



City of Sonoma Planning Commission **AGENDA**

Regular Meeting of September 8, 2016 -- 6:30 PM
Community Meeting Room, 177 First Street West
Sonoma, CA 95476

Meeting Length: No new items will be heard by the Planning Commission after 10:30 PM, unless the Commission, by majority vote, specifically decides to continue reviewing items. If an item is not heard due to the length of the meeting, the Commission will attempt to schedule a special meeting for the following week. If a special meeting is necessary, potential dates will be established at the close of this meeting, and a date set as soon as possible thereafter.

CALL TO ORDER – Chair, Robert Felder

Commissioners: Michael Coleman
James Cribb
Mary Sek
Chip Roberson
Ron Wellander
Bill Willers
Robert McDonald (Alternate)

*Be Courteous - **TURN OFF** your cell phones and pagers while the meeting is in session.*

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC: Presentations by audience members on items not appearing on the agenda.

CORRESPONDENCE

ITEM #1 – CONSENT CALENDAR

REQUEST:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

These items will be acted upon in one motion unless removed from the Consent Calendar for discussion by Commissioners or any interested party.

Request for a one-year extension to the Planning approvals allowing an 11-unit apartment development (Rabbitt Apartments) (Applicant: Victor Conforti, Architect).

Grant one-year extension.

ITEM #2 – STUDY SESSION

Project Location:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

REQUEST:

Study session on a proposal to develop a 49-unit affordable rental housing project.

20269 Broadway

Provide direction to applicant.

General Plan Designation:

Mixed Use (MU)

Applicant/Property Owner:

Satellite Affordable Housing Associates/Sonoma County Community Development Commission

Zoning:

Planning Area: Broadway Corridor

Base: Mixed Use (MX)

Overlay: Historic (/H)

Staff: David Goodison

ITEM #3 – DISCUSSION

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

ISSUE:

Discussion of Junior Second Unit concept, including presentation by Lilypad Homes.

Receive and provide direction.

CEQA Status:

Not applicable

Staff: David Goodison

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>ITEM #4 – PUBLIC HEARING</p> <p>REQUEST: Consideration of a Use Permit to construct a detached garage with second floor guest suite.</p> <p>Applicant/Property Owner: Sutton Suzuki Architects</p> <p>Staff: Wendy Atkins</p> | <p>Project Location: 277 Fourth Street East</p> <p>General Plan Designation: Agriculture (A)</p> <p>Zoning: Planning Area: Northeast Area</p> <p>Base: Agriculture (A) Overlay: Historic (H)</p> | <p>RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve with conditions.</p> <p>CEQA Status: Categorically Exempt.</p> |
| <p>ITEM #5 – PUBLIC HEARING</p> <p>REQUEST: Consideration of an Exception to the combined side yard setback requirement for an addition to the residence.</p> <p>Applicant/Property Owner: Vince Dito</p> <p>Staff: Wendy Atkins</p> | <p>Project Location: 423 Rosalie Drive</p> <p>General Plan Designation: Low Density Residential (LR)</p> <p>Zoning: Planning Area: Northwest Area</p> <p>Base: Low Density Residential (R-L) Overlay: N.A.</p> | <p>RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve with conditions.</p> <p>CEQA Status: Categorically Exempt.</p> |
| <p>ITEM #6 – PUBLIC HEARING</p> <p>REQUEST: Consideration of a Use Permit to develop a nine-unit hotel on the properties.</p> <p>Applicant/Property Owner: Michael Marino</p> <p>Staff: David Goodison</p> | <p>Project Location: 158-172 West Napa Street</p> <p>General Plan Designation: Commercial (C)</p> <p>Zoning: Planning Area: Downtown District</p> <p>Base: Commercial (C) Overlay: Historic (H)</p> | <p>RECOMMENDED ACTION: Continue to the meeting of October 13, 2016.</p> <p>CEQA Status: Categorically Exempt.</p> |
| <p>ITEM #7 – STUDY SESSION</p> <p>REQUEST: Study Session on proposals to develop two hillside properties off Fourth Street East and Brazil Street (APNs 18-091-018 and 018-051-007) each with a single-family home and related accessory structures.</p> <p>Applicant/Property Owner: Nick Lee Architecture</p> <p>Staff: Rob Gjestland</p> | <p>Project Location: 149 Fourth Street East and 0 Brazil Street</p> <p>General Plan Designation: Hillside (H)</p> <p>Zoning: Planning Area: Northeast Area</p> <p>Base: Hillside Residential (R-HS) Overlay: Historic (H)</p> | <p>RECOMMENDED ACTION: Provide direction to applicant.</p> |

ISSUES UPDATE
COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSION
COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE
ADJOURNMENT

I do hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing agenda was posted on the City Hall bulletin board on September 2, 2016.

