

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION
January 27, 2022

PROJECT TITLE

Penstemon Place

APPLICANT

Curt Nichols, Carlile Macy, on behalf of
McIntosh Builders LLC

ADDRESS/LOCATION

2574, 2842 and 2862 Linwood Avenue

PROPERTY OWNER

McIntosh Builders LLC

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

044-200-027, 044-200-029 and
044-200-040

FILE NUMBER

PRJ16-032

APPLICATION DATE

December 6, 2016

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE

December 6, 2016

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

Conditional Use Permit, Hillside
Development Permit and Tentative Map

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

PROJECT SITE ZONING

PD (Planned Development, 96-001)

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Low Density Residential

PROJECT PLANNER

Susie Murray

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

Agenda Item #8.1
For Planning Commission Meeting of January 27, 2021

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: CHAIR WEEKS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION
FROM: SUSIE MURRAY, SENIOR PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: PENSTEMON PLACE

AGENDA ACTION: FOUR RESOLUTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Planning Commission, by four resolutions, approve Penstemon Place, a proposed subdivision, including a Mitigated Negative Declaration, Conditional Use Permit, Hillside Development Permit and Tentative Map, for 2574, 2842 and 2862 Linwood Avenue, Assessor's Parcel Nos. 044-200-027, 044-200-029 and 044-200-040.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Penstemon Place (Project) is a proposal to subdivide an approximately 9.73-acre area into 59 individual residential lots with detached dwelling units, of which two will include Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU), and four more will have the option to add them.

The Project site is located in the Southeast quadrant of Santa Rosa and is currently developed with six residential units and accessory structures. All existing structures will be removed.

Site circulation includes the extension of Poinsettia Lane and Verbena Drive and introduces Street A that will connect Verbena Drive to Linwood Avenue, providing a third access point to the development. The Project is adjacent to the Farmers Lane Extension and has been designed to protect future residents of Penstemon Place from traffic impacts associated with the Farmers Lane extension.

The project involves a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) with a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP); a Hillside Development Permit (HDP) to develop on slopes greater than ten percent; a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a small lot subdivision; and a Tentative Map to subdivide the 9.73-acre area into 59 individual lots. The Planning Commission is being asked to take all four actions.

BACKGROUND

1. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Low Density Residential; currently developed with similar single family residential uses.

South: Low Density Residential; currently developed with similar single family residential uses and undeveloped parcels.

East: Low Density and Very Low Density Residential; currently developed with large lot single family residential uses and vacant parcels.

West: Low Density Residential; currently developed with similar single family residential uses.

2. Existing Land Use – Project Site

It is currently developed with six residential units, which will all be demolished.

3. Project History

April 20, 2016 – A Neighborhood Meeting was held to introduce the conceptual plan to neighbors.

December 20, 2016 – A Development Advisory Committee Meeting was held with City staff.

December 6, 2016 – The Project applications were submitted to the Planning and Economic Development Department.

August 2017 – The application was deemed complete.

June 29, 2020 – Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was circulated for a 30-day public review period.

Other events not directly related to the project that slowed the processing of the application include the rebuild from the Tubbs/Nuns Firestorm, response to the COVID-19 pandemic and an influx of new development applications.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable.

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

The Project site is designated Low Density Residential on the General Plan Land Use Diagram, which allows residential development at a density of two to eight units per acre. This land use is primarily intended for detached single family dwellings, although other uses are permitted.

The project implements several General Plan Goals including, but not limited to:

LAND USE

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 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.

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

UD-H Design hillside development to be sensitive to existing terrain, views, and significant natural landforms or features.

UD-I Respect natural features in the design and construction of hillside development.

HOUSING

H-A Meeting the housing needs of Santa Rosa residents.

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

TRANSPORTATION

- T-B Provide a safe, efficient, free-flowing circulation system.
- T-D Maintain acceptable motor vehicle traffic flows.
- T-J Provide attractive and safe streets for pedestrians and bicyclists

OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION

- OSC-B Conserve the city's open spaces and significant natural features.
- OSC-H Conserve significant vegetation and trees and plant new trees.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

- GM-B Program infrastructure improvements to keep pace with new residential growth and ensure that such growth incorporates affordable housing provisions and is balanced with conservation of resources.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

- EV-A Maintain a positive business climate in the community.

