

**Planning Commission
Staff Report**

January 22, 2014
Item 6.a.

- SUBJECT:** Work Session for P13-2078
- APPLICANT:** SummerHill Apartment Communities
- PROPERTY OWNER:** Las Positas Property, LLC
- PURPOSE:** Work Session to review and receive comments on a Preliminary Review application to demolish the existing office building and construct 177 apartment units and related site improvements on a 5.9 acre site
- GENERAL PLAN:** Mixed Use/Business Park
- ZONING:** Planned Unit Development – Mixed Use (PUD-MU)
- LOCATION:** 5850 West Las Positas Boulevard
- EXHIBITS:**
- A. [Planning Commission Work Session Discussion Points](#)
 - B. [Preliminary Development Plan Sets](#)
 - C. [Staff Report for September 11, 2013 Planning Commission Work Session \(without attachments\)](#)
 - D. [September 11, 2013 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes \(Excerpt\)](#)
 - E. [List of Concerns from Parkside Residents](#)
 - F. [Photosimulation of Buildings A and C from the Adjoining Property to the West](#)
 - G. [Location Map and Noticing Map](#)

I. BACKGROUND

In January 2012, the City Council approved rezoning of nine sites throughout the City for multifamily development in order to meet the City's share of the regional housing needs (Ordinance No. 2030). One of the approved locations is the CM Capital Properties site located at 5850 and 5758 West Las Positas Boulevard. The CM Capital Properties site consists of two parcels: a 5.9 acre parcel located at 5850 West Las Positas Boulevard and a 6.7 acre parcel located at 5758 West Las Positas Boulevard. These two parcels are not required to be developed together.

SummerHill Apartment Communities have submitted a Preliminary Review application for the development of a multifamily housing project on the 5.9 acre site located at 5850 West Las Positas Boulevard.

The purpose of the work session is to receive comments from the Commission and public regarding the project and discuss how the project would meet, or require exceptions from, the *Housing Site Development Standards and Design Guidelines* (hereafter referred to as *Design Guidelines*), adopted by City Council on August 21, 2012. The site is identified as Site #9 in the *Design Guidelines*, and has a density requirement of 30 units per acre, which results in 378 units on the entire 12.6-acre site. The proposed project is to construct 177 residential units on an approximately 5.9-acre portion of the site, meeting the density requirement of 30 dwelling units per acre. No action on the project will be taken at the work session. If an affordable housing agreement is part of the project, the agreement will be scheduled for a recommendation by the Housing Commission. The development of the project will require Planned Unit Development (PUD) Development Plan approval, which is subject to review and approval by the City Council, following review and recommendation by the Planning Commission.

September 11, 2013 Planning Commission Work Session

The Planning Commission held a work session on September 11, 2013 to review the proposed 177 unit apartment complex project. The Planning Commission provided the following comments on the work session discussion points (additional comments made by the Commission are in the attached minutes – Exhibit D):

- A. *Would the Planning Commission support the requested exceptions if the project were to move forward as proposed?*

The Commission would support the carport setback at the western property line if an agreement with the property owner to the west is reached. The majority of the Commission would support using an alley design instead of an interior street design for the second westerly access road for the project. Two commissioners indicated their support of the alley design if constraints on the development of the property can be demonstrated.

- B. *Are the on-site circulation, parking layout, feathering of densities, stepping back stories above the second story, and positioning of the buildings acceptable?*

The Commission found the proposed on-site circulation and parking layout to be acceptable. One commissioner commented to not let vehicles' headlights entering the site impact the existing residents located on the south side of the arroyo.

Two commissioners commented on the size of the proposed tot lot area and common open space area. They felt the size of the proposed tot lot area could be reduced as they did not believe it would be used as much as the common open space area, and recommended the square footage allocated to these two areas be reevaluated so that the common open space area would be adequately sized to support the development.

Some commissioners also suggested reevaluation of the pool location so that it would be more centrally located instead of being located near the southern property line. One commissioner commented that if the relocation of the pool is not feasible, screening of the pool as well as measures to mitigate noise from the pool to the Parkside residents need to be considered.

In respect to the proposed building height and feathering of density, the majority of the Commission felt that the buildings facing the arroyo should be two-story buildings. The Commission was not excited to see the proposed four-story building height, but understood that it may be needed in order to achieve the required density. Two commissioners requested that photosimulations of the buildings be provided from the existing Parkside neighborhood.

- C. *Should a pedestrian access be provided from West Las Positas Boulevard to the proposed Open Space area?*

The majority of the commissioners supported a pedestrian access. As the proposed common open space area within the development is for private use, some of the Commissioners did not want to create a de facto public open space. As the proposed development would also have a tot lot, some of the Commissioners did not support a public access through the development due to security concerns. The Commission stated that if pedestrian connectivity from the proposed development to West Las Positas is needed, it must be done in a way that does not make the private open space/tot lot area look like this is public open space/tot lot.

- D. *Are the proposed on-site recreation facilities and amenities acceptable?*

The Commission found that the proposed on-site recreation facilities and amenities are acceptable. One Commissioner wanted to make sure that the applicant reevaluates the square footage allocated to the common open space area, pool, and tot lot so that they are balanced; another Commissioner wanted the applicant to include details on what the recreation facility would include.

- E. *Are the residential building designs, colors and materials, and heights acceptable?*

The Commission, in general, found the proposed designs are acceptable. The Commission agreed with staff's recommendation that additional architectural elements, such as exposed rafter tails, window planter boxes, wrought-iron detailing, stucco finish, etc. be added. The Commission also commented that architectural details are needed around some of the garage areas and requested a color/material board.

