



## NOTICE OF PREPARATION – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

### Montaldo Apartments Project

**Date:** July 10, 2024

**To:** California State Clearinghouse  
Responsible and Trustee Agencies  
Interested Parties and Organizations

**Subject:** **Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report for the Montaldo Apartments Project**

**Lead Agency:** **City of Sonoma**

**NOP Availability:** A copy of the NOP and Initial Study is available for review at City Hall (1 The Plaza, Sonoma, CA) and on the City of Sonoma website:  
  
<https://www.sonomacity.org/montaldo-apartments/>

**Comment Period:** **July 12, 2024, through August 13, 2024**  
Written comments should be submitted at the earliest possible date, but not later than 5:00 PM on August 13, 2024.

**NOP Scoping Mtg:** **August 1, 2024, 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM**  
Emergency Operations Center  
177 First Street West, Sonoma, CA

**Project Location:** Located at 19320 Sonoma Highway in the City of Sonoma. Approximately 1 mile northwest of Sonoma Plaza, bounded by State Route (SR) 12 (Sonoma Highway) to the west, the Olde Bowl commercial center to the north, single-family dwellings to the east, and a multi-family residential complex to the south. (APNs 127-202-006 and 127-202-007)

**Proposed Project:** DeNova Homes proposes to construct the Montaldo Apartments project (the proposed project) which includes the demolition of the existing single-family home and the development of 50 apartment units in seven 2- and 3-story residential buildings, 94 on-site parking surface spaces (consisting of 68 garage stalls and 2 carports for residents; 20 standard and 4 compact spaces for visitors), common open space area, and multiple landscaped passive open space areas with connecting walkways. All apartment homes would have a minimum of two bedrooms and two baths. The project description, location maps, and preliminary identification of the potential environmental issues to be explored is available on the project webpage on the City's website.

**Environmental Determination:** The City is preparing a Draft EIR in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Pursuant to CEQA, the City of Sonoma will be the lead agency and is responsible for preparing the EIR for the proposed project.

The proposed project could result in potentially significant environmental effects. As such, the City of Sonoma will prepare an initial study, consistent with CEQA Guidelines sections 15063(b)(1)(a) and 15063(c)(3), to provide documentation to determine which of the proposed project effects warrant more-detailed environmental analysis in the EIR. The initial study will be published as an appendix to the EIR.

As required by CEQA, the EIR will further examine those issues identified in the initial study that could result in potentially significant effects, identify mitigation measures, and analyze whether the proposed mitigation measures would reduce the environmental effects to less-than-significant levels. The EIR will provide an impact analysis of feasible alternatives to the proposed project that may reduce or avoid one or more of the significant impacts of the project while still meeting most of the project objectives. The EIR will assess a No Project Alternative, which examines reasonably foreseeable conditions at the project site if the proposed project is not implemented.

**Requested Input:** In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, this Notice of Preparation describes the project location and the proposed project that will be analyzed in the EIR and identifies areas of potential environmental effects of the project. The City of Sonoma is soliciting input regarding the scope of the environmental review from members of the public, responsible of trustee agencies, and interested parties. In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, responses must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than 30 days after the date of this notice.

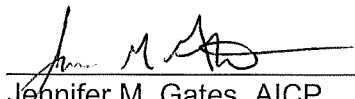
Project documents and updates can be found at the following URL:

<https://www.sonomacity.org/montaldo-apartments/>

Please send your written response, with the name, address, phone number, and email address and agency contact person, if applicable, **on or before 5:00 p.m. on August 13, 2024** to:

Jennifer M. Gates, AICP  
Community Development Department  
City of Sonoma  
No. 1 The Plaza  
Sonoma, CA 95476  
[JGates@sonomacity.org](mailto:JGates@sonomacity.org)

**Public Scoping Meeting:** Pursuant to CEQA section 21083.9 and CEQA Guidelines section 15206, a scoping meeting will be held to receive oral comments concerning the scope of the EIR. The meeting will be held on **August 1 at 6:00 p.m.** at the Emergency Operations Center, 177 First Street West, Sonoma, CA. If you have questions regarding this NOP or the scoping meeting, please contact Jennifer Gates at (707) 933-2201 or via email at [JGates@sonomacity.org](mailto:JGates@sonomacity.org).

