



DATE: May 19, 2020

CATEGORY: Public Hearing

DEPT.: Community Development

TITLE: **Rowhouse Development at 1555 West Middlefield Road**

RECOMMENDATION

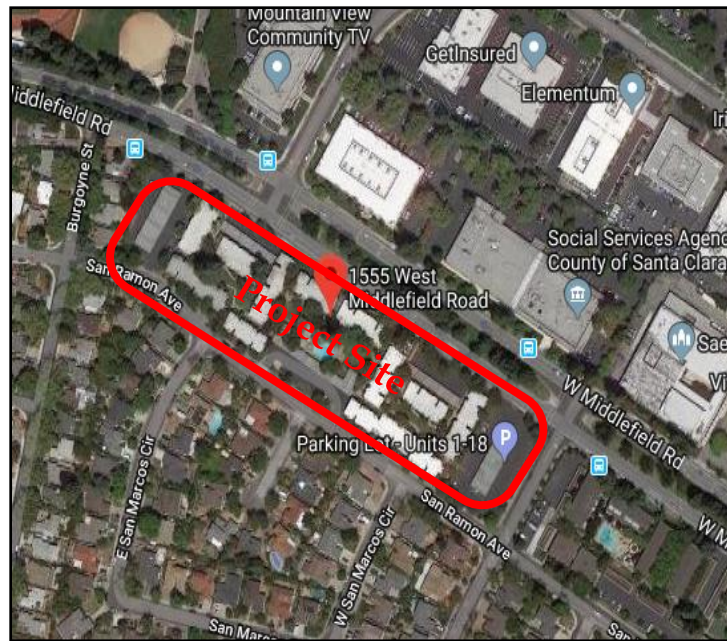
1. Approve a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the 1555 West Middlefield Road Residential Project (Attachment 1 to the Council report).
2. Adopt a Resolution Conditionally Approving a Planned Unit Development Permit and Development Review Permit to Construct a 115-Unit Rowhouse Development Project and a Heritage Tree Removal Permit to Remove 55 Heritage Trees at 1555 West Middlefield Road, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 2 to the Council report).
3. Adopt a Resolution Conditionally Approving a Vesting Tentative Map for Condominium Purposes for a 115-Unit Residential Project Creating 20 Lots and Seven Common Lots on a 5.44-Acre Lot at 1555 West Middlefield Road, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 3 to the Council report).

BACKGROUND

Project Site

The approximately 5.44-acre project site is located on the south side of West Middlefield Road, between Burgoyne Street and San Pierre Way (see Figure 1). The site is currently developed with two-story apartment buildings consisting of 116 units, known as the Meadowood Apartments, and is surrounded by residential land uses to the south, east, and west, and office buildings and Crittenden Middle School to the north across West Middlefield Road.

Figure 1: Location Map



Previous Meetings and Public Hearings

Neighborhood Meeting

Neighborhood Outreach meetings were held on December 11, 2019 and January 21, 2020. There were 15 people at the meetings expressing concern with parking, pedestrian circulation through the site, traffic, massing, and project timing.

Development Review Committee

The project was reviewed by the Development Review Committee (DRC) on January 22, 2020, where the DRC provided a recommendation for approval. Revisions were made to the project based on DRC direction and are reflected in the proposed plans.

Administrative Zoning/Subdivision Committee Public Hearing

The project was reviewed by the Zoning Administrator and Subdivision Committee on February 12, 2020, where it was recommended for approval. There were two speakers at the hearing who expressed concern with proposed displacement of existing tenants, the need to provide Below-Market-Rate (BMR) units on-site, and block consistency with the City's Subdivision Ordinance.

ANALYSIS

Project Description

The applicant, SummerHill Homes, is proposing to redevelop the site with 115 ownership rowhouse units (see Figure 2). The unit mix consists of 86 three-bedroom units and 29 four-bedroom units with units ranging in size from 2,014 square feet to 2,446 square feet (see Attachment 4).

Figure 2: Site Plan



The proposed site layout is configured to provide an activated street presence with individual front unit entries along West Middlefield Road, San Ramon Avenue, and San Pierre Way and a common open space for residents in approximately the center of the site (see Figure 3). There are currently four driveways along Middlefield Road and four along San Ramon Avenue which would be reduced to two along San Ramon Avenue to serve the new project. Internal sidewalks connect to the street, units, common open space area, and guest parking spaces. A pedestrian/bike through-block connection is provided from Middlefield Road to San Ramon Avenue (parallel to "D" Street) and would allow residents of the project as well as anyone from the public to cut through the site, which currently is not allowed.

The proposed Spanish architectural style of the development includes stucco exterior finishes, tile roofs, and metal railings and balconies. Units are differentiated through massing, varied roof forms, projections and offsets, porch elements, and exterior materials and colors.

Figure 3: View from West Middlefield Road



General Plan Designation

The site's General Plan Designation is Medium-Density Residential (13 to 25 dwelling units/acre) and is located in the Monta Loma/Farley/Rock Planning Area. This area is composed of a mix of different land uses, including single-family and multiple-family residential, industrial, office, public facilities, and parks.

