



# CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO

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## Notice of Exemption California Environmental Quality Act

**TO:**  
**OFFICE OF PLANNING & RESEARCH**  
P.O. Box 3044  
Room 113  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

**FROM:**  
**CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO**  
Planning Division  
1960 Tate Street  
East Palo Alto, California 94303

**PROJECT TITLE:** Village One, Multi-family residential project

**PROJECT LOCATION SPECIFIC:**

1201 Runnymede Street, between Pulgas Avenue and the Bay Trail (APN 063-271-090)

**PROJECT LOCATION, CITY, COUNTY:**

East Palo Alto, San Mateo County

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The proposed development (Design Review application DR20-004) is a two-story residential building over a concrete podium at grade level. A total of 32 residential units are planned on this site, distributed evenly between second and third floor levels. There are a total of 30 two bedroom units with two smaller one bedroom units. Units range in size from 755 square feet to 1,074 square feet. Six units are inclusionary units per City ordinance.

The parcel is 0.932 acres, and the proposed residential development conforms to all the requirements of the City's Urban Residential zoning designation.

The residential units are designed around a large east-facing second floor courtyard which serves as the focal point of the project and is built over a ground floor parking level. This podium level courtyard connects to the grade via a pedestrian ramp to grade level. The courtyard provides a common outdoor space with views, children's play amenities, seating, and BBQs.

The first-floor parking plan includes 55 off street parking spaces and dedicated parking or lockers for 16 bicycles.

Decks have been provided at the second-floor level, whereas the third-floor units have flat window balconies. Landscaped spaces have been planned at the first-floor level on all four sides of the building, providing tree and other plantings, play areas, and some paved areas for outdoor activity. Selected plants and trees provide both color and shade to the building, as well as visual screening.

The main entrance is from the east side, through a stone clad façade punctuated by a two-story window wall and door accessed through a landscaped court. The entrance opens to a common two-story lobby.

**NAME OR PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT**

City of East Palo Alto, a municipal corporation

**NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY CARRYING OUT PROJECT:**

Owen Byrd, Village One, LLC

**EXEMPT STATUS (Check One)**

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080 (b) (1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080 (b) (4); 15269 (a))

- Emergency Project (Sec 21080 (b) (4) 15269 (b) (c))
- Statutory Exemption – CODE NO: \_\_\_\_\_
- Categorical Exemption – **CLASS: 32** SECTION NO: **15332 – In-fill Development Project**

### REASON WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT

Categorical Exemption. Class 32, In-Fill Development Project, CEQA Guidelines Section 15332.

Section 15332- Infill Development Projects. The Class 32 “Infill” Categorical Exemption exempts infill development within urbanized areas if it meets certain requirements. Infill projects that are consistent with the local General Plan and Zoning requirements and have negligible environmental impacts may be eligible for this exemption. The following findings and evidence describe why the project is exempt.

Finding 1: The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies, as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.

Evidence: The General Plan identifies the site as “High Density Residential” and is part of a small cluster of residential properties at the south end of the Ravenswood Business District. The project is also located within the Ravenswood/Four Corners Specific Plan area, with a corresponding zoning of Urban Residential. The purpose of this designation is to provide opportunities for the development of single-family and multi-family homes at a moderate density, including multi-family apartments or condominiums. Urban Residential development standards (as per the Specific Plan) allow up to 40 dwelling units per acre, and up to three stories in height south of Rail Spur. As proposed, the project is three stories and would have a density of 34.33 du/acre, consistent with the zoning. The project also meets all parking standards and setbacks.

Finding 2: The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.

Evidence: The project site 0.932 acres and completely within the city limits. Based on a review of Google satellite imagery and a field visit by planners on April 16, 2020 and other occasions, the site is adjacent to residential and school uses on the east and south, a residential lot to the west, and an open field (future school site) to the north.

Finding 3: The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.

Evidence: The subject parcel consists of an open, level vacant lot dominated by ruderal non-native grasses, weeds, and a few low shrubs. This parcel is part of a larger patch of ruderal non-native grassland common in the City and west of the Northern Coastal Salt Marsh areas of the San Francisco Bay. There are no mature trees on the site. While visibly overgrown during the site visit, the property appears to be occasionally mowed or disked for weed control. The site is less than one acre and is bordered by residential development on two sides. It does not contain wetlands, creeks, or natural areas, and is not connected to nearby baylands or marsh habitat. Based on the General Plan EIR (2016), the site does not contain the aquatic, salt marsh, riparian or other habitats that may support special status species. Wildlife use of grasslands in much of the City is limited by human disturbance, the abundance of non-native and invasive species, and isolation of grassland remnants from more extensive grasslands that used to exist in the City. As a result, some of the wildlife species typically associated with grassland habitat are absent within these small patches within the urban matrix. The General Plan EIR does not recognize these patches as sensitive habitat.

Finding 4: Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.

