

EL DORADO COUNTY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT



Agenda of: January 25, 2007

Item No.: 9.a.

Staff: Daniel Hamilton

GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT/REZONE/PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

FILE NUMBER: AZ05-0002/PD06-0031

APPLICANT: Mercy Housing

OWNER: Sherrod Family Trust

REQUEST:

1. Amendment to General Plan changing the land use designation from Medium Density Residential (MDR) to Multi-Family Residential (MFR);
2. Rezone from One-acre Residential (R1A) to Multi-family Residential-Planned Development (RM-PD); and
3. Conceptual plans for the development of a 70-unit apartment complex.

LOCATION: On the south side of Runnymede Drive, approximately 500 feet east of the intersection with El Dorado Road, in the Diamond Springs/El Dorado area, Supervisorial District 3 (Exhibit A).

APN: 327-160-47

ACREAGE: 6.97

GENERAL PLAN: Medium Density Residential (MDR) (Exhibit B)

ZONING: One-acre Residential (R1A) (Exhibit C)

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT: Mitigated Negative Declaration

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Recommend conditional approval

BACKGROUND: A grading permit was issued to prepare the site for the proposed project in 2004 under a design review application (DR03-0014S). At that time a negative declaration was prepared. That document addressed potential impacts of the grading activities only and not the potential impacts of the proposed residential development. The grading permit listed conditions of approval and mitigation measures which limit the scope and duration of grading activities and adequately address the environmental impacts generated by the activities. The applicant has not yet undertaken any grading on the site. The mitigation measures from the CEQA negative declaration for the issuance of the grading permit are included as Attachment 3 to this staff report. Mitigation includes requirements for protective fencing, soil import and export restrictions, air quality protections, biological resource protections, and protection of stormwater runoff quality. These measures are incorporated by reference with a condition of approval of the development plan.

The project was submitted to the County on October 14, 2005, as a General Plan amendment and rezone application. The application was amended in late spring 2006 to add a planned development overlay (PD06-0031), allowing for a revised CEQA analysis consistent with the development plan proposed by the applicant. A development plan was submitted in summer 2006, and the application was subsequently revised consistent with the proposed changes.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Project Description: AZ05-0002/PD06-0031 is an application for a General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation from Medium Density Residential (MDR) to Multi-Family Residential (MFR), rezone from One-acre Residential (R1A) to Multi-family Residential-Planned Development (RM-PD), and approval of a conceptual development plan for up to 80 units of attached multifamily housing units in seven buildings with 149 parking spaces, landscaping, and community open space. An approximately 1800 square foot community center will also be constructed for the management office and resident recreation. The purpose of the conceptual plan is to limit the focus of the environmental document to what is proposed to be constructed, and to provide for approval of the General Plan amendment and zoning for the purposes of financing and grant applications. Mercy Housing typically uses state and federal grants, along with other public financing, to lower the development costs to provide a more affordable housing product. A final planned development application with all of the required details consistent with this preliminary approval will be required to be reviewed by the Planning Commission at a future date.

Project design drawings include the realignment of Runnymede Drive, the primary source of access to the site, to reduce traffic impacts. Approval of the realignment of Runnymede Drive also received prior approval in 2004. Because the development plan is part of the project, the environmental analysis for the project focuses on impacts associated with the proposed development plan only, as opposed to the maximum development allowed under the General Plan and zoning designations.

Site Description: The 6.97-acre parcel is currently vacant and undeveloped. Site access is currently provided by a sloped trail that connects to Runnymede Drive. The slope varies on the parcel, with the terrain ranging from gently to steeply sloping. The site is flat in the center, and is steeply sloped on three sides of the property. The parcel is mostly covered by grass and sporadic shrubs. Mixed oak and pine trees are present on adjacent properties, near property lines for the subject parcel. No

oaks are contained within the site. Commercial and multi-family residential uses are adjacent to the site.

