

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION
March 26, 2026

PROJECT TITLE

Spring Lake Village East Grove

ADDRESS/LOCATION

225 Los Alamos Road, 5803 and 5815
Melita Road

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

031-101-026, 031-101-035 and
031-101-034

APPLICATION DATES

December 29, 2014

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

Conditional Use Permit, Hillside
Development Permit, and Rezoning

PROJECT SITE ZONING

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

PROJECT PLANNER

Monet Sheikhal
Supervising Planner

APPLICANT

Front Porch Communities and Services

PROPERTY OWNER

Front Porch Communities and Services

FILE NUMBERS

MJP14-012 (CUP14-099, DR14-096,
HDP14-016, REZ14-016)

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATES

July 24, 2025

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Council action on entitlements and CEQA
determination

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Very Low Density Residential (0.2-2.0
units per acre)

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend that Council certify the Final
Environmental Impact Report (EIR), and
approve a Conditional Use Permit, Hillside
Development Permit, and Rezoning

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
FROM: MONET SHEIKHALI, SUPERVISING PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: SPRING LAKE VILLAGE EAST GROVE

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Economic Development Department recommends that the Planning Commission, by five resolutions, recommend that the City Council (1) certify the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and adopt the CEQA findings of fact and mitigation monitoring and reporting program, (2) Rezone the property located at 225 Los Alamos Road from Rural Residential-Scenic Road (RR-40-SR) to Planned Development-Scenic Road (PD-0308-SR), (3) adopt a Text Amendment to the Planned Development Policy Statement (PD-0308), (4) approve a Minor Conditional Use Permit for a 32-unit Community Care Facility, and (5) approve a Hillside Development Permit for the properties located at 225 Los Alamos Road, 5803 and 5815 Melita Road.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Front Porch Communities and Services, the applicant, proposes to expand the existing Spring Lake Village Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) at 5555 Montgomery Drive. The expansion will encompass the parcels situated at 225 Los Alamos Road and 5803 and 5815 Melita Road, covering a total area of 7.28 acres. The proposed development will consist of 32 independent senior living units. Additionally, the Project will incorporate a community building, outdoor common areas, parking facilities, paved walking paths, landscaping, drainage systems, lighting, fencing, retaining walls, as well as off-site improvements for pedestrian, bicycle, stormwater management, and utility enhancements.

Following the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in 2021, the applicant elected to advance Alternative 2 identified in the Draft EIR, referred to as the Maximum Avoidance Alternative and resubmitted a planning application to reflect a modified version of Alternative 2 (Maximum Avoidance Alternative) as the version of the project now under consideration for approval. This alternative has been designated as the Environmentally Superior Alternative in Section 5.5 of the Draft EIR and is currently

under review as the proposed project. The Maximum Avoidance Alternative is intended to result in reduced direct tribal/cultural disturbance at the Project site and to further mitigate impacts to cultural and tribal cultural resources. This alternative is the applicant's preferred design, which effectively balances the City's goals for senior housing with the need to protect the environment. The approach emphasizes the development of new construction in areas deemed suitable while preserving the rural character and natural features of the site. The proposed Project requires certification of the EIR, rezoning of the 225 Los Alamos property from RR-40-SR to PD 0308-SR, zoning text amendment to modify the language in the Policy statement for PD-0308, approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a large community care facility use, and approval of a Hillside Development Permit because portions of the proposed development would be located on slopes of 10 percent or greater.

BACKGROUND/PRIOR COUNCIL REVIEW

December 25, 2014	Planning applications were submitted
May 11, 2016	Notice of Preparation (NOP) for EIR was issued
May 23, 2016	EIR 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 the Design Review Board
November 7, 2024	Policy Statement was reviewed by the Design Review Board
March 11, 2026	Final EIR was released for public review
March 2, 2026	Notice of Planning Commission public hearing was distributed

The Project application was submitted to the Planning and Economic Development department on December 25, 2014, for 24 independent living units. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) mandates that discretionary decisions made by public agencies undergo environmental review. To comply with CEQA requirements, the City of Santa Rosa has prepared an EIR for the Project.

