

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL
FROM: AMY NICHOLSON, SENIOR PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: FALL 2020 GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT PACKAGE:
3575 MENDOCINO AVENUE

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTIONS APPROVING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT, AND TENTATIVE MAP AND INTRODUCTION OF AN ORDINANCE FOR A ZONING MAP AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning Commission and the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Council, by resolutions, adopt a Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); by resolution approve a General Plan amendment changing the General Plan land use designation from Mobile Home Park to Transit Village Medium; introduce an ordinance rezoning from RR (Rural Residential) to TV-R-RC (Transit Village Residential-Resilient City) and TV-R-SH-RC (Transit Village Residential-Senior Housing-Resilient City); and by resolution, approve a Tentative Map for those parcels located at 3575 Mendocino Avenue, which are also identified as Assessor's Parcel Numbers 173-030-001 and 173-020-002 for the 3575 Mendocino Avenue Project; File No. PRJ20-002.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 3575 Mendocino Avenue project involves the development of up to 532 high-density multi-family housing units consisting of 162 units affordable for low- and very low-income senior households and up to 370 market rate housing units. The proposed project also includes a 1-acre park, the construction of a new public street (0.8 acre), private streets, on- and off-site utility infrastructure, parking (including surface, covered, and an aboveground garage), driveways, frontage improvements, landscaping, and a new stormwater outfall into the adjacent, off-site Russell Creek.

A General Plan land use diagram amendment to the Transit-Village Medium land use designation and a Zoning Map amendment to TV-R-RC (Transit-Village Residential –

Resilient City) classification is required for the proposed development of 532 multi-family units. The Senior Housing (-SH) combining district would be applied to 2.5 acres of the project site to accommodate the senior housing development. A phased Tentative Map is necessary to subdivide the 13.3-acre site into eight parcels, and Director level Design Review is needed to review the architecture of the senior housing units and the overall site landscaping. Subsequent Design Review will be required for the market rate housing component once the design is finalized and the application is submitted. Approval of a Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment (SCEA) is necessary to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The Planning Commission and Planning and Economic Development staff have found the proposed project to be consistent with the City's General Plan, Zoning Code, Mendocino Avenue Corridor Plan, Citywide Creek Master Plan, Design Guidelines, and CEQA, and are therefore recommending approval.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

As stated in the Project Narrative, the proposed project involves the redevelopment of an approximately 13.3-acre infill site into a transit-oriented community with up to 532 high-density multi-family housing units consisting of 162 units affordable for low- and very low-income senior households and up to 370 market rate housing units. The proposed project also includes a one-acre park, to be privately improved and maintained, but open to the public. The construction of a new public street, on- and off-site utility infrastructure, parking (including surface, covered, and an aboveground garage), driveways, frontage improvements, landscaping, and a new stormwater outfall into the adjacent, off-site Russell Creek would occur following project approval and issuance of engineering and building permits.

The proposal includes a General Plan amendment to change the General Plan Land Use designation from Mobile Home to Transit-Village Medium. The proposal also includes a rezoning of the entire site from the Rural Residential - Resilient City combining district (RR-40-RC) to the Transit-Village Residential - Resilient City combining district (TV-R-RC). To support the development of senior housing, a rezoning of a 2.5-acre portion of the project site is proposed to include the Senior Housing (-SH) combining district. The project requires a Tentative Map to subdivide the project site into eight legal parcels. Finally, the construction of the residential units will require Director-level Design Review approval pursuant to City Code Chapter 20-16 - Resilient City Development Measures.

Phase I of the Tentative Map would create Lots 1, 2, and 3. These lots would accommodate the 162 low- and very low-income senior housing units. The units

would occupy three, four-story buildings totaling 136,185 gross square feet (SF) on 2.5 acres. Phase I will also include the construction of a new public street (0.8 acres) and parking facilities, in addition to the construction of on- and off-site utility infrastructure, driveways, frontage improvements, landscaping, and a new stormwater outfall into Russell Creek.

Phase II of the Tentative Map would create Lots 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, and would allow for the construction of up to 370 market rate units, which would occupy approximately eight, three- or four- story buildings totaling approximately 510,531 gross SF on nine acres. Private streets to access the remainder of the site would be installed during this Phase. Phase II would also consist of the construction of a one-acre park on Lots 6 and 7. A public access and use easement will be recorded to facilitate public use of the privately improved and maintained park.

The proposed project also requires the adoption of a Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment (SCEA) which was prepared to analyze environmental impacts in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). All environmental impacts were found to be less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation measures.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Mendocino Overpass, Retail and Business Services (Vacant, Tubbs Fire affected parcel)

East: Developed Retail and Business Service and Office

South: Public Institutional (Kaiser Permanente)

West: Highway 101

The subject site is bordered by a variety of developed and undeveloped areas including a Tubbs Fire destroyed commercial development to the north, commercial and office uses to the east, Kaiser Permanente to the south, and Highway 101 and strip commercial development to the west.

