



land planning ■ landscape architecture ■ urban design ■ entitlement

August 28, 2015

Modification Request

DIVISION 4.6 MEDIUM DENSITY MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT (M-M-N)

(D) Land Use Standards.

(1) Density. Residential developments in the Medium Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood District shall have an overall minimum average density of twelve (12) dwelling units per net acre of residential land except that residential developments (whether approved pursuant to overall development plans or project development plans) containing twenty (20) acres or less shall have an overall minimum average density of seven (7) dwelling units per net acre of residential land. The requirements of this paragraph shall not apply to mixed-use dwellings in multistory mixed-use buildings.

Reason for the Request

The Applicant proposes cottage-style/townhome student-oriented housing northeast of the intersection of Lincoln and Lemay Avenues. The Cottage-style and Townhome units will meet the City's criteria for extra occupancy rental units and will be leased to 4-5 unrelated people. The project will be marketed to students but may also include tenants who are not attending college. The housing project will provide needed rental units for the growing student population in Fort Collins within a managed setting with recreational opportunities on-site. The low-profile design of the project allows it to easily blend with nearby single family housing and is a good design fit for the neighborhood.

Lower density enables the project to be sensitive to neighborhood compatibility by providing smaller scale buildings and lower building heights that blend visually with the neighborhood. The proposed lower density also allows for open space and ensures adequate on-site parking. The project as proposed will allow for a mix of housing types in the neighborhood and will create a transition of residential density from the higher density Buffalo Run Apartments (16.78 dwelling units per acre) to a project with smaller buildings located closer to single-family neighborhoods (Andersonville/San Cristo/Alta Vista) northwest of the project site.

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Justifications

The Land Use Code states that the decision-maker may grant a modification of standards only if it finds that the granting of the modification would not be detrimental to the public good;

Granting of the request for modification of the density requirement would be beneficial to the public good in that it will provide a logical and orderly pattern of development and allow for an appropriate transition between the existing single family neighborhoods to the north and the higher density multi-family development immediately to the south (see City Plan Policy LIV 29.5). In addition, the public is benefitted by the distribution of student housing throughout the community, instead of such uses being concentrated in neighborhoods directly adjacent to CSU (See West Central Neighborhoods Plan Implementation Actions).

. . .the decision-maker must also find that the Modification meets one of the following four criteria described in the LUC.

(1) the plan as submitted will promote the general purpose of the standard for which the modification is requested equally well or better than would a plan which complies with the standard for which a modification is requested;

We believe the proposed project at eight (8.7) dwelling units per acre will promote the general purpose of the density requirement for the M-M-N District equally well or better than a plan with the twelve (12) dwelling unit per acre, by fulfilling the purposes of the M-M-N district as set forth both in City Plan and in the following statements of the Land Use Code:

*(A) **Purpose.** The Medium Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood District is intended to be a setting for concentrated housing within easy walking distance of transit and a commercial district. Secondly, a neighborhood may also contain other moderate-intensity complementary and supporting land uses that serve the neighborhood. These neighborhoods will form a transition and a link between surrounding neighborhoods and the commercial core with a unifying pattern of streets and blocks. Buildings, streets, bike and walking paths, open spaces and parks will be configured to create an inviting and convenient living environment.*

This District is intended to function together with surrounding low density neighborhoods (typically the L-M-N zone district) and a central commercial core (typically an N-C or C-C zone district). The intent is for the component zone districts to form an integral, town-like pattern of development, and not merely a series of individual development projects in separate zone districts.

The proposed project at 8.7 dwelling units per acre achieves the purpose of the M-M-N District by creating an area of concentrated housing within easy walking distance of transit and a commercial district (Mulberry and Lemay Crossings) that forms a transition and a link between surrounding neighborhoods and the commercial area to the south with a unifying pattern of streets and blocks. Buildings, streets, pedestrian paths, and open spaces are configured to

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create an inviting and convenient living environment which appears to be a low to medium density neighborhood and is compatible with the single-family neighborhoods to the northwest.

(4) the plan as submitted will not diverge from the standards of the Land Use Code that are authorized by this Division to be modified except in a nominal, inconsequential way when considered from the perspective of the entire development plan, and will continue to advance the purposes of the Land Use Code as contained in Section 1.2.2.

The density standard in the M-M-N District allows for lower density in relation to the size of the development parcel. Twelve (12) dwelling units per net acre is required for projects containing over twenty (20) acres. Projects containing (20) acres or less are only required to have an overall minimum average density of seven (7) dwelling units per net acre. Because the proposed project (23.13 net acres) is only slightly larger than the 20-acre threshold for higher density, and will provide a density in excess of the minimum (minimum 7 du/ac), we believe that the modification is nominal and inconsequential when considered from the perspective of the whole plan, particularly when the lower density allows the use of a cottage-style product that is closer to the scale of a single family home and further helps with the ability to be able to provide onsite recreation, open areas and landscaping that contribute to the project's similarity in appearance to that of a single family neighborhood.

Finally, the plan as submitted will continue to advance the purpose of the Land Use Code to improve and protect the public health, safety and welfare as contained in in the following subsections of Section 1.2.2:

(F) encouraging patterns of land use which decrease trip length of automobile travel and encourage trip consolidation.

(G) increasing public access to mass transit, sidewalks, trails, bicycle routes and other alternative modes of transportation.

(J) improving the design, quality and character of new development.

(K) fostering a more rational pattern of relationship among residential, business and industrial uses for the mutual benefit of all.

(L) encouraging the development of vacant properties within established areas.

(M) ensuring that development proposals are sensitive to the character of existing neighborhoods.

(O) encouraging a wide variety of housing opportunities at various densities that are well-served by public transportation for people of all ages and abilities