



DATE: May 25, 2021

CATEGORY: Public Hearing

DEPT.: Community Development

TITLE: **Four-Unit Residential Project at 773 Cuesta Drive**

RECOMMENDATION

1. Find the project to be categorically exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act, Section 15332 (“In-Fill Development Projects”).
2. Adopt a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Mountain View Approving a Planned Unit Development Permit and Development Review Permit to Construct a Four-Unit Residential Development, and Heritage Tree Removal Permit to Remove 11 Heritage Trees and Relocate Two Heritage Trees at 773 Cuesta Drive, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 1 to the Council report).
3. Adopt a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Mountain View Approving a Vesting Tentative Map to Create Four Residential Lots and One Common Lot at 773 Cuesta Drive, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 2 to the Council report).

BACKGROUND

Project Site

The approximately 0.7-acre project site consists of one existing lot, currently developed with one single-family home which is proposed to be demolished.

The project site is located on the south side of Cuesta Drive, between Miramonte Avenue and Begen Avenue. Directly west of the property is a dental office, which is located on the southeast corner of Cuesta Drive and Miramonte Avenue.

The Blossom Valley Shopping Center, which includes a Safeway in addition to other retail uses, is located on the southwest corner of Cuesta Drive and Miramonte Avenue. To the north of the property, across Cuesta Drive, is a church with an associated preschool. Several single-family homes are located to the south and east of the project site. Cuesta Park and Cuesta Annex are located approximately one-half block east of the project site.

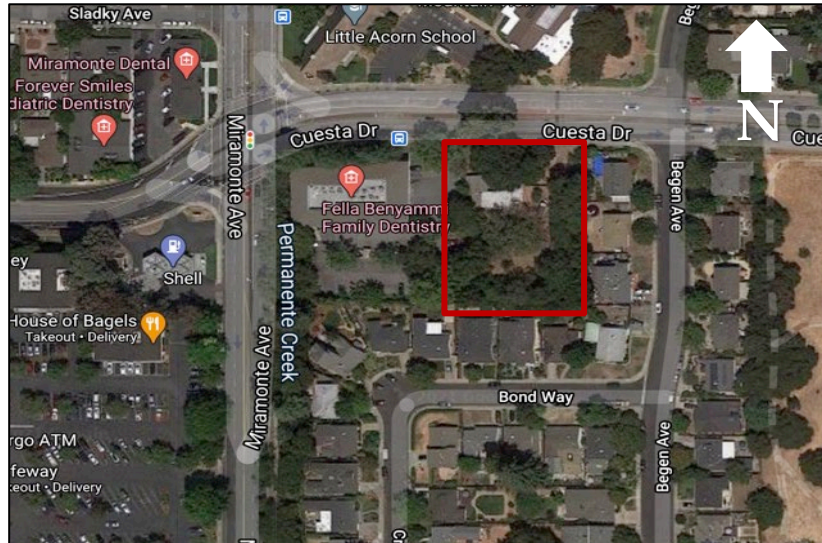


Figure 1: Location Map

Previous Meetings

Neighborhood Meeting

On December 16, 2020, the applicant held a neighborhood meeting to discuss the proposed project. Sixteen (16) members of the public attended the meeting. Some attendees raised concerns about the removal of the Heritage trees on-site and possible parking impacts. The proposed tree preservation and replacement strategy and an analysis of the proposed parking is discussed later in the report.

Development Review Committee

The project was reviewed by the Development Review Committee (DRC) on March 17, 2021. The DRC recommended conditional approval of the project, providing direction for the applicant to continue to work with staff to refine the exterior color palette, use and placement of building materials, window placement and alignment, porch details,

pedestrian paths, and landscaping. The applicant has addressed many of the DRC's recommendations in the current plans and will continue to work with staff through the building permit process as conditioned.

Administrative Zoning/Subdivision Committee Public Hearing

The project was reviewed by the Zoning Administrator and Subdivision Committee on April 28, 2021, where the project received a recommendation for conditional approval to the City Council. There were four speakers at the public hearing, who provided comments related to concerns surrounding the proposed tree removals and privacy impacts. Additionally, staff received written comments from 15 members of the public. These comments are provided as Attachment 3 to the Council Report.

