



Agenda Item C.1
PRELIMINARY REVIEW
Meeting Date: January 27, 2026

TO: Goleta Design Review Board

SUBMITTED BY: Mary Chang, Supervising Planner
Steve Rodriguez, Contract Planner

SUBJECT: Sandpiper Golf Course Renovation Project 7925 Hollister Avenue;
APN 079-210-059 Case Nos. 22-001-CDPH (in concept); 22-0009-
DP-CUP; 22-0032-DRB

DRB ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Conduct Preliminary Review on the project elements and make a recommendation to the Planning Commission on the proposed findings provided in Attachment A and on the design aspects of the project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project application was filed by Mr. Steve Welton of SEPPS, on behalf of the property owner, Sandpiper Golf Trust, LLC. Major elements of the proposed project are described below.

- **Proposed Clubhouse.** The existing 9,305 square foot golf course clubhouse would be demolished and replaced with a new 37,179 square foot building. Two clubhouse building levels would be located above ground and would have 16,019 square feet of floor area. An additional building level would be located below ground and have 21,160 square feet of floor area. The two above ground levels would have glass windows, a glass elevator enclosed within a glass structure in the center of the clubhouse, sloped turf walls, and a turf roof. The below ground level would be used for receiving materials and supplies, and the support of golf operations.
- **Proposed Maintenance Facility.** The existing maintenance buildings, trailers, and sheds located near the eastern edge of the project site would be demolished/removed. The existing 7,555 square foot maintenance structure would be replaced with a 7,476 square foot facility consisting of two structures. Uses such as offices, employee restrooms, lockers, and small equipment storage would be located in a new 4,316 square foot structure. Vehicle and golf course equipment storage would occur in a proposed 3,160 square foot structure.
- **Golf Course Redesign.** The existing 18-hole golf course would be redesigned to

be more consistent with the natural topography of the site, and to provide an increase in ocean views. New cart paths are proposed at the tees and greens, and would reduce the amount of concrete cart paths on the golf course from 154,829 sf to 92,346 sf. The redesign also includes new drought tolerant turf, a new irrigation system, and “sand-capping” of turf areas, which will enhance water quality and drainage. As proposed, the existing 125 acres of irrigated turf would be reduced to 62 acres. Proposed grading would result in approximately 86,500 cubic yards of cut and 56,000 cubic yards of fill.

- **Accessory Structures.** An existing 290 square foot comfort station (i.e., restroom) would be removed and replaced with a 121 square foot restroom and a 208 square foot refreshment/storage building.
- **Barnsdall Rio Grande Gas Station.** The Barnsdall Rio Grande Gas Station historic landmark building would be restored and adaptively re-used as part of the proposed Rio Grande Coffee Shop. The coffee shop would consist of the restored 349 square foot gas station building, a new single-story 695 square foot café building designed to resemble a 1920's gas station service bay, and new wooden trellises to be located to the west of the gas station building and on the eastern and western sides of the Rio Grande Coffee Shop. This component of the project was initially planned to be reviewed by the Historical Preservation Commission (HPC) on January 13, 2026, but the applicant was unable to get the on-site notice and story poles installed timely. HPC's review is now scheduled for Thursday, February 26, 2026. The HPC recommendation regarding the adaptive reuse and improvements planned for the Barnsdall Rio -Grande Gas Station and adjacent area, along with DRB's recommendation, will be provided to the Planning Commission and the City Council when those hearing bodies consider the merits of the project.
- **Right-of-Way Abandonment.** The project includes a request by the applicant for the City to abandon 17,306 square feet of public right-of-way adjacent to Hollister Avenue. The abandoned right-of-way would be used for clubhouse parking and a new project site driveway entrance.
- **Hollister Avenue Improvements.** Proposed improvements along the project site's Hollister Avenue frontage include undergrounding overhead utility lines, and the construction of a “Type 4” decomposed granite path with landscaping. Various other roadway, transit service, and site access improvements are also proposed.
- **Parking.** The City of Goleta's Municipal Code does not have a specific parking requirement for recreation land uses and the determination regarding the appropriate amount of parking is made by the Review Authority, which for this project is the City Council. The proposed number of parking spaces is based on the results of a parking study conducted at the project site. The project would provide a total of 162 parking spaces, which would be an increase of 23 spaces compared to existing conditions. Parking would be provided adjacent to the new clubhouse (138 spaces), the maintenance buildings (10 spaces), and the Rio

Grande Coffee Shop (14 spaces).

