



Meeting Date: 8/16/2021
Item Number: 4a
Time Estimate: 30 minutes

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED DESIGN AND LAYOUT FOR THE PHASED MEDIUM RESIDENTIAL DENSITY (R-2) COMPONENT OF THE AVILA RANCH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, CONSISTING OF 297 RESIDENTIAL UNITS; THE PROJECT INCLUDES A FENCE HEIGHT EXCEPTION FOR A MAXIMUM 13-FOOT TALL COMBIN

PROJECT ADDRESS: 175 Venture (Main) **BY:** John Rickenbach, Contract Planner
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FILE NUMBER: ARCH-0624-2020 **FROM:** Shawna Scott, Senior Planner

RECOMMENDATION

Review the proposed project in terms of its consistency with the Airport Area Specific Plan (AASP); Avila Ranch Development Plan (ARDP); Community Design Guidelines (CDG); and applicable City Standards and provide comments and recommendations to the Planning Commission.

1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

In September 2017, the City Council approved the Avila Ranch project, which envisioned phased development of up to 720 homes and 15,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving commercial uses on a 150-acre site on three parcels in the southern portion of the City of San Luis Obispo, generally northeast of Buckley Road and Vachell Lane (APNs 053-259-004, -005 and -006). The project as approved was determined to be consistent with the City's General Plan, Airport Area Specific Plan (as amended), and the City's Community Design Guidelines. It was also determined to be consistent with the County's Airport Land Use Plan.

The following entitlements were included as part of project approval to facilitate development:

- **Resolution 1832 (2017 Series)** certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report for the project, amending both the Airport Area Specific Plan and General Plan, and approving Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 3089.

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- **Resolution 1638 (2017 Series)** rezoning property at 175 Venture Drive (the Project) from Business Park/Specific Plan Area (BP-SP) and Conservation /Open Space/Specific Plan Area (C/OS/SP) to be consistent with the Project's Development Plan and with the General Plan and Airport Area Specific Plan, as amended to enable development of 720 residential units and 15,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial on a 150-acre site. The Project also includes 18 acres of parks and 53 acres of designated open space.
- **Ordinance 1639 (2017 Series)** approving the Development Agreement (DA) between the City and Avila Ranch LLC. The Project was subsequently sold to Wathen Castanos Homes, and with it, the rights and obligations associated with the DA. The DA ensures phased and orderly development of the Project, and includes provisions for reimbursement for public infrastructure and improvements beyond project requirements.

The applicant now requests that the ARC review and the Planning Commission approve the proposed design and layout for the Medium Residential Density (R-2) component of the project. The majority of the R-2 zoned property is located within Phase 1 of the approved Development Plan, with the remainder of the R-2 zoning in Phases 2 and 3, consistent with what is described in the Development Plan. In all, the project would accommodate 297 R-2 units, which would be constructed in three phases (refer to Figure 2, Avila Ranch Project Phasing and R-2 Locations). Phase 1 would include 179 R-2 units, with 29 R-2 units as part of Phase 2 and 89 R-2 units in Phase 3. The current application also includes a fence height exception request to provide screening between the residential development and the adjacent existing industrial/manufacturing development north and west of portions of Phase 1 development.

The project site is within a portion of the Airport Area Specific Plan and is designated as Medium Density Residential (R-2). Figure 1 shows the proposed project site and key information about the site.