CRISTINA MORRIS, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Rights of Appeal: Any decision of the Planning Commission may be appealed to the City Council. Appeals must be filed with the City Clerk within fifteen (15) calendar days following the Planning Commission's decision, unless the fifteenth day falls on a weekend or a holiday, in which case the appeal period ends at the close of the next working day at City Hall. Appeals must be made in writing and must clearly state the reason for the appeal. Appeals will be set for hearing before the City Council on the earliest available agenda. A fee is charged for appeals.

Copies of all staff reports and documents subject to disclosure that relate to any item of business referred to on the agenda are available for public inspection the Monday before each regularly scheduled meeting at City Hall, located at No. 1 The Plaza, Sonoma CA, (707) 938-3681. Any documents subject to disclosure that are provided to all, or a majority of all, of the members of the Planning Commission regarding any item on this agenda after the agenda has been distributed will be made available for inspection at the Administrative Assistant office, No. 1 The Plaza, Sonoma CA during regular business hours.

If you challenge the action of the Planning Commission in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described on the agenda, or in written correspondence delivered to the Administrative Assistant, at or prior to the public hearing.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk (707) 933-2216. Notification 48-hours before the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

MEMO

To: Planning Commission
From: David Goodison, Planning Director
Re: Study session on an affordable apartment development proposed for 20269 Broadway.

Study Session Purpose and Limitations

Study sessions are encouraged in order to provide an opportunity for early feedback on a project concept by the Planning Commission and the public prior to or immediately after the filing of an application. Planning Commission feedback provided in a study session will normally focus on:

- Site planning.
- Compatibility with neighboring uses.
- Overall consistency with the General Plan policies and Development Code standards and guidelines.
- Scale and mass.
- Potentially significant environmental impacts.

While a study session provides an opportunity for the Planning Commission to identify potential issues of concern, Commissioners will refrain from making statements of absolute judgment. Commissioners will provide their comments individually. Straw votes or polls of the Commission will not be undertaken. Commissioner comments made in the course of a study session should not be construed as limiting any action that the Planning Commission may subsequently take with respect to a project in the course the entitlement process.

Site Description and Environs/Ownership History

The subject property, which has an area of 1.98 acres, is a flat, rectangular parcel located at the northwest corner of Broadway and Clay Street. Currently, development on the property is limited to two billboards at the southeast corner of the site. In addition, there are number of trees on the site, including several large oak trees. The property had been developed with a home, a detached garage, a former water tower, and several barns, but all of these structures were removed in 2008. The property is located within the city limits of Sonoma and it has a General Plan land use designation and zoning designation of Mixed Use. The Mixed Use zone allows a residential density of up to 20 units per acre, although that may be increased with a density bonus for affordable housing. A commercial component is not necessarily required in the Mixed Use zone, meaning that a 100% residential development may be allowed on the site, subject to findings being made by the Planning Commission. The property is also identified in the City's Housing Element as a "Housing Opportunity Site," meaning that it is considered to be a suitable candidate for development with affordable housing.

Adjoining uses and zoning designations are as follows:

North: An office building and associated parking (Chase Receivables)/Mixed Use
South: A hotel (the Lodge at Sonoma), across Clay Street/Gateway Commercial
East: A small shopping center and Traintown, across Broadway/Gateway Commercial, unincorporated territory

West: Single family residences (part of the St. Francis Place subdivision)/Medium Density Residential.

The Community Development Agency (the City of Sonoma's Redevelopment Agency) purchased the property from the Ranzanni family in 2007 with the intent of developing it with affordable housing. No immediate action was taken to do so, however, because the focus of the CDA at that time was the development of another affordable site, located off of Sonoma Highway (which was ultimately developed with the Sonoma Valley Oaks apartments). In 2012, ownership of the site was transferred from the City of Sonoma Community Development Agency (CDA) to the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (CDC), as parent agency of the Sonoma County Housing Authority and in its capacity as Successor Housing Agency, as a result of the termination of redevelopment agencies throughout California.

Selection of Project Development Partner

In September 2015, the CDC issued a request for proposals (RFP) seeking a non-profit development partner to assist it in developing affordable housing on the site. Because implementing an affordable housing development is a complex process requiring specialized expertise, housing agencies typically seek a partner when developing a site with affordable housing. The development partner, typically a non-profit, undertakes the following responsibilities: 1) conducting neighbor outreach, in conjunction with government partners; 2) project design, from initial site planning to final construction drawings; 3) obtaining financing for construction, including applying for tax credit financing; 4) managing the process of obtaining required permits and entitlements; 5) constructing the project; and 6) owning and managing the project post-construction in conformance with affordability requirements imposed by the City and/or the CDC, including programs for residents.