On May 11, 2016, the City issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR to Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, the Office of Planning and Research, Native American tribes, and neighboring property owners. A public scoping meeting was held on May 23, 2016, at Whited Elementary School, 4995 Sonoma Highway, Santa Rosa, California. Fifteen people signed in at the meeting, with 10 of them speaking on the project. Additionally, nine written comments were received during the 30-day scoping period.

After May 11, 2016, the applicant made changes to the proposed Project by including two single-family lots at 5803 and 5815 Melita Road and increasing the number of units to 32. Following the State CEQA Guidelines, the City of Santa Rosa issued a second NOP on August 30, 2017, to update agencies and interested parties about the modified Project and the City's plan to prepare an EIR. During the 30-day scoping period for the second NOP, the City received one comment letter.

Following extensive consultations with the Tribes (Lytton Rancheria and Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria) regarding the project and the required technical studies for preparing the EIR, the Draft EIR was prepared. The Draft EIR was released for public review on June 1, 2021, with a 45-day circulation period beginning on June 1, 2021, and ending on July 15, 2021. A Notice of Availability (NOA) and notice of public hearing for the Draft EIR was provided to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (renamed in 2024 to the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation), the Sonoma County Clerk, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Native American tribes, to organizations and individuals who previously requested such notice in writing, and through direct mailing to owners and occupants of property within 600 feet of the Project site. The NOA was also posted at the Project site and was published in the Press Democrat on June 6, 2021. The Draft EIR was submitted to the State Clearinghouse for distribution to State agencies, and the City posted the Draft EIR and NOA on its website. A physical copy of the Draft EIR was made available at the front counter of the Planning and Economic Development Department and the Rincon Valley Branch of the Sonoma County Library. The Draft EIR is also available on the City's website at <https://srcity.org/425/Plans-Studies-EIRs>.

The 45-day review and comment period, and the Planning Commission public hearing meeting on June 24, 2021, aimed to gather feedback on the document's adequacy in identifying and analyzing potential environmental impacts and ways to avoid and minimize the project's significant effects in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15204. Per City Code Section 17-04.180, the Planning Commission must conduct a public hearing to review and comment on the Draft EIR. On June 24, 2021, the Planning Commission reviewed the Draft EIR and provided comments. Three members of the public and five Planning Commissioners provided comments during the public hearing.

During the 45-day public comment period, the City also received two agency comment letters and 26 emails. The comments received on the Draft EIR primarily focused on concerns about wildfire risks, traffic congestion, water supply, and the adequacy of infrastructure to support the Project during emergencies. Commenters expressed concern about potential emergency evacuation challenges, and the impact on local traffic and safety. There were also concerns about the Project's water usage and its compatibility with existing community resources.

The Draft EIR and Final EIR identify Alternative 2 (Maximum Avoidance Alternative) as the Environmentally Superior Alternative. This alternative would cause less direct disturbance at the Project site and have a smaller overall footprint compared to the original proposal. Specifically, Alternative 2 would keep the two existing single-family

homes at 5803 and 5815 Melita Road and reduce the development footprint, thereby decreasing excavation and ground-disturbance work.

Several Planning Commissioners expressed interest in Alternative 2, and on January 9, 2024, the Project applicant resubmitted their planning application to reflect this alternative. After reviewing the plans, the City shared them along with the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) with the tribes on October 16, 2024. The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR) requested a meeting with the City to discuss tribal cultural resources. Following this meeting, the applicant made additional modifications to the project based on feedback from the FIGR and submitted revised plans on July 24, 2025. The current proposal before the Planning Commission is a modified version of Alternative 2. Also, a revision to a mitigation measure was made in response to additional requests from FIGR.

On March 11, 2026, the Final EIR, which provides responses to comments received on the Draft EIR, as well as revisions to the Draft EIR, was released for public review.

