

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION  
**November 29, 2018**

**PROJECT TITLE**

Montecito Townhomes

**ADDRESS/LOCATION**

0 Montecito Boulevard

**ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER**

182-120-052

**APPLICATION DATES**

August 3, 2017; December 6, 2017

**REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS**

Conditional Use Permit and Tentative Map

**PROJECT SITE ZONING**

R-3-18 (Multi-Family Residential)

**PROJECT PLANNER**

Aaron Hollister

**APPLICANT**

Chris Shaughnessy

**PROPERTY OWNER**

Chris Shaughnessy

**FILE NUMBER**

PRJ17-077; CUP17-136; MAJ17-004

**APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE**

September 12, 2018

**FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED**

Minor Design Review

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION**

Medium Density Residential (8.0 to 18.0 units per acre)

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approval

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: CHAIR EDMONDSON AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION  
FROM: AARON HOLLISTER, PLANNING CONSULTANT  
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
SUBJECT: MONTECITO TOWNHOMES TENTATIVE MAP AND SMALL LOT  
SUBDIVISION  
AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Planning Commission, by resolutions, (1) approve a Residential Small Lot Subdivision Conditional Use Permit, and (2) approve the Tentative Map to subdivide the parcel into eight fee simple lots for the development of eight attached single-family dwellings (townhouses).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant requests the approval of a Small Lot Subdivision Conditional Use Permit and a Tentative Map to subdivide a vacant 0.5-acre lot into eight fee simple lots and to subsequently construct eight attached single-family dwellings (townhouses).

Staff recommends approval of the project as it has been designed to fit into the surrounding neighborhood and is consistent with the General Plan and Zoning Code.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

The proposal involves Tentative Map and Conditional Use Permit applications. The Zoning Administrator will consider the yet-to-be filed Minor Design Review application at a future date. The property will be subdivided into eight fee simple lots and eight corresponding townhomes are proposed for construction.

The project would feature four different residential floor plans with lots ranging in size from 1,500 square feet to 2,437 square feet. Each of the new structures is two stories and would measure a maximum of 23.25 feet in height. The units in the project would include six units containing approximately 1,419 square feet of

habitable space with the other two units containing 1,729 and 1,737 square feet of habitable space, respectively. Each of the eight townhouse units are proposed to contain three bedrooms and 2.5 baths. Private outdoor open space is proposed on each lot in the form of a private yard area (measuring 516 square feet to 888 square feet), balconies, and porches. Lot 3 will contain a 138 square-foot front porch and an approximate 1,130 square-foot rear yard area.

Each townhouse unit will contain an attached garage that will accommodate one car, while visitor parking will be provided in a shared parking area in proposed "Parcel A", which will also contain the project's common areas such as the driveway/circulation area, trash enclosure, and stormwater facilities. The site's access is proposed via a 25-foot-wide access easement that would provide access directly from the north side of Montecito Boulevard and would traverse over the property immediately to the south. The property owner of the property located to the south would grant the easement, which would also be utilized for utilities.

Proposed landscaping includes improvements that would be included in the common areas of the project site including in the parking/vehicular circulation area and along the project site's perimeter areas. None of the existing trees are proposed for removal as part of the project. All of the existing trees are located in the rear yard areas of the proposed lots and include a total of seven trees (five ornamental trees and two oak trees).

## 2. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Single family detached residences and multi-family residential

South: Medical office building and community shopping center

East: Multi-tenant retail commercial

West: Multi-family residential

The project site is surrounded on all sides by developed properties of differing uses and intensities including commercial uses, two-story multi-family residential and single-story detached single-family dwellings. The Montecito Center, a General Plan-designated Community Shopping Center, is located on the opposite side of Montecito Boulevard immediately to the south.

## 3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The project site is relatively flat with a slight change in overall slope of approximately three feet. The project site is currently vacant with no structures and contains seven trees and overgrown grass and shrubs.

#### 4. Project History

On March 8, 2017, a Pre-Application Neighborhood Meeting was held for the project. Six neighbors in the project vicinity attended the meeting. Concerns were expressed regarding shadows, wind, drainage, impacts to existing trees and privacy.

On August 3, 2017, the Tentative Map application was submitted.

On December 7, 2017, the Conditional Use Permit application was submitted.

The submitted applications were deemed complete on September 12, 2018, after additional information was provided.

#### PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

None.

#### ANALYSIS

As part of their project analysis of both the Conditional Use Permit and Tentative Map, the Planning Commission will need to consider the project's consistency with the General Plan. Applicable General Plan Goals and Policies have been included immediately below. Staff's analysis of the project's consistency with the General Plan can also be found immediately below.

