CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 24, 2025

PROJECT TITLE

Meadow Creek Townhomes

APPLICANT

Jay Ryder

ADDRESS/LOCATION

533 Bellevue Avenue

PROPERTY OWNER

Burgess SR, LLC

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

134-042-070

FILE NUMBERS

PRJ22-011 (MAJ23-002)

APPLICATION DATES

June 7, 2023

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATES

June 7, 2023

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

Tentative Map

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Design Review (Zoning Administrator)

PROJECT SITE ZONING

R-3-18 (Multi-Family Residential) and R-1-6 (Single Family Residential)

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Medium Density Residential

PROJECT PLANNER

Sachnoor Bisla

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

Agenda Item #11.1
For Planning Commission Meeting of: July 24, 2025

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: SACHNOOR BISLA, CITY PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: MEADOW CREEK TOWNHOMES

AGENDA ACTION: Resolution

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Planning Commission, by resolution, adopt a Tentative Map for Meadow Creek Townhomes, a 62-lot subdivision located at 533 Bellevue Avenue, Assessor Parcel No. 134-042-070.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Meadow Creek Townhomes (Project) is a proposal to subdivide a 4.78-acre parcel into 62 individual residential lots and two separate parcels, and construct ten 5-plex buildings and two 6-plex buildings for a total of 62 single-family attached homes. The Planning Commission (Commission) is being asked to consider a Tentative Map for the subdivision, which includes common open space areas.

Should the Planning Commission approve the Tentative Map, the Project will be scheduled for review by the Zoning Administrator for Design Review of the attached units.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The Project site is located on the northern side of Bellevue Avenue, abutting

Burgess Drive to the west. The site is currently vacant with some vegetation.

The proposal consists of the subdivision of one 4.78 acre parcel into 62 individual lots and construction of 62 single-family attached units distributed amongst 12 buildings. Six of the units would be designated for moderate-income households. The townhomes range from 1,500 to 1,800 square-feet in size, with 3 bedrooms each. Lot sizes range from 1,349 to 1,818 square-feet. A total of 174 parking spaces are provided with proposed parking as follows: 124 garage spaces, 15 uncovered spaces, and 35 parallel spaces.

The subdivision would be accessed from Burgess Drive, and is designed in a traditional grid pattern, providing ease of access to and around the site.
The site plan includes two common open space areas, as well as a bioretention area alongside the creek to the south, and a steel fence with gate access to the creek trail.

2. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The Project site is currently vacant with vegetation consisting mostly of trees located on the southwestern portion of the property. The topography is generally flat.

The project site is located within the Roseland Priority Development Area, along the southern perimeter.

3. Project History

September 14, 2021	Development Review Pre-Application Meeting
November 9, 2022	Neighborhood Meeting
November 17, 2022	Concept Design Review
June 7, 2023	Application Submitted
August 11, 2023	Notice of Application Distributed
June 27, 2024	Waterways Advisory Committee Concept Review
July 11, 2025	Notice of Public Hearing Distributed

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

Pursuant to California Government Code § 66474.2, "in determining whether to approve an application for a tentative map, the local agency shall apply only those ordinances, policies, and standards in effect at the date the local agency has determined that the application is complete." The Meadow Creek Townhomes Tentative Map application was deemed complete on June 7, 2023, when the Santa Rosa General Plan 2035 was in effect; the application has been reviewed by staff for consistency with the General Plan 2035.

The General Plan land use designation for the site is Medium Density Residential, which anticipates residential development at a density of 8.0 to 18.0 units per gross acre. This classification is intended for a variety of housing types, including single family attached developments.

Land Uses for surrounding properties:

North: Low Density/Open Space (2.0-8.0 units per acre); Southwest Estates, a 48-parcel, small lot subdivision.

South: Medium Density Residential (8.0-18.0 units per acre); Colgan Creek, owned by the Sonoma County Water Agency.

East: Medium Density Residential (8.0-18.0 units per acre); Colgan Creek Village, a subdivision of 72 single-family attached residences.

West: Public/Institutional; Elsie Allen High School.

The Project implements the following General Plan 2035 goals and policies:

HOUSING

H-A Meet the housing needs of all Santa Rosa residents.

LAND USE AND LIVABILITY

LUL-E-2 As a 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.

LUL-F-1 Do not allow development at less than the minimum density prescribed by each residential land use classification.

LUL-F-3 Maintain a balance of various housing types in each neighborhood and ensure that new development does not result in undue concentration of a single housing type in any one neighborhood.

TRANSPORTATION

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

T-K Develop a safe, convenient, and continuous network of pedestrian sidewalks and pathways that link neighborhoods with schools, parks, shopping areas, and employment centers.

URBAN DESIGN

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 to neighborhoods abutting regional/arterial streets with long monotonous stretches of fencing or walls.