Adjacent Land Uses:

	Zoning	General Plan	Land Use/Improvements
Site	R1A	MDR	Undeveloped
North	R1A	MDR	Undeveloped
South	MP/R1A	MFR	Mobile home park (Crestview)
East	R1A	MDR	Undeveloped
West	C/R1A/CG	C	Dental and Health care offices

The site is adjacent to existing multi-family residential, in the form of the mobile home park, to the south of the site. The land uses proposed in the project would not conflict with the professional office uses to the west of the site. The project would aide in the development of additional circulation routes through the area, as the realignment of Runnymede and the extension of entrance driveways would improve overall vehicular access to the area.

Planned Development and Design: The development of the proposed project would create seven residential buildings, from two to three stories in height, across the site. Additionally, a community center, landscaping, parking areas, and other site improvements would be constructed as part of the project. The development plan submitted for the project, required as part of the planned development zone, provides elevation drawings of each proposed structure in relation to the surrounding land uses and land development patterns.

Buildings on the site are organized around a community center and parking areas. Open space, which comprises 30 percent of the project site, is scattered throughout the development in the form of landscape strips, common recreational open space, and preserved open hillsides. There are 7 residential buildings within the site with heights ranging from 38 to 40 feet. Building finishes would be in a combination of stucco and hard siding with composite shingle roofs. Colors on the building exteriors would include various shades of white, brown, and yellow, consistent with color schemes submitted as part of the application. Buildings 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 would be 166 feet in length, and 43 feet deep. Buildings 4 and 6 are smaller and contain fewer units. Heights in these buildings remains at 40 feet, but widths reduce to 132 feet as each building contains fewer units. Balconies or patios are located on the front of each unit with open air staircases located at each end of the buildings.

Parking is provided in surface parking spaces located throughout the project site. Uncovered parking spaces generally run along building fronts and backs with one centralized parking area surrounding the community center. The parking is slightly in excess of the required number of spaces, and would be sufficient to serve the residents and visitors of the complex.

The previously approved grading permit, which was issued in 2004 (valid through July 2007), would result in the flattening of the central portion of the project site, leaving the substantial slopes along the property boundaries intact. These areas are proposed for preservation in this application as well. The hillsides would provide for natural buffering between the proposed project and the less intensive single-family residential use adjacent to the site. The hillsides are also protected between the undeveloped property to the east and the existing Crestview Mobile Home Park to the south. Site layout would divide the development from the existing commercial uses to the west of the project site, although these uses are considered compatible and substantial buffering is not needed to limit noise, traffic, and other environmental factors.

General Plan: The MFR designation permits “high-density, multifamily structures, such as apartments ... and multiplexes.” Additionally, the designation also specifies that the lands “shall be in locations with the highest degree of access to transportation facilities, shopping and services, employment, recreation, and other public facilities.” The project is located less than two blocks from State Highway 50, has health, banking, and shopping facilities within a few blocks away. This project is located within the El Dorado/Diamond Springs Community Region.

Policy 2.2.5.3 requires the County to review proposed zone changes against a set of 19 criteria, along with the general direction of the Plan. These are reviewed as follows:

- 1. Availability of an adequate public water source or an approved Capital Improvement Project to increase service for existing land use demands; and*
- 2. Availability and capacity of public treated water system;*

Discussion: An El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) Facility Improvement Letter, dated October 13, 2005, states that adequate water supplies and facilities are available to serve the proposed project. The project would require 54.5 equivalent dwelling units (EDUs) of water, within the 2,434 units available in the Water Supply Region as of January 2005.

- 3. Availability and capacity of public waste water treatment system;*

Discussion: An El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) Facility Improvement Letter, dated October 13, 2005, states that an extension of an eight-inch sewer force main of adequate size and a sewer lift station must be constructed in order to adequately serve the proposed project. The lift station and portions of the eight-inch line would be placed off-site, connecting to the existing system in place along Runnymede Drive. Construction of the lift station and extension of the eight-inch line would ensure adequate infrastructure to meet sewer service demands. Upon completion of the lift station by the applicant, it will be turned over to EID for maintenance.

- 4. Distance to and capacity of the serving elementary and high school;*

Discussion: The project site is located within the Mother Lode Union School District, approximately two miles from Herbert Green School. The affected school district was contacted as part of the initial consultation process, and specific comments were adequately addressed. There is existing

capacity for elementary and high schools proposed to accommodate student populations from the project.

