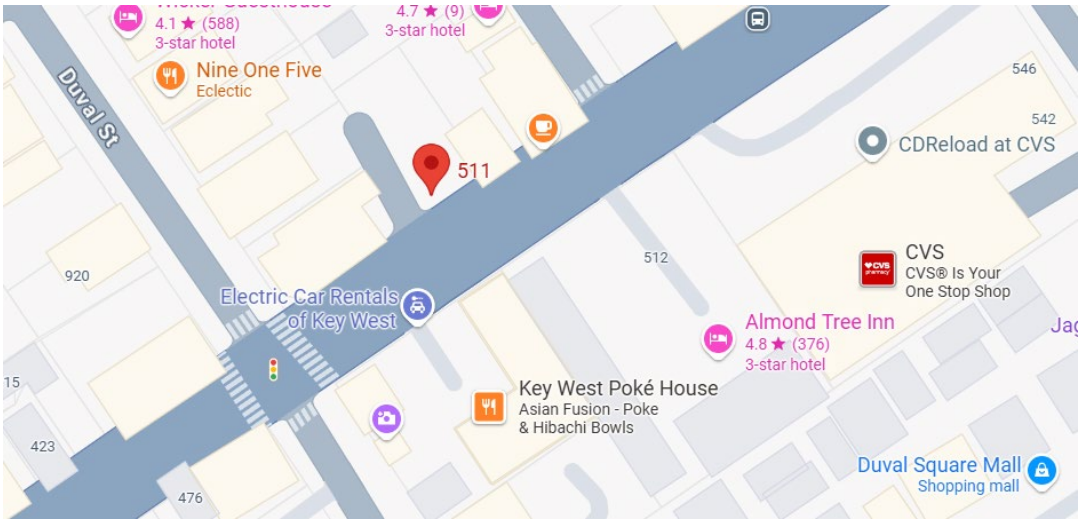
THE CITY OF KEY WEST
PLANNING BOARD
Staff Report

To:	Chair and Planning Board Members
Through:	Katie P. Halloran, Planning Director
From:	Ben Gagnon, Planner II
Meeting Date:	August 21, 2025
Agenda Item:	**Conditional Use – 511 Truman Avenue (RE#00017750-000000)** - Applicant seeks a conditional use to allow for the commercial rental of electric bicycles located at a property in the Historic Residential Commercial Core (HRCC-3) zoning district, pursuant to Section 122-62, Section 122-747 through Section 122-755 of the City of Key West Land Development Regulations.
Request:	A request for a conditional use to add 16 class 2 E-Bicycles to an existing 14 pedal bicycle rental business at 511 Truman Avenue.

Owner:	Elsing Key, LLC
Applicant:	Matt Elsing – 511 Truman Avenue, Southernmost Park and Play
Location:	511 Truman Avenue (RE#00017750-000000)
Zoning:	Historic Residential Commercial Core -3 (HRCC-3)

SITE MAP & PHOTOS



BACKGROUND:

The subject property is a 5,136 square-foot parcel designated by the Monroe County Property Appraiser (MCPA) as a parking lot. The principal use is a parking lot along with the current Southernmost Park n Play bicycle rental business. City Staff made the determination that an E-bike should fall under Sec 18-355 "*recreational rental vehicle deemed conditional use*" as well as Sec 122-748 that "*small recreational power-driven equipment rentals*" are deemed a conditional use in the HRCC-3 zoning district. Further 86-9 defines "*Small recreation power-driven equipment rental means rental of low-speed vehicles, jet skis, mopeds,*

scooters and/or other similar nonautomotive, two- or three-wheeled, power-driven vehicles, excluding the rental of automobiles, trucks, tractors, or other vehicles." It was determined in coordination with Planning and Legal that E-bikes, especially Class-2 that offer the rider the ability to move without pedaling, should fall under power driven equipment. Class-2 E-Bikes are defined "as one that has both a throttle and pedal assist (PAS), with the motor assisting up to a maximum speed of 20 mph"

Recreational vehicle rentals are a conditional use in the HRCC-3 zoning district. Ordinance 21-12 created additional review and performance criteria for new recreational rental vehicle (RRV) permits related to traffic impacts and nuisance prevention. This is the first application staff has received for E-bikes.

