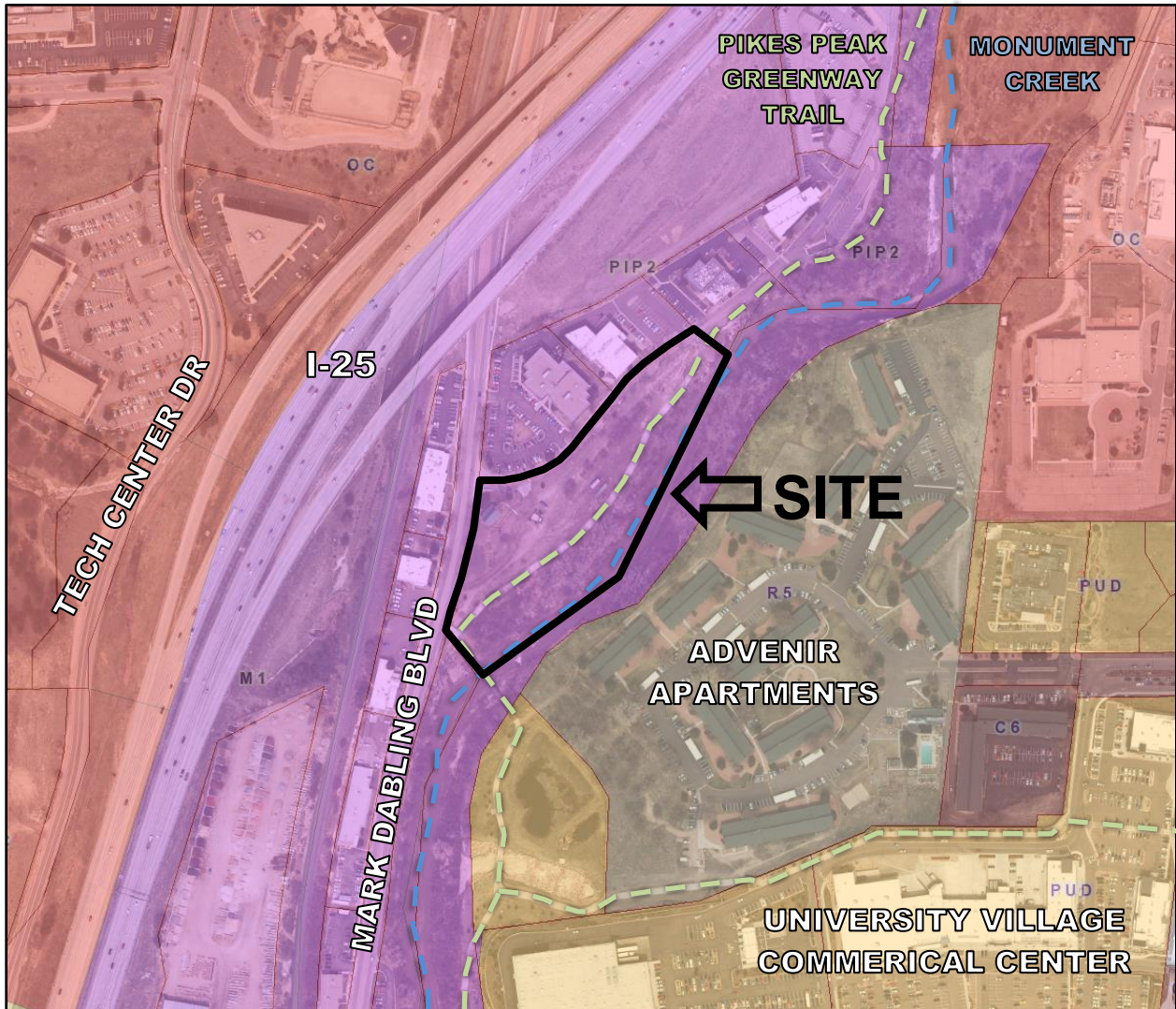


CITY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

STAFF: HANNAH VAN NIMWEGEN

FILE NO(S):
CPC ZC 17-00033 – QUASI-JUDICIAL
CPC CP 17-00070 – QUASI-JUDICIAL

PROJECT: MONUMENT CREEK APARTMENTS
APPLICANT: MATRIX DESIGN GROUP, INC
OWNER: COLORADO CONSTRUCTORS & ASSOCIATES, INC



PROJECT SUMMARY

1. **Project Description:** This project includes concurrent applications for a zone change and concept plan to support a proposed 48-unit apartment building intended for workforce housing on a 5.41 acre property generally located south of the I-25/Mark Dabling Boulevard underpass.

