



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
PLANNING COMMISSION
REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 11/13/2024

ITEM NO: 3

DATE: November 8, 2024
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Joel Paulson, Community Development Director
SUBJECT: Requesting Approval of a Planned Development for Demolition of a Senior Living Community, Construction of a New Senior Living Community, Removal of Large Protected Trees, and Site Improvements Requiring a Grading Permit on Property Zoned R:PD. **Located at 110 Wood Road.** APN 510-47-038. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and Modified CEQA Checklist have been Prepared for this Project. Planned Development Application PD-20-001 and Environmental Impact Report EIR-21-002. Applicant: Frank Rockwood. Property Owner: Front Porch Communities. Project Planner: Sean Mullin.

RECOMMENDATION:

Forward a recommendation to the Town Council on a request for approval of a Planned Development (PD) for demolition of an existing senior living community, construction of a new senior living community, removal of large protected trees, and site improvements requiring a Grading Permit on property Zoned R:PD, located at 110 Wood Road.

PROJECT DATA:

General Plan Designation: Medium Density Residential: 5-12 dwelling units/acre
Zoning Designation: Residential, Planned Development, R:PD
Applicable Plans & Standards: General Plan; Hillside Specific Plan
Parcel Size: 10.84 acres

PREPARED BY: Sean Mullin, AICP
Planning Manager

Reviewed by: Planning Manager and Community Development Director

Surrounding Area:

	Existing Land Use	General Plan	Zoning
North	Single- and Multi-Family Residential	Medium Density Residential	R-1D
East	Office-Professional and Commercial	Central Business District	C-2 and C-2:PD
South	Office-Professional and Single-Family Residential	Hillside Residential and Central Business District	HR-5
West	Single-Family Residential and Vacant	Hillside Residential	HR-5

CEQA:

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) have been prepared for the project (Exhibits 1 and 2) and are available online at www.losgatosca.gov/110WoodRoad. Additionally, a Modified CEQA Checklist (based on the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist) was prepared that concluded that the revised project is adequately addressed in the EIR (Exhibit 6). Any new or increased environmental impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through implementation of the MMRP prepared for the 2021 EIR and standard Town conditions of approval. Additional environmental analysis and/or recirculation of the 2021 EIR is not required.

FINDINGS:

- As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for certifying the Final EIR.
- That the PD to rezone the property is consistent with the General Plan.
- That the project is in compliance with the Hillside Specific Plan.
- As required by Section 29.80.095 of the Town Code for adoption of a Planned Development Ordinance.

ACTION:

- Forward a recommendation regarding Environmental Impact Report EIR-21-002 to the Town Council.
- Forward a recommendation regarding Planned Development application PD-20-001 to the Town Council.

BACKGROUND:

The subject site is approximately 10.84-acres consisting of two underlying parcels at the intersection of Wood Road and South Santa Cruz Avenue (Exhibit 3). The property rises east-to-west approximately 240 feet, and approximately 95 feet across the area of development. The subject property is characterized by a hillside setting and is in the Hillside Specific Plan area, but it is not located within the hillside area as defined by the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines (HDS&G). The site has been occupied by the Los Gatos Meadows since 1971, a senior living development approved under a PD ordinance in 1968.

On April 9, 2018, the Conceptual Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) reviewed a preliminary proposal for redevelopment of the subject property. The staff report and minutes of the CDAC meeting are available at www.losgatosca.gov/110WoodRoad.

In February 2019, the Los Gatos Meadows facility initiated a month's long closure and transition process to relocate all residents. By September 2019, the facility was vacant. While the property owner, Front Porch Communities, has completed the closure process, the property continues to be staffed to provide on-going maintenance and to ensure security of the property.

On February 12, 2020, an application was filed by Frank Rockwood of Rockwood Pacific requesting a new PD zoning for the property for the purpose of building a new senior living community. The existing zoning is Residential, Planned Development (R:PD) and the General Plan Land Use designation is Medium Density Residential.

A Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project was prepared and circulated for a 45-day public review period from May 28, 2021, through July 12, 2021. The Final EIR, which includes the Response to Comments, was distributed on September 3, 2021. These environmental documents are available at www.losgatosca.gov/110WoodRoad.

On January 12, 2022, the Planning Commission considered the application and forwarded a recommendation of denial to the Council based on the following concerns:

- Building heights;
- Tree removal;
- Lack of diversity in housing types;
- Concentration of luxury housing units; and
- Ratio of the number of units (fewer than existing) to the overall height (greater than existing).

