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RE: Pacific Knolls

Summary

Noise: The proposed two- story 12-unit apartment building facing Healdsburg Avenue does not comply with the Noise Element of the General Plan. Future residents would be exposed to excessive traffic noise levels.

Outdoor Space and Storage: The apartment's outdoor space is limited to a 3 ft wide patio facing Healdsburg Avenue and there appears no provision for storage space for bicycles or other items.

Comments on the Proposed Pacific Knolls Subdivision

The noise from the peak hour traffic measured on the site of the proposed apartment building facing Healdsburg Avenue on 08/26/24 using a NOISH sound meter ranged between 72.5 dBA to 84.1 dBA.

It appears that the residents of the proposed apartment building may be exposed to noise levels classified as *Unacceptable* to *Clearly Unacceptable* pursuant to Noise Element *Table N-1 Land Use Compatibility* which are based on *Ldn*, an average sound level over a 24 hour period. An acoustical analysis is needed at this location burdened by heavy traffic.

The Pacific Knolls apartment building does not meet the policies and actions of the Noise Element of the General Plan listed below:

1. **Policy N 1-2:** *Require development and infrastructure projects to be consistent with the Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments standards indicated in Table N-1 to ensure acceptable noise levels for existing and future development.*
2. **Policy N 1-3:** *Require new development to mitigate excessive noise through best practices, including building location and orientation, building design features, placement of noise-generating equipment away from sensitive receptors, shielding of noise-generating equipment, placement of noise-tolerant features between noise sources and sensitive receptors, and use of noise-reducing materials.*
3. **Policy N 1 -4:** *Require mixed-use projects to minimize noise exposure for indoor areas of nearby residential areas through the use of noise attenuating building materials, engineering techniques, and site design practices. Site design practices may include locating mechanical equipment, loading bays, parking lots, driveways, and trash enclosures away from residential uses, and providing noise-attenuating screening features on-site.*
4. **Policy N 1-6:** *Require acoustical studies for new developments, projects seeking use permits related to activities that would increase noise levels, and transportation*

improvements that affect noise-sensitive uses such as schools, hospitals, libraries, group care facilities, convalescent homes, and residential areas.

6. NOISE

Land Use Category	Exterior Noise Exposure (Ldn)						
	55	60	65	70	75	80	90
Residential							
Transient Lodging; Motel, Hotel							
School, Library, Church, Hospital, Nursing Home							
Auditorium, Concert Hall, Amphitheater, Sports Arena							
Playground, Recreational Open Space, Park							
Golf Course, Stables, Water Recreation, Cemetery							
Office Buildings, Business, Commercial							
Industrial, Utilities, Manufacturing, Agriculture							
	<p>NORMALLY ACCEPTABLE Specified land use is satisfactory, assuming that any buildings involved are of conventional construction without any special insulation requirements.</p> <p>CONDITIONALLY ACCEPTABLE Specified land use may be permitted only after detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements and noise insulation features included in the design.</p> <p>UNACCEPTABLE New construction or development should be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirement must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.</p> <p>CLEARLY UNACCEPTABLE New construction or development generally should not be undertaken.</p>						

In addition, *Action N 1-d: Requires acoustical studies for all new discretionary projects, including those related to development and transportation, which have the potential to generate noise impacts which exceed the standards identified in this element. The studies shall include representative noise measurements, estimates of existing and projected noise levels, and mitigation measures necessary to ensure compliance with this element and relevant noise standards in the Sebastopol Municipal Code.*

Conclusion


Before approving the Pacific Knolls Subdivision, the Planning Commission should require:

- (a) the applicant carry out an acoustical study to establish both 24-hour and peak traffic noise levels, and;
- (b) include mitigation measures ensuring future residents of Pacific Knolls do not live with excessive indoor noise levels.

This may require revisions to the site plan and/or construction details to reduce indoor noise levels to acceptable levels.

According to the World Health Organization noise is the second largest environmental cause of health problems after air pollution. It has been linked with issues ranging from sleep disturbance to poor concentration to risk of metabolic and cardiovascular disease and dementia. Elevated peak noise levels (dBA) have been shown to have significant adverse health impacts.

Cordially,
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