  
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Jennifer M. Gates, AICP  
Community Development Director

7/10/2024  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## 1. Project Information

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**Title:**

Montaldo Apartments Project

**Lead Agency Name and Address:**

City of Sonoma Community Development Department  
Planning Division  
No. 1 The Plaza  
Sonoma, CA 95476

**Contact Person and Information:**

Jennifer M. Gates  
Phone: (707) 933-2201  
Email: [JGates@sonomacity.org](mailto:JGates@sonomacity.org)

## 2. Location and Regional Setting

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The project site is in southeastern Sonoma County, within the City of Sonoma. The City is situated in the center of the approximately 17-mile-long Sonoma Valley, which is bounded by the Sonoma Mountains to the west, the Mayacamas Mountains to the east, San Pablo Bay to the south, and Santa Rosa to the north (**Figure 1**).

## 3. Project Site

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The project site, of approximately 2.15 acres, comprises the Sonoma County Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 127-202-006 and -007 (**Figure 2**). Both parcels are owned by the project applicant.

The portion of the project site fronting Sonoma Highway/SR 12 is developed with a single-family home, built in 1939, and a large valley oak tree (**Figure 3**). The 1939 house has been determined to be a historically significant resource for its representation of the Ranch-style with Spanish Colonial Revival influences. The house is clad in hand-troweled white stucco with a red mission-style clay tile roof, two chimneys, clay attic vents, and a covered porch with three arches that mirror the arched plate glass window of the front gable. Other windows are painted wood multi-lite casements.

An approximately 2-foot wall borders the site in front of the single-family home along Sonoma Highway/SR 12. A driveway from Sonoma Highway/SR 12 is located between the single-family home and the valley oak tree and provides for parking in a paved area at the rear of the residence. The rear parcel has a livestock corral, remnants of prior agricultural use, and trees but is otherwise undeveloped. There is a total of 93 trees on the project site.

#### 4. Surrounding Land Uses

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The project site is immediately surrounded by commercial and residential land uses. A commercial center with medical offices (Olde Bowl Center) is located to the north of the project. Two multi-tenant office buildings and a vacant restaurant are located to the west. Single-family dwellings and a multi-family residential complex border the site from the south and single-family dwellings are located to the east of the project site.

The project site is approximately 1 mile northwest of the historic Sonoma Plaza, an 8-acre park in the center of the downtown area, which includes the City of Sonoma City Hall, several historic buildings, picnic and play areas, and large expanses of public lawns and green space. The Sonoma State Historic Park is approximately 3,600 feet east of the project site. The Sonoma Valley Fire Station No. 1 is approximately 1 mile southeast of the project site.

#### 5. Proposed Project

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Montaldo Apartments Project (the proposed project) includes the demolition of the existing single-family home and development of the 2.15-acre project site with 50 apartment units in seven 2- and 3-story residential buildings. The proposed Buildings 1 and 7, would be two-story buildings and would be located on the western and eastern boundaries of the project site. The proposed buildings 2 through 6 would be three-story buildings and would be located within the center of the project site. All apartment homes would have a minimum of two bedrooms and two baths. Proposed building design of the two- and three-story buildings is shown in **Figure 4** and the proposed location of the buildings is shown in **Figure 5**.

Two types of building configurations are proposed:

- Buildings 1 and 7 (shown in **Figure 4**) would be two-story, approximately 29.5-foot tall buildings with five units and four single-car garage spaces for each building.
- Buildings 2 through 6 would be three-story, approximately 36-foot-tall buildings with eight units and would be of “stacked flat” type. Each unit would have access to a single or two-car garage.

The proposed project would include 13 affordable housing units (26 percent of the total residential units), with three of the units allocated for extremely-low-income households,<sup>1</sup> five of the units allocated for very-low-income households,<sup>2</sup> and the remaining five units allocated for low-income households.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Extremely low-income (ELI) households are defined as those earning up to 30% of the area median household income.