##### 1. General Plan

The General Plan designation for the site is Medium Density Residential, which allows residential development at a density of 8.0 to 18.0 units per acre. The parcels immediately to the south and west have the same land use designation, while the parcels immediately to the north have a land use designation of Low Density Residential and the parcel immediately to the east has a designation of Retail and Business Service. The project density (16.0 units per acre) is above the midpoint of the allowed density range.

This designation permits a range of housing types, including single family attached and multifamily developments, and is intended for specific areas where higher density is appropriate. New single family detached housing is not permitted except in historic preservation districts and historic neighborhoods where single family detached units are allowed.

The following General Plan goals and policies are most relevant to the proposed project:

## **Land Use**

- LUL-E Promote livable neighborhoods. Ensure that everyday shopping, park and recreation facilities, and schools are within easy walking distance of most residents.
- LUL-E-2 As a part of planning and development review activities, ensure that projects, subdivisions, and neighborhoods are designed to foster livability.
- LUL-F Maintain a diversity of neighborhoods and varied housing stock to satisfy a wide range of needs.
- LUL-F-1 Do not allow development at less than the minimum density prescribed by each residential land use classification.
- LUL-F-3 Maintain a balance of various housing types in each neighborhood and ensure that new development does not result in undue concentration of a single housing type in any one neighborhood.

## **Urban Design**

- UD-A-5 Require superior site and architectural design of new development projects, to improve visual quality in the city.
- UD-F-4 Provide visual interest in building, site, and landscape design that avoids the sense of a monotonous tract development.
- UD-G Design residential neighborhoods to be safe, human-scaled, and livable.
- UD-G-6 To promote social interaction, houses in new developments should contain porches, front gardens, and windows overlooking front yards and sidewalks.

## **Housing**

- H-A-2 Pursue the goal of meeting Santa Rosa's housing needs through increased densities, when compatible with existing neighborhoods. Development of existing and new higher-density sites must be designed in context with existing, surrounding neighborhoods.

## **Staff Response:**

The project furthers a number of goals and policies of the General Plan. The eight new townhouses will add to the diversity of the residential neighborhood,

which primarily features apartments and single-family residential units. The proposed landscaping will improve the appearance of the property from Montecito Boulevard and surrounding properties. The building design for the new residences is consistent with the Design Guidelines, as discussed in the Design Guidelines section of this report. The project will help meet the City's housing needs by adding eight new, family-sized dwelling units on an undeveloped site that can support the proposed density of the project.

Furthermore, the project is located within walking distance of a shopping center that is anchored by a grocery store. It is in an area of Santa Rosa where several land use designations converge in a cohesive way to blend very low density detached residential uses with higher density areas targeted for both detached and attached housing, all within walking distance of a commercial center, which provides a grocery store, dining, and a variety of other retail and commercial services. Public transit, schools and recreation areas are also within walking distance.

### Zoning

The project site is within the R-3-18 (Multi-family Residential) zoning district. This zoning district is consistent with the Medium Density General Plan land use designation and is applied to 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.

Zoning for surrounding properties:

North: RR-20 (Rural Residential) and R-1-6 (Single-family Residential) zoning districts

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

East: CG (General Commercial)

West: R-3-18 (Multi-family Residential) zoning district

The minimum lot size in the R-3-18 district is 6,000 square feet. The project proposes lots less than 6,000 square-feet, which triggers the requirement for a Residential Small Lot Subdivision Conditional Use Permit.

Furthermore, the following Zoning Code sections are applicable to the project:

Zoning Code Section 20-42.140, provides development standards for small lot subdivisions. Section 20-42.140(F)(8) allows flexibility of individual unit or project design alternatives if authorized by the review authority as part of Conditional Use Permit approval.

## *Residential Small Lot Subdivisions*

The Zoning Code establishes design and development standards for residential small lot subdivisions (Section 20-42.140). Small lot subdivisions are allowed in the R-3 zoning district with a Conditional Use Permit.

The following discussion explains the requirements of residential small lot subdivisions and how these requirements have been addressed in the proposal:

### *Setbacks*

The setback requirements for residential small lot subdivisions are as follows:

- a. Front Setbacks – A minimum front setback of 10 feet shall be required, provided that a one-story covered porch may project up to six feet into the setback, and provided that no front porch shall have a depth of less than six feet. Front yard setbacks shall be varied along each block face.

