

CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW**ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING COMMISSION****STAFF REPORT****WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2020****6. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- 6.1 Public Hearing for Consideration of a Planned Community Permit and Development Review Permit for a Residential Bonus FAR to Construct Two 7-Story Multi-Family Residential Buildings with 427 Units (157 Condominiums and 270 Apartments) with Three Levels of Structured Parking and 36 Four-Story Townhomes with Attached Garages, for a Total of 463 Residential Units, Transfer of Development Rights of 10,000 Square Feet on a 6.0-Acre Project Site; a Heritage Tree Removal Permit to Remove 18 Heritage Trees; a Vesting Tentative Map to Create Five Residential Lots with Three Common Lots and Dedication of a New 0.38-Acre Public Park; and an Initial Study of Environmental Significance for a Project Located at 355-365, 401, and 415 East Middlefield Road**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC):

1. Recommend that the City Council approve an Initial Study of Environmental Significance for the 355-365, 401, and 415 East Middlefield Road Residential Project, pursuant to Section 15168 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Exhibit 1 to the EPC Staff Report);
2. Adopt a Resolution Recommending that the City Council Approve a Planned Community Permit and Development Review Permit for a Residential Bonus FAR to Construct Two 7-Story Multi-Family Residential Buildings with 427 Units (157 Condominiums and 270 Apartments) with Three Levels of Structured Parking and 36 Four-Story Townhomes with Attached Garages for a Total of 463 Residential Units and a new 0.376-acre Public Park, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) of 10,000 Square Feet from 2535 California Street, 506 Showers Drive, and 350 Showers Drive to the Project Site in Relation to the Los Altos School District TDR Program, and a Heritage Tree Removal Permit to Remove 18 Heritage Trees on a Six-Acre Site Located at 355, 365, 401, and 415 East Middlefield Road, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Exhibit 2 to the EPC Staff Report); and

3. Adopt a Resolution Recommending that the City Council Approve a Vesting Tentative Map to Create Five Residential Lots, Three Common Lots, and Dedication of a New 0.376-Acre Public Park on a 6.0-Acre Project Site Located At 355, 365, 401, and 415 East Middlefield Road, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Exhibit 3 to the EPC Staff Report).

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The Commission's agenda is advertised on Channel 26, and the agenda and this report appear on the City's Internet website. All property owners within a 750' radius and other interested stakeholders were notified of this meeting. A separate notification of the City Council public hearing will occur for this project.

BACKGROUND

Project Site

The project site includes two parcels totaling approximately 6.0 acres, and is located on the south side of East Middlefield Road, between North Whisman Avenue and Ellis Street. The site is currently developed with 84,905 square feet of office and research and development buildings, which were built in the 1960s.

The site is surrounded by light industrial and research and development (R&D) uses to the west, office uses to the north and east, and a residence and agricultural use to the south (see Figure 1). The Middlefield VTA Light Rail Station is located approximately 1,000' (0.2 mile) to the northeast of the project site and Vargas Elementary School and the Google day care are located approximately 700' southwest of the project site along North Whisman Road.

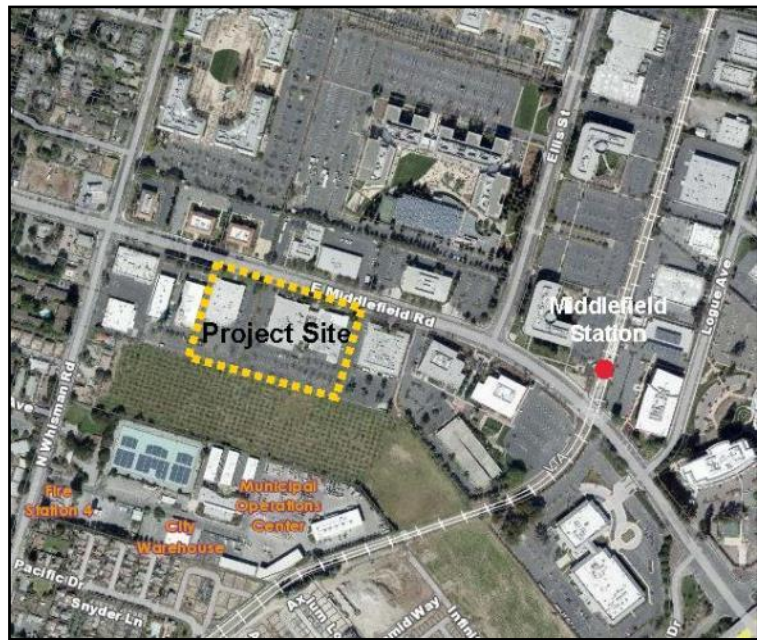


Figure 1: Location Map

Prior Hearings and Meetings

City Council Gatekeeper Authorization

On January 16, 2018, the City Council authorized a framework for the Los Altos School District's (LASD) Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program and Gatekeeper requests for development projects proposing to utilize the available TDR square footage. In total, the TDR program facilitates the sale of up to 610,000 square feet from the newly acquired LASD school property at 2535 California Street, 506 Showers Drive, and 305 Showers Drive in the San Antonio Precise Plan area to help fund acquisition of the site for a new neighborhood-serving school (see [Exhibit 4 – City Council Report Dated January 16, 2018](#)).

This project is one of the six initial LASD Gatekeeper requests authorized by Council to include 10,000 square feet of the TDR for a 250-unit residential development and allowed the applicant to begin the development review process prior to the final adoption of the East Whisman Precise Plan (EWPP).