The property is currently zoned PIP-2/CR/SS (Planned Industrial Park with Conditions of Record and a Streamside Overlay) and is proposed to be rezoned to OC/SS (Office Complex with Streamside Overlay). The Monument Creek Apartments Concept Plan illustrates a single, 4-story building, community garden, play area, and clubhouse. **(FIGURE 1)**

2. **Applicant's Project Statement:** **(FIGURE 2)**
3. **Planning and Development Team's Recommendation:** Staff recommends approval of the applications.

BACKGROUND

1. **Site Address:** 5325 Mark Dabling Boulevard
2. **Existing Zoning/Land Use:** PIP-2/CR/SS (Planned Industrial Park with Conditions of Record and Streamside Overlay)/Contractors yard and religious institution **(FIGURE 3)**
3. **Surrounding Zoning/Land Use:** North: PIP-2/CR (Planned Industrial Park with Conditions of Record)/Office parks then I-25
South: R-5/SS (Multi-family Residential with Streamside Overlay)/ Monument Creek then an apartment complex
East: R-5/SS (Multi-family Residential with Streamside Overlay)/ Monument Creek then an apartment complex
West: PIP-2/CR (Planned Industrial Park with Conditions of Record)/Mark Dabling Boulevard then office buildings
4. **Comprehensive Plan/Designated 2020 Land Use:** This area is designated as Employment Center
5. **Annexation:** The property was annexed on November 1, 1965 as part of the Hart's Addition #1 annexation.
6. **Master Plan/Designated Master Plan Land Use:** No Master Plan exists for the subject site.
7. **Subdivision:** Pikes Peak Research Park Filing No. 2.
8. **Zoning Enforcement Action:** None.
9. **Physical Characteristics:** The site is partially developed along the northwestern property line, but is largely unimproved. The site currently contains a portion of the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail and Monument Creek. The northwestern portion of the site is relatively flat where the property is the highest. On average, the site begins to slope slightly down about 120' from the northwestern property line towards the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail. From the trail, the site slopes significantly down to Monument Creek and the creek's bed. The site is enveloped with natural vegetation which is thickest nearest the creek.

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS AND INVOLVEMENT

Upon submittal of the requests; public notice was mailed to 25 property owners within a 1,000-foot radius of the subject site, and the property was posted with two posters (one visible from Mark Dabling Boulevard and the other visible from the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail) with application and contact information. Staff received one letter in opposition **(FIGURE 4)**, one letter in support **(FIGURE 5)**, and had two verbal conversations which did not result in written comments or complaints. Due to little neighborhood input, Staff did not require a neighborhood meeting. Staff sent first review comments to those individuals, but did not receive further input. Prior to the City Planning Commission hearing; the site was posted in the same two locations with the hearing date information, and a postcard was mailed to the same 25 property owners, and an additional business owner, within 1,000 feet of the site.

Staff input is outlined in the following section of this report. Staff sent plans to the standard internal and external review agencies for comments including; Colorado Springs Utilities, City Engineering, City Traffic Engineering, Water Resources Engineering, City Fire, and Parks and Recreation. Staff did not receive any revisionary comments from those agencies regarding the zone change or concept plan applications.

ANALYSIS OF REVIEW CRITERIA/MAJOR ISSUES/COMPREHENSIVE PLAN & MASTER PLAN CONFORMANCE:

1. Review Criteria / Design & Development Issues:

a. Background

The Monument Creek Apartments project contains two concurrent applications; a request to rezone the 5.41 acre property from PIP-2/CR/SS (Planned Industrial Park with Conditions of Record and a Streamside Overlay) to OC/SS (Office Complex with Streamside Overlay), and a concept plan illustrating general building location, existing site conditions, and other site features.

