

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
November 19, 2020

PROJECT TITLE

College Creek Apartments

APPLICANT

USA Properties Fund, Inc. by USA
Multifamily Development

ADDRESS/LOCATION

2150 W. College Avenue

PROPERTY OWNER

Sonoma County Community Development
Commission

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS

010-320-029

FILE NUMBER

DR19-011

PROJECT SITE ZONING

R-3-30

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Medium-High Density Residential

APPLICATION DATE

February 24, 2020

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE

July 9, 2020

PROJECT PLANNER

Adam Ross

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend Approval

Agenda Item # 8.1
For Design Review Board Meeting of November 19, 2020

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

TO: CHAIR KINCAID AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
FROM: ADAM ROSS, INTERIM SENIOR PLANNER
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: COLLEGE CREEK APARTMENTS

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Economic Development Department recommends that the Design Review Board, by resolution approve Major Design Review for the College Creek Apartments, a 164-unit affordable multifamily housing project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant requests Major Design Review approval of a proposed 164-unit affordable multifamily housing project on 5.79 acres. Planning and Economic Development Staff recommends approval based on the proposed project's consistency with the General Plan and applicable Zoning Code regulations, while incorporating Superior Design, and is consistent with applicable Design Guidelines.

1. Project Description

The project consists of the development of 164-unit multifamily housing project available to seniors, veterans,

Unit Type	Unit Square Feet	Number of Units
1 bed/1 bath	622	64
2 bed/2 bath (avg)	906	58
3 bed/2 bath (avg)	1,162	42
Total		164

lower-wage working families, and individuals with incomes ranging from 30% to 120% area median income, on an approximately 5.79-acre parcel located at 2150 W. College Avenue in the City of Santa Rosa. The College Creek Apartments (Project) includes one-, two-, and three-bedroom units ranging in size from 622 to 1,240 square feet.

The units are comprised within three walk-up buildings with one four-story elevator served building. The Project includes a community center, pool, and tot lot as well as connect a portion of the existing College Creek trail to College Avenue.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

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

The project site is in the City's northwest quadrant north of the City's utility facilities. Existing residential neighborhoods are located north across W. College Avenue. The site is also located approximately 400 feet east of the Westside Transfer Center.

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The site is currently developed with three office buildings, a garage building, access driveways, and associated parking areas. The site totals 7.46 gross acres 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 an existing pedestrian creek trail, for a total of 5.79 developable acres.

4. Project History

September 18, 2019	Neighborhood Meeting was held
September 19, 2019	Concept Design Review meeting held with the Design Review Board
February 24, 2020	Project was submitted to the Planning and Economic Development Department
July 16, 2020	Application deemed complete

PRIOR BOARD REVIEW

On September 19, 2019, the Project was reviewed as a Concept Item by the Design Review Board (DRB). The DRB provided the following comments, considerations, and recommendations:

- Consider pool location to be oriented to reduce shadows on the pool area.
- Explore plantings and benches at pool area.
- Explore options to lower parapet height.
- At next submittal, show visual effect from different vantage points.
- Explore building massing and orientation to create open space, green space, and place-making.

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- Explore color variety and boldness
- Explore more board and batten siding.
- Consider parking reduction for open space and orchard parking where feasible.
- Consider car-charging stations.
- Consult Design Guideline 3.2.F.1 regarding common open space and grass percentage.
- Consider a dog park and garden.
- Try for multiple purposes for each outdoor amenity,
- Consider common space in lieu of a pool.
- Give accessory structures the same character as the main buildings.
- The trash enclosures may require roofs.
- Provide pedestrian access to trash enclosures.
- Add more bicycle parking at western edge.
- Provide access to creek trail and tie the project into the creek.
- Maximize bioretention to filter water draining to the creek.
- Maximize connection to open space.

The applicant's response to the DRB comments, considerations, and recommendations can be found in Attachment 3.

ANALYSIS

Pursuant to § [20-52.030](#) (Table 5-2), Major Design Review is required for any project with 10,000-square-feet or more in total floor area.

1. General Plan

The site is designated Medium-High Density Residential (18 to 30 units per acre) on the General Plan Land Use Diagram. The proposed density is 29 units per acre. The surrounding area consists of Public Institutional land uses as well as Low-Density Residential. The proposed use is adjacent to an existing public transportation transfer hub. The following General Plan goals and policies are most relevant to the proposed project:

Land Use

LUL-A Foster a compact rather than a scattered development pattern in order to reduce travel, energy, land, and materials consumption while promoting greenhouse gas emission reductions citywide.