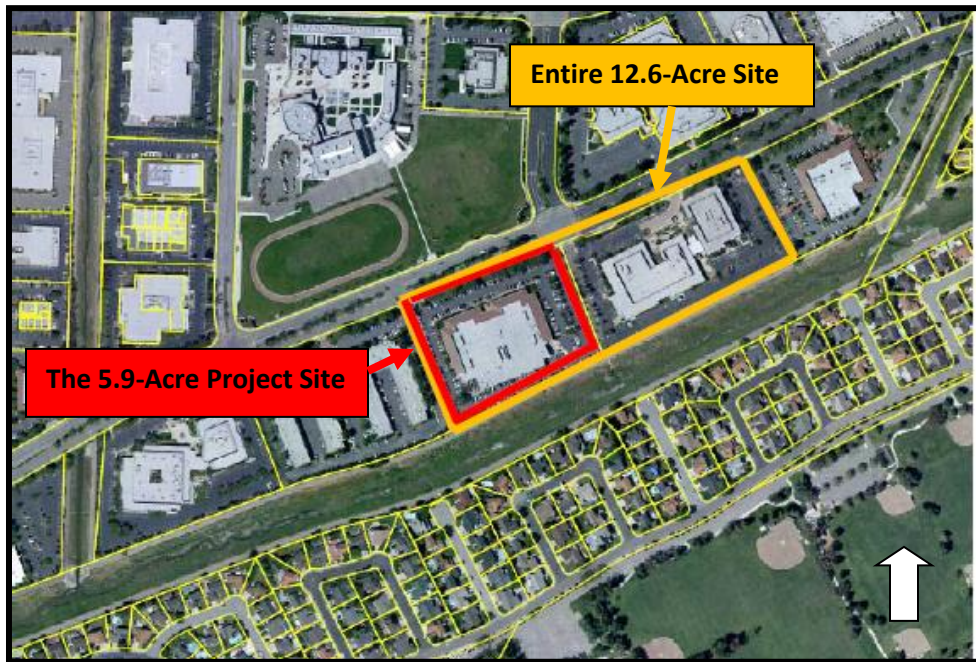
F. What additional information do you need the applicant to come back with?

The Planning Commission requested the following items be submitted and/or addressed in the formal application:

- A visual analysis and a color palette.
- More outreach with the residents to get their comments.
- Mature trees should be added to the visual analysis to show what it would look like fully developed. In addition, provide growth intervals of three years, five years and 10 years.
- If there have been any academic studies that looked at the correlation of an increase in affordable or high-density housing and an increase in crime rate.
- School district's projection report on number of students that may be enrolled in schools from the proposed development.

II. SITE DESCRIPTION AND SURROUNDING AREA

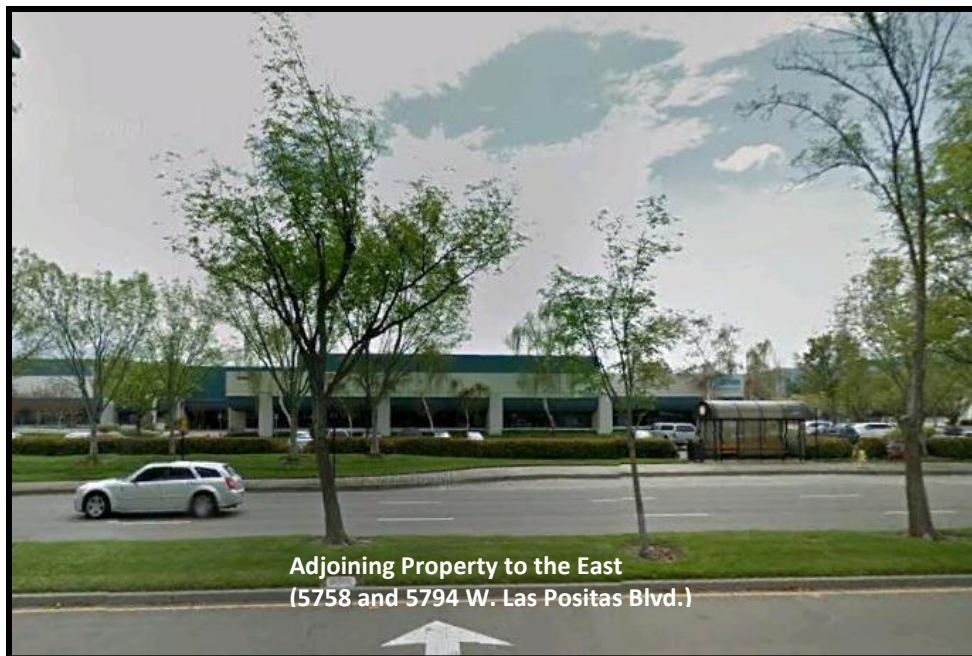
The subject site is located on the south side of West Las Positas Boulevard, across from Thomas Hart Middle School, within the Hacienda Business Park. The subject 5.9 acre site and the adjoining 6.7 acre site to the east are collectively referred as the 12.6 acre Site #9 of the Design Guidelines. Please see aerial map below.



Project Location Map

The project site fronts on West Las Positas Boulevard and backs up to Arroyo Mocho (south). The site was initially developed in 1984 for AT&T and later was clinical laboratories for SmithKline Beecham. The existing building is a one-story building, approximately 88,512 square feet in floor area. It is currently vacant.

The site is generally flat. A bus stop within a shelter served by Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA) is located in front of the building to the east, and also across West Las Positas Boulevard at the middle school.

