

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Date: July 12, 2017

To: Public Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

Lead Agency: City of Santa Rosa
Contact: Andy Gustavson, Senior Planner
Planning & Economic Development Department
100 Santa Rosa Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Subject: **Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Elnoka Continuing Care Retirement Community Project**

Review Period: July 12, 2017 to August 11, 2017

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) initiates the environmental review process in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15082) for a senior residential development project in the City of Santa Rosa. The City of Santa Rosa will be the Lead Agency and will prepare the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The purpose of an NOP is to provide sufficient information about the proposed project and its potential environmental impacts to allow agencies, organizations, and interested parties the opportunity to provide a meaningful response related to the scope and content of the EIR, including mitigation measures that should be considered and alternatives that should be addressed (CEQA Guidelines 14 CCR Section 15082[b]). The project description, location, and probable environmental effects of the Elnoka Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) Project are briefly described below.

Providing Comments

The City of Santa Rosa is soliciting comments from responsible agencies, organizations, and interested parties regarding the scope and content of the environmental documentation. Because of time limits mandated by State law, comments should be provided no later than 5:00 PM on **Friday, August 11, 2017**. Please send all comments to:

Andy Gustavson, Senior Planner
County of Santa Rosa Planning Division
100 Santa Rosa Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95404
Tel: (707) 543-3236
Email: agustavson@srcity.org

Agencies that will need to use the EIR when considering permits or other approvals for the proposed project should provide the name of a contact person, phone number, and email address in their comment. Comments provided by email should include "Elnoka CCRC NOP Comment" in the subject line, and the name and physical address of the commenter in the body of the email.

Public Scoping Meeting

A public scoping meeting will be held by the City to inform interested parties about the proposed project, and to provide agencies, organizations, and the public with an opportunity to provide comments on the scope and content of the EIR. The meeting time and location are as follows:

Thursday, July 27, 2017

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Berger Auditorium at Oakmont Community Center, 6633 Oakmont Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95409

Project Location and Setting

The project site is located at 6160 Highway 12 (Sonoma Highway) and 300–425 Elnoka Lane in the southeastern portion of Santa Rosa in the urban/rural fringe. The surrounding area contains plant and animal life, including several native tree species as well as wetlands and aquatic life. The project site is surrounded on the northwest by single-family homes, on the northeast by Sonoma Highway, on the southeast by the active adult community of Oakmont, and on the southwest by Channel Drive and Trione Annadel State Park (Exhibit 1).

The project site is an approximately 68.7-acre site consisting of four parcels (031-050-062, 031-050-071, 031-050-063, and 031-050-072). There is a moderately sloped ridgeline running east to west through the center of the site surrounded by more gentle terrain. There are over 1,660 trees on-site. There is a seasonal creek running east-west in the northern portion (near Sonoma Highway), and two other creeks on the western, upper portion. The site is predominately undeveloped with the exception of three single-family homes located in the approximate center of the site. The area is envisioned as a low-density residential community in the City of Santa Rosa General Plan 2035. The General Plan land use designations applicable to the site are Very Low Density Residential, Low Density Residential, and Medium Density Residential and the site is zoned Planned District (PD 93-002) and Multi-Family Residential (R-3-18).

Project Description

The Elnoka Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) Project would develop 664 senior care units (74 cottages, 528 apartments, and a 62 unit care center) with 12 affordable employee housing units and recreational center (Exhibit 2). The project would be developed in phases over time. The first phase would contain 202 units of project housing, plus the 12 employee housing units. The remaining 462 units would be built in subsequent phases over time based on market conditions. There would be a total of approximately 975 residents on-site at full buildout (1.42 seniors per unit plus an average of 2.62 persons per employee units). The project would employ approximately 194 people in full and part-time positions, including care staff, housekeepers, landscaping, maintenance, administrative and recreation center staff. There would be an average of 75 employees on site daily. Residents and employees will likely be drawn largely from the Santa Rosa area.

Access to the site would be taken from a gated entrance on Sonoma Highway, which would serve as the primary entrance. A secondary entrance would be located on Melita Road. Emergency vehicles would be provided additional site access from a fire access road off Channel Road. Pedestrian linkages and trails would be provided for the residents and their guests within and amongst all on-site land use areas. A publicly accessible bicycle trail running parallel to Sonoma Highway would be constructed.

The site plan would respect the natural features and slopes of the site and be laid out with a goal of maximizing the natural features of the site. Over 58 percent of the site would be left as natural open space and landscaped area. Over 75 percent of the trees on site would be preserved. Table 1 lays out the development plan summary.