All of the proposed lots will have front setbacks of less than 10 feet with the minimum front setback on each lot measuring approximately two feet.

The Planning Commission will need to consider the reduced front setbacks as part the Conditional Use Permit review process.

- b. Side Setbacks – The Code states, “except for attached single-family, rowhouse, or zero lot line units, the one-story portions of a proposed structure shall be set back a minimum of four feet from side property lines, and the two-story portions of a structure shall be set back a minimum of eight feet from side property lines.”

The southerly side setback of Lot 8 where the proposed building would be two stories in height and would not be attached is proposed to have a minimum side setback of five feet. The Planning Commission will need to consider the reduced side setback on Lot 8 as part the Conditional Use Permit review process. All other lots comply with the side setback requirement.

- c. Rear Setbacks – A minimum rear setback of 15 feet shall be required, except where a 10-foot setback is authorized by the review authority.

Lots 1-6 are proposed to have a rear setback of 20 feet. Lots 7 and 8 will have rear setbacks of 12 feet each. In this instance, the Planning Commission may authorize a 10-foot rear setback provided that the each parcel provides a minimum of 400 square feet of usable private open space with no dimension less than 15. All of the lots in the subdivision contain private open space that meet the minimum area and dimensional requirements.

d. **Garage Setbacks** – A garage entrance facing a street shall be set back as follows:

1. 19 feet from the rear of the public sidewalk, or 19 feet from the street property line or street plan line, whichever is greater.
2. 19 feet from the back of the driveway approach on a private lane with no sidewalks.

All of the proposed garages will have a setback of two feet from the proposed shared driveway area. The Planning Commission will need to consider the reduced garage setbacks as part the Conditional Use Permit review process.

As part of its deliberations regarding the reduced garage setback, the Planning Commission will need to consider the primary functions of the 19-foot garage setback requirement. These functions are primarily safety/sight distance for vehicles entering and exiting the garages, as well as building design. Related to building design, the design guidelines stipulate that garages should not dominate the appearance of the ground-floor, and further, that elements that provide interest and cues to habitation of the structure (porches, balconies, front door entries, windows, etc.) should be provided at the ground floor.

Please note that in this instance, the City's Traffic Engineering division reviewed the project and determined that the project would not cause vehicular safety hazards or maneuverability issues. Furthermore, the design of the groundfloor areas provides activating features such as covered porches and front door entries and generally limits the garage openings to 50% of the width of the individual townhouse modules, consistent with the residential design guidelines.

### *Lot Size*

Attached single-family units are not subject to the minimum lot size of 2,000 to 6,000 square feet. The proposed lot sizes on which the attached single-family units are proposed are consistent with this Zoning Code requirement.

### *Building Height*

The maximum allowed building height is 35 feet. The new townhouses will be two-story, 23.25-foot high buildings. These buildings will be in conformance with the height limit.



### *Lot Coverage*

The maximum allowed lot coverage is 65 percent. The maximum lot coverage on any one lot proposed by the project 65 percent. The project conforms with this standard.

### *Private Open Space*

The Zoning Code requires 400 square feet of usable private open space for single-family parcels, with no dimension less than 15 feet. The proposed private open spaces measure between 516 square feet and 888 square feet and comply with the 15-foot dimension requirement.

### *Parking*

The project is required to provide one covered vehicular parking space per unit, as well as 1.5 visitor spaces per unit, which will equate to a total of 20 required parking spaces (8 covered, 12 visitor spaces). Each dwelling unit will contain a covered, garage parking space. 12 visitor parking spaces are proposed in the parking and circulation area of the project on Parcel A.

## 2. Design Guidelines

Approval of a residential small lot subdivision Conditional Use Permit requires superior design, consistent with the City's Design Guidelines. The following Design Guidelines and goals pertain to the proposed project:

- 3.1 I.C. To promote single-family projects that feature a variety of lot types, home sizes, housing types, designs and building materials.
- 3.1 II.A.1 Incorporate existing natural features such as trees, topography, creeks, and riparian vegetation into the site plan.
- 3.1 II.A.2 Integrate new development carefully into existing neighborhoods.
- 3.1 II.B.3 Design single-family projects such that homes orient the front door toward new and existing streets.
- 3.1 II.D.1 Provide each home with a private yard.
- 3.1 III.A.1 Orient the elements of the house, which provide outward signs of habitation, such as the front door, windows, porches and balconies, towards the street.

