



TOWN OF LOS GATOS
CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

MEETING DATE: 05/11/2022

ITEM NO: 2

DATE: May 6, 2022

TO: Conceptual Development Advisory Committee

FROM: Joel Paulson, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Conceptual Development Advisory Committee Application CD-22-003. Project Location: **300 Mountain Laurel Lane**. APN: 567-24-023. Property Owner: Bright Smile Dental Office Defined Benefit Plan. Applicant: Kunling Wu, Trustee. Requesting Preliminary Review of a Proposal to Amend the Planned Development Ordinance to Increase the Maximum Residence Size Allowed on Lot 14 on Property Zoned HR-5:PD.

ROLE OF THE CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

The Conceptual Development Advisory Committee (Committee) advises a prospective applicant on the overall consistency of a project with Town policies prior to submitting a formal application and investing in the development review process. The Committee also endeavors to identify the potential issues that will need to be addressed during the development review process should the applicant wish to submit an application. The issues identified by the Committee are not intended to be all-inclusive and other additional issues may be identified during the formal development review process.

None of the Committee's comments are binding on the Town and in no way are they intended to indicate whether the project will be received favorably by the various review bodies that are charged with evaluating and deciding the application. As noted in this report, if an application is filed, technical analysis would need to be done during the evaluation of the proposal. In addition, public input is a required and essential component in the development review process. Notice has been sent to residents and property owners within 600 feet of the project site and to all properties within the Shannon Valley Ranch subdivision. In addition to the public comments received at this meeting, all applicants are strongly encouraged to hold neighborhood meetings to receive input as the design of the project evolves should they decide to proceed with the development review process.

PREPARED BY: SEAN MULLIN, AICP
Senior Planner

Reviewed by: Planning Manager and Community Development Director

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is approximately 8.14 acres located in the northern portion of the Shannon Valley Ranch subdivision (Attachment 1). A single-family residence was once located on the property, but was destroyed by fire prior to the 2004 subdivision. The property is the last undeveloped residential property in the subdivision.

In March 2002, the Town Council considered a project at 17101 Hicks Road and 14045 Shannon Road and approved Ordinance 2097, amending the General Plan land use designation from Agricultural to Hillside Residential and a Planned Development (PD) to change the zoning from HR-5:Prezone to HR-5:PD to allow subdivision of the property into 14 single-family lots and three open space lots (Attachment 3). Architecture and Site applications for new residences on Lots 1 through 13 were approved in 2002 and 2003. The subdivision was completed in November 2004 and subsequent Building Permits were issued in December of 2004. The 13 new residences were completed by 2007. In 2009, the Town Council approved an amendment to the PD to allow accessory structures on all 14 lots, provided they comply with the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines (HDS&G) (Attachment 4).

The original PD application was considered numerous times by the Development Review Committee and the Planning Commission prior to the Council's action in March 2002. During the final Planning Commission meeting on January 23, 2002, two members of the public spoke on the project, offering comments specific to the size of the replacement residence on Lot 14 (Attachment 5, highlighted text). Both commenters expressed concern on whether developing Lot 14 was appropriate, with one commenter adding that if Lot 14 is to be developed, it should be rebuilt in the original footprint and not turned into a 4,600 or 4,800 square foot home. The motion to forward a recommendation of approval to the Town Council included an additional performance standard that Lot 14 be developed under the guidelines of a replacement structure, similar in square footage, mass, and scale to the original residence that was destroyed by fire. This additional performance standard was forwarded to the Council and included in Ordinance 2097 and the amended Ordinance 2172 (Attachments 3 and 4, Performance Standard #8). The Town Council approved the project in March 2002 with the additional performance standard as recommended by the Planning Commission.

Town records for Lot 14 do not provide much detail on the original residence that was destroyed by fire. An April 20, 2016, letter from Greenbriar Homes Communities (applicant under the original PD application) to Mr. Alan Barbie of the Sereno Group indicates that the original home was one story and approximately 2,400 square feet (Attachment 6). Other anecdotal information indicates that the size of the original residence was closer to 3,000 square feet. Given the incomplete nature of the records for Lot 14, staff has messaged that the lot could be developed with a single-story residence with a maximum size of 3,000 square feet to be located in the general area of the previous residence subject to Architecture and Site approval.

