



SAN RAFAEL
THE CITY WITH A MISSION

Community Development Department – Planning Division

Meeting Date: December 14, 2021
Agenda Item: 4
Case Numbers: ZC20-001, UP20-022
ED 20-051 & IS20-003
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REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT: Aldersly Retirement Community, 326 and 308 Mission Avenue - Scoping meeting for Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to assess impacts of the Aldersly Retirement Community Project. The project proposes phased improvements on the Aldersly Campus, including demolition and renovation of existing buildings and construction of new buildings. APNs: 014-054-31 and -32; Planned Development (PD-1775) Zoning District; Applicant: Peter Lin, Greenbriar Development; Property Owner: Peter Schakow, Aldersly Retirement Community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Aldersly Retirement Community and Greenbriar Development have filed applications for a project that proposes phased improvements over the next ten years on the Aldersly Campus. The project includes demolition and renovation of existing buildings, and construction of new buildings on the Campus. Project applications include the following:

- A zoning amendment to amend the previously approved Planned Development (PD) Ordinance No. 1775, including revised Aldersly PD Development Standards (ZC20-001);
- An amendment to a master use permit (UP20-022); and
- An environmental and design review permit for Phases 1-4 (ED20-051)

An Historic Resources Evaluation prepared by Page & Turnbull (December 2020) concluded that the Aldersly Retirement Community property is eligible for listing as a historic district in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register). Given the proposed project would require the demolition of buildings that are considered to be historically significant, staff determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) would be required. In accordance with Section 15064.5. of the CEQA Guidelines, a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, an EIR will be prepared to address this significant impact.

An Initial Study was prepared to determine if the project would result in other potentially significant impacts on the environment. As documented in the Initial Study, all other potentially significant impacts would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level through implementation of recommended mitigation measures or through compliance with existing Municipal Code requirements or City standards. Recommended mitigation measures are included in the Initial Study. Based on the conclusions of the Initial Study, no other impacts require further analysis in the EIR.

Consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act, the issuance of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) is required when the lead agency has determined that an EIR will be prepared. An NOP was issued on November 22, 2021, and transmitted to the State Clearinghouse, responsible and trustee agencies and interested parties, to announce the initiation of the EIR process. The purpose of the scoping meeting is to afford the Planning Commission, other agencies, and the public an opportunity to provide oral comments on the Initial Study and the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the EIR. Following the

close of the 30-day NOP comment period, City staff will review comments received and consider revisions to the Initial Study and/or the scope of the Draft EIR, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Planning Commission take the following action:

1. Accept public comment on the Notice of Preparation, Initial Study, and the scope of issues to be addressed in the EIR; and
2. Direct staff to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), taking into consideration verbal and written comments received during the scoping period.