NOISE AND SAFETY

- NS-G Minimize the potential for wildland fires.

The Project site is located in the southeast quadrant of Santa Rosa. It is surrounded on three sides by similar residential development, with access points from each, and, as such, all utilities and services are available.

The Project will construct 59 new single-family homes, of which at least two will include Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU). The Project is located within half a mile, walking distance, of multiple schools including Sonoma Academy and Kawana Springs Elementary; Sonoma County Fairgrounds; and multiple parks including Dauenauer Park and Taylor Mountain Regional Park.

The Site Plan provides a unique layout that avoids a sense of monotonous track development both from the surrounding neighborhood and from within Penstemon Place. It proposes clustered housing where four homes will access off the same driveway and a several architectural designs. The street standard and layout provide traffic calming, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and are in scale with the proposed architecture.

A Traffic Impact Study, prepared by W-Trans, dated January 11, 2018, provided recommendations which have been incorporated into the project. The review of traffic impacts assumed a worst-case scenario in which the Farmers Lane Extension is not constructed.

The site has been designed with the Farmers Lane Extension in mind, which is planned on the northern boundary of the development site. To minimize impacts of the Farmers Lane Extension on the adjacent residential properties, the site will be graded to lower those homes below the planned extension to protect occupants from noise impacts.

The Project will retain four significant heritage trees both on and off-site and will use its best efforts to preserve four others. As required in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), tree replacement will be done in compliance with the Tree Ordinance, City Code Chapter 17-24. The landscape design assumes only four will be saved and will provide replacement trees even if the four additional trees remain.

2. Southeast Area Plan

Santa Rosa General Plan 2035 incorporates policy direction from several other plans, including the Southeast Area Plan, which was superseded by the General Plan 2035.

3. Zoning

The Project site is within a Planned Development (PD 96-001) zoning district. The Policy Statement for this planned development, which was adopted in 1996 (attached), directs that the density shall comply with the Southeast Area Plan. As mentioned in the section above, the Southeast Area Plan was superseded by the adoption of General Plan 2035. The site is designated as Low Density Residential on the General Plan Land Use Diagram, which allows residential development at a density of two to eight units per acre. The proposed density is approximately six units per acre, which is consistent with the General Plan.

Residential Small-Lot Subdivision Conditional Use Permit

The policy statement defers to the project CUP to set most development standards. Given the characteristics of the proposed development and surrounding neighborhoods, the project was reviewed in compliance with Zoning Code [Section 20-42.140](#), which directs development of small lot subdivisions. The Development Plan, also prepared by Carlile Macy, dated December 2021, demonstrates compliance with all development standards including parcel size, lot coverage, building height, parking, setbacks and private open space.

Chapter [Section 20-52.050](#) discusses CUPs, and directs that the review authority

may only approve a CUP after making six required findings, as demonstrated on the draft resolution:

1. The proposed use is allowed within the applicable zoning district and complies with all other applicable provisions of this Zoning Code and the City Code; and
2. The proposed use is consistent with the General Plan and any applicable specific plan; and
3. The design, location, size, and operating characteristics of the proposed activity would be compatible with the existing and future land uses in the vicinity; and
4. The site is physically suitable for the type, density, and intensity of use being proposed, including access, utilities, and the absence of physical constraints; and
5. Granting the permit would not constitute a nuisance or be injurious or detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare, or materially injurious to persons, property, or improvements in the vicinity and zoning district in which the property is located; and
6. The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Design Review & Hillside Development Permit

The Policy Statement also requires a Design Review Permit for all new development; however, Zoning Code Section 20-52.030(B)(1) exempts single-family dwellings, including those within a PD Zoning District, from the Design Review process. Because the project proposes single-family residential development coupled with intermittent sloped areas throughout the site, including areas with slopes that are greater than 10%, the Project was not required to include Design Review, but instead requires a HDP which includes a required finding that the Project be found in compliance with the Design Guidelines. The Project has been reviewed in compliance with [Design Guidelines](#), Sections 1, Neighborhood Design; 3, Residential Development; and 4, Special Design Considerations for Hillside Development. The project implements several Guideline goals:

- Provides an interconnected street network to diffuse traffic and provide easy access for residents both within and between neighborhoods;
- Creates an environment that encourages pedestrian activity along the streets;

- Features a variety of lot types, home sizes, and includes ADUs; and
- Does not propose structures silhouetted above ridgelines.