<sup>2</sup> Very-low income (VLI) households are defined as those earning between 30% and 50% of the area median household income.

<sup>3</sup> Low-income (LI) households are defined as those earning between 50% and 80% of the area median household income.



The proposed project would maintain the large valley oak tree located at the front of the site. A 22-foot-wide drive aisle would be located at approximately 4 feet from the northern property line and would provide access to the site. The proposed site layout is shown in **Figure 5**.

Access and building orientation are designed to accommodate access of emergency vehicles to the three-story living areas and exit via a hammer-head type turnaround.

The property would be separated from adjoining uses by a six-foot tall wood fence. A front low accent fence is proposed to separate the public sidewalk along Sonoma Highway from the project site.

To maintain a design context similar to the existing single-family home, the proposed development would reflect a contemporary version of Spanish architecture. Building 1, facing SR 12, would be a two-story building with archways framing the front doors.

**Green Building Features.** The proposed project would be required to comply with the State of California Cal Green Building Code (CalGreen) and energy efficiency standards in effect at the time of permit approval.

**Open Space and Landscaped Areas.** The proposed project would include approximately 22,242 square feet of common open space, which would result in more than 400 square feet per dwelling unit.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the proposed project would include approximately 25,875 square feet of landscaped areas, including passive open space areas with connecting walkways located throughout the project site (see **Figure 6**).

**Parking.** The proposed project would provide a total of 94 parking spaces with 70 spaces designated for residents and 24 parking spaces for visiting guests. Residents parking would include 68 garage stalls and 2 carports. Guests parking would include 20 standard spaces and 4 compact spaces. Apartment units would have a one-car garage or a 2-car garage. One unit within each of Buildings 1 and 7 would not have a garage.

## **6. Required Permits and Approvals**

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The following is a preliminary list of potential approvals needed for the project construction. Needed permits and approvals will be confirmed during the preparation of the CEQA document. This list is not intended to be inclusive of all permits required:

- City of Sonoma certification of the EIR
- Encroachment Permits for any work within the City right-of-way (e.g. curb cuts, sidewalk improvements, utility work, etc.)
- Major Design Review for construction of a multifamily dwelling
- Demolition permit for removal of a historic resource
- Lot Merger to dissolve property boundary between the two parcels at the project site
- Tree removal permit pursuant to SMC 12.08.035
- Utilization of density bonus waivers and/or concessions for (including but not limited to) floor area ratio (FAR) and private open space

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<sup>4</sup> City of Sonoma Municipal Code 19.40.070 requirements for common open space are 300 square feet per dwelling unit.

- Sign permit for placement of a monument sign to display the complex name and street address
- Grading and Building Permits for construction of the project buildings
- Caltrans Encroachment Permit
- Sonoma County Water Agency approval of proposed water supply improvements
- Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District approval of proposed wastewater improvements
- PG&E approval of electrical and natural gas facilities
- Other local, State, or federal approvals or permits may be necessary pursuant to applicable laws and regulations.

## **7. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

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The proposed project is subject to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it would require the City of Sonoma to take several discretionary actions to grant the requested land use entitlements. CEQA requires the City, as the CEQA Lead Agency, to identify and document the potential significant environmental effects of the project prior to making a decision to approve the project.

This Notice of Preparation has been prepared under the direction of the City in accordance with the requirements of CEQA (Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.), and the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq), to inform the public and responsible and interested agencies about the intent to prepare an EIR for the proposed project and to solicit their input of scope of the EIR analysis. Pursuant to CEQA section 21083.9 and CEQA Guidelines section 15206, a public scoping meeting will be held on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, at the Community Meeting Room, located at 177 First Street West, Sonoma, CA.

## **8. Public Comment**

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**Notice to Agencies:** The City of Sonoma requests that public agencies provide comments regarding the scope and content of the EIR as it relates to an agency’s statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project in accordance with California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15082(b).