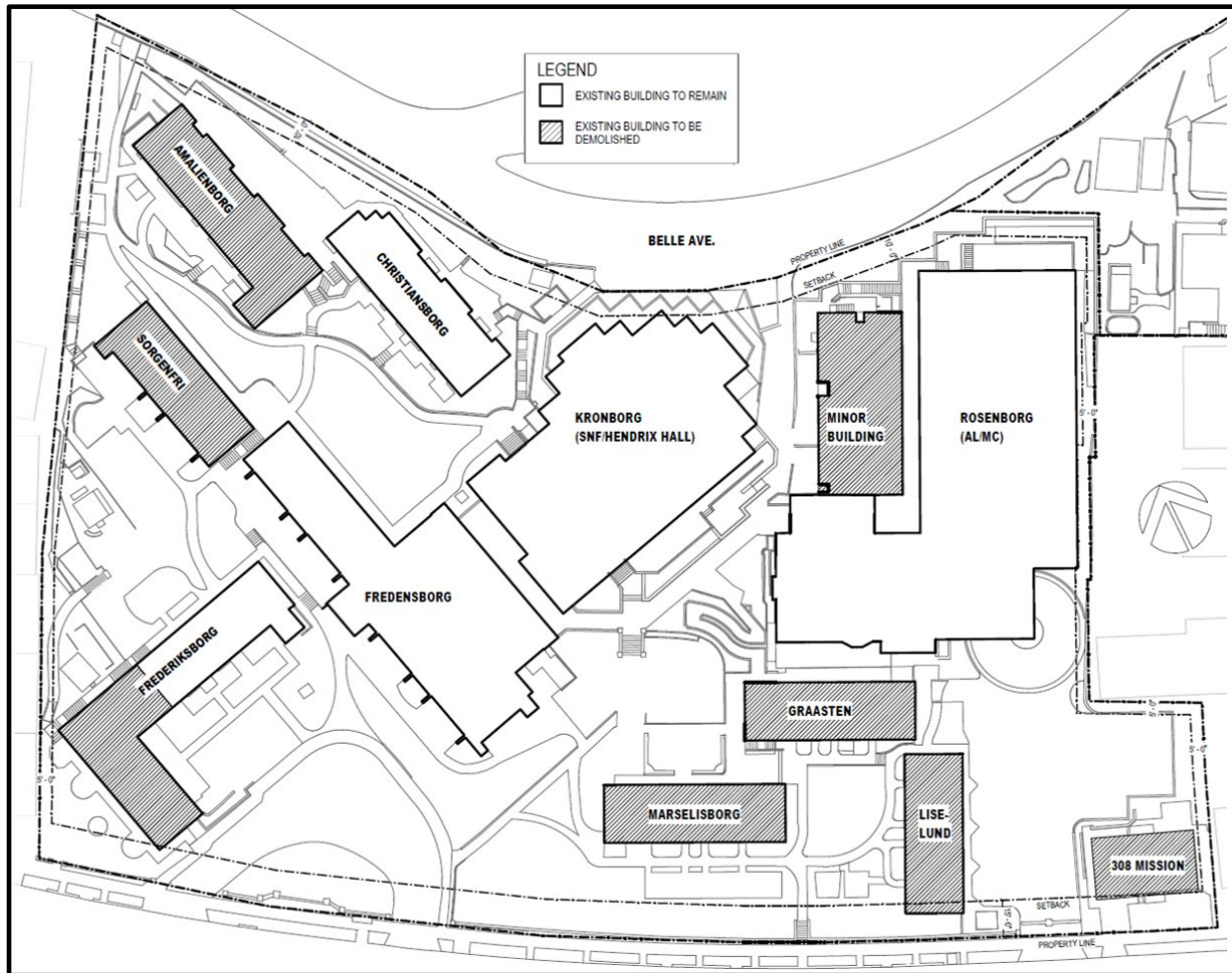
BACKGROUND

Site Description/Setting:

The Aldersly Retirement Community occupies 2.88 acres on the north side of Mission Avenue and extending to Belle Avenue to the north. The property slopes uphill from Mission Avenue frontage (13-16 ft. elevation) to Belle Avenue (40-60 ft. elevation). The campus is developed with residential, administrative, and healthcare buildings connected by an extensive network of landscaped pedestrian paths and gardens and on-site parking.

The campus is located within the Montecito/Happy Valley Neighborhood, one of San Rafael's oldest neighborhoods. The area surrounding the Aldersly campus contains a mix of residential, retail, and community services. The site has a General Plan Land Use designation as High Density Residential and is zoned PD - Planned Development (Ordinance No. 1775). The Aldersly campus is located just north of the Montecito Commercial Sub-Area of the Downtown Precise Plan Area.

Founded in 1921 as a retirement community for Danish immigrants, Aldersly has been transformed numerous times over its 100 years to meet the changing needs of residents and new concepts of community care. None of the original buildings of the Aldersly campus remain, and the existing buildings on the campus represent a variety of styles reflecting the four periods of redevelopment in the 1940s, 1960s, 1990s and early 2000s. The most recent major development on the campus is the 30-unit assisted living facility and attached parking garage (Rosenborg), completed in 2004. Figure 1 below depicts the existing buildings on the Aldersly campus.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proposes phased improvements over the next ten years that include demolition and renovation of existing buildings, and construction of new buildings on the Aldersly Campus. As noted in the proposed PD Zoning and Development Standards, the overall goal of the master plan is “to keep Aldersly a boutique residential community for older people looking for a home with *hygge* - Danish for the experience of coziness and comfortable conviviality that engenders feelings of contentment and well-being”.

