I. INTRODUCTION

A. Project Description

Public hearing to consider recommendations to the Planning Commission for approval of an Architectural Review Permit and Sign Permit for the proposed remodel of the south side of the Diablo Valley Plaza shopping center. The proposed project includes the following features:

- Overview: Replacement of approximately 76,100 square feet of existing multi-tenant single-story commercial building (to be demolished) with an approximate 79,700 square foot new single-story commercial building, anticipated to be occupied by Floor and Decor, for a net gain of approximately 3,600 square feet of gross floor area
- Specifically, the in-line shops building along the north end of the site (which total approximately 61,100 square feet) would be demolished and replaced with the new 79,700 square foot Major 2 building. This in-line shop building currently consists of Shops C and Majors 2, 3 and 4.
- Furthermore, the existing Major 1 building (formerly California Health Club) and Shops B would be demolished and replaced with approximately 15,000 square feet of new landscape area
- Total Demolition: Shops B & C and Majors 1, 2, 3 & 4 combined are approximately 76,100 square feet
- Exterior façade improvements for an existing multi-tenant building (Shops A)
- Existing planting area is 50,530 square feet (12% of the site) and the proposed planting area is 85,047 square feet (20.1% of the site)
• In addition, 13,294 square feet of permeable paving (3.1% of the site) is proposed; this would include bark, gravel and DG

• Total proposed site landscape area is 98,341 square feet, or 23.2%, which includes the proposed 3.1% permeable paving areas. Note: 0% of decorative hardscape is proposed for the project.

• Restriping of parking lot to provide 90-degree parking

• Repaving of 70-80% of the parking lot area

• New site lighting

• Removal of 81 trees (16 trees to remain to include 4 mature oak trees)

• Planting of 106 new trees

• Provision of two bio-retention areas to comply with C-3 standards

• A new dog park

• A new multi-use creek trail on the eastern edge of the property

• Amendment to the existing ARC-approved master sign program.

  o Amendment to accommodate wall signage on the new Floor & Décor (Major 2) building

  o Amendment to accommodate wall signage on the proposed façade modifications to Shops A

  o No amendments to the freestanding sign portion of the existing master sign program are proposed

The project does not include the northern half of the Diablo Valley Plaza which is currently being developed with a Carmax auto sales facility. The project does propose to add landscaping to the eastern edge of this area to complement the proposed multi-use trail for the adjacent County Flood Control District property.

Note: The project is required to obtain Development Plan Permit approval, in association with the proposed Architectural Review Permit, prior to issuance of grading and/or building permits. The applicant’s Development Plan Permit application is scheduled to be heard by the Planning Commission on May 28, 2019.

B. Background

The Diablo Valley Plaza site is made up of several parcels that were originally developed in the 1970's as a single shopping center. Various tenants have occupied the shopping center over the years (e.g. Safeway, K-Mart, Round Table, McDonalds, etc.). In 2008, this site was incorporated into a Redevelopment Project Area. However, in 2011, the State of California dissolved redevelopment agencies throughout the State eliminating local agencies’ redevelopment powers. Over the years, ownership of the site has changed and future plans for the site have also evolved.
On October 15, 2015 the Architectural Review Commission approved Architectural Review Permit (PLN 15-0162) for a remodel to the south half of the Diablo Valley Plaza shopping center including construction of updated facades and signage, new lighting, updated landscaping, a new dog park, various site improvements, a master sign program and a new public trail running the entire length of the site from Golf Club Road to Chilpancingo Parkway adjacent to Grayson Creek. These improvements have not been completed at this time. If the current proposal to remodel the shopping center is approved, the prior approval will become null and void (Condition No. 1.2).

Merlone Geier Partners also obtained City approval for a new free-standing sign (50 foot maximum height) on one of the several parcels comprising the Diablo Valley Plaza (DV Plaza) shopping center site. This existing pylon sign is intended to substantially improve visibility and identity for the entire site.

Merlone Geier Partners also obtained City approval for a new commercial building for *Carmax*, on the northern half of the site, which is currently in the latter construction phases.

On January 11, 2019 Merlone Geier Partners submitted an Architectural Review Permit and a Development Plan Permit to modify the previously approved plans to remodel the southern half of the DV Plaza site.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. General Plan

The General Plan designates the site as *Mixed Use*.

B. Zoning

The zoning designation is *RB-Retail Business*.

The site is also partially located within Airport Safety Zone 4, the least restrictive of the four Airport Safety Zones. This safety zone includes a height limitation of four stories for new buildings. Projects within Airport Safety Zones are referred to the Airport Land Use Commission for review and comment regarding consistency with Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan and related regulations.

C. Site Description and Existing Land Use

The two-parcel 8.83-acre project site is zoned *RB Retail Business*. Assessor Parcel Nos. 153-300-003 & 004.

Access to the site is available from Old Quarry Road and Golf Club Road. Grayson Creek is located immediately east of the site. The site generally slopes
from north to south (towards Golf Club Road) or southeast (towards Grayson Creek).