- LUL-A-1 As part of plan implementation – including development review, capital improvements programming, and preparation of detailed area plans – foster close land use/transportation relationships to promote use of alternative transportation modes and discourage travel by automobile.
- LUL-E Promote livable neighborhoods by requiring compliance with green building programs to ensure that new construction meets high standards of energy efficiency and sustainable material use. Ensure that everyday shopping, park and recreation facilities and schools are within easy walking distance of most residents.
- LUL-E-2 As a part of planning and development review activities, ensure that projects, subdivisions, and neighborhoods are designed to foster livability.
- LUL-F Maintain a diversity of neighborhoods and varied housing stock to satisfy a wide range of needs.
- LUL-F-2 Require development at the mid-point or higher of the density range in the Medium and Medium High-Density Residential categories. Allow exceptions where topography, parcel configuration, heritage trees, historic preservation or utility constraints make the mid-point impossible to achieve.
- LUL-F-3 Maintain a balance of various housing types in each neighborhood and ensure that new development does not result in undue concentration of a single housing type in any one neighborhood.
- LUL-S Develop an attractive, safe, and extensive network for pedestrian and bicyclist movements.
- LUL-S-3 Link pedestrian and bicycle paths to community destinations (parks, etc.), the surrounding rural countryside trail system, and the downtown area.

Urban Design

- UD-G Design residential neighborhoods to be safe, human-scaled, and livable by addressing compact development, multi-modal connectivity and reducing energy use.
- UD-G-8 Promote personal safety in project design, particularly in multifamily development, by locating windows and walkways to assure visual access to common areas. Locate children's play space within view of the nearest units and discourage designs with unutilized open space.
- H-A Meet the housing needs of all Santa Rosa residents.

- H-A-5 Improve community acceptance of higher-density housing through community-based outreach, recognition of existing livable neighborhoods, and assurance of well-designed, high-density projects.
- H-C Expand the supply of housing available to lower-income households.
- H-C-13 Encourage the development of units with three or more bedrooms in affordable housing projects.
- H-C-15 Encourage new affordable housing development to provide amenities for residents, such as on-site recreational facilities, children's programs (day care or after-school care), and community meeting spaces.
- H-G-1 Maximize energy efficiency in residential areas. Utilize the following techniques: Implement CALGreen Tier 1 standards.

Staff Response:

The project furthers a number of goals and policies of the General Plan outlined above. The project incorporates the City of Santa Rosa's CALGreen requirements, and CalGreen Tier 1 Standards for 2020, while placing the site adjacent to public transportation, neighborhood serving commercial uses, community recreation facilities, while incorporating solar photovoltaic panels on the roofs, and its own private recreational facilities. The multifamily element brings a missing housing type to the predominately single-family area and incorporates a higher overall percentage of three-bedroom units into the Project. The project also creates an entrance to the existing College Creek trail from College Avenue promoting a safe pedestrian and cyclist friendly connection to the Citywide Creek Master Plan.

2. Other Applicable Plans – Citywide Creek Master Plan (CCMP)

The project is located along a portion of College Creek Reach I on Santa Rosa Creek Map 3. The College Creek Reach I is a modified-natural creek approximately 5,735 linear feet. There is an existing gravel trail along the northwest side of the trail with a connection to the existing parking lot. The CCMP describes a proposed paved trail alongside the north/right bank extending south from West College Avenue would replace the existing sidewalk and driveway on-street connection. The project is conditioned to provide a connection in compliance with the Sonoma County Water District Standards with consultation from the City of Santa Rosa. With this, the project complies with the CCMP.

3. Zoning

The project site is zoned R-3-30 (Multi-Family Residential), which allows multi-family by right. The project is in compliance with all aspects of the Zoning Code and no exceptions are required for the development.

Lot Size

All R-3-30 zoning districts allow up to 65% of lot coverage. This project proposes 22.5% total lot coverage.

Building Height

The maximum building height proposed is 36 feet, which is below the 45-foot maximum height allowed for R-3-30 zoning districts.

Setbacks

The project exceeds all setbacks outlined in the [Table 2-5](#) of Zoning Code Section 20-22.050.



Parking and Traffic

[Table 3-4](#) of the City's Zoning Ordinance sets forth the parking requirements for - multi-family affordable housing projects. The parking table requires one space for each studio/1-bedroom unit and two parking spaces for every unit with two or more bedrooms. Based on the unit count, the site is required to provide 264 parking spaces. The total amount provided is 272 parking spaces. With this, the project is compliant with the Zoning Code.

The project is expected to generate 60 a.m. peak hour trips and 74 p.m. peak hour trips. Therefore, a Traffic Impact Study (Study) by W-Trans, dated August 6, 2020, was conducted as part of the Project. The Study analyzed five intersections surrounding the site and found that all will continue to operate at a Level of Service (LOS) of D or better during both a.m. and p.m. peak hours. Adding a traffic signal to the W. College Avenue and Navarro Street intersection is not warranted and not recommended. An enhanced rectangular rapid beacon crosswalk at the intersection of Navarro St. and W. College Avenue is warranted. Collision rates at all intersections except Guerneville Rd/Marlow Rd. were below the statewide average for similar intersections. Site distance along W. College Avenue is adequate for both driveways access points. A left-turn lane is warranted on W. College Avenue at the western access driveway on the project site.

