



COLLEGE CREEK APARTMENTS
2150 West College Avenue
Project Narrative
July 2019

Overview. USA Properties Fund, Inc. (USA) proposes the redevelopment of 2150 West College Avenue, the former Sonoma County Water Agency property. USA's development proposal is for a 168-unit apartment home community on 5.72 net acres. The community will consist of one, two, and three bedroom units in three residential buildings with a community center, pool, and other amenities.

Through innovative design and creative site planning on this irregularly shaped 5.72 net acre parcel, College Creek Apartments supports the goals of the City and County by proposing an inclusive community. College Creek will provide housing opportunities for seniors, veterans, lower-wage working families, and individuals with incomes ranging from 30% to 120% area median income.

Location. The property is located approximately 400' west of the intersection of West College Avenue and Stony Point Road, near the West Side Bus Transfer Center. Finley Community Center and Finley Park are located just east of the project site across Stony Point Road. The site is identified as APN 010-320-029 with a current street address of 2150 West College Avenue.

Background/Site Ownership. The site was acquired by the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) in 1981 for its operation center. In 2008, SCWA was exploring redevelopment of the site for medium/high density workforce housing; and submitted a formal request to the City for a change in the land use designation from Public Institutional to a Multifamily Residential designation. The land use designation change was considered as part of the 2009 Housing Element update and included in the Santa Rosa General Plan 2035 designated as Medium High Density Residential. In September, 2013, the Planning Commission initiated a rezoning of the site from PD-0196 (Planned Development) to R-3-30 (Multi-Family Residential), to be consistent with the General Plan.

In March 2014, the County Board of Supervisors declared the property as surplus. In June, 2017, the Board authorized the sale of the property to the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (SCCDC). The property was marketed for development by SCCDC through a lengthy proposal process. In December 2018, USA was selected as the preferred Developer with approval from the Board of Supervisors to enter into an ERNA for the entitlement of a mixed income residential community.

Site Characteristics. The site is 7.46 acres (gross) with 1.67 acres of the parcel reserved for an exclusive easement to the Sonoma County Water Agency for flood channel maintenance and Public Right of way Dedication for a creek-side pedestrian trail. USA's proposal is dedicated to the remainder 5.79 acres, leaving the creek environment in its natural state.



The site is irregularly shaped with the creek easement area along the entire eastern and southern boundary. The 5.79 acre developable parcel property is currently developed with three, single-story office Buildings, a garage building, access driveways, and associated parking areas. The project site is mostly developed and does not support any natural areas or plant communities that are contiguous with offsite habitat. The site contains a robust human-influenced landscape. Ornamental trees planted on site include Elm, Glossy Privet, Apple, Sycamore, Tulip Tree, Ponderosa Pine Red Gum Eucalyptus, Cedar, Olive, and Liquid Amber. Native tree species include Valley Oak. Non-native Coast Redwood have been planted as ornamentals.

Surrounding Uses. The neighborhood is characterized by civic uses and residential with scattered retail. The site is bordered to the east, west and south by state and local government facilities, and to the north by West College Avenue and a single-family residential neighborhood.

North: West College Avenue and single-family residential
 South: City of Santa Rosa utility facilities
 East: City of Santa Rosa Fire Department training facility
 West: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection facilities

The City's Westside Transfer Center is approximately 400 feet east of the site and is the transfer point for multiple bus routes operated by Santa Rosa CityBus.

General Plan and Zoning Designations. The site is designated as Medium High Density Residential and Zoned as R-3-30 (Multi-Family Residential). Entitlement requested for the implementation of this land use is Design Review-Major for a 168 unit apartment home community with on-site community center, pool, and other amenities.

Proposed Project. College Creek Apartments is designed to include a development footprint exclusive of the existing creek/ drainage channel easement area for a net buildable area of 5.72 acres.

The site plan is designed to maximize density of the net building area with 168 units in three buildings with a mix of one, two, and three bedroom units ranging in size from 622 to 1,130 square feet.

