



NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Draft Environmental Impact Report

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING
976 OSOS STREET | ROOM 200 | SAN LUIS OBISPO | CALIFORNIA 93408 | (805) 781-5600

Promoting the Wise Use of Land | Helping to Build Great Communities

DATE: October 1, 2019

TO: Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Interested Persons

FROM: **Schani Siong, Senior Planner**
Department of Planning and Building
976 Osos St., Room 300
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408-2040
Email: ssiong@co.slo.ca.us

PROJECT TITLE: Somera (The Cottages) Development Plan / Coastal Development Permit DRC2018-00033 (ED19-008)

PROJECT APPLICANT: SCM Avila Beach Partners, LLC

RESPONSES DUE BY: **5:00pm on Wednesday, October 30, 2019**

SCOPING MEETING: **October 10, 2019 Thursday at 6:00PM (Avila Beach Community Center)**

PURPOSE OF NOTICE

The County of San Luis Obispo will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the above-referenced project. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, please provide us the following information at the earliest possible date, **but not later than 5:00pm on Wednesday, October 30, 2019.**

1. NAME OF CONTACT PERSON. (Please include address, e-mail and telephone number)
2. PERMIT(S) or APPROVAL(S) AUTHORITY. Please provide a summary description of these and send a copy of the relevant sections of legislation, regulatory guidance, etc.
3. ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION. What environmental information must be addressed in the Environmental Impact Report to enable your agency to use this documentation as a basis for your permit issuance or approval?
4. PERMIT STIPULATIONS/CONDITIONS. Please provide a list and description of standard stipulations (conditions) that your agency will apply to features of this project. Are there other conditions that have a high likelihood of application to a permit or approval for this project? If so, please list and describe.
5. ALTERNATIVES. What alternatives does your agency recommend be analyzed in the EIR?

6. REASONABLY FORESEEABLE PROJECTS, PROGRAMS or PLANS. Please name any future project, programs or plans that you think may have an overlapping influence with the project as proposed.
7. RELEVANT INFORMATION. Please provide references for any available, appropriate documentation you believe may be useful to the county in preparing the EIR. Reference to and/or inclusion of such documents in an electronic format would be appreciated.
8. FURTHER COMMENTS. Please provide any further comments or information that will help the county to scope the document and determine the appropriate level of environmental assessment.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A detailed project description for environmental review and location are contained in the attached material.


POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

It is anticipated that the proposed project would result in potentially significant environmental impacts relating and not limited to Aesthetics, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology & Soils, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, Utilities & Service Systems and Wildfire. These issues, together with other CEQA-mandated analyses including Alternatives, Cumulative Effects, and Growth Inducement will be addressed in the EIR.

SCOPING MEETING

The County will conduct a public scoping meeting on **Thursday, October 10, 2019 from 6:00pm to 8.00pm at the Avila Beach Community Center (191 San Miguel Street, Avila Beach, CA 93424)**. The purpose of the scoping meeting is to share information regarding the proposed project, environmental review process, and to receive comments regarding the project scope and environmental concerns to be addressed in the EIR. No decisions(s) will be made on the project during this meeting.

This NOP and the Preliminary Initial Study for the proposed project are available for review at the County's Department of Planning & Building website <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Planning-Building.aspx> (under *Active Major Projects*) starting October 1, 2019. Please send your response to **Schani Siong** at the address or email shown above. As requested above, we will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Signature  _____
Schani Siong, Project Manager
Telephone: (805) 781-4374

Section 1 Reference: California Administrative Code, Title 14, Section 15082
Exhibit A Detailed Project Description for Environmental Analysis



Notice of Preparation – Draft Environmental Impact Report: Exhibit A

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

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DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

PROJECT TITLE: Somera (The Cottages Hotel) / Development Plan / Coastal Development Permit DRC2018-00033, ED19-008

PROJECT APPLICANT: SCM Avila Beach Partners, LLC

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: SCM Avila Beach Partners, LLC is requesting a Development Plan/ Coastal Development Permit for the construction of a 50-room cottage style hotel, various sized temporary events not exceeding 200 guests, and modification of side and rear setback standards. The applicant is also requesting a Variance to grade over 30% slopes and an amendment to the San Luis Bay Estates Master Development Plan to increase the potential development area from the previously approved 4 acres to 7 acres. The project will result in the disturbance of approximately 7 acres on the 22.25-acre parcel with an approximate of 20,300 cubic yards of cut and 18,000 cubic yards of fill.

