

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR SAWYER AND COUNCIL MEMBERS
FROM: SUSIE MURRAY, CITY PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: MARLOW ROAD DEVELOPMENT ADOPTION OF NEGATIVE
DECLARATION, GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT AND
REZONING

AGENDA ACTION: TWO RESOLUTIONS AND INTRODUCTION OF AN ORDINANCE

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning Commission and the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Council, by two resolutions, adopt a Negative Declaration, approve a General Plan Land Use Diagram Amendment, and introduce an ordinance to Rezone Assessor's Parcel Nos. 036-061-028, 036-061-068, 036-061-069 & 036-061-064.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project includes a Negative Declaration; an amendment to the General Plan land use diagram for three of the four subject parcels from Low Density Residential (2-8 units per acre) to Medium Density Residential (8-18 units per acre); and a rezoning request from the RR-40 (Rural Residential) and R-1-6 (Single-family Residential) zoning districts to the R-3-18 (Multi-family Residential) zoning district. Approval will result in the possible development of 91 attached residential units; however, no physical development is proposed at this time.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The site is made up of four contiguous parcels, and is located northeast of the intersection of Marlow Road and Guerneville Road with frontage along both streets. The site is currently developed with three single-family residential units and one mobile home. By amending the land use designation to Medium Density Residential for the entire project area, a maximum of 91 units, or an increase of

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87 dwelling units, becomes possible. There is no physical development proposed as part of this project.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Low Density Residential (2-8 units per acre) – This area is developed with Apple Manor Small Lot Subdivision and an approximately 6,800 square foot residential lot developed with one home.

South: Medium Density Residential (8-18 units per acre) – This area is developed with single family residential units, and Retail & Business Services developed with a fueling station and neighborhood shopping center.

East: Very Low Density (0.2-2.0 units per acre), Low Density (2-8 units per acre), Medium Density (8-18 units per acre), and Retail & Business Services – There are a variety of uses including large lot and single family residential parcels and commercial uses.

West: Low Density and Medium Density Residential - This area is developed with a mix of large lot and small lot residential uses.

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The site is currently developed with three single-family residential units and one mobile home. Vegetation consists of grasses and shrubs and a variety of trees scattered about the properties.

4. Project History

December 31, 1989 – The southern-most parcel was annexed into Santa Rosa.

August 17, 1993 – The three remainder parcels were annexed into Santa Rosa.

June 9, 2015 – Planning & Economic Development received the subject applications.

October 20, 2015 – The project application was deemed complete.

December 31, 2015 – The public hearing notice and 20-day review notice for the Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND) were mailed to property owners within 400 feet of the site.

January 4, 2016 – Two public hearing signs announcing the public hearing 20-day review period for the IS/ND were erected on site.

January 5, 2016 – The public hearing notice and 20-day review notice for the IS/ND were published in the Press Democrat.

January 28, 2016 – The Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing and recommended, by Resolution Nos. 11745 – 11747, that the City Council adopt the Negative Declaration, General Plan Land Use Diagram Amendment,

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and Rezone for the subject site. The vote was 4-0-2 with two Commissioners absent.

March 2016 – Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 20-66, two public hearing signs were erected on site, a Notice of Public Hearing was sent to neighbors within 400 feet of the project boundary, and a Notice of Public Hearing was published in the Press Democrat, all announcing the General Plan Amendment scheduled before the City Council at the meeting of March 29, 2016.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW (Indicate N/A if not applicable)

N/A

ANALYSIS

The project proposes to amend the General Plan land use diagram for three of the four subject parcels from Low Density Residential (2-8 units per acre) to Medium Density Residential (8-18 units per acre) and to rezone all four parcels from the RR-40 (Rural Residential) and R-1-6 (Single-family Residential) zoning districts to the R-3-18 (Multi-family Residential) zoning district. While no physical development of the site is proposed as part of this project, the change may result in the site development of up to 91 attached residential units.

1. General Plan

The General Plan land use designation for the three northern most parcels is Very Low Density Residential, which allows 0.2-2.0 residential units per acre. The project proposes a General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation to Medium Density Residential, which allows 8-18 residential units per acre.

Applications for a General Plan Amendment must address four questions as shown below with applicant responses:

Question: Why do you want the General Plan changed?