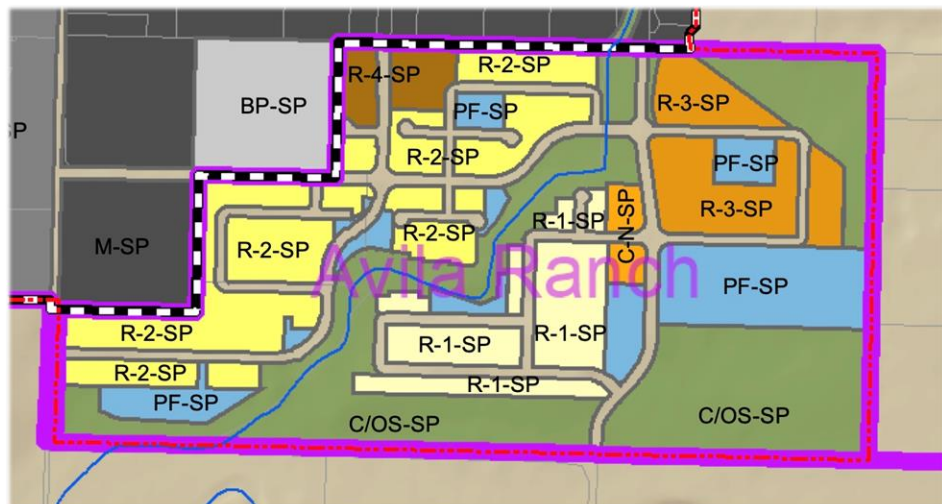


Figure 1. Avila Ranch Project Site

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General Location: Generally, north of Buckley Road and east of Vachell Lane.

Site Area: 150 acres for the Avila Ranch project (27.3 acres within the R-2-SP zone)

Present Use: Vacant land

Zoning: R-2-SP within the Airport Area Specific Plan

General Plan: Medium Density Residential

Surrounding Uses (*outside the Avila Ranch Planning Area*)

East: County jurisdiction; Agriculture zoning

West: M-SP (Manufacturing) Lockheed Martin; C-S (Service Commercial) further west across Vachell Lane

North: M (Manufacturing); BP-SP (Business Park); warehousing & industrial uses

South: County jurisdiction; Agriculture zoning

Zoning surrounding the R-2-SP zoned land include M-SP, BP-SP, R-4-SP, PF-SP, and C/OS-SP (refer to Figure 1, Avila Ranch Project Site).

Existing Site Characteristics

The Avila Ranch site includes 150 contiguous acres at the northeast corner of Buckley Road and Vachell Lane. The land is currently vacant. The site generally slopes from the northeast to southwest, although there are localized undulations. It is diagonally bisected by a drainage channel known as Tank Farm Creek, which conveys on and offsite storm water to San Luis Creek. The R-2 portion of Avila Ranch, which is the subject of this report, includes the westerly 27.3 acres of the 150-acre site.

2.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

The proposed application is for ARC to consider and make recommendations to the Planning Commission concerning the design of the R-2 component of the Avila Ranch project, which would be constructed in Phases 1-3 of the project. If approved, the R-2 product as envisioned would be developed in the framework of existing project entitlements, subject to the policies of the General Plan, AASP, and requirements of the Avila Ranch Development Plan. Figure 2 shows the phasing within Avila Ranch, and the R-2 areas in more detail, which is exclusively in the first 3 phases of the 6-phase project. The layout shown is consistent with the approved Tract Map.

