

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
November 7, 2024

PROJECT TITLE

Spring Lake Village East Grove

APPLICANT

Rachel Vranich

ADDRESS/LOCATION

225 Los Alamos Road

PROPERTY OWNER

Front Porch Communities and Services

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

031-101-026

FILE NUMBERS

MJP14-012

APPLICATION DATES

December 29, 2014

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATES

July 18, 2024

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

None

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Conditional Use Permit, Hillside Development Permit, Design Review, Rezoning, and EIR Certification Rezoning (Council)

PROJECT SITE ZONING

RR-40-SR

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Very Low-Density Residential

PROJECT PLANNER

Monet Sheikhal, Senior Planner

RECOMMENDATION

Provide comments

For Design Review Board Meeting of: November 7, 2024

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
FROM: MONET SHEIKHALI, SENIOR PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: SPRING LAKE VILLAGE EAST GROVE

AGENDA ACTION: MOTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Design Review Board make a determination that the proposed project complies with the findings required by Zoning Code Section 20-26-060 A(4)(b) and the City's Design Guidelines, and direct staff to forward such determination to the Planning Commission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposal is to rezone the property located at 225 Los Alamos Road from RR-40-SR (Rural Residential – Scenic Road) to PD 0308 – SR (Planned Development – Scenic Road). The project proposes to expand the Spring Lake Village Continuing Care Facility, which is situated at 5555 Montgomery Drive on the property at 225 Los Alamos Road, by adding 32 new units. Per the Zoning Code [Section 20-26-060](#), before a hearing by the Commission on a rezoning to the PD zoning district, the proposed Policy Statement and Development Plan shall be reviewed by the Design Review Board (DRB), who shall recommend to the Planning Commission whether the project will comply with the following required findings and the City's Design Guidelines:

1. Preservation of natural amenities, including creeks, hillsides, and significant vegetation;
2. The creation of new amenities such as recreational and/or community facilities;
3. Diversity in the proposed mix of housing types and densities;
4. Development regulations that will ensure a superior relationship among uses within the district as well as those surrounding the district;
5. Preservation and protection of the quality of living for areas surrounding the proposed planned community; and

6. Accommodation of non-auto oriented modes of transportation including pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths and transit routes/stops.
7. Other project features that the Planning Commission believes should be acknowledged.

BACKGROUND

1) Project Description

The future development on a 7.28-acre parcel will include 32 independent living units, a new resident community building, support buildings, parking spaces, outdoor lighting, fencing, landscaping, and on-site improvements. In addition, off-site improvements such as pedestrian sidewalks, bicycle, stormwater, and utility improvements would be included to support the project. The proposed residential units consist of seven (7) single-story duplex cottages and one three-story residential villa building. The community building will be a one-story structure containing kitchen and dining facilities, activity/common rooms, and administrative office space.

2) Surrounding Land Uses

North: Highway 12

South: RR-20 and RR-40 (Rural Residential)

East: PD 0061-SR-RC (Planned Development - Scenic Road - Resilient City)

West: RR-20-SR and RR-40-SR (Rural Residential - Scenic Road)

The Project site is surrounded to the north by Highway 12 and single-family residences; to the east by Los Alamos Road and multi-family residences; to the south by single-family residences, Melita Road, Montgomery Drive, and Annadel State Park; and to the west by single-family residences and a church.

3) Existing Land Use – Project Site

The project site is currently a vacant lot and contains grasslands and trees. The parcel has areas with slopes greater than 10% near Highway 12. The slope gradually decreases towards the center and eventually flattens near Melita Road. The site has a total of 292 trees, with 154 proposed for removal, 27 of which are heritage trees.

4) Project History

December 25, 2014	Planning application was submitted
May 11, 2016	Notice of Preparation (NOP) for EIR was issued
May 23, 2016	Public scoping meeting was held

August 30, 2017	Second NOP was prepared to inform agencies and interested parties of the modified project and the City's intent to prepare an EIR
June 1, 2021	Draft EIR was released for public review
June 24, 2021	Planning Commission reviewed the Draft EIR and provided comments
May 16, 2024	Concept Design Review was reviewed by DRB

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

The proposed project site is designated as Very-Low Density Residential on the General Plan Land Use Diagram. This classification is intended to accommodate rural and hillside developments and is intended for single-family detached units, but clustered single-family attached and multifamily may be permitted. The following General Plan goals and policies are most relevant and applicable to the staff's analysis of this project.