**Notice to Members of the Public, Organizations, and Interested Parties:** The City of Sonoma requests comments and concerns from members of the public, organizations, and interested parties regarding the environmental effects associated with construction and operation of the proposed project.

## **9. Potential Environmental Impacts**

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The proposed project could result in potentially significant environmental effects. Therefore, the initial study and EIR will assess both project-specific and cumulative impacts for all topics. The EIR will further examine those issues identified in the initial study as having potentially significant and unavoidable effects, identify mitigation measures, and analyze whether the mitigation measures would reduce the environmental effect(s) to a less-than-significant level. The initial study will be published as an appendix to the draft EIR and will be considered part of the EIR.

It is anticipated that the EIR will include a focused assessment of impacts on historical resources and that alternatives to be considered for this project will include one or more alternatives that reduce the impacts on these resources. Other environmental topics are anticipated to be analyzed in the initial study, unless significant impacts are identified that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level, in which case, any such impacts will be included in the EIR.

Key environmental topics to be addressed through the CEQA process are described briefly below.

- **Aesthetics:** Describes the existing visual setting and describe visual changes resulting from the project.
- **Air Quality:** Describes the existing regional air quality conditions. The potential for the proposed project to result in local and regional air quality impacts will be evaluated in consideration of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) CEQA Guidelines.
- **Biological Resources:** Describes the impacts for potential impacts to sensitive plant and wildlife habitats resulting from the demolition and clearing of the existing single-family home and construction of the proposed project in accordance with State and federal law.
- **Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources:** The potential to impact cultural resources will be described, including Tribal Cultural Resources. The analysis will address the potential historic significance of the existing single-family home on the site and determine if the project would have the potential to result in a significant impact to historic resources.
- **Energy:** Describes current electricity and natural gas utility providers and evaluate whether the proposed project would have any potentially significant effects related to energy demand, energy resources, transportation energy use, or compliance with energy standards.
- **Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources:** Evaluates whether the project could result in the exposure of people, structures, and/or property to seismic ground shaking, impacts related to soils constraints, or impacts to unique paleontological (fossil) resources.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Net new greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the project will contribute incrementally to climate change. The analysis will examine if the proposed project would be consistent with the BAAQMD performance criteria and with applicable plans and policies adopted by the City of Sonoma to reduce GHG emissions.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality:** Stormwater runoff from the site would be collected onsite in bioretention swales, then conveyed to underground stormwater pipes that would connect to the City's drainage network. The analysis will examine the impacts from redeveloping the site with the proposed project on hydrology and water quality during construction and operational phases of the proposed project.
- **Land Use and Planning:** Describes the existing land uses within and/or adjacent to the proposed project site and evaluate consistency of the project with relevant policies and plans enacted to reduce adverse physical environmental effects.

