

STAFF REPORT

DATE: June 6, 2017

TO: City Council

FROM: Mike Webb, Assistant City Manager
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Katherine Hess, Community Development Administrator

SUBJECT: **West Davis Active Adult Community EIR Project Alternatives.** Planning Application #15-49 for Environmental Impact Report #3-15

Staff Recommendation

Direct staff to proceed with inclusion of the project alternatives as outlined in this report to be evaluated in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed West Davis Active Adult Community.

No action on this proposal is being sought at this time. The CEQA review and project applications will be presented to commissions and City Council through public meetings and hearings in the coming months. On July 19, 2016, the City Council approved the Budget Adjustment for the project's EIR preparation. The EIR preparation is ongoing and staff believes that Council confirmation of the EIR Project Alternatives is appropriate at this time. The merits of the proposal and the associated land use and policy issues such as density, access, affordable housing, and sustainability features will be addressed at future meetings.

Project Description

In November, the City received project applications for development of approximately 75 acres north of Covell Boulevard and west of Sutter-Davis Hospital as the West Davis Active Adult Community.

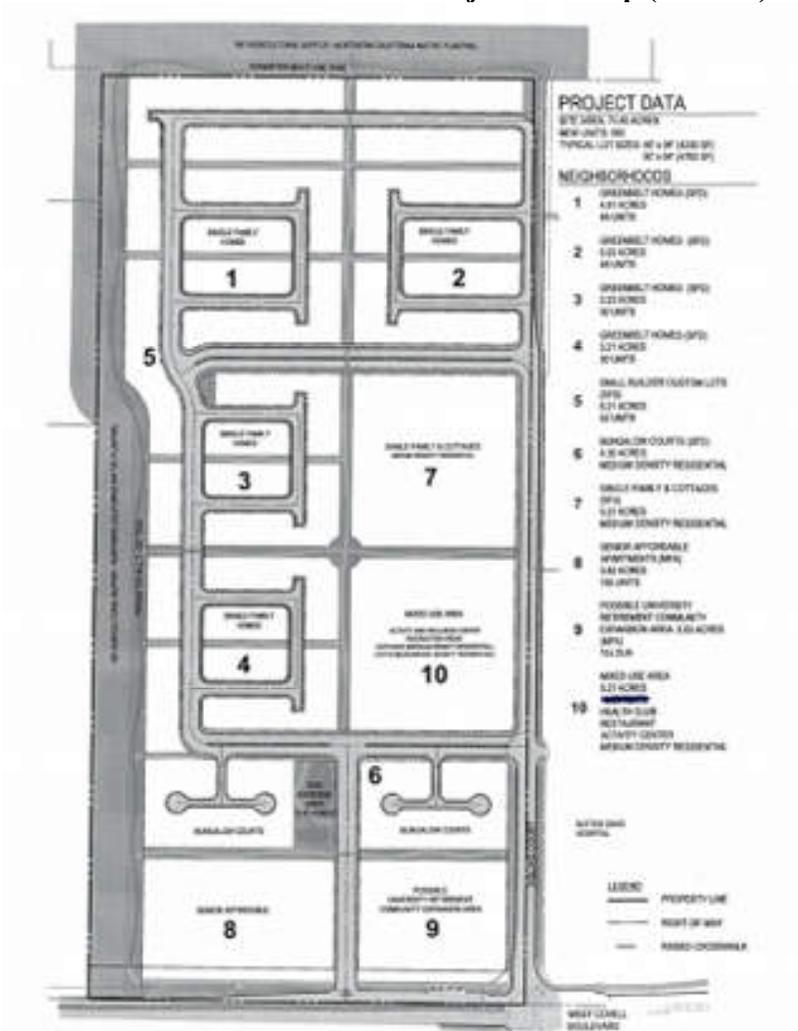
As currently submitted, the West Davis Active Adult Community would include a mix of single-family and apartment units. The majority of the units would have occupancy limited to ages 55+ or 62+. Approximately 24% of the single-family units (77 units) are proposed to be unrestricted and may be occupied by multi-generational families or other non-senior households. The project would also include a 5.27-acre commercial and recreational area owned by the homeowner's association, which may also include an age-restricted residential component. The project also includes on- and off-site stormwater conveyance, a stormwater detention area north of the hospital parcel, and an agricultural buffer on the west and north edges of the site.

Because the property is currently designated for agricultural use in the City's General Plan, development would require voter approval under the provisions of Measure R.

Project Location Aerial Photo



Project Site Map (Revised)



Council Goals

No specific goal or task addresses this matter.

Fiscal Impact

There is no immediate fiscal impact from the recommended action. Costs of the Planning review process, including preparation of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), will be borne by the project applicant. Analysis of fiscal impacts of the proposed project is underway.

