects and sweeping zoning changes such as this overlay

- Will provide designers with an understanding of what makes Petaluma unique and how best to integrate new buildings
- Will give developers the critical background information to invest confidently rather than “rolling the dice” with the project-by-project review process suggested in the staff report.
- Will implement Policy 3-P-1 of our current General Plan 2025, HR-2.1 of the General Plan Historic Resources Policy Framework, and statements included in the October 2021 Historic Resources Existing Conditions Report prepared by Page & Turnbull.
- Will help the people of Petaluma understand how new development can complement our city’s unique appeal

Much has been discussed in the last 16 months about how we value Petaluma's historic character and how that character supports our economy via tourism, property, and sales taxes, how downtown Petaluma’s unique architectural heritage is a draw for local and future residents, and business owners seeking an authentic environment for their customers and employees. Now it is time for action.

We cannot ignore that much has changed in the nearly 30 years since the Petaluma Historic Commercial District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Petaluma Historic Commercial District Design Guidelines were adopted.



To effectively preserve the economic asset that Petaluma’s downtown represents, we ask that you direct staff to engage the services of a professional historic preservation planning firm to prepare:

- A detailed and comprehensive historic resource survey and inventory (what’s been prepared to date is a windshield survey at best)
- A historic context statement for the entire Downtown area.
- Updated design guidelines that not only guide design professionals but also give Petaluma the tools to objectively evaluate proposed projects of the scale and intensity allowed under the overlay.

We appreciate your consideration and dedication.

Sincerely,

Katherine & Bill Rinehart


Petaluma, CA 

From: [kathy.schmidt](#) [REDACTED]
To: -- City Clerk
Subject: Council Meeting 11/18 - Overlay
Date: Monday, November 11, 2024 5:12:30 PM

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Comment for the Council:

I don't understand why we're rushing to add an overlay to the hotel application. Why not see what happens with the hotel - how it looks, if it's bringing in revenue - if it even gets built. There's no reason to rush zone changes -- especially when there will be a general plan update.

Kathy Schmidt, home owner

[REDACTED]
Petaluma, CA

From: [Ken Moody](#)
To: [-- City Council](#)
Subject: No on the overlay
Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2024 8:18:55 AM

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Like most Petaluma citizens, I vote no on the overlay. Let's keep Petaluma the apple of everyone's eyes instead of a limitless jungle of 6 to 9 story monstrosities in our downtown neighborhood.

Ken & Janeen Moody

[REDACTED]
Petaluma, CA 94952

From: [Marsha Calhoun](#)
To: [-- City Council](#)
Subject: Proposed overlay
Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2024 12:24:27 PM

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Please do not approve the proposed Downtown Housing and Economic Opportunity overlay to alter existing zoning codes and allow 75-foot buildings in the designated areas. Two issues concern me: 1) the inappropriate attempt to shoehorn an unattractive, six-story hotel into a corner lot with insufficient parking, where it would tower over everything else in the area and serve as the beginning of a trend for others to "catch up" with the size of the building and create a dreary cavern at the entrance to our town, and 2) the fact that as far as I can tell, we don't need another hotel, let alone one of six stories, since we already have two hotels downtown, neither of which is fully utilized, and two more a bit farther out, and of course, more at the town's edge. Whenever I ask about occupancy rates at these hotels, I get no answer. I am wondering how responsible a company that wants to build a six-story hotel in the middle of a town regardless of historically well-thought-out zoning requirements, and doesn't seem to know how many guests to expect, can be. Petaluma has a unique character; please don't compromise this for the sake of speculative big checks being waved under your noses.

Nov. 14, 2024

Dear Petaluma City Council Member:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment regarding the proposed amendments for the Downtown Housing and Economic Overlay.

I would like to state my opposition to the Downtown Housing and Economic Overlay proposals in addition to opposition to the Appellation Hotel. My objections are listed below:

Appellation Hotel

1. The height, scale and architectural design do not meet standards required by the City's Historic District Guidelines. The design is totally out of character with both new and historic buildings within the District.
2. No attempt has been made to blend the new design with existing buildings in the area.
3. The height of the current proposed hotel exceeds that of adjacent buildings and is too big for the small lot.
4. Inadequate parking for the number of rooms proposed.

Downtown Housing and Economic Opportunity Overlay

The Downtown Historic District requirements were developed to maintain the character of surrounding neighborhood and should be complied with. So far, the proposed hotel makes no attempt to blend the design with existing historic structures, or even the more recent developments. The request to exceed height requirements should be denied. We don't change guidelines developed over years of input and community support just to accommodate a developer. A developer from Southern California does not know what's best for Petaluma.

The Overlay includes existing buildings, businesses and residential neighborhoods that will be impacted with development that exceeds height and scale guidelines. Development on empty lots designated for housing need to follow existing guidelines and height restrictions for that area. I do not support changes to these requirements. Housing needs to have adequate parking to reduce impacts to surrounding streets.