D. Surrounding Zoning and Uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zoning</th>
<th>Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>PUD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>R-7 Single Family Residential – High Density</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>RB – Retail Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>MRH, MRL and PAO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E. CEQA Status

Pursuant to Sections 15301, 15302, 15304 & 15311 of the Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended, the proposed project is determined to be categorically exempt (Class 1 – Existing Facilities) as the project scope involves an existing facility with negligible expansion and (Class 2 – Replacement of a commercial structure) which involves a new structure of substantially the same size, purpose/capacity, (Class 4 – Minor Alterations to Land) which includes minor changes to existing parking/landscape facilities and Class 11 for on-premise signage. In addition, pursuant to the general rule that where it can be seen with certainty that a project that does not have the possibility to impact the environment, it is not subject to CEQA (Section 15061 b.3.).

F. Public Notice

Public noticing was sent to all property owners within 300-feet of the project site. To date, no public comments have been received.

III. NECESSARY FINDINGS

A. Architectural Review Permit Purpose

The purpose of architectural review is to evaluate the interdependence of property values and aesthetics, and to provide a method to promote sound land use development. More specifically, architectural review is intended to:

1. Ensure excellence of architectural design;

2. Ensure that siting and architectural design of structures, including their materials and colors, are visually harmonious with surrounding development
and with the natural landforms and vegetation of the areas in which they are proposed to be located;

3. Ensure that plans for the landscaping of open spaces conform with the requirements of this chapter and that they provide visually pleasing settings for structures on the site and on adjoining and nearby sites, and blend harmoniously with the natural landscape;

4. Prevent excessive and unsightly grading of hillsides, and preserve natural landforms and existing vegetation; and

5. Ensure substantial compliance with City-wide design guidelines.

The Architectural Review Commission will consider the following elements in evaluating the sign permit (amendment to an existing master sign program) application:

1. Ensure sign visibility and legibility, including letter height and legibility, contrast background relationship, placement and location, and the impact of other signs in the vicinity, and the average travel speed on adjacent streets.

2. Intensity of sign illumination of both the proposed sign and other signs in the vicinity, and other light sources such as street lights or canopy lights.

3. The relation of the signs to the architectural design of the building. An attractive scale between the sign, the building and the immediate surroundings shall be maintained.

4. Ensure the graphic design of a sign, including emphasis on simplicity, style, trademarks or business identification and use of symbols.

5. Ensure substantial compliance with City Wide Sign Design Guidelines.

IV. ANALYSIS

This section of the staff report provides an analysis of project compliance with applicable City development policies and regulations.

A. Development Regulations

Since the site is a refurbishment of the existing shopping center, any development standards that are noncompliant are considered nonconforming and are allowed to remain as originally approved. A Development Plan Permit is required for the project due to the demolition and expansion of a portion of the site. As a result, proposed development features, associated with the floor area expansion, are required to comply with current zoning standards (i.e. site landscape coverage, setbacks and floor area ratio). However, any existing buildings with non-
compliant setbacks that are to remain, are considered legal non-conforming, and are therefore exempt from current standards. The table below is a summary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Regulations (RB)</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
<th>Complies?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Lot Area</td>
<td>7,500 square feet.</td>
<td>Over 8 acres</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Lot Width</td>
<td>75 lineal feet.</td>
<td>Site width – over 100 lineal feet.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Yards:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front</td>
<td>25 feet</td>
<td>Varies, down to 18-feet 327-feet for Major 2 building</td>
<td>Yes. Legal Nonconforming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear</td>
<td>None required</td>
<td>24-feet for Major 2 building</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corner Side</td>
<td>25 feet.</td>
<td>Varies down to 35 feet 91-feet for Major 2 building</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side</td>
<td>None required</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Side</td>
<td>None required</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creek Setbacks</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Building Height</td>
<td>35 feet</td>
<td>35 feet</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Number of Stories</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Gross FAR</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Site Landscaping</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>No, conditioned below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting Areas and Additional Setbacks</td>
<td>When located adjacent to Residential Zoning District, additional setbacks and planting areas are required.</td>
<td>Not located adjacent to residential districts</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse Storage Area</td>
<td>Required for project.</td>
<td>Site would have new refuse storage areas at side and/or rear of buildings.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Screening</td>
<td>Screened from views.</td>
<td>Screened from views.</td>
<td>Yes, Conditioned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>Shopping Center: 1 space per 250 square feet of building area.</td>
<td>1 space per 250 square feet</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Car Spaces</td>
<td>50% maximum.</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loading Spaces</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Each building has loading docks.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Vehicle Parking</td>
<td>7 spaces (including charging station)</td>
<td>4 spaces</td>
<td>No, conditioned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bicycle Parking | 1 bicycle space plus 2% of the vehicle parking space requirement = 8 bicycle parking spaces. | Two bicycle racks proposed to accommodate 9 bike spaces (5 at Shops A & 4 at Major 2) | Yes
Motorcycle Parking Space | One. | None (nonconforming). | No, conditioned to comply.
Parking Access from Street | One driveway allowed if there is less than 200 lineal feet of street frontage, two allowed if over 200 lineal feet of street frontage. | No changes to existing driveways (three driveways on two frontages). | Yes