Tribal Consultation Background

From April 7, 2016, through September 23, 2025, the City conducted an extensive and ongoing tribal consultation process with representatives from Lytton Rancheria and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, beginning with formal notification under AB 52 and continuing through multiple meetings, site visits, and iterative review of project materials and environmental documents. Early consultation included requests for cultural resource studies, such as a Phase I archaeological survey, and was followed by site meetings in 2017 and 2018, as well as the preparation and refinement of consultation packages and mitigation measures incorporated into the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

Consultation resumed in 2024 after a temporary project pause, with additional meetings in 2025 to review updated plans, address tribal concerns, and provide requested materials. Throughout this multi-year process, tribal input directly informed the evolution of the project, resulting in several substantial design modifications and enhanced mitigation strategies specifically aimed at avoiding, minimizing, and reducing impacts to cultural resources and tribal cultural resources.

ANALYSIS

1. Surrounding Land Uses

- North: Highway 12
- South: RR-20 and RR-40 (Rural Residential)
- East: PD 0061-SR-RC (Planned Development - Scenic Road)
- West: RR-40-SR (Rural Residential - Scenic Road and Single-Family 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 Station Bed & Breakfast Inn, Melita Road, Montgomery Drive, and Annadel State Park; and to the west by single-family residences and a church.

2. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The project site consists of three parcels totaling 7.28 acres. The parcel at 225 Los Alamos Road is an approximately 5.77-acre vacant lot that contains annual grasslands that are more or less ruderal in character, as well as trees. The two other parcels, located at 5815 Melita Road and 5803 Melita Road, are currently developed with a single-family home and accessory structures. The site has a total of 294 trees, with 157 proposed for removal, including 30 heritage trees, to accommodate the proposed project. Some trees will need to be removed to accommodate construction activities, while others may be removed due to health concerns or safety hazards. In some cases, both factors apply. The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) has included measure BIO-5 to address the loss of trees on the site as required by City Code Chapter 17-24. 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 Maximum Avoidance Alternative (Alternative 2) significantly reduces the development footprint and preserves both existing homes. This option also decreases the need for grading and excavation, as well as minimizing tree removal. Nearly all project improvements would be situated within the currently vacant parcel.

3. General Plan

The [General Plan](#) addresses issues related to the physical development and growth of Santa Rosa and guides the City's planning and zoning functions. The 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 General Plan includes various goals and policies related to land use, housing, open space, conservation, and growth management. The Project was found to be consistent with numerous goals and policies of General Plan 2035, which was in effect at the time of application submission. The following goals and policies of General Plan 2035 were found to be relevant and applicable to the staff's analysis of this project.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| LUL-M | Ensure new development and streetscape projects provide pedestrian and bicycle circulation improvements. |
| LUL-F | Maintain a diversity of neighborhoods and varied housing stock to satisfy a wide range of needs. |

- 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. Downtown is excepted.
- LUL-M-2 Require dedication of right-of-way for improvement and/or expansion of pedestrian and bicycle facilities where insufficient right-of-way currently exists.
- 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.**
- 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-F-2 Protect natural topographic features such as hillsides, ridgelines, and mature trees and stands of trees. Minimize grading of natural contours in new development.
- T-G Identify, preserve, and enhance scenic roads through Santa Rosa in both rural and developed areas.**
- T-G-5 Retain existing trees and vegetation along scenic roads, as possible. Enhance roadway appearance through landscaping, using native plant material.
- T-G-6 Provide large setbacks from scenic roads, as possible, to avoid encroachment of buildings on the view of the roadway.
- T-G-9 Require curbs and gutters only where they are necessary for drainage and pedestrian safety purposes.

General Plan 2050, which was adopted by the City Council June 3, 2025. The following goals, policies, and actions of General Plan 2050 were found to be relevant and applicable to the staff's analysis of this project.