Commission Review

In February and March, staff presented the application to advisory commissions for preliminary review and comment, prior to confirming the project description for the purpose of the environmental review.

Commission	Date	Discussion Topics
Senior Citizen	February 9 (workshop) March 9 (recommendations)	Senior-friendly components of subdivision, including age restrictions, greenbelt configuration, unit types and features, and recreational/HOA amenities; access to public transit and paratransit; consistency with Guidelines for Housing that Serves Seniors and Persons with Disabilities
Natural Resources	February 27	Sustainability components. The commission will also review the environmental analysis when released.
Open Space and Habitat	March 6	Agricultural mitigation and buffer. The commission will also review the environmental analysis when released.
Bicycle, Transportation, and Street Safety	March 9	Street layout and connectivity, roadway and path widths, Covell Boulevard frontage improvements
Recreation and Park	March 16	Park and greenbelt location and amenities
Social Services	March 20	Affordable housing proposal
Finance and Budget	TBD, likely spring-summer	Fiscal impacts on City, sensitivity analysis reflecting Development Agreement commitments, tax-share agreement, and project refinements

Commissioners made comments regarding

- Traffic and transportation, including alternative transportation and access to destinations such as parks and shopping.
- Adequacy of provisions for active recreation, children’s activities, and a dog exercise area.
- Unit and building design.
- Sustainability features.
- Affordable housing.

In response to Commissioner comments, the proposal was revised to add a dog exercise area. The applicant is also exploring improvements to Covell Boulevard to improve connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists without significantly affecting vehicle circulation for neighbors south of the project site.

EIR Determination

The City has determined that an Environmental Impact Report would be required for the proposal. The Initial Study prepared for the proposed project identified resource areas where potential impacts may occur as a result of the proposed project. The analysis of the EIR focuses on resource areas where a potential for impacts was identified by the Initial Study. Conversely, based upon the analysis contained in the Initial Study, it is anticipated that the EIR will not need to further address the CEQA topics of Mineral Resources, and Geology and Soils. Public and agency comments on the scope of the EIR were solicited during April and May, and a public scoping meeting was held at City Hall the evening of April 26, 2017. The Initial Study and Notice of Preparation are at <http://cityofdavis.org/city-hall/community-development-and-sustainability/development-projects/west-davis-active-adult-community>

The Draft EIR will examine most of the environmental areas contained in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, with the exception of Mineral Resources. The topics to be addressed in the Draft EIR include: Aesthetics, Agricultural Resources, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Tribal and Cultural Resources, Geology/Soils, Greenhouse Gases/Climate Change, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology/Water Quality, Land Use/Planning, Noise, Population/Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation/Circulation, Utilities, Cumulative Impacts, and Growth Inducing Impacts.

Pursuant to CEQA, the EIR will include a section on project alternatives which would allow for comparison of the various project merits and issues. Staff is requesting confirmation from the City Council on the range of EIR project alternatives to be evaluated.

Property Information

Project Location: 39660 West Covell Boulevard, north of Covell Boulevard and west of Sutter-Davis Hospital. APN 036-060-05

Property Size: Approximately 75 acres

Existing General Plan Land Use: Agriculture

Proposed Project Data

General Plan: Residential Medium and High Density, with Mixed-Use, Park, and Green Space Overlay components

Total Units: Up to 560 units

Anticipated Project Objectives

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines, reasonable alternatives to the project must be capable of feasibly attaining most of the basic objectives of the project. Staff and the EIR consultant have developed specific objectives for the proposed project. Council comments on the objectives are invited.

In general, the purpose of the project is to provide housing for seniors within an intergenerational community at a location proximate to health services and other destinations. In addition to the purpose of the project, the project is being pursued with the following objectives:

The proposed project identifies the following objectives:

- Create a community that connects the City's senior population to existing services and facilities in West Davis.
- Design a neighborhood with homes to support an active lifestyle for older adults.
- Create a diverse community that provides housing for multiple generations and lifestyles.
- Provide Davis residents with housing options that meets their long-term needs so they remain local rather than leave the City.
- Foster a sustainable community, including efficient use of land.
- Provide a community that is not isolated from the rest of the City by providing public gathering spaces for all City residents.

Proposed EIR Project Alternatives

Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, an EIR "shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives." Public scoping comments related to project and alternatives have suggested increased density with a smaller footprint, changes to accommodate traditional households instead of the senior-focused project, and consideration of other locations for the development such as Binning Ranch approved subdivision.