UD-G Design residential neighborhoods to be safe, human-scaled, and livable addressing compact development, multi-modal connectivity and reducing energy use.

The Project has also been found to be consistent with the General Plan 2050, which was adopted by City Council on June 3, 2025. The Project implements the following General Plan 2050 goals and policies:

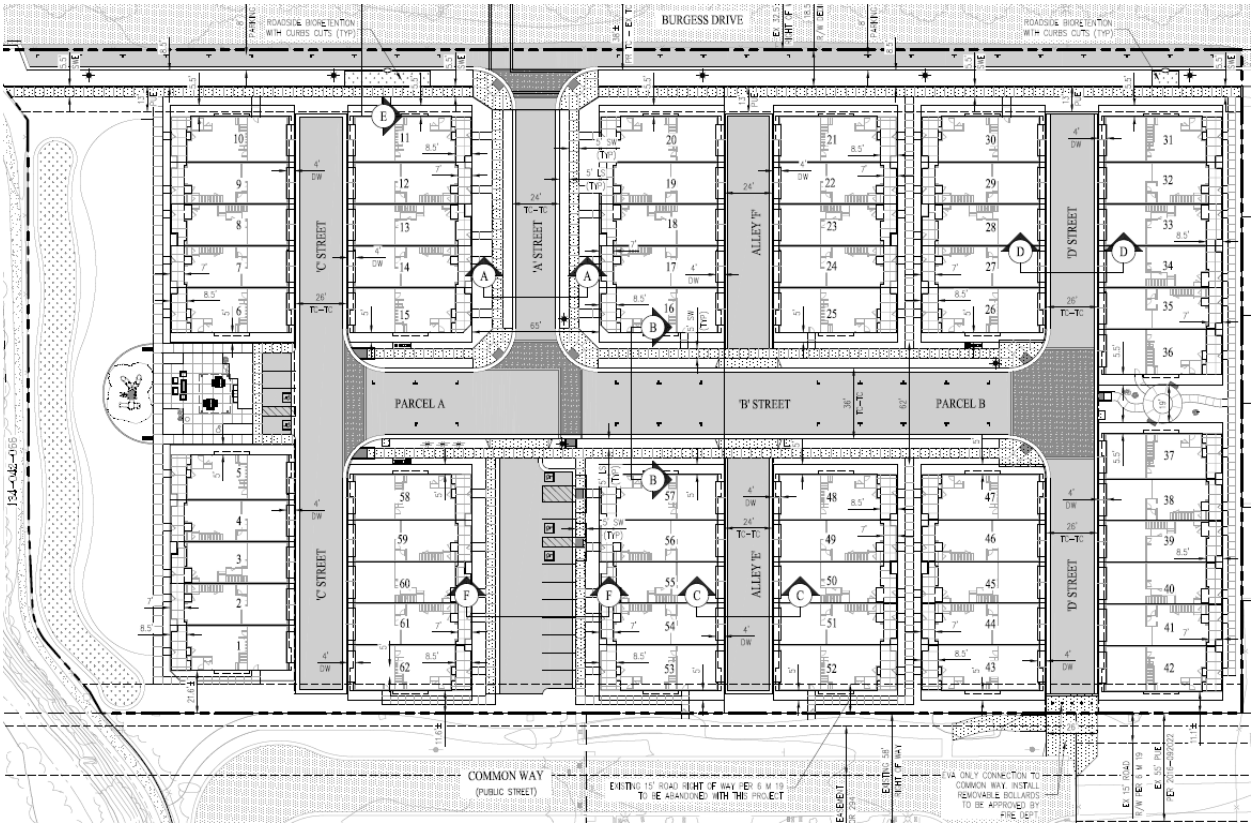
2-1.1 Encourage development that supports community health and quality of life and fosters complete neighborhoods in both established and emerging neighborhoods.

2-3.1 Ensure that residential developments, including subdivisions and neighborhoods, are designed to foster livability, maintain local and historic character of neighborhoods, and offer diverse housing types to satisfy a wide range of needs and retain local character.

Staff Response

The Project would provide 62 single-family attached homes on individual lots, distributed amongst 12 buildings with 5 to 6 units each. This configuration is unique to the area, providing diversity in housing type without exceeding the allowed density (8.0 – 18.0 units per acre). The project is proposed at a density of 12.79 units per acre.

As shown in the figure below, the Project has been designed in a traditional grid pattern to allow easy navigation throughout the subdivision. Emergency vehicle access is provided to Common Way with removable bollards to be approved by the fire department:



Public improvements include frontage improvements along Burgess Drive and sidewalks throughout the subdivision, providing a safe and direct pedestrian path of travel throughout the neighborhood and to Elsie Allen High School.

2. Other Applicable Plans

The project is located within the following Master and Specific Plans adopted by the City.

