



Technical Memorandum

City of Santa Rosa
Planning & Economic
Development Department
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Subject: CEQA Environmental Screening – 930 Fresno Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Description of Proposed Modifications

In September 2007, the City of Santa Rosa certified the *Southwest Area Projects Subsequent Environmental Impact Report* (2007 Subsequent EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The 2007 Subsequent EIR partially tiered from a previously certified Master EIR for the *Southwest Area Plan*.

The 2007 Subsequent EIR evaluated 29 individual residential projects that included development of 1,399 housing units as well as retail, office, and light industrial uses on 168.4 acres within the Southwest Area Plan. One of the 29 individual projects was a proposed development at 930 Fresno Avenue, referred to as **Project 22 – Cherry Ranch**, which was described in the 2007 Subsequent EIR as 39 single-family detached units and a rezoning of the project site to R-1-PD. In 2007, the project site was mass graded with CEQA clearance and applicable regulatory permits having been obtained. Following the mass grading, the project went on hold and no residential units or other improvements were constructed.

The Applicant is now considering modifications to the original project at 930 Fresno Avenue. The modifications would include an increase in the number of residential dwelling units from the 39 single-family detached units evaluated in the 2007 Subsequent EIR to a 67-unit residential development consisting of 62 duplex units and 5 single-family homes.

This memorandum provides a CEQA environmental screening of the proposed modified project, as well as an evaluation of changes to circumstances that have occurred since the Subsequent EIR was certified in 2007, to determine an appropriate path for CEQA compliance. As part of this analysis, technical studies were completed to evaluate the modifications to the project relative to traffic and circulation, historical and cultural resources, and vegetation, wildlife, and habitat.

1.2 Applicability of Environmental Screening

As directed by California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21166 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15162, when an EIR has been already prepared for a project, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared, unless one or more of the following circumstances occur:

1. Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
2. Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revision of the previous EIR due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or
3. New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete, shows any of the following:
 - a. The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR;
 - b. Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;
 - c. Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or
 - d. Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

The changes in environmental impacts due to proposed modifications in the project or changed conditions have been evaluated and measured against the standards set forth in paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 above. The environmental analysis in Section 2 and Section 3, below, provides a more detailed examination of each of these issues.

2. Modifications to the Project and Changes in Circumstances

2.1 Modifications to the Project

The location of the project site remains the same as described in the 2007 Subsequent EIR. The 6.87-acre project site is located at 930 Fresno Avenue, within the southwest area of the City of Santa Rosa. The parcel has a General Plan land use designation of Medium-Low Residential, and a zoning designation of R-1-6. The site is surrounded by single-family residential to the west, rural residential and an animal hospital to the north, and the former Santa Rosa Naval Auxiliary Airfield to the east and south. The site is accessed from Fresno Avenue via Sebastopol Road and South Wright Road.

Proposed modifications to the project include an increase in the number of residential units from the 39 single-family detached units evaluated in the 2007 Subsequent EIR to a 67-unit residential development that includes 62 duplex units and five (5) standalone homes.

Access to the project site is proposed via three new street connections on the east side of Fresno Avenue. Terrabrook Drive would loop around the project site and intersect Fresno Avenue in two locations. The second project street, called “Street A”, would run parallel to Fresno Avenue before bending and intersecting opposite New Zealand Drive. Fresno Avenue would be widened along the project frontage as part of the project, consistent with the City’s future plans for the roadway, including a center median, travel lane, bike lane, and separated sidewalk.

Continuous sidewalks would be constructed along the project site’s frontage with Fresno Avenue and along both sides of the new streets to be constructed within the project site. The proposed project would provide 194 parking spaces, including 89 in garages, 67 in driveways, and 38 on-street spaces.

Table 1: Proposed Dwelling Unit Changes

Project No. 22 – Cherry Ranch 2007 Subsequent EIR	Current Proposed Project
6.87 Acres	6.87 Acres (no change)
39 Single-Family Detached	62 Duplex Units 5 Single-Family Homes

2.2 Changes in Circumstances

Since certification of the 2007 Subsequent EIR, several changes have occurred in respect to the circumstances under which the project would be undertaken.

Changes to Site Setting

Changes to the site setting include the mass grading that was conducted in 2007. At the time of certification of the 2007 Subsequent EIR, 0.4 acre of jurisdictional seasonal wetlands, including vernal pools, were verified on site. The entire site was subsequently graded and the wetlands filled. An updated biological review for the project site (Monk & Associates 2019) identified a few subsided low topographic areas that have developed since the site was graded in 2007. These low areas are regarded as “construction-related” features that are not considered jurisdictional waters, as verified by the U.S. Army Corps during verification site visits in 2018 and 2019. Therefore, there are currently no seasonal wetlands at the site. There remains, however, a jurisdictional drainage along the roadway that was not filled during the 2007 mass grading.