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|----------------|--|
| GM-A | Prevent urban sprawl by focusing growth within the Urban Growth Boundary. |
| H-D | Provide housing for households with special needs |
| UD-A | Preserve and enhance Santa Rosa's scenic character, including its natural waterways, hillsides, and distinctive districts. |
| LUL-M | Ensure new development and streetscape projects provide pedestrian and bicycle circulation improvements. |
| LUL-E-2 | As part of planning and development review activities, ensure that projects, subdivisions, and neighborhoods are designed to foster livability. Utilize the City's Design Guidelines as a reference when evaluating the following neighborhood components: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Streets. Street design, traffic calming, and landscaping can make great contributions to the creation of successful neighborhoods. Neighborhood streets should be quiet, safe, and accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.• Connections. Neighborhoods should be well connected to local shops and services, public plazas and gathering places, park lands, downtown, schools, and recreation by adequate and safe streets, bike lanes, public pathways, trails, general infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks and crosswalks), and transit.• Neighborhood Character. Each neighborhood should maintain a distinct identity, such as the historic preservation districts featuring Victorian cottages and California bungalows. |

- ***Diversity and Choice.*** Neighborhoods should provide choices for residents with different values. Different housing types and locations within the City accommodate a diverse range of needs.

The General Plan land use designation is Very-Low Density Residential. The proposed housing use is consistent with the general plan's goals and policies. The project aims to provide a variety of housing options in the neighborhood, with a focus on accommodating seniors and individuals with special needs. The project also seeks to improve the appearance of the roads by creating larger setbacks, preserving existing trees, and planting new trees on the site. Further, the project will enhance the streets by adding sidewalks and bike lanes to improve connectivity.

2. Zoning

The Zoning Code is designed to implement the General Plan. The PD district is intended to recognize the advantage that integrated community offers over conventional zoning techniques in implementing General Plan goals through specific site developments. The PD district is specifically envisioned as a mechanism to preserve and/or create distinctive, high quality, single or mixed use developments that meet or exceed the goals of the General Plan. The requirements of this district are intended to encourage preservation of existing amenities and creation of new amenities; provide for a variety of housing types and densities; and achieve superior relationships among uses, both within and surrounding the district. The PD district is intended to be used only where the other zoning districts established by this Zoning Code cannot achieve these goals.

The project proposes to rezone the parcel from Rural Residential (RR-40) to Planned Development (PD) to be consistent with the existing PD zone for the Spring Lake Village campus at 5555 Montgomery Drive. The rezoning to PD would result in the creation of a document that outlines the following:

1. Permitted uses, allowable accessory uses, and uses allowed with Conditional Use Permit approval;
2. Subdivision regulations including minimum lot area and dimension requirements;
3. Site planning and development regulations establishing maximum densities, setback and building height requirements for primary and accessory structures, site coverage limits (including paved areas, except for those on single-family detached residential lots), and parking requirements; and
4. Design guidelines.

Staff response: The attached policy statement outlines the permitted uses and accessory uses for the continuing care facility, as well as details regarding building height and the total number of parking spaces provided. Additionally, the development plan includes the location of all buildings, carports, and setbacks. The design of the residential and community buildings will be similar to the facility located at 5555 Montgomery Drive. As the lot is not being subdivided, the policy statement does not need to include minimum lot dimensions and minimum lot area.

Per the Zoning Code [Section 20-26-060](#), before a hearing by the Commission on a rezoning to the PD zoning district, the proposed Policy Statement and Development Plan shall be reviewed by the Design Review Board (DRB), who shall recommend to the Commission whether the project will comply with the following required findings and the City's Design Guidelines. These DRB recommendations will be forwarded to the Planning Commission.

1. Preservation of natural amenities, including creeks, hillsides, and significant vegetation;

Staff response: The project aims to preserve natural slopes by arranging residential units and a community building in less sloped areas while keeping the existing natural landscape intact. The tallest structure, a three-story villa, is situated in the flattest part of the site to minimize its impact. Although the plan involves removing 154 out of 292 existing trees, it also includes planting approximately 390 new trees, which will enhance the landscape and provide screening from public view along Highway 12. The project complies with the Highway 12 Scenic Road (-SR) Setbacks by ensuring that all structures are positioned more than 50 feet from the highway. The parcel is not directly adjacent to a creek.