The RFP called for the development of rental housing affordable at extremely-low, very-low and low-income levels, in accordance with requirements in California Redevelopment Law (CRL). A rental development was identified as the objective in the RFP because there is a critical shortage of rental units in the City of Sonoma and Sonoma Valley, especially at lower income levels, and because CRL requires that property bought using redevelopment housing set-aside funds be used for that purpose. In addition, the RFP suggested that a component of units be made available for households that have become homeless or are at risk of homelessness. The RFP further specified that 30 percent of the units in the development be affordable at 30 percent of Area Median Income, as also required under the law governing Low and Moderate Income Housing Asset Funds (post-redevelopment housing assets) or assets such as this property. Seven responses to the RFP were received and to evaluate them the CDC established a review committee comprised of John Haig, Nina Bellucci, and Nick Stewart of the CDC, along with David Goodison, the City's Planning Director. Based on an initial screening for compliance with RFP objectives, four candidates were selected for in-depth assessment and interviews with the selection committee: Burbank Housing Development Corporation, MidPen Housing, Resources for Community Development, and Satellite Affordable Housing Associates (SAHA). Based on the interviews and a scoring of specified selection criteria, the committee identified SAHA as its consensus recommendation. A number of factors led to the selection of SAHA:

- Their design and community engagement programs were judged to be superior to their competitors.
- Their focus on homeless and disabled veterans not only addresses an important unmet need, it also allows them to apply for Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention program (VHHP) funds from the State, bolstering project finances and reducing their need for local subsidy.
- Their proposal had a slightly greater percentage of 30% AMI units than the other proponents, and slightly greater degree of average affordability.
- They have experience implementing green building features, including photovoltaics and grey water systems that conserve energy and water and reduce costs for residents.

- With regard to density and total building area, the SAHA proposal was at the mid-range of the proposals received and it was the selection committee’s view that the development concept was an appropriate fit for the site in comparison to the other proposals.

The recommendation of the selection committee was reviewed and confirmed by Kathleen Kane, then the Executive Director of the CDC, the CDC’s citizen advisory committee, and the Board of Supervisors, acting in their role as the Board of the Commission. CDC staff and SAHA are now preparing an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (ENA) in order to formalize the relationship.

Proposed Development Concept

The conceptual plan developed by SAHA—which has been revised from that provided in the RFP submittal in response to suggestions received through the community outreach process—groups 49 apartment units among eight two-story building clusters, along with a single-story community room/office. The placement of the buildings is intended to engage the two street frontages, provide a yard-to-yard relationship with the adjoining homes on the west, and create a central common open space area that retains two of the larger oak trees on the site. The one-bedroom units are placed on the west, adjoining the Bragg Street residences, as these units are more likely to be occupied by seniors. The 3-unit apartments, which are intended for larger families with children, adjoin the community room and the common open space area. This area would incorporate a play area for children, as well as raised garden beds available for resident use. Pedestrian paths would provide access throughout the site. The main parking lot would be placed along the northern edge of the site, with a smaller court, designed to meet Fire Department turn-around requirements, projecting off of it. The placement of the parking lot allows vehicle access to be limited to Broadway and minimizes potential noise conflicts with the adjoining residences on the west. A total of 70 off-street parking spaces are proposed. The proposed mix of units consists of 22 one-bedroom apartments, 14 two-bedroom apartments and 13 three-bedroom apartments. Sixteen of the units would be affordable to extremely-low income individuals and households at 30% AMI. A schedule of unit types, affordability levels, and rents is set forth in the table below.

| Proposed Schedule of Units and Rents | | | |
|---|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Unit Type | No. Units | AMI* Affordability | Net Rent** |
| 1 bedroom | 12 | 30% AMI | \$407 |
| 1 bedroom | 6 | 50% AMI | \$717 |
| 1 bedroom | 4 | 60% AMI | \$871 |
| Subtotal | 22 units | | |
| 2 bedroom | 2 | 30% AMI | \$482 |
| 2 bedroom | 2 | 40% AMI | \$667 |
| 2 bedroom | 5 | 50% AMI | \$853 |
| 2 bedroom | 4 | 60% AMI | \$1,038 |
| 2 bedroom | 1 | Manager’s Unit | |
| Subtotal | 14 units | | |
| 3 bedroom | 2 | 30% AMI | \$553 |
| 3 bedroom | 2 | 40% AMI | \$767 |
| 3 bedroom | 6 | 50% AMI | \$982 |
| 3 bedroom | 3 | 60% AMI | \$1,196 |
| Subtotal | 13 units | | |
| Total | 49 units | | |

*Area Median Income.

**Reflects subtraction of utility allowance.

Ten units are proposed to be reserved for veterans, of which five would be set aside for disabled veterans and five for homeless veterans, addressing a priority in the CDC's Low and Moderate Income Housing Asset Fund Policies. This unit allocation is dependent upon the receipt of special funding, however. The SAHA proposal also includes an extensive resident services element, provided through in-house staff and in partnership with local providers such as La Luz.

