

Garden's Gate
Major Subdivision Tentative Map
Consistency Analysis – General Plan Housing Element
December 1, 2006

GOAL 1: INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING, PARTICULARLY HOUSING AFFORDABLE TO LOWER INCOME HOUSEHOLDS.

Policy 1.1: Encourage the development of an adequate supply of housing and a range of housing densities and types to meet the diverse needs of County residents.

Response: The project proposes development at the residential density called for by the general plan and allowed by the AZ overlay zoning. The project includes a variety of housing types and sizes including detached single family dwellings and attached townhouses. The townhouse units are located on separate small lots that can be purchased by a common owner and managed as affordable rental units as well as market rate units.

The diverse range of lots sizes and types will allow the construction of single family dwellings that will be affordable for a range of income groups, including moderate income families, and would accommodate a range in household types, including families with children and elderly single adults.

Policy 1.2: Encourage the development of housing that is affordable or serves special needs populations in areas with community services and infrastructure, employment, and supportive services in (1) towns and adjacent to cities, or (2) locations that facilitate infill and compact development patterns.

Response: The project's location between unincorporated residential neighborhoods on the south end of Ukiah, next to South State Street and served by public utilities, makes it a practical location for residential infill development. The proposed small lots would allow compact development and efficient use of urban land that can support higher residential density.

Policy 1.3: Support mixed-use developments, infill, reuse, and redevelopment in towns and adjacent to cities.

Response: The site is designated Suburban Residential by the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance in recognition of its potential for infill development adjacent to the City of Ukiah, and served by existing roads and public utilities.

Policy 1.4: Continue to publicize the opportunities for and encourage the production of second residential units for full time occupancy and encourage family care units.

Response: The project includes two story detached garages that are designed to accommodate second residential units.

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Policy 1.5 The County recognizes that an adequate supply of decent affordable housing for its workforce and residents is necessary to support healthy communities and a vibrant economic base.

Response: The proposed residential density and mix of lot and housing unit types as well as the substantial park and landscape amenities within Gardens Gate will create a new source of housing affordable to people living and working within Mendocino County and create a vibrant new neighborhood next to the City of Ukiah. If requested by the County, County residents and workforce can be given first priority for designated affordable housing units within the project.

Policy 1.6: The County encourages actions by other jurisdictions that facilitate attainment of Regional Housing Need objectives and opposes actions that may hamper the ability of those jurisdictions to meet their Regional Housing Needs.

NA

SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Certain groups, such as farmworkers, the homeless, large families, single-parent households, persons with disabilities, farmworkers, Native Americans, and seniors, often have difficulty finding housing that is both suitable and affordable. The following policies facilitate a range of housing types to accommodate the special housing needs of these groups.

GOAL 2: ENCOURAGE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

Policy 2.1: Identify and support programs that address the housing needs of special needs groups and work with local organizations that provide housing opportunities for these groups.

NA.

Policy 2.2: Encourage a range of housing types to address the housing needs of the County's special needs populations, such as seniors, large families, single-parent families, the homeless, persons with disabilities, Native Americans, and farmworkers.

Response: The project includes dwellings that fit the access needs of seniors and persons with disabilities. Most of the Garden Court and Townhouse dwellings are "slab-on-grade" buildings that allow at-grade access between the interior and exterior without steps. The exceptions will be limited to dwellings on the steeper lots located on the western side of the site. The ground floor of these dwellings provide full living accommodations including bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchen and living areas on the ground

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floor. The size and number of bedrooms of the units vary such that there are units which would accommodate a single parent family or a large family. Finally, the market rate and designated affordable units are available to all qualifying buyers, including native Americans. The project is not specifically designed to accommodate the housing needs of homeless people or farmworkers.

Policy 2.3: Increase housing opportunities for persons with disabilities consistent with the fair housing and disability laws, and encourage physical access to and within residential units and areas.

Response: See above response regarding access. The dwellings will all be built with doorways, bathrooms, and other structure features to accommodate access within the building. Also, the public improvements, including sidewalks and parks are designed to make gentle grade changes and avoid steps because the site is relatively flat.

Policy 2.4: Encourage partnerships among the development, financial, governmental, nonprofit, tribal, and other sectors involved in the provision of housing, supporting infrastructure, and supportive services for special needs populations.

Response: A partnership with an affordable housing entity to purchase part of the project is being explored by the applicant.

Policy 2.5: Support the Mendocino County "Continuum of Care Plan" of outreach, housing, and support services for the County's homeless families and individuals.

NA

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The rise in housing prices and lack of supply throughout the County has made it more difficult for lower and moderate-income households to afford a home or an adequately sized rental unit. The policies will assist lower and moderate-income households with their housing needs as well as expand and preserve the County's affordable housing stock.

GOAL 3: EXPAND AND PRESERVE THE COUNTY'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING STOCK.

