

**ATTENTION FORESTVILLE - A Summary of the County of Sonoma Housing Element Update EIR by Dan Northern  
January 19, 2023**

**The Sonoma County Planning Commission is considering streamlining the rezoning and permit process to allow the construction of up to 635 new dwelling units, primarily apartments, within a ½ mile of the center of downtown Forestville. The process could take as little as 8 years to complete and could increase the population of Forestville by approximately 1652 citizens, if fully adopted, according to data found in the County Housing Element Update Environmental Impact Report and its Appendices. The information in this Summary, except where noted, was taken directly from the Draft Environmental Impact Report published by the County of Sonoma.**

The County of Sonoma Planning Commission has completed a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to examine the potential environmental effects of the Sonoma County Housing Element Update. The Housing Element Update proposes to rezone 59 urban sites located in designated Urban Service Areas throughout unincorporated Sonoma County, to comply with State law and further the goal of meeting the existing and projected housing needs of all household income levels in the County. If the plan is adopted these 59 sites, or a portion of them, would be rezoned to accommodate medium density housing. This project also provides evidence of the County's ability to accommodate its Regional Housing Needs Assessment thru the year 2031 and significantly streamlines and shortens the development process. The designation of a site as part of the housing inventory does not mean it would be developed during 2023-2031, or that a specific project has been proposed there. It simply means the site has the potential to support housing during the 8-year time period, as well as physical characteristics that are conducive to housing development.

The Sonoma County Housing Element Update EIR identifies seven properties in the Town of Forestville (FOR) that are potential sites for rezoning under the Sonoma County Housing Element Update. All 6 of these sites are within ½ mile of downtown Forestville. *See Attachment 1 – Forestville Map*

- FOR-1 6555 Covey Road (Electro Vector)
- FOR-2 6898 Nolan Road (14 acre apple orchard, between Mirabel, Nolan and Giusti Roads)
- FOR-3 6220 Hwy 116 N (area around the old County Corp Yard)
- FOR-4 6090 Van Keppel Road (between the Grammar School and Van Keppel Road)
- FOR-5 6475 Packing House Road (area around the old County Corp Yard)
- FOR-6 6250 Forestville Street (Between Pajaro Lane and the Sewer Treatment Plant)

There are three proposed zoning Alternatives within the EIR. Based on the alternatives analysis, Alternative 3 was determined to be the environmentally superior alternative by the County.

- **Alternative 1: No Project** - In this case no action would be taken to rezone a site(s). This alternative would not accomplish the project objectives to update the General Plan's Housing Element in compliance with State-mandated housing requirements, nor would this alternative provide more housing development opportunities in urban areas, encourage the development of additional high-density housing, or alleviate the housing shortages currently experienced in the County.
- **Alternative 2: Workforce Housing Combining District** – In this case a site(s) would be rezoned with a combination of commercial development and new residences at a typical ratio of 2/3 housing and 1/3 commercial. This pattern of development would allow locally serving retail uses along with residential uses at the Rezoning Sites, which would, according to the County, reduce the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) for residents of those sites and surrounding areas because they would live close to some commercial uses. The commercial component of this alternative would allow for commercial uses on the ground floor with up to two stories of residential uses above for a total of 3 stories. This alternative would result in an update to the County's existing Housing Element, provide housing

development opportunities, encourage the development of additional workforce housing, and alleviate the housing shortage currently experienced in the County, although to a lesser extent than the proposed project. However, this alternative would not meet project objectives because no sites would be zoned exclusively for housing. **See Attachment 2 – Development Statistics Alternative 2**

- **Alternative 3: Fewer Rezoning Sites** – This Alternative would simply eliminate 6 of the 59 proposed Rezoning Sites within the entire County. These 6 Rezoning Sites have greater environmental impacts and would be more costly to develop, thus have been removed from Alternative 3. The 6 Rezoning Sites removed from this Alternative include FOR-1 and FOR-2. These Rezoning Sites have greater than average environmental constraints compared to the other Rezoning Sites. In particular, these sites would require off-site infrastructure, water and sewer improvements to serve future development. Under this alternative, the remaining 53 Rezoning Sites would be rezoned, per this plan, for future medium density development. **See Attachment 3 – Forestville Development Statistics Alternative 3**

According to the General Manager of FWD, there are no existing capacity deficiencies in the water or sewer system that would prevent this increase in residential development as specified in the County Housing Element Update. According to the EIR the addition of traffic from these projects also indicates that a traffic signal/roundabout would be necessary at Mirabel and HWY 116 at some point in the future.