General Plan Policy Directions

As noted above, the site has a land use designation of "Mixed Use," a designation that encompasses a variety of purposes, including to provide additional opportunities for affordable housing, especially for low and very low income households. The designation allows a density up to 20 residential units per acre. Potentially applicable General Plan policies include the following:

Community Development Element

- Require pedestrian and bicycle access and amenities in all development. (CDE 4.4)
- Promote higher density, infill development, while ensuring that building mass, scale and form are compatible with neighborhood and town character. (CDE 5.5)
- Pursue design consistency, improved pedestrian and bicycle access, and right-of-way beautification along the Highway 12 corridor. (CDE 5.6)

Housing Element

- Facilitate the development of affordable housing through regulatory incentives and concessions, and available financial assistance. Proactively seek out new models and approaches in the provision of affordable housing, including junior second units and cottage housing. (HE 1.2)
- Encourage the sustainable use of land and promote affordability by encouraging development at the higher end of the density range within the Medium Density, High Density, Housing Opportunity, and Mixed Use land use designations. (HE 1.4)
- Support collaborative partnerships with non-profit organizations to provide greater access to affordable housing funds. (HE 1.7)
- Provide regulatory incentives and concessions to offset the costs of affordable housing development while protecting quality of life goals. (HE 4.1)
- Incentivize the development of affordable housing through growth management prioritization. (HE 4.2)
- Provide reduced parking standards for affordable and special needs housing. (HE 4.7)
- Preserve open space, watersheds, environmental habitats and agricultural lands, while accommodating new growth in compact forms in a manner that de-emphasizes the automobile. (HE 6.1)

In addition, Program 2 of the Housing Element specifically calls upon the City to work with the CDC to develop the Broadway site with affordable housing.

Environmental Resources Element

- Require new development to provide adequate private and, where appropriate, public open space. (ERE 1.4)
- Preserve existing trees and plant new trees. (ERE 2.6)
- Encourage construction, building maintenance, landscaping, and transportation practices that promote energy and water conservation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. (ERE 3.2)

Circulation Element

- Incorporate bicycle facilities and amenities in new development. (CE 2.5)

- Ensure that new development mitigates its traffic impacts. (CE 3.7)

Although the proposed use is consistent with the Mixed Use land use designation, there are General Plan policy issues that will need to be considered in the review of this development, especially those related to compatibility and traffic. Generally speaking, however, it is staff's view that the proposed development is consistent with and would work to fulfill a number of General Plan policies, especially as related to housing diversity and affordability.

Housing Opportunity Site Inventory

The subject property is listed as a Housing Opportunity site in the Housing Element's inventory of sites suitable for higher-density residential development. In essence, State Housing Element law requires that jurisdictions verify that they have adequate land capacity to meet projected housing needs as defined through the Regional Housing Needs Determination process. This is accomplished by compiling an inventory of available sites that are potentially suitable for higher density residential development. However, the inclusion of the subject property in this inventory does not represent a mandate that it be developed with affordable housing or with housing of any particular type or density.

Development Code Standards and State Density Bonus Law

Mixed Use Zone: The MX zone is intended to allow for higher density housing types, such as apartments and condominiums, in conjunction with commercial and office development, in order to increase housing opportunities, reduce dependence on the automobile, and provide a pedestrian presence in commercial areas. Multi-family dwellings, including apartment developments, are allowed in the MX zone, subject to review and approval of a Use Permit by the Planning Commission.

Density: The maximum density allowed in the Mixed Use, is 20 units per acre, except that the allowed density may be increased for affordable residential developments that qualify for a density bonus under State housing law. Based on the proposed levels of affordability, the project qualifies for a 35% density bonus, which equates to 27 units per acre, or approximately 53 total units on the site. The proposed project density amounts to 25 units per acre, which is within the allowance provided for under State law.

Floor Area Ratio and Coverage. The maximum FAR in the MX zone is 1.0. The project would result in a FAR of approximately 0.52. The maximum coverage in the MX zone is 60% of the total lot area. The proposed building coverage amounts to 27%.

Setbacks: The minimum front/street-side setback required in the Mixed Use zone is 15 feet. Along the Broadway frontage, the community building would be setback 15 feet and the apartment buildings would be set back 15-20 feet. Along the Clay Street, the apartment buildings would be set back 15 feet. The rear yard setback in the Mixed Use zone is 15 feet, except that for properties adjoining residentially-zone parcels, the corresponding residential setback applies. The subject property adjoins six residences within the St. Francis subdivision, which has a zoning designation of Medium Density Residential. The minimum rear yard setback in that zoning district is 20 feet, so that is the standard that applies. Of the three buildings within the Broadway project adjoining the St. Francis residences, two feature a 20-foot setback. However, one building falls short of the normal standard as it features a 15 - 17-foot setback. This building is designed with a one-story element on the west in order to improve its compatibility (see Sheet 8 of the architectural attachment).