Parking Lot Design Standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Regulations (RB)</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
<th>Complies?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

B. Architecture

The project proposes to update the exterior of the existing buildings noted as Shops A and also proposes to demolish 76,100 square feet of existing commercial
buildings and replace with a new 79,700 single-story commercial building. The two areas to be demolished include the Major 1 building and Shops B (15,000 s.f.) and the in-line building consisting of Shops C and Majors 2, 3 and 4 (61,100 s.f.). The remodel portion of the project would add new vertical elements to the existing buildings and apply new exterior façade treatments and updated exterior colors.

In addition, the west elevation (facing Old Quarry Road) of the Major 2 building, will be partially screened with 4 trees planted adjacent to the building and a wall-mounted trellis to accommodate ivy plants. Also, the west building elevation would be further screened by approximately ten trees in the parking lot area and/or perimeter planting area. Lastly, the nearest portion of the west elevation is setback 91-feet from the Old Quarry Road public right-of-way. However, the west elevation does lack articulation and exemplifies a somewhat unadorned “side elevation” appearance.

The north elevation of the Major 2 building would exhibit two sections that would accommodate wall-mounted trellises (to accommodate ivy plants) to soften the architectural features of the building. In addition, four trees are proposed along the west end of the north elevation, to provide screening, and two additional trees are proposed at the east end to screen the loading dock area.

**Building Height**

The exterior improvements on Shops A include new vertical features that would range from 23-feet to 30-feet in height where the maximum building height allowance is a 35-feet. In addition, the architectural features on the new building (Major 2) will vary between 25-feet and 35-feet high. Therefore, the existing building and the new building would comply with the 35-foot maximum building height allowance.

The proposed new façades include the following building materials and colors:

a. Plaster, composite wood siding, and existing CMU (concrete masonry). In addition, storefronts would feature metal trim and/or metal canopy elements.

b. Colors include white, bronzes, red (trim) and grays.

The applicable provisions of the City-Wide Non-Residential Design Guidelines include, but are not limited to:

- **No. 2a & 2b** – The scale and mass of a new development should be consistent with the neighboring developments without overwhelming through disproportionate size or design, including maintaining low profiles that transition to taller elements when adjacent to residential uses. The project would refurbish existing shopping center buildings, and provide a new large anchor tenant building, in compliance with
maximum building height requirements. The surrounding neighborhood includes both multi-story commercial and residential buildings. There is a variety of architecture styles within the immediate area.

- **No. 2c** – *Structures should have a human scale, including change in elevation, insets and projections and distinct massing elements.* New and improved pedestrian areas are proposed fronting the buildings to provide a more inviting environment for pedestrians. The project proposes new facade materials, vertical features varying in height, metal canopies and new storefronts to further enhance the pedestrian experience throughout the shopping center.

- **No. 2e & 2h** – *The architecture should have variations in form, building details and siting and entries that are readily identifiable.* The proposed design includes a mix of building materials, colors and new vertical elements that add visual interest and identity to the former low horizontal buildings.

- **No. 2n** – *Roof top equipment shall be screened from all views.* The plan for the roof of the building incorporates roof parapets where roof top equipment would be placed, thus, providing screening from views. To ensure equipment is screened from views, in a cohesive manner, staff recommends a condition that all roof top equipment be screened from all views or appropriate justification (line of sight drawing from all views) be provided to not warrant additional screening (Condition No. 1.4).

- **No. 2o** – *Appropriate building colors and materials should relate to the surrounding neighborhood.* The proposed colors and materials are similar to those exhibited in nearby commercial sites and/or those approved for recent projects elsewhere in the city.

### C. Site Planning/Parking

The project will retain the existing circulation pattern of the site with some minor modifications to the interior parking lot and circulation. The existing retail buildings (Shops A) are proposed to remain in their current configuration at the southwest corner of the property. However, the existing Major 1 building (formerly California Health Club) and Shops B would be demolished and replaced with approximately 15,000 square feet of new landscape area.

The in-line shops building along the north end of the site (which total approximately 61,000 square feet) would be demolished and replaced with the new 79,700 square foot Major 2 building. The in-line shop building currently consists of Shops C and Majors 2, 3 and 4.
The project would demolish approximately 76,100 square feet of existing gross floor area, and provide approximately 79,700 square feet of new gross floor area, for a net increase of approximately 3,600 square feet of gross floor area.

The project proposes to upgrade the pedestrian areas fronting the existing retail buildings to improve the pedestrian experience of the center and add more outdoor activity areas to the site. Vehicular access to the site would remain unchanged; pedestrian access patterns would also largely remain unchanged with refurbishment of access from both Old Quarry and Golf Club Roads.