I don't care if a vacant lot generates low taxes. Increasing taxes on a plot of land is a short-sighted reason to approve changes to the historic district guidelines. Someday a developer who wants to follow city guidelines will come forward and build housing or a hotel or some other business that will compliment the area, not detract from it. I'm not opposed to development, I only want it to comply with existing guidelines that have prevented irreparable damage to the Historic District.

Has the City Council ever considered a city-wide survey to gauge support? The public input process has been too bureaucratic and cumbersome for many to take the time to register their opinion.

Please step back to consider what the area is losing by approving the Overlay as currently proposed. Tourists and citizens alike love downtown Petaluma. It's a big reason why I moved here in 1985- the thriving and bustling historic downtown. I love walking the downtown and I support it's businesses there. I encourage you to spend some time walking the area on both weekdays and weekends. Ask folks why they are visiting. If you begin to carve away the historic district with development that does not comply with the City's own guidelines- you lose it forever. Petaluma is one of the few communities to make the decision to preserve what it has. You only have to travel to downtown Santa Rosa to see what happens when you don't.

Respectfully,
Nancy Rogers

[REDACTED]

Petaluma, CA [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [Zach Luz](#)
To: -- City Clerk
Subject: Support for Zoning Amendment and Annexation of Barn 5400 to Petaluma
Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2024 2:59:58 PM

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Dear Members of the Petaluma City Council,

As a proud supporter and frequent customer of Retrograde Coffee Roasters, I am writing to urge you to approve the zoning amendment and annexation of Barn 5400 to the city of Petaluma. This decision is essential for allowing the team to open a coffee shop in the same space where their coffee is roasted, and it will bring countless benefits to the community.

Annexing Barn 5400 will help local businesses like Retrograde contribute directly to Petaluma's economy through sales tax revenues and required operating licenses. These contributions are crucial for supporting local services and improving the quality of life for residents. The annexation will also allow them to bring their incredible coffee experience into our city, connecting the roastery and café in one unique, community-centered location.

One of the things I love most about Retrograde is their dedication to the community. They sponsor local sports teams, non-profits, schools, and events in Sebastopol, and they frequently partner with artists and makers to host pop-up events that benefit small businesses. In fact, on a personal note, they offered to host my wife's very first art show in their coffee shop, which catalyzed her career as an artist. Since then, I've watched them offer similar opportunities to an innumerable amount of other artists. This same community-first approach will enhance Petaluma, providing a much-needed gathering place for residents to meet, enjoy great coffee, and support local artisans.

Additionally, Retrograde is a testament to the power of small businesses. Since starting from a mere coffee cart, I've watched them grow to their first retail space, into expanding and doubling the size of their commercial space. Employees have frequently mentioned that this is "the best job they've ever had" and their contribution to the community and economy has been reflected in their growth as a business. I consider them a "role model" for young aspiring entrepreneurs.

By approving this annexation, you're not just supporting a business, you're creating a space for people to connect, share, and grow together. As a customer, I am eager to see this coffee shop become a part of Petaluma's vibrant culture and economy, and I believe it will be an asset to the city.

Thank you for considering this important request. Please help make Barn 5400 a place where the Petaluma community can gather, enjoy, and thrive.

Sincerely,

Zach Luczynski
Sonoma County Resident
[REDACTED]

From: [Susan Oshiro](#)
To: [-- City Clerk](#)
Subject: Overlay.
Date: Monday, November 11, 2024 12:16:53 PM

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Hi

My concerns are:

- Modern looking buildings interspersed with original historic buildings. New buildings should adhere to set design standards.
- I don't object to 6 stories but definitely no higher. I think the 9 story talk should be addressed by the city openly.
- There must be adequate parking on site. The areas public transit infrastructure has to be built out before we limit parking. Otherwise there will be a lack of parking for locals and others. I would assume that people staying in the proposed hotel would be wine tasting, visiting the coast, river, other towns etc. which can't be done on public transit. Let's be practical.

I do like the idea of a nice hotel downtown to bring in tax dollars. We need to do something to keep downtown vibrant and generate income.

I encourage the council and various commissions to be overly transparent and spell out what can and can't happen with the overlay, WHY it is proposed, etc.

There are a few people in this town who have really stirred up conspiracy theories and caused a rift among Petaluma citizens. They aren't going away so I suggest being overly transparent about everything going on.

Also, I notice that business permitting is taking way too long. This needs to be addressed now, finding out why and speeding up the process greatly. The owner of Nick the Greek told me it took 3 years! That is absolutely unreasonable and has to be fixed before Petaluma gets a bad reputation.

I hope my letter is actually read and taken to heart.

Thank you,

Susan Oshiro