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The 13.3-acre project site is the former site of the Journey's End Mobile Home Park, where 116 of 160 mobile homes were lost in the Tubbs Fire of 2017. The mobile home park was subsequently closed (see Attachment 8), and the site has remained uninhabited. On July 15, 2020, the remaining 44 mobile homes were removed. Numerous paved private streets and limited fire-damaged vegetation are still present on the project site.

4. Project History

January 14, 2020	Journey's End Mobile Home Park Relocation Impact Report approved by Council
February 5, 2020	Required Pre-application Neighborhood Meeting was held
February 6, 2020	Concept Design Review was conducted by the Design Review Board
February 24, 2020	Minor Design Review, General Plan amendment, Rezoning, and Tentative Map applications were submitted
March 20, 2020	Notice of Application distributed to neighbors and former residents
March 24, 2020	Notice of Incomplete Application was issued to applicant
May 4, 2020	Project Application deemed complete
August 27, 2020	Project reviewed by Waterways Advisory Committee
September 23, 2020	Project Description and Plans were submitted to address modifications based on Staff and Review Authority review
September 25, 2020	Notice of Public Hearing and Intent to Adopt was distributed by mail, and onsite signage was posted
September 28, 2020	30-day public circulation of SCEA commenced
October 27, 2020	30-day public review period ended
November 12, 2020	Planning Commission public hearing

ANALYSIS

1. **General Plan**

The project includes a General Plan amendment from Mobile Home Park to Transit Village Medium, a designation intended to accommodate mixed use development within approximately one-half mile of a transit facility. This designation requires residential uses and encourages ground floor neighborhood serving retail and live-work uses. The Transit Village Medium land use allows residential densities between 25 to 40 units per acre.

The proposed project includes a density of 40 units per acre, consistent with the Transit Village Medium land use. Bus stops for CityBus Route 1, a high frequency corridor with 15-minute headways, are located within a ½ mile radius of the project site. Additionally, the site is served by Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART), Sonoma County Transit and Paratransit.

The following General Plan Goals and Policies are applicable to the 3575 Mendocino Avenue Project:

Land Use Element

LUL-A Foster a compact rather than a scattered development pattern in order to

reduce travel, energy, land and materials consumption while promoting greenhouse gas emission reductions citywide.

LUL-A-1 As part of plan implementation - including development review, capital improvements programming, and preparation of detailed area plans – foster close land use/transportation relationships to promote use of alternative transportation modes and discourage travel by automobile.

LUL-E Promote livable neighborhoods by requiring compliance with green building programs to ensure that new construction meets high standards of energy efficiency and sustainable material use. Ensure that everyday shopping, park and recreation facilities, and schools are within easy walking distance of most residents.

LUL-E-2 As part of planning and development review activities, ensure that projects, subdivisions, and neighborhoods are designed to foster livability.

LUL-F Maintain a diversity of neighborhoods and varied housing stock to satisfy a wide range of needs.

Transportation Element

T-A Provide a safe and sustainable transportation system.

T-A-7 Expand non-motorized and bus infrastructure throughout the city such that greater amenities exist for cyclists, pedestrians and transit users in order to promote a healthy, sustainable city and further reduce GHG emissions.

T-H Expand the existing transit network to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to provide convenient and efficient public transportation to workplaces, shopping, SMART stations, and other destinations.

T-J Provide attractive and safe streets for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Urban Design Element

UD-A Preserve and enhance Santa Rosa’s scenic character, including its natural waterways, hillsides, and distinctive districts.

UD-A-2 Strengthen and emphasize community focal points, visual landmarks, and features that contribute to the identity of Santa Rosa using design concepts and standards implemented through the Zoning Code, Design Guidelines, Preservation District Plans, Scenic Roads policies, the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan, and the Citywide Creek Master Plan.

UD-A-4 In new developments, minimize overall grading by limiting site grading to the minimum necessary for driveways, parking areas, and understructure areas.

UD-A-5 Require superior site and architectural design of new development projects to improve visual quality in the city.

UD-A-7 Continue the city's program of utility undergrounding.

UD-A-10 Relate landscape design to the natural setting. Require that graded areas within new development be revegetated.

UD-A-12 Promote green building design and low impact development projects.

UD-C Enhance and strengthen the visual quality of major entry routes into the city, as well as major corridors that link neighborhoods with downtown.

UD-C-1 Enhance the appearance of the city's major entries through special design criteria and streetscape improvements. City entries, which occur at the Urban Growth Boundary, are shown in Figure 3-1: City Entries and Corridors.