Evidence: Traffic- A traffic analysis was conducted to evaluate the impacts of the proposed residential project (Kimley-Horn, June 2020). A sight distance evaluation was also conducted at the full access, unsignalized driveway along Runnymede Street. Based on the analysis and the proposed site plan, there is

limited sight distance for vehicles making turns out of the driveway due to the proposed landscape and on-street parking within the clear site area on both sides of the driveway. While there is limited traffic in this location due to the cul-de-sac, site distance could be improved. Therefore, several standard conditions of approval have been incorporated. They include requiring that landscaping be removed from within the clear sight area to avoid obstructions for vehicles exiting the project driveway. The Project will also be required to request red curb along the project frontage, or at minimum red tipping on both sides of the driveway to restrict parking. Based on the City's VMT Policy Framework for Common Land Uses, the proposed project will generate a VMT per capita equal to the citywide average VMT per capita since the project is a residential land use. Therefore, since the project-generated VMT per capita is equal to and not greater than the citywide average VMT, the project will not create a VMT impact. With the reduction of five units in the updated plans, operations would be the same or better with the revised project. In a memorandum dated September 3, 2020, Kimley-Horn also confirmed that the project's parking plan meets the standards of the Ravenswood/Four Corners Specific Plan.

Noise- An acoustical analysis of the project was prepared (Kimley-Horn, 2020). This analysis concludes that construction noise, while elevated, would be temporary would be required to adhere to Standard Permit Conditions. Nearby receptors (residential uses and the charter school) are located 10 and 50 feet from the project site, respectively. Temporary construction noise would be most noticeable at the adjacent residential uses to the east. Construction noise is recognized by land use agencies throughout California as a temporary, but necessary, consequence of development on infill sites in urban areas. With respect to traffic noise, traffic volumes on project area roadways would have to approximately double for the resulting traffic noise levels to increase by 3 dBA (the threshold of significance). Although traffic volumes are generally low in this area as there are no opportunities for through traffic, the charter school across Runnymede Street represents the majority of traffic related noise during peak times in the morning and afternoon. The project's additional traffic would be nominal in this context and less than 3 dBA. Therefore, permanent increases in ambient noise levels of less than 3 dBA are considered to be less than significant. The analysis also shows that parking areas and mechanical equipment also would not exceed city standards at the nearest sensitive receptors.

Air Quality- An air quality and greenhouse gas (GHG) analysis was conducted for the project (Kimley-Horn, June 2020). Based on the results of this analysis, the construction and operational emissions would be consistent with the General Plan and 2017 Clean Air Plan Progress Report, could address construction emissions through required permit conditions, would not trigger operational impact thresholds, nor result in significant cumulative effects from project emissions. The potential for objectional odors, increased GHG emissions and CO concentrations were also found to be less than significant.

Water Quality- The project includes a preliminary drainage plan and erosion control plan designed to stabilize soils during construction and treat surface waters entering the storm drain system. Surface water quality in East Palo Alto is primarily a function of compliance with City of East Palo Alto drainage design criteria and C.3 stormwater control and treatment requirements. On site stormwater treatment will be provided in bio-retention areas and a storm trap retention chamber along eastern portion of the property. With these stormwater management controls, water quality would not be adversely impacted.

Finding 5: The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

Evidence: The General Plan EIR finds that the higher density land uses envisioned by the City can be served by existing utilities and service providers. The project would connect to existing electrical, communications, water, sewer and storm drain infrastructure that currently exists within public rights of way. The project will be required to pay development impact fees intended to support public service systems such as police, fire and government services. The project included a utility plan, domestic water analysis and sewer capacity analysis to confirm that the project can be served by existing infrastructure.

Finding 6: The site is not listed on any regulatory data bases that track hazardous material sites.

Evidence: Kimley-Horn (June 2020) performed an updated regulatory database search of the Department of Toxic Substances Control Envirostor website (<http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>) and the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) Geotracker website (<http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>) to identify

if any new hazardous material regulated facilities or sites within or proximate to the project are present. The target property was not listed in any of the databases searched by Kimley-Horn.

Attachments (on file with the City of East Palo Alto): 1. Transportation Impact Analysis, Kimley-Horn, June 2020 2. Final Transportation Memo, Kimley-Horn, September 2020 3. Hazardous Materials Memorandum, Kimley-Horn, June 2020 4. Air Quality and GHG Emissions Analysis, Kimley-Horn, June 2020 5. Noise Prediction Memorandum, Kimley-Horn, June 2020

Pursuant to Executive Order N-80-20, signed on September 23, 2020, certain requirements for filing, noticing, and posting of CEQA documents with county clerk offices have been conditionally suspended and alternate requirements must be taken in lieu of those requirements. Accordingly, the notice will be listed on the City of East Palo Alto's website for the same length that would be required for physical posting and submitted to the State Clearinghouse.

**LEAD AGENCY CONTACT PERSON**

Ami Upadhyay, Consultant Planner

**AREA CODE, TELEPHONE, Extension**

(650) 853-3151

SIGNATURE	TITLE	DATE
<i>Elena Lee</i>	Planning Manager	11/20/2020
Elena Lee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lead Agency	