



BARCELLUS SENIOR AFFORDABLE APARTMENTS PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AT 502, 510, AND 524 EAST BARCELLUS AVENUE

Review of a Planned Development Permit (PD2022-0015) for Barcellus Senior Housing LLC to construct an 80-unit senior affordable apartment complex with Density Bonus on a 2.37-acre site in a PD/R-3 (Planned Development/High Density Residential) district.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission, by motion, approve Planned Development Permit PD2022-0015.

BACKGROUND

The site is located on a vacant 2.37-acre site at the southwest corner of Barcellus Avenue and South Bluebird Street (Exhibit A). The Driftwood Gardens single-family neighborhood is south of the project site in the R-1 (Single-Family Residential) district. Medical and professional office uses are present to the west and north of the site in the CPO (Commercial/Professional Office) district. Vacant land lies across Bluebird Street to the east, also in the CPO district.

Current Planned Development Permit.

On December 7, 2016, the Planning Commission approved a Planned Development Permit (PD2016-0005) requested by Mark Fugate for an 80-unit senior apartment project on the subject property. The PD/R-3 (Planned Development/High-Density Residential) district on this site was established by the City Council on December 6, 2016.

After two previously approved time extensions, and with the development of the project not yet commenced, the 2016 Planned Development Permit is set to expire in June of 2023, and therefore a new Planned Development Permit application must be processed if the project is to be developed.

The current property owner acquired the property in 2022 and is requesting a new Planned Development Permit to develop the site with essentially the same senior housing project that was approved under PD2016-0005. The new permit will allow sufficient time to process and receive building permits, and provide the applicant with a discretionary approval that will remain valid throughout the duration of the affordable tax credit application process. For these reasons, this new Planned Development Permit application is before the Planning Commission.

DISCUSSION

The project will consist of 80 apartment units with one on-site manager unit and the remaining 79 units deed restricted as affordable for seniors. The three-story residential buildings are proposed at approximately 35 feet in height with select taller architectural tower elements, along with a two-story clubhouse building. The project proposes a mix of 61 one-bedroom and 19 two-bedroom two-bath residences each with a living room, kitchen, in-unit laundry, and balcony or patio. The residences range in size from 599 square-feet for the one-bedroom units to 957 square-feet for the two-bedroom units.

State Regulations for Senior Housing

The State of California has identified affordable and senior housing as a critical need. State law (Government Code Section 65915) allows affordable and/or senior housing projects to receive a 'density bonus' to achieve a greater density than what is specified in City code.

For senior housing, an applicant can request to add 20 percent more units to the base 30 units per acre specified in the R-3 zone, equating to approximately 36 units per acre, or to 86 dwelling units for this project site. This applicant is requesting approval of 80 senior units, which would require a smaller bonus of approximately 12.5 percent. For comparison, this is the same number of units and same density bonus percent granted to the previously approved PD2016-0005 project on this site.

Not only are the units to be restricted to seniors (55+), but the proposed units will also be income restricted to seniors with incomes at 80 percent or below the Area Median Income (AMI), with the majority of units affordable for seniors with incomes at or below 60 percent AMI.

City Regulations for Senior Housing

The R-3 zoning district allows a maximum density of 22 dwelling units per acre, which would equate to 52 units on this site. For a senior residential project, the density may be up to 30 dwelling units per acre provided that the project adheres to the special standards listed in Section 12-8.18 of the Municipal Code:

- Minimum half acre site.
- Average unit not larger than 800 square feet (average unit size is approximately 685 square feet)
- Deed restrictions for the project to remain senior housing (condition of approval)
- Convenient access to medical, commercial, transportation and parks

With the 12.5 percent increase under the State Density Bonus Law discussed above, the project is consistent with these standards. The site is over two acres in size with an average unit size that is less than 800 square feet. The project is conditioned to be deed restricted as senior housing (as well as to be affordable) and is a short walking distance to medical offices and bus stops on Stowell Road, and within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of retail shopping, parks, and the Elwin Mussell Senior Center (Exhibit B). As discussed in further detail below, the project is consistent with the parking requirements for senior housing.