- Goal 2-1** Ensure that growth and change serve community needs, protect the environment, improve the City's fiscal stability, and enhance quality of life for all members of the community.
- Policy 2-1.1** Encourage development that supports community health and quality of life and fosters complete neighborhoods in both established and emerging neighborhoods.

- Policy 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.
- Policy 2-3.2** Ensure that residential developments achieve the density potential of the project site and include a variety of housing types with a full range of affordability, in accordance with the General Plan Land Use map (Figure 2-6).
- Action 2-4.3** Create environments with safe, connected streets, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities that include shade trees to establish a pleasant streetscape.
- Policy 3-2.4** Identify, preserve, and enhance City-designated scenic roads throughout Santa Rosa in both rural and developed areas, to encourage bicycle commuting and recreation.
- Action 3-2.25** Provide bicycle lanes along scenic roads where right-of-way exists.
- Goal 6-8** Foster environments that support families and community members of all ages with high-quality, equitably accessible amenities, programs, and services.

The following goals and policies are the most relevant from the Santa Rosa 2023-2031 Housing Element:

- GOAL H-1** Encourage the development of housing to meet the needs of all Santa Rosa residents.
- Policy H-1-1** Ensure there is a sufficient supply of land zoned to accommodate the projected housing needs.
- GOAL H-3** Increase special needs housing opportunities and supportive services for lower-income households, families with children, seniors, persons with physical and developmental disabilities, farmworkers, female-headed households, and people who are experiencing homelessness.
- Policy 3-1** Give priority in providing housing assistance to those groups with demonstrated special needs, such as lower-income households, seniors, persons with disabilities, persons with mental health conditions or psychiatric disabilities, large families with children, female-headed households, victims of domestic violence, and people who are experiencing homelessness.

The proposed Project has been reviewed for General Plan consistency and has been found consistent with both General Plan 2035, which was in effect at the time

the project application was submitted and deemed complete, and General Plan 2050, which was adopted in June 2025. The project will add 32 new residential units for seniors, adding new and diverse housing types to the area. The project aligns with the goals and policies of both Plans by contributing to the City's housing stock, aiming to offer diverse housing options in the neighborhood, particularly for seniors and individuals with special needs. The Project includes frontage improvements along Highway 12 and Los Alamos Road, expanding utility infrastructure connections, enhancing landscaping, and improving pedestrian and biking access.

The Project site is situated along Los Alamos Road, Melita Road, Montgomery Drive, and Highway 12, which have been designated as scenic roads. The City of Santa Rosa General Plan 2035 and 2050 defines a scenic road as a highway, road, drive, or street that, in addition to its transportation function, provides opportunities for the enjoyment of natural and human-made scenic resources and directs views to areas of exceptional beauty, natural resources or landmarks, or historic or cultural interest. The Project aims to maintain and enhance the scenic roads by providing larger setbacks, preserving existing trees, and planting new trees on the site.

4. 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 applicant requests to rezone one parcel from RR-40-SR (Rural Residential – Scenic Road) to PD0308-SR (Planned Development – Scenic Road), which is the current zone for the existing Spring Lake Village. Under the modified Alternative 2 – Maximum Avoidance Alternative (now the proposed project), the two existing parcels with the two homes will no longer be rezoned. Therefore, only the vacant property zoned RR-40-SR will be rezoned to PD 0308-SR. The PD is consistent with the General Plan Land Use, which is Low Density Residential, and Community Care Facilities are allowed in residential land use through approval of a Conditional Use Permit. All proposed structures comply with the Scenic Road (SR) setback requirements and are situated 50 feet from the road's edge. Also, according to zoning code Section 20-36.040, Table 3-4, Community Care Facilities must provide one parking space for every three beds. The project proposes 32 units that can accommodate 64 residents, requiring 21 parking spaces. However, the project is providing approximately 72 parking spaces, which will be distributed among carports, surface parking lots, and garages associated with the cottage units.

