

NEWS > HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT

Supervisors approve Live Oak development

Project will have 57 affordable units, medical and dental clinics



A proposed 3.7-acre housing and mixed-use development on Capitola Road near 17th Avenue calls for 57 units of affordable rental homes, as well as dental and medical clinics. (Dan Coyro — Santa Cruz Sentinel)

By **ELAINE INGALLS** | eingalls@santacruzsentinel.com | Santa Cruz

Sentinel

PUBLISHED: November 14, 2019 at 5:05 pm | UPDATED: November 14, 2019 at 5:06 pm

LIVE OAK — The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors is adding a project to the county's affordable housing options.

The Board of Supervisors last week unanimously approved a mixed-use development near 17th Avenue and Capitola Road in Live Oak. The project was first brought to the community for discussion in 2017.

The development will have community-serving medical and dental clinics, a public plaza and 57 units of affordable rental homes.]It sits on a 3.7-acre site previously owned by the county's former redevelopment agency. Per state law, the county had to sell the property after a Supreme Court decision in 2011 to eliminate all redevelopment agencies.

Nonprofit housing developer and owner MidPen Housing will lead the project and will own and operate the rental units. MidPen owns and manages 13 affordable housing communities it developed in the county.

The housing site will have a community room with a kitchen and computers, a manager's apartment, space for an academic After School Program for children, a laundry room, a property management office, a garden and a bicycle storage room.

"We're really pleased to be able to build housing in this mid-county region," said Betsy Wilson, director of special projects for MidPen Housing. "It has multiple prongs of benefits."

For residents who commute across the county for work, this development will enable them to live closer to their jobs, spend less time on the road and have more of an opportunity to engage with the nearby schools and volunteer, Wilson said.



A rendering of the mixed-use development near 17th Avenue and Capitola Road shows housing units and a dental and medical clinic.

Rents are affordable to households earning from 30% to 80% of the area median income, with an overall average rent affordable to households earning 45% of AMI, according to Wilson. This equates to \$36,810 to \$98,160 for a four-person household, according to the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee. At 30% to 80% of AMI, a one-bedroom apartment would cost \$690 to \$1,841 per month, according to the committee.

Around half of the housing units are expected to also have a rent subsidy, Wilson said. MidPen Housing is working with the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz to finalize the rent subsidies.

"It's a great addition of affordable housing...within walking distance of three elementary schools, one middle school and the Boys & Girls Club," said John Leopold, 1st District county supervisor. Along with housing, the project will provide good jobs at the medical and dental clinics, as well as access to good health care, he said.

Housing will have "special preferences," or will be intended for people who live or work in the county, according to Leopold. Of the 57 units, excluding the manager's unit, 15 will be designated for Live Oak residents, he said.

Also on the project site will be a dental and medical clinic. Dientes Community Dental, which provides oral health care to low-income children, adults and seniors

“The need for affordable dental care in Santa Cruz County is huge,” said Laura Marcus, CEO of Dientes, in an email. “Dientes’ new clinic at 1500 Capitola Road is a big step towards addressing this problem for 6,000 low income children, adults and seniors.”

Santa Cruz Community Health Centers, which offers affordable, comprehensive health services for 45 years, will operate the 18,000-square-foot medical clinic on the site. The clinic will have two floors with pediatric, family practice and behavioral health services, according to Leslie Conner, CEO of Santa Cruz Community Health Centers. It will also have an on-site pharmacy for its patients and the general public and will launch its first in-house optometry services, she said.

“It’s very exciting that we can serve not only more people, but with a greater depth of service in a way,” said Conner.

The site will also have a proposed public plaza. The plaza is expected to have a green space, seating, sculptures and a historical installation to honor the site’s history as well as Robert Merriman, a former resident of the site and the commander of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade during the Spanish Civil War.



Elaine Ingalls

Elaine Ingalls covers Santa Cruz business, housing, transportation, technology and healthcare. Elaine grew up on the east coast and graduated from Assumption College in Massachusetts with a BA in English: Writing and Mass Communications. Elaine started working as a journalist in 2019.

[Follow Elaine Ingalls @elaine_ingalls](#)