Architecture

The building architecture is a traditional craftsman style, with significant building face articulation, roof line height changes with large roof eave overhangs complemented by exposed beams and brackets. The exterior materials include charcoal grey shaker-style concrete roofing, a combination of brown and tan lap siding and stucco walls, heavy wood-look window trim and roof bracket elements in white, decorative metal balcony rails, and grey tone stacked stone wainscots. Those buildings along the southern elevations and closest to the adjacent single-family development incorporate step-backs of the third story elements to reduce the massing and visual impact. Three quarters of the units are one-bedroom units, with 19 two-bedroom units.

Landscape, Open Space, and Amenities

There are two primary landscape regulations for this project:

- Chapter 12-44 requires multi-family residential development to have a minimum 20 percent of the site for landscaping, including landscaped setback areas; and
- Section 12-8.08 of the R-3 district regulations requires 250 square-feet of landscape open area per unit, exclusive of required setback areas.

The project provides nearly 36,000 square-feet of landscaped area which exceeds the City Municipal Code minimum landscaping and open space requirements. A central courtyard of over 15,000-square-feet is provided in the project design, which includes a large patio and gazebo, a fire pit, community garden space, shuffleboard and a Bocce ball court, and various sitting areas surrounded by landscaped areas. In addition, a two-story community center is provided, with fitness center, group use kitchen and second floor terrace. Pedestrian scale site lighting is provided throughout the project.

The common areas and adjacent parkways will be landscaped with a mix of trees, shrubs and groundcovers, including seven street trees on Bluebird Street and ten street trees along Barcellus Avenue. The southern perimeter of the site will be landscaped with trees and shrubs as well as bounded by the existing six-foot-high wall to buffer the adjacent single-family residential neighborhood. A landscaped storm water basin is located along the western perimeter of the site.

Setbacks

The Municipal Code considers the Bluebird Avenue side of the site, with the narrower width, as the 'front' yard, and the Barcellus Avenue frontage as the street side yard. The minimum front yard setback in the R-3 zoning district is 20 feet, with 15 feet required for the street side yard.

Under the State Density Bonus Law developers may request concessions or waivers from development standards including setbacks. Therefore, as a concession, the applicant requests to reduce the setback to ten feet adjacent to both streets. This is the same setback reduction that was requested and approved by the Planning Commission for the previously approved Planned Development Permit.

The ten-foot setback is consistent with the minimum frontage setbacks in the CPO district properties which lie across and adjacent to this project site. Additionally, setbacks are measured from the property lines, which for this site is ten feet behind the curb of the

street. The frontage landscape design and street trees, in addition to the quality architectural design, will provide a positive aesthetic appearance despite the reduced setback. Lastly, this reduction is not adjacent to the single-family residential neighborhood to the south, with the closest proposed building being setback approximately 58 feet from that south property line.

Parking

Buildings are placed along the street frontages, with the parking to the side and rear. The Municipal Code bases parking required for Senior Housing on the size of the units. For those units that are 600 square feet or less, one parking space for every three units is required. For unit sizes over 600 square feet, one space per unit is required. In addition, one space per each staff member of the senior facility is required.

There are sixty-one units below 600 square feet, and 19 units larger than 600 square feet equating to 39 parking spaces required. This is not a care facility, so the number of management and maintenance staff is projected to be ten or less at any one time. Therefore the 85 on-site parking spaces proposed well exceeds the minimum 49 spaces required by code.

State Preemption

As this is an affordable, senior housing project, California's Housing and Accountability Act applies. The Act limits the City's discretion to reduce the number of units proposed or to deny the project. If the Commission were to consider the denial of this project, specific findings must be developed based on documented evidence that the project will cause specific, adverse impacts upon the public health or safety, and that there are no feasible methods to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the adverse impacts.

Environmental Procedures

The project qualified for a Class 32 (Infill Development Projects) categorical exemption based on Section 15332 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. The site is less than five acres and is an infill site surrounded by existing development and can be adequately served by all required utilities. No further environmental review is required.

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Enclosures

Exhibit A – Vicinity Map
Exhibit B – Nearby Services
Permit
Plan Set