One of the new features of the project is a dog park in the southeast corner of the property that is currently undeveloped and which would be located adjacent to Chilpancingo Park.

Parking/Circulation

The project proposes to modify the existing 60 degree angled parking site plan with rows of 90 degree parking spaces throughout the project site. The site would have 373 total parking spaces consisting of 38 compact spaces and 335 standard size spaces (this includes 4 electric vehicle parking spaces, 7 ADA parking spaces and 4 van accessible ADA spaces). The overall layout and circulation of the parking lot will remain as existing. To ensure the parking lot matches the new appearance of the shopping center building and landscaping, staff recommends the entire parking lot be re-striped and uniformly slurry sealed to the satisfaction of the Zoning Administrator and City Engineer (Condition No. 1.5).

Additional landscaping and trees are proposed to be integrated into the parking lot through the creation of new landscape planters.

Bicycle, Motorcycle & Electric Vehicle Parking

a. Bicycle Parking:

The project proposes a bicycle parking facility in two locations, one to accommodate 4 bicycles (Major 2) and the other to accommodate 5 bicycles (Shops A), for a total of 9 bicycles. Therefore, the proposal satisfies the ordinance requirement for a minimum of eight bicycle parking spaces.

b. Motorcycle Parking:

The existing parking lot does not contain any motorcycle parking spaces and no motorcycle parking spaces are proposed. The site is required to provide no less than one motorcycle parking space. Therefore, staff recommends that a motorcycle parking space be provided at the site to better accommodate alternative modes of transportation (Condition No. 1.7).
c. Electric Vehicle Parking:

The applicant has incorporated four parking spaces for electric vehicles (EV), including associated charging equipment, where a minimum of seven EV parking spaces (each with a charging station) is required in accordance with Section 18.55.070A of the Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, staff recommends that three additional EV parking spaces be provided for a total of seven EV parking spaces. (Condition no. 1.8).

Mechanical/Loading/Trash Facilities

A modified rear loading area is proposed for Shops A and a loading dock would be provided on the east (side) elevation of the new Major 2 building. The loading area behind the Shops A building is proposed to be partially screened with landscaping (3 trees on the south side and 3 trees on the north side). However, there is no vertical landscape proposed between this loading area and the Old Quarry Road public right-of-way directly to the west. Therefore, staff recommends additional landscaping be provided to further screen the loading area/trash enclosure behind Shops A from the Old Quarry Road public right-of-way. The landscaping shall incorporate a mix of shrubs, groundcover and trees to provide screening for the loading area. In addition, the north elevation of the trash enclosure behind Shops A should exhibit a wall-mounted trellis to accommodate ivy plants for additional green-screening (Condition No. 1.9).

The applicable Non-Residential Design Guidelines related to site planning/parking, include the following:

- **No. 1a** – The arrangement of structures, parking and circulation areas, and open spaces should recognize the particular characteristics of the site and should relate to the surrounding built environment in pattern, function, scale, character and materials. The project does not propose to modify the existing parking lot layout. However, additional pedestrian opportunities are proposed to be incorporated throughout the site, thus, making the site more pedestrian-friendly and providing improved connections to surrounding areas. In addition, the existing 60-degree parking space design would be changed to a 90-degree parking space design.

- **No. 1b** – Buildings, roadways and parking shall be sited to preserve existing heritage, protected, and mature trees to the greatest extent possible. In accordance with a past approval, ten (10) trees have been removed from the site, most of which were considered to be in poor health or inappropriate planting locations. The remaining were in conflict with the new parking lot layout and/or pedestrian areas. Of these, nine trees were considered “protected.” The project proposes to remove a total of 79 trees and provide 106 new trees.

- **No. 1d** – The placement and design of structures should facilitate and
encourage pedestrian activity and convey a visual link to the street and sidewalks. The project proposes to refurbish the exterior of the buildings with features that are pedestrian friendly, including new canopies, new storefronts, and the use of a variety of colors that help to break up the vertical and horizontal planes of the existing Shops A building. In addition, the project proposes to improve pedestrian access throughout the shopping center including new plazas and sitting areas to improve the pedestrian experience for a center that was primarily vehicle-centric.

- **No. 4a – Parking areas should be well-designed and safe.** As proposed, the parking lot design would be consistent with this guideline and the plans for the parking lot and associated walkways include adequate lighting.

- **No. 4h – Parking lots should be screened with landscaping.** Additional landscaping along Golf Club Road and Old Quarry Road is proposed to provide improved screening and buffering for the parking lot.

