

Design Concept Narrative for Caritas Village: September 17, 2019

GENERAL INFORMATION

Caritas Village is a full block development for affordable housing and facilities with services for people who are presently homeless, those who are at risk of being homeless, or were formerly homeless, and other lower income, and working people needing affordable housing. These facilities are united into one “village”, whose internal open spaces are visually but not physically connected. The proposed village is comprised of Caritas Center and Caritas Homes, and includes:

- Emergency Shelter: temporary housing for up to 50 families with housing referral services and other social services, a play room for children, a multi-purpose dining room with commercial kitchen, all with access to a ‘family-oriented’ courtyard;
- Navigation Center: a navigation center for adults without homes which includes showers and lockers, multipurpose room, counseling rooms, access to computers, and which opens onto its own courtyard (includes some kennels for pets) independent of and screened from the family courtyard;
- Nightingale Program: up to 40 partitioned beds for presently homeless adults who have been discharged from hospital care but need shelter and food while recuperating, with lounge and access to the Navigation Center;
- Other Wrap Around Services: a wide variety of social services, medical services – doctor’s office, and administrative functions facing onto that same courtyard;
- Transitional Housing: there will be transitional housing for 20 formerly homeless people who participate in Catholic Charities’ Transitional Residency Program, or TRP;
- Permanent Supportive Housing: up to 128 units of permanent supportive housing for a mix of very-low income and formerly homeless households. This will be built in two phases. Parking for the permanent housing will be located in ground-level garages beneath the housing.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY & URBAN CHARACTER.

The village fronts four different streets, each with its own unique physical conditions. The design addresses each street in a way that will harmonize the village with the adjacent neighborhood and will activate and protect the public realm along those four edges of the village.

A Street. The village faces a three-story parking garage across A Street. Several strategies are employed to activate the village along A Street and to add “eyes on the street”. The main entrance to the Emergency Shelter (temporary family housing) is located on A Street near the southeast corner with 6th Street, away from the adjacent residential neighborhood. The west side of A Street on the ground floor of the permanent housing there are dwellings facing A Street with covered patios. Building heights are generally three and four stories along A Street, while dropping to two stories along 7th Street, so that the height is compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood.

Morgan Street. Morgan Street faces Highway 101, an on-ramp to Highway 101, and a sound wall, which varies between 20 to 30 feet high above the level of Morgan St. This street is challenged because it has no uses on the western side and is significantly impacted by on-ramp traffic. A good portion of this frontage is lined with trees along the on-ramp and freeway. On the east side of Morgan Street, the northern half of the village includes housing at all levels including the ground floor with

covered patios to maintain “eyes on the street,” reducing the chances of becoming a location for undesirable activities. The southern half is fronted by a planted courtyard wall and is overlooked by staff offices and windows of the TRP. The building height along Morgan Street varies from one to four stories, only the top of which may be minimally visible from Highway 101 because of its sound wall.

6th Street. The village faces a three-story concrete parking garage along the southern side of Sixth Street. Caritas Center, a three-story structure, is situated on the north side of Sixth Street. The entrance to the Caritas Navigation Center (Drop-In Day Center) is located at the corner of 6th and Morgan, and faces away from the residential neighborhood. The Center’s Main Lobby is centered on 6th Street, and these south-facing entrances will draw people into Caritas Center at the furthest point from the adjacent residential neighborhood.

7th Street. In order to be compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood, the village’s structures on Seventh Street are two stories high with one-story patio porches. The two-story height is similar to houses in the adjoining residential neighborhood. The entrance lobbies to the permanent supportive housing face 7th Street on each side of the existing alley and a linear courtyard between the two phases of housing defines the existing mid-block alley that extends to the south.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER.

The architectural strategy is to respond appropriately to each of the village’s surrounding streets. Materials will be a combination of stucco, cement panels, with specialty highlights around entrances using ceramic tiles, terracotta, metal panels, and wood. Mediterranean detailing and clay roof tiles are added to the palette along the residential edges of Morgan and A Streets, and 7th Street. These are intended to relate the housing to the other two major structures in the neighborhood- the Sonoma County Museum and St. Rose office building. Ground floor porches will have wood details in the railings, with exposed beams and rafters supporting their roofs so that these architectural elements will relate to the scale of the adjacent residential neighborhood.

A Street. The entrance to the family Emergency Shelter of Caritas Center includes a stairwell which will be partly enclosed in glass and lit at night so it welcomes families to the Center. Both the east and south wings of this building will have a rhythm of bay windows reflecting a residential scale, and will have sunscreens to protect the rooms from overheating.

Morgan Street. The four-story residential building will have bay windows to add scale and articulation to its length. At the north end of Morgan Street, the building will decrease in height to two and three stories to be compatible with the adjacent neighborhood. The exterior will be stucco with some highlights such as wood soffits below the projecting bay windows which will also be the ceiling above the patios to add some warmth to the residential character.

6th Street. The facade of this three-story structure will have two parts. To the east is a continuation of the bay windows of the family wing or Emergency Shelter (entered from A Street). The western part will house the social services and administrative offices. The windows of this wing will have sun shades and plantings to protect these uses from overheating. Between these two flanking wings is the Main Lobby, rooting the building to the street frontage and clearly marking the primary entrance. The exterior materials will be a combination of stucco and cement panels, with wood siding around the recessed lobby entrance and wood soffit on the underside of the metal entry canopy. At the southwestern corner of the façade the building steps down to one story, scaling down to frame the walled courtyard entry to the Navigation Center.

7th Street. The two- and three-story buildings along this street will have pitched tiled roofs, porches, and window proportions that generally reflect the smaller scale character of the neighborhood to the north.

CENTRAL COURTYARD

The village includes a network of internal, on-grade open spaces designed to enhance a sense of place at a residential scale. This courtyard is a mirror of the existing mid-block alley and relates to the alley in the block to the north. There will be a combination of pavers to allow for storm water percolation, and native plantings appropriate to storm water swales, with ample shade trees to lower the ambient temperature during the hotter months. The open spaces for the permanent housing on the 2nd floor podium levels (above the ground-level enclosed garages) will include appropriate planters to manage storm water. The setbacks for each of the surrounding edge conditions facing the streets will have appropriate planting for their sunlight opportunities, and each street frontage will have street trees to help shade the sidewalks and windows on the south and west sides.

SUSTAINABILITY

Caritas Village will strive to maximize sustainable construction methodology. Solar hot water and solar photovoltaic panels will be used on all rooftops to provide on-site energy generation as will be required by new energy codes. Exterior sunshade strategies on the south and west sides will lower dependence on air conditioning. Low-VOC materials and filtered fresh air will ensure indoor air quality. Electric vehicle charging stations will be provided and extensive indoor and outdoor bike parking will be available. Construction materials will include a significant percentage of recycled content, and building systems will be selected with the goal of minimizing ongoing energy and resource consumption, including low-flow plumbing fixtures and high-efficiency lighting.