Table 1: Development Plan Summary

Project Component	Acreage	Percent coverage
Natural Open Space	16.7	24.3
Landscaped Area	23.5	34.2
Parking and Circulation	11.2	16.2
Exterior Flatwork	4.4	6.4
Building	13.0	18.9
Total	68.8	100

On-site landscaping would incorporate drought resistant native plants and variations in color, texture, and massing to compliment the buildings. The landscaping, trees, and shrubs would enhance screening throughout the project and provide vertical relief to the horizontal massing of the buildings.

Required approvals and permits

The proposed project requires the following discretionary approvals from the City of Santa Rosa:

- Subdivision Tentative Map
- Conditional Use Permit
- Design Review
- Hillside Development Permit
- Subdivision Tentative Map
- EIR Certification

In addition, the proposed project would require ministerial approvals, including but not limited to grading, site work, and building permits.

Potential Environmental Impacts

The determination to prepare an EIR was made by the City following preliminary review of the project. Because an EIR is clearly needed for the project, no initial study has been prepared for the project and is not required, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a). The EIR will evaluate potentially significant impacts associated with the approval and implementation of the project. Consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Appendix G), the following environmental resource categories will be analyzed in relation to the project:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Land Use/Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population/Housing

- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Geology/Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities/Service Systems
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

All of the resource categories listed above will be considered in the EIR; however, given the local context of Santa Rosa, the following issues will be central to the environmental analysis:

- Sonoma Highway (SR 12) is an important regional arterial street that carries between 26,500 and 77,000 vehicles per day on segments that pass through the city. While the highest volumes occur near the junction with US 101, SR 12 is a key transportation route in the vicinity of the project site and careful consideration of potential cumulative traffic impacts along this roadway will be needed.
- As SR 12 is an officially designated State Scenic Highway and Melita Road is designated as a Scenic Road in the Santa Rosa General Plan, aesthetics impacts to views from these roadways will need to be closely evaluated. Additionally, changes to the visual character of the site, including those associated with the onsite ridgeline, will be assessed for consistency with City of Santa Rosa General Plan, Zoning Code and applicable Design Guidelines.
- With residences adjacent to the northwest and southeast, potential neighborhood impacts related to air quality, noise and local traffic will also need to be quantified and assessed.
- Given the presence of creeks and wetland areas on the site, the EIR will need to closely examine potential impacts related to biological resources, water quality, and flooding on- and off-site.
- Potential impacts to known cultural resources in the vicinity of the site will also need to be carefully evaluated.

CEQA allows environmental effects for which there is no likelihood of a significant impact to be “scoped out.” The following effects have been determined not to be significant, as outlined below. Full documentation of the factual basis for this determination will be included in the EIR. Unless specific comments are received during the NOP public comment period that indicate a potential for the project to result in significant impacts, these less than significant effects will be addressed briefly in the EIR and “scoped out.”

- **Agriculture and Forest Resources:** The project site is currently designated for Very Low Density Residential, Low Density Residential, and Medium Density Residential uses in the Santa Rosa General Plan. The project would not result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural uses, would not affect properties subject to a Williamson Act contract, and would not conflict with existing zoning for forest land or timberland.
- **Mineral Resource:** There are no mineral recovery sites on or in the vicinity of the project site.¹ The nearest mine is the Mark West Quarry, located approximately 7.43 miles to the north of

¹ City of Santa Rosa General Plan 2035 Land Use Diagram

the project site. Therefore, implementation of the project would not result in the loss of a locally important mineral resource recovery site. Further, while a Mineral Land Classification report prepared by the California Geological Survey indicates that the project site is located in an area containing known mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral significance,² residential areas and areas committed to residential development are not considered suitable as Aggregate Resource Areas under the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA). As such, construction and operation of the project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource of value to the region.

Alternatives to the Project

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, the EIR must contain a comparative impact assessment of alternatives to the Elnoka CCRC Project. The primary purpose of the alternatives section is to provide decision-makers and interested parties with a reasonable number of feasible project alternatives that could attain most of the basic project objectives while avoiding or reducing any of the project's significant adverse environmental effects.

² Mineral Land Classification of Sonoma County Map, March 2005.



Source: Brelje and Race, 2017

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Exhibit 1
Aerial of Site and Surroundings

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Source: ESRI Imagery

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Exhibit 2 Proposed Site Plan