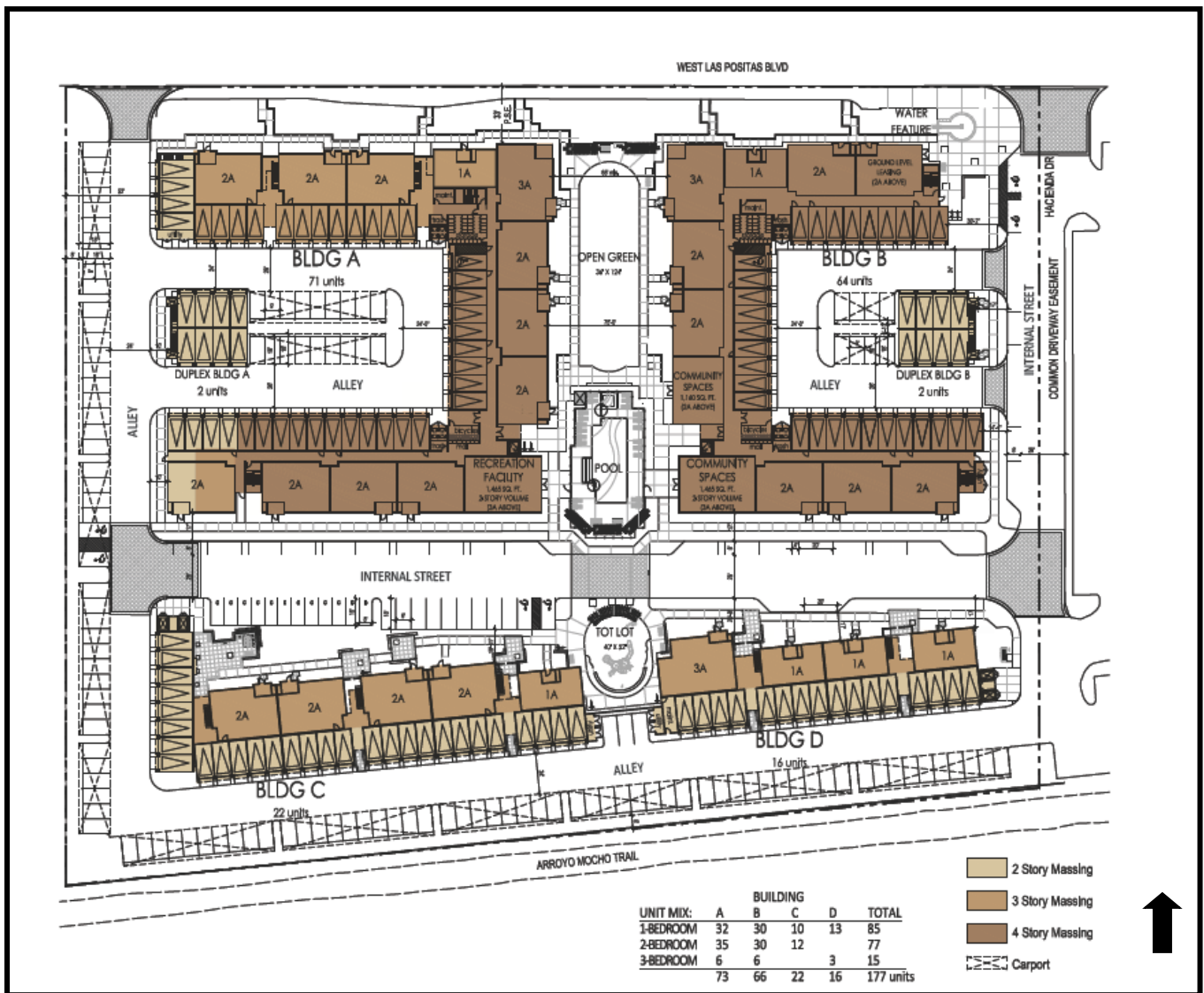


Adjacent properties include one-story office buildings to the east and west, Thomas Hart Middle School to the north, and Arroyo Mocho to the south. Further across the arroyo to the south are single-family homes.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project would include four residential buildings housing a total of 177 residential units. Buildings A and B would be U shaped buildings located in the northern portion of the site fronting West Las Positas Boulevard. Buildings C and D would be rectangular shaped buildings located in the southern portion of the site. A combination of one- to three-bedroom units is proposed.

The proposed development would utilize the two existing entrances/exits off of West Las Positas Boulevard. One entrance/exit is located near the western edge of the site and the other one is located near the eastern edge of the site. The project's main entrance would be from the eastern edge of the site at the existing signalized intersection at West Las Positas Boulevard and Hacienda Drive. Please see site layout below.



Revised Site Plan

The proposed elevations present a Spanish influenced architectural style. The materials that are proposed include stucco exterior finish, stone veneer, wood-like trim for the windows, tile roof, wrought iron patio and balcony railings, and awnings.



Conceptual Building Elevation on West Las Positas Boulevard

The proposed development would provide a total of 304 parking spaces in private garage spaces, covered parking spaces (carports), and surface parking spaces. An open space area, a tot lot, a pool/spa, and a recreation facility would be provided within the complex. Pedestrian paths within the complex are proposed between residential buildings, the open space area, and recreation uses. A six-foot tall sound wall is proposed along the southern property line.

No changes were made to the number of units. There were minor changes made to the size of the bedrooms and the mix of bedrooms per building. Please refer to the following table for comparison.

Bedroom Sizes

	Original Submittal	Revised Submittal
One bedroom	718 sq. ft. to 785 sq.ft.	702 sq.ft. – 881 sq.ft.
Two bedrooms	1,054 sq.ft. to 1,069 sq.ft.	No change
Three bedrooms	1,298 sq.ft.	1,298 sq.ft. – 1,309 sq.ft.

Bedroom Mix per Building

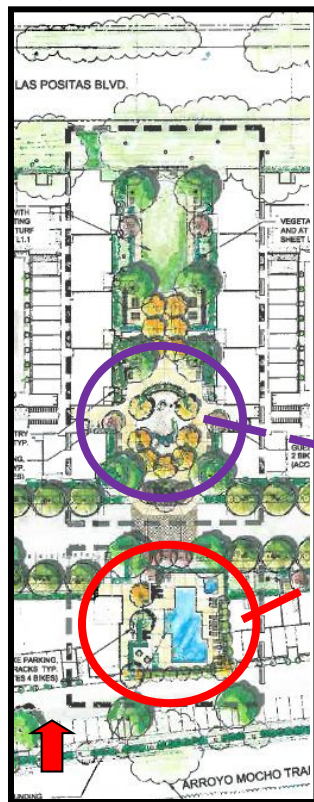
Original Submittal						Revised Submittal					
UNIT MIX:	BUILDING				TOTAL	UNIT MIX:	BUILDING				TOTAL
	A	B	C	D		A	B	C	D		
1-BEDROOM	30	28	10	20	88	1-BEDROOM	32	30	10	13	85
2-BEDROOM	35	31	6		72	2-BEDROOM	35	30	12		77
3-BEDROOM	8	8	1		17	3-BEDROOM	6	6		3	15
	73	67	17	20	177 units		73	66	22	16	177 units

IV. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE WORK SESSION

The applicant has revised the plans per comments received from the Planning Commission work session on September 11, 2013. Staff is seeking comments and direction from the Commission whether the applicant has responded satisfactorily. The additional information the Commission requested would be included in the formal application submittal.