Additionally, the Planning Commission voted not to certify the Final EIR because it is based on a project that the Planning Commission found to be inappropriate, and environmental review is

not required for denial of a project. The Planning Commission staff reports and meeting minutes are available at www.losgatosca.gov/110WoodRoad.

On April 5, 2022, The Town Council considered the application and several options presented by the applicant developed to respond to the concerns expressed by the Planning Commission. Included with these options was relocation of some of the building mass by reducing the height of some villas and increasing the height of other villas. Following public comment and Council discussion, the application was remanded back to the Planning Commission for further discussion with consideration of comments provided by the Town Council, which included but are not limited to, the following:

- Concern with proposed building heights, tall wall plains, and lack of screening;
- Appreciative of applicant's regard for fire safety;
- Preference for Options A and B;
- Support removal of penthouse units;
- Not supportive of removing parking to reduce grading; and
- Provide full set of drawings and details of revised project.

The Town Council staff reports and meeting minutes are included as Exhibits 7 through 9 and available at www.losgatosca.gov/110WoodRoad.

On October 25, 2023, the Planning Commission conducted a Study Session on a revised proposal presented in a conceptual fashion to allow the applicant to received initial feedback prior to submitting a full revised project. During the Study Session, the Planning Commission noted the following positive aspects of the revised conceptual project:

- Reduction in grading;
- Elimination of the penthouse units; and
- Potential offsite programming at 142 S. Santa Cruz Avenue as a community benefit.

The Planning Commission also expressed concerns on the following aspects of the revised conceptual project:

- Overall height, consider expanding the development pad to lower height of buildings;
- Visibility impacts when viewed from downtown and from neighboring residences on Wood Road; and
- Unit size and targeting of luxury market.

The Planning Commission staff report and meeting minutes are included as Exhibits 10 through 12 and available at www.losgatosca.gov/110WoodRoad.

DISCUSSION:

The applicant now presents a revised project (Exhibit 16B) for consideration by the Planning Commission and provided a revised Letter of Justification discussing the project changes (Exhibit 13). The Commission's review should consider whether the revised submittal adequately responds to the comments and concerns expressed by the Planning Commission and Town Council on January 12, 2022, and April 5, 2022, respectively; and the feedback provided at the October 25, 2023, Planning Commission Study Session.

Building Height

The development footprint of the revised project is consistent with the previous iteration. The project revisions are primarily focused on a redistribution of building height and mass amongst the villas above the podium level. The revised project removes upper floors from the front portion of Villa A and adds a sixth floor to the rear portion of Villa A. Moving from the front/downhill portion of the building to the rear/uphill portion, Villa A now steps up from three stories, to four, five, and then six stories. Villa B has been reduced from four stories to three, and Villa H remains at three stories. Villa C has been reduced from five to four stories. Villas D and E, previously separated, have been combined at the second floor creating a breezeway below. Villa D remains at four stories while Villa E has increased from five to six stories. Similarly, Villas F and G have been combined at the first floor, with Villa F remaining at five stories and Villa G remaining at four stories. These revisions push some of the taller building mass to the rear/uphill portions of the site and reduce building mass at the front/downhill portions of the site. As a result, the maximum building height of Villa A increased at the rear by approximately 11 feet, six inches and decreased at the front by approximately 26 feet; Villa B decreased in height by approximately 11 feet, six inches; Villa C decreased in height by approximately 12 feet; Villa E increased in height by approximately 12 feet, five inches; and Villa F decreased by approximately two feet. Maximum building heights of Villas D, G, and H remain unchanged.

In their Letter of Justification (Exhibit 13), the applicant indicates that they explored options to expand the development pad in order to reduce building heights, as recommended by the Planning Commission during the Study Session. The applicant selected not to expand the building pad, indicating that the overall impacts to the site would be increased.

Visibility Impacts

In their Letter of Justification (Exhibit 13), the applicant indicates that the changes in height and massing are intended to mitigate the visual impacts of the development by relocating height and massing deeper into the uphill portions of the site. Additionally, the revised project no longer includes height increases to Villas F and G, as presented as an option to the Council, to address the concerns of the neighbors along Wood Road. The applicant provided visual

renderings and a video to demonstrate the visual impacts of the development from several locations in the areas surrounding the project site (Exhibit 14).