The Monument Creek Apartments proposal is intended to ease the City-wide need for affordable workforce housing. Meaning, the proposal is seeking state and federal tax credits to develop the proposal under the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program. Colorado Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) is reviewing the proposal for compliance with all requirements. CHFA will be able to approve the request for tax credits once the zoning for the subject site permits the proposed land use.

b. Zone Change

The request changes the zoning of the 5.41 acres from PIP-2/CR/SS (Planned Industrial Park with Conditions of Record and a Streamside Overlay) to OC/SS (Office Complex with Streamside Overlay). The OC zone was recommended because it aligns with the surrounding land uses (**FIGURE 3**) and is compatible with the Streamside Overlay requirements and recommendations in the event the proposed Monument Creek Apartments are not constructed.

The Streamside Overlay places additional restriction on what land uses are conditional and which are prohibited regardless of the underlying zone district. The Streamside Manual contains a land use hierarchy to help guide staff and applicants to the highest and best use for a property adjacent to a stream, and strongly recommends multi-family residential as a highly desirable use within the Streamside Overlay (**FIGURE 7**).

c. Concept Plan

The Monument Creek Apartments Concept Plan illustrates a single, 4-story building which will house 48 units (24 one bedroom units and 24 two bedroom units) (**FIGURE 6**). The concept plan also illustrates four features available for tenant use; a community garden to the north of the property; a playground; direct access to the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail; and a clubhouse which will provide computers, a meeting space, and barbeque area. Ultimately, the project has aimed to meet green community design standards set by CHFA.

Traffic and Access: The concept plan illustrates general parking location and two access points—one from Mark Dabling Boulevard and the other from the private road to the northeast. City Traffic Engineering did not require a traffic impact analysis due to the low unit count, and also stated the cross-section along Mark Dabling Boulevard will accommodate the proposed number of units without any additional roadway improvements. Typical public improvements (curb, gutter, and sidewalk) will be required adjacent to Mark Dabling Boulevard, and any damaged curb along the private road will be replaced.

Trail Realignment: The concept plan illustrates a realignment of the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail in order to straighten that portion of the trail and lessen the trail's encroachment on the buildable area (**FIGURE 8**). The location for the realigned trail is conceptually illustrated, but has been reviewed by City Parks and Recreation. City Parks and Recreation agreed to work with the applicant to obtain a detour permit prior to any work, and are requiring that work be coordinated with the Special Events Office to ensure a conflict with races or other events does not occur.

Stream and Trail Dedication: The Monument Creek Apartments Concept Plan illustrates a general boundary for a tract containing Monument Creek and the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail. This tract is planned to be dedicated and conveyed to the City for public uses. This dedication is supported by the Stormwater Department and the Parks and Recreation Department. The tract boundary and dedication will be formally reviewed with the final plat application administratively.

Easement Encumbrances: In addition to Monument Creek and the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail limiting the buildable area, the property is significantly encumbered by large utility, sanitary, and drainage easements. These easements leave a very small area available for building location. Each of these easements contain significant utility infrastructure and are not available to be vacated. Colorado Springs Utilities reviewed the clubhouse and apartment building location with no concerns at the conceptual level.

Drainage: Due to the above mentioned easement encumbrances, there is little room available to accommodate on-site water quality and detention. The concept plan illustrates underground features which were conceptually approved by Water Resources Engineering. Water Resources Engineering is currently reviewing a final drainage report for the proposal which will confirm final designs.

Geologic hazards: A geologic hazard study was reviewed as part of a previous proposal. This study indicates there was limited amount of fill along the Monument Creek bank in the general area of the proposed project. The report indicated that site specific reports would be necessary to identify all potential hazards, but also indicated no issues precluding the site from development were found. An update to this report is being reviewed in conjunction with the development plan, and Colorado Geologic Survey will be consulted.

Staff finds that the request will not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, or general welfare. As further explained below, staff believes the proposal is consistent with and supportive of the established goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Staff believes the proposed apartment project will not overwhelm surrounding properties or City infrastructure through density, bulk, or lack of open space. The proposed site layout is practical despite the constraints on the property while also separating pedestrian travel from vehicle travel promoting the safety of both. Staff considers the central location of the project, the adjacency to a public trail system, and proximity to retail, employment, and other services will result in a stable, desirable, and continuously viable residential product.

2. Conformance with the City Comprehensive Plan

The proposed applications are consistent with the envisioned development patterns for the subject area, which is identified as Employment Center per the Comprehensive Plan 2020 Land Use Map. This is supported by the intention of the Comprehensive Plan to accommodate regional growth and a sensible land use pattern. This is also supported by the Infill Chapter supplementing the Comprehensive Plan.

