



MEMORANDUM

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: TERESA McCLISH, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

BY: JOHN RICKENBACH, CONSULTING PLANNER

SUBJECT: WORKSHOP TO TAKE PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) FOR THE E. CHERRY AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT

DATE: MAY 17, 2016

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Planning Commission take public comments and provide input to City and consultant staff on the Draft EIR for the East Cherry Avenue Specific Plan Project. No action on the project is being considered at this time.

BACKGROUND:

Location



Figure 1. Project Location

**PLANNING COMMISSION
 WORKSHOP ON DRAFT EIR FOR THE E. CHERRY AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN
 MAY 17, 2016
 PAGE 2**

The Specific Plan area encompasses 15.29 acres of undeveloped, vacant, and agricultural land at the southern commercial gateway of the City of Arroyo Grande (Figure 1). The plan area consists of five parcels (street addresses of 490 and 112 East Cherry Avenue, and 501 Traffic Way) under three separate ownerships. For the purpose of the Specific Plan, these are organized into three subareas as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. East Cherry Avenue Specific Plan Properties

Subarea	Current Ownership	APN	Existing Zoning/ Land Use	Acreage
1	Harshad and Vina Panchal, et al.	076-621-076, -077, -078	Traffic Way Mixed-Use (TMU D-2.11)/ Mixed-use	2.16
2	NKT Development, LLC	076-621-079	Agriculture/ Agriculture	11.62
3	Arroyo Grande Valley Japanese Welfare Association (JWA)	076-210-001	Agriculture/ Agriculture	1.51
Total Acres				15.29

Notes: TMU D-2.11 - Traffic Way Mixed-Use with D-2.11 Design Overlay.
 Source: City of Arroyo Grande 2015a.

The Specific Plan area is situated north of the Vagabond Mobile Home Park, single-family residences, and the Saint Barnabas' Episcopal Church; east of Traffic Way and its interchange with U.S. Highway 101; south of East Cherry Avenue; and west of Luana Lane and Los Olivos Lane.

PLANNING COMMISSION'S PURVIEW:

The Planning Commission is taking public testimony and input on the Draft EIR for the proposed project. It is not considering the merits of the project at this time, nor is it considering potential project approval. These actions will occur later in the process, once the Final EIR is prepared. The Final EIR will consist of the Draft EIR and any changes that may result to that document based on input received during the 45-day comment period, which is from April 8 to May 23, 2016.

City staff and its EIR consultant, Amec Foster-Wheeler, will be taking public input. As part of the Final EIR, the consultant will respond to public input received at this workshop, as well as any letters or other written input received during the 45-day public review period. All testimony received during that period will be included in the Final EIR, as well as written responses to that testimony. As appropriate, the Draft EIR will be modified to respond to this input. Potential changes could include updates or corrections to information included in that document, or possibly updates or modifications to the existing analysis.

**PLANNING COMMISSION
WORKSHOP ON DRAFT EIR FOR THE E. CHERRY AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN
MAY 17, 2016
PAGE 3**

Once completed, the Final EIR must be certified by the City Council prior to (or concurrent with) potential project approval. The Planning Commission will have an opportunity to consider potential project approval once the Final EIR is completed, and prior to that document's certification.

SCOPE OF THE DRAFT EIR:

This EIR assesses the potential environmental impacts that could occur with implementation of the Project. The scope of the EIR includes evaluation of potentially significant environmental issues identified in the Initial Study (IS) and raised in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and during scoping discussions. The IS and NOP scoping process determined that the Project may result in potentially significant impacts with respect to the following issue areas, which are addressed in detail in this EIR:

- Aesthetics and Visual Resources
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Biological Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Recreational Resources
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Other Required CEQA Disclosures

This EIR addresses the issues referenced above and identifies potential environmental impacts, including Project-specific and cumulative effects of the Project, in accordance with the provisions set forth in the CEQA Guidelines. In addition, the EIR recommends feasible mitigation measures, where necessary, that would reduce or eliminate adverse environmental effects.

A summary of cumulative impacts, which gives consideration to other projects in the vicinity, are described in each resource section within Section 3.0, *Environmental Impact Analysis and Mitigation Measures*. Cumulative project analyses represent a comprehensive assessment of potential impacts on City resources using a list of past, present, and probable future projects capable of producing related or cumulative impacts.