Reconfiguration of the existing roadway to provide a center-turn lane is proposed to meet the need of the left-turn lane. The site also complies with Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by highlighting a 15% reduction to the Countywide VMT figures. Refer to Attachment 6 for further information.

4. Design Guidelines

Some of the goals and implementation measures set forth in the City's Design Guidelines, that are applicable to this project, are shown below:

Neighborhood Design

- 1.1. I.A To promote the development of new "neighborhoods" that incorporate a variety of uses as opposed to subdivisions that feature single-family homes exclusively.
- 1.1.I.C To promote neighborhoods that feature a variety of housing types (both single-family and multiple-family) as well as a variety of price ranges.
- 1.1.I.E To encourage neighborhood design that supports pedestrians, bicyclists and use of public transit as well as automobile use.

Streetscapes

- 1.3.I.E/F To develop a comprehensive pedestrian/bicycle circulation system.

Multi-family Residential

- 3.2.I.A Develop multi-family housing that is compatible with existing surrounding homes and other structures and provides "superior design."
- 3.2.I.D Encourage multiple-family projects which are safe, contribute to safer neighborhoods, and support Police and Fire Department efforts to promote public safety.
- 3.2.I.E To provide developments with logical layouts that people can navigate through without confusion.
- 3.2.II.B.3 Integrate multiple-family projects with pedestrian and bicycle circulation systems that extends to neighborhood centers, along creek corridors and to adjacent neighborhoods and shopping districts.
- 3.2.II.L.7 All site features including trash enclosures, fencing, light fixtures, mailboxes, laundry and facilities utility screens, should be architecturally compatible with the main structures.
- 3.2.III.A.1 Break up the mass of larger structures with articulation of the form, use

of color and the use of multiple materials, including: horizontal wood, cement fiber and composite siding, vertical wood siding, stucco, wood shingles, real and cultured masonry.

3.2.III.A.4 Avoid dressing up fronts of building with higher quality materials and switching to less expensive siding material on the sides and back. Design all four sides of buildings.

3.2.III.B.1 Orient the main entrance of each unit, or the building to the street or to a common open area.

3.2.III.C.2 Avoid buildings with a massive appearance. Divide buildings into segments that break down the scale.

3.2.III.E.2 Locate garages or carports to minimize their impact from the public street. The main buildings should be the dominant visual statement along the public streetscape.

Landscaping

4.1 I E To develop landscaping that is easily maintained and conserves water.

4.1 II 1 Integrate landscaping into all site development.

4.1 II 2 Provide special attention to incorporation of trees in all landscape design.

4.1 II 3 Provide landscaping that exhibits a strong design concept and creates a harmonious composition.

4.1 II 5 Landscaping incorporated in a development should reflect or improve on the landscaping already present in the neighborhood.

4.1 II 6 Select landscape materials and plants that are appropriate in scale and function to the locations in which they are placed.

4.1 II 10 Select planting materials that are appropriate for local climatic conditions and historic continuity.

4.1 II 12 Maintainability is an important consideration in landscape design. To this end care should be taken to ensure that plants are selected which, at maturity, do not outgrow their planting site. Other factors to be considered include exposure, microclimate, soil condition and type, irrigation to be used, and the impact of plantings on pedestrian traffic.

4.1 II 13 Automatically controlled irrigation systems with multiple programs and repeat start times, are required.

Off-Street Parking

- 4.2 II A 1 Design parking areas to facilitate the movement of vehicles in and out, to avoid difficult turning maneuvers, and to reduce the possibility of accidents to vehicles and pedestrians.
- 4.2 II A 2 Do not locate parking stalls adjacent to vehicular entrances and exits where vehicles entering and exiting the parking space will be in conflicts with vehicles entering and exiting the parking lot. Provide a minimum of 15 feet behind the sidewalk to the first parking space.
- 4.2 II B 1 Landscape parking lots with shade trees to provide a canopy over the parked cars and reduce solar heat gain in the summer. The City's preference is for "orchard" style planting, typically a minimum of one tree should be planted for every five parking spaces.
- 4.2 II B 3 Screen parked cars from public street frontage. Screening may be of landscaping, a planted earth berm, planted fencing, or some combination of the above. The screening should be to a height of not less than 4 feet above the adjacent sidewalk (or curb if there is no sidewalk) to obscure the greater portion of each parked vehicle.