5. Response time from nearest fire station handling structure fires;

Discussion: The Diamond Springs-El Dorado Fire Protection District is responsible for providing fire protection to the subject site. As such, the District has reviewed the proposal and indicated that adherence to the applicable building and fire codes, as well as conditions of approval regarding the installation of proper fire lanes, installation of automatic fire sprinkler systems, provision of established fire flow, installation of a Knox box, installation of fire hydrants, necessary fire department connections, and construction of road improvements shown on the development plan, would satisfactorily address all fire related safety issues. No response time concerns are present.

6. Distance to nearest Community Region or Rural Center;

Discussion: The project site is located within the El Dorado/Diamond Springs Community Region. As proposed, the project is an in-fill residential project adjacent to compatible existing and planned residential and commercial land uses.

7. Erosion hazard;

Discussion: According to the Soil Survey of El Dorado Area, California, 1974, the erosion hazard of soils at the subject site is moderate to high. As indicated earlier, the site has been issued a grading permit with mitigation measures incorporated to address impacts related to erosion and siltation. Mass pad grading would occur on the site. Construction on the graded site would not result in additional soil erosion, as the site would be leveled at that point. With the slopes removed, the potential for soil erosion is less than significant.

8. Septic and leach field capability;

Discussion: The proposed lots would be served by municipal sewage disposal systems of the El Dorado Irrigation District. A Facility Improvement Letter, dated October 13, 2005, indicates that the site can be served adequately by existing facilities. No septic systems or leach fields are proposed.

9. Groundwater capability to support wells;

Discussion: The project will be served by EID public water facilities. No wells are proposed.

10. Critical flora and fauna habitat areas;

Discussion: The prepared environmental document, attached as Exhibit M, discusses the biological issues at the subject site under Biological Resources. There are no critical flora and fauna habitat areas that would be affected by the proposed project.

11. Important timber production areas:

Discussion: The project is not located in or near an important timber production area.

12. Important agricultural areas;

Discussion: The project is located on lands within the urbanized area west of Placerville. There is no active agricultural use on the project site or surrounding properties. The proposed project would not impact any important agricultural areas.

13. Important mineral resource areas;

Discussion: The General Plan has designated the site as not containing mineral resources. The project would not impact any important mineral resource areas.

14. Capacity of the transportation system serving the area;

Discussion: The El Dorado County Department of Transportation reviewed the submitted traffic study and concluded that incorporation of mitigation measures, along with the recommended conditions of approval, would sufficiently address project traffic issues. Improvements to Runnymede Drive and driveway entrances to the site will establish adequate infrastructure in the area. There is sufficient capacity in the transportation system to adequately serve the area.

15. Existing land use pattern;

Discussion: The project area is surrounded by existing residential and commercial land uses, including a mobile home park, commercial offices, and a single-family residence. The parcels to the east of the project site are currently undeveloped. The surrounding commercial development is within a single-story office building, while the mobile home park south of the site is located atop the hillside in individual mobile homes and associated community buildings. The approximate density of the mobile home park is 15 dwelling units per acre, with the mobile homes clustered to allow for retention of surrounding open space and vegetation.

The proposed multi-family project would result in the construction of apartment buildings on the site, at a gross density of approximately 10 units per acre. This development will be of a size and scale similar to the mobile home park but denser and more intense than the commercial development. The height and massing of the project would also be greater than that of surrounding development which would represent a more intense development pattern than currently exists. While the height and scale of buildings is higher than that of surrounding development, the differences are not substantial enough to result in incompatibility among the uses or to appear as out of place. The proposed project is compatible with existing land use patterns within the project area.

16. *Proximity to perennial water course;*

Discussion: There are no known perennial water courses on the site. Construction is not expected to impact waterways in the area.

17. *Important historical/archeological sites; and*

Discussion: The proposed project is located in an area that is urbanized and has been previously disturbed by grading and development. There are no known historical or archaeological sites in the vicinity of the proposed project. The project would not impact any historical or archaeological sites.