Applicant Response: Approximately 40% of the land area encompassed by the Rezoning request is currently designated Medium Density Residential in the City's General Plan. Adding the ±3 acres, which are subject to the General Plan Amendment, creates a sensible development boundary, provides superior access opportunities and creates sufficient land area for a much needed affordable rental or, if funding is unavailable, rental project.

Question: What changes or event have occurred or what new evidence has arisen since the General Plan was adopted which now warrant a change?

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Applicant Response: The City of Santa Rosa is experiencing a very low vacancy rate, causing rents to escalate above the affordability of many residents. Although the Housing Element has identified numerous sites within the city limits for medium to higher density development, many of those sites lack sufficient infrastructure. Infrastructure is available to service the subject parcels and it is the applicant's intention to develop an affordable rental project, assuming the availability of some governmental funding.

Question: Have detailed neighborhood plans or other studies revealed the need for a General Plan Amendment?

Applicant Response: Detailed neighborhood plans or studies have not been conducted. The site is outside the boundary for CTS, would have superior access from two primary collectors, serviceable by sewer and water, and without major vegetation, creeks or major drainage swales. At the time of a specific project proposal, detail design plans will be developed that will address on and off-site circulation, landscaping and unit design that will be compatible with the surrounding land uses.

Question: Describe the effect the proposed change will have on the surrounding uses. Describe how the proposed change will affect achievement of the General Plan in this and the surrounding area.

Applicant Response: Notwithstanding the potential for a density bonus, the General Plan Amendment to the Medium Density Residential land use designation would permit 25 – 30 additional units over the ±5 acre project site. The character of the area would change from an existing open land, rural residential landscape to an urban residential land use pattern. Superior architectural design will be required to achieve neighborhood compatibility. Development of the ±3 acres of the ±5 acre project site at a higher density than currently designated will help achieve many of the policies found in the Housing Element, particularly if the project is an affordable project.

The following General Plan goals are applicable to the project:

- 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-E Ensure that everyday shopping, park and recreation facilities, and schools are within easy walking distance.
- H-A Meet the housing needs of all Santa Rosa residents.
- H-A-2 Pursue the goal of meeting Santa Rosa's housing needs through increased densities, when consistent with preservation of existing neighborhoods.

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GM-B-4 Direct growth to areas where services and infrastructure can be provided efficiently.

UD-G-2 Locate higher density residential uses adjacent to transit facilities, shopping, and employment centers.

Zoning Code Section 20-64.050, Findings - An amendment to the General Plan, may be approved only if all of the following findings are made, as applicable to the type of amendment.

- The proposed amendment ensures and maintains internal consistency with the goals and policies of all elements of the General Plan;
- The proposed amendment would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City;
- The site is physically suitable (including absence of physical constraints, access, compatibility with adjoining land uses, and provision of utilities) for the requested/anticipated land use developments; and
- The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Staff response: The proposed General Plan Amendment and rezoning maintain internal consistency with, and furthers, the goals of the General Plan. The subject parcels are surrounded by other residential and commercial uses and the increased density along an arterial street provides housing opportunities within walking distance of public transportation, a commercial center, schools and recreation areas. The commercial center offers a grocery store and a variety of other retail and commercial services. Nearby schools include James Monroe Elementary School, Hilliard Comstock Middle School, and Albert F. Biella Elementary School. Nearby recreation areas include Hilliard Comstock Northwest Community Park, For Pete's Sake Field, Dutch Flohr Park, and Brenden Park.

The site is physically suitable for the increased density. Water, sewer, and other utilities are available, as are emergency services including Police and Fire. Depending on the design of future development, the site has potential access points off both Guerneville Road and Marlow Road.

The proposed amendment would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City in that it may result in additional housing in an area where all services are readily available.

An Initial Study has been conducted which resulted in a Negative Declaration.

2. Other Applicable Plans

Santa Rosa Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan - The project area has frontage on both Guerneville Road and Marlow Road. The Santa Rosa Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan identifies existing Class II bike lanes on both of these

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streets. Further design analysis will be completed when a development project is submitted.

3. Zoning

The current zoning for the subject site is split. The southern-most parcel is within the RR-40 (Rural Residential) zoning district and the three others are within the R-1-6 (Single-family residential) zoning district.