- 3.1 III.B.5 Provide a second primary siding material on developments of more than five homes. Primary materials for homes should be: horizontal siding, stucco, board and batten style (battens over panel siding) vertical wood siding, and wood shingles.
- 3.1 III.D.2 Provide a covered entry where one can wait at the front door out of the weather. Additionally, this covered entry should provide a strong visual signal to visitors as to the location of the front door.
- 3.1 III.G.2 Design homes so that garages compromise no more than 50% of the width of the lot along the street.
- 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.

**Staff Response:**

The project generally meets all of the above Design Guideline goals. The design of the structures meets all of the above referenced guidelines pertaining to design including building orientation, porch placement, and building variation. The project will also incorporate the existing trees found on-site into the landscaping plan and will be located to so as to respect the existing scale of the neighborhood, which is varied both in terms of land uses and scale.

4. **Tentative Map**

City Code, Title 19, sets forth the regulations pertaining to Tentative Maps. Pursuant to City Code Chapter 19-24, the Planning Commission must make the following findings before approving a Tentative Map:

1. The proposed map is consistent with the general plan and any applicable specific plans as specified in Government Code Sections 65451 and 66474.5.
2. The proposed subdivision meets the housing needs of the City and the public service needs of the subdivision's residents are within the available fiscal and environmental resources of the City.
3. The design of the proposed subdivision has, to the extent feasible, provided for future passive or natural heating or cooling opportunities in the subdivision; and
4. The proposed subdivision would not discharge waste into the City's sewer system that would result in violation of the requirements prescribed by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board.

The proposed map is consistent with the General Plan in that the land use designation is Medium Density Residential which is intended for higher density residential development.

Staff has reviewed the Project plans and determined that the service needs of the subdivision's residents will be met. Sewer and water capacity exists in the area and the project will connect to the existing facilities found in the Montecito Boulevard right-of-way. Project specific services, such as circulation and stormwater management, have been addressed.

Furthermore, the project will feature south and west-facing units that will be able to utilize passive heating methods by absorbing the sun's heating energy throughout the day. The project's rooftops will also be able to easily accommodate solar arrays to capture the sun's energy. Passive cooling features such as sunshades and recessed building areas have been provided at the second stories of the buildings where the bedrooms in each of the units are located.

5. Neighborhood Comments

No neighborhood comments have been received at the time of writing this report beyond the comments that were received at the aforementioned March 2017 neighborhood meeting.

Six neighbors attended a Neighborhood Meeting held on March 8, 2017. The following list summarizes neighborhood concerns, followed by the staff response:

Concern

Staff Response

Privacy

The rear setback of Lots 1-6 adjacent to residential properties to the north has been increased from 15 feet to 20 feet since the neighborhood meeting took place leaving approximately 130 feet of open rear yard space between the project and the nearest single-family dwelling. The number of second-story windows facing the rear and sides of the property have been limited to the extent possible and have been limited in size. The existing trees in the rear yard areas will be retained to provide enhanced privacy even during project development and construction.

## Shadows

Given the maximum height of the buildings at 23.25 feet, the shadows that would result from the project are anticipated to be minimal. Although some shading of the rear yard areas to the north of the project site can be expected (particularly in the winter months), it is not anticipated that any additional shadow generated from the project would adversely affect the usability of rear yard areas to the north given the large rear yard areas, the setbacks between buildings, the height of the project, and the sloped roof proposed on the rear portion of the buildings.

## Wind

The project is not expected to significantly accelerate or stifle the wind in the project area. These are phenomena with wind that are more commonly experienced in densely developed urban areas with defined street corridors/walls and large buildings.

## Drainage

Standard stormwater and drainage facilities will be required of the project both during construction and after completion of the project. Stormwater and drainage facilities will be designed so that all on-site water is captured, treated, and released to the sewer system. Furthermore, the systems may not allow for drainage onto surrounding properties.

## Impacts to Existing Trees

The seven trees that are currently found on the project site will be retained in rear yard areas of the project site. Detailed landscape plans will be required prior to grading and construction of the project that demonstrate how both on-site and off-site trees will be retained and not damaged during construction activities.

## 6. Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

Standard public street improvements along the Montecito Boulevard frontage will not be required since the public improvements are already meeting City standards. On-site improvements include a 26-foot wide common driveway and vehicular circulation/parking areas. Standard private water and drainage improvements are also required.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Project has been found in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332, the Project qualifies for a categorical exemption as in-fill development.

