

SALINAS PLANNING COMMISSION

Staff Report

City of Salinas

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Planning Manager Approval

Agenda Item

ID#19-582

DATE: November 6, 2019
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Courtney Grossman, Planning Manager
BY: Jill Miller, Senior Planner
SUBJECT: STUDY SESSION REGARDING THE WEST AREA
SPECIFIC PLAN PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION

Receive staff presentation. No recommended action is required at this time.

BACKGROUND

The participating applicants, represented by Brian Finegan (Patricia Bondensen, Ray Harrod Jr., Mark Kelton, Mortensen Family, and Joseph Rivani), have applied for a specific plan (SPEC), rezoning (RZ), and development agreement (DA). An environmental impact report (EIR) has been prepared for the project.

The project is identified as a Future Growth Area in the Salinas General Plan. In particular, the project area is part of the North of Boronda Future Growth Area, which has been separated into three specific plan areas per Council direction; the West Area, Central Area and East Area. The West Area is comprised of 797 acres situated north of Boronda Road, east of San Juan Grade Road, west of Natividad Road and south of Russell Road and Rogge Road. The North of Boronda Future Growth Area was annexed to the City in 2008.

On October 14, 2015, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was distributed in accordance with Section 15082 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. A scoping meeting was held on

October 29, 2015. Comment letters were received from: 1) Northern Salinas Valley Mosquito Abatement District, 2) California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), 3) Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST), 4) Monterey County Resource Management Agency, 5) California Natural Resource Agency Division of Land Resource Protection, 6) Salinas Union High School District, 7) Ohlone/Coastanoan-Esselen Nation, 8) Santa Rita Union School District, 9) Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC).

On February 27, 2019, the DEIR was circulated for a 45-day public review period, and the Notice of Completion (NOC) and Notice of Availability (NOA) prepared in accordance with Section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines. The Draft Specific Plan was also circulated for a 45-day public review period in accordance with California Government Code Section 65453. The comment period will close April 15, 2019.

On March 12, 2019, staff presented the project to the Housing Subcommittee providing a project overview with emphasis on the housing components of the project.

On March 13, 2019, staff presented the project to the Library and Community Services Commission. The Commission voted 5-0 to recommend approval of the park plan to the City Council.

On March 14, 2019, staff presented the project to the Traffic and Transportation Commission. The Commission voted 6-0 to recommend approval based on the Traffic Impact Analysis to the City Council.

April 3, 2019: the Planning Commission held a study session regarding the proposed Project. Issues raised during that meeting were: traffic noise, sound-attenuation walls, and grading along Russell Road; potential sewer connection requirement for the Bolsa Knolls area (which is located in unincorporated Monterey County); the need for future transit service in the Plan Area; and the adequacy of the newspaper noticing.

April 15, 2019: the comment period for the West Area Specific Plan and the DEIR documents closed. Comment letters were received from: 1) Native American Heritage Commission, 2) Monterey County Health Department, 3) LandWatch, 4) California Department of Transportation, 5) Salinas Union High School District, 6) Alisal Union School District, 7) Santa Rita Union School District, 8) Brian Finegan, 9) California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 10) Monterey Bay Air Resources District.

April 30, 2019: the City Council held a study session regarding the proposed Project. Issues raised during that meeting were: school facility funding; traffic noise, sound-attenuation walls, and grading along Russell Road; potential sewer connection requirement for the Bolsa Knolls area (which is located in unincorporated Monterey County); and the need for future transit service in the Plan Area.

June 10, 2019: City Staff held a Community Meeting at the Northminster Church community room to provide members of the public to ask questions about the proposed Project. Four stations were available for the public to explore: public works/traffic, housing and land use with City staff and for the public to engage directly with the development team. Over 70 people attended.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project includes applications for a Specific Plan, Rezoning, and Development Agreement.