Policy 3.1: Continue to pursue and administer programs that provide low and moderate-income households with homeownership assistance.

Response: NA

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Policy 3.2: Continue to pursue and administer programs that provide rental assistance to lower-income households.

Response: NA

Policy 3.3: Support land use entitlements that expand or preserve a wide variety of housing opportunities affordable to the County's households, consistent with other policies.

Response: Approval of the requested major subdivision along with the density bonus will allow the County to approve a substantial number of affordable housing units within Ukiah Valley. It will also allow development of market rate units that will be affordable to middle income families who do not qualify as low income households, as defined by the State.

Policy 3.4: Encourage and support the development of affordable housing and supporting infrastructure and services by local agencies, non-profit and for-profit developers, Indian tribes, and Indian housing agencies through financial assistance, local cooperation agreements, partnerships, and regulatory incentives (e.g., density bonus, fee waivers, and flexible development standards).

Response: Approval of the density bonus, including the incentives and concession, as well as waiving development standard will make the development of affordable housing units within the project economically feasible.

Policy 3.5: Identify and pursue available federal, State, regional, local, and private sources of financial assistance for the provision of affordable housing and make the information available to potential developers.

Response: NA

ADEQUATE RESIDENTIAL SITES

Overall, the unincorporated County has sufficient residentially zoned land. However, sites suitable for a range of densities and housing types, particularly multi-family units, are lacking. The following policies will increase the amount of land designated for a range of densities and housing types to ensure housing opportunities for the County's diverse population.

GOAL 4: INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF LAND WITH LAND USE AND ZONING DESIGNATIONS THAT FACILITATE A RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES IN THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES.

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Policy 4.1: Evaluate current land use through the General Plan Update and subsequent rezoning to ensure that sufficient land is designated at a variety of densities to meet the unincorporated County's share of the Regional Housing Need.

Response: The Housing Element calculated that that 47 affordable multiple family units could be built on approximately 30 acres of the project site where the vineyard is now standing. That number was based on the assumption that site constraints and historic development trends which suggest that only 8% of the SR (Suburban Residential) base residential density (20 units per acre) could actually be built on the site. This assumption is not correct since 16.8 acres of the SR zoning lies within the AZ (C) (Airport Overlay) combining district which has a lower residential density (15 dwelling units per acre) than the SR zoning district and requires that 20 percent of the area remain as open space. Consequently, the number of affordable units that could be developed on the site is less than projected by the Housing Element. Using this lower base density, the 20 percent open space set aside, and the Housing Element's constraint assumption, the revised estimate is that 41 affordable units could be built within the SR portion of the project site. In this case, Gardens Gate would construct 36 units in this area and provide extensive park improvements to help foster a strong neighborhood.

Policy 4.2: Ensure an adequate supply of sites zoned to accommodate housing for special needs populations.

Response: The site is in SR zoning and the project would include housing that will accommodate special needs populations including the elderly.

Policy 4.3: Maximize the efficient use of lands with adequate public water and sewer services and transportation infrastructure for housing, including affordable and special needs housing opportunities. High density residential uses should be located in (1) towns and adjacent to cities, or (2) locations that facilitate infill and compact development patterns.

Response: The project site is served by public water and sewer, and is located near major streets that provide direct connections to nearby services in downtown Ukiah. Included in the mix of housing types are three bedroom townhouse units that can accommodate families and small cottage units for elderly and for one or two person households.

HOUSING CONSERVATION

Improvement of substandard or aging housing and conservation of units at risk of conversion to other uses are vital to maintaining the unincorporated County's housing stock. Approximately 40 percent of the unincorporated area's housing stock is over 30 years old – the age at which most homes need repairs. The County will continue to maintain and improve its housing stock through code enforcement, building inspection, and rehabilitation programs.

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GOAL 5: CONSERVE AND IMPROVE THE CONDITION OF THE HOUSING STOCK.

Policy 5.1: Conserve the housing stock through the rehabilitation, preservation or replacement of existing units, especially affordable housing and those serving special needs populations.

NA

Policy 5.2: Reduce the negative impact of housing unit conversions and demolitions, particularly in the coastal areas, on the housing stock and its associated occupants. Avoid the displacement of lower-income or special needs households.

NA

Policy 5.3: Assist developers, including non-profit organizations, with the acquisition, rehabilitation, or development of affordable housing as funding permits.

NA

Policy 5.4: Pursue State, federal and other funding sources to assist lower- and moderate-income households with water or sewage disposal system installations or upgrades necessary to conserve the housing stock and provide sanitary and decent housing conditions.

NA

REMOVAL OF GOVERNMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

Governmental constraints can increase the time and cost to develop housing. County efforts to reduce these constraints will facilitate the development of both affordable and market rate units. The following policies will reduce governmental constraints and alleviate other constraints such as infrastructure, one of the primary factors limiting housing development in the unincorporated area.