CEQA does not require that the level of detail or analysis of the alternatives be equal to the proposed project. CEQA only requires that a reasonable range of alternatives be considered and that the information be sufficient to provide a meaningful analysis and comparison to the proposed project. The discussion of the project alternatives in the West Davis Active Adult Community EIR will largely consist of qualitative discussions based on the major issues addressed by the alternative and the project tradeoffs. Information and data may be supplemented where appropriate. Staff believes that the following alternatives and this approach to their analysis more than adequately meet the requirements of CEQA. Based on the potential project impacts identified in the Initial Study and taking into consideration the Draft EIR scoping comments received, staff is recommending that the Draft EIR evaluate the following four project alternatives.

Four alternatives to the proposed project were developed based on City of Davis staff, City Council and public comments. The alternatives proposed to be analyzed in the EIR include the following alternatives in addition to the proposed West Davis Active Adult Community Project:

1. No Project, No Build Alternative
2. Higher Density, Less Land Alternative
3. Conventional (Non-Age Restricted) Alternative
4. Off-Site (Inside Mace Curve) Alternative

No Project, No Build Alternative

CEQA requires the evaluation of the comparative impacts of the “No Project” alternative (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[e]). Analysis of the no project alternative shall:

“... discuss [...] existing conditions [...] as well as what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services.” (*Id.*, subd. [e][2]) “If the project is other than a land use or regulatory plan, for example a development project on identifiable property, the ‘no project’ alternative is the circumstance under which the project does not proceed. Here the discussion would compare the environmental effects of the property remaining in the property’s existing state versus environmental effects that would occur if the project were approved. If disapproval of the project under consideration would result in predictable actions by others, such as the proposal of some other project, this ‘no project’ consequence should be discussed. In certain instances, the no project alternative means ‘no build,’ wherein the existing environmental setting is maintained. However, where failure to proceed with the project would not result in preservation of existing environmental conditions, the analysis should identify the practical result of the project's non-approval and not create and analyze a set of artificial assumptions that would be required to preserve the existing physical environment.” (*Id.*, subd. [e][3][B]).

The No Project Alternative, would assume that the project site remains in its existing state and no additional development would occur. As will be described in the EIR, the current condition of the site consists of a agricultural uses, a gravel parking lot, and the existing Covell Boulevard improvements and drainage channel.

Higher Density, Less Land Alternative

Under the Higher Density, Less Land Alternative, it would be assumed that the project site would be developed with the same number of dwelling units (up to 560), but on a smaller footprint than the project proposal, approximately fifty percent of the footprint of the proposed project. The assumed type of units would be adjusted to reflect the increased density. This would allow a portion of the agricultural mitigation area, and possibly the stormwater detention, to be located on the site.

Conventional (Non-Age Restricted) Alternative

Under the Conventional (Non-Age Restricted) Alternative, the project site would be developed similar to the proposed project with up to 560 units, but with no age restrictions. The required affordable housing would be provided onsite. Agricultural mitigation, stormwater management, and homeowner association facilities would be the same as with the proposed project.

Off-Site (Inside Mace Curve) Alternative

The Off-Site (Inside Mace Curve) Alternative would involve development similar to the proposed project at an off-site location. Parcels of similar size that are designated and/or zoned for residential uses are not currently available for development within the City. For the purposes of evaluating an off-site alternative location within the City, City staff has identified the 47-acre property located inside the Mace Curve, adjacent to at Harper Junior High School. Like the site of the proposed project, the property is designated for agricultural uses and development would require a Measure R vote. This site was identified as a “yellow light” site in the 2008 Resolution by City Council implementing the Housing Element Steering Committee recommendations.

Due to the lesser lot acreage, options for the Off-Site (Inside Mace Curve) Alternative would involve

1. Development of a lesser number of units than the proposed project (maintaining the same density and intensity). This is staff recommendation, because it provides a contrasting analysis with the Higher Density alternative discussed above.
2. Maintaining the same number of units (increasing the density and intensity).
3. Combining a hypothetical development on the Mace Curve property with development of the 27-acre Horse Ranch (3003 East Covell Boulevard) site, for a combined size similar to that of the proposed project site. Staff and the EIR consultant are continuing to evaluate these options in light of CEQA requirements.

Next Steps

Completion of the Draft EIR is in progress. Upon completion of the internal staff review and necessary edits made, the Draft EIR will be released for a 45-day public review period. It is anticipated that this will occur later this summer. The Draft EIR will be presented to various commission for review and comments pursuant to City Council direction. Comments received by the public, Commissions, and other agencies will be addressed in the Final EIR. Upon completion of the Final EIR, public hearings on the planning application entitlements and the EIR adoption are anticipated to occur later this year.

Additional project information including the NOP with the Initial Study is available online on the City’s project webpage at: <http://cityofdavis.org/city-hall/community-development-and-sustainability/development-projects/west-davis-active-adult-community>.