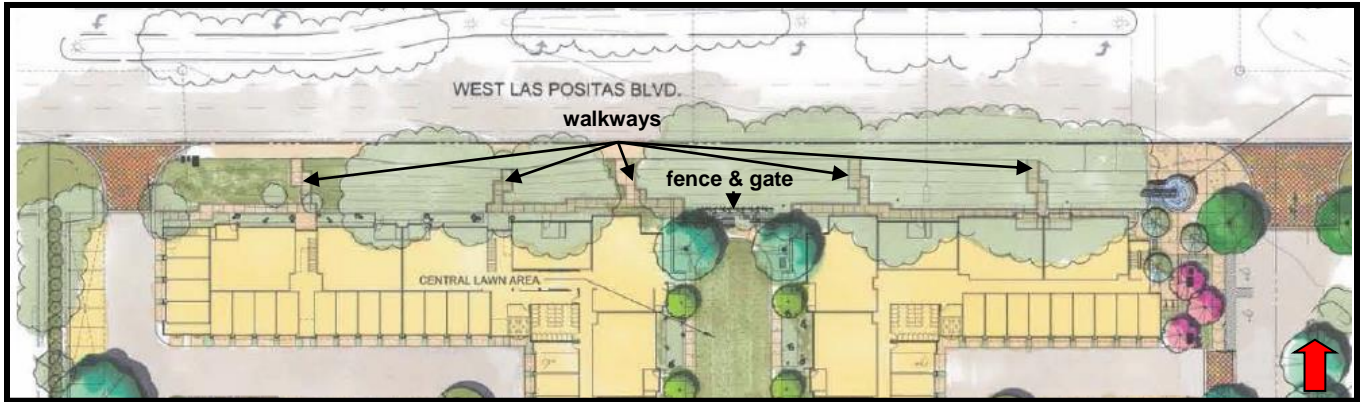
- 1. Site Layout.** In response to Commission’s comments regarding the pool location, size of the common open space area, and size of the tot lot, the applicant has revised the site layout to: 1) relocate the pool to the north between Buildings A and B; 2) relocate the tot lot to the south and reduce its size from 2,400 sq. ft. to 2,080 sq. ft.; and 3) increase the square footage of the common open space area from 2,528 sq. ft. to 4,464 sq. ft. In addition, walkways have been added to connect the sidewalk along W. Las Positas Boulevard to the proposed residential development. In consideration of security of the private open space area, a fence and a gate are proposed at the northern entrance of the open space. Please refer to the exhibits below and the following page for the revisions.

Original Plan



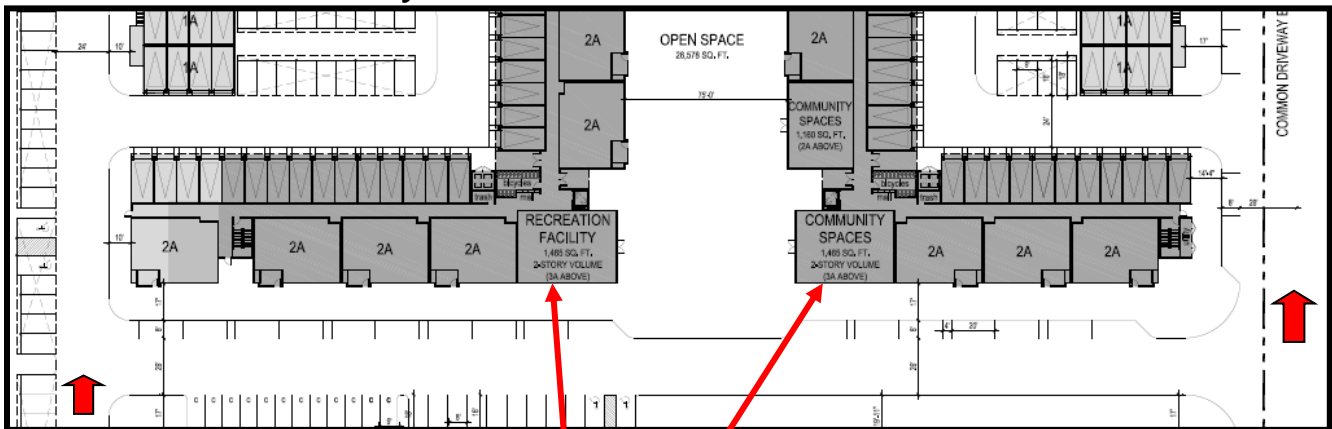
Revised Plan



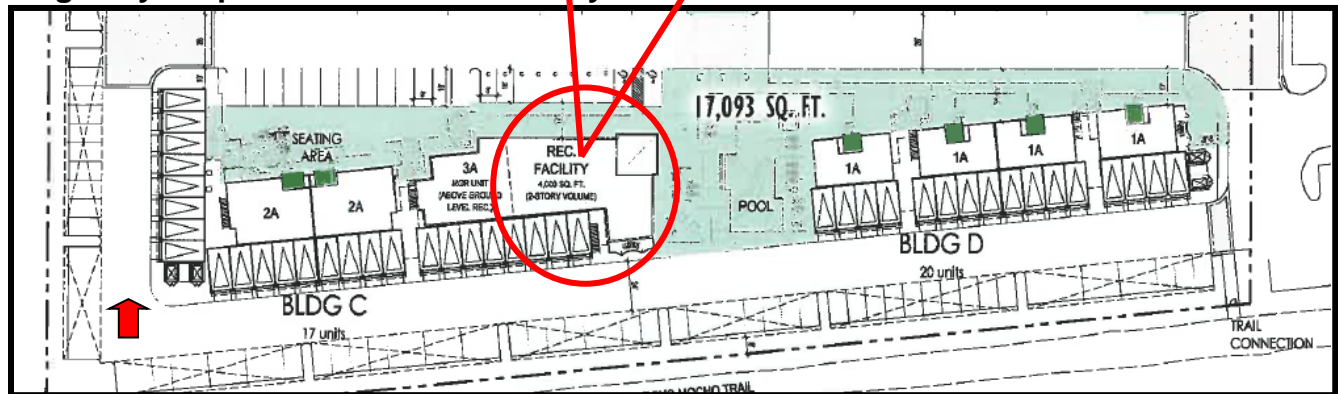


To accommodate to the pool and tot-lot location swap, the applicant has relocated the recreation facility. The recreation facility was originally proposed to be located in the eastern end of Building C. The applicant now proposes to locate the facility in both Buildings A and B. Building A would have the fitness facility and Building B would have a lounge area. Please see exhibits on the following page.