Roseland Area/Sebastopol Road Specific Plan

The proposed project is located within the Roseland Area/Sebastopol Road Specific Plan boundary. The project implements the following Specific Plan goals and policies:

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

R-1 Encourage the development of attractive residential neighborhoods that maintain and enhance the diverse character of the Roseland area.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND ANTI-DISPLACEMENT

AH-1 Provide a variety of housing types and densities to support a diverse population.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NETWORK

PBN-4 Ensure safe routes to school.

For staff comments, refer to the discussion under the heading of General Plan above.

Citywide Creek Master Plan

The Project site abuts Colgan Creek to the south, which is located on the Southern Santa Rosa 3 Map of the Citywide Creek Master Plan. The Project proposal implements the following Citywide Creek Master Plan goals, objectives, and policies:

STORM WATER

SW-2-1 New development and redevelopment projects shall comply with the City NPDES storm water permit and with the Storm Water Low Impact Development Technical Design Manual.

ECONOMIC

EC-1-1 Where discretionary approval for new development is sought adjacent to the creek, that development shall, to the extent possible, be consistent with and support the Master Plan. Planners and decision-makers will look for consistency between proposed projects and the Master Plan. The overall intent of this policy is to incorporate the creek into the project design.

RECREATION

RT-2-1 Provide access to the creek trail system for people and authorized vehicles from neighborhoods.

PRIVATE PROPERTY

PR-1 Where discretionary land use approvals are sought, development shall, to the extent possible, be consistent with the Master Plan.

PR-1-1 Proposed improvements associated with development projects should be consistent with the Master Plan.

PR-3 Encourage access from private property to public creek trails where desired by the property owner and where appropriate.

Staff Response

The Project is consistent with the Master Plan. The creek setback area will consist of landscaping and a bio-retention area. The buildings to the south will be oriented towards the creek, with a common open space and recreation area in between them, to encourage enjoyment of the creek by residents. Additionally, gate access to the creek trail is provided. The Project has been conditioned to be compliant with the City's Standard Urban Storm Water Low Impact Development Plan Guidelines and permit requirements.

3. Zoning

The Zoning Code implements the goals and policies of the General Plan by classifying and regulating the use of land and structure development within the City. The zoning for the Project site is split – R-3-18 (Multi-Family Residential), which is consistent with the site's General Plan land use designation of Medium Density Residential; and R-1-6 (Single-Family Residential) at the northern portion of the property. Both the R-1-6 and R-3-18 zoning districts are intended for a wide range of residential development, including attached single-family houses.

Though the R-1-6 portion of the property is inconsistent with the Medium Density Residential General Plan land use designation, rezoning for consistency is not required; pursuant to Government Code § 65860 and Zoning Code § 20-64.020 (3)(A), a development application shall be reviewed in compliance with objective general plan standards, and not zoning standards if they are inconsistent. Therefore, the Project has been reviewed for compliance with R-3-18 development standards, implementing the Medium Density Residential land use designation.

Zoning for surrounding properties:

North: R-1-6 (Single-family Residential)

South: R-3-18 (Multi-family Residential)

East: R-3-18 (Multi-family Residential)

West: PI (Public/Institutional)

The following Zoning Code sections are applicable to the Project:

Table 2-3 of Zoning Code Section 20-22.040 provides subdivision and density standards for residential districts. Subsection B allows for attached townhome projects to be subdivided into parcels smaller than allowed by Table 2-3 if the overall project site complies with density, lot area, and width requirements of the applicable zoning district, *with the minimum lot area requirement, maximum lot coverage, and dimensions determined through the subdivision review process.* The proposed density of the overall Project is consistent with the maximum allowable density, and the 4.78 acre parcel is compliant with lot area and width requirements. The applicant is proposing smaller parcels and higher site coverage than allowed in the R-3-18 zoning district, subject to approval by the Planning Commission:

Minimum Lot Area – The minimum gross area is 6,000 square feet for interior lots, and 7,000 square feet for corner lots. The proposal includes interior lots at 1,349 square feet in size, and corner lots ranging from 1,773 to 2,176 square feet.

Maximum Lot Coverage – Proposed structures shall not occupy more than 65 percent of the lot area. The maximum lot coverage proposed is 81 percent.

Minimum Width – The minimum width required is 80 feet for interior lots and 90 feet for corner lots. The proposed interior lots are 21.25 feet wide, and corner lots range from 28.12 to 34.27 feet wide.

Staff is recommending that the Planning Commission approve these proposed

alternatives by resolution of the Tentative Map. Staff's analysis has found the smaller lot sizes, shorter lot widths, and increased lot coverage to be appropriate for the Project; with these, the Project is able to meet the mid-point of the density range for Medium Density Residential housing, while providing a for-sale product that would expand the diversity in housing ownership options for the residents of Santa Rosa.

