



CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO

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www.cityofepa.org

Notice of Exemption California Environmental Quality Act

TO: COUNTY CLERK

County of San Mateo
555 County Center Redwood
City, California 94063-1665

FROM: CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO

Planning Division
1960 Tate Street
East Palo Alto, California 94303

PROJECT TITLE: Village One 1201 Runnymede St

PROJECT LOCATION SPECIFIC:

1201 Runnymede Street, between Pulgas Avenue and the Bay Trail (APN 063-271-090)

PROJECT LOCATION, CITY, COUNTY:

East Palo Alto, San Mateo County

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The parcel is 0.932 acres and is located near the southern border of the Ravenswood/4 Corners Specific Plan area. The proposed development is a 20 three-story townhome-styled condominium units and common areas, including a driveway with related soft and hard landscaping improvements and other shared amenities. The project is a modern style building utilizing earth tones and shed roofs. The side facades utilize earthy white and wood tones wood siding and incorporates splashes of accent colors to break the building facades. The residential units are arranged in four buildings, each containing five (5) attached units, around the common "t" shaped driveway running along the center of the property. The driveway extends along the center, with the longer side running north to south providing access to the private garage and the shorter side running east to west with five (5) uncovered guest parking spaces to the east and outdoor paved area to the west, to which also accommodates the required fire turning radius.

The project provides 45 off-street parking spaces, including one (1) van accessible parking stall, 8 bike lockers, and 2 bike racks.

The project private and common open spaces. Each unit has a private open space with a pedestrian entrance at the rear, ranging from 105.53 sqft to 143.96 sqft. The project has a total of three (3) common open spaces. One of the spaces is 1,967.64 sqft, is located at the western property line that has landscaping and outdoor seating. The other two 2,329.43 sqft common open spaces include two (2) children's play areas with landscaping and outdoor seating.

NAME OR PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT

City of East Palo Alto, a municipal corporation

NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY CARRYING OUT PROJECT:**EXEMPT STATUS (Check One)**

Ministerial (Sec. 21080 (b) (1); 15268)

- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080 (b) (4); 15269 (a))
- Emergency Project (Sec 21080 (b) (4) 15269 (b) (c))
- Statutory Exemption – CODE NO: _____
- Categorical Exemption – **CLASS: 32** SECTION NO: **15332 – In-fill Development Project**

REASON WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT

Categorical Exemption. Class 32, In-Fill Development Project, CEQA Guidelines Section 15332. The project may also be exempted per CEQA Guidelines Section 15182[c] as a project consistent with the adopted Ravenswood/Four Corners Specific Plan and its associated certified EIR. The project may also be exempted per CEQA Guidelines Section 15182[c] as a project consistent with the adopted Ravenswood/Four Corners Specific Plan and its associated certified EIR.

Finding 1: The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies, as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.

Evidence: The General Plan identifies the site as “High-Density Residential” and is part of a small cluster of residential properties at the south end of the Ravenswood Business District. The project is also located within the Ravenswood/Four Corners Specific Plan area, with a corresponding zoning of Urban Residential. The purpose of this designation is to provide opportunities for the development of single-family and multi-family homes at a moderate density, including multi-family apartments or condominiums. Urban Residential development standards (as per the Specific Plan) allow up to 40 dwelling units per acre, and up to three stories in height south of Rail Spur. As proposed, the project is three stories and would have a density of 22 du/acre, consistent with the General Plan and zoning designations. The project also meets all parking standards and setbacks.

Finding 2: The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.

Evidence: The project site is 0.932 acres and completely within the city limits. Based on a review of Google satellite imagery and a field visit by planners in March 2024 and other occasions, the site is adjacent to residential, and school uses to the east and south, a vacant residential lot to the west, and a vacant nonresidential lot to the north.

Finding 3: The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.