Revised Recreation Facility Locations

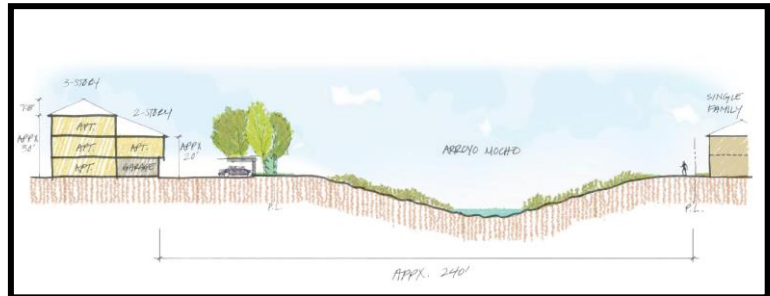
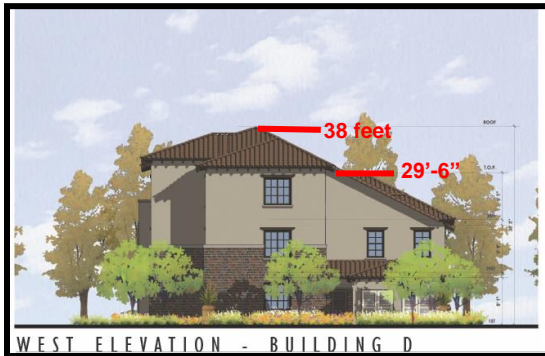


Originally Proposed Recreation Facility Location



Discussion Point No. 1: Is the new location of the pool and other amenities, and access from W. Las Positas acceptable?

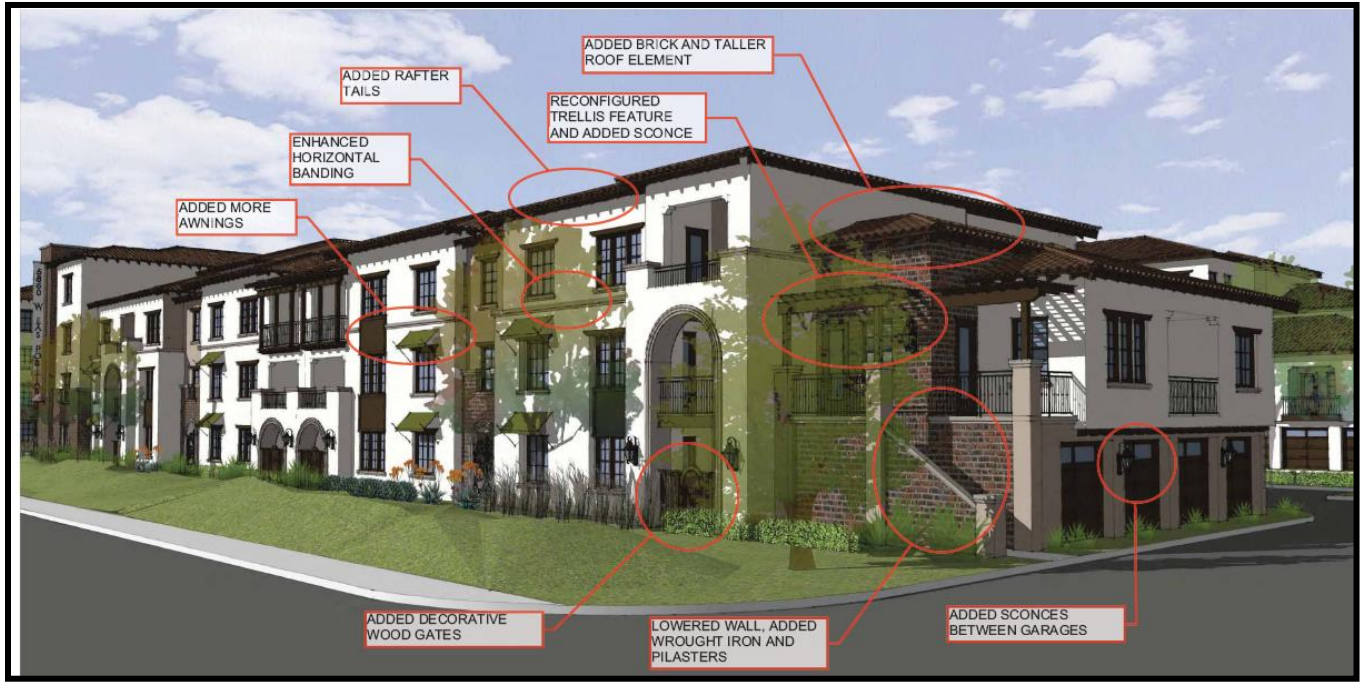
2. Building Height. Instead of two three-story buildings facing Arroyo Mocho, the applicant proposes two buildings which have a three-story component facing north and a two-story component facing south (the arroyo) to reduce the building mass and to reduce visual impacts to the existing residential community to the south. The two-story portion would measure approximately 29'-6" to the top of a sloping roof, and the height of the three-story portion would measure approximately 38 feet to the ridge of the roof. Please see the cross-section and the south elevations of Buildings C and D below. The cross-section also shows the distance to an existing two-story home on the south side of the arroyo.



Discussion Point No. 2: Is the revised proposal for massing at the rear of the site with two and three story building combinations acceptable?

3. Building Details. Additional architectural elements, such as rafter tails, awnings, horizontal bands, sconces, wrought iron railings, wooden gates, etc. were added to the buildings. In addition, a lowered wall and columns have been added to the otherwise plain wall on the northwest elevation of Building A near the garage. Please see the elevations on the following pages showing additional architectural elements/details to address the Commission’s comments.