Height: The maximum building height in the MX zone is 30 feet, except that within the Commercial, Gateway Commercial, and Mixed Use zoning districts, a maximum height of 36 feet may be allowed in order to accommodate third-floor multifamily residential development. Proposed building heights do not exceed 26 feet. On a related matter, while this remains subject to verification through the engineering

process, it appears that the project site may be developed with a finished grade that is 3-4 feet lower than the neighboring St. Francis Place development.

Parking: Based on the parking standards for multi-family set forth in the Development Code, the normal requirement for a 49-unit development would be 92 off-street parking spaces, including 49 covered spaces. As noted above the applicant is proposing to provide 70 spaces, with no covered parking. The rationale provided in the project narrative is as follows: one parking space is provided for every 1- and 2-bedroom unit and 2 spaces are provided for every 3-bedroom unit. It is also noted that there is on-street parking available along the site frontages, although under the Development Code this is not counted in terms of meeting off-street parking requirements. In addition, as noted by neighbors, there is already competition for this parking on the part of employees of the nearby Lodge at Sonoma as well as visitors and employees of Traintown, although this demand dissipates in the evening. As discussed below, as an affordable housing development, the project qualifies for concessions and incentives with respect to normal zoning standards, including parking requirements.

Bicycle Parking: Bicycle parking is required in all new commercial development subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission. According to the project narrative, bicycle parking will be provided at the open space courtyard and the community meeting room, although specific locations have not yet been specified.

Commercial Component: The Planning Commission and City Council recently amended the language of the Mixed Use zone to establish an expectation for a commercial component in new development for which a discretionary permit is required, unless waived by the Planning Commission. It should be noted that the reduction or waiver of a commercial component does not constitute a variance or an exception, as this allowance is built into the definition of the Mixed Use zone. Circumstances in which the residential component may be reduced or waived, include, but are not limited, to the following:

Interference with the objective of maximizing housing opportunities, especially affordable housing and other housing types that meet community needs as identified in the Housing Element.

No commercial component is proposed in this project for several reasons. Most notably, a commercial component would reduce the amount of land available for affordable housing and would limit eligibility for the tax credit financing necessary to fund the project. In staff's view, there is a substantial basis for waiving a commercial component.

Historic Overlay Zone: The site is located within the Historic Overlay Zone. At the time of site design and architectural review, this means that the following additional findings must be made in conjunction with design review approval:

- A. The project will not impair the historic character of its surroundings;
- B. The project substantially preserves the qualities of any significant historic structures or other significant historic features on the site.
- C. The project substantially complies with the applicable guidelines set forth in Chapter 19.42 SMC (Historic Preservation and Infill in the Historic Zone).
- D. The project substantially complies with any applicable preservation plan or other guidelines or requirements pertaining to a local historic district as designated through SMC 19.42.020.

Not all of these findings may be relevant to the project. For example, apart from the billboards, there are no structures on the site. However, findings A and C are applicable and the project will need to be carefully evaluated in that regard.

Incentives and Concessions. Under State law, an affordable housing development in which at least 15% of the units will be affordable at the very low income level qualifies for a minimum of three “development incentives or concessions”, defined as follows:

A reduction in site development standards or a modification of zoning code requirements or architectural design requirements that exceed the minimum building standards approved by the California Building Standards Commission as provided in Part 2.5 (commencing with Section 18901) of Division 13 of the Health and Safety Code, including, but not limited to, a reduction in setback and square footage requirements and in the ratio of vehicular parking spaces that would otherwise be required that results in identifiable, financially sufficient, and actual cost reductions.

Incentives requested for a qualifying project must be granted by the local jurisdiction, unless it makes a written finding, based upon substantial evidence, of any of the following:

- A. The concession or incentive is not required in order to provide for affordable housing costs, as defined in Section 50052.5 of the Health and Safety Code, or for rents for the targeted units to be set as specified in subdivision (c).
- B. The concession or incentive would have a specific adverse impact, as defined in paragraph (2) of subdivision (d) of Section 65589.5, upon public health and safety or the physical environment or on any real property that is listed in the California Register of Historical Resources and for which there is no feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the specific adverse impact without rendering the development unaffordable to low- and moderate-income households.
- C. The concession or incentive would be contrary to state or federal law.

Based on the current submittal, potential concessions that may be requested include a reduction in the amount of parking required, the waiver of covered parking, and a setback exception for the central building adjoining the Bragg Street residences.