GOAL 6: REDUCE GOVERNMENTAL CONSTRAINTS TO THE MAINTENANCE, IMPROVEMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING WHERE APPROPRIATE.

Policy 6.1: Continue efforts to streamline the planning and permitting process and reduce constraints that directly or indirectly increase costs, time, and uncertainty for housing development.

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Response: The requested expedited processing as one of the two concessions and incentives will help streamline the planning and permitting process and thereby reduce the costs and uncertainty for the project.

Policy 6.2: Continue to minimize the impact of governmental fees and assessments on the cost and production of affordable housing.

NA

Policy 6.3: Reduce constraints to the development or conservation of housing, particularly housing that is affordable or serves special needs populations, through flexible development standards for qualifying projects, when public health, safety, and welfare are not impacted.

Response: Granting the proposed development standard waivers is consistent with this policy as it would allow provision of affordable market rate housing for middle income households as well as provide affordable housing for qualifying moderate income households. The plans and initial study submitted with the project application show that the reduction of these standards will result in a healthy residential neighborhood where public health, safety, and welfare will not be impact

Policy 6.4: Reduce constraints to housing and housing with supportive services accessible to persons with disabilities. Where appropriate, minimize constraints and/or provide reasonable accommodation for housing intended for persons with disabilities.

Response: The dwellings are designed to accommodate mobility-impaired residents.

Policy 6.5: Encourage and support public water and sewer service providers in maintaining and improving in a timely manner facilities necessary to serve existing and projected future residential uses.

Response: NA

Policy 6.6: Promote residential development in or adjacent to towns and cities, or locations that facilitate infill and compact development patterns, through the development of community water and sewer services. Assist communities in the establishment or expansion of community service entities to provide management and maintenance of developed systems.

Response: The project location is consistent with the existing residential zoning and general plan designation and is served by public utilities.

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Equal access to housing is critical to ensuring that all households can find housing to meet their needs. Both the State of California and the federal government have established fair housing laws to protect persons from housing discrimination. The goal and policies below are aimed at continuing the County's efforts to ensure equal access to housing and enhance housing opportunities for all residents.

GOAL 7: PROMOTE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN HOUSING FOR ALL PERSONS.

Policy 7.1: Promote housing opportunities for all persons, regardless of race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, disability, sex, familial status, marital status, or other such arbitrary factors.

Response: The dwellings will be offered for sale to qualified households without regard to race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, disability, sex, familial status, marital status, or other such arbitrary factors.

Policy 7.2: Prohibit housing discrimination based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, disability, sex, familial status, marital status, or other such arbitrary factors pursuant to Fair Housing Laws and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Response: See above comment.

Policy 7.3 Facilitate the resolution of housing discrimination complaints and promote fair housing programs.

See above comment.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Energy costs can add considerably to a household's housing costs. Energy costs can be reduced through energy-efficient designs, weatherization, and construction methods.

GOAL 8: ENCOURAGE ENERGY CONSERVATION IN HOUSING.

Policy 8.1: Reduce energy costs for housing through energy efficient siting, design, construction methods, and weatherization.

Response: Summer cooling costs will be reduced by landscaping while winter space heating costs will be minimized by constructing the houses using insulation materials, including windows and doors, and by installing energy efficient appliances.

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Policy 8.2: Reduce electricity and natural gas demands by promoting the use of renewable energy technologies in residential and mixed-use projects. Strongly promote solar energy and use of solar water heaters for new housing and, especially, multi-family housing. Encourage retrofitting older housing where feasible.

Response: See above response. No solar panels are planned.

HEALTHY RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS

The living environment affects the health, safety and welfare of the County's residents and their ability to be productive citizens, employees, and students.

GOAL 9: PROMOTE HEALTHY AND SAFE LIVING ENVIRONMENTS FOR ALL RESIDENTS.

Policy 9.1: Promote a sense of community through residential development with mixed housing densities and types that promote diversity and human interaction, neighborhood-scale services and facilities, and connectivity to schools, neighborhoods, and commerce.

Response: The project will provide a wide range of dwelling types and densities, a number of different type of public and semi-public outdoor places where residents can gather and socialize, and nearby schools and other community services are within walking (or riding) distance.

Policy 9.2: Promote safe and healthy living environments for residents of all income levels, with safe, sanitary, and decent housing. Minimize the effects of excessive noise, light, traffic, and exposure to hazardous industrial facilities and uses.