#### **Comments by Dan Northern:**

This Project is likely to change the face of Forestville and affect every resident in one way or another. It is imperative that members of the Community understand, participate in and monitor these projects. If all 6 of the proposed Sites in Forestville are rezoned for medium density housing, the maximum number of potential residential occupancies added to the core area of Downtown Forestville would be approximately 635 and the number of new residents would be approximately 1652. The current population of Forestville as defined by the boundaries of the Grammar School is 6771. The addition of 1652 residents would be a population increase of nearly 25 percent. **If all sites are rezoned in accordance with the Plan, Forestville will have the greatest number of proposed new occupancies/population in the County with the exception of the City of Santa Rosa.** **See Attachment 4 – Community Comparison**

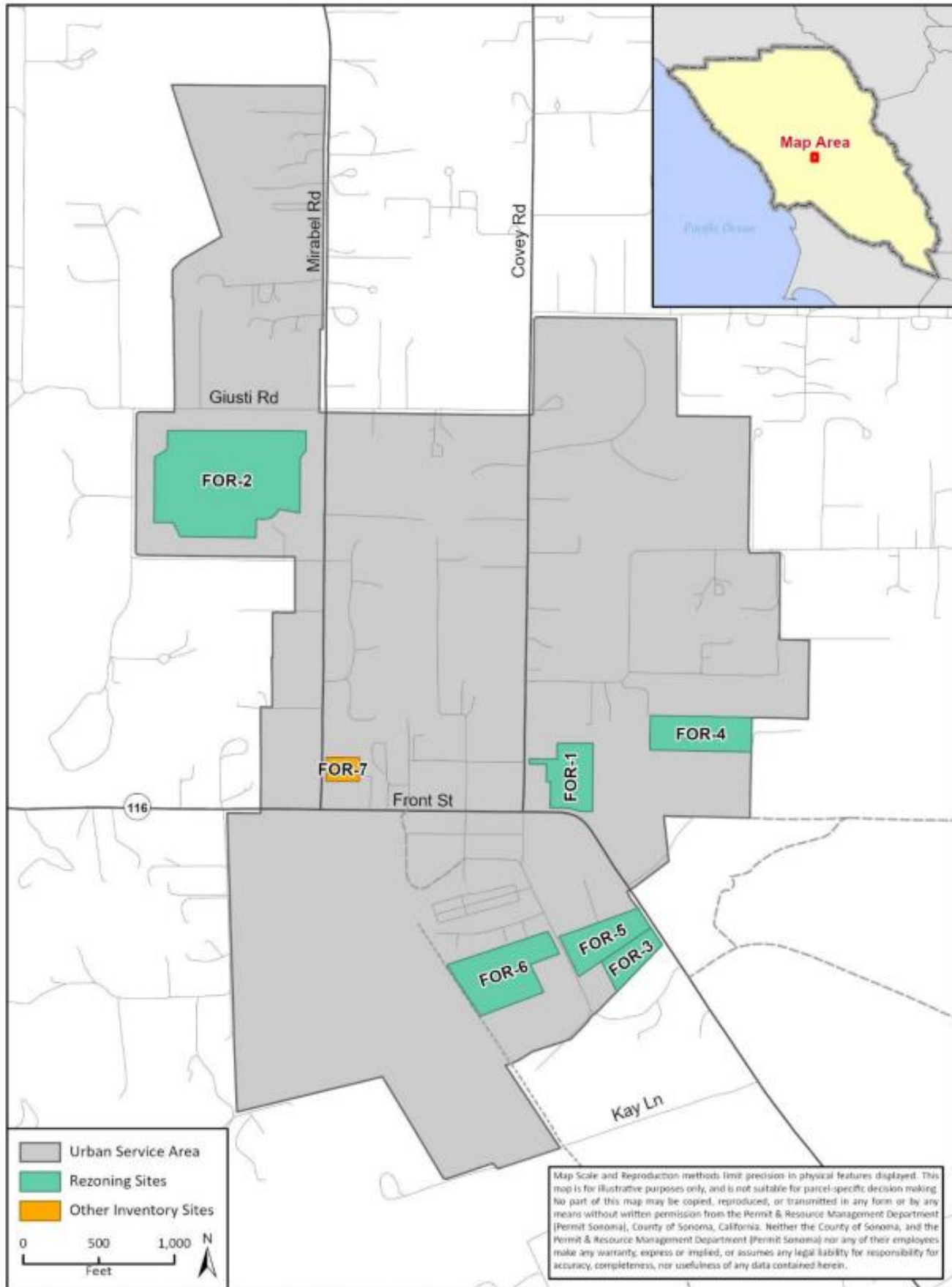
You can find a copy of the Sonoma County Housing Element Update – Draft Environmental Impact Report **(Draft Environmental Impact Report)** an explanation of the process and comment requirements and timeline **(Notice of Availability)** and information regarding studies including **Traffic Studies (DEIR Appendices)** here:

<https://permitsonoma.org/longrangeplans/proposedlong-rangeplans/housingelement - DEIR>

Comments on the Draft EIR must be returned to the County by February 13, 2023 at 5pm.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF SUBSTANTIVE EIR COMMENTS** Substantive comments that are backed by factual support can lead to changes to the proposed project itself or to the Draft EIR for inclusion in the Final EIR. To influence the EIR process, comments should specifically point out errors, inconsistencies, omissions of data or analyses, conclusions not based on evidence, or failures to provide discussion required by CEQA. To support the specific comments, the commenter can provide additional substantive evidence or information that was not considered in the Draft EIR. The lead agency must consider all substantive comments and information submitted on the Draft EIR and needs to respond adequately to substantive comments prior to certification of the Final EIR.

Figure 2-6 Forestville Inventory Sites



Source: Modified from data obtained with permission from the County of Sonoma, Permit & Resource Management Department (Permit Sonoma), 2022.  
Data and/or analysis depicted may be altered from the original Permit Sonoma dataset source therefore not representative of Permit Sonoma data: Esri.

*Attachment 2 – Development Statistics Alternative 2*

<b>SITE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>CURRENT DENSITY ALLOWED (Houses)</b>	<b>PROPOSED DENSITY (Occupancies)</b>	<b>CURRENT TOTAL POPULATION ALLOWED</b>	<b>PROPOSED TOTAL POPULATION</b>
FOR-1	6555 Covey Road (Electro Vector)	0	46	120	121
FOR-2	6898 Nolan Road	7	188	18	490
FOR-3	6220 Hwy 116 N	3	22	8	57
FOR-4	6090 Van Keppel Road	2	47	5	123
FOR-5	6475 Packing House Road	6	38	16	100
FOR-6	6250 Forestville Street	0	80	0	208
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>1099</b>

*Attachment 3 – Forestville Development Statistics Alternative 3*

<b>SITE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>CURRENT DENSITY ALLOWED (Houses)</b>	<b>PROPOSED DENSITY (Occupancies)</b>	<b>CURRENT TOTAL POPULATION ALLOWED</b>	<b>PROPOSED TOTAL POPULATION</b>
FOR-1	6555 Covey Road (Electro Vector)	46	70	120	182
FOR-2	6898 Nolan Road	7	283	18	736
FOR-3	6220 Hwy 116 N	3	33	8	86
FOR-4	6090 Van Keppel Road	2	71	5	185
FOR-5	6475 Packing House Road	6	58	16	151
FOR-6	6250 Forestville Street	0	120	0	312
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>64</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>1652</b>

*Attachment 4 – Community Comparison*

<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>PROPOSED DENSITY (Occupancies)</b>	<b>PROPOSED TOTAL POPULATION</b>
Glen Ellen	22	57
City of Sonoma	78	202
City of Petaluma	170	441
Graton	179	466
Geyserville	204	531
Auga Caliente	223	579
Pengrove	240	625
Guerneville	256	666
Larkfield	300	780
Forestville	635	1652
City of Santa Rosa	1022	2656
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3329</b>	<b>8655</b>