Evidence: The subject parcel consists of an open, level vacant lot dominated by ruderal non-native grasses, weeds, and a few low shrubs. This parcel is part of a larger patch of ruderal non-native grassland common in the City and west of the Northern Coastal Salt Marsh areas of the San Francisco Bay. There are no mature trees on the site. While visibly overgrown during the site visit, the property appears to be occasionally mowed or disked for weed control. The site is less than one acre and is bordered by residential development on two sides. The does not contain wetlands, creeks, or natural areas, and is not connected to nearby baylands or marsh habitats. Based on the General Plan EIR (2016), the site does not contain aquatic, salt marsh, riparian, or other habitats that may support special status species. Wildlife use of grasslands in much of the City is limited by human disturbance, the abundance of non-native and invasive species, and the isolation of grassland remnants from more extensive grasslands that used to exist in the City. As a result, some of the wildlife species typically associated with grassland habitats are absent within these small patches within the urban matrix. The General Plan EIR does not recognize these patches as sensitive habitats.

Finding 4: Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.

Evidence:

Traffic: A traffic analysis was conducted to evaluate the impacts of the originally approved 32-unit residential project. Based on the analysis, the intersection of University Avenue and Runnymede Street would operate at an acceptable level of service (LOS) under the 32-unit residential project in both the AM and PM peak hours. The project would not degrade the intersection LOS to an unacceptable LOS (Kimley Horn, June 2020). Because the revised residential project comprises fewer units, the 2020 study is still applicable according to the consultant Kimley Horn. A sight distance evaluation was also conducted at the full access, unsignalized driveway along Runnymede Street. Based on the analysis and the proposed site plan, there is limited sight distance for vehicles making turns out of the driveway due to the proposed landscape and on-street parking within the clear site area on both sides of the driveway. While there is limited traffic capacity in this location due to the cul-de-sac, site distance could be improved. Therefore, several standard conditions of approval have been incorporated. They include requiring that landscaping be removed from within the clear sight area to avoid obstructions for vehicles exiting the project driveway. The Project applicant would also be required to request a red curb along the project frontage, or at minimum red tipping on both sides of the driveway to restrict parking. Based on the City's VMT Policy Framework for Common Land Uses, the proposed project would generate a VMT per capita equal to the citywide average VMT per capita since the project is a residential land use. Therefore, since the project-generated VMT per capita is equal to and not greater than the citywide average VMT, the project would not create a VMT impact. With the reduction of five units in the updated plans, operations would be the same or better with the revised project. The project's onsite parking meets the standards of the Specific Plan.

The 20 multifamily unit project is compliant with the City's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) ordinance requirements by providing a minimum number of elements for trip reduction. Per the City's adopted Residential TDM Guidelines, applicants of residential projects with ten or more units must submit a TDM plan that incorporates a minimum number of elements deemed equivalent to a 40% reduction of average daily trips. The TDM plan prepared by Hexagon Transportation Consultants Inc., dated June 2, 2023, shows how the project would meet the TDM requirements, as well as the implementation and monitoring of the project. The TDM plan was reviewed and preliminarily accepted by the City's TDM consultant. A final TDM plan is required prior to the issuance of a building permit. The project is providing for the following elements: (0.5 points) proximity to Route 296 bus, (0.25 points) TDM Coordinator provided by the Homeowner's Association, (0.25 points) CALGreen-level onsite bike parking (8 secure lockers and 2 short-term bike racks), and (2.0 points) sidewalk extension to Puglas Ave as access improvement.

