

TO: James L. App, City Manager
FROM: Ronald Whisenand, Community Development Director
SUBJECT: Olsen/Beechwood Specific Plan: Beechwood Option
DATE: April 7, 2009

Needs: Hear a presentation by Tom Erskine, Mike Harrod, and Jay Huebner to modify the development concept for the Beechwood half of the Olsen Ranch/Beechwood (OBSP) Specific Plan.

Facts:

1. General Plan policy LU-2G requires the preparation of a Specific Plan for the Olsen Ranch and Beechwood areas. The plan further restricts the maximum number of dwelling units for the planning areas (673 dwellings for Olsen Ranch and 674 dwellings for Beechwood).
2. On May 17, 2005, the Council awarded a consultant contract to the firm of Moule and Polyzoides and in doing so, directed that the Olsen Ranch and Beechwood areas be planned as a single unit and use a “traditional neighborhood design” model which incorporates interconnected mixed use neighborhoods.
3. The consultant team, property owners, public, staff, and elected officials developed the current plan following a weeklong design exercise.
4. Messrs. Erskine, Harrod, and Huebner have often been critical of the plan. Recently, they hired the firm of Studio 81 International to prepare an alternative design for the Beechwood area. They have requested that Council substitute the revised development plan prior to the Olsen Beechwood Specific Plan’s final consideration.

Analysis & Conclusion: While the existing and proposed development plans appear similar, there are differences that could complicate the integration of the neighborhoods as a homogeneous thriving community. Furthermore, the mechanics of processing the changes will present some challenges. Simply put, it is not just a matter of “substituting” development plans. Depending on the scope of the changes that are made, there could be significant additional time and costs.

Plan Comparison

The plans are similar in terms of a well connected network of streets, the inclusion of a variety of housing types, and the presence of neighborhood-based commercial uses. Both plans offer a network of sidewalks and trails that provide residents an alternative way to travel.

The plans differ in the following areas:

- Density - The revised plan increases the total number of dwelling units in the Beechwood half from 674 to 1050. Serious evaluation of the propriety of a General Plan amendment, and whether the City has sufficient water, wastewater, and traffic capacity for such a density increase will be required.
- Intensity of Development – The revised plan appears to have a much higher development to open space ratio. The revised plan provides a greater number of apartments, condominiums, and townhomes. Also, much of the intense development is slated for the eastern edge adjacent to rural/agricultural uses.

Should high density elements be placed at the edge of the City or should development intensity lessen as it transitions to rural county lands? Would it be more appropriate to locate high-density residential closer to major employment and activity centers such as the Uptown or Town Centre areas?

- Commercial Development – Both plans propose a similar amount of commercial square footage – an amount Moule & Polyzoides determined to be economically viable to serve all of OBSP and the adjacent Meadowlark area. One notable difference however is location - the commercial hub is moved from a walkable center for the Olsen Ranch, Beechwood, and Meadowlark neighborhoods to Creston Rd. The new location may serve Beechwood, but would have to be oriented to serve County residents and wine tourists traveling Creston Road it will not be convenient for Olsen Ranch or the existing Meadowlark neighborhood.
- Alleys and Street Design – While both plans minimize the presence of dead end or cul-de-sac streets, the Moule and Polyzoides design results in a far greater number of alley loaded dwellings. In addition to the neighborhood character advantages that alleys provide, they also add to safety of pedestrians.

Specific Plan Processing Details

The current Moule and Polyzoides plan benefitted from extensive public review. The plan is considered a “public review draft” and awaits completion of the project EIR before it goes through the final review and approval process. With the exception of a completed traffic analysis, the current project design has had a great degree of environmental analysis and study. The City has received a pre-public release EIR for staff’s review of key environmental findings and EIR content. To date, the City has paid the firm of Moule and Polyzoides \$542,000 of a \$750,000 Specific Plan contract (72% complete).