Unit Type	Typical Unit Square Feet	Number of Units
1 bed/1 bath	622	73
2 bed/2 bath	896	81
3 bed/ 2 bath	1,130	14
Total Number of Units		168

Building types include two 3-story walk-up buildings and one 4-story elevator served building; all within the 45 foot height restriction. The combination of building types and building sizes provides options for a variety of households including singles, families, senior, and special physical needs. The inclusion of



elevators and adaptable design features in the four-story building provides increased accessibility to a majority of units.

Density. The density of the proposed project for the buildable area is 29.37 units per acre.

Affordability. With the objective of prioritizing housing product and maximizing affordability, USA proposes to develop College Creek as a 168 unit multi-generational, mixed-income apartment home community which offers 59 affordable units (35% of the project) at 30% to 120% AMI and 109 market-rate units (65% of the project) at whole dollar rents that are well below other market-rate projects in the City. USA is offering 100% of the market-rate units at 120% AMI rents which makes non-rent restricted units affordable for lower-wage income families in need of housing. USA's diverse mix of affordability levels will provide housing opportunities to seniors, veterans, homeless, and lower-wage working families and individuals. The project is designed to bring people together through shared spaces and attentive, experienced management.

Amenities. This project will feature market rate community amenities. The Community Center, located on the ground floor of the 4-story building, will include the leasing office with leasing lounge, wifi in common areas, fitness room, mail room, and package lockers. A clubroom with hospitality kitchen, large screen TV, billiards table, and wifi work stations are also planned. Outdoor amenities will include a pool with loungers, barbeque counter with seating, children's play area, enclosed bike storage area, bike repair station, and a pet wash station.

Access and Circulation. Vehicular and pedestrian access will be from two driveways on West College Avenue at the eastern and western ends of the frontage with an additional inviting pedestrian paseo at the center of the site. An internal loop drive will access residential buildings. The western entry features a large heritage oak tree and serves as a landmark to the project. The entry leads to the leasing offices and clubhouse as well as entry for residents. A ride-share drop-off/pick up location is also planned at the western entry.

The wide pedestrian paseo with trees and benches provides a neighborhood scale to the project. The existing creek-side pedestrian trail does not currently extend all the way to West College Avenue. The applicant proposes to coordinate with the Sonoma County Water Agency and the City of Santa Rosa in completing the trail out to the street providing enhanced accessibility to the miles of creek trails meandering throughout the City.

Parking. The project as presented includes 272 parking spaces with 1:1 covered parking ratio and the remainder as open spaces. This represents an overall reduction of 22% of the current MF residential parking standards, but exceeds the parking standards permitted under the density bonus ordinance. This reduction is supported by the close proximity to the Westside Transfer Center (within 400 ft. of the entry) with multiple bus lines and access to SMART. Neighborhood retail services and the Finley Community Park are also within ¼ mile of the site.



The site is also designed with a ride share pick-up/drop-off zone near the eastern entry of the project site providing easy in-easy out service.

Bicycle Parking. Enclosed bicycle parking will be provided for 84 bikes in an enclosed structure fitted with hanging, lockable bike racks. 14 additional short term bike parking spaces will be scattered throughout the site.

Fencing and Gates. The project design includes 6' tube steel fencing along the eastern and southern boundaries of the developable area, leaving an open view to the creek area. This design enhances the open space experience while adding passive observation of the trail.

While masonry type walls are typically used separating non-residential and residential properties, the applicant will work with the City in determining the appropriate fencing for the western boundary adjacent to the Cal Fire facility. This boundary is heavily forested; a wood fence may provide more opportunities to preserve trees than the heavy footings and construction impacts for a masonry wall.

Architectural Concept. An inviting pedestrian paseo at the center of the site adds to the neighborhood atmosphere by breaking up the building mass along West College Ave. Pedestrian circulation within the community is accommodated with a combination of walkways connecting the community to the clubhouse and outdoor amenity areas and access to the adjacent creek trail. All of the residential buildings are designed with four-sided architecture creating natural surveillance and maximizes visibility of people, parking, and building entries. Residential buildings along the street frontage are arranged in a manner that provides street presence and visual interest. The project accomplishes this by orienting the widest part of the buildings towards the street. These frontages provide windows and balconies that place eyes on the street.