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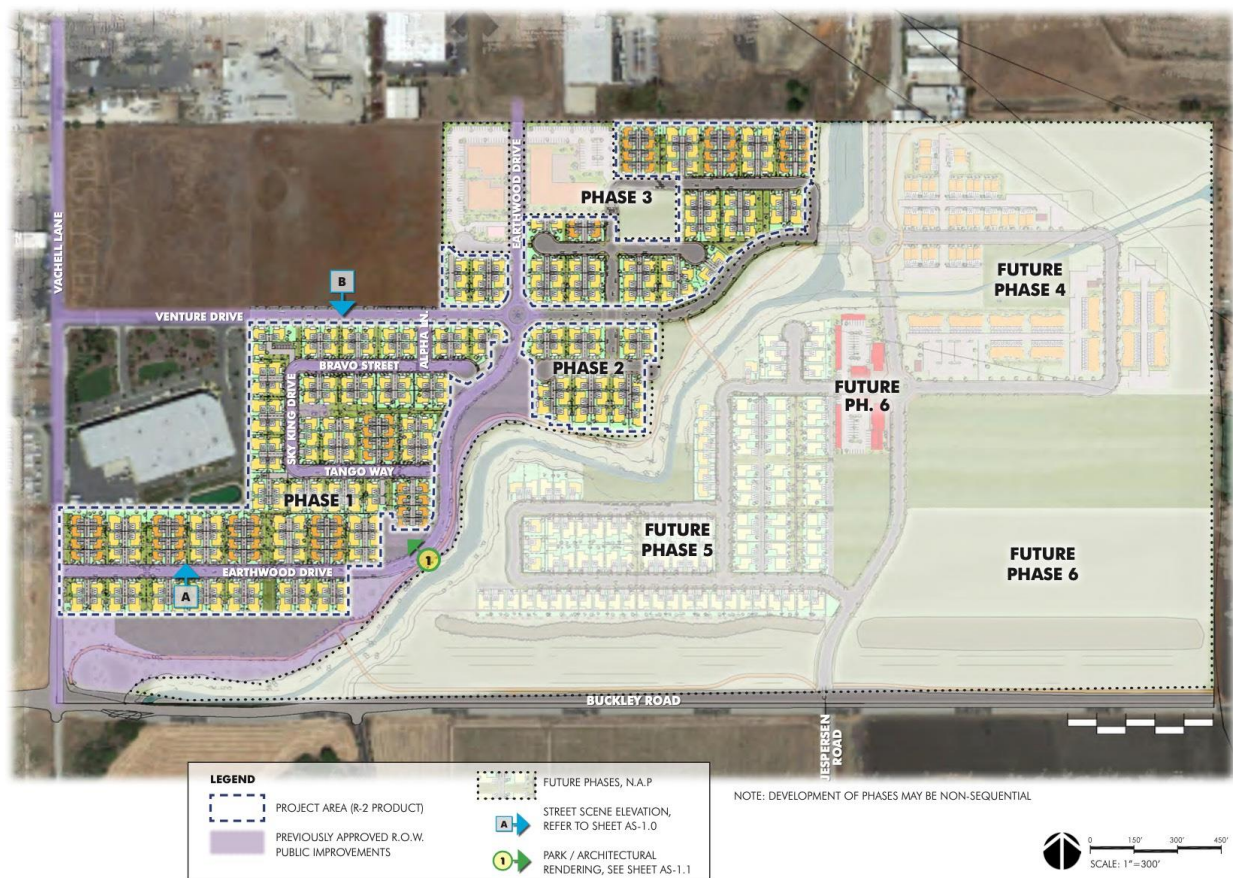


Figure 2. Avila Ranch Project Phasing and R-2 Locations

Two types of R-2 products are proposed, and these are described in the Avila Ranch Development Plan. These are called the Cluster and Pocket Cottage units, which differ in their design, size and layout. These are briefly described below, but described in detail on Sheets A1.1 through A9.2 of the application packet (Attachment 1).

Cluster units are intended to provide workforce housing and housing for moderate income families, and would range in size from 1,609 to 2,273 square feet (SF). These are 3-bedroom units, most with 2.5 bathrooms, although some have 3 full bathrooms. Overall, six floor plans are proposed, including two floor plans that are repeated from the pocket cottage product. The Pocket Cottage units are slightly smaller, ranging in size from 819 to 1,708 SF, with five floor plans proposed. The smallest unit has 2 bedrooms and 1 bathroom, while the others have 1.5 to 2.5 bathrooms.

Architectural Design Concept

The overall community has been designed in small motor court clusters, sharing a drive aisle and landscaped paseo on either side of the homes. This design approach is intended to present a pedestrian friendly street façade and scale along the main circulation streets by eliminating the street facing garage door and driveways. Consistent with the Development Plan, five architectural styles are proposed.

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These include Spanish (Mission), Bungalow, Craftsman, Farmhouse and Contemporary. In the case of the cluster units, any of the five styles could be applied to any of the six proposed floor plans. For the cottage units, there is a greater emphasis on the Spanish style, especially for the smallest units, which would be exclusively in this style.