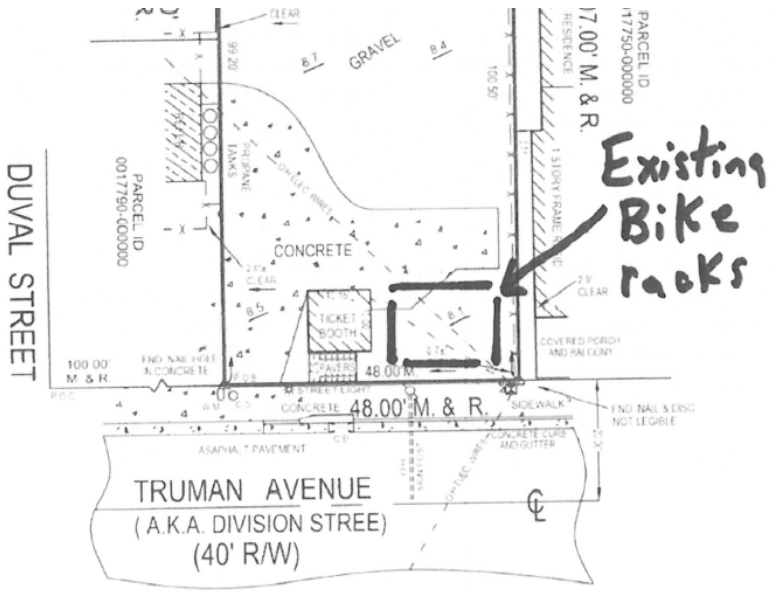
REQUEST:

The applicant proposes to continue to operate a bicycle rental business out of a portion of the existing parking lot at 511 Truman Avenue. The proposal is for:

- 16 E-Bikes
- 14 Pedal Bikes

Both of which are already on site. The conditional use was triggered after staff discovered the business to be renting these bikes.

SITE PLAN



SURROUNDING ZONING AND USES:

North: HRCC-3: Commercial
South: HRCC-3: Commercial
East: HRCC -3: Commercial

West: HRCC -3: Commercial

PROCESS:

Development Review Committee:	June 25th, 2025
Planning Board:	August 21st, 2025
Local Appeal Period:	10 days
DEO Review:	Up to 45 days

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE:

This application appeared before the June 26, 202, Development Review Committee. Committee member comments/questions and the applicant's responses are provided below:

Planning:

- Please comply with Section 18-358 for a submission of traffic impacts on level of service and nuisance prevention
- Where does bike maintenance take place? On or off site?

Multimodal:

- Can you please confirm the bikes have labels on them marking the make, model, and battery wattage.

Fire:

- Can the E-bikes be placed furthest away from kiosk to reduce fire?
- Please purchase a 10lbs fire extinguisher for use onsite in case of emergency. Must be purchased from a licensed contractor.
- Require a fireproof E-bike cabinet for the safe charging and storage of the batteries.

Utilities

- Need to set up trash account with WM – contact the city for assistance, all commercial businesses require one.

HARC:

- Any future bike racks shall be reviewed by HARC and Multimodal

SECTION 18-358 REVIEW: TRAFFIC IMPACTS ON LEVEL OF SERVICE AND NUISANCE PREVENTION.

Traffic Study

Code Section 18-358 stipulates specific performance criteria for motorized RRV permit applicants:

- *Requires the applicant to submit a traffic analysis to show that the size, location and operation of the facility does not degrade the existing traffic level of service.*
- *If the operation increases average daily or peak hour traffic by 3% or more, the applicant must mitigate the impact through a capital improvement or payment in lieu.*
- *Provides that a 3% or greater impact may serve as one reason to deny the application.*

The information below was provided by the applicant in response to a request for a traffic impact analysis.

Traffic Impact Summary (Level of Service Analysis)

We reviewed our sales records from January through June 2025. Our E-bike rental volumes are summarized below:

E-Bike Rentals by Month:

January 72

February 82

March 126

April 101

May 84

June 75

Total: 540 E-bike rentals over six months

*Average: ~90 rentals per month, or ~**3 per day***

Traffic Impact Analysis:

Rentals are distributed throughout the day, with peak periods typically between 10 AM and 4 PM, avoiding traditional vehicular rush hours.

Most customers are visitors arriving on foot, by rideshare, or from nearby hotels and guesthouses.

No evidence suggests that our operation results in a 3% increase in average daily or peak-hour vehicle traffic on any city roadway. For example, Truman Avenue carries an average of 13,900 vehicles per day; even if our entire inventory were rented out at once, it would represent only about 0.0002% of that daily volume—demonstrating a negligible impact on traffic in Key West.

E-bikes inherently reduce traffic congestion by offering an alternative to car and scooter rentals.

Nuisance

Both Section 18-358 and Section 122-62, which provides conditional use criteria, speak to minimizing nuisance including noise and fumes.