Unit Size and Luxury Marketing

The revised project no longer includes any penthouse units, and the average unit size has decreased from 1,493 square feet to 1,414 square feet. The revised submittal also includes changes in the number of units and unit types. Total independent living units would increase from 174 to 187 units through elimination of the penthouse units and redistribution of the one- and two-bedroom units. The independent living unit mix includes four types of units: one-bedroom, one-bedroom with den, two-bedroom, and two-bedroom with den. Additionally, the number of supporting care units would increase from 17 to 24.

Grading

The revised submittal reduces grading off-haul by approximately 11,500 cubic yards by reducing the size of the parking garages.

Parking

The revised plan shows that total parking spaces, including tandem spaces, would increase from 200 to 214 parking spaces. The parking increase is achieved through a reduction in standard spaces and an increase in tandem spaces. The tandem parking spaces would be managed under a 24/7 valet parking program.

The tables on the following page provide a comparison of the original project from 2021 to the revised project.

Comparison of Existing Development with 2021 and 2024 Proposals				
Project Component	1968 PD (2019 Baseline)	Project Evaluated in Draft/Final EIR - 2021	Revised Project 2024	Impact of Project Revisions (2021 to 2024)
Site Coverage (%)	24.6	22.5	23	2.2% increase
Site Coverage (sf)	116,427	106,540	108,640	+2,100 (2% increase)
Total Independent Living Units	184	174	187	+13 (7.5% increase)
Total Supporting Care Units	38	17	24	+7 (41% increase)
Total Units	205	191	211	+20 (10.5% increase)
Total Gross Square Footage (SF)	150,475	430,816	438,971	+8,155 (2% increase)
Open Space	75.4%	77.5%	76.7%	1% decrease
Building Setbacks	Front: 20'-0" Side: 15'-0", 27'-0 Rear: 15'-0"	Front: 34'-10" Side: 40'-10", 60'-10 Rear: 32'-11"	Front: 34'-10" Side: 40'-10", 60'-10 Rear: 32'-11"	No Change
Parking	111 spaces	78 non-tandem 200 total spaces	40 non-tandem 214 total spaces	-38 non-tandem +12 total spaces
Height	2 stories 30'9" to 55'-2"	3 to 5 stories 59'-0" to 85'-6"	3 to 6 stories 59'-0" to 97'-0"	+ 1 story +11'-6" max. height increase
Population and Employment	205 units 222 residents 120 FTE	191 units 223 residents 120 FTE	211 units 251 residents 120 FTE	+20 (10.5% increase) +28 (13% increase) No change in FTEs

Comparison of Villas in 2021 and 2024										
Villa	Project Evaluated in Draft/Final EIR – 2021					Revised Project – 2024				
	Units	Residential Square Footage	Gross Square Footage	Height from Ground Floor (ft)	Stories	Units	Residential Square Footage	Gross Square Footage	Height from Ground Floor (ft)	Stories
A	46	63,480	157,054	85.5	5	50	65,479	124,517	59 to 97	3-6
B	20	29,465	41,483	70.5	4	18	20,590	36,510	59	3
C	29	41,887	56,891	82	5	23	32,733	51,150	70	4
D/ E	33	53,082	72,138	70.5 82	3 5	42	65,610	105,550	70 94	4 6
F/ G	31	49,794	72,138	84.5 70.5	3 5	37	57,300	39,595	82 71.5	4 5
H	15	22,076	31,112	59	3	17	22,016	37,573	59	3
Total	174	259,744	430,816 (+ 91,827 structured parking = 522,643)	--	--	187	263,728	453,200 (+ 83,330 structured parking = 536,530)	--	--

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

An EIR was prepared for the project. As part of the environmental review process a number of technical reports were prepared, including species lists and database reviews, tree evaluations and arborist reports, geotechnical investigations, and traffic analyses. Reports that were prepared by outside consultants were peer reviewed by Town consultants.

The Notice of Preparation (NOP) was distributed on February 1, 2021, for a 30-day comment period. Comments received on the NOP are included as Appendix A to the Draft EIR (Exhibit 1).

The Notice of Completion and Availability for review of the Draft EIR was released on May 28, 2021, with the 45-day public review period ending on July 12, 2021. On June 23, 2021, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to accept comments on the Draft EIR. No comments were received at this meeting. Written comments on the Draft EIR were received from the applicant, one public agency, and three individuals. The Final EIR, with Response to Comments, was completed in August 2021 (Exhibit 2).