Another change to the site setting was the removal of the Santa Rosa Livestock Auction Yard building in 2017. The Santa Rosa Livestock Auction Yard building was previously determined to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1. Signs from the Auction Yard were relocated to the Sonoma County Library at the time of demolition for historical preservation. Presently, only the foundation of the former Auction Yard remains present at the site, as well as an Italian cypress tree. A cultural resources study conducted for the project (Origer & Associates 2019) has determined that the remaining foundation and Italian cypress tree do not convey historical association with Agricultural Development and the integrity of feeling, design, materials, and workmanship are no longer present. Therefore, the remaining elements of the Auction Yard would no longer be found eligible for the State or National Register of Historic Places.

Changes to Regulatory Setting

Several changes have also occurred to the regulatory setting since the certification of the 2007 Subsequent EIR. These include:

- A Construction General Permit (Order 2009-0009-DWQ) was adopted in 2009 requiring Storm Water Pollution Prevent Plans for construction activities involving one or more acres of land disturbance. This Order remains in effect, but has been amended by Order 2010-0014-DWQ and Order 2012-0006-DWQ. The project would be required to comply with this Order.
- On August 31, 2011, a Final Rule on the Revised Designation of Critical Habitat for the Sonoma County Distinct Population of the California tiger salamander was published (76 FR 54346 54372) (USFWS 2011). The project site is located within the mapped critical habitat area.
- On March 4, 2010, California tiger salamander was state-listed as a threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act. The State listing requires incidental take authority from the CDFW for projects that may impact the species.
- On December 2016, the USFWS adopted a Recovery Plan for the Santa Rosa Plain (Recovery Plan) addressing recovery efforts necessary to protect and otherwise eventually recover the federally-listed Sonoma County DPS of California tiger salamander and three vernal pool plants: *Blennosperma bakeri* (Sonoma sunshine); *Lasthenia burkei* (Burke's goldfields); and *Limnanthes vinculans* (Sebastopol meadowfoam). The USFWS' Recovery Plan for the Santa Rosa Plain designates the project site within the Llano Crescent-Stony Point "Core Area" for California tiger salamander and within the Southern Core Area for the three vernal pool plants.
- The 2007 Programmatic Biological Opinion for the Santa Rosa Plain is under revision to incorporate the elements of the Recovery Plan for the Santa Rosa Plain and has not been released to the public at this time.
- In 2017, the City of Santa Rosa adopted a revised Storm Water Low Impact Development Technical Design Manual to facilitate design of permanent storm water features into development projects. The project would be required to comply with the Technical Design Manual.

3. Preliminary Environmental Screening

3.1 Traffic and Circulation

The 2007 Subsequent EIR determined the project as previously proposed would generate fewer than 50 peak hour trips and would therefore have a less-than-significant impact on localized traffic. To evaluate the modified project, a Focused Traffic Study was prepared that included estimating the updated anticipated trip generation (W-Trans 2020). The evaluation used standard rates published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers in the Trip Generation Manual (10th Edition) for "Residential Planned Unit Development (PUD)" (LU #270), as this description best represents the proposed housing units. Based on application of these rates, the proposed project would be expected to generate an average of 494 trips per day, including 38 a.m. peak hour trips and 46 p.m. peak hour trips. Therefore, the modifications to the project would not generate more than 50 peak hour trips, similar to the project evaluated in the 2007 Subsequent EIR, and under the City of Santa Rosa's guidelines, an analysis of off-site operational impacts is not required. The impact on localized traffic would remain less than significant.

The Focused Traffic Study further evaluated the modified project relative to access conditions, sight distance, on-site circulation, alternative modes of transportation, and parking demand, as summarized below.

Access and On-Site Circulation

The project would have three access points which satisfies City Street Design Standards that require projects with more than 50 residential units to provide a secondary access point. As proposed, Terrabrook Drive would vary in width from 24 to 36 feet depending on the presence of street parking on one side, both sides, or no street parking. Street A would be 24 feet wide and would have no street parking. All project streets would be wide enough to accommodate two-way traffic as well as emergency response vehicles. Therefore, both site access and on-site circulation would be expected to operate acceptably.