At buildout of the Development Plan in approximate ten years (2031), the project would result in a new four-level Independent Living (IL) building along Mission Avenue, a new Independent Living building on the western portion of the site, a new service building along Belle Avenue, three renovated/reconfigured buildings, and new outdoor spaces including a memory care garden, activity lawn, and rose terrace. The project, which includes demolition of six existing buildings, construction of three new buildings, and additions/renovations to four existing buildings, would result in fourteen (14) additional independent living units, an increase from 55 units to 69 units. The number of Assisted Living/Memory Care beds (35 beds) and Skilled Nursing beds (20 beds) would remain unchanged. The number of on-site parking spaces would increase from 48 to 56 spaces at buildout of the Aldersly Development Plan.

The proposed phasing of the Aldersly Development Plan is outlined below:

PHASE 1 MISSION AVENUE INDEPENDENT LIVING

Phase 1A: New Mission Ave Independent Living (IL) Building:

1. Demolition of Marselisborg (4,500 sq. ft.), Graasten (4,320 sq. ft.), Lieslund (1,800 sq. ft.) Independent Living buildings and the single-family residence at 308 Mission Avenue
2. Construction of new independent living apartments along Mission Avenue (net gain of 21 residential units and 9 parking spaces)
3. Redesign the parking spaces (6 net new spaces) located near the new east driveway (308 Mission property)
4. Redesign of the site entry (1 net new parking space)
5. Expansion of community space and improve central courtyard

Phase 1B: Frederiksborg Independent Living (Remodel/Addition):

1. Interior renovation of 15,000 sq. ft. Fredensborg (no discretionary review required; consistent with approved Development Plan)
2. Partial rebuild of 5,000 sq. ft. Frederiksborg with a 1,200 sq. ft. addition for a total of 7,200 sq. ft. (4 new parking spaces)

Phase 1C: Fredensborg Terrace

1. Improve outdoor space

GRADING REQUIRED FOR PHASE 1: 4,953 Cubic Yards (cy) of export; Est. 502 Truck Trips

PHASE 2A & 2B - KRONBORG RENOVATION

1. Renovate existing 14,250 sq. ft. Kronborg (20 Skilled Nursing beds; no net increase)
2. Renovate lower level to provide Wellness and additional amenities
3. Demolish the 6,510 sq. ft. Minor Building currently used for Independent Living (loss of 8 residential units)
4. Add a new service connector with an elevator to support and improve site circulation
5. Expand outdoor garden for Memory Care

GRADING REQUIRED FOR PHASE 2: 497 Net Cubic Yards (cy) of export; Est. 51 Truck Trips

PHASE 3 - CHRISTIANSBORG RENOVATION

1. Renovate and expand Christiansborg (5,500 SF) Independent Living units
2. Improve outdoor spaces with landscaping; define a core active space for the residents

GRADING REQUIRED FOR PHASE 3: 0 Cubic Yards (cy) of export; 0 Truck Trips

PHASE 4 - WEST CAMPUS INDEPENDENT LIVING ADDITION

1. Replace Amalienborg (5,500 sq. ft.) and Sorgenfri (3,800 sq. ft.) with a new Independent Living building (+1 unit net)

GRADING REQUIRED FOR PHASE 2: 872 Net Cubic Yards (cy) of export; Est. 89 Truck Trips

Project Applications

Project applications include the following:

- A zoning amendment to amend the previously approved Ordinance No. 1775, including revised Aldersly PD Development Standards. (ZC20-001);
- An amendment to a master use permit (UP20-022); and
- An environmental and design review permit for Phases 1-4 (ED20-051)

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

Initial Study

As noted above, an Historic Resources Evaluation prepared by Page & Turnbull (December 2020) and submitted by the applicant concluded that the Aldersly Retirement Community property is eligible for listing as a historic district in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register). Given the proposed project would require the demolition of buildings that are considered to be historically significant, staff determined early in the review process that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) would be required. In accordance with Section 15064.5. of the CEQA Guidelines, a project with an effect that may cause a

substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. Substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource means physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource would be materially impaired. The significance of an historical resource is materially impaired when a project demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources.