On April 17, 2018, Council considered modifications to the applicant's original Gatekeeper request (see [Exhibit 5 – City Council Staff Report Dated April 17, 2018](#)). The revised request included overall changes to the project scope and proposed deviations from the draft EWPP and other City requirements, which the applicant stated were necessary for the project's financial viability and included:

- An increase in the total number of units, from 250 units to 447 units;
- Incorporating a mix of rental and ownership units, instead of ownership units exclusively;
- An increase in the number of building stories, from five stories up to seven stories;
- An increase in floor area ratio (FAR), from 2.26 to 2.87; and
- An alternative below-market-rate (BMR) compliance plan, providing 10 percent below-market-rate rental units on-site and payment of the in-lieu fee for the ownership units instead of providing units on-site per the City's updated BMR requirements.

The City Council reauthorized the Gatekeeper request with the applicant's proposed modifications, except for the alternative below-market-rate compliance

plan. The City Council requested a separate Study Session be scheduled to discuss alternative compliance plan options for the project.

City Council Study Session

On October 16, 2018, the City Council held a Study Session and provided direction on the project's affordable housing obligation based on the characteristics of the proposed project, the City's BMR requirements, and various options for comparable mixes of low and moderate-income units (see [Exhibit 6 – City Council Staff Report Dated October 16, 2018](#)). The majority of Council supported an alternative BMR compliance plan for the project to include 10 percent of the units at rents affordable to low-income households and 15 percent of the units at moderate-income levels in the rental portion of the project in lieu of providing any affordable ownership units or paying an in-lieu fee (identified as Alternative 4 in the Staff Report). Council supported this alternative because it provided the greatest number of affordable units on-site and included moderate-income units to address the needs of “missing-middle” households.

Environmental Planning Commission Study Session

The EPC reviewed the proposed project at a June 19, 2019 Study Session (see [Exhibit 7 – EPC Staff Report Dated June 19, 2019](#)) and provided the following feedback:

- Supported flexibility in applying the service street dimensional requirements and associated building-to-building distance separation for the project;
- Supported project revisions to achieve a continuous paseo along the southerly edge of the site, which avoided pedestrians crossing the internal service street twice to traverse the site;
- Expressed general support for exceptions to the Precise-Plan-required common open area requirements but directed the applicant to work with staff to improve the proposal's compliance with the EWPP; and
- Expressed general support for the overall design of the project, but directed the applicant to continue to work on the project design, particularly the key corner, variation between project buildings, and overall massing/articulation (“boxiness of buildings”). Numerous Commissioners also discussed the need for a greater variety in building forms, window design, and detailing.

Development Review Committee

The project was reviewed by the Development Review Committee (DRC) in July, October, and November 2019. The DRC provided design recommendations on several iterations of the project design, such as architecture, massing, transitions, and pedestrian-level improvements, as well as addressed feedback provided by the EPC.

The DRC recommended approval of the project with design conditions, providing direction for the applicant to continue to work with staff to: enhance the paving design for the pedestrian paseos; provide high-contrast pedestrian crossings of the service street; refine screening designs for gas meter banks and the garage podium to achieve a high-quality appearance along pedestrian pathways; refine the color, materiality, and profile of the angled “key corner” building feature and seating/landscaping configuration in the “key corner” plaza to achieve a warm and distinctive appearance; adjust certain recesses and projections on the large apartment and condo buildings to improve massing; make the design of ground-level porch/patio detailing more interesting, particularly on the condominium building; and continue to refine the color/material palettes to have adequate variation but complement each other.

The applicant has begun to address DRC recommendations in the current plans and will continue to work with staff through the building permit process if the project is approved.

Neighborhood Meetings

The applicant hosted a neighborhood meeting on November 13, 2019. No neighbors or interested parties attended the meeting. The applicants also met with two adjacent property owners and the Wagon Wheel Neighborhood Association, where they presented their plans and answered questions about the project in September 2019.

ANALYSIS

Project Overview

The applicant, SummerHill Homes, proposes to construct a 463-unit residential project, consisting of a mix of townhomes and stacked condominiums and apartments, and dedicate a 0.376-acre public park (see Exhibit 8—Project Plans).

The applicant is requesting a Residential Bonus FAR up to 2.91, exceeding the allowed base FAR of 1.0, with a density of 77 dwelling units per acre (du/ac).

The project will provide vehicular access from Middlefield Road with a new U-shaped service street serving as primary access to the seven-story apartment building on the east, the seven-story condominium building in the middle of the site, and two alleys, which serve the townhomes, on the west side of the site. Along Middlefield Road is the approximate 0.38-acre future public park and eight guest parking spaces available for park visitors. This location facilitates potential park expansion if/when redevelopment occurs on the adjacent parcel(s) and is aligned with a future north-south roadway/intersection planned under the EWPP. An additional five surface parking spaces are located between the condominium and apartment building and provide EWPP-required ride-share spaces.

A multi-use paseo is proposed along the perimeter of the site, including an east-west connection along the southern edge of the site. The paseo along the easterly side of the site is designed to function like a sidewalk (on which bicycles could go three to five miles per hour), whereas, the paseo along the southerly site boundary is designed to accommodate full-speed bicycle travel.