Speaking specifically to RRV applications, Section 18-358 calls on staff to propose conditions for consideration by the Planning Board to minimize potential nuisance including noise and fumes, especially as those impacts may occur in mixed use and residential neighborhoods.

The Planning Department has not found any potential noise or fume issues related to E-bike rentals.

CONDITIONAL USE CRITERIA

Pursuant to Section 122-61 and 122-62(a), conditional uses shall only be permitted on specific sites where the proposed use may be adequately accommodated without generating adverse impacts on properties and land uses within the immediate vicinity. Section 122-26(a) provides the required content of Conditional Use applications. Section 122-26(b) provides specific criteria for approval.

SECTION 122-62(B): CHARACTERISTICS OF USE DESCRIBED:

The following characteristics of a proposed conditional use shall be clearly described as part of the conditional use application:

Scale and Intensity:

- Floor area ratio: N/A
- Traffic generation: an average of 3 E-bike trips per day in last three months.
- Square feet of enclosed building for each specific use: approximately 100 square foot existing ticket booth for sales.
- Proposed employment: 1-2 employees
- Proposed number and type of service vehicles: None proposed.
- Off-street parking needs: no new parking proposed.

On- or off-site improvement needs generated by the proposed conditional use:

- Utilities: No needs are identified by the application.
- Public facilities: No needs are identified by the application.
- Roadway or signalization improvements: None
- Accessory structures or facilities: No needs are identified by the applicant.
- Other unique structures or facilities: No needs are identified by the applicant.

On-site amenities proposed to enhance site and planned improvements. Amenities including mitigative techniques such as:

- Open Space: The current use is a parking lot with a small ticket booth.
- Screening and buffers:

- None provided; the bikes are in view of pedestrians.
- Per Sec. 108-283, all businesses and services shall be conducted within enclosed buildings, excepting duly permitted activities.
- In evaluating the degree of required screening and buffering, the Code looks to whether a proposed use is low, medium, or high impact, using the considerations listed below. The location of the proposed use is directly adjacent to pedestrian pathways on one of the heavily pedestrian-trafficked areas of the City, and zero setbacks, screening or buffering are proposed.
    - Noise
    - Outdoor parking and loading
    - Exterior storage
    - Production of dust, fumes, vibration

SECTION 122-62(C): CRITERIA FOR CONDITIONAL USE REVIEW AND APPROVAL.

Land Use Compatibility: The scale and intensity, traffic-generating characteristics, and off-site impacts are compatible and harmonious with adjacent land use and will not adversely impact land use activities in the immediate vicinity.

- Per Comprehensive Plan Policy 1-1.1.8, T*he HRCC-3 zoning sub-district comprises the Duval Street Oceanside corridor from Petronia Street south to United Street. This corridor serves as a center for arts, crafts, gifts, designer goods, restaurants, and tourist accommodations. Structures within this corridor generally have retained a front facade which is much less commercialized relative to the entertainment center on the Gulf side of Duval Street HRCC-1 District. The front facades generally have much smaller storefront windows and frequently incorporate a residential vernacular characterized by wood frame windows, equipped with mullions, and wood clapboard siding. This area shall be regulated by more restrictive performance standards than those applicable to the HRCC-1 area. The criteria shall require larger open space ratios, design standards which preserve and reinforce the physical characteristics of the area, and land use restrictions which exclude sidewalk bars and lounges which may produce excessive noise incompatible with surrounding residential activities.* The proposed use is more compatible than a typical RRV application looking for Mopeds or Golf Carts as E-Bikes create far less noise and no fumes.

- As of 2011, Duval Street was operating between E and F LOS during mid-day peak hour for the northbound and southbound lanes, respectively. FDOT AADT data suggests daily traffic has increased since then. The likely number of vehicles trips that will result from this proposal are if anything a reduction as those who rent an e-bike would most likely not be renting a car as well, or at the very least could not be using both on Duval at the same time.

Sufficient site size, adequate site specifications, and infrastructure to accommodate the proposed use: The site shall be of sufficient size to accommodate the proposed scale and intensity of the use,

including urban design amenities such as screening, buffers, landscaping, open space, off-street parking, efficient internal traffic circulation, infrastructure

Pedestrian-Vehicle Conflict:

Renters will have to drive over a pedestrian side walk to access the road, there is also the worry that renters will ride E-Bikes on the sidewalks to feel safer and avoid vehicle conflicts, the applicant should instruct riders that cyclists should share the road with vehicles and avoid pedestrian conflicts by not using the E-Bikes on sidewalks.