Table 1 on the following page summarizes the proposed floor plans within the R-2 zone, including key features and the applicability of the various architectural styles.



Figure 3. Architectural Elevations - Cluster Development

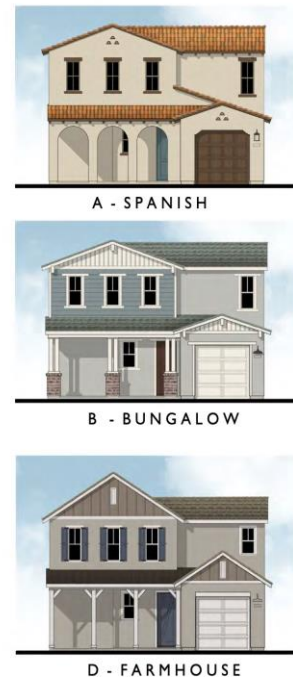


Figure 4. Architectural Elevations - Cottage Development

| Table 1. Summary of Proposed R-2 Development | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Cluster Units | | | | | | |
| Plan # | Size | Stories | Bedroom/ Baths | Garage | Architectural Styles | # of Units in Phase 1 |
| Same as Cottage plan 2 | 1,609 SF | 2 | 3BR / 1.5BA | 1 car | A, B, C, D, E | 15 |
| Same as Cottage plan 3 | 1,708 SF | 2 | 3BR / 2.5BA | 1 car | A, B, C, D, E | 5 |
| 1 | 1,805 SF | 2 | 3BR / 2.5BA | 2 car | A, B, C, D, E | 17 |
| 2 | 1,900 SF | 2 | 3BR / 2.5BA | 2 car | A, B, C, D, E | 20 |
| 3 | 2,066 SF | 2 | 3BR / 2.5BA | 2 car + bonus room | A, B, C, D, E | 43 |
| 4 | 2,273 SF | 2 | 3BR / 3BA | 2 car + bonus room | A, B, C, D, E | 31 |
| <i>TOTAL</i> | | | | | | <i>131</i> |
| Pocket Cottage Units | | | | | | |
| 1 | 1,169 SF | 2 | 3BR / 1.5BA | 1 car | A, B, D | 8 |
| 2 | 1,609 SF | 2 | 3BR / 2.5BA | 1 car | A, B, C, D, E | 12 |
| 3 | 1,708 SF | 2 | 3BR / 2.5BA | 1 car | A, B, C, D, E | 13 |
| 4 | 1,551 SF | 2 | 3BR / 2.5BA | 1 car | A | 2 |
| 5 | 819 SF | 1 | 2BR / 1BA | 1 car | A | 13 |
| <i>TOTAL</i> | | | | | | <i>48</i> |
| All Phase 1 | | | | | | 179 |
| Architectural Style Key: A – Spanish (Mission) B – Bungalow C – Craftsman D – Farmhouse E – Contemporary | | | | | | |

The following Figures 5 and 6 show renderings of the development concept, and how the various architectural and design elements would interact with parks and pedestrian paseos. The intent of the overall design is to mix architectural styles and floor plans throughout the development consistent with the intent of the Development Plan. Additional renderings and design details are included in the application package (Attachment 1, Sheets AS1.0 through AS1.4)

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Figure 5. Rendering of Development Concept



Figure 6. Rendering of Development Concept

Details related to the treatment of pedestrian paseos, particularly how they would interact with neighboring development and landscaping, are included on Sheets L1.0 to L1.8. Additional details related to lighting, colors and materials are included on Sheets A10.0 to A10.5 (Attachment 1, Project Plans).

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Proposed Fence Height Exception

Municipal Code section 17.70.070 allows a maximum wall/fence height of 6 feet along rear and side setbacks or up to 9 feet when combined with a retaining wall. Exceptions to these requirements can be granted for circumstances relating to topography and privacy. A fence height exception is requested along the north and west tract boundaries adjacent to an industrial property (APN 053-259-003) to allow for a 6-foot high solid fence atop a previously approved retaining wall. The requested maximum total combined wall/fence height is proposed at 13 feet.