PROJECT LOCATION: The project site is in the Recreation land use category and is located approximately 620 feet northwest of the Avila Beach Drive and Ana Bay Drive intersection in the community of Avila Beach. The site is in the San Luis Bay Coastal planning area.

BACKGROUND: On August 27, 1981, the San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission certified an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (ED 80-90) and approved the San Luis Bay Estates Master Development Plan (SLBE MDP). The SLBE MDP covers approximately 1,200 acres consisting of multiple phases of residential development, a commercial and maintenance area, a hotel expansion development plan, an improved golf course, and an area for developing hotel cottage units.

The 1200-acre SLBE MDP designated approximately 24 acres (site), adjacent to and west of an existing hotel property (San Luis Bay Inn), for the purpose of developing 50 hotel cottage units as an adjunct to the existing hotel. The SLBE MDP included the following development standards for developing the hotel cottage units on this site:

- Units to be attached or detached no higher than 35 feet
- Units may have efficiency kitchen units
- Units will be operated as rental units in conjunction with the (existing San Luis Bay Inn) hotel facilities
- Vehicular access will be through the existing hotel entrance
- Development within the cottage parcel will be limited to a maximum of four (4) acres with the remaining areas committed to permanent open space
- Development standards will conform to all Land Use Ordinance standards unless waivers are granted in the development plan approval

Proposed San Luis Bay Master Development Plan Amendment

- At the time the SLBE MDP was approved, the San Luis Bay Inn and the hotel expansion area (site) were on different parcels but under the same ownership. Since then, the site was sold and is no longer affiliated with the San Luis Bay Inn.
- Therefore, the applicant is requesting to amend the SLBE MDP to allow for an independent full-service hotel on the site and increase the development area from four (4) acres to seven (7) acres to feasibly accommodate the necessary support and ancillary uses such a reception area, restaurant, a pool, and parking.

PROPOSED PROJECT COMPONENTS

Development Summary

The subject property (APN 076-174-009) is located on an undeveloped site adjacent and west of the San Luis Bay Inn in the community of Avila Beach. Total building development, including underground parking area, is estimated to be 65,291 sq. ft. (net, excluding cottage decks). Overall impervious footprint of the lodge and cottages will be 62,019 sq. ft. or 6.4% of the 22.25-acre site. After including the pool deck, pools, roads and other pathways, the total impervious area will be approximately 15% of the project site. The development envelope for the project, including grading to support structures is expected to be approximately 6.46 acres. The remaining acreage (except that required for access) will be dedicated to permanent open space per the requirements of the SLBE MDP.

The development proposed for “The Cottages” hotel project includes the following:

- Fifty (50) single-story cottages totaling 26,402 sq. ft. (averaging 550 sq. ft. each)
 - Clustered on the west portion of the property
 - Each cottage will have a porch and/or a deck
 - Developed in 6 different configurations ranging from 415 sq. ft. to 845 sq. ft.
- Main Lodge with the following amenities (approximately 28,323 sq. ft.)
 - 5,331 sq. ft. restaurant (~95 seats), bar (~40 seats) and support facilities (kitchen) that would be open to the public and guests of the hotel
 - 429 sq. ft. pool bar
 - 1,679 sq. ft. spa (3 treatment rooms) open to guests and the public
 - 566 sq. ft. fitness center
 - 2,046 sq. ft. conference and banquet space
 - 1,032 sq. ft. lobby/reception
 - 299 sq. ft. gift shop
 - 11,218 sq. ft. partially subterranean parking and valet area
 - Other employee, service, mechanical and restroom spaces
- 4,600 sq. ft. pool deck with a 1,250 sq. ft. pool
- 337 sq. ft. waste/recycling storage
- 24 sq. ft. valet stand at Main Lodge
- 106 sq. ft. entry kiosk on Marre Road (existing access road)
- 167 parking spaces
 - 32 above ground spaces dispersed in pods near cottages
 - 8 spaces in the main lodge within the motor-court

- 127 below ground spaces using a valet stacking system
 - 43 spaces below Main Lodge using parking lift system
 - 84 spaces partially below ground in 10,209 sq. ft. west parking structure using parking lift system
- Supporting infrastructure
 - Widening of existing access road from Ana Bay Road (*see Access discussion*)
 - Additional new roads for interior circulation and cottage access
 - New fire hydrants and standpipes
 - Open space & trails
 - Fences, entry gate, and retaining walls
 - Shuttle service
 - Preferred & Original Utility upgrades and extensions to the site (*see Utility Design discussion*)
- On Site & Off-site Signage
- Temporary Events (*see Temporary Events discussion*)