Design Guidelines for the Broadway Corridor

In addition to quantified zoning requirements regarding setbacks, coverage, Floor Area Ratio limitations, and so forth, the Development Code sets forth design guidelines tailored to each Planning Area. Within the Broadway Corridor, key guidelines applicable to the proposed development are as follows:

- *Proposed dwellings should be placed on their sites so that the narrow dimension of the structure is parallel to the narrow dimension of the parcel, and so that the primary entrance to the building faces the public street.* The site is a square-shaped parcel with two street frontages, so it does not have a narrow dimension. The design calls for the units facing the street frontages to include openings and windows that engage and address the street.
- *Buildings should reinforce the scale, massing, proportions and detailing established by other significant historic buildings in the vicinity (if any).* There are no historic structures in proximity to the site. However, along the Broadway corridor in general, there are number of historic buildings of a variety of types that could be used in establishing an architectural direction for the project, if desired.
- *The massing of larger buildings should be broken down to an appropriate scale through the use of breaks in the facade.* Although the project architecture is at a preliminary stage, it clearly employs breaks in massing, porch elements, and other details intended to reduce building mass.
- *Architectural styles and details that reflect the Sonoma vernacular should be used. The use of durable, high quality materials is encouraged.* The architectural style for the project has not yet been defined.

- *Site design and architectural features that contribute to pedestrian comfort and interest, such as awnings, recessed entrances, and alleys, are encouraged.* The site plan includes a network of pedestrian pathways linked to common open space.
- *Building types, architectural details and signs having a generic or corporate appearance are strongly discouraged.* The architectural style for the project has not yet been defined.

Staff would emphasize that these are guidelines, not requirements. That said, they do provide context and direction with respect to evaluating the proposal for consistency with the overall objectives for the Broadway Corridor.

Project Issues

The following issues have been highlighted by staff in order to generate discussion and feedback. This list does not represent a complete catalog of the issues that will need to be evaluated in the course of the planning process, nor should it preclude discussion of other topics of interest to the Planning Commission or interested members of the public.

Traffic and Circulation: The preliminary development plan submitted by SAHA in response to the RFP called for vehicle access to the site from both Broadway and Clay Street. The Clay Street access was objectionable to many residents in the area, who cited concerns about increased traffic volumes as well as conflicts with the loading dock at Sonoma Lodge, which is located immediately across Clay Street from the project site. The revised site plan addresses these concerns by limiting vehicle access to a driveway connecting to Broadway. That said, traffic generation remains an issue and a traffic study will be required as part of the environmental review of the project. On a related matter, in recent correspondence several comments have expressed concern about air quality on the site, due to the proximity of the loading dock at the Lodge at Sonoma and the truck deliveries that occur there. In staff's experience, it is unlikely that the site is or will be subject to air quality issues but this question could potentially be addressed as part of the traffic study.

Parking: Although the number of off-street parking spaces has been increased from the original proposal as a result of the community outreach process, the proposed number of off-street parking spaces falls short of the normal requirement. While a reduced parking standard may be appropriate, careful consideration should be given to avoid an outcome in which resident parking associated with the project spills over onto Clay Street beyond the frontage of the site. And while the site frontage is extensive, future street improvements could result in red-curbings, reducing the area available for parking. All of that said, as an affordable development, the project will qualify for reduced parking as a development concession.

Massing: Three buildings are proposed to front Broadway: the community building, which would be located at the project entrance, and two apartment buildings. The apartment buildings are two-story structures with a ridge height of 26 feet. The community building is a one-story structure, but given its function it would likely be relatively tall. Setbacks along Broadway range from 15 to 20 feet. Separations between each building and breaks in the massing of each structure are intended to reduce the sense of mass. Although a low fence or wall would separate the apartment buildings from the sidewalk, the apartments would be designed to visually engage the street. Three apartment buildings would front Clay Street, including a corner building that also fronts Broadway. The Clay Street elevation would be more uniform than that of Broadway and the basic building setback is proposed at 15 feet, although porches and other breaks in façades would provide variation in this regard. The project submittal (attached) includes photographs of a site model that depicts the massing of buildings on the site.

Density: At 25 units per acre, the project is dense relative to most development in Sonoma, a point that has been made by a number of persons commenting on the project. That said, while residential density

may lead to certain impacts—for example, in terms of traffic generation—density is not, in and of itself, an impact and the fact that the project is proposed at a relatively high density does not mean that it is inherently incompatible with the site or its surroundings. Staff would also note that under State law, jurisdictions may not require density reductions in qualifying affordable housing projects merely for the sake of achieving a lower density. Changes or requirements that have the effect of reducing density may only be made as needed to avoid a specific, adverse impact upon health, safety, or the physical environment, and for which there is no other feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the specific adverse impact.