ANALYSIS

Project Description

The project proposes to redevelop the site with four 2-story, single-family homes, ranging in size from approximately 2,700 square feet to 3,000 square feet (see Attachment 4—Project Plans). Each home would be on an individual lot, and a shared driveway is proposed in the middle of the site and would provide access to the garage for each home.

The two front homes along Cuesta Drive have front entries and porches oriented towards the street and garages to the rear of the homes. The two rear homes have front porches facing each other and garages facing the shared driveway. Each home includes private yard areas with many existing trees being incorporated into the site's landscaping. The site plan was developed to preserve and highlight as many existing on-site Heritage trees as practical for the development of the site. Planning staff, the City arborist, and the applicant team and the applicant's arborist visited the site numerous times to evaluate the trees and discuss the best way to maximize tree preservation into the planned development.

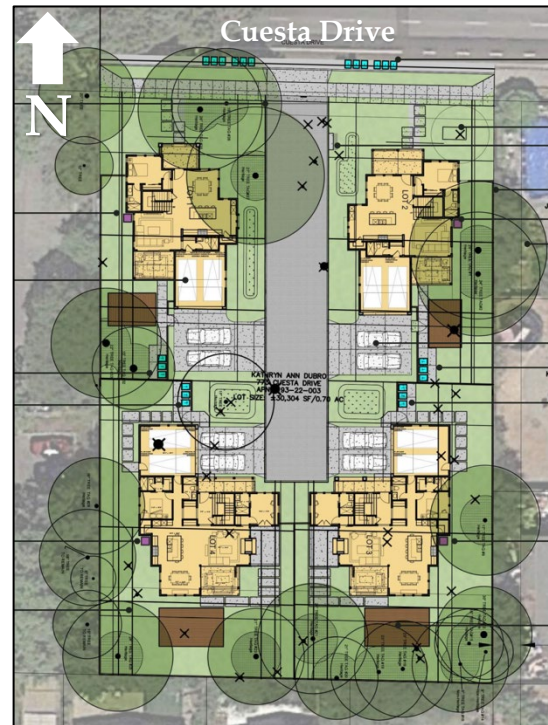


Figure 2: Site Plan



Figure 3: View from Cuesta Drive

General Plan

The site's General Plan designation is Low-Density Residential (1 to 6 du/acre) and is located in the Miramonte/Springer Planning Area. The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan designation which allows detached, single-family houses and similar uses compatible with a quiet living environment and complies 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 or pathways.
- ***MOB 7.2: Off-street parking.*** Ensure new off-street parking is properly designed and efficiently used.
- ***LUD 9.1: Height and setback transitions.*** Ensure that new development includes sensitive height and setback transitions to adjacent structures and surrounding neighborhoods.

Zoning Designation

The site's zoning designation is R1 (Single-Family Residential), and the proposed project complies with all applicable requirements of the R1 District and R1 Flag Lot Development Standards, with the exception of a request to allow a reduced common lot width.

The R1 Flag Lot Standards require that the common lot, or "flag pole," serving two or more lots be at least 25' wide with 16' paved. The applicant requests an exception to this requirement to allow a 23' wide common lot. This exception will allow the applicant to

achieve the minimum 60' lot width requirement for the new lots. The proposed 23' wide common lot and 22' paved driveway will provide adequate width for shared vehicular access for the four homes and emergency vehicle access.

Parking

The R1 Zoning District requires single-family homes to provide one covered and one uncovered parking space. The project proposes a two-car garage, plus a two-car driveway for each home which provides double the amount of required parking for the development.

Trees

Staff and the applicant worked through several iterations to the originally proposed site layout to preserve many trees on-site, specifically Heritage trees in good health and around the perimeter of the site which help serve as a privacy buffer to adjacent properties.