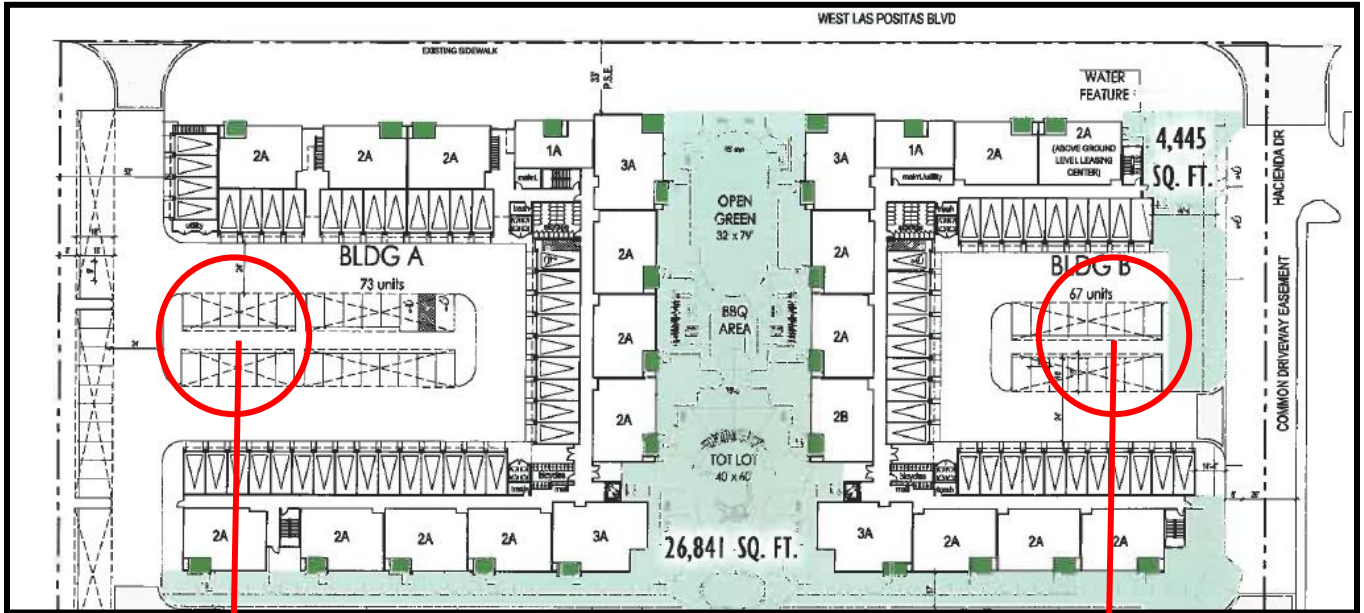




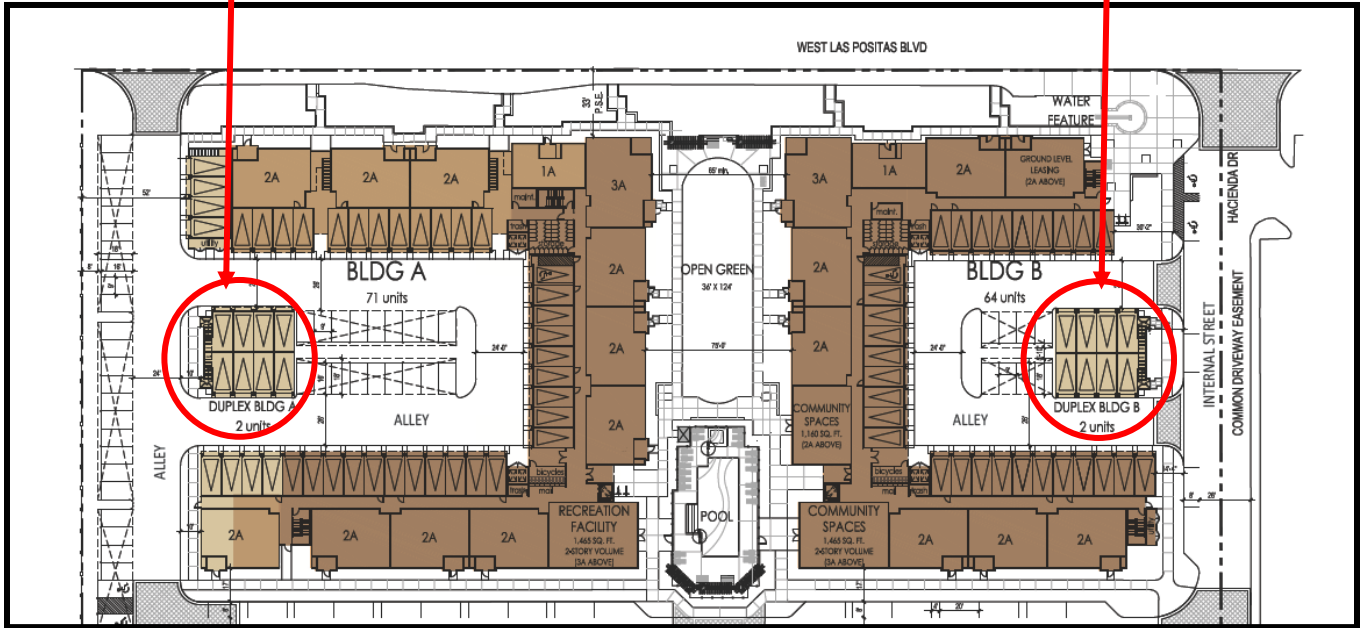
Discussion Point No. 3: Is the revised building design acceptable?

- 4. Redistribution of Dwelling Units.** As a result of lowering the building height of the buildings located in the southern portion of the site (Buildings C and D), the applicant has relocated four units (referred to as duplex units) in the middle of Buildings A and B, changing the middle carport area to a combination of carport and two-story building (one living floor above garage) to meet the required density.