18. *Seismic hazards and present of active faults.*

Discussion: As shown in the Division of Mines and Geology's publication Fault Rupture Hazard Zones in California, there are no Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zones mapped in El Dorado County. The impacts from fault ruptures, seismically induced ground shaking, or seismic ground failure, or liquefaction are considered to be less than significant. Any potential impact caused by locating buildings in the project area would be offset by the compliance with the Uniform Building Code standards.

19. *Consistency with existing Conditions, Covenants, and Restrictions.*

Discussion: No Conditions, Covenants, and Restrictions are effective within the project area.

The land to be developed is capable of supporting the proposed densities, and urban services are available to the project site. There are no known important environmental habitats or areas of concern on the project site. The proposed rezoning and planned development are consistent with the existing land uses in the area. All responsible agencies are able to serve the property. Conditions attached to this staff report provide necessary project components needed to ensure adequate levels of service by each of the service providers.

Policy 2.2.5.21 requires that the project be designed to avoid incompatibility with adjoining land uses, existing and permitted, adjacent to the project site. The project is compatible with adjoining land uses, as discussed above. The development of two and three story multi-family residential buildings on the site would represent an increase in the intensity of development in the area, but the uses would be compatible and complimentary. The buildings have been clustered in the middle of the site to allow for natural hillside buffers between this and adjacent properties, and 30 percent of the site has been dedicated to open space to fulfill the requirements of the –PD Zone.

Other vacant adjoining lands are zoned for single-family residential (R1A) use but have yet to be developed. At the densities permitted by the R1A zoning designation, it is likely that such properties would develop at a density of one single-family residence per acre. This development would be at a density and intensity well below this project, although the location of single-family residences adjacent to this project would be compatible. Adequate buffers between properties and appropriate

vegetative screening would ensure that the lighting and noise generated by the project would not adversely affect future homes on these adjacent sites.

Policy 7.1.2.1

Development or disturbance shall be prohibited on slopes exceeding 30 percent unless necessary for access. The County may consider and allow development or disturbance on slopes 30 percent and greater when reasonable use of the property would otherwise be denied.

The project site contains some slopes that are greater than 30 percent. The site will be graded for development to allow the structures to be built in the center of the site, with the slopes on the sides. A grading permit for the site was issued on July 22, 2004, and extended on June 22, 2006, by the Planning Commission. Thus, the current grading permit is valid through July 22, 2007, and the approvals and environmental documentation for that permit remain in effect. Once the site has been graded, this project would not have any development on any slopes of 30 percent or greater.

Policy 7.4.4.4

For all new development projects that would result in soil disturbance on parcels that are over an acre and have at least 1 percent total canopy cover by woodlands habitats, the County shall require mitigation.

No trees are expected to be removed on the project site; therefore, this policy does not apply.

Policy 5.2.1.3

All medium-density residential, high-density residential, multifamily residential, commercial, industrial and research and development projects shall be required to connect to public water systems when located within Community Regions and to either a public water system or to an approved private water systems in Rural Centers.

As conditioned, the project has been required to connect to EID, and EID has indicated that it will serve the proposed development.

Policy 5.2.1.2: An adequate quantity and quality of water for all uses, including fire protection, shall be provided for with discretionary development.

Discussion: Upon annexation, the El Dorado Irrigation District would provide water to the subject site. According to the *Facility Improvement Letter* prepared by the El Dorado Irrigation District, October 13, 2005, “in terms of water supply, as of January 1, 2005, there were 2,434 equivalent dwelling units (EDUs) available in the [Western] Water Supply Region. Your project, as proposed on this date, would require 54.5 EDUs of water supply.” An eight-inch water line exists in Runnymede Drive, adjacent to the site. Various options are available to extend water service existing infrastructure. There is sufficient water supply for all uses available to serve the project.

Policy 5.7.1.1: Prior to approval of new development, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that adequate emergency water supply, storage, conveyance facilities, and access for fire protection either are or will be provided concurrent with development.