Modifying the current Beechwood half of the OBSP would require further processing and added costs. First, a public input process would be advised as a bridge from the current public plan. Additionally, Moule & Polyzoides finds Studio 81 Plan substantially dissimilar from the current plan and approach. Consequently, they would not be interested in finishing the specific plan process (unless changes could be made to the property owner plan).

Options for processing the Plan include:

- Continue with current Council direction and finish the draft Specific Plan as developed (and potentially modified) by the firm of Moule and Polyzoides. No additional costs will result.
- Conduct an additional round of meetings with the OBSP property owners, the consultant team, and the City to address property owner issues. Note; such a proposal was presented to the property owners last August. The goal was for the property owners’ concerns to be understood and addressed during an intensive one day meeting. The total cost for the additional consultant services would be \$10,000. The proposal was not pursued by the property owners. If this was the preferred option for Council, then it is important to point out that further revisions to the current plan may result in additional consultant costs.
- Re-start the public input and technical process of preparing an OBSP with a different consulting firm. The Council would need to decide whether the City is to select the new firm and how re-starting the process would influence Council’s prioritization of pending residential specific plans (discussion scheduled for April 23rd workshop). The Beechwood and Olsen property owners would be responsible for the \$542,000 paid to date as well as the costs to prepare a new plan.
- Split the OBSP into two specific plans. The Olsen Ranch would remain a Moule and Polyzoides plan. The costs to the City and/or Olsen family are

unknown. Beechwood would require a separate plan. Again, the Council would need to decide whether the City is to select the new firm and how separate plans would influence Council's prioritization of pending residential specific plans.

It is important to note that any option that proposes density above that which is included in the General Plan will need to go through a public review and a General Plan amendment process. More important however, is the evaluation that will be needed to ensure that the City has resource capacity to accommodate any increased density. Primary concerns include transportation/traffic, water supply, and wastewater treatment capacity.

EIR Processing Details

Modifying the Beechwood development plan would also have an effect on the project EIR. The changes that are proposed by the property owner, including increased density and the extent of development (i.e. encroachment into possible sensitive habitat areas) would change the "project description" which is the basis for the EIR analysis. To date, approximately \$106,000 of the \$137,000 EIR contract has been expended by the City (77% complete). A principle of the firm of Crawford, Multari, and Clark Associates has reviewed the revised plans and feels that modifying the EIR at this point to accommodate analysis of new concepts would cost an additional \$20,000. Splitting the Specific Plan and doing a separate EIR (one for each plan) would cost an additional \$60,000.

Policy

Reference: None

Fiscal

Impact: To date, staff has expended a total of 45 hours reviewing the above referenced alternative to the OBSP. Staff costs now stand at just over \$6,000 for this effort.

- Options:**
- a. Hear the property owner's presentation and receive staff's report.
 - b. Amend, modify or reject the foregoing option

Attachments:

- 1. Plan Comparison
- 2. Property owner proposed Beechwood development plan concept (black and white)
- 3. Current draft Specific Plan development concept (black and white)