The condominium and apartment buildings are located 15' to 19' from the front property lines, consistent with the minimum 10' setback per the EWPP, and include a new public sidewalk and landscape strip for the new Middlefield Road streetscape. This front setback area includes passive open space, pedestrian access to ground-floor building areas, and entry plazas for both buildings. The condominium building also includes a small entry arcade (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Site Plan

The project provides a mix of housing types, building heights, and amenities as follows:

Townhomes: The 36 four-story townhomes (referred to as 12-plex flats on the project plans) are located in three buildings on the southwesterly corner of the project site. Each two- or three-bedroom unit is served with a private, tandem two-car garage on the first floor. Four of the 12 units in each building have front door entries from a porch, while the other units have a shared lobby entrance. All units have a private balcony. Overall, the townhomes have a transitional contemporary architectural style with stucco and vertical siding, gable/shed roof forms, stone veneer, and metal accents, providing a mix of contemporary and traditional elements.

Condominiums: The seven-story condominium building is located in the center of the project site with 157 units and three levels of podium parking (one below-grade and two levels above-grade). The unit mix is summarized in Table 1. The condo building includes a central podium courtyard located on the third floor with

Table 1: Condo Unit Mix

Unit Type	No. of Units	Average Size (in sq. ft.)
1 bedroom	42	1,055
2 bedroom	97	1,250
3 bedroom	18	1,780

a pool, spa, and outdoor amenities along with a common club room. There are three roof decks proposed on the sixth and seventh levels. A fitness center and bike room are located at-grade with personal storage units located in the basement garage level. There are a total of 208 parking spaces (30 of which are tandem) to serve the building and 19 guest parking spaces. The condominium building employs a contemporary design with stucco, brick veneer and metal siding, porcelain tile accenting the building base, and metal accent details throughout.

Apartments: The seven-story apartment building is located on the eastern edge of the project site and includes 270 units and three levels of podium parking (one below-grade and two levels above-grade). The building has two podium outdoor courtyards accessed from the third floor with a pool, spa, common club room, and other outdoor amenities. The unit mix is summarized in Table 2. The 90' tall building has a fitness center and common room on the main floor and three roof decks on the seventh floor. There are 295 parking spaces, 15 of which are guest parking spaces. The apartment building also employs a contemporary design with stucco, high-pressure laminate panels and metal siding, brick veneer accenting the building base, and metal accent details throughout.

Table 2: Apartment Unit Mix

Unit Type	No. of Units	Average Size (in sq. ft.)
Studio	24	560
1 bedroom	190	760
2 bedroom	56	1,035



Figure 3: Eastern View along Middlefield Road

Public Park: The approximate 0.38-acre public park is proposed along Middlefield Road, highlighting a key entrance into the project site as shown in Figure 3. The park scale and location align with desired open space identified in the EWPP, discussed in greater detail later in this report.

Consistency with General Plan and Zoning

2030 General Plan

The project site has a General Plan Land Use Designation of East Whisman Mixed-Use, which promotes a mix of office, neighborhood-serving commercial, multi-family residential, lodging, and small businesses in the core of the Precise Plan area. The project is consistent with the General Plan land use as it introduces a multi-family residential use into the East Whisman area near transit and employment. Additionally, the project advances the following General Plan policies:

- *LUD 3.1: Land Use and Transportation.* Focus higher land use intensities and densities within one-half mile of public transit service and along major commute corridors by locating a residential land use within 0.2 mile of a VTA Light Rail Station;
- *LUD 8.3: Enhanced Publicly Accessible Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections.* Encourage new and existing developments to enhance publicly accessible bicycle, pedestrian, and transit connections. The proposed development includes new pedestrian and paseo connections throughout the site, incorporates bike facilities on-site, and aligns the service street in a manner that can accommodate a potential midblock crossing in the future on Middlefield Road with implementation of Street A (identified in the mobility section of the EWPP); and
- *LUD 8.4: Pedestrian-Oriented Civic and Public Spaces.* Create and encourage new pedestrian-oriented civic and public spaces throughout the City by providing dedication of land for a future public park.

East Whisman Precise Plan

On November 5, 2019, the City Council adopted the East Whisman Precise Plan, resulting in the project site being zoned P(41) East Whisman Precise Plan.

The EWPP is structured around 10 interrelated policy strategies to help implement the vision and guiding principles for the area, summarized on Page 29 of the EWPP (see [Exhibit 9 – East Whisman Precise Plan](#)). To demonstrate the project’s compliance with the EWPP, staff has summarized how the project has achieved, or requested exceptions to, each of the plan strategies below. In Exhibit 10, the applicant has submitted a letter identifying their requested development exceptions.

1. CHARACTER AREA.

This project is located in the EWPP’s Mixed-Use Character Area. The westerly one-third of the site is in the Medium-Intensity subarea and the remaining portion is in the High-Intensity subarea (as shown in Figure 4). Up to 5,000 dwelling units are planned for within this character area, for which this project contributes 463 units (approximately 9 percent). Each respective subarea has specific development standards related to height, FAR, open area, and setback requirements.

Requested Exceptions

- *Exception 1A (Setback).* For residential development proposed in these subareas, a minimum side and rear setback of 15’ is required. The applicant is requesting to have a 14’ side setback from the western property line to the townhomes. This is to accommodate articulation in the building facade with balconies and building projections, which staff supports to maintain architectural interest.