UD-C-3 Screen views of development from Highway 101, south of Hearn Avenue, with dense landscape treatments, allowing only glimpses or short breaks to points of interest. North of Hearn Avenue along Highway 101 allow openings in the buffer to views of downtown.

UD-C-6 Require that buildings, sound walls, and other structures highly visible from Highway 101 or Highway 12 and adjoining neighborhoods be designed to enhance and improve scenic character.

UD-E-1 Provide for new open space opportunities throughout the city, especially in neighborhoods that have less access to open spaces.

UD-F Maintain and enhance the diverse character of Santa Rosa's neighborhoods. Promote the creation of neighborhoods – not subdivisions – in areas of new development.

UD-F-3 Encourage creative subdivision design that avoids walling off neighborhoods abutting regional/arterial streets with long monotonous stretches of fencing or walls.

UD-F-4 Provide visual interest in building, site, and landscape design that avoids the sense of a monotonous tract development.

UD-G-1 Establish a defined center – such as a park, school, neighborhood shopping center, or a transit stop – at the core of large residential projects.

UD-G-2 Locate higher density residential uses adjacent to transit facilities, shopping, and employment centers, and link these areas with bicycle and pedestrian paths.

UD-G-4 Provide through-connections for pedestrians and bicyclists in new developments. Avoid cul-de-sac streets, unless public pedestrian/bikeways interconnect them.

UD-G-8 Promote personal safety in project design, particularly in multifamily development, by locating windows and walkways to assure visual access to common areas. Locate children's play space within view of the nearest units and discourage designs with unutilized open space.

Housing Element

H-A-2 Pursue the goal of meeting Santa Rosa's housing needs through increased densities when compatible with existing neighborhoods. Development of existing and new higher-density sites must be designed in context with existing, surrounding neighborhoods. The number of affordable units permitted each year and the adequacy of higher-density sites shall be reported as part of the General Plan Annual Review report.

H-C Expand the supply of housing available to lower-income households.

H-C-3 Require projects requesting residential General Plan amendments to rezone for General Plan consistency.

H-C-15 Encourage new affordable housing development to provide amenities for residents, such as on-site recreational facilities, children's programs (day care or after-school care), and community meeting spaces.

H-D Provide housing for households with special needs.

H-D-2 Ensure that new units are appropriate for households with special needs by conditioning new multifamily construction to meet federal and state requirements for accessibility and/or adaptability for disabled persons.

H-D-11 Encourage the development of affordable housing for the elderly, particularly for those in need of assisted and skilled nursing care. Continue to provide funding and offer incentives such as density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, design flexibility, and deferred development fees.

H-E Promote equal access to housing.

Public Facilities, Open Space and Conservation, and Growth Management Elements

PSF-A Provide recreational facilities and parks for all sectors of the community.

OSC-D Conserve wetlands, vernal pools, wildlife ecosystems, rare plant habitats, and waterways.

OSC-H Conserve significant vegetation and trees and plant new trees.

OSC-K Reduce energy use in existing and new commercial, industrial, and public structures.

GM-A Prevent urban sprawl by focusing growth within the Urban Growth Boundary.

Staff has found that the project complies with relevant General Plan goals and policies related to land use, Urban Design, Housing, Transportation, Public Facilities, Open Space and Conservation and Growth Management. Specifically, the proposal will result in needed affordable senior housing and market rate rental housing located in a convenient location with access to high-frequency transit, services, employment centers and on and off-site recreation. The scenic qualities of the overall area are preserved using a flat and previously developed site to accommodate 532 multi-family units, and view corridors of the nearby Sonoma Mountain range are preserved.

2. Other Applicable Plans

Mendocino Avenue Corridor Plan

The proposed project site is located on Mendocino Avenue, which connects the Project site with downtown Santa Rosa to the south and Sonoma County to the north. The proposed project site is located within the Mendocino Avenue Corridor Priority Development Area, a designation established to increase residential development near existing high-quality transit facilities.

The project site is served by several local and regional public transportation services including Santa Rosa CityBus, Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART), Sonoma County Transit and Paratransit. Santa Rosa CityBus provides frequent transit service to and from the Project site offering a fast connection to the Transit Mall and the Coddington Transit Hub via Route 10. Route 10 runs along the Project frontage on Mendocino Avenue and has two bus stops in the vicinity of the Project; one near the Project site entrance and one further to the south in front of Kaiser Permanente. The Project site is also located less than one half mile from the Bicentennial Way Transit Facility located on CityBus' primary route, Route 1.