- The project is consistent with the general plan and zoning. The Project is consistent with the General Plan land use designation of Medium Density Residential, which allows residential development at a density of 8-18 units per acre. The project also complies with the R-3-18 (Multi-family Residential) zoning district development standards, pursuant to Zoning Code Table 2-5, in that the requested entitlements include a CUP for a small lot subdivision.
- The project is within the city limits on a site no more than 5 acres. The Project occurs on a 0.5 acre site located within City limits, and is substantially surrounded by urban uses.
- The Project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species. According to the City's mapping of wetland areas and endangered, rare or threatened species, wetlands are not present on the site or in the project vicinity as the area surrounding the site has been already developed. Similarly, according to the City's mapping of known locations of endangered, rare, or threatened species, there is no evidence of special status plant species, and there is no evidence of the California Tiger Salamander on the project site or in the project area. The existing trees are being maintained on-site, which will not affect existing nesting opportunities for avian species or other tree-dwelling species.
- Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality or water quality.
  - Traffic. Based on the Institute of Transportation Engineer's Trip Generation Rate Manual, the project would add less than 50 new peak hour trips, which is considered less than significant based on the City's threshold of over 50 new peak hour trips. The project is also expected to generate a minimal number of average daily trips (ADT) to the traffic circulation system (46 A which is considered

less than significant.

- Noise. Pursuant to the General Plan, the City's Land Use Compatibility Standards the units within the project would be considered to be normally acceptable with a Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) of up to 65 dB CNEL without any special noise insulation requirements. Pursuant to Figure 12-2 of the General Plan, the multi-family units would be located within the 60-65 dBA noise contour, which is within acceptable levels established by the General Plan for the proposed residential units in the project. The City's Noise Ordinance identifies a conditionally acceptable exposure level up to 70dB. Accordingly, the proposed project would be sited in a noise environment that is consistent with the acceptable noise levels under both the General Plan and the Noise Ordinance. Therefore, new residents on-site would not be exposed to noise levels in excess of established standards and potential impacts would not be significant. Furthermore, the surrounding land uses including multi-family residential, single-family residential, medical offices, and retail, are not expected to generate exterior noise levels onsite exceeding 65 dBA at the project site. With present and reasonably foreseeable conditions, noise levels onsite would be within the normally acceptable range for the residential units.
- Air Quality. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) CEQA Guidelines provide preliminary screening for a lead agency to consider in making a conservative determination of a project's potential impacts on air quality based on proposed land-use. Numerical screening sizes for construction and operation of land uses are established by these guidelines. When BAAQMD screening criteria are exceeded, a quantitative analysis would be warranted to determine if the project would result in significant impacts related to air quality. The screening level criteria for townhouses are 451 dwelling units for operational screening criteria, 78 dwelling units for the greenhouse gas screening size, and 240 dwelling units for construction-related screening size. With eight townhouse units, the project is well below the screening criteria, and it can be determined that the proposed project would have no impacts to degraded air quality resulting from the infill project.
- Water Quality. Although the development will result in an increase in impervious surfaces as compared with existing conditions of the site, the project has been designed in accordance with the City's Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) guidelines that require the integration of Low Impact Design (LID) measures

into site designs. The proposed LID measures include a bioretention area to which the entire site will drain. The bioretention area will treat the stormwater, will facilitate rainwater infiltration, and has components of stormwater detention which attenuates the peak runoff volume. Accordingly, the project will not result in a drainage pattern that causes substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site nor will it result in flooding on- or off-site.

Furthermore, the proposed project would be served by the City's wastewater system. There are no septic systems or other alternative wastewater treatment facilities proposed as part of the project. All wastewater would be collected and conveyed to the City's wastewater treatment plant via existing infrastructure in the project vicinity and the installation of laterals and connections to the project site. Based on the above, the proposed project would not substantially degrade water quality, and the impacts would not be significant.

- The Project site is located in a fully developed area. It can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services. City staff has reviewed the plans and conditioned the Project appropriately.

The City has further determined that no exceptions to the exemptions apply and there is no reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. (CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2.).

#### BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

#### 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, 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.

#### ISSUES

There are not unresolved issues.

## ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Disclosure Form  
Attachment 2 – Location Map  
Attachment 3 – General Plan and Zoning Map  
Attachment 4 – Tentative Map, Dated Received December 7, 2017  
Attachment 5 – Development/Architectural Plans, Dated Received December 7, 2017  
Attachment 6 – Landscape Plans, Dated December 15, 2017  
Attachment 7 – Public Comments (from March 7, 2017 Neighborhood Meeting)

Resolution 1 – Residential Small Lot Subdivision Conditional Use Permit  
Resolution 2 – Tentative Map

## CONTACT

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