Discussion: The Diamond Springs-El Dorado Fire Protection District has determined that the minimum fire flow for this project is 1,500 gallons per minute for a two-hour period, at a pressure of 20 psi. The project has been conditioned to require this water pressure prior to issuance of a building permit. The water flows and transportation infrastructure is sufficient to meet District requirements for fire suppression. A Fire Safe Plan, minimum roadway widths, and fire hydrant placement have been required by the District to ensure adequate fire protection infrastructure.

Conclusion: As discussed above, staff finds that the project, as proposed/conditioned with the amendment and rezone, conforms to the General Plan's goals.

Zoning: The project proposes a change in zoning from R1A to RM with a PD combining zone. Under the RM designation, the proposed multifamily dwellings would be a permitted use. The approving authority must find that the project is consistent with the General Plan if the land use designation is amended for this project, and the project would not be detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to the neighborhood.

Among comments received from various departments and agencies proposed to serve the project, most indicated an ability to serve the site under the proposed new zoning. The Diamond Springs-El Dorado Fire Protection District has indicated through telephone correspondence that the project can be served adequately upon joining the Community Facilities District (CFD) covering the area including the project site. All other commenting agencies indicated an ability to serve the project site with the new zoning designation, and no other comments were received indicating that the change in zoning would result in any adverse impacts to overall community health in the area.

Based on comments received from public agencies, the project would not be detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare and would not be injurious to the neighborhood.

Section 17.04.100 of the County Code requires that planned development districts have two parking spaces per dwelling unit. With 70 units, the, minimum parking spaces required are 140 spaces. The community center also needs a minimum of 6 spaces for a total of 146 spaces. The development exceeds the minimum requirements and will have 149 parking spaces.

Under Section 17.18.090 parking lot landscaping and buffering, landscaping equivalent to five percent of the gross area used for parking is needed. This project, as proposed, would have 7.8 percent, exceeding the 5 percent minimum. Total open space on the site, including landscaping, hillsides, and vegetated areas, is approximately 30 percent of the total site area.

Planned Development:

PD06-0031 consists of the conceptual design for seven apartment buildings, up to 45 feet in height and three stories high. The number of units within each structure ranges from 6 to 12, for a total of 0 units. Preliminary estimates indicate that 10 percent of the units would be four bedrooms, 40 percent three bedrooms, 30 percent two bedrooms, and 20 percent one bedroom units. There is adequate parking of 149 stalls for the entire development. There is a community center for use by the residents

for recreation, as well as housing the management office. A small park would be built next to the community center.

More detailed plans, including elevations with colors, landscaping, and the final site plan will be provided with the subsequent planned development application that will be necessary prior to construction. However, this approval would permit the grading of the site as previously approved under DR03-0014S. Section 17.04.030.B establishes specific findings that must be made in order for the County to approve a development plan. These are set forth in Attachment 2.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Staff has prepared an Initial Study (Environmental Checklist with Discussion attached) to determine if the project has a significant effect on the environment. Based on the Initial Study, staff finds that the project could have a significant effect on air quality, noise, and transportation. However, the project has been modified to incorporate the mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study which would reduce the impacts to a level considered to be less than significant. Therefore, a Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared.

NOTE: This project is not located within or adjacent to an area which has wildlife resources (riparian lands, wetlands, watercourse, native plant life, rare plants, threatened and endangered plants or animals, etc.) However, biological studies are required as a condition of the Grading Permit in order to ensure that no plant and animal species of concern have established habitat on the site, and there is the possibility for such an occurrence. As such, no *de minimus* finding can be made for the project, and the applicant shall be responsible for payment of the DFG review fees, as specified in State law.

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend approval

SUPPORT INFORMATION

Attachments to Staff Report:

Exhibit A	Vicinity Map
Exhibit B	General Plan Land Use Map
Exhibit C	Zoning Map
Exhibit D	Conceptual Site Plan
Exhibit E	Conceptual Design Plan
Exhibit F	Approved Grading Plan
Exhibit G	Site Landscaping Plan
Exhibit H	Elevations for Buildings 1 and 5
Exhibit I	Elevations for Buildings 2, 3, and 7
Exhibit J	Elevations for Buildings 4, 6, and Community Bldg.