- **No. 5a – Vehicular circulation should be safe, efficient and convenient with conflicts with pedestrians minimized.** Continuous circulation is encouraged and decorative pavement used as appropriate. The site plan does not propose a circulation pattern that is unsafe or awkward. Continuous circulation is provided throughout the project site and decorative pavement is provided in pedestrian areas adjacent to the commercial buildings. There are areas within the parking lot that contain pedestrian crossings. The applicant proposes to provide striping to identify these areas. However, to encourage walkability and provide a safer pedestrian crossing, additional measures such as colored/stamped pavement or raised crossings could be required in these areas subject to direction by the ARC (Condition No. 1.10).

- **No. 5b – Pedestrian access should be safe and convenient with direct access from public streets, paths and trails.** Pedestrian walkways should be visually attractive and well defined by landscaping and lights. New pedestrian walkways that provide interior and exterior connections to areas within and adjacent to site are proposed. All of the proposed exterior walkways include pedestrian-scale, visually attractive lighting and provide safe access.

- **No. 8a, 8b & 8c – Fully screen service facilities from public views, set back as far as the main building and locate away from public streets and nearby residential uses.** The applicant proposes to screen all roof top equipment from views, however, from the plans provided, it is not clear if equipment will be adequately screened in some locations. Thus, to ensure full screening occurs, final roof-top equipment screening plans shall be submitted for review and approval by the Zoning Administrator or alternatively the applicant shall provide line-of-site drawings demonstrating to the satisfaction of the Zoning Administrator that roof top equipment will not be visible to the public (Condition No. 1.4).
• **No. 8d, 8e, 8f, and 8h** – *Enclosures should be of a solid, permanent material, access should be designed to discourage public entry, accessible to service vehicles, located in rear yards and fully screened in enclosures that complement the main structure.* The existing loading areas will continue to contain trash and loading facilities. New enclosures of split-face CMU block (painted to match the wall color of the adjacent commercial building) would be provided with metal gates, metal self-closing man-doors and metal roofs. Since the shopping center would have restaurants, compliance with all other City Engineering and outside agency requirements is also required (Condition No. 1.11).

• **No. 8g & 8i** – *Mechanical equipment should be undergrounded or architecturally designed to be screened from views, and not generate noise impacts.* As mentioned previously, most equipment would be located behind roof parapets/screening. In addition, the site is separated from residential uses with a four lane roadway and mechanical equipment would be located on roof tops behind screens and setback from property edges. The project is also required to comply with all applicable provisions of the Municipal Code (including the noise ordinance).

**D. Landscape/Tree Removal**

The site does not meet current landscaping requirements and is considered legal nonconforming in its existing condition. However, the proposed increase in building floor area triggers compliance with current development standards for landscaping, lot coverage and floor area ratio. The project would increase the amount of existing landscaping throughout the site (including a 15,000 square foot area where the Major 1 building and Shops B would be demolished) and particularly within the parking lot, creating several new landscape islands. In addition, the project proposes to increase, refurbish and improve the landscaping throughout the pedestrian/plaza areas adjacent to the Shops A building. New outdoor seating areas, benches, planter pots and other furniture are also proposed throughout the project plaza/pedestrian area. The landscape plan proposes adding approximately 106 new trees (Chinese pistache, London Plane, Canary Island Pine, Bradford Pears, Maidenhair, Crape Myrtle, Southern Magnolia, Chinese Flame, Forest Green Oak, Zelkova, Eastern Redbud, Washington Hawthorn and Cork Oak) on the property (in addition to new landscaping along the proposed multi-use trail).

Seventy-one (71) existing trees are proposed to be removed, in addition to the 10 trees already removed as a result of the 2015 ARC approval, for a total of 81 tree removals. In addition, 16 existing trees (4 of which are mature oak species) are proposed to remain. Many of the trees proposed to be removed are in poor health, hazardous, damaging property, have been topped, or are growing in an unsafe or inappropriate manner (such as excessive leaning). Included in the proposed tree removals is a large Valley oak tree, however, due to its location within a new drive-aisle/parking-area, the project proposes removal. Note: *As cited on the tree*
plan, tree nos. 54, 55 and 56 are Valley Oak Trees and tree no. 61 is a Coast Live Oak.

A significant buffer area (91-feet at the nearest) would be provided between the new Major 2 building and the west property line (along Old Quarry Road). In addition, this area would be provided with approximately 18 trees to provide vertical screening of the building’s west (side) elevation from the Old Quarry Road public right-of-way and from the adjacent multi-family residential sites to the west.

Lastly, the project is required to comply with the City Water-Efficient Landscape Ordinance provisions (Condition No. 1.12).

The applicant is proposing a total of 23.2% site landscape coverage where a minimum 25% site landscape coverage is required in the RB district. As a result, the applicant may: (1) provide additional planting area and/or decorative or pervious hardscape area, (2) reduce the building square footage, or (3) a combination of both. If the project was not proposing to increase the net floor area on the site, the existing non-conforming site landscape coverage would be acceptable. However, due to the net increase in floor area, the applicant is required to comply with the 25% site landscape coverage standard (Condition No. 1.12.a).