An arborist report was provided by Kielty Arborist Services which evaluated the size, species, and condition of all on-site trees which was reviewed by the City arborist (see Attachment 5). In total, 11 Heritage trees and three non-Heritage trees are proposed to be removed. Twenty-six (26) Heritage trees, including 24 Coast live oaks and two Valley oaks, will be preserved and two existing Heritage trees (one Coast live oak and one Valley oak) are proposed to be relocated on-site. The Heritage trees proposed for removal include: one dead Monterey pine, three black walnuts which are either dead or in decline, one Valley oak with significant root rot that has suffered limb failure in the past, and six Coast live oaks which have poor form and are within the proposed building footprints or driveway. Twenty-four (24) replacement trees ranging in size from 24" box to 48" box are proposed to be planted on-site. Additionally, the project proposes substantial and varied landscape screening around the perimeter of the site, including both trees and understory plantings, to ensure privacy for neighbors is maintained. New street trees will also be planted along the project frontage.

The following table shows the existing and estimated future tree canopy coverage for the site:

Tree Canopy Coverage

	Canopy Coverage
Existing	60%
Retained + New After 5 Years	43%
Retained + New After 10 Years	60%

Tenant Relocation

The existing single-family home on-site is exempt from the Community Stabilization and Fair Rent Act (CSFRA) and the Tenant Relocation Assistance Ordinance (TRAO). It is also not covered under SB 330 since it is an owner-occupied unit and no tenant displacement will occur.

Subdivision Map

The project proposes a Vesting Tentative Map to subdivide the property into five lots, including four residential lots and one common lot to be used as a shared driveway. On April 28, 2021, the Subdivision Committee reviewed the application and found it consistent with the General Plan and Subdivision Map Act with incorporation of the draft Conditions of Approval and recommended approval to Council (see Attachment 2 – Resolution Conditionally Approving a Vesting Tentative Map).

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project qualifies as categorically exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 15332 (“In-Fill Development Projects”), because it is characterized as an infill development, which is consistent with the applicable General Plan and zoning designation; is on a project site that is less than five acres; contains no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species; would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; and the site can adequately be served by all required utilities and public services.

FISCAL IMPACT

The subject site has a current total assessed value of \$471,827, and the City’s share of property taxes is approximately \$800 per year. If the site were redeveloped with the

project, the City would receive approximately \$16,600 per year in additional property tax revenue.

As fewer than seven residential units are proposed, the project may pay a Below-Market-Rate (BMR) Housing In-Lieu Fee instead of providing on-site BMR units per the City's BMR requirements. Based on the proposed net-new habitable square footage of approximately 8,744 square feet, the project would provide approximately \$491,763 in BMR In-Lieu Fees prior to issuance of the first building permit.

The project is subject to the Park Land Dedication In-Lieu Fee requirements set forth in Chapter 41 of the Municipal Code. Prior to issuance of any building permits and prior to approval of the final map, the applicant shall pay the Park Land Dedication Fee for the three net new residential units being proposed by the project. The total estimated Park Land Dedication In-Lieu Fee is \$136,650.

CONCLUSION

The Zoning Administrator and Subdivision Committee recommended conditional approval of the proposed residential development. The project supports General Plan policies related to preserving neighborhood character, providing adequate and properly designed on-site parking, and preserving Heritage trees. Additionally, the project complies with applicable development standards for flag lot developments in the R1 District. The proposed residential project will provide four new homes with architectural design that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, thoughtful landscaping highlighting on-site Heritage trees, and an improved public sidewalk.

Overall, the proposed subdivision – together with proposed improvements, design, and conditions of approval – is consistent with the General Plan Land Use Designation of Low-Density Residential; the R1 (Single-Family Residential) 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 DRC and/or Zoning Administrator for additional consideration.
3. Deny the project and/or deny the map.
4. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING

The 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 and interested stakeholders were notified of this meeting.

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- Attachments:
1. Resolution Conditionally Approving a Planned Unit Development Permit, a Development Review Permit, and a Heritage Tree Removal Permit with Conditions of Approval
 2. Resolution Conditionally Approving a Vesting Tentative Map
 3. Public Comment Letters
 4. Project Plans
 5. Arborist Report