An Initial Study was prepared to determine if the project would result in other potentially significant impacts on the environment. As documented in the Initial Study, all other potentially significant impacts would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level through implementation of recommended mitigation measures or through compliance with existing Municipal Code requirements or City standards. Recommended measures are included in the Initial Study.

Notice of Preparation

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) including the Initial Study was published on November 22, 2021, to announce the commencement of the EIR process and to solicit comments concerning the scope of issues to be addressed in the EIR. A 30-day public review period is being observed and public comments will be accepted until Tuesday, December 22, 2021. The purpose of the scoping hearing is to afford the Planning Commission, other agencies, and the public an opportunity to provide oral comments on the Initial Study and the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the EIR. Following the close of the 30-day NOP comment period, City staff will review comments received and consider revisions to the Initial Study and/or the scope of the Draft EIR, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines.

Probable Environmental Effects

The following is a summary of the conclusions of the Initial Study. It is presented in accordance with the categories of potential environmental effect listed in the Initial Study Checklist: No Impact, Less than Significant Impact, Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated, and Significant Impact.

“No Impact” and “Less than Significant Impact” Determinations

The proposed project was determined to have “no impact” or “less than significant impact” in the following topic areas. Therefore, no mitigation is recommended, and no further analysis is warranted in the Draft EIR.

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forest Resources
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

The proposed project was determined to have a “Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated” in the following topic areas. Mitigation Measures identified in the Initial Study would reduce project impacts to less-than-significant. Therefore, no further analysis is warranted in the Draft EIR.

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Noise
- Tribal Cultural Resources

Significant Impact

The proposed project was determined to have a “Significant Impact” in the following topic area:

- Cultural Resources (historic resources)

The proposed project would require the demolition of buildings that are considered contributors to the eligible historic district. No mitigation or alternative has been proposed that would avoid or reduce project impacts on historic resources to less than significant. Therefore, an EIR will be prepared to address this significant impact. Based on the conclusions of the Initial Study, no other impacts require further analysis in the EIR.

Project Alternatives

The EIR will also address alternatives, including the “No Project” alternative (required by CEQA) that would avoid or substantially lessen the significant effects. One of the intents of the NOP and the Commission’s scoping session is to help determine potential alternatives to the project for discussion in the EIR. Staff is recommending that the EIR assess 3 alternatives including the No Project alternative. Project alternatives analyzed in the EIR will be limited to concepts or approaches that would meet the project objectives identified by the applicant. Following the close of the 30-day NOP comment period, City staff will review comments received and develop alternatives to evaluate in the EIR that would avoid or minimize significant impacts, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines.

NEXT STEPS

Draft EIR

Preparation of the Draft EIR (DEIR) will begin, focusing on the significant impact on historic resources noted above. However, the full scope of the DEIR will not be finalized until the 30-day comment period has ended and the scoping comments have been considered. It is expected that completion of the DEIR will take approximately three (3) months. Once the DEIR is completed, a Notice of Availability (NOA) will be released initiating a 45-day public review period for comment on the DEIR. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the DEIR during the 45-day public review period and will provide the public an opportunity to comment on the adequacy of the document.

Final EIR and Project Merits

Following the 45-day public review period for the DEIR, the environmental consultant will respond to the comments raised during the review period and prepare a Final EIR (FEIR). The FEIR, along with the project merits, will be considered by the Planning Commission and the City Council at noticed public hearings. This project requires an amendment to the approved PD Development Plan (Zoning Amendment,) which requires action by the City Council. Therefore, the Planning Commission action will be a recommendation to the City Council.

CORRESPONDENCE

As of the date and publication of this staff report, the City has received no correspondence on the NOP or Initial Study. Correspondence received before the Planning Commission meeting will be forwarded to Commission members under separate cover.

EXHIBITS

1. NOP and Initial Study for Aldersly Retirement Community Project, November 2021
https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/uploads/2021/11/Aldersly_NOP_IS_20211122.pdf

Plans/documents and supportive studies provided on website:
<https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/aldersly/>