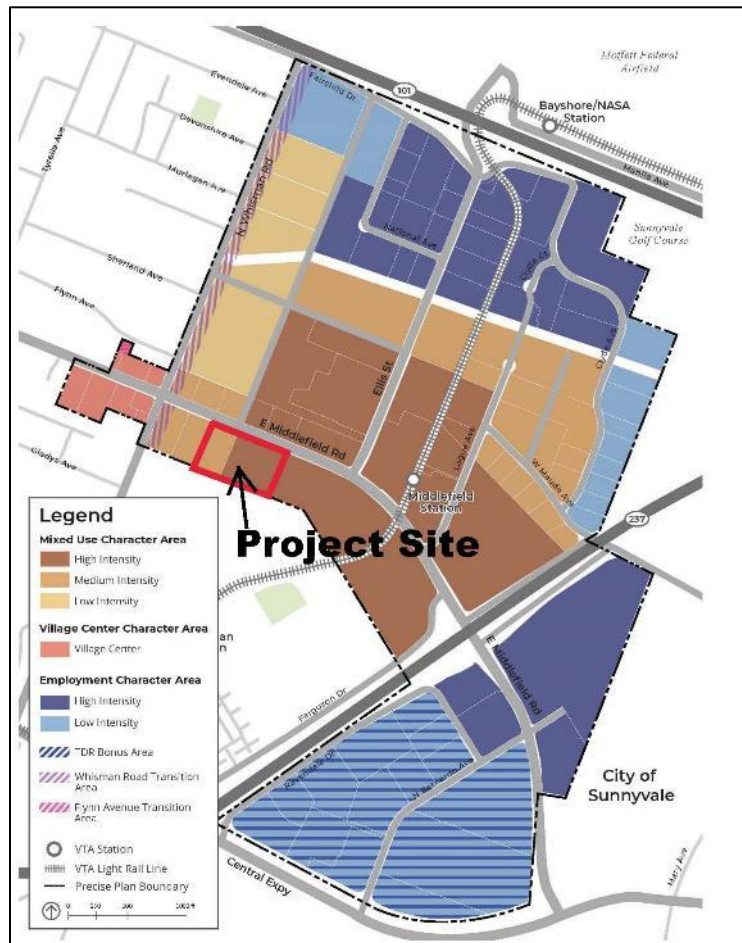


Figure 4: Character Sub Areas

- *Exception 1B (Building Separation).* Per the EWPP, a minimum building-to-building separation of 65' is required to accommodate a service street that can serve vehicle circulation, pedestrian sidewalks, and fire access on a project site (a graphic is shown on Page 156 of [Exhibit 9](#)). The applicant is requesting an exception to this minimum separation between the seven-story condominium building and the four-story townhomes to be 53'. Due to the decreased height of the townhomes, the narrower building separation will not result in a tight building corridor, which the requirement is intending to avoid.

2. HEIGHT AND FLOOR AREA RATIO.

Overall, the Mixed-Use Character area is intended to transition from the highest intensity and height around the light rail station to the least intensity towards North Whisman Road. The maximum height allowed for the four-story townhomes is 75', where a maximum of 45' is proposed. The maximum height for the seven-story buildings is 95', which the project is proposing to meet at 90'. The project incorporates appropriate height transitions from the seven-story stacked flat buildings (apartments and condominiums) to the four-story townhomes.

The baseline FAR allowed in these character sub areas is 1.0 for residential development. However, with a Residential Bonus FAR a maximum up to 3.5 FAR for the high-intensity subarea, or 2.5 FAR for the medium-intensity subarea, can be requested.

With the project's proposed 2.91 FAR, the applicant is requesting for a Residential Bonus FAR within the allowable maximum. It should be noted the 10,000 square feet of TDR the applicant is proposing to purchase from the LASD is excluded from the total square footage of the project, consistent with the exemptions permitted in the EWPP for LASD TDR

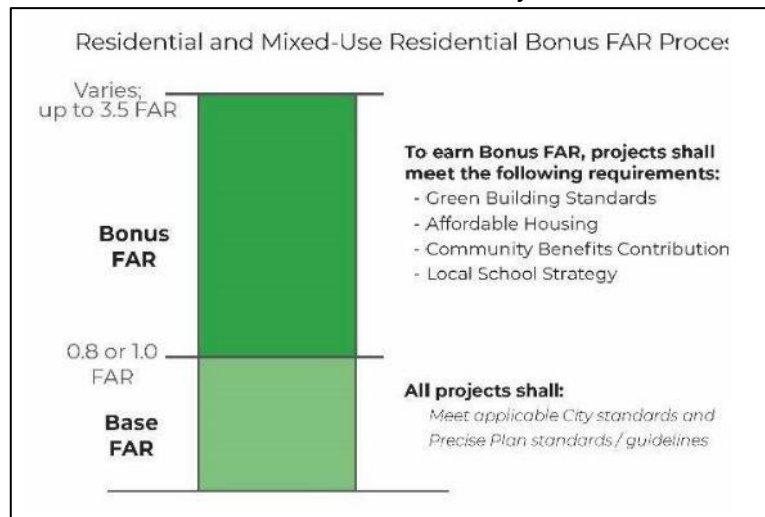


Figure 5: Residential Bonus FAR Requirements

projects. In requesting the Bonus FAR, the applicant is required to provide additional benefits to the project beyond those required for a baseline project, as shown in Figure 5. These requirements will be discussed later in this report.

Requested Exceptions

- *Exception 2A (Wall Plate Height).* The EWPP requires the ground-floor height of a residential building to be a minimum of 12' above the sidewalk to support a prominent ground-floor presence for the pedestrian experience. Though the apartment and condominium buildings comply with this standard, the townhome flats do not. Because the townhomes are far from the project's primary frontage (behind the park) and the building architecture delineates a two-story building base, staff feels the project will continue to meet the intent of the standard.