Per Zoning Code [Section 20-26.020 \(D\)](#), *“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 height limit for the current Rural Residential (RR) zoning district is 35 feet. With the proposed rezoning of the site to Planned Development (PD-0308), the height limit at the Project site would increase to 45 feet. However, the tallest building proposed for the Project is the residential Villa building, which would be 36 feet 9 inches tall, with an additional approximately five feet of mechanical equipment and stairway/elevator shafts above the roof peak. Furthermore, the Scenic Road combining district would remain in order to maintain and enhance the scenic roads by providing larger setbacks, preserving existing trees, and planting new trees on the site.

Zoning Map Amendment (Rezoning) and Zoning Code Text Amendment

Per Zoning Code Section 20-64.020, a Zoning Code amendment may modify any procedure, provision, regulation, requirement, or standard applicable to land use or development within the City. The proposed project includes a rezoning of the parcel located at 225 Los Alamos Road from RR-40-SR to PD-0308-SR, which is the zoning district for the existing Spring Lake Village complex located at 5555 Montgomery Drive. Also, the project includes a zoning text amendment to modify the policy statement for PD-0308. The proposed text amendment will default to the City’s Zoning Code for land use permitting requirements consistent with the associated General Plan land use designation.

Under Zoning Code Section 20-64.050, the review authority must make the following required findings shown below for the zoning code/map amendments. As demonstrated in the two attached draft resolutions, staff’s analysis has determined that these findings can be met:

1. The proposed amendment is consistent with the goals and policies of all elements of the General Plan, and any applicable specific plan;
2. The proposed amendment would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City; and
3. The proposed Project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and
4. The proposed amendment is internally consistent with other applicable provisions of this Zoning Code (This finding is only for the zoning text amendment); and
5. 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 (This finding is only for the Zoning Map amendment).

Conditional Use Permit

Pursuant to Zoning Code [Section 20-42.060](#), the Project would require a Minor Conditional Use Permit to accommodate the 32-unit community care facility. This Zoning Code Section identifies spacing and concentration of community and health care facilities from other similar facilities. Specifically, the Code prohibits such uses from being located closer than 300 feet from another such facility, as measured from any point on the exterior walls of both structures. The Code also states the following:

- “The over-concentration of community care/health care facilities in an area shall constitute cause for the denial of a Minor Conditional Use Permit, where it is determined that over-concentration will not be mitigated by conditions that might be imposed upon the Minor Conditional Use Permit and other measures instituted by the applicant. As used in this Section, a condition of ‘over-concentration’ arises wherever two or more community care facilities would be located at a distance of 1,000 feet or less from each other, as measured from any point upon the outside walls of the structures housing the facilities.”

The purpose of regulating the location of community care and health care facilities is to permit these services to be available at locations within Santa Rosa, as mandated by State law applicable to a charter city, that are convenient to the public, while requiring the mitigation of or avoiding any adverse effects of the facilities upon surrounding properties to the extent permitted by law. The closest large community care facility (7 or more clients) is located approximately 900 feet from the facility located at 5555 Montgomery Drive, which is part of this project. Also, the proposed facility has been reviewed and conditioned by the City’s Fire Department, and the applicant is licensed under the State of California Department of Health Care Services.

In addition to the required findings for a Conditional Use Permit under Section 20-52.050 for a community care/health care facility, the review authority also requires the following two additional findings, which are included in the draft Conditional Use Permit resolution and as outlined in the attached draft CUP resolution, staff has determined that the findings can be made:

1. That the facility complies with all applicable requirements of this Section; and
2. The facility complies with all applicable building and fire code provisions adopted by the State and administered by the City Fire Marshal, and California Department of Social Services licensing requirements.