Sight Distance

Sight distances along Fresno Avenue at the proposed new intersections were evaluated based on sight distance criteria contained in the Highway Design Manual, 6th Edition published by Caltrans. The recommended sight distances for minor street approaches to intersections are based on corner sight distance. For the posted 25-mph speed limit on Fresno Avenue, the recommended corner sight distance is 275 feet. Based on a review of the field conditions, sight distances at all of the proposed intersection locations extend more than 300 feet in both directions so are adequate for the posted speed limit. Similarly, sight lines along Fresno Avenue approaching the project access points are more than adequate to allow a following driver to observe and react to a vehicle stopped in the roadway while the driver waits to turn left into the site. Therefore, based on field observations and the project site plan, sight distances along Fresno Avenue are adequate to accommodate all turns into and out of the site.

Alternative Modes

Continuous sidewalks would be constructed along the project site's frontage with Fresno Avenue and along both sides of the new streets to be constructed within the project site. Residents would be able to use the project sidewalks, existing sidewalks on the west side of Fresno Avenue south of Sebastopol Road, and an existing four-foot paved shoulder on the east side of Fresno Avenue to reach the nearest transit stops, which are within an acceptable walking distance from the site of less than one-quarter mile.

In the project vicinity there are existing Class II bicycle lanes in the southbound direction on Fresno Avenue between Sebastopol Road and approximately 150 feet south of New Zealand Avenue, and on Sebastopol Road between approximately 450 feet west of Campoy Street and Fresno Avenue and between Corporate Center Parkway and Avalon Avenue. According to the Santa Rosa Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, there are plans to provide Class II bike lanes on Fresno Avenue between New Zealand Avenue and Finley Avenue and on Sebastopol Road between Fresno Avenue and Corporate Center Parkway. The project is consistent with this plan as the planned northbound bike lane on Fresno Avenue would be constructed along the project frontage as part of the project. Therefore, access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders would be adequate.

Parking Supply

Based on the application of standard City rates per Section 20-36.040 of the City of Santa Rosa Zoning Code, the project would need to provide a total of 175 parking spaces on-site, 67 of which would need to be covered. With a proposed supply of 194 spaces, including 89 in covered garages, the project would exceed City requirements, and thus the proposed parking supply would be adequate.

3.2 Historic and Cultural Resources

A Cultural Resources Study was prepared for the project by Tom Origer & Associates (Origer & Associates 2019). The study included archival research at the Northwest Information Center, Sonoma State University, examination of the library and files of Tom Origer & Associates, Native American contact, and field inspection of the area of potential effects.

The 2007 Subsequent EIR found that the former Santa Rosa Livestock Auction Yard that was located on the project site was a historic property eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources, was locally important, and appeared to be historically significant. Mitigation Measure 3.5-3 was required in the 2007 Subsequent EIR, and would apply to the project. However, as noted in Section 2.2 above, the Santa Rosa Livestock Auction Yard building was removed from the project site in 2017. The cultural resources study conducted for the project (Origer & Associates 2019) has determined that the remaining foundation and Italian cypress tree do not convey historical association with Agricultural Development and the integrity of feeling, design, materials, and workmanship are no longer present. Therefore, the remaining elements of the Auction Yard would no longer be found eligible for the State or National Register of Historic Places.

Five resources have been recorded within a half-mile of the project's area of potential effect. The closest resource is the former Santa Rosa Naval Auxiliary Airfield which lies adjacent to the east. No archaeological site indicators were observed during a field survey of the project site in October 2019. Mitigation Measure 3.5-1a and 3.5-1b were required in the 2007 Subsequent EIR, and would apply to the project in the event that buried archaeological resources or human remains are inadvertently unearthed during project construction.

As part of the mitigation and monitoring program, the City of Santa Rosa should confirm that Mitigation Measure 3.5.3 was implemented. This measure included depositing a copy of the historic resources evaluation and historic resources site record with the Sonoma County Library, Department of Community Development, and Sonoma County Museum, and depositing a collection of original business documents from the Santa Rosa Livestock Auction Yard in the Sonoma County Library. The evaluation records were to include a written historic context statement documenting the significance of the property in the history of Santa Rosa.

3.3 Vegetation, Wildlife, and Habitat

A Biological Resources Analysis was prepared for the project by Monk & Associates (Monk & Associates 2019). The study included review of relevant databases and inventories for historic and recent records of special status plant and animal species known to occur in the project area. Biologists completed a general survey of the project site on April 23, 2018 to record biological resources and to assess the likelihood of resource agency regulated areas on the project site. A delineation of a roadside ditch was completed on July 26, 2018, using criteria prescribed in the Corps' 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual (Corps 1987) and the Corps' Regional Supplement for the Arid West Region (Corps 2008). The Corps confirmed an Aquatic Resources Delineation Map of the roadside ditch (confirmed on December 13, 2018) taking jurisdiction over the feature. Biologists conducted follow-up rare plant surveys on April 4, May 2, May 21, and July 15, 2018 in accordance with guidelines established by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFG 2000, 2009), USFWS (USFWS 2000), and the inventory guidelines published by the CNPS (CNPS 2001) for assessing the effects of proposed developments on rare and endangered plants and plant communities. All areas within the proposed project site were examined.