3. JOBS-HOUSING LINKAGE.

A key element in the Precise Plan is the job-housing linkage, which is intended to create opportunities for people to live near work, services, and retail by increasing housing supply and reducing regional vehicle trips generated by office development in the City. By "linking" housing development with commercial office development, the Precise Plan is attempting to balance the pace of each type of development in the area.

If approved, this project will be the first residential development in East Whisman and the 463 residential units would support the strategy for balanced growth. Based on Council's prior direction, the net new office square footage that balances with this housing is available for use by the other authorized LASD TDR office developments. There is an office development currently under review in East Whisman at 465 Fairchild Drive, which may utilize a portion of this square footage.

Separately, the existing 84,905 square feet of office/R&D on the project site is proposed to be demolished. This square footage is available to the applicant to transfer to another site. The applicant has up to five years after start of construction to complete a transfer of this square footage, or it will be added to the EWPP Development Reserve.

4. DIVERSE HOUSING.

The Precise Plan includes various strategies to incentivize and support the construction of affordable housing in the area and establishes a target mix of unit sizes.

The EWPP has a target of achieving 20 percent of units as affordable. Per prior Council direction in October 2018, SummerHill is proposing an alternative below-market-rate compliance plan that is not consistent with the City’s recently adopted BMR requirements, which requires 15 percent affordable units for all market-rate projects. Instead, the applicant is proposing to provide the following units as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Alternative BMR Compliance Plan

Rental Units	Proposed BMR Units
270	Low-Income: 10% (27 units)
	Mod-Income: 15% (41 units)
<i>Subtotal</i>	68 BMR Units
Ownership Units	
Townhomes: 36	
Condos: 157	

Table 4 compares the project’s unit mix with the target mix desired in the Precise Plan. Overall, the project is proposing slightly more one-bedroom units and slightly fewer studio and three-bedroom units than the Precise Plan target.

Table 4: Project Comparison of Target Unit Mix

Residential Unit Type	Precise Plan Target Percent	Proposed Project
Micro/Studio	10%-20%	5%
1 Bedroom	20%-40%	50%
2 Bedroom	30-50%	36%
3+ Bedroom	10-30%	9%

5. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL.

The Precise Plan identifies key nodes for locating neighborhood commercial uses. This project site is not included in a key location for commercial uses and is not proposing any commercial operations.

6. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE.

The EWPP conceptually identifies desired public open spaces throughout the plan area. A mini-park (0.3 acre to 1.0 acre) is identified on the south side of Middlefield Road at the project site (see Figure 6). Through the review process, the park was relocated from the middle of the site to its current location in order to provide better public access, greater visibility, and facilitate the possibility of a larger park in the future when adjoining property redevelops. The project is dedicating a 0.376-acre parcel to the City for the public park, which, if approved, will be designed and developed through the City-led Capital Improvement Project (CIP) process. In addition to the land dedication for a park, the applicant will be required to pay the remainder in park in-lieu fees which are estimated at approximately \$15 million.



Figure 6: Conceptual Open Space

7. SCHOOLS.

In Exhibit 11, the project applicant is continuing to develop a strategy to support local schools based on the Citywide School Strategy. The City Council is tentatively scheduled to discuss the topic on March 17, 2020.

LASD Transfer of Development Program

Separate from the Local School Strategy, this project is one of six LASD TDR projects authorized by the City Council to participate in the program with the purchase of 10,000 square feet. In exchange, the applicant received authorization to proceed through the development review process and submit an application prior to the adoption of the East Whisman Precise Plan, and the option for development exceptions as identified in the Precise Plan. The project is not proposing to invoke any specific exceptions to development standards identified in the Precise Plan for TDR projects. A condition of approval of the project

requires the applicant to provide proof of purchase for the TDR square footage, prior to the issuance of the first building permit, and the TDR square footage will be memorialized through a legal agreement recorded on the property.

8. *STREETSCAPES AND FRONTAGES.*

The EWPP calls for walkable and active streets that provide direct access to buildings located near the sidewalk. The project proposes significant improvements to the public sidewalk and frontage along Middlefield Road as displayed in Figure 7, including preservation or relocation of existing Heritage trees along this frontage.



Figure 7: View from Middlefield Road

Requested Exception

- *Exception 8A (Ground Level Above Sidewalk).* The Precise Plan requires the ground-floor level to be no more than 4' above the sidewalk to support easy pedestrian access into a building. With the sloped nature of the project site, the applicant is requesting to allow up to 1.5' of additional height above the sidewalk to accommodate the topography of the site and allow for ground-level residential units to align with the grade. Staff supports the request as it appropriately addresses the topographic conditions.

9. MULTI-MODAL CIRCULATION NETWORK.

The on-site circulation network has been significantly revised from the original submittal. The revisions include a complete street and continuous bicycle and pedestrian connections, improving options for non-automobile travel through the site (see Figure 8).