This exception is requested in response to the site topography and to provide privacy for proposed residential uses from the adjacent active industrial development, notably the parking areas near the property line. The majority of the retaining wall would face the residential development. The proposed fences would be located in the rear and side yards of the residential development and would not be visible along public roads.

See Figure 7 for the proposed fencing concept, which shows some of the detail from Sheet E1.0, included as Attachment 1. The site retaining walls were approved and permitted as part of Tract 3089 Phase 1 Improvements (FMAP-1563- 2018) and are included for graphic reference only to depict the total wall/fence height. The retaining wall varies in height from 2 to 7 feet. Although the combined height of the retaining wall and fence could be as high as 13 feet, because of topographic variation, in other areas it would be under 9 feet. Due to the tract drainage improvements, topography, and location of the approved walls, it is infeasible to offset the fence from the retaining wall.

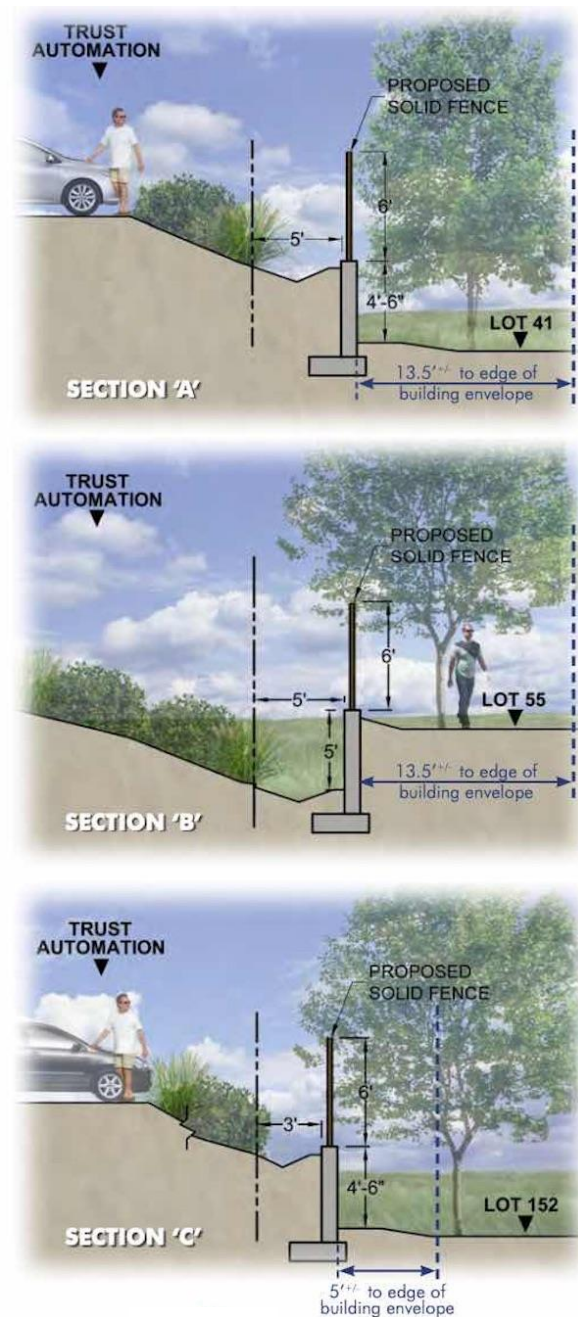


Figure 7. Proposed Fence Height Exception

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3.0 FOCUS OF REVIEW

The ARC's role is to 1) review the proposed project in terms of its consistency with the Airport Area Specific Plan (AASP); Avila Ranch Development Plan (ARDP); Community Design Guidelines (CDG); and applicable City Standards; and 2) provide comments and recommendations to the Planning Commission.