- **Landscape Trees.** The project would remove 39 non-native trees from the project site and one oak tree located in the Hollister Avenue right-of-way. The oak tree would be replaced with a 72-inch box oak tree to be located on the project site. The project would plant 116 trees to replace removed trees and trees that may be disturbed by construction activities.
- **Lighting.** A variety of new lighting fixtures would be installed at the project site. All proposed lighting would be directed downward and designed to conform with Goleta Municipal Code Chapter 17.35.
- **Zoning Adjustments.** The project requests two (2) zoning standard adjustments. One of the adjustments would allow two portions of the proposed clubhouse building to exceed 25 feet in height. Proposed building height exceedances include a minor portion of the building's roof that would have a height of 29 feet; and an elevator-related structure that would have a height of 33 feet. The other zoning adjustment would allow eight (8) parking spaces located near the proposed clubhouse to be partially located within the required front yard setback adjacent to Hollister Avenue.

BACKGROUND

Site History. The 193-acre project site was previously occupied by the former Ellwood Oil Field, which ceased operation in the 1960s. While much of the previous oil infrastructure has been removed, thirteen abandoned oil wells are located primarily on the southern portion of the project site. The Sandpiper Golf Club was developed in 1972 prior to the enactment of the California Coastal Act (1976). The construction of the golf course was approved by the County of Santa Barbara with the approval of building and grading permits. The project site was incorporated as part of the City of Goleta in 2002.

Land Use Designations and General Plan Policies. The project site is designated as "Open Space/Active Recreation" by the City's General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan and zoning.

The following policies relate to either the Active Recreational zoning or to Sandpiper Golf Course directly:

Policy LU 6.3 (Open Space/Active Recreation) states "*This designation is intended to identify existing or planned areas for public parks and active recreational activities and facilities, such as playgrounds, picnic areas, tennis courts, ballparks, and sports fields. This use category is also intended to apply to significant private outdoor recreational facilities, such as golf courses and privately owned parks. Individual recreational areas may include a mix of passive and active recreational features or improvements. Appropriate caretaker facilities and residences may also be allowed if consistent with*

the character of the planned uses. The designation may also include storm drainage facilities.”

Policy LU 9.3 (Site #3 – Coastal Recreation Parcels) states “*These parcels, which were occupied by the Sandpiper Golf Course as of 2005, are designated in the Open Space/Active Recreation use category. The requirements applicable to this site are as follows (see Figure 2-2):*

- a. The Sandpiper site shall continue to be used for golf course and other related outdoor recreation purposes.*
- b. The golf course shall be maintained as a public course and shall not be converted to a members-only course.*
- c. Any future project that requires a discretionary approval by the City shall be subject to a condition that requires preference to be given to local residents in terms of fees and tee times during appropriate time periods each week.*
- d. The size and design of any new buildings and structures, or expansions and alterations of existing buildings, shall be controlled so as to preserve the character of the property as open land and minimize impacts on views of the ocean and Channel Islands from Hollister Avenue and views of the Santa Ynez Mountains from within the property and from beach and water areas.*
- e. Any new development or alteration of the existing facilities and golf course shall be required to maintain or expand the extent of existing coastal access facilities, including parking and vertical access to the beach. Lateral bluff-top access may also be considered and should connect with the bluff-top trail on Santa Barbara Shores Park, with a transition down the bluff to the SL 421 access road. The intent is to secure access easements, or offers to dedicate, that will provide for lateral access during all seasons and tide conditions. Conceptual locations for future coastal accessways are shown on Figure 3-1 in the Open Space Element (see also OS 1.7).*
- f. Any commercial uses, including restaurants, shall be open to the general public.*
- g. Views from Hollister Avenue to the ocean and islands shall be preserved. Perimeter walls and landscaping that would obstruct or impair coastal views shall not be permitted.*
- h. Any rerouting or alteration of the golf course shall be designed in a manner that protects and enhances environmental resources, including adjacent monarch butterfly habitat areas, Devereux Creek, and other drainages, and that protects safety on the beach.”*

Policy OS 7.5 (Open Space for Outdoor Recreation) states: *Lands designated in Figure 3-5 for outdoor recreation include Goleta’s diverse City-owned parks and open space areas, as well as private lands that are devoted to active recreation. Private lands, such as Girsh Park and the Sandpiper Golf Course, may be available to the general public or*

may be for the exclusive use and enjoyment of residents or customers of particular development projects. The following shall apply to lands designated for outdoor recreation

c. Private lands for outdoor recreation, including but not limited to Girsh Park and Sandpiper Golf Course, shall be protected and preserved for the valuable contribution that they make to the supply of recreation services available to residents of Goleta and adjacent areas.

d. The City should maximize the use of the existing park, recreation, and open space resources within the City by connecting them with an integrated system of trails and sidewalks.