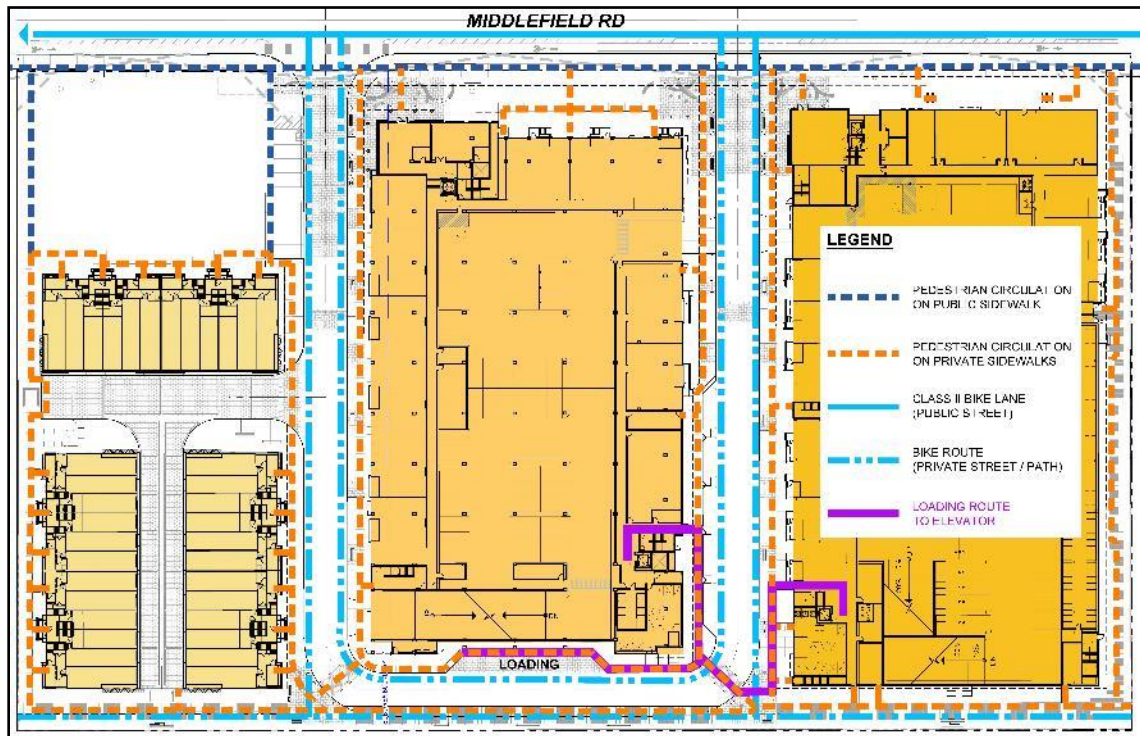


Figure 8: Site Circulation

An important aspect of the identified circulation network in the Precise Plan is the proposed southern paseo that allows east-west connection across the rear of the project site. As adjacent properties develop over time, the intent is for an off-street east-west connection that travels from the VTA Light Rail trail to the commercial shopping center and public school on North Whisman Road. Since the EPC Study Session, significant progress has been made on the proposed paseos. Figure 9 shows the proposed cross-section for the southern paseo.

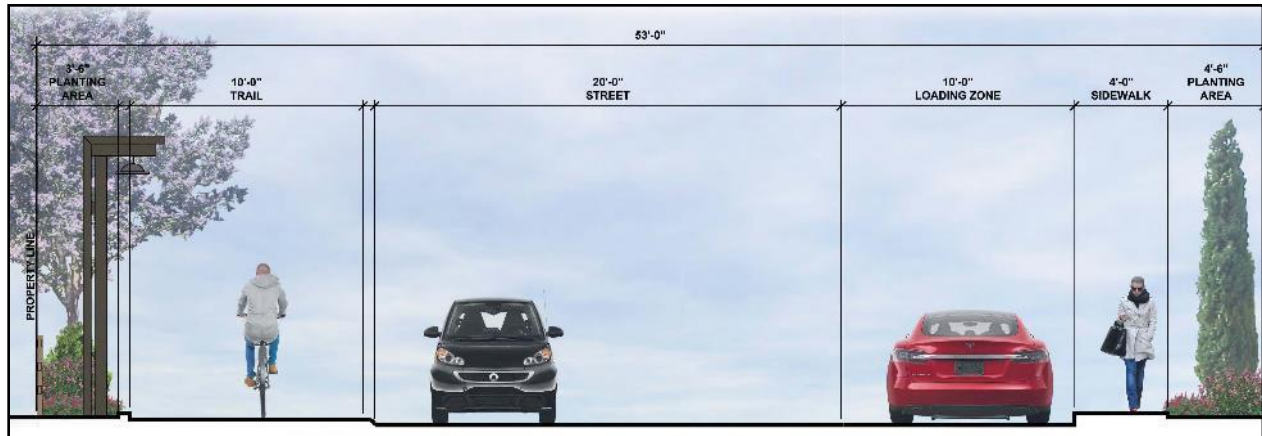


Figure 9: Cross Section of Southern Paseo

Requested Exceptions

- *Exception 9A (Sidewalk Width).* For service streets that accommodate fire access, the EWPP establishes a 5' minimum sidewalk width. While the majority of sidewalks in the project comply, the sidewalk segment along the south side of the condominium building is 4' in width (as seen in Figure 9). Staff supports the exception because it covers a limited span of on-site sidewalk, helps facilitate a better east-west paseo connection, and preserves space for vertical landscaping adjacent to the seven-story condominium building.
- *Exception 9B (Service Street Width).* In tandem with the sidewalk exception, the applicant is requesting to have a service street width of 20' along the south end of the condominium building, in lieu of the required 26', in order to accommodate the 10' wide south paseo (see Figure 9). To maintain the minimum fire access and clearance, the applicant has proposed a rolled curb along the paseo so a fire truck can drive on the paseo if needed in an emergency. City staff, including the Fire Department, has reviewed the proposal and is satisfied with the solution. A continuous east-west paseo connection could not be provided without this exception unless the condominium building was made smaller, which the applicant has indicated would significantly impact project feasibility.

10. TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT.

In addition to contributing housing to the EWPP, the project is required to have a Residential Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program to further support reduced vehicle trips and promote alternative transportation options for

all on-site residents and employees. The proposed project TDM program includes the following design and operational measures (see Exhibit 12):

- Parking maximums, car-share parking, and bicycle parking;
- Provision of a shared, common workspace for residential projects located in the condominium and apartment buildings;
- Secure storage space for grocery deliveries and packages proposed in each building;
- Building entrances oriented toward sidewalks, transit stops, and bicycle routes;
- Join and maintain membership in the Mountain View Transportation Management Association (MVTMA) for the life of the project;
- Access to shared bicycles;
- Support for Safe Routes to Schools programs, including coordination of walking school buses and bike trains; and
- Monetary incentives such as subsidized transit passes and unbundled parking for residents.

Project Design

The EWPP includes extensive quantitative and qualitative design direction for new development, for which key topics are discussed below.

- ***Key Corner.*** The EWPP identifies the northwest portion of the condominium building as a “key corner,” where buildings or publicly accessible plazas/open spaces with distinctive character must be located. Key corners are to have building entrances within 30’ of the corner. The project is in compliance with these requirements, and the applicant has worked with staff and the DRC to make the key corner appear distinctive and welcoming through relocation of a Heritage oak tree to the area, adding sculptural seating, pedestrian-scaled landscaping, an entry arcade, and special building materials and colors. If the project is approved, several of these elements will continue to be refined with staff through building permit review, based on DRC-recommended design conditions.

- ***Differentiate Buildings and Building Massing.*** At prior EPC and DRC meetings, concerns were raised about the need to further differentiate the condominium and apartment buildings. Modifications to the buildings, including changes in form, have happened since those meetings. If approved, staff would continue to work with the applicant on the townhome portion of the project through the building permit process to ensure that all three buildings include a complementary, but varied appearance.
- ***Architectural Detailing, Materials, and Color Schemes.*** The applicant has worked with staff to incorporate more varied design details and color schemes. Particular attention was paid to high-quality materials and detailing on the building bases, variation in window designs, color selection at primary building corners, and better differentiation of color schemes between the two seven-story buildings. The elevations now include increased articulation in the facades and roofline and contain visual interest and variation. Staff believes significant progress has been made on the design.
- ***Integration into Existing Neighborhood.*** The project integrates into existing and future development in the Precise Plan by providing ground-floor uses which are transparent, well-lit, and inviting, with windows and entries overlooking the street, sidewalks, common areas, and public spaces. In addition, the project includes a planting plan for the southerly paseo that is intended to complement the existing agriculturally-zoned property to the south. Further, the street setback areas will create a comfortable transition between the ground-floor interior of a building and the street, and the building entries will reinforce building character and provide visual interest.
- ***Parking/Loading, Equipment, and Trash Locations.*** One remaining design concern is screening of the garage podium, particularly on the eastern facade of the apartment building – which has a long portion of its length devoted to structured parking and utility rooms. Staff is concerned about the overall appearance of the buildings in locations where the garage podium is not wrapped by more active uses and also about the visibility of vehicles and headlights. Improvements have been made to the applicable elevations over the course of the project review, but staff anticipates, prior to issuance of building permits, continuing to work with the project developer on this issue to adequately address visibility from off-site, including screening materials and integration into the overall podium apartment design.

Traffic and Parking

As part of this project, a Site Specific Transportation Analysis (SSTA) was prepared in September 2019. The project is estimated to generate 108 net new peak-hour trips in the morning hours and 146 net new peak-hour trips in the evening hours, which accounts for a 9 percent reduction based on the projects proximity to light rail as summarized in Table 5. The project will not result in any new impacts beyond those already identified in the Precise Plan EIR.

Table 5: Estimated Project Trip Generation

	Daily Trips	AM Peak-Hour Trips Total	AM Peak-Hour Trips Inbound	AM Peak-Hour Trips Outbound	PM Peak-Hour Trips Total	PM Peak-Hour Trips Inbound	PM Peak-Hour Trips Outbound
Proposed Land Use							
464 Multi-Family Units	2,527	154	40	114	193	118	75
VTA Housing Near Light Rail (9% Reduction)	-227	-14	-4	-10	-18	-11	-7
<i>Subtotal (A)</i>	2,300	140	36	104	175	107	68
Demolished Land Use							
Existing Uses ¹ (B)	242	32	28	4	29	5	24
Proposed Net New Trip Generation							
Proposed Trips (A-B)	2,058	108	8	100	146	102	44

¹Existing trips based on driveway counts, not existing square footage

For parking standards, the EWPP applies different requirements to different residential development types. Each townhome unit is required to provide a minimum of two spaces per unit for a combined total of 72 spaces. The remainder of the project has a parking maximum based on bedroom counts. Based on the bedroom mixes, the project cannot exceed a maximum parking of 670 spaces. However, the project is proposing a total of 588 spaces, which includes 13 additional spaces along the service street (see summary in Table 6).