Hillside Development Permit

According to [Chapter 20-32](#) of the Zoning Code, which outlines Hillside Development Standards, the Project requires a Major Hillside Development Permit. This regulation applies to any proposed development on a site with a slope of 10

percent or greater. Since the proposed project will alter parts of the lot with slopes exceeding 10 percent, a Hillside Development Permit is necessary. The permit mandates that any development on sites featuring significant natural landforms or characteristics must be designed to minimize alterations to the topography, drainage patterns, and vegetation on slopes of 10 percent or more. The following are the required findings, which are provided in the Hillside Development resolution, and as outlined in the attached draft HDP resolution, staff has determined that the findings can be made:

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.

5. Public Improvements

The Project will include off-site improvements along Highway 12, Los Alamos Road, and Melita Road. These improvements include pedestrian sidewalks with curb and gutter installation, bike lanes, and stormwater and utility improvements. The Project also includes the construction of a 5-foot-wide crosswalk at the intersection of Montgomery Drive and Melita Road. These improvements are intended to improve pedestrian and bike connectivity. In addition, the Sonoma County Transit Stop on

westbound Highway 12 will be relocated to a new location next to the sidewalk on the northeast side of the intersection, and the existing sidewalk at the current Sonoma County Transit stop on eastbound Highway 12 will also be extended. These improvements aim to enhance ADA accessibility, which is currently lacking at the stops.

Summary of Public Comments

During the EIR scoping meeting, the most common issues raised were related to noise, traffic, pedestrian safety, parking, and aesthetics. Specific comments included suggestions for alternative vehicular access points, concerns about the visual impact of the Project, potential increases in traffic and noise, and the need for additional off-site improvements such as sidewalks and crosswalks. Attendees also expressed concerns about air quality, biological resources, and the Project's impact on the residential character of the area.

During the Draft EIR public hearing held before the Planning Commission, several concerns and suggestions were raised by both the public and Planning Commissioners regarding the Project. The primary issues discussed included wildfire risks, with concerns about the Project's location and the adequacy of emergency response plans and evacuation routes. Traffic congestion was another major topic, particularly at the intersection of Highway 12 and Los Alamos Road, with requests for details on collision rate data. Water supply adequacy was questioned in light of ongoing drought conditions. Environmental impacts on local wildlife and vegetation were also highlighted, along with the need for robust mitigation measures. Additionally, there were discussions about the selection of the Environmentally Superior Alternative identified in the Draft EIR and its potential benefits. The integration of the Project with the existing community and its impact on the area's character and aesthetics were also important points of discussion.

Staff Response: The Project retains the same primary vehicular access and includes off-site pedestrian, bicycle, stormwater, and utility improvements identified in the Draft EIR. The number of on-site parking spaces exceeds the zoning code requirement. The Final EIR clarifies that under the modified Alternative 2 (Maximum Avoidance Alternative), which is the project now, the development footprint is reduced, thereby minimizing potential traffic, noise, and neighborhood disturbances associated with construction and long-term operations. Traffic concerns raised during the public hearing regarding congestion near Highway 12 and Los Alamos Road were addressed in the transportation analysis presented in the Draft EIR, which evaluated intersection performance and safety conditions, including collision data. Any necessary transportation-related improvements and mitigation measures identified in the Draft EIR would still apply to the revised Project.

The Project continues to incorporate off-site pedestrian and bicycle improvements. In addition, under modified Alternative 2, the previously proposed secondary access road through the southern portion of the site has been reduced to a pedestrian pathway

connecting to Melita Road. This change reduces site disturbance while maintaining pedestrian connectivity.

The modified Alternative 2 modifies the site design by reducing the number of cottages from ten to seven and decreasing the overall development footprint, while maintaining the same total number of residential units through a different unit mix. The reduction in ground disturbance and the concentration of development within a smaller footprint help minimize changes to the surrounding landscape and maintain the area's general character. The Final EIR confirms that the same mitigation measures identified in the Draft EIR would apply to the modified Alternative 2, which is now the proposed project. .