Further, many of the policies contained within the Visual and Historic Resources Element are applicable either to the DRB's review of this application. The Visual and Historic Resources Element can be accessed here:

https://www.cityofgoleta.org/home/showpublisheddocument/32237/6389354668522700_00

Required Approvals. A Development Plan/Coastal Development Plan in concept and a Conditional Use Permit are required for the project. Due to the project-related request to abandon City right-of-way for project-related use, the City Council is the local review authority/decision-maker for the project.

Because the City does not have an adopted Local Coastal Program, the Coastal Development Plan must be reviewed by the California Coastal Commission (CCC) following City review and action on the project. The CCC will evaluate the Project's consistency with California coastal policies and regulations. Following discretionary approval from the CCC, the City has authority to effectuate the Coastal Development Permit and the Development Plan through issuance of a Land Use Permit/Zoning Clearance (ministerial level).

Previous DRB Review .

The DRB conducted conceptual review on December 8, 2020. The design and aesthetics of the new clubhouse building received positive comments as the DRB found the design to be excellent and a creative concept, and would integrate well into the surrounding area.

The minutes of the meeting can be accessed here:
https://goleta.granicus.com/DocumentViewer.php?file=goleta_c7fa3b95-18f5-4388-a076-9c202d616fcc.pdf&view=1

The video of the meeting can be accessed here:
https://goleta.granicus.com/player/clip/1531?view_id=5&redirect=true

DISCUSSION

As specified in the above referenced General Plan policies, the project would renovate the Sandpiper Golf Club, and the facility would remain open to the public. The project would continue the existing use of the project site as an outdoor golf course, which is a conditionally allowed land use under the Open Space/Active Recreation land use designation. The project would also renovate existing maintenance facilities located on the project site, preserve existing public views, and provide lateral access opportunities by constructing a public trail adjacent to Hollister Avenue and an access easement along the sandy beach adjacent to the project site. In addition, the project would result in the removal of a concrete cart path and culvert located in Devereaux Creek and associated sensitive habitat. In place of the existing creek crossing and culvert, a free-standing wooden bridge would be installed beyond the creek's top of bank. Therefore, the project is consistent with the land use requirements of Policy LU-6.3, LU-9.3 and OS-7.5..

Zoning Development Standards. With the approval of the zoning adjustments related to proposed vehicle parking in a required front yard setback, and the minor clubhouse building elements that exceed maximum building height requirements, the project is consistent with applicable Title 17 development standards.

Design. The applicant has proposed a unique design for the new club house building with the intention of mimicking the rolling topography of the area, and ocean waves and to be environmentally friendly with the green roof form. In general, the majority of the proposed clubhouse building would have a height of approximately 25 feet above grade, which is similar to the maximum height of the existing clubhouse building. The above ground levels of the proposed clubhouse would have approximately 16,019 square feet of floor area, which would not be substantially larger than the 9,305 square feet of floor area provided by the existing clubhouse building. Since the size, bulk and scale of the proposed clubhouse would generally be similar to the existing clubhouse, the project would not result in substantial changes to existing ocean views from locations such as Hollister Avenue. As mentioned above related to the DRB's Conceptual review in 2020, DRB indicated that the design and aesthetics of the new clubhouse building was excellent and a creative concept that would integrate well into the surrounding area.

The existing 290 square foot comfort station would be replaced with a 121 square foot restroom adjacent to a 208 square foot refreshment center and storage building. The maximum height of the new comfort station would be 15 feet, and the new structures would be integrated into the natural landscape and would feature gently sloped, turfed roofs.

The proposed maintenance buildings would be located on the eastern portion of the project site at the location of the existing project site maintenance facility. The two new maintenance buildings would have a combined floor area and overall size that is similar to the existing maintenance building that would be removed.

The Barnsdall Rio Grande Gas Station building would be restored consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, and adaptively reused as part of the proposed Rio Grande Coffee Shop. The new coffee shop would also include the construction a new single-story 695 square foot café building designed to resemble a 1920's gas station service bay. Therefore, the proposed coffee shop design would be consistent and harmonious with the appearance and scale of the historic gas station building.

DRB should consider if the design of the new club house, the maintenance facilities, the new coffee shop building, and the design elements associated with the adaptive reuse of the Barnsdall-Rio Grande Gas Station are consistent with the Design Review Findings of Goleta Municipal Code Section 17.58.080 provided in Attachment A.