**PLANNING COMMISSION
WORKSHOP ON DRAFT EIR FOR THE E. CHERRY AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN
MAY 17, 2016
PAGE 4**

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines (Section 15126.6[d]), the EIR includes the assessment of a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project that could feasibly attain the project objectives while avoiding or substantially lessening any of the significant effects of the Project. These include the following:

- No Project Alternative (two approaches: no development or development under existing zoning)
- Reduced Development Alternative

SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS IDENTIFIED IN THE DRAFT EIR:

The significance of each impact resulting from implementation of the Project has been determined according to CEQA thresholds. Table ES-1 of the Draft EIR summarizes the impacts, mitigation measures, and residual significance of those impacts from implementation of the Project. In summary, the Project would result in significant and unavoidable Project level and cumulative impacts to certain City roadway intersections. Certain air quality impacts are also considered significant and unavoidable. Project level impacts with respect to all other identified issues are either less than significant, or would be reduced to a less than significant level with proposed mitigation measures.

In order to assess cumulative impacts, the Draft EIR uses a combination of the list method and General Plan projection method approaches that includes programs included in the City's General Plan as well as specific past, present, and probable future projects that are reasonably foreseeable that could produce related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the Lead Agency (CEQA Guidelines Section 15130). Cumulative impacts for more complex resource sections such as Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases, Transportation and Traffic, and Hydrology and Water Quality, have been assessed in regards to General Plan build out projections for the City. Cumulative impacts associated with a particular resource are assessed in Sections 3.1 through 3.11 of the Draft EIR.

PROPOSED PROJECT OVERVIEW:

Project Description

The project is a Specific Plan, General Plan Amendment, Development Code Amendment, Vesting Tentative Tract Map and two (2) Conditional Use Permits. While the first three entitlements would address the entire 15-acre site, the Vesting Tentative Tract Map would only address the central portion of the site encompassing 11.62 acres, which is described further below as Subarea 2. Subareas 1 and 3 are each subject to a Conditional Use Permit.

**PLANNING COMMISSION
WORKSHOP ON DRAFT EIR FOR THE E. CHERRY AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN
MAY 17, 2016
PAGE 5**

The Specific Plan site area is divided into three (3) subareas, with development envisioned in each as follows:

Subarea 1. Subarea 1 is currently zoned Traffic Way Mixed Use (TMU) with a Design Overlay (D-2.11). The primary purpose of the D-2.11 Design Overlay is to encourage the use of design elements to enhance the character and appearance of this southern commercial gateway to Arroyo Grande.

Uses allowed within the TMU zone are limited to automobile and light truck sales and services and related automotive parts stores, repair shops, and similar vehicle sales, services and accessory uses. All other permitted uses and Minor Use permitted uses would be considered subject to a Conditional Use Permit.

The EIR evaluates potential hotel and restaurant uses, which is consistent with the property owner's goals for this site. While no changes to the current TMU zone are proposed, the Design Overlay provision that incentivizes auto sales and use is proposed to be removed under the Specific Plan.

Subarea 2. Subarea 2, the largest portion of the site, is proposed for residential development. Conceptually, the Specific Plan includes a 60-lot subdivision with a total of 58 single-family residential lots, which are shown in more detail in a proposed Vesting Tentative Tract Map. Access to the project site would be via East Cherry Avenue. No private driveways will be located on East Cherry Avenue. All homes will be accessed via residential streets and alleyways. A second access is located at the future property boundary with the Subarea 3 property.

An existing drainage feature is located at the toe of the slope approximately twenty feet from the southerly border of the property. This drainage feature, created in this location due to the historical agricultural activities, takes sheet flows from the hillside below the St. Barnabas' Church property. A 2- to 5-foot tall concrete retaining wall/drainage facility would be located along the southern boundary of the residential lots at the base of the hillside. A neighborhood park (about 0.35 acres) is planned for interior to the project site on proposed Lot 59.

Subarea 3. The proposed Arroyo Grande Valley Japanese Welfare Association (JWA) land use plan for Subarea 3, the eastern 1.51 acres of the Specific Plan area, identifies a private historically-oriented park that would highlight the Issei pioneers (first generation settlers) of Arroyo Grande. Proposed land uses would include historical residential and public assembly uses, and would provide expanded commercial use and residential density necessary for present and future economic sustainability of the property. Specifically, Subarea 3 would include limited commercial retail (farm stand), passive recreation (historic walking paths and gardens), limited residential (independent senior housing consisting of approximately 10 units), public and quasi-public community facilities (cultural archive and

**PLANNING COMMISSION
WORKSHOP ON DRAFT EIR FOR THE E. CHERRY AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN
MAY 17, 2016
PAGE 6**

community center), visitor-serving (B&B guest house), and public assembly (heritage and demonstration gardens) uses, as well as related support amenities (e.g., onsite parking). While the current Subarea 3 includes approximately 1.51 acres, an additional approximately 0.5-acre parcel would be added via the Subarea 2 Vesting Tentative Tract Map and a future lot merger.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Planning Commission (PC) take public comments and provide input to City and consultant staff on the Draft EIR for the E. Cherry Avenue Specific Plan Project. No action on the project is being considered at this time.

Attachment:

1. Draft E. Cherry Avenue Specific Plan Draft EIR and supporting materials