As indicated in the project narrative, transit riders can take the Santa Rosa CityBus to the Coddington Transit Hub and Shopping Center and Downtown Santa Rosa where connections to SMART can be made via the Santa Rosa North

SMART Station and the Downtown Santa Rosa SMART Station, from the project site. Additionally, transit riders can access greater Sonoma County via regional bus service provided by Sonoma County Transit's Route 60 which runs along the project site's Mendocino Avenue frontage and provides two stops in the vicinity of the site.

Citywide Creek Master Plan

The southern portion of the Project site is adjacent to Russell Creek Reach One, identified on the Paulin and Piner Creeks Map One of the Citywide Creek Master Plan (CCMP) as the portion of Russell Creek from headwaters to Highway 101. This portion is described in the CCMP as a natural creek, modified-natural creek, and culvert.

Russell Creek starts from several intermittent tributaries in the Fountaingrove area. The eastern-most tributary flows into Nielsen Lake, and continues down a steep slope to Bicentennial Way. The other two tributaries combine downstream of Altruria Drive and follow along the east side of Fountaingrove Parkway and Bicentennial Way. Except for the Lake, the creek in this area is natural, with mature trees and other natural features providing aquatic habitat including riffles and pools, and shelter for fish. Plant species include live oak, madrone, poison oak, and willow. The main invasive species present is Scotch broom and Himalayan blackberry. Portions of the creek near Bicentennial Way are underground, leading to an aboveground section between Mendocino Avenue and Highway 101. This latter section, abutting the southern portion of the project site, is channelized but does include trees and understory plants. Preservation is recommended for the portions of this reach upstream of Bicentennial Drive. Habitat enhancement involving removal of invasive species and replacement with native vegetation is recommended throughout the reach.

The proposed project is consistent with the CCMP in that the project proposes landscaping along the southern project boundary near Russell Creek and a new 24-inch storm water line that would be located on the southwest corner of the project site and constructed with an outfall into Russell Creek. The local drainage of the area would therefore be improved as a result of the proposed project.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update 2018 establishes a long-term vision for improving walking and bicycling in Santa Rosa by updating the previous plan adopted by the City Council in 2010. The Plan Update 2018 provides a strategy to develop a comprehensive bicycling and walking network to provide access to transit, schools, and downtown alongside support facilities like bicycle parking and pedestrian amenities. These network improvements are paired with education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation programs. This

document also identifies a plan to implement these projects and programs through prioritization and phasing to ensure implementation is manageable and fundable. This Plan Update 2018 represents a long-term, aspirational vision for walking and bicycling in Santa Rosa, and recognizes that limited funding and resources will require phased implementation of the proposed improvements over many years.

The proposed Project is consistent with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan in that ample pedestrian facilities exist in the vicinity of the Project site including a comprehensive network of continuous sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, curb ramps, curb extensions, and various streetscape amenities such as lighting, benches, and other amenities that encourage pedestrian travel. The Project site design encourages residents to walk to the on-site amenities and to access commute benefits such as long-term bicycle storage and the adjacent transit service. The on-site pedestrian network links the residential units to bicycle lanes, transit, the central park and adjacent uses including Kaiser Permanente and the heavily used transit facilities on Mendocino Avenue and Bicentennial Way. The on-site pedestrian network connects to the public sidewalk on Mendocino Avenue and will include pedestrian scale lighting to enhance pedestrian safety. Additional benches would be installed along Mendocino Avenue to provide resting locations for seniors and other residents walking to the Bicentennial Way Transit Facility. Additionally, the Project site has direct access to existing Class I and Class II bike lanes that connect the site to downtown Santa Rosa to the south. The Project site design incorporates substantial on-site residential and visitor bicycle parking and includes long-term bicycle parking for 60 bicycles in the affordable housing component. The market rate housing component will provide bicycle parking pursuant to the Zoning Code requirements at the time of application submittal.

Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (IHO)

The proposed project would support General Plan goals of expanding the supply of housing available to lower income households. Planning and Economic Development staff understands that the inclusionary component would be funded by several sources, including but not limited to, Community Development Block Grant Disaster Relief funds and Disaster Relief Tax Credits. Alternative compliance to dispersion and concurrency requirements contained in Sections 21.02-100(A) and (B) of the IHO has been requested to support development of a project constrained by the regulatory requirements of the funding sources. Based upon the information provided, on February 25, 2020, the Director of Planning and Economic Development determined that the Project would exceed inclusionary requirements of the IHO by 22%, and the development, including construction, would benefit from alternative compliance allowed by the IHO. Consistent with the authority granted by the IHO, dispersion and concurrency requirements established by the Ordinance should be waived to (1) allow the senior housing for low- and very-low income households to be constructed near the southeast corner

of the project site, and (2) to allow project construction to proceed based upon funding availability.