Wetland Habitat

On March 20, 2002, the former applicant submitted an application to the Corps for authorization to fill 0.40-acre of seasonal wetlands on the project site. On May 6, 2002, the Corps issued a permit and confirmed that the project qualified for authorization under NWP 29. The applicant re-applied for a Corps permit in 2007, and the Corps re-issued a NWP 29 permit on July 13, 2007 (Corps File No. 26570N).

The RWQCB issued a 401 Water Quality Certification for the project on July 5, 2007 (WDID No. 1B02040WNSO). The Certification authorized impacts to 0.40-acre of seasonal wetlands and 0.046-acre of drainage ditch.

To mitigate anticipated impacts to 0.046-acre of the roadside ditch, the applicant purchased 0.13-acre of wetland creation credits from the Hazel Mitigation Preserve.

In 2018, Monk & Associates submitted a Preconstruction Notice requesting the Corps verify the project meets conditions for use of Nationwide Permit 29 (Residential Development) pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The application only pertained to the impacts to the roadside ditch which would be filled to complete the road improvements, as the previous permit had expired. The Corps issued a permit for impacts to the roadside ditch on July 18, 2019 (Corps File Number 2002 - 265700N). The applicant also will re-apply for Water Quality Certification to impact the roadside ditch. This permit cannot be issued by the RWQCB until the CEQA process is complete.

Mitigation Measure 3.6-2b, in the 2007 Subsequent EIR, requires preservation and creation of new wetland habitat offsite when impacts to wetlands cannot be avoided. Mitigation Measure 3.6-2d requires that the appropriate permits be obtained prior to filling wetlands. As described above, implementation of these measures has occurred, or in the case of the RWQCB 401 Certification is in the process of being implemented. Any additional conditions stipulated for wetland impacts by the Corps and/or RWQCB also would be required to be implemented.

California Tiger Salamander

Prior to the mass and grading, and to mitigate the loss of 5.49 acres of CTS habitat on the project site, the applicant purchased 16.47 acres of CTS mitigation credits from the Christina Preserve to satisfy the 3:1 replacement ratio for impacts to CTS habitat, as required by a previous USFWS' Biological Opinion and the 2007 Subsequent EIR. In addition, the applicant had purchased mitigation credits from the Southwest Santa Rosa Vernal Pool Preserve Bank (equivalent to 2.4 acres of endangered plant habitat and/or 4.8 acres of CTS habitat) (June 10, 2002). The roadside ditch was included in the CTS habitat acreage, as the APN acreage was used to calculate CTS mitigation requirements. The APN extends to the pavement section of Fresno Avenue.

Currently, there are a few shallow topographic low areas on the project site that were created during the 2007 grading activities which have subsided in some areas. These low areas are regarded as "construction-related" features that are not subject to Corps jurisdiction, as verified by the Corps during the site verification site visit on December 13, 2018. The Corps again verified that no regulated wetlands remained on the project site during a site walk with Monk & Associates, the USFWS (Mr. Vincent Griego), and CDFW (Ms. Melanie Day) on July 10, 2019. During that project site walk, Mr. Griego agreed that the CTS impacts had been fully mitigated.

Mitigation requirements for impacts to CTS associated with the project site were originally agreed to by Mr. Carl Wilcox and Mr. Liam Davis of the California Department of Fish and Game. Pursuant to the USFWS' Biological Opinion, mitigation for impacts to CTS was fully implemented at a 3:1 replacement to impacts ratio. In addition, 3:1 mitigation is currently consistent with both CDFW and USFWS policies for mitigating impacts to CTS

dispersal habitat. Accordingly, no new mitigation for impacts to CTS are likely to be required by CDFW over that which already purchased for this project prior to the time it was mass graded in 2007. (Monk 2019)

Raptor Nesting Habitat

The 2007 Subsequent EIR identified a less-than-significant impact related to loss of raptor nesting habitat with implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.6-1a Replace Trees in Accordance with City Code and 3.6-6a Provide Protection of Nesting Migratory Birds. Currently a total of 14 trees occur on the project site, including 13 valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*) and one large Italian cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) (18-inch DBH). The trees would be removed as part of the project. The mitigation measures required in the 2007 Subsequent EIR would apply to the project and would reduce the impact to less than significant.