Issue Area	Original OBSP	Revised OBSP	Comments
Density	Beechwood Area - 674 units (876 with Density ++ Option) Olsen Ranch - 673 units (875 with Density ++ Option)	Beechwood Area - 1050 units Olsen Ranch - ? (based on past comments, the Olsen family will likely request a similar density)	Depending how density is handled with the Olsen Ranch portion, the property owner plan could result in a 56% density increase above General Plan limits. This amounts to a population increase of approximately 2000 persons.
Development to Open Space Ratio	354 acres of development and roads/117 acres of parks and open space (3:1)	Not quantified but ratio appears higher	
Multi-family units	Mixture of duplexes, triplexes, and quadraplexes. Townhouses limited to 255 units total and clustered in neighborhood centers	Mixture of duplexes, triplexes, five-plexes, townhomes, apartments, and condo flats. Much greater use of apartments and townhouses. Assuming the number of high-density residential units in Olsen Ranch remain the same, the revised plan would result in 500 high-density units overall.	Is a significant concentration of high-density multi-family housing at the rural edge of the City best or should it be in the Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan.
Variety of housing types	Yes	Yes	Both plans provide a variety of housing types and sizes
Variety of public spaces	Squares, plazas, greens, mini park, natural open space, greenway, creek greenway, and PG&E Easement. Higher density areas surround a significant public green/park	Parks, mini parks, natural open space, greenway, and PG&E Easement. Higher density areas have walking access to parks but not central to the housing (i.e. neighborhood centers)	Both plans provide public space but arrangement of the space differs.
Park, trails, and open space	69 acres resulting in 15-19 acres of parks and active open space/1000 population	Not quantified; appears lower	General Plan calls for 7 acres/1000 people
Commercial	53,000 square feet centrally located to serve Beechwood, Olsen, and Meadowlark neighborhoods as well as motorists passing through on Airport Rd.	42,000 square feet moved away from the Olsen and Meadowlark neighborhoods. However, motorists along Creston Road would now be better served.	A separate commercial center may be necessary for Olsen Ranch if original commercial core is moved from its central location.
Interconnected network of pedestrian friendly neighborhood streets	Well connected street and alley network	Streets are connected but improvements could be made.	
Safety in street design	Narrow streets with bends and intersections designed for slow travel speeds	Narrow streets with sweeping bends. Changes needed to Airport Rd. extension and the main east/west connectors to slow traffic speeds	The property owner plan requires driveway access off of residential streets (see alley discussion below). Driveways diminish pedestrian safety.

Maximum block length	500 feet	A few blocks exceed the 500 foot distance, but modifications would be possible	
Use of alleys	Approximately 80% of the plan utilizes alleys for secondary access to dwellings	Approximately 20% of the plan utilizes alleys. Additional alley blocks are needed in some areas. Unless strict development standards are developed, approximately 80% of the neighborhoods could have garage-front houses	Significantly reduced number of alleys. If additional alleys are not possible, then houses should be required to have detached rear yard garages. Driveways create safety hazards for pedestrians.
Grading	Grading model prepared showing City grading standards can be achieved	Grading model will be needed; appears to conform to the site's rolling topography.	
Treatment of vernal pools	Generally avoids development in sensitive habitat areas. EIR will recommend further avoidance.	Work needed to preserve mapped vernal pools. Plan modification is possible	



Community Concept (Land Use) Plan Beechwood Specific Plan

- Legend :**
- Very Low Density Residential (VLD) 2.0 - 3.0 DU/AC
 - Low Density Residential (LDR) 3.0 - 8.0 DU/AC
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 - 110 - Executive Homes (55' x 110')
 - 164 - Alley Homes (45' x 100')
 - 121 - Small Lot Homes (45' x 55' x 90')
 - 80 - Duet Paired Homes (80' x 95')
 - 475 - LDR Homes Subtotal
 - Medium Density Residential (MDR) 8.0 - 15.0 DU/AC
 - 98 - Paseo Court Homes (Cluster Homes)
 - 66 + 24 (Phase 2) - Three to Five-Plex Farmhouse Homes
 - 184 or 186 MDR Homes Subtotal
 - Grand Total 706 Total Units (Phase 1)
 - High Density Residential (HDR) 15.0 - 22.0 DU/AC
 - 125 - Townhomes (2 Story) (Phase 2)
 - 96 Apartments (2 Story) (Phase 2)
 - 59 - Condo Flats (2 story) (Phase 2)
 - 320 HDR Units Subtotal
 - Total Units - Phase 2 = 344 Units
 - Mixed Use (Commercial, Spa, Inn or MF Units)
 - 60 Units x 42,000 Sq Ft (Commercial/Office/Conference/Wine Tasting/Spa)

Harrod Builders, Country Real Estate, Huebner Enterprises, Inc.
Beechwood Ownership Group

CHAPTER 3 : THE DEVELOPMENT CODE

3.1 - Purpose and Applicability

A. Purpose. The regulations in this Development Code are intended to facilitate the development of the extension of Olsen Ranch-Beechwood Specific Plan area in a manner that successfully creates vital, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods with a mixture of housing types, and mixed-use centers within walking distance of homes, and achieves the related goals and objectives identified in Chapter 2 of this Specific Plan (Form and Character).