Airport Area Specific Plan:

<https://www.slocity.org/home/showpublisheddocument/4294/637493456364330000>

Avila Ranch Development Plan: <https://www.slocity.org/government/department-directory/community-development/planning-zoning/specific-area-plans/avila-ranch>

Community Design Guidelines: <https://www.slocity.org/home/showdocument?id=2104>

4.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES/DISCUSSION ITEMS

The proposed development must be consistent with the requirements of the General Plan, Zoning Regulations, AASP, ARDP and CDG. Notably, upon its approval, the project (including the ARDP) was found to be consistent with the General Plan and AASP, and is directly referenced in the AASP. The ARDP was also previously considered by the ARC in the context of the CDG. Therefore, consistency with the ARDP is the key consideration for ARC with respect to this project, although relevant aspects of the CDG will be highlighted in the analysis that follows. For development within Avila Ranch, the AASP defers to the design standards included in the ARDP. Figure 8 from the ARDP summarizes the design standards for R-2 development (also see Attachment 2).

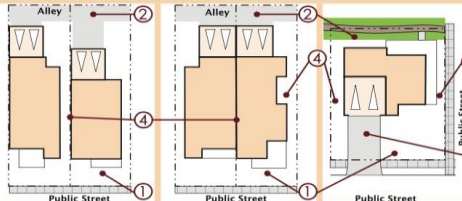
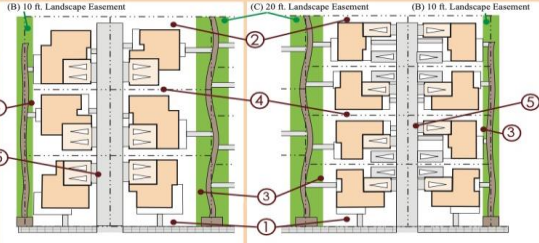
| Medium Density Residential Building Standards (R-2) | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| EXAMPLES These sketches show basic lot layouts based on the Development Standards. Not all features are shown in each layout. |  | | |  | |
| | ALLEY OR STREET ACCESS | | | CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT 4 TO 6 LOTS | POCKET COTTAGE DEVELOPMENT 8 LOTS |
| STANDARDS Minimums, unless otherwise noted. (A) | DETACHED - ZERO LOT LINE | ATTACHED - ZERO LOT LINE (includes pairs of dwellings on adjacent lots) | DETACHED (parking access from street) | | |
| Lot Area | 3,575 sf Min. | 3,575 sf Min. | 3,575 sf Min. | 3,575 sf Min. | 2,620 sf Min. |
| Lot Coverage | 60% Max | 60% Max | 60% Max | 60% Max | 60% Max |
| 1- Street Setback: Dwelling | 15 ft | 15 ft | 15 ft | 15 ft | 15 ft |
| Front Porch | 10 ft | 10 ft | 10 ft | 10 ft | 10 ft |
| 2- Rear Setback: Dwelling | 20 ft (F) | 20 ft (F) | 3.5 ft | 5 ft | 5 ft |
| Garage | 13 ft (F) | 13 ft (F) | N/A | 5 ft | 5 ft |
| 3- Side Setback: Dwelling | 4 ft | 4 ft | 4 ft | 8 ft (B) / 13 ft (C) | 8 ft (B) / 13 ft (C) |
| Porch | N/A | N/A | N/A | 5 ft (B) / 10 ft (C) | 5 ft (B) / 10 ft (C) |
| 4- Interior Setback | 0 ft / 4 ft (D) | 0 ft (attached) / 4 ft | 4 ft | 4 ft | 4 ft (E) |
| 5- Garage Setback | see rear setback | see rear setback | 18.5 ft | 13 ft (F) | 13 ft (F) |
| 6- Side Street Setback | 10 ft | 10 ft | 10 ft | 10 ft | 10 ft |
| Building Height (G) | 35 ft Max | 35 ft Max | 35 ft Max | 35 ft Max | 35 ft Max |
| Notes: A- Tract 3089 Final Map(s) to include any parcel-specific encroachments into setback and/or easements based on map and lotting configurations beyond elements allowed per Zoning Regulation §17.70.170 (Allowed Projections into Setback Area). B- Setback is from property line to dwelling in areas with 10-foot landscape easements. C- Setback is from property line to dwelling in areas with 20-foot landscape easements. D- Where a building wall is located on a lot line, there shall be an easement of at least 4 feet wide on the neighboring lot for maintenance access. E- Setback for uncovered parking spaces is 1 foot. F- Assumes property line and center line of driveway/alley are coterminous. G- Second floor setbacks shall match ground floor setbacks. | | | | | |