The Final EIR includes additional discussion of wildfire considerations and emergency planning. The City of Santa Rosa Fire Department reviewed the revised project and determined that a secondary emergency vehicle access road is not required because the number of proposed residential units is below the threshold in the 2022 California Fire Code requiring two fire apparatus access roads. Accordingly, the secondary access route previously proposed through the southern portion of the site was reduced in width and redesigned as a pedestrian pathway, which reduces environmental disturbance while maintaining access for pedestrians.

The Draft EIR analyzed water demand and infrastructure capacity and determined that the Project's operational water demand could be accommodated by existing service providers. The modified Alternative 2 would result in substantially the same operational water demand as the originally proposed Project, and therefore would not change the conclusions of the water supply analysis.

Regarding cultural resources, the modified Alternative 2 reduces the overall development footprint, avoids the most sensitive portions of the site, and relocates certain project elements, including the pedestrian pathway and stormwater retention basin, to reduce potential disturbance. The Final EIR also includes mitigation measures requiring archaeological monitoring, preparation of an Archaeological and Tribal Cultural Resources Treatment Plan, and consultation with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria and the Lytton Rancheria. With these design changes and mitigation measures, impacts to archaeological and tribal cultural resources are reduced to less than significant with mitigation under CEQA.

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 compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15161 to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the project. The EIR analyzes the project's potential impacts, identifies mitigation measures to reduce significant effects, and evaluates a reasonable range of alternatives.

Section 15126 of CEQA Guidelines requires an EIR to identify and discuss a no project

alternative, as well as a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project that would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the proposed project and would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant environmental impacts.

Alternatives to the proposed project considered for analysis in the EIR are:

- a. No Project Alternative
- b. Maximum Avoidance Alternative

A thorough analysis can be found in section 4.0 Alternatives Description and Analysis. A summary of each project alternative is provided below:

a. Alternative 1 – No Project Alternative

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(1) requires that the no project alternative be described and analyzed, “to allow decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the project with the impacts of not approving the project.” The no project analysis is required to discuss “the existing conditions at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published, as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services (Section 15126.6(e)(2)).”

The No-Project Alternative would leave the existing site as it is without improvements. The existing residences at 5803 and 5815 Melita Road would continue to operate, with no anticipated change in use or to the existing site layout. The property at 225 Los Alamos Road would remain as a RR-40 zoned property that may be developed in the future. There would be no improvement of off-site pedestrian and bicycle facilities along Highway 12, Los Alamos Road, or Melita Road, or off-site storm drain facilities along Los Alamos Road or Melita Road.

Under the No Project Alternative, the vacant parcel at 225 Los Alamos Road, totaling 5.77 acres, could be developed under current land use and zoning designations, subject to discretionary approval by the City of Santa Rosa. Based on the existing zoning designation of the vacant parcel (RR-40), the parcel could potentially be subdivided into five lots, with each lot supporting one single-family residence, one accessory dwelling unit, and one junior accessory dwelling unit (total of 15 dwelling units). Alternatively, the vacant RR-40 zoned parcel could also support a 2 units/acre multifamily residential development, or approximately 10 multifamily residential units. Any future development would be subject to discretionary approval and environmental review by the City of Santa Rosa.

While the no project alternative would avoid the significant and unavoidable impacts to cultural and tribal cultural resources, it would not meet the project objectives.

b. Alternative 2 – Maximum Avoidance Alternative

The Maximum Avoidance Alternative would be located in the same location as the originally proposed project. The total residential units would remain the same at 32 units, but the mix would change from 12 Villa units and 20 cottage units to 18 Villa units and 14 cottage units. The residential Villa building would be located in the same location as under the originally proposed Project, however, it would be a three-story building as opposed to a two-story building. The resident community building would be the same as in the originally proposed Project. The alternative also would include the same vehicle access, and off-site pedestrian, bicycle, storm water and utility improvements as the previously proposed project.

Alternatives Description and Analysis, to be considered, an alternative must be potentially feasible. While several alternatives were rejected from further analysis as being infeasible, Alternative 2 Maximum Avoidance Alternative was carried forward in the alternatives analysis as a potentially feasible alternative.