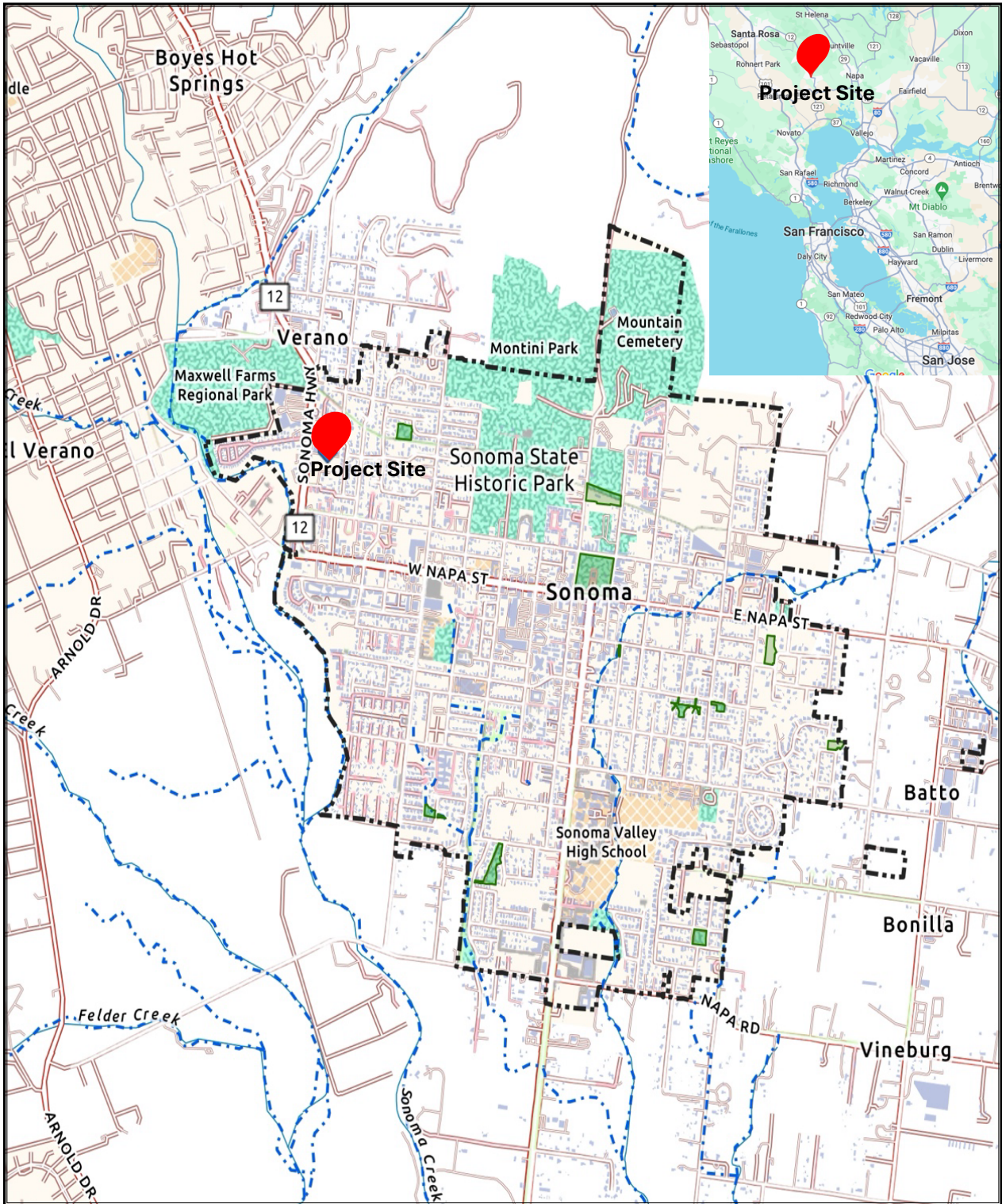
- **Noise and Vibration:** Describes the anticipated noise level exposure and vibration during construction and operation of the proposed project.
- **Public Services:** Evaluates the potential for adverse physical environmental effects that could result from physical improvements needed to accommodate increased demand for police, fire, or school services attributable to the project.
- **Transportation:** Evaluates project traffic impacts using the vehicle-miles traveled (VMT). The EIR will examine if the proposed project would generate above the evaluate hazards due to a design feature or incompatible use; inadequate emergency access; and conflicts with adopted plans, policies, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities that could create a potentially significant adverse environmental effect.
- **Utilities and Service Systems:** Evaluates physical environmental impacts related to the expansion and extension of utility systems, such as those that are required for water supply, stormwater drainage, wastewater treatment, and solid waste disposal.

**Other Environmental Topics:** In addition to the key topics identified above, potential effects associated with the environmental topics listed below will also be analyzed:

- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Recreation
- Wildfire

As required by the CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a), the CEQA analysis will evaluate a “range of reasonable alternatives to the project” which would “feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant impacts of the project.”

## Figures



Source: City of Sonoma, 2024.