Pursuant to Zoning Code [Chapter 20-32](#), the Hillside Development Permit provides a review process to consider the appropriateness of proposed development on hillside parcels and to ensure that a proposed project minimizes its visual and environmental impacts. Lots 27-29, 31-38, 41 and 55 will develop on slopes greater than ten percent. To avoid the possible future requirement of another Hillside Development Permit, the project has committed to architecture for those lots, as shown on the Development, attached. Prior to acting on the HDP, the Commission must first make the following findings, as demonstrated in the draft resolution:

1. Site planning minimizes the visual prominence of hillside development by taking advantage of existing site features for screening, including tree clusters, depressions in topography, setback hillside plateau areas, and other natural features.
2. Site development minimizes alteration of topography, drainage patterns, and vegetation on land with slopes of 10 percent or more.
3. Site development does not alter slopes of greater than 25 percent, except in compliance with Section 20-32.020.B (Applicability—Limitations on hillside development).
4. Project grading respects natural features and visually blends with adjacent properties.
5. Building pad location, design, and construction avoids large areas of flat pads, and building forms are instead “stepped” to conform to site topography.
6. The proposed project complies with the City’s Design Guidelines.
7. The proposed project complies with the requirements of this Chapter and all other applicable provisions of this Zoning Code.
8. The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan and any applicable specific plan; and
9. The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the use will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to the public health, safety, or general welfare.

As shown on pre- and post- Grading Slope Analyses, prepared by Carlile Macy,

dated December 2021 (attached), sloped areas are intermittently sprinkled throughout the site in a pattern that does not warrant stepping. The areas adjacent to the Farmers Lane Extension will be lowered below grade to protect future residents from impacts related to the roadway (i.e. noise, exhaust, lights, etc.). As such, staff's analysis deferred to standards for small lot subdivisions for the project discussed above.

Parking

Zoning Code [Chapter 20-36](#), Table 3-4 provides parking requirements. The project has been found in compliance by providing a minimum of four off-street parking spaces, two of which are covered, for each home. Additional street parking will be sufficient to meet additional requirements for ADUs.

4. Neighborhood Comments

Two events generated several public comments. 1) On April 20, 2016, a well-attended, pre-application Neighborhood Meeting was held, and 2) on June 29, 2020, the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was circulated for a 30-day public review period. Comments received, including a widely circulated petition, attached, are summarized below, followed by Staff Responses to each:

- Occupants of Penstemon Place will use private neighborhood parks

Response: There are a couple nearby pocket parks owned by the Linwood Homeowners Association. If these are intended for private use with no public access easements, the property owner may enforce against trespassers.

- Removal of trees (both on and off site)

Response: The draft MND, circulated in June 2020, misstated that 16 heritage oak trees would be removed. As shown in the blue-redline and final versions of the MND and MMRP, attached, that number has been increase to 20 heritage oaks. Tree mitigation was calculated in compliance with City Code Chapter 17-24.

- Impact of grading and drainage on neighboring properties.

Response: The project plans have been reviewed by staff in compliance with the City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and has been conditioned to mitigate drainage impacts resulting from development of the subdivision.

- Development review process is not fair; the decision is made before the project goes to a hearing.

Response: The residential “land use” is determined by the General Plan 2035, which was adopted by Council in 2009. The development project, which implements the land use, must be reviewed in compliance with applicable sections of applicable documents (i.e. General Plan, Zoning Code, etc.), and the required findings made, before the review authority, in this case the Planning Commission, may act on the requested application.

- Farmers Lane Extension – Noise barriers

Response: This development is not responsible for noise protection from the Farmers Lane Extension for the surrounding area. Within the Penstemon Place subdivision, the homes along the eastern boundary of the site, adjacent to the planned Extension, will be set low enough to protect against impacts of the future road extension.

- All units proposed are two stories

Response: Single-story floor plans have been added into the mix.