Noise: An acoustical analysis of the larger 32-unit project was prepared (Kimley-Horn, 2020). Since the revised project comprises of fewer units, the 2020 study is still applicable. The analysis concludes that construction noise, while elevated, would be temporary and would be required to adhere to Standard Permit Conditions. Nearby receptors (residential uses and the charter school) are located 10 and 50 feet from the project site, respectively. Temporary construction noise would be most noticeable at the adjacent residential uses to the east. Construction noise is recognized by land use agencies throughout California as a temporary, but necessary, consequence of development on infill sites in urban areas. With respect to traffic noise, traffic volumes on project area roadways would have to approximately double for the resulting traffic noise levels to increase by 3 dBA (the threshold of significance). Although traffic volumes are generally low in this area as there are no opportunities for through traffic, the charter school across Runnymede Street represents the majority of traffic-related noise during peak times in the morning and afternoon. The project's additional traffic would be nominal in this context and less than 3 dBA. Therefore, permanent increases in ambient noise levels of less than 3 dBA are considered to be less than significant. The analysis also shows that parking areas and mechanical equipment also would not exceed city standards at the nearest sensitive receptors.

Air Quality: An air quality and greenhouse gas (GHG) analysis was conducted for the project (Kimley-Horn, June 2020). Since the revised project comprises of fewer units, the 2020 study is still applicable. Based on the results of this analysis, the construction and operational emissions would be consistent with the General Plan and 2017 Clean Air Plan Progress Report, could address construction emissions through required permit conditions, would not trigger operational impact thresholds, nor result in significant cumulative effects from

project emissions. The potential for objectional odors, increased GHG emissions and CO concentrations were also found to be less than significant.

Water Quality: The project includes a preliminary drainage plan and erosion control plan designed to stabilize soils during construction and treat surface waters entering the storm drain system. Surface water quality in East Palo Alto is primarily a function of compliance with City of East Palo Alto drainage design criteria and C.3 stormwater control and treatment requirements. On-site stormwater treatment would be provided in bio-retention areas and a storm trap retention chamber along the eastern portion of the property. With these stormwater management controls, water quality would not be adversely impacted.

Finding 5: The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

Evidence: The General Plan EIR finds that the higher-density land uses envisioned by the City can be served by existing utilities and service providers. The project would connect to existing electrical; communications, water, sewer, and storm drain infrastructure that currently exists within public rights of way. The project applicant would be required to pay development impact fees intended to support public service systems such as police, fire, and government services. The applicant has entered a wastewater expansion and service agreement with the East Palo Alto Sanitary District to connect to the District's sanitary sewer system. The project includes a utility plan, domestic water analysis, and sewer capacity analysis to confirm that the project can be served by existing infrastructure.

Finding 6: The site is not listed on any regulatory databases that track hazardous material sites.

Evidence: Kimley-Horn (June 2020) performed a regulatory database search of the Department of Toxic Substances Control Envirostor website (<http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>) and the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) Geotracker website (<http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>) to identify if any new hazardous material regulated facilities or sites within or proximate to the project are present. The target property was not listed in any of the databases searched. The consultant has affirmed that there have been no changes to either database regarding the project site since the original study.

Attachments (on file with the City of East Palo Alto):

1. Transportation Impact Analysis, Kimley-Horn, June 2020
2. Final Transportation Memo, Kimley-Horn, September 2020
3. Hazardous Materials Memorandum, Kimley-Horn, June 2020
4. Air Quality and GHG Emissions Analysis, Kimley-Horn, June 2020
5. Noise Prediction Memorandum, Kimley-Horn, June 2020

LEAD AGENCY CONTACT PERSON

Michelle Huang, project planner

AREA CODE, TELEPHONE, Extension

(650) 853-3169

This notice shall be filed only after approval of an exempt project. IF

FILED BY APPLICANT

1. Attached certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?
Yes ___ No ___
3. Attach original and two copies of this Notice of Exemption.
4. Attach two self-addressed, stamped envelopes.

| SIGNATURE | TITLE | DATE |
|---|-------|------|
| Signed by <u> </u> Applicant <u> </u> Lead Agency | | |

AFFIDAVIT OF COUNTY CLERK FILING AND POSTING

I declare that on _____ I received and posted this Notice as required by California Public Resources Code Section 2115.2. Said Notice will remain posted for thirty (30) days from the filing date.

By _____ Date _____