**Figure 1. Regional Site Location**





- |   |   |   |                            |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | Maxwell Farms Regional Park             | 4 | Retail and Office Building |
| 2 | Olde Bowl Center                        | 5 | Valley Oak Homes           |
| 3 | Sonoma Dispensary and Cannabis Delivery | 6 | Single-Family Homes        |

**Figure 2. Project Site**







View looking east at the single-family home from Highway 12



View looking east at the undeveloped portion of the project site

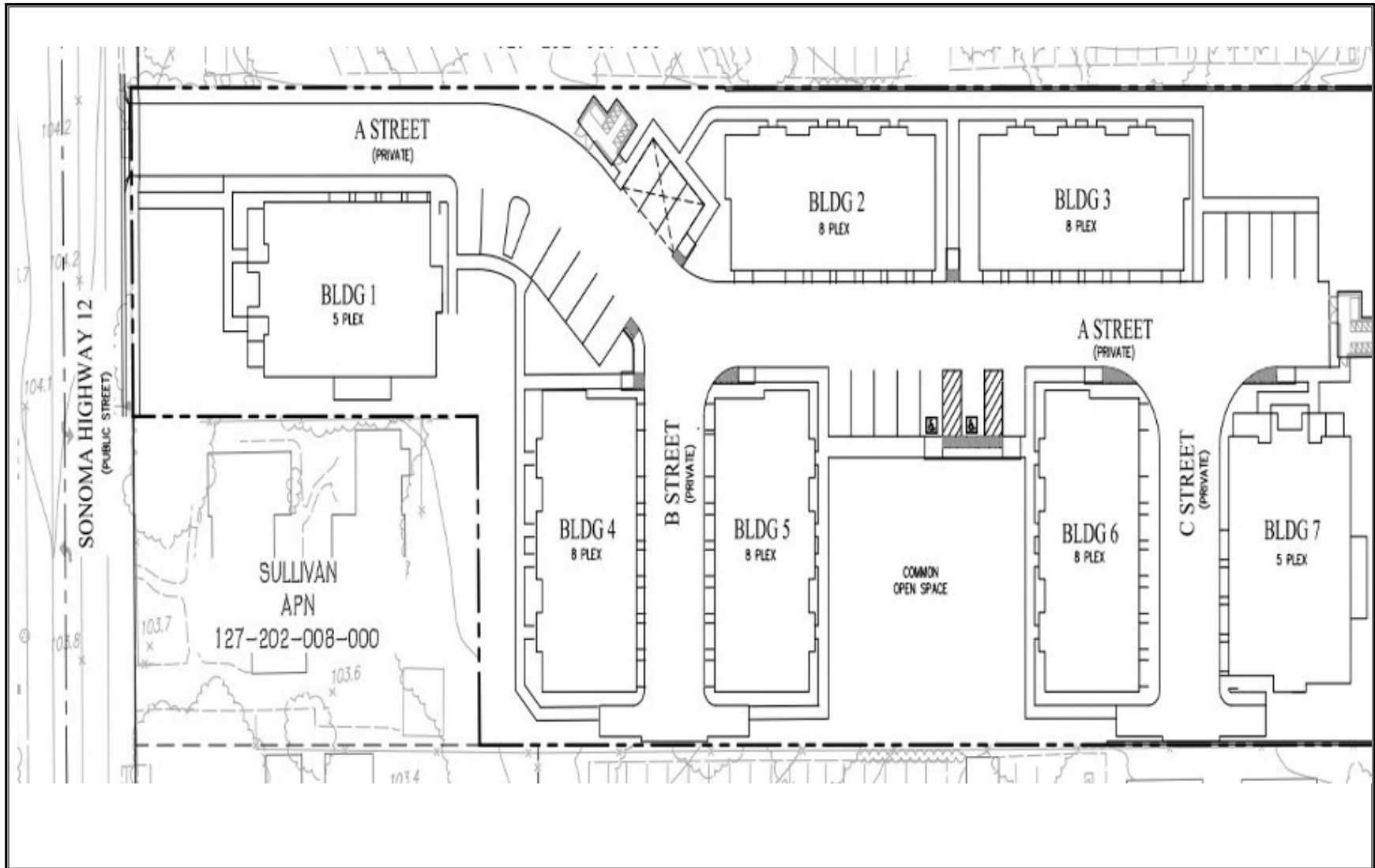
**Figure 3. Photographs of the project site**