Through the Initial Study/EIR process, no significant and unavoidable impacts were identified. All identified significant impacts that would result from the project can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level through implementation of the MMRP that has been prepared for the project as required by CEQA (Exhibit 2). The MMRP includes a list of all mitigation measures and the department(s) responsible for ensuring that the mitigation measures are properly implemented. All mitigation measures are included as performance standards within the draft PD Ordinance (Exhibit 16).

A Modified CEQA Checklist (based on the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist) was prepared to determine if the previously prepared EIR adequately addresses the project as revised or whether the revised project will result in new or substantially increased environmental impacts requiring recirculation of the 2021 draft EIR. The analysis determined that the revised project has been adequately addressed in the draft and final EIR in terms of potential increases in or new environmental resulting from the revised project. Any new or increased environmental impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level through implementation of the MMRP prepared for the 2021 EIR and standard Town conditions of approval. Therefore, additional environmental analysis and/or recirculation of the 2021 EIR is not required.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

As detailed in the Letter of Justification, the applicant has been engaged with the surrounding neighborhood, business community, Town officials, and the greater Los Gatos community since 2018 through open house meetings, focus groups, individual in-person and video meetings, and maintenance of a project website (Exhibit 13). The applicant also provided a supplemental

community engagement letter summarizing their outreach efforts that have taken place since the Letter of Justification was submitted (Exhibit 15).

Written notice was sent to property owners and tenants within 300 feet of the subject property. As approved by the Council, visual renderings were prepared in-place of story poles and made available on the applicant's website for some time and provided on the Town's website on November 4, 2024. Project signs were also installed at the primary entrance on Wood Road and at the intersection of Farwell Lane and Broadway. Public comments received between 11:01 a.m., Tuesday, October 24, 2023, and 11:00 a.m., Friday, November 8, 2024, are included as Exhibit 17.

CONCLUSION:

A. Summary

The applicant presents a revised project for consideration by the Planning Commission. The Commission's review should consider whether the revised submittal adequately responds to the comments and concerns expressed by the Planning Commission and Town Council on January 12, 2022, and April 5, 2022, respectively; and the feedback provided at the October 25, 2023, Planning Commission Study Session.

B. Recommendation

Based on the summary above, if the Commission finds merit in the proposal, the Commission can take the following actions to forward the Final EIR and PD applications to the Town Council, recommending that the Town Council:

1. Make the required findings included in Exhibit 4;
2. Make the required CEQA Findings of Fact (Exhibit 5), certify the Final EIR (Exhibit 2), and adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (Exhibit 2); and
3. Adopt the Planned Development Ordinance (Exhibit 16) and approve the proposed project.

C. Alternatives

Alternatively, if the Commission has concerns with the proposed project, it can:

1. Forward a recommendation for approval of the applications with modified performance standards to the Town Council; or
2. Forward a recommendation of denial of the applications to the Town Council; or
3. Continue the matter to a date certain with specific direction.

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SUBJECT: 110 Wood Road/ PD-20-001 AND EIR-21-002

DATE: November 8, 2024

EXHIBITS:

Exhibits previously received under separate cover:

1. May 2021 Draft Environmental Impact Report (available online at www.losgatosca.gov/110WoodRoad)
2. August 2021 Final Environmental Impact Report and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (available online at www.losgatosca.gov/110WoodRoad)

Exhibits received with this Staff Report:

3. Location Map
4. Required Findings
5. Required CEQA Findings of Fact
6. Modified CEQA Checklist, dated September 24, 2024
7. April 5, 2022 Town Council Staff Report (with Attachments)
8. April 5, 2022 Town Council Addendum Report (with Attachments)
9. April 5, 2022 Town Council Minutes
10. October 25, 2023 Planning Commission Study Session Staff Report (with Exhibits)
11. October 25, 2023 Planning Commission Study Session Addendum Report (with Exhibits)
12. October 25, 2023 Planning Commission Study Session Minutes
13. Letter of Justification, dated May 31, 2024
14. Visual Renderings
15. Supplemental Community Engagement Letter, dated October 14, 2024
16. Planned Development Ordinance with Exhibit A Rezone Area and Exhibit B Development Plans, May 31, 2024
17. Public comments received between 11:01 a.m., Tuesday, October 24, 2023, and 11:00 a.m., Friday, November 8, 2024