The below strategies, objectives, and policies are supportive of the proposed Monument Creek Apartments' intention to place workforce housing where established places of work exist. This location is not only surrounded by areas of employment, it also provides tenants with direct access to one of the most extensive trail systems in the City. This trail links tenants to additional areas of employment, to necessary human services, areas of retail and enjoyment, and to a wider transportation networks such as bus routes.

a. Policy LU 203: Develop a Land Use Pattern that is Mutually Supportive with the Intermodal Transportation System

Develop a land use pattern that supports, and is in turn supported by, increased pedestrian, bicycle, and transit travel and that reduces the need for automobile use.

- b. Strategy LU 203a: Locate the Places that People Use for Their Daily Needs and Activities Close to Each Other
Group and link the places used for living, working, shopping, schooling, and recreating and make them accessible by transit, bicycle, and foot, as well as by car. The Monument Creek Apartments proposal supports this Strategy by providing direct access to one of the most extensive trails systems in the City. This trail links the proposed apartment building to areas of employment, retail, and bus routes.
- c. Objective LU 3: Develop A Mix of Interdependent, Compatible, and Mutually Supportive Land Uses
Over the past several decades, the location and design of development have created a pattern of isolated, disconnected, single-purpose land uses. An alternative to this type of land use pattern is one that integrates multiple uses, shortens and reduces automobile trips, promotes pedestrian and bicycling accessibility, decreases infrastructure and housing costs, and in general, can be provided with urban services in a more cost-effective manner. As mentioned above, this proposal will integrate a residential land use into an area of employment. Potential tenants may be employees of nearby businesses, and the proposal allows those who may not work in the vicinity direct access to an extensive transportation network.
- d. Policy LU 301: Promote a Mixed Land Use Pattern
Promote development that is characterized by a mix of mutually supportive and integrated residential and non-residential land uses and a network of interconnected streets with good pedestrian and bicycle access and connections to transit.
- e. Policy LU 303: Promote A Pedestrian-oriented and Transit-oriented Development Pattern
Promote a land use pattern that reduces reliance on automobile travel and supports pedestrian-oriented and transit-oriented development.
- f. Objective LU 4: Encourage Infill and Redevelopment
Encourage infill and redevelopment projects that are in character and context with existing, surrounding development. Infill and redevelopment projects in existing neighborhoods make good use of the City's infrastructure.
- g. Policy LU 401: Encourage Appropriate Uses and Designs for Redevelopment and Infill Projects
Work with property owners in neighborhoods, the downtown, and other existing activity centers and corridors to determine appropriate uses and criteria for redevelopment and infill projects to ensure compatibility with the surrounding area.
- h. Infill Supplement: Density and Mixed Use are Important
Infill provides an added value component that can complement traditional development. Thus, ongoing and strategic support for infill and redevelopment is expected to increase the overall marketability of the city and region for land and economic development investment. Density is important, but so are land use mix, design, connectivity, and integration. Increases in housing and employment density are an essential component of the city's infill and redevelopment vision because density creates opportunities for markets, livability, placemaking, and land use efficiency. Increases in density should be location and context sensitive and be connected and integrated with surrounding uses.

It is the finding of the Planning and Community Development Department that the Monument Creek Apartments zone change and concept plan will substantially conform to the City Comprehensive Plan 2020 Land Use Map and the Plan's goals and objectives.

3. Conformance with the Area's Master Plan

No Master Plan exists for this site. However, the project site is within a close proximity of the Renew North Nevada Avenue Master Plan. The Plan supports and recommends development of affordable housing within the Plan area. The proposed project is consistent with the Plan and tangentially helps implement the Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPC ZC 17-00033 – ZONE CHANGE

Recommend approval to City Council the rezoning of 5.41 acres from PIP-2/CR/SS (Planned Industrial Park with Conditions of Record and a Streamside Overlay) to OC/SS (Office Complex with Streamside Overlay), based upon the findings that the zoning request complies with the review criteria set forth in City Code Section 7.5.603.B.

CPC CP 17-00034 –CONCEPT PLAN

Recommend approval to City Council the Monument Creek Apartments Concept Plan based upon the findings that the concept plan meets the review criteria for granting approval of a concept plan as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.501.E.