Operations

“The Cottages” project proposes to operate 50 detached cottages; 45 single and 5 double room cottages. On-site amenities will include a restaurant and bar, swimming pool, small spa, fitness center, conference/ banquet space and gift shop. The hotel would have a 24-hour operation, staffed with a variety of personnel including: reception, entertainment, food service, retail, management, security, housekeeping and maintenance staff. Employees would work in 3-4 shifts, with some workers being part-time. The hotel would provide valet parking services in one of the underground garages and courtesy shuttle service to guests from the site to nearby commercial areas and local beaches.

Temporary Events

The applicant is requesting to host temporary events of different sizes at the hotel all year round.

- *Small sized events* (30 or fewer guests) are anticipated to make up most of the temporary events at the hotel and will be held at the banquet and conference space. The typical hotel operations will remain open to regular hotel guests. All temporary event parking will be accommodated on site.
- *Medium sized events* (31-100 guests) will also be held at the banquet and conference space. The typical hotel operations will remain open to regular hotel guests. Temporary events exceeding 78 guests will utilize a Transportation Demand Management Plan (TDM), which will include off-site parking and shuttling services. All hotel guest parking will be accommodated onsite.
- *Large sized events* (101-200 guests, including event staff) will require the entire hotel to be booked i.e. a wedding and the restaurant is closed to the public. It is anticipated several event guests will stay at the hotel. All temporary event and hotel guest parking will be accommodated on site.

Temporary events will typically occur at the Main Lodge area, with the pool, spa and gym facilities be available only to guests staying at the hotel. The following table summarizes the temporary events proposed at the hotel.

Size of Event	Number (guests)	Restaurant Open to Public?	Max No. of events per year	Notes
Large	101-200	No	40	A large private event that requires the entire hotel to be booked. Some event guests may stay at the hotel and some will be just attending. Numbered guests (200) includes event staff. Restaurant will be closed to the public. All parking onsite and no shuttle service provided. Large events will not be scheduled during identified special community events (e.g. Blues Festival). Types: destination wedding, conference, etc.
Medium	31-100	Yes	100-150	Medium events conducted at the banquet space and hosted by local organizations / businesses. Anticipated 2-3 times per week occurrence. Restaurant will remain open to the public. A TDM could be required for events that exceed 78 persons where the restaurant remains in use. Types: smaller wedding, retirement party, community event, awards ceremony, etc.
Small	30 or fewer	Yes	unlimited	Small events where the banquet space is used by persons other than hotel guests e.g. private dinner, smaller community events. Restaurant will remain open to the public.

Utility Design Options

In 2017, the applicant submitted an initial utility layout (water, sewer, stormwater, drainage) for the proposed project. The initial utility layout is predominantly along Marre Road, which traverses identified cultural sites and is referred as the '**Original Utility**' (Figure A). In order to minimize impacts to cultural resources, the applicant conducted additional site investigations to identify an alternate utility layout, which is hereby referred as '**Preferred Utility**' (Figure B). The *Preferred Utility* layout decreased the subterranean disturbance along Marre Road by rerouting the gas, sewer and power lines off-site to adjacent connections and discharge points. The *Preferred Utility* layout will require obtaining necessary easements from adjacent parcel owners. The *Preferred* and *Original* (initial layout) option for utilities are as follows:

Original Utility Layout

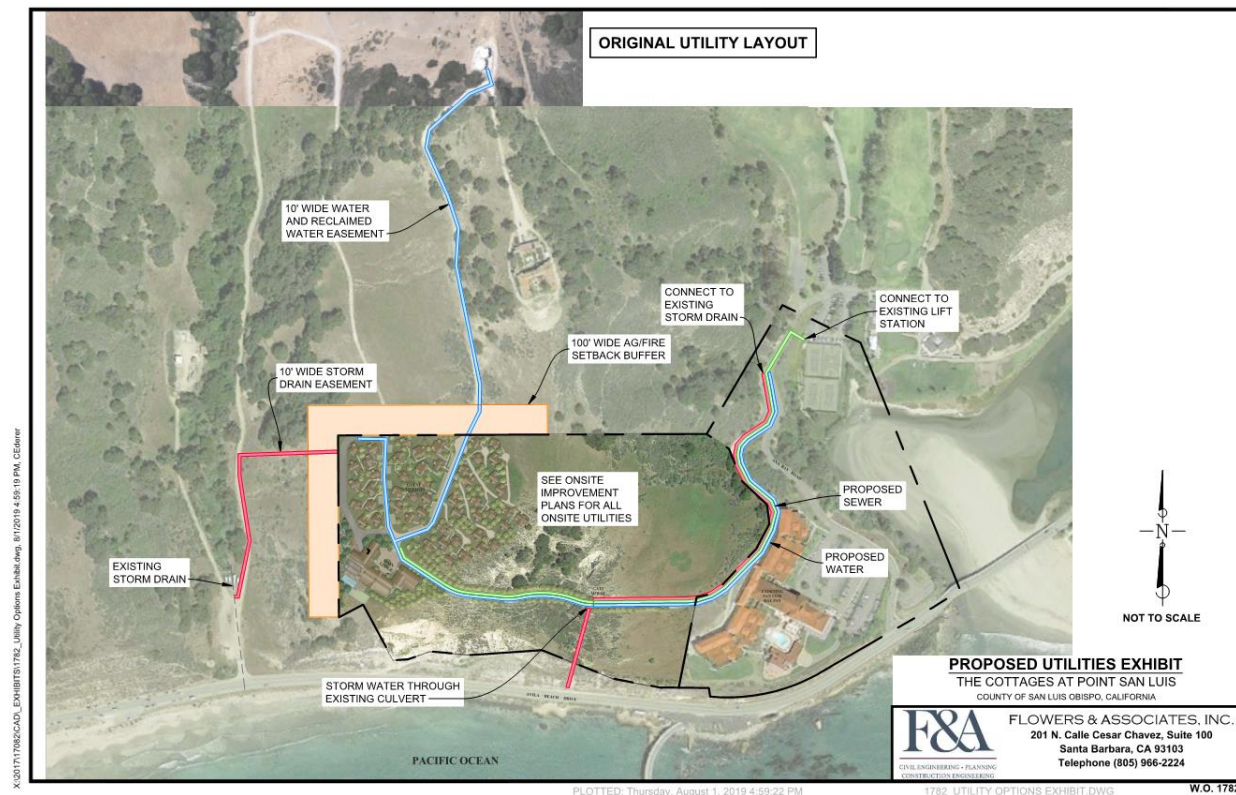
In the event that some or all of the necessary off-site easements from adjacent landowners are unable to be obtained, the following utility options remain as originally submitted:

- Water: New water lines will be constructed on the northeast side to extend water from existing tanks up the hill to the site. A future reclaimed water line will be located within the same route. The water line will run along Marre Road and connect to an existing tie-in on Ana Bay Road near the tennis courts. Upgrades to existing water lines near Ana Bay Road and along Marre Road is

anticipated. The northeast extension will complete the 'loop' in the water distribution system which is critical to provide for adequate water flow pressure and water quality.

- Sewer will be routed east through Marre Road to an existing main near the golf course.
- Gas will be routed west along Marre Road towards the project.
- Power & telecommunications lines per *Preferred Utility Layout*.
- Stormwater design per *Preferred Utility Layout*.