Original Plan

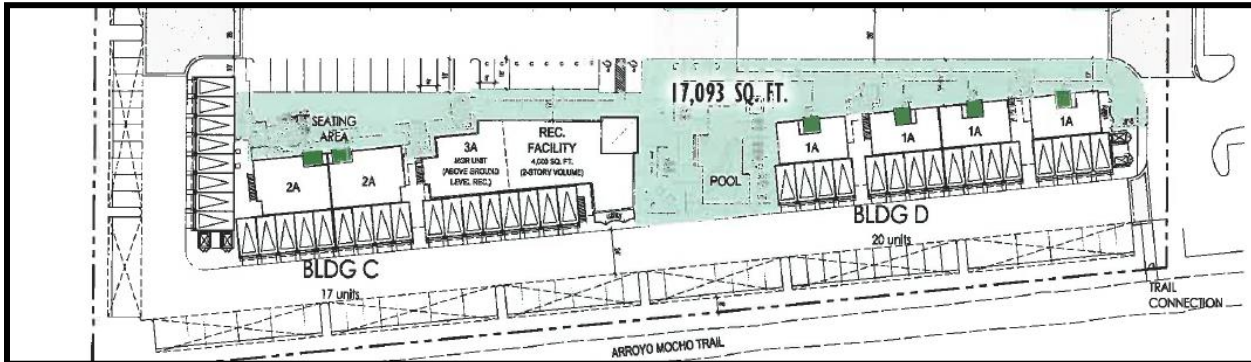


Revised Plan

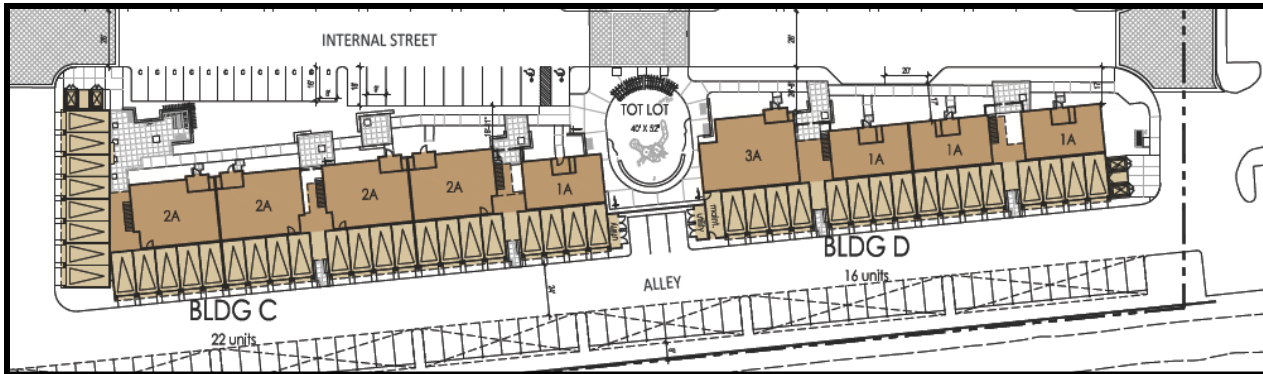


Additionally, the applicant has relocated five dwelling units to Building C and removed four units from Building D.

Original Plan



Revised Plan



Discussion No. 4: Is the revised dwelling-unit with living units over parking by Buildings A and B acceptable?

5. Housing Site Development Standards and Design Guidelines

With the above revisions, the applicant requests the following additional exception from the design guidelines. For the Commission's reference, the page and section number for each item in *italics* is also included.

The southeast portion of Building B where the utility closet and one garage are proposed is set back approximately 5'-8" from the back of the sidewalk, not meeting the required eight-foot setback. This reduction resulted from adding the required parallel parking to entry street.

Special Design Standards and Guidelines, page 20:

A4.2. Front setbacks shall be a minimum 8 feet from the back of sidewalk providing enough room for planting and privacy while still allowing a strong relationship between the units and street.

Discussion Point No. 5: Would the Planning Commission support the requested exception if the project were to move forward as proposed?

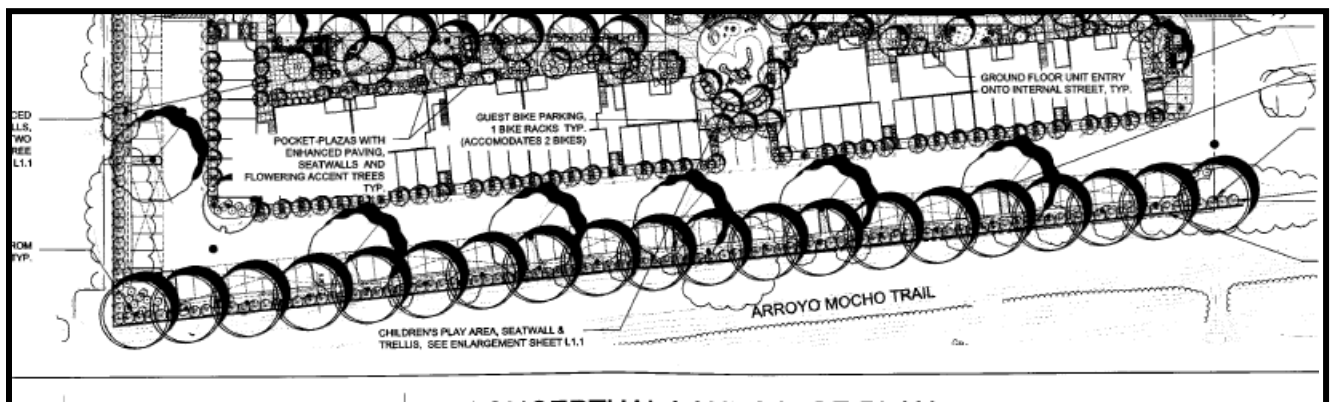
6. Revised Landscape Plan and Planting Growth Photosimulations

To screen the proposed development from the existing residential neighborhood located to the south, the applicant has revised the landscape plan at the southern property line. The existing trees (seven red ironbarks, 12 plums, and a cork oak) along the southern property line would remain. In a discussion with the project landscape architect, evergreen shrubs and Rhus lancea (African Sumac) trees would be planted to screen the future buildings. The evergreen shrubs would be trimmed to form a dense hedge. The applicant prepared photosimulations showing the planting along the southern property line at growth intervals of three, five, and ten years.