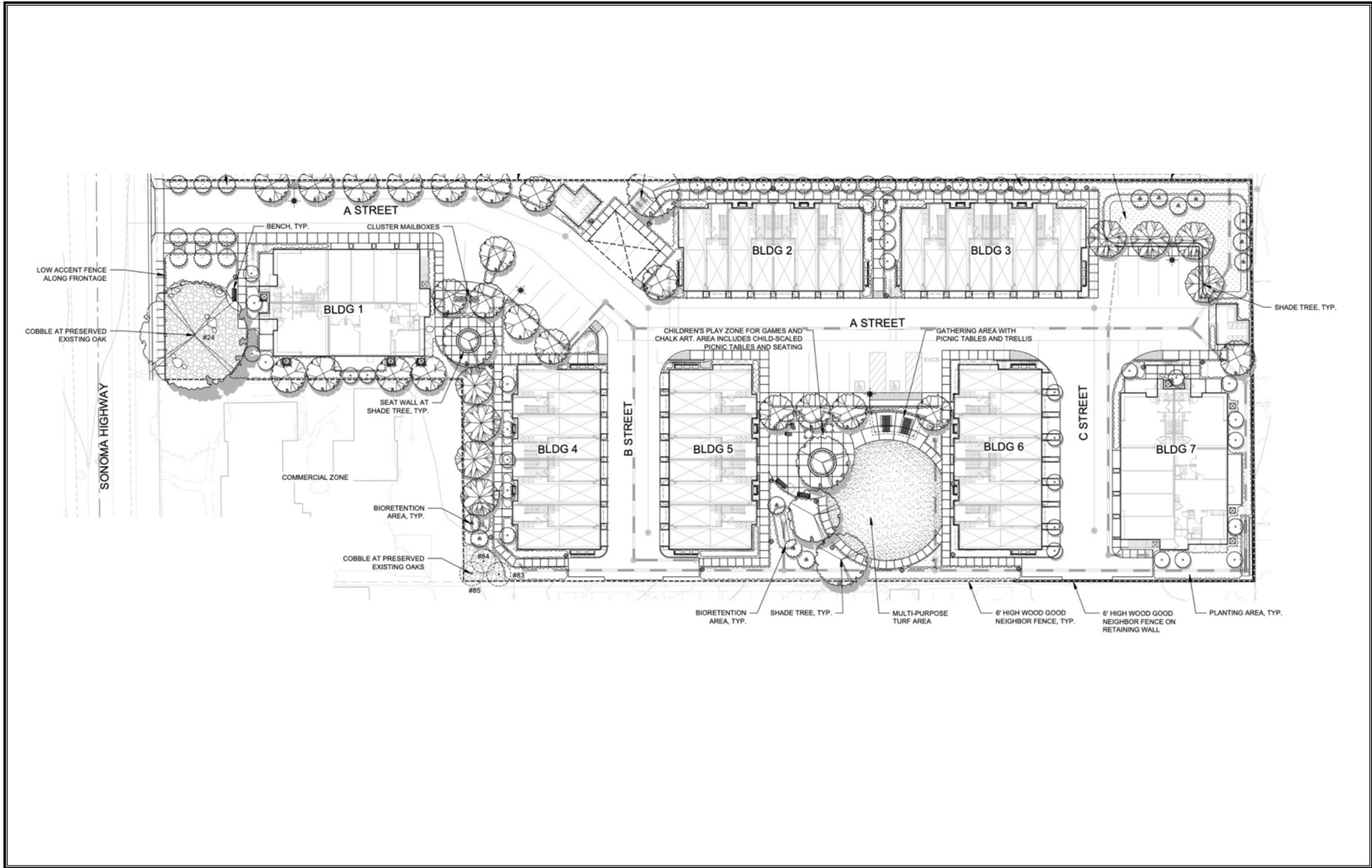
Source: WHA, 2022.

**Figure 4. Proposed Buildings Design**



Source: cbg Civil Engineers, 2022.

**Figure 5. Proposed Site Layout**



Source: cbg Civil Engineers, 2022.

**Figure 6. Common Open Space**