Special Status Plants

No rare plants were found during the rare plant surveys conducted on the project site. Previously, the applicant purchased 0.40-acre of wetland creation/restoration credits and 0.40-acre of vernal pool preservation credits for Sebastopol meadowfoam from the Hale Mitigation Bank (October 22, 2002). In addition, the applicant purchased mitigation credits from the Southwest Santa Rosa Vernal Pool Preserve Bank (equivalent to 2.4 acres of endangered plant habitat and/or 4.8 acres of CTS habitat) (June 10, 2002). The roadside ditch does not support suitable listed plant habitat; therefore, additional mitigation credits for impacts to listed plant habitat is not required. (Monk 2019)

Tree Removal

The 2007 Subsequent EIR identified a less-than-significant impact related to the loss of valley oaks or other native trees at the project site. Currently a total of 14 trees (4 inches or greater diameter at breast height, DBH) occur on the project site, including 13 valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*) and one large Italian cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) (18-inch DBH). The trees were identified as being removed in the 2007 Subsequent EIR and would be removed under the modified project as well. Mitigation Measures 3.6-1a, 3.6-1b, and 3.6-1c, in the 2007 Subsequent EIR, would apply to the project, requiring replacing trees in accordance with the City's tree ordinance, tree preservation notes, and best management practices during construction.

3.4 Other Topics

The changes in the project and change in circumstances would not be anticipated to involve new or substantially more severe significant environmental impacts related to the following impact categories:

- Land Use
- Population, Employment and Housing
- Visual Quality and Community Character
- Soils, Geology and Seismicity
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Utilities and Public Services

- Hazardous Materials

The project modifications include an increase in the number of residential units from the 39 single-family detached units evaluated in the 2007 Subsequent EIR to 67 residential units. The project site is mapped as urban and built up land and no impacts to farmland would occur. The project would be consistent with the General Plan and zoning designation, and the development would be required to comply with the Design Review Guidelines and Southwest Area Community Design policies prior to final project approval. The project site would be developed in accordance with site-specific geotechnical recommendations. The project site is not included on the Cortese List pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code, and a Phase II study completed at the site did not reveal evidence of soil or groundwater contamination at the site. Applicable mitigation measures from the 2007 Subsequent EIR and the Master EIR would be implemented during construction related to hydrology and water quality, air quality, and noise. The project modifications are thus not anticipated to result in a new potential impact to these impact categories or require new mitigation measures.

4. Conclusions

The residential development project proposed at 930 Fresno Avenue was evaluated pursuant to CEQA in a previously certified *Southwest Area Projects Subsequent Environmental Impact Report*. Identified as **Project 22 – Cherry Ranch**, the residential development project proposed at 930 Fresno Avenue was described in the 2007 Subsequent EIR as 39 single-family detached units and a rezoning of the project site to R-1-PD. In 2007, the project site was mass graded with CEQA clearance and applicable regulatory permits having been obtained. Following the mass grading, the project went on hold. The Applicant is now considering modifications to the original project at 930 Fresno Avenue. The modifications would include an increase in the number of residential dwelling units from the 39 single-family detached units evaluated in the 2007 Subsequent EIR to a 67-unit residential development consisting of 62 duplex units and 5 single-family homes. The location of the project site remains the same as described in the 2007 Subsequent EIR (i.e., 6.87-acre project site located at 930 Fresno Avenue).

The evaluation in this CEQA environmental screening indicates that the project, as modified, together with changes in circumstances, are not likely to cause a substantial change in impacts and would not likely result in new significant impacts relative to the previously certified 2007 Subsequent EIR.

The City of Santa Rosa may utilize the evaluation in this environmental screening memo to consider the project to be adequately covered by the previously certified CEQA documentation, or to inform an Addendum to the 2007 Subsequent EIR evaluating the proposed modifications pursuant to Sections 15162 and 15164 of the CEQA Guidelines. As part of the Project approval or EIR Addendum, the City would identify the applicable mitigation measures included in the 2007 Subsequent EIR that would be applicable to the project, and mitigation measures may be updated to reflect requirements per current regulations.

5. References:

City of Santa Rosa. *Southwest Area Plan, A Plan for the Future*. September 6, 1994.

City of Santa Rosa. *Southwest Area Projects Subsequent Environmental Impact Report*.

Tom Origer & Associates. *Cultural Resources Study for the Cherry Ranch Project at 930 Fresno Avenue, Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California.* October 22, 2019.

Monk & Associates. *Draft Biological Resource Analysis, Cherry Ranch, City of Santa Rosa, California, APN: 035-101-004.* October 21, 2019.

W-Trans. *Focused Traffic Study for the Cherry Ranch Project.* January 29, 2020.