



City Council Staff Report

From: City Manager

Report Type: CONSENT CALENDAR

Lead Department: Planning and Development Services

Meeting Date: June 3, 2024

Report #:2403-2811

TITLE

QUASI-JUDICIAL. 810 Los Trancos Road [23PLN-00147]: Request for Site and Design Review to allow removal of an existing pool and construction of a new lap pool, removal of three (3) and planting of ten (10) new 24-inch box trees, and associated site improvements. Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the provisions of CEQA per Section 15303.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends City Council approve the subject Site and Design Review application.

BACKGROUND

The project site, located in the Open Space (OS) district at 810 Los Trancos Road (Attachment A), is 9.49 acres and is developed with a single-family home, garage, and an accessory dwelling unit.

This project requires Site and Design review, however the municipal code provides for a streamlined process with City Council consent calendar review when the following criteria are met:¹

- a) The project would comprise less than 1,000 square feet of floor area, less than 1,000 square feet of impervious cover, and less than 100 cubic yards of excavation and/or grading; and
- b) The proposed floor area or impervious cover would not exceed 50% of the allowable for the site; and
- c) The project and any prior projects within the prior five years would not cumulatively exceed these thresholds.

The subject project complies with these criteria.

Project Description

The project proposes to remove the existing pool and add a new lap pool. Three (3) existing trees will be removed and ten (10) new 24-inch box screening trees will be planted. New retaining walls, steps, firepit, hardscaping, and lighting will also be installed. Proposed landscaping and hardscape improvements will occur on the upper portion of the site, which has a natural slope

¹ Palo Alto Municipal Code Section 18.28.070 (b)(2).

down and away from the existing single-family home. A location map is provided in Attachment A and the Project Plans are included in Attachment C.

The site has dense landscaping and there will be no visibility to the new pool and associated landscaping and hardscaping features from off-site (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: View towards the location of proposed site improvements adjacent to the neighbor at 854 Los Trancos Road
(Source: Google Maps image on the left; applicant's photograph on the right)

DISCUSSION

Staff has reviewed the project for compliance with the Zoning Code and recommends project approval with conditions (Attachment B). The proposed new lap pool, landscaping, and impervious cover improvements will require minimal new grading with some of the cut soil being used to infill the existing smaller pool. The proposed new impervious area of 283 sf will bring the total impervious area of the site to 14,432 sf (3.49 %), which is below the maximum amount allowable for the lot (3.55 % or 14,668 sf).

Trees

Three (3) existing California bay laurel trees will be removed ranging from 9.7 to 11.5 inches in diameter, which are located within the location of the proposed pool but also would serve to reduce fire risk and may reduce transmission of sudden oak death as bay trees are a primary vector for the disease. In accordance with the City's Tree Ordinance, the required tree replacement ratio is ten (10) new replacement trees. Proposed new trees, which have been reviewed by the City's urban forester, are all native to California and include three (3) *cercis canadensis*, three (3) *cercis occidentalis*, two (2) *quercus agrifolia*, and two (2) *aesculus californica* trees.

Water Quality and Wildlife Protection

The project is not located within the vicinity of any waterbodies or waterways. The nearest waterway is Los Trancos Creek, which is located on the opposite side of Los Trancos Road and more than 0.2 miles (over 1,100 feet) from the proposed work. The project will be required to follow the City standard requirements for grading and stormwater protection in accordance with public works requirements. A condition of approval has been added to provide a pool cover to protect the wildlife from entering the pool.

Lighting

Proposed new wall, step/uplight, and path lighting will match the existing lighting on site and will be minimized at nighttime to only allow minimal lighting for using the stairs. It is not anticipated that the lighting will interfere with wildlife movement through the landscape. All new outdoor lighting will be limited to Correlated Color Temperature of 2700 Kelvin or less, and will be extinguished at 11:00 PM (set to a timer).

Other standard and project-specific conditions that minimize the impact of construction are included in the record of land use action.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Staff determined the proposed new lap pool and associated site improvements are covered under the statutory exemption, Section 15303 (New construction of small structures, including pools). No further CEQA evaluation is necessary for the request.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

This action has no fiscal impact.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION, OUTREACH & COMMENTS

The Palo Alto Municipal Code requires notice of this public hearing to be published in a local paper and mailed to owners and occupants of property within 600 feet of the subject property at least ten days in advance. Notice of a public hearing for this project was published in the *Daily Post* on May 24, 2024, which is 10 days in advance of the meeting. Postcard mailing occurred on May 21, 2024, which is 13 in advance of the meeting.

As of the writing of this report, no project-related, public comments were received.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Location Map

Attachment B: Draft Record of Land Use Action

Attachment C: Project Plans

APPROVED BY:

Jonathan Lait, Planning and Development Services Director