The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan's vision for the area, including a residential project at 21 units per acre and is in compliance with the following General Plan policies:

- ***LUD 6.1: Neighborhood character***—Ensure that new development in or near residential neighborhoods is compatible with neighborhood character.
- ***LUD 6.3: Street presence***—Encourage building facades and frontages that create a presence at the street and along interior pedestrian paseos and pathways.
- ***LUD 9.1: Height and setback transitions***—Ensure that new development includes sensitive height and setback transitions to adjacent structures and surrounding neighborhoods.

- **LUD 10.1: Sustainable design and materials**—Encourage high-quality and sustainable design and materials.

Zoning Designation

This site’s zoning designation is R3-2 (Multiple-Family Residential) and allows a maximum of 115 units on this site. While the General Plan Designation prescribes a range of 13 to 25 units to the acre, the actual density of individual sites is determined by the R3 density in the Zoning Code, which is in compliance and consistent with the General Plan density range because it is within the range of density allowed by the General Plan.

Senate Bill 330 (SB 330), Housing Crisis Act of 2019, took effect on January 1, 2020, and its provisions apply to residential projects not deemed complete under the Permit Streamlining Act prior to January 1, 2020. This project was deemed complete prior to January 1, 2020; therefore, the provisions of SB 330 do not apply to the project, particularly related to statute requirements to not allow a reduction in the number of units regardless of City density limitations, replacement of protected units, and tenant relocation requirements.

The R3 Zoning District allows rowhouse developments consistent with the Rowhouse Guidelines. The proposed development complies with all of the Rowhouse Standards and no exceptions are requested. The following table shows the project’s compliance with the Rowhouse Development Standards.

Table 1: Compliance with Rowhouse Development Standards

Standard	Requirement	Proposed
Units	115 units maximum	115 units
Floor Area Ratio	1.05 maximum	1.04
Front Setback	15’ minimum	15’
Side Setbacks	10’ minimum for the first two stories, 15’ minimum for the third story	10’ for the first two stories, 15’ for the third story
Rear Setbacks	10’ minimum for the first two stories, 15’ minimum for the third story	10’ for the first two stories, 15’ for the third story
Building Coverage	35 percent maximum	35 percent
Height	45’ maximum	39’7”

Standard	Requirement	Proposed
Open Area	35 percent minimum 100 square feet per unit private open space	36 percent 169 square feet per unit
Parking	Two covered spaces per unit + 0.3 guest space + one temporary space per 10 tandem spaces (270 total required)	Two-car garages + 35 guest spaces + five temporary spaces (270 total spaces)

Open Space and Trees

The project contains approximately 84,383 square feet of open space, including a centrally located, 10,332 square foot common open-space area, which meets the minimum 35 percent open-space requirement. The common area includes amenities such as dining tables, trellis feature, barbecue pits, fire pits, and landscaped open area.

A tree survey was completed for the project site by HortScience/Bartlett Consulting and reviewed by the City arborist. The tree survey identified, measured, mapped, and rated the trees for preservation, which took into consideration the trees' age, health, structural condition, and proximity to the proposed structures and site development. The project site has a total of 158 existing trees, including 62 Heritage trees and 96 non-Heritage trees.

The applicant is proposing to remove 55 Heritage trees and 85 non-Heritage trees due to poor health and conflict with the proposed buildings and utilities and plant 293 new trees throughout the site. The proposed tree removal is necessary for the build-out of the project to achieve the proposed density and achieve the site planning design requirements of the Rowhouse Guidelines. These organizing principles include maximizing the number of units facing the public street, centralized common open space, and a connected internal circulation network. The existing trees are located in the proposed project's building footprints, circulation, and guest parking spaces.

Since the Zoning Administrator public hearing, the applicant has updated the landscape plans to incorporate more native trees into the landscape palette by proposing 24" box western redbud trees to replace the previously proposed crape myrtle trees. The following table shows the existing and estimated future tree canopy coverage for the site:

Table 2: Tree Canopy Coverage

Existing Canopy	16 percent
Retained + New after five years	12 percent
Retained + New after 10 years	14 percent
Maturity	18 percent

Subdivision Map

The project proposes a Vesting Tentative Map to subdivide the existing lot into individual residential lots and common lots for open space and circulation. Staff finds that the project is consistent with the requirements of the Subdivision Map Act, the City’s Subdivision Ordinance, and the General Plan with incorporation of the draft Conditions of Approval (see Attachment 3).

Tenant Relocation

The 116 existing apartment units on-site are covered under the City’s Community Stabilization and Fair Rent Act (CSFRA) and Tenant Relocation Assistance Ordinance (TRAO).