Table 2-5 provides setback and height requirements for the R-3-18 zoning district. The Project is eligible for one concession as it is in compliance with the City's inclusionary housing requirements as outlined in City Code Section 21-02.050, by providing 6 units, on site, available to moderate income households and paying a fractional housing impact fee.

Building Height - The maximum allowable building height for residential structures is 35 feet. The plan sets submitted for the Project show that the height is substantially lower (28.75-feet at the tallest point).

Setbacks - In lieu of 10-foot front and exterior side setbacks, the applicant is requesting a concession for reduced setbacks and proposing a minimum seven-foot front setback and five-foot exterior side setback. The Project is compliant with the interior side and rear setbacks of 0 feet, as well as the garage setback of 3 to 5 feet from the back of curb of the alley.

Parking

Pursuant to Zoning Code Chapter 20-36, Table 3-4, an attached single-family residence must provide 2.5 parking spaces per unit, one of which must be covered. As proposed, the Project requires 155 spaces. As designed, the Project provides 174 parking spaces (two garage spaces per unit, 15 uncovered spaces, and 35 parallel spaces), which exceeds Zoning Code requirements.

Creekside Development

Zoning Code Section 20-30.040 prohibits the construction of new structures within the required creekside setbacks:

Setbacks – The exterior boundary of the setback area of a natural or modified natural waterway is measured 50 feet from highest bank of each side of that waterway. The Tentative Map (Attachment 4) includes a Creek Cross Section Sheet which specifies this setback area; there is a bio-retention area, which is supported within creekside setbacks, and no new structures are proposed.

The following findings are required for approval of the Tentative Map.

FINDINGS REQUIRED FOR TENTATIVE MAP

Decisions on Tentative Maps are based on the four discretionary standards found in City Code Section 19-24.080(A-D). Applicable Tentative Map standards followed by a staff analysis of the project's compliance with the standards is as follows:

A. That the proposed map is consistent with the General Plan and any applicable specific plans as specified in Government Code Sections 65451 and 66474.5.

B. That the proposed subdivision meets the housing needs of the City and that the public service needs of the subdivision's residents are within the available fiscal and environmental resources of the City.

C. That the design of the proposed subdivision has, to the extent feasible, provided for future passive or natural heating or cooling opportunities.

D. That the proposed subdivision would not discharge waste into the City's sewer system that would result in violation of the requirements prescribed by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (Ord. 3396 § 1, 1998; Ord. 2622 § 1, 1987).

Staff analysis along with the required findings are included in the Resolution attached to this Staff Report.

4. Summary of Public Comments

During the neighborhood meeting, general concerns were raised regarding traffic and parking. The Traffic Impact Study, dated May 9, 2024, concludes that site access and circulation is adequate, as well as parking.

4. Public Improvements

For a comprehensive list of on- and off-site improvements, refer to the attached Development Advisory Committee Report.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of the Project will not have an effect on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As set forth in the April 30, 2024 Roseland Area/Sebastopol Road Specific Plan Consistency Analysis, the project is statutorily

exempt from CEQA pursuant to Government Code Section 65457. The project would develop a residential land use that implements and is consistent with the Roseland Area/Sebastopol Road Specific Plan. The EIR prepared for the Specific Plan was certified by the City Council on October 18, 2016 (Resolution No. 28873, State Clearinghouse No. 2016012030) and no events subsequent to certification have required a supplemental EIR pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21166.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Concept Design Review

   On November 17, 2022, conceptual design plans were considered by the Design Review Board for comment. A summary of the comments by the Design Review Board is provided in the Project Narrative (Attachment 3), as well as the applicant's responses which include changes to the Project design.

2. Waterways Advisory Committee Concept Review

   On June 27, 2024, the Waterways Advisory Committee provided comments on the Project design and site plan. It was recommended that there be open space and recreational space within the creek setback area, and that the front of buildings to the south be facing the open space and creek area. The site plan has since been revised to incorporate these recommendations, which encourage use and enjoyment of the creekside area by residents.

PUBLIC 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 an on-site sign, publishing notice in a newspaper of general circulation, mailed notice to 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

Alternatives to minimum lot area, dimensions, and lot coverage noted in this Staff Report must be approved by the Planning Commission. Otherwise, there are no unresolved issues.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Disclosure Form
Attachment 2 - Neighborhood Context Map
Attachment 3 – Project Narrative
Attachment 4 – TM, Preliminary Site, Grading, Drainage, Utility Plans
Attachment 5 – Elevations and Floor Plans
Attachment 6 – Conceptual Landscape Plan
Attachment 7 – Design Variation Plan
Attachment 8 – Consistency Analysis Checklist Specific Plan
Attachment 9 – Traffic Impact Study
Attachment 10 – Cultural Resources Study
Attachment 11 – Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment
Attachment 12 – Arborist Letter and Tree Data

Resolution: Tentative Map
Development Advisory Committee Report

CONTACT

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