The IHO (City Code Section 21-02.050) also provides for one incentive or concession if on-site allocated units are provided as indicated in the Ordinance. Based on the provision of affordable units, the applicant has requested a concession to the parking requirements of the 958 parking spaces required by the Zoning Code. Without the IHO concession, development of this project would require a 16% parking reduction to allow for 114 spaces for the affordable housing component, and 689 spaces for the market rate component, for a total of 803 parking spaces.

Growth Management Ordinance

The City's Growth Management Ordinance was adopted in 1992 to meter residential growth per calendar year. The intent of this Ordinance was to allow for the necessary capital improvement project improvements to balance new residential developments.

The Project consists of 532 multifamily units, all of which are Reserve "A" allotments. The Growth Management Ordinance, specifically City Code Section 21-03.120.B., allows exemptions from Growth Management allotments for any dwelling units which replace previously existing dwelling units situated on the same lot which was demolished or destroyed, if a building permit application is submitted within five years of destruction.

The proposed Growth Management allotment schedule is reflected in the following table:

	Year				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
RESERVE "A"	200	171			
RESERVE "B"					

During the Tubbs Fire on October 9, 2017, a total of 116 residential units were destroyed on the project site. In accordance with the City Code Section above, the replacement of these units is exempt from allotment requirements if building

permits are submitted to replace these units prior to October 9, 2022. In addition, the 45 units remaining on-site following the fire were demolished by July 15, 2020. As such, the replacement of these units is exempt from allotment requirements if building permits are submitted to replace these units prior to July 15, 2025.

3. Zoning

Existing and Proposed Zoning

The Project site is currently zoned RR-40-RC (Rural Residential-Resilient City). A rezoning for the entire Project site to TV-R (Transit-Village Residential) with the RC (Resilient City) combining district is required for the project development. The addition of the Senior Housing (SH) combining district for the 2.5-acre affordable housing component has also been requested.

The TV-R zoning district allows multi-family dwellings by right and is applied to areas within approximately one-half mile of a transit facility that is appropriate for mixed use development. Development should transition from less intense uses at the outlying edges to higher intensity uses near the transit facility. Residential uses are required, and ground floor neighborhood serving retail and live-work uses are encouraged. The maximum allowable density ranges from 25 to 40 dwellings per acre. The TV-R zoning district is consistent with and implements the Transit Village Medium land use classification of the General Plan.

The -RC combining district, created to facilitate the reconstruction and resilience of areas impacted by the Tubbs Fire, reduces the design review authority for new multi-family projects to the Director. The SH combining district applies to senior housing that seeks automobile and bicycle parking allowances based on the senior housing project parking requirements.

Rezoning the entire Project site to TV-R-RC, with the SH combining district applied to the affordable housing component, will result in the development of additional rental housing units to help address the significant housing shortage that exists post-wildfire and create senior affordable housing opportunities available to prior qualifying Journey's End residents in accordance with the Journey's End Mobile Home Park Relocation Impact Report.

The proposed amendment ensures and maintains internal consistency with the goals and policies of all elements of the General Plan as it is consistent with the City's goals to locate high density residential within the City's Priority Development Areas and on a main arterial, proximate to existing infrastructure, utilities, transit, services and major employers. The proposed amendment would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City as the Project proposes to address a critical public need and the site's

flat, previously developed, infill nature and location near existing infrastructure make it physically suitable for the proposed Project. There are no issues associated with physical constraints, access, compatibility with adjoining land uses, or provision of utilities that would prevent development of the Project site as proposed.

Development Standards

The TV-R zoning district does not require a minimum lot size or width for parcels (Zoning Code Section 20-22.040) and requires a density range between 25 to 40 units per acre. There are no minimum primary and accessory structure setbacks for the TV-R zoning district, and lot coverage of 100% is allowed. Primary structure height is limited to four stories, and accessory structures are limited to 16 feet. Staff has determined that the proposed development is consistent with each of these development standards.

As discussed under the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance section above, the proposed project does not meet the vehicle parking space requirements specified in the Zoning Code. The Zoning Code requires one parking space per unit for senior affordable housing, 1.5 spaces per unit for one-bedroom apartments and 2.5 spaces per unit for two-bedroom apartments for market rate multifamily units. Based on these rates, the project would need to provide a total of 958 parking spaces, and a total of 803 spaces are proposed. The original project proposal included a total of 719 spaces. Following a conversation with Kaiser (located immediately south of the project site) in early November, the applicant revised the site plan to add an additional 83 spaces (see Attachment 17).