Figure 8. R-2 Standards from the Avila Ranch Development Plan

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Staff has identified the discussion items below related to consistency with relevant provisions of the ARDP and CDG. Table 2 summarizes the applicable standards within these documents, and how the project responds to them.

Table 2. Discussion Items

| Highlighted Sections | Discussion Items |
|---|--|
| <i>Avila Ranch Development Plan – Design Framework</i> | |
| <i>ARDP Standard 1.1: Adherence to AASP Building Orientation and Setback Standards</i> | The ARDP builds on the streetscape and pedestrian orientation standards included in the AASP, and follows the intent of setback requirements included in the Municipal Code related to the R-2 zone. The proposed design adheres to these standards and meets the intent of ARDP standards that relate to these issues. Figure 8 above shows the relevant standards for the R-2 zone within the ARDP. The proposed design adheres to these requirements related to setbacks and building heights. |
| <i>ARDP Standards 1.2, 1.6 and 1.7 and related guidelines: Building Height and Setback relationship; driveway orientation; open space orientation</i> | <p>The intent of this standard is to avoid blocking distant views of the background topography through the relationship of setbacks to building height. As designed, the project would adhere to setback and building height restrictions of the R-2 zone as applied elsewhere in the City, and as described in the ARDP (see Figure 8). The project meets the intent of City requirements, including the municipal code and applicable ARDP standards.</p> <p>The project as designed meets the intent of standards related to driveway and garage orientation away from major street, and with its paseos and parks, meet the intent of open space orientation standards. These are consistent with direction in AASP and CDG.</p> |
| <i>ARDP Standard 7.1.2: Required Architectural Styles</i> | This standard requires that development use one or more of these architectural styles: Farmhouse, California Bungalow, Contemporary, Craftsman, or Mission (Spanish). The project design uses all five styles, distributed throughout the project. |
| <i>ARDP Standard 7.1.3 and related guidelines: Distribution of Architectural Styles</i> | This standard includes a detailed approach to ensure that architectural styles are distributed throughout the planning area. The intent is to ensure visual variety and interest throughout, and large enclaves of overly uniform style and architecture. The design as envisioned includes six different floor plans for the cluster units, and five floor plans for cottage units, with architectural styles that could apply to those floor plans. As proposed, there are no specific provisions for ensuring a distribution of |