Figure A. Original Utility Layout

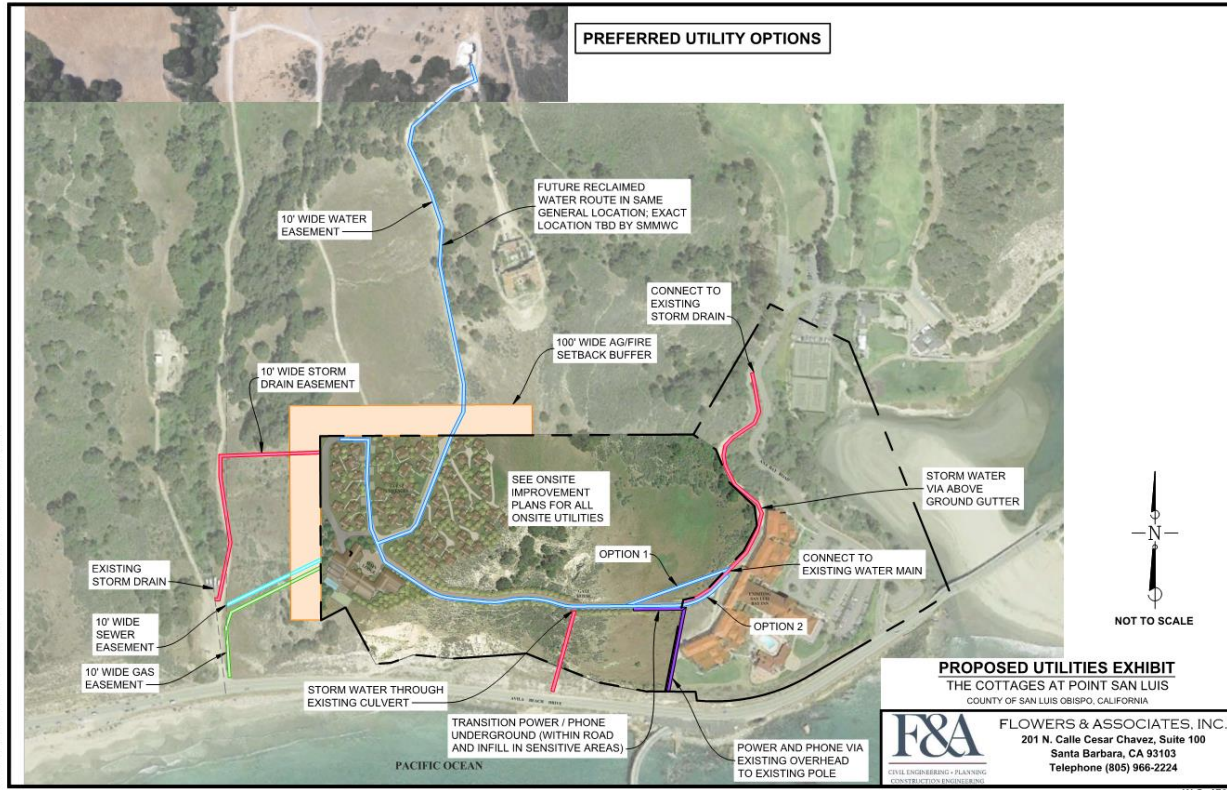


Preferred Utility Layout

- New water lines will be constructed on the northeast side to extend water from existing tanks up the hill to the site. A future reclaimed water line will be located within the same route. The water line will run along Marre Road and utilize deep horizontal boring into bedrock to avoid sensitive cultural resources (*shown with Option 1 and 2 boring directions*). The new line will tie into an existing water main at the rear of existing San Luis Bay Inn. The 'loop' is still provided by reusing existing water lines along Marre Road and Ana Bay Road. No upgrades to existing off-site pipes are anticipated.
- Sewer will be routed westward, downslope to an existing sewer main near Wild Cherry Creek Canyon Road.
- Gas will be provided from Avila Beach Drive through Wild Cherry Creek Canyon and routed eastwards towards project site.
- Power & telecommunications overhead lines will be routed from existing lines on Avila Beach Drive to an existing pole on Marre Road (up the cliff face across the Cal Poly Pier). Upgrades to the existing pole or introduction of an additional new pole may be required. On site, the overhead lines will then transition underground into proposed fill along Marre Road. It is anticipated that the lines will be routed through proposed fill and/or bedrock when traversing through the culturally sensitive site
- Stormwater

- West side: Water will be routed westerly downslope to Wild Cherry Creek via a storm drain.
- East side: Existing flows will be directed through 1) an existing storm drain culvert to Avila Beach Drive and 2) sheet flow along the driveway into an existing storm drain connection on Ana Bay Road.

Figure B. Preferred Utility Layout



Access

1. Primary Access

Guests, employees and deliveries will access the hotel via Ana Bay Road to a private drive. The private road will be widened and improved as necessary to meet Cal Fire and SLO County Public Works standards. Portions of the access road can be reduced to 20 feet wide, which is the minimum width acceptable to Cal Fire/County Fire in order to minimize impacts to sensitive cultural resources on the site.

2. Secondary emergency egress

In an emergency, guests and employees will exit the site via the main driveway and proceed north on Ana Bay Road through the golf course and onto Blue Heron Road. Blue Heron Road terminates near the Bob Jones Trail at a gate which leads to Coffeeberry Place. The gate will be opened for egress by hotel staff allowing access to San Luis Bay Drive without crossing a bridge or going through downtown Avila Beach.

3. Wild Creek Cherry Canyon

An existing ~16-foot-wide unpaved road links the parcel to Wild Creek Cherry Canyon. There is no intention to use this route as a hotel access. The applicant is considering providing pedestrian access to the beach via a trail to Avila Beach Drive, which will require obtaining an easement from the property owner, currently Pacific Gas & Electric Company.