The architectural design for the buildings utilizes simple forms with contemporary architecture. Flat roof with varying height parapets articulate the massing of the apartment buildings. A variety of materials including horizontal composition board siding, board-and-batt composition siding, and plaster are used throughout the project to articulate the building surfaces and to provide variety in the texture of the building elements. Metal awnings, railings and balcony elements on the apartment structures provide a natural element to the design.

Throughout the project, natural colors and earth tones are proposed for the stucco base and siding features. The variety of finish materials and colors on the buildings provides layering of the design composition both horizontally and vertically. This layering reduces the overall mass of each building and relates to the pedestrian scale.

Landscape Concept. Landscaping is designed to complement the buildings and make a positive contribution to the overall aesthetics of the site. HVAC units will be roof-mounted and screened from sight to create more areas for landscaping.



Low-profile landscaping, including screen shrubs, grasses, and groundcover will be utilized and compatible with the bio-retention areas. All parking lot areas will be landscaped according to the city's Design Guidelines. The pedestrian paseo will include tree-lined, ornamental landscaping and seating areas. The planting design will call for new trees, shrubs, native, drought-tolerant, and low-fuel species to create layers of color and texture to complement the architecture style and setting.

Tree Preservation and Mitigation. The existing site is heavily planted with a variety of native, non-native, and ornamental trees. Except for extending the pedestrian trail out to West College Ave, no development is anticipated in the creek easement area. Trees within the creek corridor will remain. Within the developable pad of 5.79 acres, the applicant will, to the extent possible, preserve in place heritage trees including two major oak trees at the eastern entryway. Where trees cannot be preserved due to site design or construction impacts, the applicant will work with the City to mitigate lost trees with on-site replacement trees and mitigation fees as required per City Municipal Code 17-24 Trees.

Green Technologies. The project will be designed to incorporate elements from the City's Climate Action Plan and City of Santa Rosa's CALGreen requirements, and CalGreen Tier 1 Standards for 2020. These features can include energy and water efficient design measures including: incorporating solar power design, the installation of several electric charging stations in the parking area, and water efficient landscaping consisting of drought tolerant plant species separated into hydro-zones for irrigation needs. The Project will include high efficiency lighting, energy efficient appliances, and low-flow plumbing faucets and fixtures. The applicant will also utilize a construction waste recycling program during demolition and construction to minimize waste to the extent practicable.

Project Ownership and Management. The project will be owned and managed by USA Properties Fund, Inc. USA Properties has developed, constructed, or rehabbed more than 12,000 units of family and senior apartments in approximately 90 communities throughout California and Nevada. USA Properties owns and manages six apartment communities in Santa Rosa including Terracina Santa Rosa a few blocks east of the site at 471 W College Ave.

Public Outreach. This site has a long history of public outreach through the City (General Plan Update and Rezone) and the County Community Development Commission as they prepared to release the Request for Proposal for Multifamily housing.

More recently, USA has also engaged with the neighborhood up to a 1.5 mile radius of the site to gather feedback about the proposed project. USA is assisted in those efforts by Muelrath Public Affairs who is also managing an informational website for the project. The website (www.CollegeCreek.com) provides a resource for the public (in English and Spanish) to follow the progress of the project through the design and entitlement process.

- **Community Presentation.** March, 2019 Open House Community Presentation at Finley Community Center. Outreach 1.5 mile radius of site.



- **Letter Campaign.** May 2019, second presentation to project with brochure, comment card, and introduction to website. Outreach 1.5 mile radius of site.
- **Website Launch.** May 2019 www.collegecreek.com launched. Updated and maintained by Muelrath Public Affairs.
- **Follow-up correspondence.** June 2019-August 2019, follow-up correspondence to those who submitted questions via the project website or returned a comment card with questions or comments regarding the conceptual proposal. Outreach extends up to 1.5 miles from the site, contingent on the home address of each individual comment card or website respondent.
- **Neighborhood Meeting by City.** August 2019, application submitted to Planning Dept for Neighborhood Meeting; date pending.
- **Public Meetings.** The proposed project will be presented to the Design Review Board with Concept Design Review, followed by Preliminary and Final Design Review. These meetings will be noticed and include opportunities for public input.