B. Applicability. The requirements of this Development Code apply to all proposed development, subdivisions, and land uses within the specific plan area. It shall be unlawful, and a violation of the City of El Paso de Robles Municipal Code for any person to establish, construct, reconstruct, alter, or replace any use of land or structure, or subdivide any real property, except in compliance with the requirements of this Development Code. No Building Permit or Grading Permit shall be issued by the City and no subdivision shall be approved, unless the proposed construction complies with all applicable requirements of this Development Code.

C. Relationship to Municipal Code.

1. Because this Development Code provides requirements for development and land uses appropriate and specific to the Olsen Ranch-Beechwood Specific Plan area, this Development Code will be the primary body of standards considered by the City in the review and approval of development within the area it covers. This Development Code specifically supersedes and replaces the Zoning Ordinance provisions regarding zoning districts, allowable land uses, permit requirements for allowable land uses (i.e., permitted or conditional uses), and site development standards.
2. The requirements of the Paso Robles Zoning Ordinance which address regulatory topics not covered by this Development Code remain applicable to development within the Olsen Ranch-Beechwood Specific Plan area.

D. Conflicting requirements. If a conflict occurs between requirements of this Development Code, the most restrictive requirement shall control. If a conflict occurs between a requirement of this Development Code and the City of El Paso de Robles Municipal Code, or other regulations of the City, the

requirements of this Development Code shall control.

E. Appeals. Any interpretation of this Development Code may be appealed to the Planning Commission and City Council in compliance with Zoning Ordinance Section 21.23A (Decisions, Hearings, and Appeals).

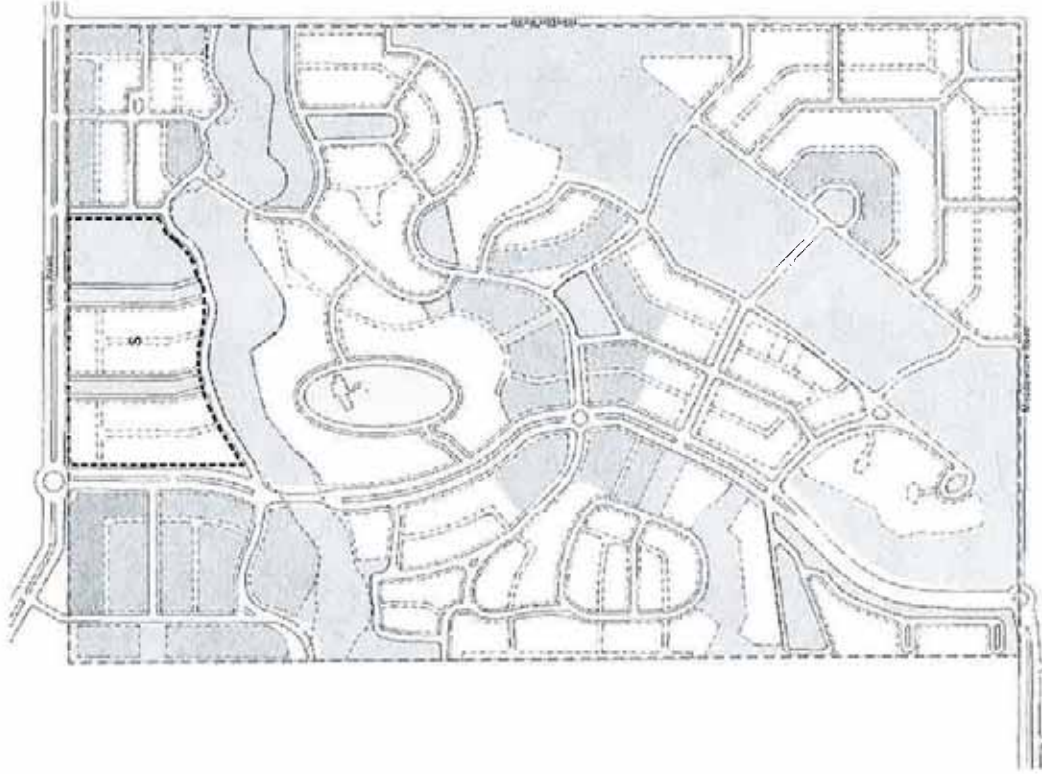
F. Responsibility for Administration. This Development Code shall be administered by the Paso Robles City Council, hereafter referred to as the "Council," the Planning Commission, referred to as the "Commission," the Community Development Director, referred to as the "Director," and the Community Development Department, hereafter referred to as the "Department." These are also individually and collectively referred to in this Development Code as the "review authority."