Artwork

In the plans approved by the ARC in 2015, initially artwork was only proposed within the dog park area. Eventually, after the ARC provided feedback, three additional public art features were proposed within the shopping center. However, the current project does not propose artwork in any portion of the shopping center including the dog park and the creek side trail.

Non-Residential City Wide Design Guideline no. 6.s reads as follows:

Public art should be incorporated into larger projects and should be located in high visibility locations. Also, artwork should be completed by local artists and artwork shall be integrated into the building design in addition to freestanding structures.

As a result, staff recommends that the ARC consider no less than three (3) public art features in the following locations: (1) dog park, (2) Creekside trail, (3) plaza area in front of the Shops A building and/or (4) integrated into the building design of the Major 2 building. Furthermore, staff recommends that a final artwork plan be provided for review and approval by the Architectural Review Commission prior to issuance of a building permit and that installation of the artwork be completed no later than 90 days after issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the Major 2 building or no later than July 31, 2020 (Condition No. 1.13).
Proposed Creek Trail

An improved 10 foot wide pedestrian/bicycle multi-use trail is proposed as part of the project (following the approximate alignment of an existing gravel pathway along the western edge of Grayson Creek). The improvement would extend from Golf Club Road, north to Chilpancingo Parkway within the County Flood Control District (FCD) property adjacent to Grayson Creek. In addition, a landscape buffer (approximately 8-feet wide on the project site) would be provided between the pathway and the creek. Pedestrian scale lighting (bollard light) and a split rail fence are also proposed along the trail. The trail would also provide connections from the aforementioned streets, the proposed dog park and Chilpancingo Park. Since the trail would be located on FCD property, the final design is subject to FCD review and approval.

The trail improvements were required in association with the 2015 project approval. As a result, the improvements were anticipated to be completed sometime in 2017. In addition, creek side trail improvements associated with the north side of the DV Plaza (Carmax site) are also required. Therefore, to ensure a timely completion of the trail improvements so that the trail connects Golf Club Road to Chilpancingo Parkway, staff recommends that the applicant submit a security deposit for the installation of the trail prior to issuance of a building permit (see Condition No. 1.14). In addition, staff recommends that the trail be installed within six months of the Planning Commission’s action on the associated Development Plan Permit (also see Condition No. 1.14).

The applicable Non-Residential Design Guidelines related to landscaping and tree removal, include, but not limited to:

- **No. 6a, 6b & 6j** – Integrate landscaping into site development and building architecture to ensure a complete project and to complement and add to the building architecture. The proposed landscape plan is intended to complement the new building appearance and contains trees that will enhance the pedestrian experience throughout the site and provide increased shading throughout the parking lot.

- **No. 6c** – Select landscape materials and plants that are appropriate in scale and function with the site and for the site conditions. See comments above.

- **No. 6e & 6f** – Protected trees shall be preserved for the community’s enjoyment and preserved to the greatest extent possible and incorporated into the overall landscape plan. Structures shall be designed to not impact existing mature trees to the greatest extent possible. The project proposes to preserve as many matures trees as possible. However, some of the trees on the site are in poor health or are in conflict with proposed site improvements, thus, necessitating removal.

- **No. 6g** – Provide landscaping that supports solar gains. The proposed landscape plan incorporates new trees within the parking lot which will
help to reduce the warming effect of large paved areas, and potentially reduce ambient temperatures in the area.

- **No. 6m** – *Landscaping should define useful public and private spaces.* The applicant is proposing landscaping that will improve the pedestrian experience throughout the center and that improve public gathering areas within the site.

- **No. 6s** – *Public art should be incorporated into larger projects and located in high visibility locations.* The project does not propose to incorporate artwork within the dog park or in the commercial areas (plazas) of the center. (see condition below)

- **No 6u** – *Landscaping shall emphasize native and water-efficient plants.* The project will comply with the City Water-Efficient Landscape provisions.

**E. Grading and Drainage**

The applicable Non-Residential Design Guidelines – Drainage and Stormwater Requirements section, include, but are not limited to:

- **No. B.1a** – Comply with applicable National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), Pleasant Hill Municipal Code Section 15.05 and Public Works Standards. Projects should consider existing topography, soil types, existing drainage pattern and creeks.

- **No. B.1b** – Project should be designed to minimize impervious surfaces.

- **No B.1d** – Projects should incorporate landscape elements to reduce pollution from urban runoff.

- **No. B.1f** – Drainage facilities should be integrated into landscaping, but also be identifiable.

Further discussion is provided later in this staff report.