BACKGROUND (continued):

In addition to Lot 14, Performance Standard #8 limits the sizes of the residences on Lots 1 through 13 to a maximum of 4,850 square feet, with an average size of 4,650 square feet (Attachment 4, Performance Standard 8). Additionally, two-thirds of the 13 residences are limited to a one-story design. The table below provides a summary of the development on Lots 1 through 13.

Summary of developed lots.					
Lot	Address	Residence	Stories	Garage	Accessory Structure
1	280 Shannon Oaks Ln	4,656 sf	1	768 sf	--
2	282 Shannon Oaks Ln	4,815 sf	2	799 sf	--
3	286 Mountain Laurel Ln	4,655 sf	1	811 sf	--
4	288 Mountain Laurel Ln	4,612 sf	1	781 sf	--
5	290 Mountain Laurel Ln	4,815 sf	2	799 sf	--
6	299 Mountain Laurel Ln	4,327 sf	1	806 sf	--
7	297 Mountain Laurel Ln	4,635 sf	1	811 sf	--
8	293 Mountain Laurel Ln	4,611 sf	1	781 sf	--
9	291 Mountain Laurel Ln	4,655 sf	1	811 sf	--
10	289 Mountain Laurel Ln	4,315 sf	1	806 sf	--
11	287 Mountain Laurel Ln	4,814 sf	2	799 sf	636 sf
12	283 Shannon Oaks Ln	4,605 sf	1	781 sf	960 sf
13	281 Shannon Oaks Ln	4,808 sf	2	799 sf	--
AVERAGE RESIDENCE: 4,640 sf			69 percent single story		

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The applicant has submitted a Conceptual Development Advisory Committee application (Attachment 2) and a project description letter (Attachment 7) requesting preliminary review of a proposal to amend the PD to allow for the construction of a residence larger than what the PD currently permits on the subject property. The applicant's letter indicates that they wish to construct a single-story residence of 6,000 square feet. The applicant indicates that a larger residence is needed to accommodate a large family and offers the following as justification for the residence size:

- The proposed 6,000 square foot single-story residence would be consistent with the development on neighboring properties;
- The current size limitation is not proportional to the size of the property (8.14 acres) or the developable area (75,000 sf); and
- The high cost to develop a residence on the site is not proportional to the current size limitation for a residence.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (continued):

The applicant has provided a Site Plan showing a developable area of approximately 75,000 square feet (1.72 acres) served by a proposed 1,483-foot paved driveway with an average slope of 17.1 percent (Attachment 7). The proposed driveway would follow the path of the existing dirt driveway, taking access from the eastern end of Mountain Laurel Lane, rising approximately 250 feet along the western property line to the developable area identified by the applicant. The slope of the proposed driveway would require an exception to the HDS&G, which limits driveway slopes to a maximum of 15 percent and a maximum length of 300 feet.

Future development of the site as proposed would require an amendment to the PD Ordinance and an Architecture and Site application, which would be subject to the Residential Design Guidelines, HDS&G, and the Hillside Specific Plan.

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN, ZONING, AND PLANNING AREA:

1. General Plan land use designation: Hillside Residential, which provides for very low density (0-1 dwelling units per net acre; up to 3.5 persons per acre), rural, large lot or cluster, single-family residential development. This designation allows for development that is compatible with the unique mountainous terrain and vegetation of parts of the Town.
2. Zoning designation: HR-5:PD, Hillside Residential (five to 40 acres for each dwelling unit) with a Planned Development overlay. The intent and purpose of the HR zone is to provide for an orderly, harmonious development of the foothills and mountains resulting in the minimum amount of disturbance of the natural terrain through existing residential density to the natural slope to encourage and provide incentive for excellence in design principles and engineering techniques, and to provide for a variety of dwelling types where land assembly and a unified development scheme are more appropriate. Slope-density regulations will be utilized to assist in relating the intensity of development to the steepness of terrain in order to minimize grading, removal of vegetation, runoff, erosion, geologic hazards, fire hazards, and to help ensure utilization of land in balance with its natural capabilities to support development.
3. Surrounding zoning designations: HR-1 to the north and east, HR-5 to the west and south.