Vehicle parking requirements are a development standard subject to concessions under the City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, and the applicant has requested a parking concession as allowed by City Code Section 21-02.050. As such, compliance with this requirement is not required for consistency with the Zoning Code. Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 20-31.090, the City shall grant a concession requested by the applicant unless the City can make a written finding that:

- A. The Concession or Incentive does not result in identifiable and actual cost reductions, as defined in California [Government Code](#) Section 65915, to provide for affordable housing costs or for rents for the targeted units as specified in Section [20-31.060](#) (State Density Bonus)
- B. The Concession or Incentive would have a specific, adverse impact, as defined in paragraph (2) of subdivision (d) of California [Government Code](#) Section 65589.5 or Section [20-31.020](#) (Definitions), upon public health and safety or the physical environment or on any real property that is listed in the California Register of Historical Resources and for which there is no feasible method to

satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the specific, adverse impact without rendering the development unaffordable to low-income and moderate-income households.

or

C. The Incentive or Concession would be contrary to State or Federal law.

Planning staff has reviewed the proposed request and finds that the applicant has demonstrated the identifiable and actual cost reductions for affordable housing costs, and that the vehicle parking proposed would not result in a specific, adverse impact to public health or safety. Further, the reduced parking would not result in any specific, adverse impact to the physical environment or any real property listed in the California Register of Historical Resources.

The project meets the bicycle parking requirements under Zoning Code Section 20-36.040 for the affordable senior housing units. Market rate housing bicycle parking spaces will be reviewed for Zoning Code compliance following submittal of the Design Review application.

4. Design Guidelines

The following is a list of the most relevant Design Guidelines that apply to the proposed development:

Section 1.1 Neighborhood Design

E. To encourage neighborhood design that supports pedestrians, bicyclists and use of public transit as well as automobile use.

A.1. Design neighborhoods to be limited in area with a defined center and edge.

Section 1.4 Transit

A. To increase the use of the City's transit systems.

D. To consider ways that new development can support transit.

Section 3.2 Multiple-Family Residential

C. To develop multiple-family housing that encourages residents to take pride and a sense of ownership in their neighborhood.

F. To enhance the public realm with attractive buildings and landscaping treatment along the City's streetscape.

Section 4.3 Infill Development

B. To ensure that projects are designed in such a way as to reduce to a minimum possible negative consequence, such as: loss of privacy, noise, increased traffic and lighting overspill that infill development may have on existing neighbors.

Section 4.4 Creeks, Riparian Corridors, and Storm Drainage

A. To preserve existing creeks and riparian vegetation along creek corridors.

E. To encourage development along creek corridors by treating the corridors as open space amenities rather than undesirable elements with back-on treatment.

Section 4.6 City Entries and Highway Corridors

A. To encourage projects that provide a positive image of Santa Rosa to residents, visitors and those passing through Santa Rosa.

C. To provide visually inviting entrances to Santa Rosa.

D. To encourage design treatments that respect the character of the particular roadway.

Section 4.9 Mendocino Avenue Corridor Plan Design Guidelines

A. To enhance the Mendocino Avenue corridor for all modes of travel including walking, bicycling, transit, and automobile use through traffic calming measures and increased aesthetics and landscaping.

B. To improve pedestrian safety along the corridor.

D. To create an identity for the corridor that complements the surrounding area and attracts residents and visitors.

Staff has found the proposal to be consistent with the Design Guidelines related to Neighborhood Design, Transit, and Multi-Family Residential Developments by creating a pedestrian and transit-oriented community with a centrally located park, ample landscaping, and attractive and varied architecture. The location of 532 multi-family units located within the Mendocino Avenue Corridor PDA is anticipated promote the use of the CityBus for daily activities. Numerous Infill Development, Creeks, Riparian Corridors, and Storm Drainage, City Entries and Highway Corridors, and Mendocino Avenue Corridor Plan Design Guidelines are implemented through the project design. Specifically, the development would create a vibrant and visible neighborhood with appropriate landscape screening and pedestrian and transit serving improvements.

5. Public Comments

Comments made at the neighborhood meeting indicated support of the proposed project in that the project would provide low income senior housing for an aging Santa Rosa community. One comment includes a request for reduced parking and bicycle spaces and increased building heights. The comment also encourages the donation of the remaining mobile homes for use by veterans and unhoused. Another comment recommends coloration with Kaiser to coordinate and encourage housing of medical services employees in the proposed development.

Following the Notice of Application, a comment was submitted via email that encouraged an evacuation plan which includes an emergency power source and a plan for off-site evacuation of residents. An Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Plan has been prepared is included as Attachment 6 to this Staff Report.

Numerous letters were received in support of the Project in response to the scheduled Planning Commission public hearing. Reasons for support include the necessity of rebuilding the project site following the Tubbs Fire, the strategic location of a high-density residential project in proximity to high-frequency transit, services, and medical services, and appreciation of the senior and affordable housing component.

6. Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

As indicated in the project description, the development would include the construction of a one-acre public park and other gathering spaces for project residents and community members to gather and participate in recreational activities. Primary access to the site would be provided by a new public street that ends in a roundabout with a central landscape feature. The roundabout connects to a series of private roadways which would expand the internal circulation throughout the project site. These roadways are designed with sidewalks, streets trees, pedestrian lighting, and crosswalks at intersections to highlight pedestrian circulation.

Two additional site access points would be provided along Mendocino Avenue, on the northern and southern portions of the site. These access points would meet the City's requirements for fire apparatus access as well as emergency ingress and egress from the site. These access points would be right-in and right-out only. Additional benches would be constructed along Mendocino Avenue to provide resting locations for seniors and other residents walking to nearby public transit.

The project also includes a proposed new bus stop along the site's Mendocino Avenue frontage and the improvement of an existing CityBus Route 10 stop to comply with the City's lane width standards and the construction of a shelter and bus turnout.

Long-term bicycle storage spaces and digital monitors that display information related to transit routes and schedules; carpooling and vanpooling; bicycle lanes, routes, paths and facilities and alternative commute subsidies are also proposed. The monitors will also display real-time arrival and departure times for nearby transit stop stops. The project also includes electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

New water, sewer and storm drain infrastructure will be constructed to serve the Project site. A public water main will be looped through the Project site providing two points of connection to the existing main in Mendocino Avenue. Private fire mains will also be constructed in the private drives to serve individual buildings. Two existing, private wells located on the Project site may be utilized to provide water to irrigate landscaping in the Project. A public sanitary sewer line will be constructed that connects to the existing line that runs along the Project's southern boundary. Private storm drain lines will connect to a public storm drain line that will be constructed with an outfall into Russell Creek.

Required public improvements, including the public street and public utility infrastructure, will be installed during Phase I of the Tentative Map except for the portion of the public water main that will complete the water loop from the end of the proposed public street back through the northern portion of the Project site to Mendocino Ave. That portion of the water line, along with frontage improvements adjacent to the market rate component, will be installed when the market rate component of the Project site develops (Phase II).

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed project has been reviewed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in that a Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment (SCEA) has been prepared. The purpose of a SCEA is to evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed project in accordance with the CEQA.

The Project SCEA evaluates the proposed project's consistency with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)/Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Plan Bay Area 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) for the San Francisco Bay Area Region and incorporates feasible mitigation

measures, performance standards, and criteria from prior applicable environmental impact reports (EIR) into the proposed project. A SCEA is a form of CEQA documentation established by Senate Bill (SB) 375 to provide streamlined environmental review for certain “transit priority projects.” Transit priority projects are residential or mixed-use residential projects that provide a minimum net density of 20 dwelling units per acre and are located within 0.5 mile of a major transit stop or high-quality transit corridor (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21155[b]).

All potentially significant or significant effects required to be identified and analyzed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) have been identified and analyzed in the attached SCEA, and the proposed project, as mitigated, either avoids or mitigates to a level of insignificance all potentially significant or significant effects of the proposed project. Pursuant to the requirements of Public Resources Code (PRC) 21155.2(3) and PRC 21092, a Notice of Intent to adopt the SCEA for the proposed project was posted, commencing a 30-day public review period, from September 28, 2020, through October 27, 2020. No written comments were provided during the public comment period between September 28, 2020, and October 27, 2020.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Design Review Board (DRB)

During the February 6, 2020, Concept Design Review meeting, the DRB provided the following comments in response to the conceptual architecture for the senior housing and the overall conceptual site and landscape plan:

- Consider a density bonus for more affordable units, possibly constructing four-stories throughout
- Explore some brighter colors for less beige
- Strong encouragement to add a site amenity such as a mini-store/market with coffee shop, etc.
- Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle access
- Consider materials and/or color to emphasize the residential quality and contrast with Kaiser and commercial buildings in the area
- Consider the north driveway as entrance only, with exists coming from the middle and south driveways (concern about people pulling out into traffic)
- Consider a slow-down lane for better line of sight and to get off of the street faster
- Make rooftop screening similar to the architecture
- In Elevation B, consider bringing down the horizontal siding (beige) to the next row of windows

The project applicant responded to comments following the Concept Design Review

meeting by altering the massing of several towers throughout the senior housing development to increase the color contrast and architectural interest. Additional wood siding was also applied to various towers to soften the appearance of the buildings and to reflect a more residential quality.