3.2 - Regulating Plan and Zones

A. Regulating Plan. The Regulating Plan defines the zones within the Specific Plan area that differentiate standards for building placement, building design, and use; and identifies the specific properties included within each zone. The Regulating Plan is a synthesis of:

1. Community input, and the designations of the General Plan;
2. The findings and recommendations of the relevant analysis prepared by the City's Olsen Ranch-Beechwood Specific Plan design team;
3. Application of the planning principles identified in Chapter 2 of this Specific Plan (Form and Character); and
4. An analysis of present and future market conditions.

B. Zones and their Purposes. The area subject to the Olsen Ranch-Beechwood Specific Plan shall be divided into the following zones, which shall be applied to property within the specific plan area as shown on the Regulating Plan.



Olsen Ranch

TABLE 3.1
Zones and Units Allowed

Zone	Maximum Number of Units Allowed ¹	
	w/o School	w/ School
Neighborhood Edge 1 (NE-1)	105	105
Neighborhood Edge 2 (NE-2)	825	785
Neighborhood Edge 2 Overlay (NE-2-O)	in NE-2 Zone	
Neighborhood General (NG)	317	357
Neighborhood Center (NC)	100	100
Special Zone (SP)	n/a	n/a
Open Space (OS) ²	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	1,347	1,347

¹ See Table 3.5 (Applicable Building Types) for unit quantity requirements by Building Type
² See Section 3.4.020 for specific park type standards



- Neighborhood Center (NC).** The NC zone is applied to the mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented Neighborhood Center, intended to be occupied primarily by live-work and mixed use buildings that may accommodate retail or office uses on ground floors, and offices and residences on second and third floors.
- Neighborhood General (NG).** The NG zone is applied to areas intended for a variety and mix of houses, duplexes, and bungalow courts on a variety of lot sizes.
- Neighborhood Edge 2 (NE-2).** The NE-2 zone is applied to areas intended for a mix of house and lot sizes, characterized primarily by detached single-family homes on larger lots, but also allowing some duplexes and bungalow courts.
- Neighborhood Edge 2 Overlay (NE-2-O).** The NE-2 Overlay zone allows the establishment of agricultural-based "roadside" retail venues such as fruit stands or nurseries. The zone overlay changes only the Land Use Regulations of the NE-2 Zone. The NE-2 Overlay Development Standards, Building Types, Frontage Types remain the same as the NE-2 zone.
- Neighborhood Edge 1 (NE-1).** The NE-1 zone is applied to areas intended primarily for detached single dwellings on larger lots, to preserve existing oak trees and provide a transition between rural conditions and the more urban portions of the specific plan area.
- Special Zone (SP).** The SP zone is applied to the hilltop occupied by the Olsen Ranch homestead and is intended for public and/or recreational uses such as public gatherings (weddings, birthday parties, company picnics), bed and breakfast type hotels, a small restaurant, a wine tasting venue, or parks.
- Open Space (OS).** The OS zone identifies areas reserved for community parks and greenways, other open spaces, and habitat protection and restoration. Allowable structures in this zone are limited to those necessary to support the specific purposes of the particular open space area (for example, sport court enclosures and multi-purpose community center buildings in active parks, and trails within the natural open space areas).