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The subject property has a gross lot area of 354,458 square feet (8.14 acres) with an average lot slope of 28 percent. When adjusted for slope per the HDS&G, the net lot area is 163,051 square feet (3.74 acres); which would allow for 6,000 square feet of development without the limitations imposed by the existing PD Ordinance. The subject property takes access from the east end of Mountain Laurel Lane via a dirt driveway along the western property line accessing the northeastern portion of the property, where the original residence once stood. This portion of the property is relatively flat encompassing approximately 75,000 square feet (1.72 acres).

EXISTING CONDITIONS (continued):

The majority of the remaining portions of the property are steeply sloped and are held in a scenic conservation easement.

POTENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND ISSUES:

The following is a brief list of issues and topics for consideration by the Committee. Staff has not reached conclusions on these topics. Staff is identifying them here to help frame the discussion and to solicit input. The main question for the Committee is whether or not the applicant's concept for the project creates a high-quality plan appropriate for Los Gatos in this location. If an application is filed, staff would evaluate the technical issues.

1. General Plan
 - a. Policy LU-1.3 encourages preservation of existing trees, natural vegetation, natural topography, riparian corridors and wildlife habitats, and promote high quality, well-designed, environmentally sensitive, and diverse landscaping in new and existing developments.
 - b. Policy LU-1.4 states, infill projects shall be designed in context with the neighborhood and surrounding zoning with respect to existing scale and character of surrounding structures, and should blend rather than compete with the established character of the area.
 - c. Policy LU-6.8 states, new construction, remodels, and additions shall be compatible and blend with the existing neighborhood.
 - d. Policy LU-7.3 states, infill projects shall contribute to the further development of the surrounding neighborhood (e.g. improve circulation, contribute to or provide neighborhood unity, eliminate a blighted area) and shall not detract from the existing quality of life.
 - e. Policy LU-7.4 states, infill projects shall be designed in context with the neighborhood and surrounding zoning with respect to the existing scale and character of surrounding structures, and should blend rather than compete with the established character of the area.
2. Zoning
 - a. Is the proposed residence size consistent with the PD zoning of the Shannon Valley Ranch subdivision and the development on surrounding properties?
3. Circulation
 - a. Adequate access, that meets Town roadway and/or driveway requirements.
 - b. Driveway slopes would exceed the 15 percent limit in the HDS&G.
 - c. Driveway length would exceed the 300-foot limit in the HDS&G.
 - d. The Hillside Specific Plan prohibits access roads that result in excessive grading. Would access and driveways require excessive grading?
 - e. Is a second means of emergency access/egress available?

POTENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND ISSUES (continued):

4. Visibility
 - a. The potential visibility of the future single-family residences from the Town's established viewing areas will need to be analyzed pursuant to the HDS&G. The applicant proposes a single-story residence, which may be more compatible with the limitations for a visible residence.
5. Potential Tree Impacts
 - a. An arborist report will be required during the development review process to evaluate the potential impacts to trees.
 - b. Will the proposed driveway be located to avoid tree impacts?
 - c. Do underground electrical and telephone utility lines impact trees?
 - d. Do the water and sanitary sewer lines impact trees?
6. Other
 - a. The project would be evaluated for utilities, stormwater management, and other engineering considerations.
 - b. Would the proposed residence be located within the Least Restrictive Development Area (LRDA) as required by the HDS&G?

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Public comments received by 11:00 a.m., Friday, May 6, 2022, are included as Attachment 8.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location Map
2. CDAC Application
3. Ordinance 2097
4. Ordinance 2172
5. Planning Commission Minutes of January 23, 2002
6. Letter from Greenbriar Homes Communities, dated April 20, 2016
7. Project Description Letter with exhibits
8. Public comments received by 11:00 a.m., Friday, May 6, 2022