Proper Use of Mitigative Techniques: The applicant shall demonstrate that the conditional use and site plan have been designed to incorporate mitigative techniques needed to prevent adverse impacts to adjacent land uses, and to ensure that land use activities in the immediate vicinity, including community infrastructure, are not burdened with adverse impacts detrimental to the general public health, safety and welfare.

- Enhancements to mitigate against potential adverse: No enhancements are proposed to mitigate against potential adverse impacts.
- Noise & fumes: No mitigative techniques are proposed – however few to none are expected.
- Traffic: No mitigative techniques are proposed.
- Multimodal safety: The proposed use may result in additional conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and no mitigative techniques have been proposed.
- General public health, safety & welfare: The applicant will work with KWFD to purchase a fire safe battery charging case for E-Bike batteries, multiple fire extinguishers for potential accidents, and keeping stickers on bikes for make and model numbers.

Additional Criteria Applicable to Development within the Historic District: Development within the historic district shall be required to provide special mitigative site and structural appearance and design attributes or amenities that reinforce the appearance, historic attributes, and amenities of structures within the historic district.

The parking lot and small ticket booth are not historic.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Staff has received no public comments as of August 14th 2025.

PLANNING ANALYSIS:

Code Section 122-62 provides that a "conditional use shall only be permitted on specific sites where the proposed use may be adequately accommodated without generating adverse impacts on properties and land uses within the immediate vicinity." Section 122-62 requires that a conditional use approval shall be based on a finding that the use complies with the criteria specified in Section 122-62 and in referenced sections of the Land Development Regulations, in order to ensure compliance with the Comprehensive Plan

and Land Development Regulations. Staff has reviewed the proposed use and finds that it does not comply with the criteria specifies in Section 122-62, and conflicts with provisions of the Land Development Regulations and Comprehensive Plan.

- The size and shape of the site, the proposed access and internal circulation, and the urban design enhancements are adequate to accommodate the proposed scale and intensity of the conditional use requested.
- No site design improvements or mitigation have been proposed, such as landscape buffering, screening, curb cuts, or roadway markings.
    - Comprehensive Plan Policy 1-1.3.2 provides that commercial zoning designations shall be complemented by performance standards and site plan review requirements that address perimeter and internal landscaping, controlled access and egress, safe and convenient systems of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation, and "urban design amenities, including, but not limited to, signage controls, pedestrian amenities, landscaping improvements, building height limitations, architectural controls in the Historic Preservation District, and other similar design features." The proposed use lacks perimeter landscaping.
- However, the business is currently already in operation and in good standing as we have not received any negative comments against the application. Staff have coordinated with Multimodal and our Transportation Coordinator to feel comfortable with the recommendation below. The application proposes to reduce the number of cars on a congested roadway while providing an additional method of transportation for visitors to Key West. The current site is a parking lot with a small ticket booth, the use is compatible with the proposed site, and the building is small allowing the open space on site to be maintained.

RECOMMENDATION:

Section 122-62 requires that a conditional use approval shall be based on a finding that the use complies with the criteria specified in Section 122-62 and in referenced sections of the Land Development Regulations in order to ensure compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations. The proposed use does comply with the required criteria and the Key West Fire Department has made sufficient comments to address potential adverse impacts. Staff acknowledges the effort to remove cars off a congested road and provide further options for pedestrians to use other modes of transportation.

Therefore, the Planning Department, based on the criteria of Section 122-62 and 18-358, recommends APPROVAL of the subject conditional use application for 511 Truman Avenue with the following conditions:

1. Vehicles shall be stored consistent with the attached plans by the applicant notwithstanding any changes or improvements suggested by the Key West Fire Department.
2. The owner shall obtain and maintain a Conditional Use Approval Permit, pursuant to City Code Chapter 18, Article II, Division 1. The owner shall be subject to an annual inspection to verify compliance with the conditions of this approval.

3. The applicant shall coordinate with City of Key West historic preservation staff to submit applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for applicable signage, flooring, or other site alterations existing and proposed.
4. Applicant shall coordinate with Multimodal and Key West Fire Department to ensure bikes are safely charged, marked, and stored to prevent fire and increase pedestrian safety. Applicant must purchase fire extinguishers and fire safe battery charging storage containers.
5. A maximum of 30 E-Bikes are permitted at 511 Truman Avenue with any additional E-Bikes requiring an amendment by the Planning Board.
6. The Class-2 E-Bikes permitted through this approval shall not be excused from any future City ordinance or law limiting the type or class of E-Bikes available for rental or purchase in the City. This approval does not create any vested rights, and any such future ordinance or law shall be fully enforceable against the applicant upon its effective date, regardless of the date of this approval or any prior authorizations.