

BLUR WORK SHOP

DATE: July 3, 2024

TO: City of Aurora Planning and Development Services Department
Attn: Sarah Wile, AICP
15151 E Alameda Pkwy
Aurora, CO, 80012

REGARDING: Gaylord Rockies Guestroom Expansion and Soundwaves

SUBJECT: Letter of Introduction for Gaylord Filing No. 1 Contextual Site Plan Amendment #9

Dear Sarah,

The Gaylord Rockies Hotel and Convention Center is looking to increase the capacity of the hotel and enhance the guest experience with a new indoor waterpark. By increasing the number of available hotel rooms, the Gaylord will be able to attract additional and larger convention groups to the area. The new indoor waterpark will provide a unique guest amenity that will appeal to convention groups as well as the family vacation market. A similar indoor waterpark has been in operation for several years at the Gaylord Opryland in Nashville, TN, and is a great success. The new guestrooms and indoor waterpark will increase the marketability of the property, bring the property to a higher brand standard, and enrich the guest experience with an additional amenity. The project includes landscape, hardscape, lighting, and architectural enhancements to the existing property as follows:

The Guestroom Expansion (referred to as Phase 1) will add 450 new guestrooms and replace an additional 21 guestrooms that must be demolished to connect the Expansion to the existing hotel. A second potential guestroom expansion (Phase 2) is planned for some point in the future, and will include another 550 guestrooms. The guestroom towers will be designed to match the existing building in its architectural aesthetic and materials. This current project only includes the Phase 1 guestroom tower, however it has been designed to coordinate with the future phase.

The new indoor waterpark facility, referred to as Soundwaves, is located to the west of the new guestroom tower, and will connect to the hotel's existing indoor pool building. The indoor area will add approximately 74,000 square feet of water, deck, and supporting amenity space. Soundwaves will be designed with exposed mass timber columns, concrete and stucco walls, and large expanses of windows. The waterpark will feature a wave pool, two water slides, and an adventure river. There will be private cabanas, deck space with lounge chairs, a restaurant and bar, and private rooms available for parties.

A public concourse will join the elevator towers for the new guestroom tower to the existing Gaylord Rockies main lobby and registration desks. The concourse will have some seating, a retail space for Soundwaves merchandise, and a coffee shop with a dining terrace. This circulation will cut through an existing guestroom tower and require the removal of 21 guestrooms as noted above. The primary entrance to Soundwaves will also connect to this public concourse. A service tunnel will be cut into the east side of the existing guestroom tower linking the existing "Colorado Trail" Back of House circulation to the new service elevators for the new guestroom tower. Soundwaves will link to the existing service circulation through the existing indoor pool.

The 12.44 acres of landscape and hardscape surrounding the new Guestroom Expansion and Soundwaves waterpark will be enhanced to meet the level of application intensity as installed for the previous Site Enhancement and Event Pavilion projects. The landscape design will be more passive in this area as compared to the amenity areas on the west side of the property. There are a few walkways that pass through the landscape, and a functional dry creek bed to allow for water catchment and flow, which has been closely coordinated with the civil stormwater design. The landscape palette will be similar to the previous landscape projects at the property, with a focus on native species, but has been fine-tuned based on the plant materials that have had the most success in the past few years. New and transplanted trees will populate the landscape to match the density of the other enhanced landscape areas.

297 self-parking spaces will be demolished to make room for Phase 1. The total number of parking spaces for the resort will be reduced to 2,376. This exceeds the required off-street parking assigned by Table 4.6-1 in the City of Aurora Unified Development Ordinance. The resort has conducted a parking analysis to determine parking capacity and needs for average days and high-volume events. This analysis has been included with this Site Plan submittal.

Respectfully,

Scott Sickeler, AIA
Principal