Table 6: Project Parking Summary

Development Type	Required Parking	Parking Proposed
Townhomes	Min. 72 spaces	72 spaces
Condominium Units	Max. 272 spaces	208 spaces
Apartment Units	Max. 326 spaces	295 spaces
Outdoor Parking		13 spaces
<i>Total</i>	Max. 670 spaces	588 spaces (or 1.27 spaces/unit)

A parking analysis was prepared to evaluate whether the proposed parking would be sufficient to serve the project (included in Exhibit 12). The analysis was based on several similar-sized projects in the Bay Area and concluded an average parking demand ratio of 0.80 space per bedroom for the condominium and apartment units, for which the project is proposed 0.82 space per unit. Applying the average ratio to the apartment and condominium buildings, a total of 493 parking spaces would be sufficient per the study results; a total of 516 parking spaces are proposed for these two buildings, in excess of the studied demand. In total, staff supports the amount of parking proposed on-site as sufficient for the project based on the distribution of parking, results from the parking analysis, and the proximity to transit. Additionally, the project is proposing 463 long-term and 46 short-term bicycle parking spaces.

Trees

A total of 91 trees exist on the project site, of which 23 are designated as Heritage trees. Eighteen (18) of the Heritage trees are proposed to be removed, along with 66 non-Heritage trees. One Heritage Coast live oak tree is proposed to be relocated to the “key corner” along East Middlefield Road. All of the trees on the site have been reviewed by an arborist who concluded that many of the existing trees are nearing the end of their life cycle, have been irreversibly pruned due to utilities, or in poor health and should be replaced. If approved, the project proposes to plant 306 new trees. Table 7 summarizes the tree canopy coverage estimated for the project.

Table 7: Tree Canopy Coverage

Canopy	Site Coverage
Existing	17%
Retained + New After 5 Years	17%
Retained + New at Maturity	28%

Tentative Subdivision Map

The proposed Vesting Tentative Map for the project includes the creation of five residential lots: (a) a lot to accommodate 157 stacked condominiums; (b) a lot to accommodate up to 270 stacked apartment units; and (c) a lot to accommodate 36 stacked townhome units. The map also includes three common lots to accommodate circulation throughout the project and shared common areas. Lastly, the map includes a lot for a new 0.376-acre public park. Staff finds that the Tentative Map is consistent with the requirements of the Subdivision Map Act and the General Plan, subject to the recommended Conditions of Approval (see Exhibit 3 – Resolution for the Vesting Tentative Map).

Community/Public Benefits

Community benefits are required in the East Whisman Precise Plan Bonus FAR program. The public benefit value based on the adopted East Whisman Precise Plan is \$5 per square foot of Bonus FAR, excluding the 10,000 square feet of LASD TDRs. The estimated public benefit contribution for this project's net "bonus" of 499,832 square feet is approximately \$2.5 million.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Since the Public Hearing Notices were sent out, staff has not received any comments.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The East Whisman Precise Plan Integrated Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) comprehensively evaluated the environmental impacts of the EWPP, which allowed up to 2.3 million square feet of net new office uses, 100,000 square feet of retail uses, 200 hotel rooms, and 5,000 multi-family residential units. Additionally, the program-level FEIR assumes that 2.2 million square feet of existing industrial and R&D space would be rebuilt/reoccupied as office space. The City Council certified the EWPP FEIR and approved the EWPP in November 2019.

Subsequent activities, which were included in the scope of a program EIR, may be determined to be adequately evaluated under CEQA and no further environmental documents may be required if it is determined that no new environmental effects will occur and no new mitigation measures would be required for the subsequent activity.

An Initial Study of Environmental Significance was prepared to evaluate whether any new environmental effects would occur as a result of the project, which were not already examined under the program EIR, and whether any new mitigation measures would be required (see Attachment 1 – Initial Study of Environmental Significance for the 355 East Middlefield Road Residential Project). Project-specific technical studies were also prepared to provide technical guidance in the areas of air quality and greenhouse gas, trees, bird-safe design, noise, utilities, and transportation.

The Initial Study prepared for the project found that, with implementation of the EWPP standards and guidelines, State regulations, and mitigation measures identified in the EWPP EIR and the 2030 General Plan and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program EIR, the proposed addition of 463 residential units and associated improvements would not result in any new environmental impacts beyond those evaluated in these EIRs.

NEXT STEPS

Following a recommendation from the EPC at this public hearing, the project and EPC recommendation will be considered at a City Council public hearing, tentatively scheduled for March 17, 2020.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends the EPC recommend the City Council approve the proposed project as it achieves General Plan goals; introduces a residential land use into the East Whisman Plan area in a major employment center; provides a mix of ownership and rental housing types; and complies with the intent of the East Whisman Precise Plan.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Recommend approval of the project with modified conditions.
2. Refer the project back to the Development Review Committee for additional consideration.

3. Recommended that the Council not adopt the CEQA document, deny the project, and/or deny the subdivision.

Prepared by:

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Approved by:

Stephanie Williams
Planning Manager/
Zoning Administrator

JR/LH/2/CDD
823-02-19-20SR

- Exhibits:
1. Initial Study of Environmental Significance
 2. Resolution for the Planned Community, Development Review, and Heritage Tree Removal Permits
 3. Resolution for the Vesting Tentative Map
 4. [City Council Report Dated January 16, 2018](#)
 5. [City Council Report Dated April 17, 2018](#)
 6. [City Council Report Dated October 16, 2018](#)
 7. [Environmental Planning Commission Staff Report Dated June 19, 2019](#)
 8. Project Plans
 9. [East Whisman Precise Plan](#)
 10. Letter of Requested Exceptions
 11. School Strategy Letter
 12. Project TDM Program