Waterways Advisory Committee (WAC)

On August 27, 2020, during the Waterways Advisory Committee meeting, the WAC focused comments on: including native plant species appropriate to creeks and waterways adjacent to the creek corridor, appreciation of the open fencing and eyes on the creek, and pedestrian access to the Sonoma Water creek corridor. While the project plans include preliminary non-native plant species, the applicant has committed to collaborating with a landscape architect prior to submitting the landscape plans during building permit review. The applicant responded to comments encouraging pedestrian connectivity to the creek by explaining that a direct pedestrian access was considered during the initial design of the project. The existing City sewer trunk line and associated public utility easement required a specific configuration of the driveway and parking areas. The applicant has stated parking areas and a private driveway with direct access to Mendocino Avenue would need to be crossed to provide access to the creek corridor from the interior of the site. Based on the proposed heavy vehicle use of these areas, the applicant was concerned about pedestrian safety and maintains that the creek corridor can be accessed by the adjacent sidewalk on Mendocino Avenue.

Planning Commission

On November 12, 2020, the Planning Commission approved four resolutions recommending that Council adopt the SCEA and approve the General Plan amendment, Rezoning, and Tentative Map for the 3575 Mendocino Avenue Project included in the Fall 2020 General Plan Amendment Package by a vote of (6-0-1), with one Commissioner abstaining.

NOTIFICATION

The project was noticed as a public hearing per the requirements of Chapter 20-66 of the City Code. Notification of this public hearing was provided by posting on-site signs; publishing notice in a newspaper of general circulation; mailed notice to former residents of the Journey's End Mobile Home Park and surrounding property owners and occupants; electronic notice to parties that had expressed interest in projects taking place in this geographic area of Santa Rosa; and bulletin board postings at City Hall and on the City website. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65091, where necessary, the City has incorporated notice procedures to the blind, aged, and disabled communities. These procedures include audio amplifier/assistive listening device support at public meetings, closed captioning, and optical character recognition conversion of electronic notices.

ISSUES

There are no unresolved issues related to this proposal. The following section summarizes several matters resolved through the entitlement review process for the project.

Private Park with Public Access Easement

City Code Chapter 19-70 provides that new residential projects must contribute to the development of park and recreation facilities through the dedication of land or the payment of fees. The proposed project would meet the requirements of City Code Chapter 19-70.120 for the 162 affordable senior housing by providing a one-acre, improved park with a public access easement, in perpetuity. Additionally, as allowed by City Code Section 19-70.120, a 45% fee credit would be applied to the park fees required for the remaining market rate units would be provided based on the improvement, public access easement, and maintenance of the one-acre, publicly assessable park. The remaining 55% of parks fees would be paid at the time of building permit issuance for the market rate units, or at the time specified in any fee deferral agreement.

Emergency Response Plan

An Emergency Response & Preparedness Plan (Plan) was prepared in response to a public comment regarding the need for a Plan to include an emergency power source and a plan to transport people off the site. The Plan outlines the roles of emergency coordinators and available resources, and necessary measures to taken prior to, during, and following a community fire, wildfire, flood, earthquake, extended power outage, gas explosion, and police activity within the community. Building evacuation and shelter in place procedures are established to address each of aforementioned emergencies. An evacuation map, and detailed plans are also reserved in the Plan to be updated once final construction drawings are completed (see Attachment 6).

The final plan will be made available to the City of Santa Rosa, management staff for the proposed development, and all community residents. The Plan will be reviewed and updated by the developer as necessary, on an annual basis.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Project Description
- Attachment 2 – Neighborhood Context, GPA, and Rezoning Maps
- Attachment 3 – Tentative Map
- Attachment 4 – Master Plan Set
- Attachment 5 – Senior Housing Plan Set
- Attachment 6 – Emergency Response Plan
- Attachment 7 – Request for Alternative Compliance

- Attachment 8 – CC Mobile Home Park Closure
- Attachment 9 – SCEA Document
- Attachment 10 – SCEA Appendices
- Attachment 11 – SCEA Memorandum
- Attachment 12 – Disclosure Form
- Attachment 13 – Meeting Summary and Public Response
- Attachment 14 – Parking Concession Request
- Attachment 15 – Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP)
- Attachment 16 – Public Correspondence
- Attachment 17 – Modified Parking Proposal and CEQA Memo
- Attachment 18 – PC Reso - 12032 - SCEA
- Attachment 19 – PC Reso - 12033 - GPA
- Attachment 20 – PC Reso - 12034 - Rezoning
- Attachment 21 – PC Reso - 12035 - Tentative Map
- Resolution 1 – Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment (SCEA)
- Exhibit A – SCEA
- Exhibit B – SCEA Appendices
- Exhibit C – Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan
- Resolution 2 – General Plan Amendment
- Ordinance – Rezoning
- Resolution 3 - Tentative Map
- Exhibit A – Development Advisory Committee Report, dated November 4, 2020.

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