Landscaping. The project includes the installation of new landscaping throughout the project site, which would include native plants, drought tolerant turf, and a new irrigation system. As proposed, the existing 125 acres of irrigated turf would be reduced to 62 acres. Areas where turf has been removed would be landscaped using native plants. DRB should consider if the landscape design associated with the project is consistent with the applicable Design Review Findings of Goleta Municipal Code Section 17.58.080 provided in Attachment A.

Lighting: All proposed project site lighting would be directed downward and designed to conform with Goleta Municipal Code Chapter 17.35. The new lighting is limited to parking lots, building entrances, and other security lighting needs. Similar to existing conditions, the golf course will not be lit for nighttime play. The largest area of exterior lighting on the project site would be within the main parking lot located adjacent to the proposed clubhouse. Average lighting levels in the parking lot would be 1.1 foot-candles

DRB should consider if the lighting design associated with the project is consistent with the applicable Design Review Findings of Goleta Municipal Code Section 17.58.080 provided in Attachment A.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code, §§ 21000 et seq.), the regulations promulgated thereunder (14 Cal. Code of Regulations, §§ 15000, et seq.), and the City's Environmental Review Guidelines, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) had been prepared for the project. The Draft EIR concluded that all of the project's potentially significant environmental impacts can be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of identified mitigation measures. The 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR ended on December 1, 2025. The City received 43 comment letters regarding the project and the analysis included in the EIR. The majority of the comments were in support of the project. Responses to the comments will be included in the proposed Final EIR, which will be available in early 2026.

NEXT STEPS

Once the DRB provides a recommendation of preliminary review the next steps include: (1) review and recommendation by the Planning Commission to the City Council on the adequacy of the Final EIR and the merits of the Project (Conditional Use, Permit, Development Plan/Coastal Development Permit in concept with adjustments, Design Review, and ROW vacation; (2) review and action by the City Council on the Final EIR and the merits of the Project; (3) review and action by the California Coastal Commission (CCC) (4) City Conformance actions following CCC action; (5) Final DRB Review; (6) ministerial issuance of a Zoning Clearance to effectuate the Development Plan and Conditional Use Permit and (7) Building Permit plan check, Building Permit issuance, and construction.

ATTACHMENTS

A – Findings for Approval

B – Project Plans

Attachment A

Sandpiper Golf Course Renovation

DRB Findings

**Design Review Preliminary Review Findings
Section 17.58.080 Of the Goleta Municipal Code**

**Sandpiper Golf Course Renovation Project
Case Nos. 22-001-CDPH; 22-0009-DP-CUP; 22-0032-DRB
7925 Lister Avenue; APN 079-210-059**

A. The development will be compatible with the neighborhood, and its size, bulk and scale will be appropriate to the site and the neighborhood.

The project would result in the construction of a new golf course clubhouse, maintenance facilities, coffee shop building, and comfort station. The visible portions (i.e., floor area provided above surrounding grade) of the proposed buildings would generally have a size, bulk and scale that is similar to the existing buildings they would replace. After proposed golf course construction and renovation activities are completed, the visual character of the project site, including south-facing views of the Pacific Ocean from Hollister Avenue, and north-facing views of the Santa Ynez Mountains, would be preserved.

The renovation of the Barnsdall Rio Grande Gas Station would not increase the size of the historic structure, and the proposed 695 square foot, single-story coffee shop building would have the appearance of the 1920's automobile service bay. Therefore, these project elements would have an appearance and scale that is consistent with existing project site conditions and are appropriate for the surrounding neighborhood.

B. Site layout, orientation, and location of structures, including any signage and circulation, are in an appropriate and harmonious relationship to one another and the property.

The proposed golf course clubhouse, maintenance buildings, comfort station, and vehicle parking areas would replace existing structures and would be located at or near the locations of the existing structures. Therefore, the project would not substantially change existing relationships between these golf course structures. The Barnsdall Rio Grande Gas Station would not be relocated, and the proposed 695 square foot coffee shop building would have the appearance of the 1920's automobile service bay. Therefore, the proposed coffee shop building would have a harmonious relationship to historic gas station building and the historic use of this portion of the project site.

No new signage for the project site has been proposed at this time.

C. The development demonstrates a harmonious relationship with existing adjoining development, avoiding both excessive variety as well as monotonous repetition, but allowing similarity of style, if warranted.