Original Plan

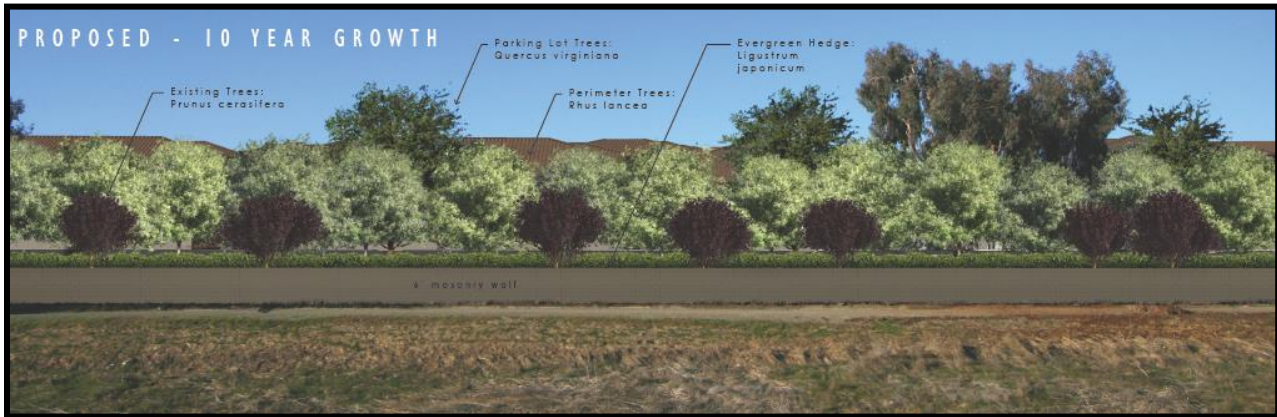
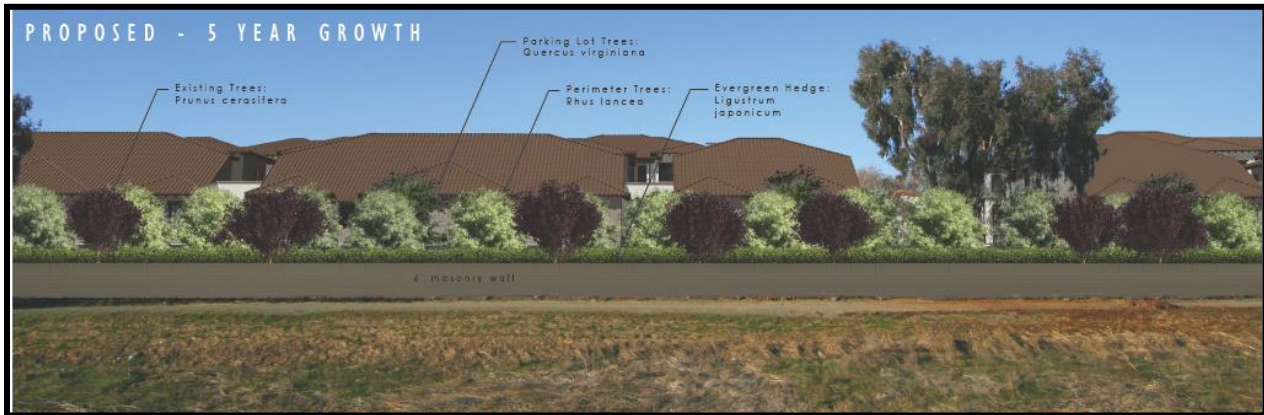
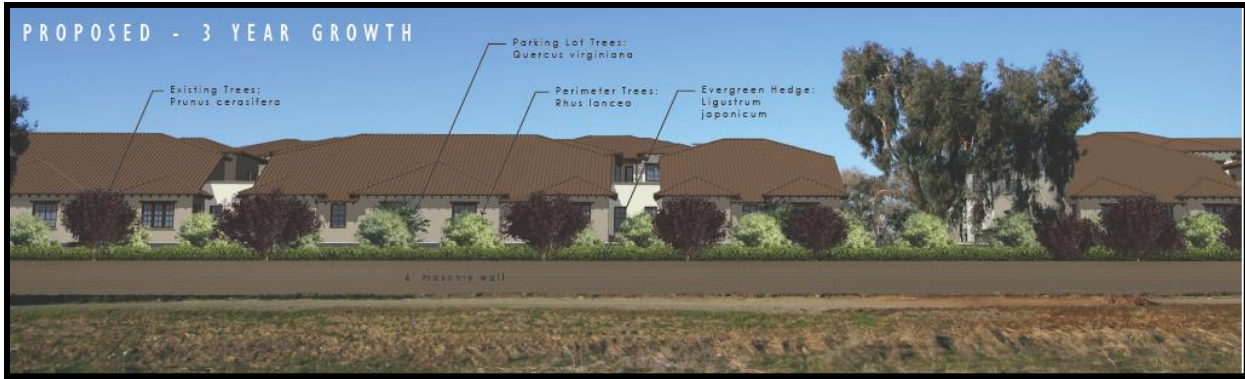


Revised Plan



Planting Growth Photosimulations





Discussion Point No. 6: Is the revised landscaping in the rear acceptable?

7. Revised Plans. The revised plan set titled “Third Pre-Submittal January 2014” includes the above referenced revisions. It also includes the following items that were not presented to the Planning Commission at the work session on September 11, 2013:

- Floor plans and elevations for Buildings C and D.
- Building sections.
- Roof plans.

V. NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH.

Neighborhood Meeting on October 20, 2013. Following the Planning Commission work session in September, the applicant held a second neighborhood meeting on the subject site. At the meeting, the applicant shared the following with the residents:

- the two and three story combination design concept for Buildings C and D;
- revised elevations of Buildings A and B with additional architectural elements; and,
- relocation of the recreation building, pool, and tot lot.

The residents appreciated the applicant's efforts in exploring design options to address their concerns; however, the following issues/concerns were made:

- building height/number of stories should be limited to two stories or less;
- impacts to schools
- impacts to traffic
- correlation between high density residential development and increase in crime
- wildlife protection

Neighborhood Meeting on November 20, 2013. Staff, led by the City Manager and the Director of Community Development, held a neighborhood meeting to discuss the proposed development, issues and mitigations. The City Manager and the Director of Community Development provided an overview of the City's Housing Element and the need to provide a variety of housing stock in the city; answered questions concerning low-income housing; explained the entitlement process; and advised the residents to form a group that would represent the Parkside neighborhood and continue conversation and discussion with staff concerning the proposed development. A list of neighborhood concerns prepared by the group is included as Exhibit E.

Residents' Group Meeting on January 14, 2014. At the meeting, staff reviewed the latest plan set with the group. The group was pleased to see the revisions showing the building height changes to Buildings C and D, relocation of the tot lot, pool, and open space area; and the additional planting along the southern property line. The group commented on the location of a trash enclosure proposed on the east side of the project. The group would like to see landscaping be planted between the proposed sound wall along the southern property line and the arroyo. In addition, the group recommended that no dogs be allowed within the complex. Staff has related the comments to the applicant. The applicant appreciated the feedback and will re-evaluate the site layout.

In addition to the outreach to residents, the applicant has forwarded the photosimulation of the carports and Buildings A and C when viewed from the west to the adjoining property owner for review and comment. Staff will report back to the Commission when comments from the adjoining property owner are received. A copy of the photosimulation is attached as Exhibit F.

VI. School District's Projected Student Yield

The Fall 2011/2012 Demographer's Report prepared by Davis Demographics & Planning, Inc., dated June 2012, for the Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD), included Student Yield Factors (SYFs) for a 10 year projection. The SYFs, when applied to planned residential development units, would determine the number of students from a particular development who may be enrolled into PUSD schools. Different SYFs are used for different grade levels. Please refer to the following table showing the number of students that would be expected for the proposed 177 residential units to be enrolled in PUSD schools in various grade levels.

Grade Level	SYFs for Apartment Units	No. of Expected Students
K-5	0.128 (x 177 units)	23
6-8	0.081(x 177 units)	14
9-12	0.110 (x 177 units)	19
K-12	0.319 (x 177 units)	56

A copy of the report is available through the following web link:

<http://206.110.20.201/downloads/businessservices/FY12StudentPopulationProjectionsDemRpt.pdf>

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Notice of the Planning Commission's public work session was sent to property owners and tenants within 1,000 feet of the subject property. A map showing the noticing area is attached to this report. At the writing of this report, staff has not received any comments from any of the adjacent property owners or tenants.

VIII. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take public testimony, discuss the items identified in the report, and any others it may identify, and provide direction to the applicant and staff.

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