



**DAVIS**  
PARTNERSHIP  
ARCHITECTS

June 8, 2021

Tasha Brackin, AICP  
Senior Planning | South Team

**Re: Letter of Explanation – Community Housing Project**

Dear Tasha:

On behalf of Lisa Sorensen, Development Director of the Cohen-Esrey Development Group, this letter describes, in general terms, the intent of the proposed Community Housing (Multi-family R-5) Development that is being designed at the southeast corner of Verde Drive and Zebulon Drive, within the south sector of Colorado Springs.

The Site is composed of two parcels combined at approximately 142,700 SF in total. The Site is currently undeveloped, with exception of paved access easements shared with existing commercial developments (zoned PBC AO) to the east and south. It is important to note immediately west of our Site, along Zebulon Drive, is undeveloped land currently zoned as Multifamily Residential (R5 AO). Similarly, along the southwest corner, lies an existing Single Family Residential Neighborhood (R1-6000 AO). Based on comments received to date from City Staff, and existing zoning (PBC AO) that allows the Conditional Use of Multifamily Development, we hope to successfully develop Affordable Multifamily Residential (R5 AO). As the site falls to the south, creating an average grade plane less than that of our proposed ground floor elevation, we anticipate the need for Nonuse Variance to allow for the Finished “Flat” Roof (2’-10”), integral parapets (4’-10”) and Roof Top Access for Fire (9’-10”).

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**Legal Description**

LOTS 2 AND 4 OF ACADEMY-VERDE SUBDIVISION NO. 2, CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS,  
COUNTY OF EL PASO, STATE OF COLORADO.

TOTAL AREA OF PARCEL A IS 142,700 SQUARE FEET OR 3.28 ACRES.

PROPERTY ADDRESS:

LOT 2:  
3725 VERDE DR  
COUNTY OF EL PASO ID#6422410001

LOT 4:  
1609 ZEBULON DR  
COUNTY OF EL PASO ID#6427111051

**Project Concept**

The Applicant has engaged Davis Partnership Architects for design and construction documentation for a 5-story, 162,200 GSF, affordable multifamily apartment building

consisting of 4 stories of 137 one, two, and three-bedroom affordable apartments, an activated ground floor community room, and lobby amenities. Also included within this design is the development of site to provide pedestrian improvements along Verde and Zebulon Drives with on-street parking, sidewalks and landscaping, off-street surface parking, a detention pond, and an abundant green space; the latter made possible by the design of a 56-vehicle partially buried, single story garage along Zebulon.

### **Architecture**

Our team seeks to infill the existing lots with a 4-story, affordable apartment community that would sit both on grade along Verde Drive, and over a partially buried 56-vehicle parking structure that resides within the fall of Zebulon Drive as the elevation drops to the south. We believe that using masonry, alongside pre-finished metal panels and large glazed openings allows for a more traditional skin to define an appropriate rhythm throughout the building's massing. The use of prefinished fiber cement panels continues to aid in breaking up the long façades while adding a modern accent, warmth, and an inviting character to the composition.

We have carefully studied the location and nearby adjacencies to determine views and positioning of the building. The residential program will be formed in a 'L'-shape creating a courtyard that is surrounded by apartments on two sides and surface parking and site detention towards the east and south. By allowing the apartments to sit along both Verde and Zebulon, we have hidden surface parking, but have activated existing street edges with units and balconies and provided occupants within the units amazing views of Pikes Peak and Cheyenne Mountain. Moreover, at the corner of Zebulon and Verde Drives, we have placed a large community room and lobby amenities to further activate this this corner to create a scaled pedestrian environment, but for connect with the surrounding community and bike lanes. We feel this location allows for a 24-hour environment that remains lit and brings a warm friendliness to the corner throughout the day and evening.

### **Landscape/Open Space**

Through the incorporation of a partially buried garage the Site has more room to incorporate a larger area of green space that could be made available for use by residents of the complex and the surrounding community. At this time programming of this space may include a small playground and fenced dog-park area and open lawn. The streetscape and open space areas are covered with live plant material. Irrigation is intended to be mostly drip with a small lawn area being sprayed. Hose bibs or irrigation heads will be provided at the dog park for continued maintenance. A detention pond to the south will include some areas for planting to provide a natural and more finished look.

### **Roadway/Access**

Vehicular access to the site is currently planned with a new curb cut along Zebulon Drive, and existing private drives/access easements, fed from existing curb cuts from

both Zebulon Drive and Verde Drive. The proposed surface parking will incorporate a fire access, below grade parking along Zebulon Drive, and ADA parking spaces at the primary Lobby Entrance.

Pedestrian access into the site from the surrounding community will be through both public and private sidewalks. Bike parking will be located both internal to the building/garage and includes exterior bike racks.

### **Grading and Paving**

The site grading will be such that current drainage patterns are maintained and improved. As noted, new public walks and on-street parking along Verde/Zebulon Drives will be notable improvements to the public right of way. Likewise, a new curb cut on the south end of Zebulon Drive will not only serve as a means of site access, but assist in the definition of a private, full spectrum detention pond located on the southern edge of the site.

**Stormwater Detention and Water Quality:** The project requires permanent water quality & detention. Surface drainage that originates from the proposed building will be piped to the proposed detention pond, as well as capture runoff from the newly graded surface parking.

The entire site will drain to this location and in turn will be piped to a storm drain within public utility easements to an Existing Inlet along Academy Boulevard.

### **Utilities**

**Water:** Both Domestic water service and Fire Sprinkler service will be provided by an existing mainline fed from Verde Drive into an existing 8" PVC line run along the shared public access/utility easement on the East side of the Site. Domestic water service for site irrigation, however, is currently planned from an existing 3" line, mid-site, along Zebulon Drive. We propose to extend the existing 8" line along the East side of the Site, to the South to connect to an existing 6" line, creating a fire loop to service proposed fire hydrants along the East edge of the site.

**Sanitary Sewer:** We intend to tie into an existing manhole, located mid-site within Zebulon Drive.

### **Justification**

This project provides much needed work-force housing to the area. We believe the density is in line with the conditional use allowed by zoning and consider the proposed density to reflect community zoning, while the architectural character to enhance the vibrancy of surrounding neighborhoods while serving as transitional massing between commercial and residential, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan of the City.

Alongside the conditional use allowed by zoning, we request a small height variance to accommodate fire access to the roof and allow for market-rate floor-

to-floor heights of the affordable apartments, while working with the Average Grade Elevation of a sloped site.

## General

### Pre-Application Requested Documentation:

1. Waiver of Replat
2. Hydraulic Grade Line
3. Elevation Drawings
4. Traffic Impact Analysis
5. Wastewater Master Facility Report
6. Mineral Estate Owner Notification
7. Drainage Report

Please review our attached Development Plan, Waiver of Replat, and additional requested studies/materials noted above. If you have questions or need additional information prior to your review, please let us know. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of this exciting project!

Sincerely,

**DAVIS PARTNERSHIP ARCHITECTS, PC**



Julie M. Meenan Eck, ASLA  
Senior Associate

Attachments

CC: File, Cohen-Esrey Development Group