**F. Lighting**

The project would provide new pedestrian scale lighting in the areas adjacent to the retail buildings and new parking lot lighting throughout the parking lot. Ten of the new parking lot light fixtures (consisting of six Type A fixtures and four Type B fixtures) would be 28 feet in height and would require Zoning Administrator approval of a minor adjustment (to allow an increase in height over 24 feet) in accordance with Section 18.55.190A (*Minor Adjustments to Parking Design Standards*) of the Zoning Ordinance (see Condition 1.15). Approval of the minor adjustment is subject to making the three required findings:

1. *The adjustment is consistent with the intent of the Zoning Ordinance*
2. *The adjustment will not adversely affect adjacent properties, and*
3. **The adjustment is necessary due to practical difficulties involved in the strict application of zoning ordinance standards.**

The light fixtures (wall and parking lot) would incorporate a metal (silver/gray/bronze) finish. The photometric analysis submitted by the applicant confirms that project lighting levels would comply with City standards (related to spillover outside of the property) with no overly dark areas within the parking lot. In addition, the applicant provided a photometric analysis to confirm that the light levels within the center plaza areas.

According to the applicant, the project would incorporate string lights in various locations of the Shops A front (east side) patio area. However, the string lights are not shown on a plan and therefore staff recommends that revised plans be submitted for final review by the Zoning Administrator (Condition 1.16).

The applicable Non-Residential Design Guidelines pertaining to lighting, includes, but not limited to:

- **No. 7a** – Lighting levels should be minimized to preserve the night (dark) sky. The project plans comply with applicable parking lot lighting requirements.

- **No. 7b** – Light fixture design should be compatible and relate to the design and the use of the principal structures on the site. Light fixtures are proposed to be 28 feet in height (compatible with the primary commercial building that would have heights up to 35 feet).

- **No. 7d** – Height of light poles should be appropriate for the project and surrounding environment. See discussion above.

- **No. 7e** – Parking lot lighting should be in scale with the project, yet provide adequate lighting for safety and visibility purposes. See discussion above.

- **No. 7f & 7g** – Shield light sources to prevent any glare or direct illumination on adjacent properties. Staff recommends that the project light fixtures include appropriate shielding to minimize glare and lighting impacts to adjacent uses (Condition No. 1.17).

- **No. 7h** – All pedestrian and vehicular areas shall be well-lit for safety and security. The project proposes to incorporate pedestrian level lighting including new light bollards (at the multi-use trail), wall lighting, and pedestrian scale lighting around the existing buildings.

- **No. 7i** – Subtle illumination to enhance the architectural form of the building is encouraged. The site is located in close proximity to existing residential uses, consequently, any building accent lighting proposed should be sensitive to those uses. Final review of intensity of building accent lighting shall be subject to review and approval of the Zoning Administrator prior to occupancy (Condition No. 1.18). Adjust to the
intensity of the accent lighting may be required as determined by the
Zoning Administrator.

G. Odors

The applicant has noted that multiple restaurants will likely make up a portion of
the tenants in the Shops A building, which are located across the street from
nearby residential uses. To minimize odors, staff recommends that odor reducing
equipment be installed for restaurants prior to occupancy (Condition No. 1.19).

H. Sustainable/Green Building Methods

The project proposes to incorporate green building measures such as use of LED
light fixtures, improved insulation, and cool roof technologies. In addition, the
applicant is proposing to install electric vehicle charging facilities within the
shopping center.

The applicable Non-Residential Design Guidelines pertaining to green building
and sustainable methods include, but are not limited to:

• No. 3a – Use landscape to reduce energy costs.
• No. 3b & 3c – Recycle and reuse materials from the existing structure.
• No. 3d – Use high quality, long lasting materials.
• No. 3f – Implement advanced building materials and techniques.
• No. 3g & 3h – Installing attachments and pre-wiring for solar energy in
  new construction and ensure this type of equipment is located in the most
  opportune location to make use of the full extent of natural energy. Staff
  recommends that the building incorporate appropriate design features to
  accommodate potential future solar energy solutions (Condition No. 1.20).
• No. 3k – Utilize water efficient landscaping. The project is required to
  comply with City Water Efficient Landscaping provisions.
• No. 3l & 3m – Shade hardscape areas and use less paving, use light
  colored materials and open grid paving systems. The project proposes to
  increase landscaping within the parking lot.

While it is assumed that the proposed electric vehicle parking spaces will have
accompanying charging equipment, for clarity purposes, staff recommends that
electric charging equipment be installed as part of the project (Condition No. 1.8).

Lastly, the outdoor patio area in front of the Shops A building would be improved
to include new landscape planters, new patio tables, new hardscape/sidewalks,
new pole lights, new string lighting and a new bicycle facility. Furthermore, new
metal canopies would provide cover for outdoor seating areas. Lastly, existing
seating walls and retaining walls would remain, but would also be refurbished.
I. Dog Park

The project includes a proposal to construct a new dog park next to Chilpancingo Park. The park would be approximately .5-acre in size and would include various amenities including dog water fountains, benches, waste receptacles and appropriate ground surfaces including decomposed granite and mulch. Additional pedestrian connections are also proposed to adjacent areas, including the proposed multi-use trail. Lastly, bollard lighting is proposed along the pathways in the dog park.