However, compared to the version presented in the Draft EIR, further modifications to Alternative 2 are intended to reduce impacts on cultural resources, including tribal cultural resources. The City of Santa Rosa Fire Department and Planning and Economic Development Department have concluded that secondary emergency access is not necessary for the Project or Alternative 2. According to the 2022 California Fire Code adopted by Santa Rosa, two fire apparatus access roads are only required for developments with more than 50 multi-family units or more than 30 single-family units. Alternative 2 proposes 14 single-family and 18 multi-family units, which are below these thresholds. Additionally, the tallest building in Alternative 2 has a roof-to-wall height of 29 feet 9 inches. Therefore, aerial access requirements do not apply to Alternative 2. As such, under Alternative 2, the secondary access route passing through the southern portion of the site to Melita Road has been narrowed in width and would serve as a pedestrian pathway. Furthermore, under Alternative 2, the pedestrian pathway and associated utility corridor have been slightly relocated to the east. The footprint of Cottage 7 has also been adjusted to better avoid potential sensitive resources. Finally, the on-site rain garden and retention basin have been moved to the north of their previous location. Revisions to the Draft EIR are presented in Chapter 5 of the Final EIR.

Conclusion and Relationship to Project Objectives

The EIR concludes that the significant impacts of the Maximum Avoidance Alternative would be substantially lessened to a less-than-significant level by the adoption of feasible mitigation measures. The Maximum Avoidance Alternative would result in less direct disturbance at the Project site and a smaller overall Project footprint. The reduction of development and avoidance of deeper ground-disturbance elements under the Maximum Avoidance Alternative would

substantially reduce direct disturbance, and with implementation of mitigation measures identified in Section 3.4 and Section 3.13 relative to cultural resources and tribal cultural resources, the impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level. This alternative would have equivalent impacts to all other resource areas.

Environmentally Superior Alternative

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2) requires an EIR to identify an “environmentally superior alternative.” The qualitative environmental effects of each alternative are summarized in Table 4-2 of the Draft EIR. To quantitatively identify an environmentally superior alternative a value has been applied to each environmental effect. The alternative with the fewest amounts of impacts and the ability to achieve the most project objectives is the environmentally superior alternative.

The Draft EIR and Final EIR identified Alternative 2 (Maximum Avoidance Alternative) as the Environmentally Superior Alternative. This alternative would meet all of the project objectives and would cause less direct disturbance at the Project site and have a smaller overall footprint compared to the original proposal. Specifically, Alternative 2 (Maximum Avoidance Alternative) would avoid removing the two existing single-family homes at 5803 and 5815 Melita Road, and also minimize improvements on a portion of the property, thereby reducing the extent of excavation and ground disturbance.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On November 7, 2024, the proposed Policy Statement for the PD zone was presented to the Design Review Board for a determination of compliance with the findings required by Zoning Code Section 20-26-060 A(4)(b) and the City’s Design Guidelines. The Design Review Board, by a resolution, made the required findings and directed staff to forward the determination to the Planning Commission.

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.

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 \$500 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 this project.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Disclosure Form
Attachment 2 - Location Map
Attachment 3 - Project Narrative
Attachment 4 - Project Plans
Attachment 5 - Landscape Plans
Attachment 6 - Existing Planned Development 0308 (PD) Policy Statement
Attachment 7 - New Planned Development 0308 (PD) Policy Statement
Attachment 8 - Design Review Board Resolution
Attachment 9 - Draft EIR
Attachment 10 - Final EIR
Attachment 11 - Planning Commission minutes June 24, 2021
Attachment 12 - Public Comments

Resolution 1 - Conditional Use Permit
Resolution 2 - Hillside Development Permit
Resolution 3 - Rezoning
Resolution 4 - Zoning Text Amendment
Resolution 5 - EIR

PRESENTER

Monet Sheikhal, Supervising Planner
MSheikhal@srcity.org, (707) 543-4698