2. The creation of new amenities such as recreational and/or community facilities;

Staff response: The project site includes a community building for use by the residents, as well as a community garden. The policy statement permits the use of athletic facilities, both indoor and outdoor recreational activities, without needing to obtain a Use Permit. This includes facilities like sport courts, dog parks, and community gardens.

3. Diversity in the proposed mix of housing types and densities.

Staff response: The 32-unit senior living facility offers a range of housing options specifically designed to meet the needs of seniors and individuals with special needs.

4. Development regulations that will ensure a superior relationship among uses within the district as well as those surrounding the district.

Staff response: The site is situated in an area surrounded by residential properties. The proposed care facility will be compatible with the surrounding residential buildings in design. The new buildings will be similar to the existing community care facility located at 5555 Montgomery Drive. Building setbacks will be consistent with those in the neighborhood and in line with residential zoning regulations. The off-site improvements will include enhancing pedestrian and bike paths to improve site connectivity. The site will also feature well-designed driveway circulation and pedestrian pathways.

5. Preservation and protection of the quality of living for areas surrounding the proposed planned community.

Staff response: The project site has been designed to minimize disruption to nearby residential areas by maintaining large setbacks with landscaping that screens the buildings, providing on-site parking for residents and visitors, and providing sidewalks to enhance the site frontage.

6. Accommodation of non-auto oriented modes of transportation including pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths and transit routes/stops.

Staff response: The project site does not propose subdividing the lot, so no roads are proposed. However, public and private pathways for residents have been provided.

7. Other project features that the Planning Commission believes should be acknowledged.

5. Design Guidelines

The [Design Guidelines](#) are the primary design criteria under which discretionary review is conducted. The following are some of the relevant applicable Design Guidelines goals and policies related to this project:

- 3.2.1.A** To develop multiple-family housing that is compatible with existing surrounding homes and other structures and provides “superior design” just as in the case of single-family homes already discussed.
- 3.2.1.E** To provide developments with logical layouts that people can navigate through without confusion.
- 4.3.1-A.** To provide for continuity of design between existing and new development.
- 4.3.1.F.** To enhance the public realm with attractive buildings and landscaping treatment along the City’s streetscape.

- 4.3.II-1.** Integrate new development carefully into existing neighborhoods with respect to scale, level of detailing, use of materials, landscaping, and other characteristics of the neighborhood.
- 4.3.II-8.** If a multi-family project is located across the street from a single-family neighborhood, design the buildings to relate to the street with individual entries, patio areas, and landscaping facing the single-family homes. Parking lot areas, carports, etc. should not be located along these street frontages.
- 4.3.II-9.** When adding a duplex, triplex or fourplex to an existing single-family neighborhood, design the new structure to have the "look" of a single-family home so as to enhance its compatibility.

The site's design places single-story cottages closer to the street and the three-story villa building on a flat area away from public view. The site will be screened by the existing trees and the proposed trees along the site perimeter. This creates a housing project that fits in well with the existing surrounding single-family and multifamily homes, as well as other structures. The project includes shared amenities such as a community building, pathways, a community garden, and landscaped areas. Each cottage will have its own private outdoor space on the ground level, and three-story villa units will also have their own private open space. The buildings will have different details and varying roof designs, so there won't be any plain or unattractive walls.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 and Section 15378 in that the recommendations to the Planning Commission are not considered a project under CEQA, and no environmental review is required. However, the proposed care facility is currently under review for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which is currently under review.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

LEVINE ACT

This project is subject to the Levine Act (Gov. Code Section 84308) which prohibits city officials from participating in certain decisions regarding licenses, permits, and other entitlements for use if the official has received a campaign contribution of more than \$250 from a party, participant, or agent of a party or participant in the previous 12 months. The Levine Act is intended to prevent financial influence on decisions that affect specific, identifiable persons or participants. Please see the attached Disclosure Form for information on individuals interested in the proposed land use action and any monetary contributions to city officials. For more information, see the FPPC website: www.fppc.ca.gov/learn/pay-to-play-limits-and-prohibitions.html

ISSUES

There are no unresolved issues with the project.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Disclosure Form
Attachment 2: Location Map
Attachment 3: Policy Statement
Attachment 4: Project Description

Resolution

CONTACT

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