



January 17, 2019

Planning Commission
City of Gonzales
117 Fourth Street
Gonzales, CA 93926

Subject: Resolution No. PC 2019-01 and 2019-02: Consideration of a Conditional Use Permit to Construct a 41-Unit Residential Apartment Project Known as the “Del Rincon Apartments”, and Approve a Lot-Line Adjustment to Accommodate Both Del Rincon and a Future City Library

Dear Chair Rios and Planning Commissioners:

LandWatch Monterey County strongly recommends your approval of the conditional use permit for the 41-unit Del Rincon Apartments, as requested by local non-profit affordable housing developer CHISPA, Inc. The project is consistent with the City’s General Plan, as well as LandWatch’s principles for smart, sustainable development and Monterey County’s city-centered growth policy. Indeed, for a variety of reasons this is an ideal project for the location, the City, and, most importantly, the City’s residents and workforce.

The Del Rincon Apartments, a 41-unit affordable apartment, is an in-fill project located close to schools, shopping and services. Additionally, the Monterey–Salinas Transit has two bus routes that service Gonzales with various stops, including on Fifth Street. According to traffic studies described in the City’s staff report, the project would result in imperceptible intersection delays.

The proposed development will help the City achieve its fair share housing obligations of 293 units as established by AMBAG. It is relevant to note that the city has not constructed any housing since 2009. Additionally, the City faces a great need for affordable housing. According to Trulia, median apartment rent in Gonzales reached \$2,125 as of October 2018. At 4.2%, Gonzales has the lowest vacancy rate in Monterey County. Moreover, according to the City’s adopted 2015-2023 Housing Element, overcrowding remains a critical issue.

The City of Gonzales is the only city within Monterey County to have an adopted Climate Action Plan. Consistent with that plan, the Del Rincon project is all-electric and includes solar panels. Additionally, CHISPA has agreed to sign up for carbon-free power delivery from Monterey Bay Community Power.

Because of the very significant need for affordable housing in Gonzales, the ideal location of the project site, and CHISPA's smart design and established reputation for building high quality affordable housing, LandWatch recommends you consider significantly increasing the density of allowed units, possibly by adding market rate rentals. There is no reason the project couldn't serve more families in a mixed-income environment.

We strongly urge the Commission to approve the proposed project and give CHISPA the option of adding more units.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael DeLapa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "DeLapa" clearly distinguishable.

Michael DeLapa
Executive Director