Specific Plan. The Specific Plan is an implementation tool for realizing the General Plan vision for the North of Boronda Future Growth Area. The General Plan requires that before development occurs in Future Growth Areas, a specific plan must be prepared. The General Plan also indicates that development in the North of Boronda Future Growth Area shall implement New Urbanism Design Principles. New Urbanism Design Principles include, but are not limited to:

- Pedestrian Oriented Development
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- Narrow Streets and Traffic Calming Devices
- Walkable and Bikeable Connectivity

The specific plan provides for the distribution and locations of land uses, transportation and infrastructure needed to support the project, development standards, implementation measures, and a statement of relationship to the General Plan. The content of the specific plan is provided in accordance with Government Code Section 65451.

At build-out (estimated to occur over 20-30 years), the project would establish: 4,340 dwelling units provided as a mix of low, medium and high densities, a Village Center with up to 571,500 square feet of mixed use commercial floor area, eleven parks, five schools (one high school, one middle school and three elementary schools), and other associated uses supporting the development including but not limited to open space and well-sites.

Rezone. The existing zoning for the project area is New Urbanism Interim in accordance with the General Plan which contemplates New Urbanism Design Principles for the North of Boronda Future Growth Area. The proposed zoning districts are Neighborhood Edge (NE), Neighborhood General-1 (NG-1), Neighborhood General 2 (NG-2), and Village Center (VC). These districts align with existing zoning districts defined in the Salinas Zoning Code and generally correspond with low density residential, medium density residential, high density residential and mixed use, respectively. Additional zoning districts are parks, open space, and public/semipublic (see Attachment 3, Zoning Map Upon Adoption of Specific Plan).

Development Agreement. The Project includes a development agreement pursuant to Government Code Section 65864. The development agreement would allow the applicant to proceed with the project in accordance with existing policies, rules, and regulations, subject to the conditions of approval, thus vesting certain development rights in the property.

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (DEIR)

The areas of potential environmental effects analyzed in the DEIR include air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gasses and climate change, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, population and housing, public services, transportation and circulation, and utilities. The appendices referenced include: Appendix A, Notice of Preparation and Responses, Appendix B, Criteria Air Pollutant, Greenhouse Gas, and Energy Modeling Results, Appendix C, CAPCOA's Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures Guidebook, Appendix D, Biological Resources Report, Appendix E, Hazards and Hazardous Materials Studies/Reports, Appendix F, Hydrology and Water Quality Technical Study, Appendix G, Water Supply Assessment, Appendix H, Noise Technical Report, Appendix I, Transportation Impact Analysis, and Appendix J, 2007 Final Supplement for the Salinas General Plan Final Program EIR Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Program.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15128, the EIR includes a statement indicating reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail. Moreover, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15183, the findings of the initial study on environmental topics that were either found to have no impact or be less than significant, or would be found to be sufficiently addressed in the General Plan EIR (Cotton Bridges Associates 2002), and subsequent Final Supplement for the Salinas General Plan Final Program EIR (EDAW/AECOM 2007), are not included within individual sections of the DEIR. These areas are: aesthetics, agricultural and forest resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, recreations, transportation and circulation.

COURTNEY GROSSMAN
Planning Manager

BY:

Jill Miller
Senior Planner

Attachments: Attachment 1: Project site vicinity map
Attachment 2: Comments received in response to DEIR, including:
a- Native American Heritage Commission, received March 4, 2019
b- Monterey County Health Department, received April 10, 2019
c- LandWatch, received April 11, 2019
d- California Department of Transportation, received April 12, 2019
e- Salinas Union High School District, received April 12, 2019
f- Alisal Union School District, received April 15, 2019
g-Santa Rita Union School District, received April 15, 2019
h-Brian Finegan, received April 15, 2019
i-California Department of Fish and Wildlife, received April 16,
2019
j- Monterey Bay Air Resources District, received April 16, 2019
Attachment 3: Zoning Map Upon Adoption of Specific Plan