Staff Response: The project furthers a number of the City's goals referenced above. The project integrates into the existing neighborhood and natural site features. Two three-story buildings face the street and hide most of the parking behind the site while other parking is screened by landscaping. The four-story building is set back behind the two three-story buildings facing College Avenue to lessen the visual impact from the street. The colors applied to the buildings are taken from the existing tree canopy surrounding the site. Architectural elements include stepped frontages provide depth and dimension on all buildings while horizontal and vertical siding using stucco and wood like siding adds visual elements to the design palette. Trim level around windows are applied throughout the site and mechanical equipment is screened via roof parapets. The site also incorporates an existing bike path and will provide a connection directly to College Avenue that provides greater connectivity for the existing neighborhood and the new residents of the Project site.

The outdoor amenities for the site offer a sense of place with communal areas for outdoor activities for family and friends of all ages and abilities. Outdoor benches are provided with shade structures for year-round utilization, a tot lot is provided for younger children, a pool and community center with lounge areas, game tables, and Wi-Fi work stations are located on the first floor of the four-story building and in the semi-internal courtyard.

5. Neighborhood Comments

The project public hearing has been noticed in accordance with [Section 20-66.020](#), including Subsections (C)(1), (2), and (3) requiring mailed notice, newspaper publication, and site posting, respectively. No comments have been received by City Staff in response to required noticing at the time this Report was written.

During the Neighborhood Meeting, comments and concerns regarded traffic, parking, and affordability.

Staff Response: The project complies with all development standards found in the Zoning Code for R-3-30 zoning districts as well as the Medium-High Density Residential General Plan Land Use Designation. The August 6, 2020, W-Trans Traffic Impact Study (Attachment 10A) analyzed the project and found that no signalization is warranted, an enhanced rapid beacon crosswalk at Navarro St. and W. College Ave. is warranted, along with restriping of College Avenue from west of Putney Drive to Stony Point Road. Refer to the Traffic and Parking section of this Report above along with Attachment 10A for further details.

6. Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

The project site is accessed by two driveways on West College Avenue. The existing sidewalk, curb, and gutter is to remain in place. Street trees are required as part of this project. Restriping on West College Avenue will accommodate five-foot wide east and west bound bike lanes, and 12-foot wide east and west bound travel lanes, and a 10-foot wide two-way left turn lane. Access to the gravel creek trail will be relocated from the existing parking to direct access off of West College Avenue.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Project has been found in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. (CEQA).

CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 states that “projects which are consistent with the development density established by zoning, community plan, or general plan policies for which an EIR was certified shall not require additional environmental review, except as might be necessary to examine whether there are project-specific significant effects which are peculiar to the project or its site.” The proposed project has been found to be consistent with the Santa Rosa General Plan and complies with all Zoning Code requirements. Review of the project has revealed no significant environmental impacts which are peculiar to the parcel or to the project and which were not addressed in the

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General Plan EIR, nor is there any new information that shows that any environmental impacts will be more significant than as described in that EIR.

NOTIFICATION

The project was noticed as a public hearing per the requirements of Chapter 20-66 of the City Code. Notification of this public hearing was provided by posting an on-site sign, publishing notice in a newspaper of general circulation, mailed notice to surrounding property owners, electronic notice to parties that had expressed interest in projects taking place in this geographic area of Santa Rosa, and bulletin board postings at City Hall and on the City website. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65091, where necessary, the City has incorporated notice procedures to the blind, aged, and disabled communities. These procedures include audio amplifier/assistive listening device support at public meetings, closed captioning, and optical character recognition conversion of electronic notices.

ISSUES

There are no unresolved issues remaining with the project.

ATTACHMENTS

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|----------------|--|
| Attachment 1 | Disclosure Form |
| Attachment 2 | Neighborhood Context Map |
| Attachment 3 | Project Description and Superior Design Narrative |
| Attachment 4 | Existing Site Photos |
| Attachment 5 | Architectural Plans received October 27, 2020 |
| Attachment 6 | Civil Plans received October 27, 2020 |
| Attachment 7 | Landscape Plans received October 27, 2020 |
| Attachment 8 | College Creek Management Brochure |
| Attachment 9 | Arborist Report dated April 27, 2019 |
| Attachment 10 | CEQA 15183 Consistency Determination Checklist dated August 25, 2020 |
| Attachment 10A | Traffic Impact Study dated August 6, 2020 |
| Attachment 10B | Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas - Supporting Information received August 25, 2020 |
| Attachment 10C | Noise - Supporting Information received August 25, 2020 |
| Attachment 10D | Biological Resources - Supporting Information received August 25, 2020 |
| Attachment 10F | Geotechnical Engineering Investigation dated April 16, 2019 |

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Attachment 10G Hazard and Hazardous Materials – Supporting Information received
August 25, 2020

Attachment 10H Energy Resources – Supporting Information

Exhibit A Dated November 6, 2020

Resolution

CONTACT

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