The units range from a one-bedroom/one-bathroom to a two-bedroom/two-bathroom, ranging in monthly rent from \$1,600 to \$3,100. The developer offered enhanced benefits above those required by the TRAO. The enhanced benefits are described below. Of the 116 households that are being displaced, it is estimated that 69 might be eligible for relocation assistance. Thus far, the following has taken place per the TRAO requirements:

- On June 7, 2019, a Notice of Intent went out to all households.
- On June 27, 2019, an on-site community meeting was held, and 21 households attended this meeting.
- Applicant opened and funded an escrow account with the appropriate 50 percent of total estimated tenant relocation costs.

- On July 3, 2019, applications were mailed to all 116 households, including a cover letter, contact person, and FAQ sheet.
- On July 18, 2019, a “Finding Affordable Rental Housing – BMR Rental Programs and Eligibility Information” information sheet was mailed to all households.
- On October 22, 2019, 12-Month Termination Notices to Vacate were mailed to all households with a final vacate date of October 22, 2020.
- On December 31, 2019, all households were mailed information on potential housing options from the Housing Industry Foundation (HIF).
- As of May 14, 2020, 25 applications have been submitted and deemed eligible. Of those households:
 - Five have vacated and received their full TRAO payment. All five households relocated within the City of Mountain View.
 - Of the 25 households who are eligible for relocation assistance, 16 are eligible for a special-circumstance payment (\$3,398 + \$5,000) per household (four households with minors; twelve households with seniors).
- Forty-Three (43) households have vacated the property and have not applied for Relocation Assistance.
- A total amount of \$171,535.50 has been paid to eligible tenants to date.

The applicant is also offering the following enhanced TRAO benefits which staff supports. The enhanced benefit package is consistent with recent residential projects that included displacement, including the 2310 Rock Street project:

- All of the current tenants will be able to remain in their units until October 22, 2020, regardless of when their current lease ends (assuming they remain in good standing).
- The property owner will waive the tenants’ obligation to provide a 30-day move-out notice.
- The second/final portion of the TRAO payment will be made when tenants provide documentation of a replacement rental, or move out, whichever is earlier.

- ARWS has been hired (a company that provides services similar to AutoTemp) to provide one-on-one assistance for housing searches. ARWS hosted a meeting at the site on February 6 and February 11, 2020 to let residents know about the one-on-one assistance and hosted office hours on-site on February 13, February 23, and February 27 for residents to drop in for assistance. ARWS is also available to provide assistance by appointment.
- Income eligibility will be increased by \$5,000 above 120 percent of AMI.
- Eligible households with special circumstances will receive an additional \$5,000 in assistance on top of the original special circumstance payment of \$3,398.
- At the applicant's request, ARWS sent a letter to residents providing information about affordable housing programs in Mountain View and nearby cities. ARWS also sent a letter providing information about a new housing assistance program offered by the Housing Industry Foundation. The new program is designed to match working families and individuals with below-market-rate units. ARWS sent a follow-up letter to all tenants in early May with the housing assistance and BMR program information.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

An Initial Study and Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration were prepared for the proposed project in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. The environmental analysis determined that with implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, all impacts of the proposed project would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level (see Attachment 1). The public review period for the Initial Study and Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration was from January 17, 2020 to February 6, 2020. One comment letter was received during the public review period, which expressed concerns with parking and open space (see Attachment 5). However, these concerns are not CEQA-related.

FISCAL IMPACT

The subject site has a total assessed value of approximately \$3.7 million, and the City's share of property tax is approximately \$5,600 per year. If the site were developed, the City would receive approximately \$255,500 per year in additional property tax revenue.

The project is subject to the City's Below-Market-Rate (BMR) Ordinance, Phase I, as the project was submitted prior to the Phase II effective date. Payment of the required BMR

in-lieu fees would result in an estimated BMR payment to the City of approximately \$5.14 million based on the applicant's projected average sales price of \$1.49 million per unit.

CONCLUSION

The Zoning Administrator and Subdivision Committee recommended approval of the proposed rowhouse project. The project supports General Plan policies for neighborhood character and street presence and is consistent with the land use and development direction in the General Plan and is in compliance with the Zoning Code and the Rowhouse Guidelines. The proposal promotes a well-designed development that is compatible with and harmonious with surrounding uses and developments and is consistent with other existing, under-construction, and proposed projects in the area.

The proposed subdivision, together with the provisions for its design and improvements, is consistent with the General Plan Land Use Designation of Medium-Density Residential; the R3-2 Zoning District, the City's Subdivision Ordinance; and the Subdivision Map Act.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the project with modified conditions.
2. Refer the project back to the Zoning Administrator or DRC for further review or project modifications.
3. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING

The City Council's agenda is advertised on Channel 26, and the agenda and this report appear on the City's website. All property owners and tenants within a 750' radius were notified of this meeting.

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- Attachments:
1. Initial Study and Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration
 2. Resolution for Planned Unit Development, a Development Review Permit, and a Heritage Tree Removal Permit with Conditions of Approval
 3. Resolution for a Tentative Map with Conditions of Approval and Tentative Map
 4. Project Plans
 5. Public Comment