Response: The submitted CEQA initial study and accompanying special studies show that the residents living in or near Gardens Gate will not be exposed to excessive noise, light, or traffic. Noise levels at the residents nearest South State Street will not exceed the County's outdoor and indoor thresholds. The noise study determined the other noise sources in the area including US 101, industrial uses east of US 101, and aircraft operations would not significantly impact residents. Shielded exterior lights within the project site will prevent light trespass on adjoining properties. There are no other significant light sources in the area that would affect the Gardens Gate residents. The nearest significant industrial uses are located on the east side of US 101, more than 1,000 feet from the site, and will not expose the residents to hazards or odors.

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ACTIONS

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Land Use and Permitting

Action 3.1: Range of Housing Opportunities: Encourage housing developments exceeding 10 residential units, to include a range of housing types, such as smaller single-family homes, second units, duplexes, and multi-family units, including rental units for lower-income large families. Consider reduced setbacks or other incentives. (Policies 1.1 and 3.3)

Response: All of the housing types listed above are included in the project except that multi-family dwellings, as defined by the County, will not be built. However, the project does include 2 and 4 unit townhouse structures which will be built with units that are on separate lots but share a common wall. This type of type of dwelling is considered a single family lot by the County since each unit is located on a separate lot. However, unlike a multiple family dwelling or apartment building, these units can be owner or renter occupied. In this way the project will create a variety of dwelling unit types that offer greater flexibility to address future affordable housing needs.

Action 6.1: Fee Reductions: Consider permit fee waivers, reductions, or deferments requested by affordable housing developers as funding permits, based upon the merits of each project in meeting the County's housing goals. Establish County budget guidelines for reimbursement of impacted County departments by the County Board of Supervisors. (Policies 6.1 and 6.2)

Response: The project is not requesting fee reductions.

Action 6.2: Expedited Processing: Provide expedited and priority processing by County staff and hearing boards for affordable housing units or special needs housing or supporting infrastructure. (Policy 6.1)

Response: The expedited processing will reduce the financing cost of obtaining entitlements for the project.

Modify County Regulations

Action 6.4: Density Bonus: Conform the County's density bonus ordinance to Section 65915 of the California Government Code and SB 1818 effective January 1, 2005. (Policy 6.3)

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Response: The proposed density bonus is based on the State Density Bonus Law. It is also consistent with the intent of the County's existing density bonus regulation, except that it follows the State's density bonus and incentive schedule which allows the project to increase overall residential density by 16 percent and allows two incentives and concessions in exchange for providing 36 dwelling units.

Action 6.6: Reduce Constraints to Housing Production: (1) Amend the Zoning and Land Division Codes to allow exceptions to standards to facilitate affordable project feasibility, such as setbacks, lot configuration, lot coverage, lot size, building height, and others; and (2) evaluate and where appropriate reduce or modify the standards above to facilitate market rate housing production. Allow reduced parking standards for second units, senior housing and specified housing for disabled persons. (3) The County will initiate amendments to the General Plan, zoning ordinances and other regulations to conform to the Housing Element; in the interim period County regulations and decision making shall conform to Housing Element policies to the maximum extent possible. (Policies 2.3, 6.3 and 6.4)

Response: The proposed density bonus is based on the State Density Bonus Law and is consistent with the Housing Element. In addition to providing 36 affordable housing units, the Gardens Gate project incorporates a number of design features which are called for by the Housing Element including small dwellings on small lots for senior housing, larger dwellings for families with children, second story second units over detached garages, and extensive park and streetscape improvements that promote healthy and vibrant neighborhoods. The project also incorporates reduced lot area and setbacks as well as modified access roads (shared driveways) and lot configurations (flag lots and double frontage lots) in order that more land be allocated for housing and open spaces within the subdivision than what would otherwise be typically consumed by traffic circulation and large residential lots.

Land Use and Permitting

Action 9.1: Safe and Healthy Living Environments: Promote safe and healthy living environments for residents of all income levels, with safe, sanitary, and decent housing. Minimize the effects of excessive noise, light, traffic, and exposure to hazardous industrial facilities and uses. (Policies 8.2 and 8.3)

Response: The illustrative site plan, the illustrative lot plans, and the initial study show that the lots and building sites as well as the subdivision street improvements and parks are designed provide future residents with a safe and healthy living environment.

Action 9.2: Community Principles: During the General Plan Update, incorporate principles of community with mixed housing densities and types for all income levels, access to recreational/park facilities, pedestrian and bike paths, and access to transit;

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allowance for neo-traditional designs, neighborhood-scale services and facilities, and connectivity to schools, child care, neighborhoods, and commerce. (Policies 8.2 and 8.3)

Response: The project will include a variety of housing types and densities to accommodate a range of income levels and household sizes. The parks and streetscape within the project create will a pleasant and safe pedestrian setting that will encourage walking and bicycling and encourage motorist to drive cautiously. The location of the project site at the south end of Ukiah, next to South State Street and Oak Knoll Road, make it a natural residential infill site were future residents will benefit from its proximity to public services and schools and commercial establishments.