J. Signage

The applicant is proposing to amend the existing DV Plaza master sign program for the south side of the plaza (see Attachments D & E). The amendments are limited to the wall signage for the Shops A building and the new Major 2 building. Therefore, no amendments are proposed associated with freestanding signage that was approved in 2015.

Potential issues of discussion include the following proposed master sign program criteria. Following each criteria, noted by staff, is staff’s recommendation in italics and whether that sign criteria, or similar criteria, was approved in the current master sign program.

- Page 2 (2.11) – Transfer of sign area from one tenant to another is limited to a maximum of 50% total allowed sign area.

  Transfer of sign area from tenant to tenant is not a common sign criteria in other master sign program’s throughout the City. In addition, it becomes a burden on staff to maintain the ongoing calculations as tenants come and go. Most importantly, as experienced with The Courtyard master sign program, there is a likelihood that tenants occupying their spaces in the latter stages of sign approvals would not have sufficient wall sign area. As a result, the tenants are either: (1) left without an appropriate amount of sign area to advertise their business, or (2) left with no option but to request a minor (or major) sign adjustment for excess sign area.

  Note: This sign criteria was not approved in the current master sign program.

- Page 2 (3.10) – Letter ascenders and descenders are not applicable to letter height calculations.

  Sign heights, in accordance with Section 18.60.040C of the Zoning Ordinance, are measured from the lowest to the highest portion of the sign copy (to include ascenders and descenders). In addition, this is consistent with other master sign programs throughout the city.
Note: This sign criteria was not approved in the current master sign program.

- Page 2 (3.13) – Tenant (anchor) may divide square footage for each approved elevation as long as the total allowable square footage is not exceeded.

Staff does not have a concern with this sign criteria, providing that the property owner and future tenants, clearly understand that the amount of wall sign area on a given elevation is not a “right” and is subject to review and approval of either the Zoning Administrator or Architectural Review Commission. More specifically, the amount of approved wall sign area will primarily be based on: (1) a proper scale with the building fascia on which it would be displayed, and (2) proper spacing from left-to-right and top-to-bottom.

Note: This sign criteria was approved in the current master sign program (for all tenants; anchor, major and shop tenants).

- Page 2 (3.15) – End cap tenants are allowed an additional sign on the north or south elevations.

Staff does not have a concern with this sign criteria, providing that the total allowed wall sign area for the end cap tenants is not calculated by using all three sides of the tenant space. The total allowed wall sign area is recommended to be based on east and west elevations only. Note: The vast majority of businesses throughout the City have allowed wall sign area based on one elevation only. However, since the rear elevations of the Shops A tenants face a public right-of-way, staff can support the use of two elevations.

Note: This sign criteria was approved in the current master sign program.

- Page 2 (3.17) – Tenant (shop tenants) may divide square footage for each approved elevation as long as the total allowable square footage is not exceeded.

Staff does not have a concern with this sign criteria, providing that the property owner and future tenants, clearly understand that the amount of wall sign area on a given elevation is not a “right” and is subject to review and approval of either the Zoning Administrator or Architectural Review Commission. More specifically, the amount of approved wall sign area will primarily be based on: (1) a proper scale with the building fascia on which it would be displayed, and (2) proper spacing from left-to-right and top-to-bottom.

Note: This sign criteria was approved in the current master sign program.
K. Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC)

The Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) reviewed the proposed project and determined that the project does not contain characteristics that are likely to conflict with the Contra Costa Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. Note: The entirety of the project site is located in Buchanan Field’s Safety Zone 4.

L. Engineering Comments

The applicant is proposing to increase the landscaped area (pervious surface) to include two bio-retention basins to capture and treat water to meet the C3 stormwater treatment requirements. The Engineering division will review and approve a hydraulic study as part of construction document review prior to issuance of a building permit. Also staff recommends the applicant provide stop signs at cross traffic drive aisles to reduce conflicts within the parking lot (see Engineering Division conditions in Attachment A).

VI. CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

The proposed project/building design substantially conforms with applicable provisions of the City-Wide Design Guidelines. The project proposes a high quality development on the site of several existing vacant commercial buildings and includes various public and private improvements to benefit the immediate neighborhood as well as the community as a whole. The project plans incorporate high quality building materials, landscaping
and architectural design features that will result in an attractive building design and related site improvements to complement surrounding development.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission conduct the public hearing, consider public testimony, review the CEQA findings that the proposed project is categorically exempt (Class 1, 2 & 4 Categorical Exemption and Section 15061 b.3) and recommend approval of the project to the Planning Commission subject to the attached findings and conditions.

VIII. ATTACHMENTS

| Attachment A | Staff Recommended Conditions of Approval |
| Attachment B | Location Map |
| Attachment C | Project Plans, Tree Survey and Green Building List |
| Attachment D | ARC Approved Master Sign Program |
| Attachment E | Proposed Amendments to Master Sign Program |
| Attachment F | Outside Agency Comments |
| Attachment G | Public Notice |
| Attachment H | Applicant’s Site Photos |