The new clubhouse building would have sloped turf walls and a turf roof. The design of the clubhouse would emulate the natural topography of the project site by integrating the structure within the green landscape and complementing the

grassy hills, blufftops, and ocean waves. The appearance of the proposed comfort station would be similar to the design of the proposed clubhouse building, and the proposed maintenance buildings would have a size and appearance this is generally similar to the existing structures that are to be replaced. Therefore, relationships with adjoining development would not change substantially.

The restoration of the Barnsdall Rio Grande Gas Station would retain the historic appearance of the building. The proposed coffee shop building would be a single-story structure and would have the appearance of a 1920's automobile service bay. Therefore, the new development would be compatible with the historic gas station and nearby residential development to the north and east.

D. There is harmony of material, color, and composition on all sides of structures.

The proposed project site buildings would have design characteristics that are similar on all sides of the structures.

E. Any outdoor mechanical or electrical equipment is well integrated in the total design and is screened from public view to the maximum extent practicable.

Mechanical equipment associated with the proposed clubhouse building, such as golf cart storage and, golf cart maintenance facilities, would be located in the subterranean basement and would not be visible to by the public. Storage and mechanical operation areas at the proposed maintenance facility, such as trash and recycling storage, landscape material storage, pump equipment, and golf cart washing areas, would be screened by fencing and landscaping.

F. The site grading is minimized and the finished topography will be appropriate for the site.

Project grading would require approximately 86,500 cubic yards (CY) of cut and 56,000 CY of soil fill over the 192 acre site. After compaction and shrinkage, the remaining soil (30,500 CY) would be distributed around graded areas to achieve the proposed golf course design. The greatest area of fill would be located at a proposed level area "event lawn" to be located near the clubhouse. The greatest area of cut would be located at the 18th fairway, which would reduce the height and steepness of the slope. The use of retaining walls would be limited, except for adjacent to the proposed clubhouse basement. Therefore, grading would be minimized and appropriate for the site.

G. Adequate landscaping is provided in proportion to the project and the site with due regard to preservation of specimen and protected trees, and existing native vegetation.

The proposed planting palette would supplement existing project site vegetation and would include a variety of native plants and shrubs compatible with the project site's coastal climate. Proposed landscaping would primarily consist of low-level shrubbery that would not obscure views of the Pacific Ocean. Ground disturbance

in environmentally sensitive areas would be minimized to the extent possible and areas that are disturbed would be restored.

The project would remove 39 non-native trees from the project site and one oak tree located in the Hollister Avenue right-of-way. The oak tree would be replaced with a 72-inch box oak tree to be located on the project site. The project would plant 116 trees to replace removed trees and trees that may be disturbed by construction activities.

H. The selection of plant materials is appropriate to the project and its environment, and adequate provisions have been made for long-term maintenance of the plant materials.

The renovation of the golf course includes the installation of new drought-tolerant turf and irrigation system. The project would reduce the amount of irrigated turf from 125 acres to 62 acres. The remaining 63 acres would be converted to native landscaping. Long-term maintenance of landscaping would be conducted in accordance with a Turf and Pest Management Plan that would be implemented by maintenance staff.

I. All exterior lighting, including for signage, is well designed, appropriate in size and location, and dark-sky compliant.

The golf course will continue to be unlit except for some low level cart path lights for safety. A variety of new lighting fixtures would be installed at the project site to aid users in the evening or early morning to primarily access the clubhouse and associated parking. The largest area of exterior lighting on the project site would be within the main parking lot located adjacent to the proposed clubhouse. Average lighting levels in the parking lot would be 1.1 foot-candles. All proposed lighting would be directed downward and has been designed to conform with Goleta Municipal Code Chapter 17.35.

J. The project architecture will respect the privacy of neighbors, is considerate of private views, and is protective of solar access off site.

Residential uses are located north of the project site along the north side of Hollister Avenue, and adjacent to the project site to the east. The visible portions (i.e., floor area provided above surrounding grade) of the proposed clubhouse, maintenance buildings, and comfort station would generally be similar in size and scale to the existing buildings they would replace. Therefore, the proposed structures would not substantially change the visual character of the project site, or adversely affect existing private views. The renovation of the Barnsdall Rio Grande Gas Station would not increase the size of the historic structure, and the proposed single-story, 695 square foot coffee shop building would not adversely affect views from residences located along the north side of Hollister Avenue. Therefore, the proposed structures are considerate of private views.

K. The proposed development is consistent with any additional design standards as expressly adopted by the City Council. (Ord. 20-03 § 6).

There are no additional design standards adopted by the City Council that are applicable to this project.