Levels of Affordability/Mix of Unit Sizes: Rent levels in the project are targeted at the extremely low, very low, and low income levels. Due to the nature of the some of the funding sources for the project, a minimum of 30% of the units must be affordable at the extremely low income level, which corresponds to a household income at 30% of the area median income. The table below summarizes the mix of units in terms of affordability and number of bedrooms.

| Unit Mix: Affordability Level and Bedroom Count* | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Affordability/Bedroom | 1 | 2 | 3 | #/% |
| 30% AMI | 12 | 2 | 2 | 16/33% |
| 40% AMI | | 2 | 2 | 4/8% |
| 50% AMI | 6 | 5 | 6 | 17/36% |
| 60% AMI | 4 | 4 | 3 | 11/23% |
| Totals | 22/46% | 13/27% | 13/27% | |

*This table excludes the 2-bedroom manager’s unit as it is technically not an affordable unit.

Based on income information for different job classifications in Sonoma County, jobs that correspond to the very low income level include restaurant wait staff and cooks, home health care workers, retail sales persons, and child care workers. Jobs at the low income level include emergency medical technicians, bus drivers, bookkeeping and account clerks, and construction and maintenance workers. Household size is also a factor. For example, a single teacher, new to the profession, with two children might qualify as a low income household. Some commenters on the project have suggested that somewhat higher income levels should be targeted, such as the moderate income level. In staff’s view, the focus on very low and low income households is appropriate and is consistent with General Plan policies. The need for units at lower income levels is well-documented and opportunities to develop them are rare.

With regard to unit sizes, almost half of the units are one-bedroom models, with the remainder divided almost equally between two-bedroom and three-bedroom units. In comparison to the RFP submittal, the number of one-bedroom units has been increased somewhat as a result of the community outreach process. Because the one-bedroom units are smaller, increasing their proportion enabled site plan changes that addressed compatibility issues. In addition, one-bedroom units will naturally have fewer occupants and are more likely to be occupied by seniors, so having a larger percentage of them tends to reduce traffic generation and parking demand. In some of the comments received on the project, the suggestion has been made to further increase the proportion of one-bedroom units. In one case, this has been suggested to allow for each of the apartment buildings adjoining the St. Francis subdivision to incorporate one-story building elements on the west. For others, it is suggested as a means of reducing site intensity while maintaining the proposed unit count. In staff’s view, it is important to remember that there are households of many sizes that would benefit from the opportunity for affordable rental housing and further increasing the proportion of one-bedroom units further reduces opportunities to accommodate larger households. The project is already heavily weighted toward one-bedroom units and increasing the proportion of one-bedroom units should not be undertaken lightly.

Household Occupancy: Some neighbors have expressed concern that because federal Housing and Urban Development guidelines allow up to three persons per bedroom within a housing unit, 200 persons or

more will live in the project. It should be noted that these and similar standards set forth in the Building Code represent maximums, not mandates. SAHA recently reviewed the demographics of the affordable rental developments that it manages and identified the following real-world occupancy averages:

| Unit Size | Average Occupancy | Proposed Units | Estimated Occupancy |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1-bedroom | 1.28 | 22 | 28 |
| 2-bedroom | 2.42 | 14 | 34 |
| 3-bedroom | 3.70 | 13 | 48 |
| Totals: | | 49 | 110 |

Based on the unit mix suggested in SAHA’s initial proposal, these averages would result in a population of approximately 110 persons, including children.

Senior Preference: Several comments have been received suggesting that the project should include a dedicated component of senior housing or that a preference for senior households should be implemented as part of the resident screening process. The project is proposed as an “all-age” development, meaning that households of any age may apply, including seniors. In addition, the mix of units includes a large proportion (45%) of 1-bedroom units, which tend to be attractive to seniors. However, according to the City’s redevelopment attorney, establishing a senior preference would not comply with state and federal fair housing laws, which prohibit discrimination based on age except in projects dedicated exclusively for seniors.

Local Preference: Many commenters have suggested that a preference should be established for those who live or work in Sonoma. The City has implemented a local preference in previous affordable housing developments and it is possible that a similar preference may be required for this project, if approved. However, any such preference program must be carefully designed and implemented to comply with state and federal housing law. In this regard, it has been confirmed by the City’s redevelopment attorney that a city limits-based preference is unlikely to be permissible due to potential disparate impacts. While a Sonoma County-based preference appears to be an option, it is not clear whether a Sonoma Valley-based preference is possible under the law because “Sonoma Valley” does not necessarily correspond to a defined jurisdiction. In terms of timing, a local preference, however it may ultimately be defined, would be accomplished as a condition of use permit approval. The CDC would need to verify that a project conditioned in this way could use public finance without violating state or federal Fair Housing standards.