Surrounding properties:

North: RR-20 (Rural Residential) and PD (Planned Development)

South: R-1-6 (Single-family Residential) and CN (Neighborhood Commercial)

East: RR-20, RR-40 (Rural Residential), and R-1-6

West: R-1-6

The following Zoning Code Sections are applicable to the project:

20-22.020 - The R-3 zoning district is suited for areas of the City appropriate for residential neighborhoods with medium and higher residential densities, to provide home rental and ownership opportunities, and to provide a full range of choices in housing types to improve access to affordable housing. It is consistent with the Medium Density Residential land use designation in the General Plan, which allows a density range of 8-18 units per acre.

20-64.030(A) Commission action on amendments – A recommendation to the Council for the approval of a proposed amendment shall be by resolution, and carried by the affirmative vote of at least four Commissioners; otherwise the proposal shall be deemed denied.

20-64.050 Findings - An amendment to the Zoning Map may be approved only if all of the following findings are made, as applicable to the type of amendment.

1. Findings required for all Zoning Code/Map amendments:

- a. The proposed amendment is consistent with the goals and policies of all elements of the General Plan, and any applicable specific plan;
- b. The proposed amendment would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City; and
- c. The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

2. Additional finding for Zoning Code amendments: The proposed amendment is internally consistent with other applicable provisions of this Zoning Code.

3. Additional finding for Zoning Map amendments: The site is physically suitable (including absence of physical constraints, access, compatibility with adjoining land uses, and provision of utilities) for the requested zoning designations and anticipated land uses/developments.

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Staff Response: The requested rezoning change from the RR-40 and R-1-6 zoning districts to the R-3-18 zoning district will allow up to 91 dwelling units. The typical housing type found in the RR-40 and R-1-6 zoning districts is single-family residential and the typical housing type found in the R-3-18 zoning district is attached.

At present, the RR-40 zoning and Medium Density Residential General Plan land use designation of the southern-most parcel are inconsistent. The proposed project will correct that discrepancy. It will also increase the allowable density on all four parcels while retaining consistency between the General Plan and zoning.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing about the project on January 28, 2016, which was attended by four Commissioners. During that meeting, the Commissioners made all the required findings to support the project, and voted in favor of it with a vote of 4-0-2.

The change would further the goals and policies of the General Plan, as discussed in the General Plan section of this report, and has been reviewed and found in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act as discussed in the Environmental section of this report.

The site is physically suited for the proposed change. Utility and emergency services are available; public transit and a commercial center with a grocery store are within walking distance; several schools and recreation areas are in close proximity; and the project would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City in that it will result in increased densities where services are available.

Changes in development standards, as shown in the table below, would apply:

RR-40 “Rural Residential” (APN: 036-061-064)	R-1-6 “Single-family” (APNs: 036-061-028, 068 & 069)	R-3-18 “Multi-family” (Proposed zoning for all four parcels)
Building height: 35 ft	Building height: 35 ft	Building height: 45 ft
Front setback: 20 ft	Front setback: 15 ft	Front setback: 10 ft
Side setback: 5 ft	Side setback: 5 - 10 ft	Side setback: 5, 10, 15 ft
Lot coverage: 40%	Lot coverage: 40%	Lot coverage: 65%
Housing type: Detached	Housing type: Detached	Housing type: Attached

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4. Design Guidelines

There is no development proposed as part of this project. Any future proposals to develop the site with multi-family attached housing will require Design Review.

5. Neighborhood Comments

Several neighbors expressed concerns regarding the proposal during the January 28, 2016, Planning Commission hearing. Staff also received written and verbal comments prior to that meeting. Concerns raised include:

- Traffic impacts
- Aesthetics
- Safety
- Density

Staff response: While there is no development proposed as part of this project, future development will likely result in taller structures and greater densities than what is currently allowed. A multi-family attached housing proposal will require Design Review and must be consistent with the City's Design Guidelines.

With regard to traffic and safety, all new development plans will be reviewed by several other City Departments including Traffic Engineering. The review process allows City staff to assess the current conditions and make improvements based on specific project designs.

6. Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

No public improvements are required as part of this approval. When a development project is proposed, staff will determine the required improvements based on the project design.

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Initial study was conducted which resulted in a Negative Declaration.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning Commission, at a duly noticed public hearing held on January 28, 2016, approved, by Resolution Nos. 11745-11747, a recommendation that City Council adopt a Negative Declaration, approve an Amendment to the General Plan land use diagram, and Rezone the subject properties to the R-3-18 (multi-family residential) zoning district.