| Highlighted Sections | Discussion Items |
|---|---|
| | <p>styles throughout the project based on the formulas included in the standard, although the project meets the intent of this by distributing the variety of floor plans (and associated architectural styles) throughout the project area. Sheets AS1.0-AS1.4 demonstrate the intent of the applicant, and show a variety of styles, colors and floor plans within a given street scene. In addition, porches are included in the project consistent with Guideline 7.1.3.E.</p> |
| <p><i>ARDP Standards 7.2.3, 7.3.2, 7.3.5 and related guidelines: Scale and massing, including the relationship between building height and setbacks</i></p> | <p>The ARDP builds on the streetscape and pedestrian orientation standards included in the AASP, and follows the intent of setback requirements included in the Municipal Code related to the R-2 zone. The proposed design adheres to these standards and meets the intent of ARDP standards that relate to these issues. Figure 8 above shows the relevant standards for the R-2 zone within the ARDP. The proposed design adheres to these requirements related to setbacks and building heights.</p> |
| <p><i>ARDP Standards 7.4.1 and 7.5.1: Architectural facades and treatment; colors and materials</i></p> | <p>The intent of this standard to ensure that visually prominent design details are compatible with the overall architectural style, and that compatible colors and materials are chosen. Key features include entries, windows, doors, and garages. See Sheets A1.0 through A9.2 reflect this standard, showing details related to each of these features, which are consistent with the applicable architectural theme. Colors and materials proposed are shown on Sheets A10.0 to A10.5. These reflect a variety of color and material choices within compatible parameters. Colors range from muted grays, whites and browns augmented a variety of color choices. Materials differ depending on architectural style.</p> |
| <p><i>ARDP Standards 8.1.1-8.1.4: Landscaping</i></p> | <p>The proposed project responds to these standards with a landscape plan that enhances and complements the architectural design, as shown on several project sheets, notably Sheets L1.0-L1.8, and the renderings shown on Sheets AS1.0-AS1.4.</p> |
| <p><i>ARDP Standards 9.3.2-9.3.8: Lighting</i></p> | <p>The project has not yet established a formal lighting plan, although Sheet A10.0 shows potential lighting fixtures as they relate to the different architectural styles. The project will be required to comply with the City's night sky ordinance; however, the ARC may provide specific direction regarding exterior lighting for the project.</p> |

| Highlighted Sections | Discussion Items |
|--|---|
| <i>ARDP Standard 12.1: Fencing</i> | The intent of this standard is to ensure that fencing design does not block views of open spaces or Tank Farm Creek. The proposed exception to the fence height would apply to areas between residences and industrial areas, not areas associated with open space or the creek. |
| <i>CDG Chapter 5 – Residential Project Design Guidelines</i> | |
| <i>§ Section 5.2: Subdivision Design and General Residential Design Principles</i> | This section of the CDG includes several key principles related to integrating open space into the design, project scale, and pedestrian orientation. More specifically related to architectural review, the section also calls for durable and low maintenance finishes, the use of a variety of materials, building articulation, and garage orientation. The project seems generally responsive to these issues, and consistent with the intent of these principles. Sheets A10.0 to A10.5 illustrate a variety of complementary colors and materials that would be applied to the varied design details shown on Sheets A1.0-A9.2. |
| <i>§ Section 5.5: Single-Family Housing Design</i> | <p>The ARDP was previously found to be consistent with the CDG, and reflects and expands on many of the same principles articulated in the CDG. Among the principles articulated in this section of the CDG include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. pedestrian orientation; 2. architectural variety, housing sizes and design details; 3. variable setbacks in compliance with the Municipal Code; 4. primary entrances facing a street, encouraging porches to transition between public and private spaces; and 5. garages subordinate to living spaces, preferably not facing the primary street entrance to the home. <p>The project is responsive to these principles. Sheets L1.1-L1.4 show how homes are integrated into and have access to pedestrian paseos. Also see the renderings in Figures 5 and 6 above. Consistent with the ARDP, five architectural styles are proposed throughout the project, with considerable design variation as described above. Garages are oriented to the side along alleys, as shown in Sheets A1.1, A2.1, A3.1, A4.1, A5.1, A6.1, A7.1, A8.1 and A9.1.</p> |

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5.0 ACTION ALTERNATIVES

- 5.1 Recommend the Planning Commission find the project consistent with the AASP, ARDP Design Framework and Community Design Guidelines. The ARC's recommendation will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for final action. This action may include recommendations for design modifications and/or conditions of approval to address consistency with the ARDP Design Framework and Community Design Guidelines.
- 5.2 Continue the project. An action continuing the application should include direction to the applicant and staff on pertinent issues.
- 5.3 Recommend the Planning Commission find the project inconsistent with the AASP, ARDP Design Framework and Community Design Guidelines. The ARC's recommendation will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for final action. This action may include recommendations for design modifications and/or conditions of approval to achieve potential consistency with the ARDP Design Framework and Community Design Guidelines.

6.0 ATTACHMENTS

A - Project Plans (ARCH-0624-2020)

B - Avila Ranch Development Plan Medium Density Residential Building Standards