Compatibility with Adjoining Residential Uses: Compatibility with adjoining uses—especially residential neighbors—is a key issue on the review of any development application. The revised site plan incorporates the following features to improve compatibility with neighboring residences to the west:

- Vehicle access would be limited to Broadway.
- Adjoining parking is minimized.
- A rear yard to rear yard relationship is provided.
- One-bedroom units are placed on the west, as these would tend to be quieter.
- Second-story windows on the buildings adjoining the St. Francis subdivision will be placed to minimize privacy issues.
- The site may also benefit from a finished grade that is expected to be several feet lower than the adjoining St. Francis subdivision, as this would reduce building heights relative neighboring residences.

Two of the three apartment buildings adjoining the St. Francis development meet the normal 20-foot setback requirement. The central apartment falls short of the normal requirement, with a rear setback that ranges from 15 to 17 feet. However, this building is designed with a single-story element on the west to reduce the visual impact. An upgraded fence or wall would be built along the western property line.

Neighboring residents have expressed a preference for a masonry wall, for reduced maintenance and superior noise buffering.

Compatibility with Broadway and Adjoining Commercial Uses: Traffic noise associated with Broadway and noise associated with commercial deliveries at the loading dock of the Lodge at Sonoma could create compatibility issues for residents of the project if not assessed and mitigated. These issues would be evaluated as part of the environmental review of the project.

Construction Impacts: Project construction can be a noisy and lengthy process. While the disruption associated with construction is temporary, potential impacts on nearby properties need to be addressed in any development. Compliance with standard requirements such as noise ordinance limits on hours of construction and equipment noise, as well as regular watering of the site for dust control address many of these issues. In addition, it has been suggested by some neighbors that the wall or fence along the western property line should be built at the earliest stages of development in order to provide immediate noise buffering.

Utilities: The adequacy of water and sewer availability and infrastructure will be evaluated as part of the environment review process.

Billboards: The billboards at the southeast corner of the site will be removed prior to construction.

Environmental Review

The proposal is a discretionary project subject to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The scope and level of environmental review will be a key issue in the evaluation of the project. These determinations are made following the submittal of a planning application, which has not yet occurred. Once an application has been submitted, staff will prepare an initial study, which is a preliminary assessment of areas of potential impact. Based on the findings of the initial study, the Planning Commission will determine what special studies may be needed (e.g., traffic). Depending on the number and nature of areas of potential impact, an environmental impact report may be required or it is possible that the project may qualify for a mitigated negative declaration, in which only a few, focused special studies are required. These decisions are made by the Planning Commission as part of a noticed public hearing, with an opportunity for public input. Although every project must be evaluated on its own merits, previous affordable housing developments in Sonoma—including the Wildflower development on Napa Road, Firehouse Village on Second Street East, and Sonoma Valley Oaks on Lyon Street—each qualified for a mitigated negative declaration.

Next Steps

The applicant is before the Planning Commission in a study session to obtain feedback from the Commission and receive comments from the public. In terms of next steps, after a formal application is filed, the City would need to prepare an environmental review addressing issues of concern identified by the Planning Commission. After the completion of environmental review, the project would return to the Planning Commission for consideration of the Use Permit and any Exceptions that may be applied for. The project would also be subject to review by the Design Review and Historic Preservation Commission with regard to building design details and landscaping.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission provide direction to the applicant on the issues identified in the staff report, and any other issues raised by the application.

Attachments

1. Vicinity Map
2. Recent Correspondence (Enclosure 1)
3. Project Narrative/Site Plan and Massing Submittal (Enclosure 2)

cc: Broadway Affordable Project mailing list

John Haig, Deputy Director, CDC

Adam Kuperman/Eve Stewart, SAHA

Vicinity Map



Zoning Designations

- R-HS Hillside Residential (1 D.U./10acres, maximum)
- R-R Rural Residential (2 D.U./acre, maximum)
- R-L Low Density Residential (2-5 D.U./acre)
- R-S Sonoma Residential (3-8 D.U./acre)
- R-M Medium Denisty Residential (6-10 D.U./acre)
- R-H High Density (9-12 D.U./acre)
- R-O Housing Opportunity (15-20 D.U./acre)
- R-P Mobile Home Park (7 D.U./acre, maximum)
- MX Mixed Use (12 D.U./acre, maximum)
- C Commercial (15 D.U./acre, maximum)
- C-G Commercial-Gateway (15 D.U./acre, maximum)
- W Wine Production
- P Public Facility
- Pk Park
- A Agriculture

Project Summary

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>Project Name:</i> | Broadway Affordable Housing Project |
| <i>Property Address:</i> | 20269 Broadway |
| <i>Applicant:</i> | Satellite Affordable Housing Associates |
| <i>Property Owner:</i> | Sonoma County Housing Authority |
| <i>General Plan Land Use:</i> | Mixed Use |
| <i>Zoning - Base:</i> | Mixed Use |
| <i>Zoning - Overlay:</i> | Historic |
| <i>Summary:</i> | Study session on a proposal to develop a 49-unit affordable rental housing project. |