- Circulation

- Traffic speed along existing neighborhood streets
- Quad lots taking access from Linwood Avenue
- Parking
- Street width

Response: A Traffic Impact Study, prepared by W-Trans, dated January 11, 2018, did not raise concerns with quad-lots taking access off Linwood Avenue, nor has staff’s review identified any concerns; the Project exceeds the number of parking spaces required by Zoning Code Table 3-4; and all required street standards allow for emergency access. As discussed in the General Plan section of this report, the Project has been conditioned to implement recommendations from the study, which assumed a worst-case scenario for traffic impacts.

- Will the development be required to be energy efficient?

Response: The Project will be required to comply with the Building Code in effect at the time of building permit application submittal. Since the Penstemon Place project applications were submitted, the “All-Electric” Building Code, was codified in City Code Chapter 18-33. New single-family development, may not install gas appliances or equipment and are required to install photovoltaic panels, increase foundation insulation; and minimizes air duct leakage.

5. Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

There is a comprehensive list of both on and off-site improvements listed in the Development Advisory Committee Report, dated December 30, 2021, and attached to the draft Tentative Map resolution. Highlights include:

- complete circulation within and around the development;
- fair share payments to nearby intersection improvements;
- undergrounding of existing and new utilities; and
- hydrology and drainage improvements.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this project will not impact the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Project has been found in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An Initial Study was prepared by Sponamore Associates, dated January 2020, which resulted in a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). A Notice of Public Review and Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration was circulated on June 29, 2020. In response, staff received several public comments, which have been addressed with edits to the document; a redlined version is attached. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15073.5, because no substantial revisions were made to the previously circulated document, recirculation is not required.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

The Project applications were submitted in 2016, which preceded the requirement to send a Notice of Application; however, as discussed previously in this report, there have been several noticing opportunities and, given the amount of correspondence received, the surrounding neighborhoods are fully aware of the proposed project.

All noticing for the Public Hearing was done in compliance with Zoning Code [Chapter 20-66](#), including a mailed Notice of Public Hearing (Notice) to owners and occupants of properties within 600 feet of the Project site; a published Notice in the Press Democrat; three 32-square foot Public Hearing signs posted on the Project site; a physical copy of the Notice posted at City Hall's noticing kiosk; a virtual copy of the Notice posted at www.srcity.org; and an emailed Notice to recipients of the Planning Commission bulletin updates.

ISSUES

During staff review, several issues were raised and resolved, including site/area drainage, tree protection and replacement, and circulation and area improvements, all of which have been resolved through plan modifications and conditions of approval.

There are no pending issues.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Disclosure Form
- Attachment 2: Location & Neighborhood Context Maps
- Attachment 3: Project Narrative, prepared by Carlile Macy, date-stamped received on January 13, 2022
- Attachment 4: Tentative Map, prepared by Carlile Macy, date-stamped received on January 7, 2022
- Attachment 5: Streetscape Rendering, prepared by Farrell prepared by Farrell-Faber & Associates, Inc., date-stamped received on January 7, 2022
- Attachment 6: Architectural Plans, prepared by Farrell-Faber & Associates, Inc., date-stamped received on January 7, 2022
- Attachment 7: Development Plan, prepared by Carlile Macy, date-stamped received on January 7, 2022
- Attachment 8: Slope Analyses, prepared by Carlile Macy, dated December 2021
- Attachment 9: Preliminary Landscape Plan, prepared by Carlile Macy, stamped received September 15, 2021
- Attachment 10: Existing Conditions, prepared by Carlile Macy, date-stamped received January 7, 2022
- Attachment 11: Policy Statement, Planned Development (PD 96-001)
- Attachment 12: Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, prepared by Sponamore Associates, dated January 2020 (circulated)
- Attachment 13: Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, prepared by Sponamore Associates, dated January 2020 (blue-redline)
- Attachment 14: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, dated December 30, 2021 (redline)
- Attachment 15: Arborist Report, prepared by Becky Duckles, dated May 21, 2018 date-stamped received January 5, 2022
- Attachment 16: Current Tree Tabulation, prepared by Becky Duckles, date-stamped received on January 5, 2022
- Attachment 17: Tree Ordinance, City Code Chapter 17-24
- Attachment 18: Traffic Impact Study, prepared by W-Trans, dated January 11, 2018
- Attachment 19: Public Correspondence

- Resolution 1: Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
- Resolution 2: Hillside Development Permit
- Resolution 3: Conditional Use Permit
- Resolution 4: Tentative Map (including Development Advisory Report and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program)

CONTACT

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