

December 17, 2018

Michael Schultz, AICP
Principal Planner
Land Use Review

RE: Barnes and Medical View Apartments – Initial Review Comments
FILES: CPC CU 18-00146 & AP FP 18-00745

Dear Mr. Schultz,

Thank you for forwarding the neighborhood comments received during the initial review of the Barnes and Medical View Development Plan. We have given consideration to these comments and would like to supply more details to address some of the concerns and misconceptions about the proposed project. We would be grateful if you could send this letter to the neighbors who commented on the application.

The project will be partially funded through the use of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), a federal funding program that is **not** the Section 8 voucher program. The apartment complex will be eligible to households making 60% of the Average Median Income (AMI) in El Paso County, which in 2018 is \$46,620 and this is projected to increase in 2019. Tenants who qualify for these units must make less than 60% of the AMI but more than 50% of the AMI. In the LIHTC program this is the highest income level for affordable workforce housing. The rents for this project will range from \$831 for a 1 bedroom up to \$1,144 for a 3-bedroom unit.

Since this project is targeted towards families with children, providing a safe and secure home is a priority. On top of the very detailed income screening for the project, the property management has very extensive back ground checks for every tenant. Every applicant has a criminal background check performed and will be rejected if they do not meet the guidelines. The most important aspect for the apartment community is keeping a safe and healthy environment for families.

The project provides rental housing opportunities for the local workforce and is in a good location to serve multiple employment centers including the Barnes Marketplace on the northeast corner of Barnes and Powers, Costco and the surrounding retail/services on the southeast corner of Barnes and Powers, and DaVita Medical directly east across Medical View. We consider the site to be well-situated to provide access to these commercial and employment areas and to nearby recreational facilities. To the northeast is Stetson Hills Open Space and Sand Creek Trail, also connecting to Coleman Park, and to the west is another portion of the Stetson Hills Open Space. The site is within 1-mile of four elementary schools (Rudy, Odyssey, Stetson, and Springs Ranch) and within 2-miles of two high schools (Sand Creek & Doherty). The site is within ½ mile of a Metro bus line on Tutt Boulevard, connecting to other lines and the Citadel Transfer Center.

The project has been designed to mitigate potential visual impacts on the adjacent single-family residential to the north. The site topography provides a natural transition to Barnes Road and the design team has worked diligently to develop a site layout that preserves the residential integrity of the adjacent neighborhood. To address the substantial grade change across the site, the north side of the site will be built up with retaining walls up to 7 feet tall, which places the buildings at a much lower elevation than the neighboring homes. The buildings will also step down the site towards Barnes Road, with the shorter side of the building facing the north. Attached to this letter is a cross-section of the site to illustrate how much lower the buildings will sit than the adjacent homes. The current buffer provided by the vacated Comstock Loop right-of-way will be retained between the site and the neighborhood to the north, and additional landscaping has been added to meet buffering requirements. Lighting along the north side and throughout the site is designed to be downcast full cut-off lighting to meet City requirements and protect the privacy and amenity of adjacent residents.

Please let me know if there is any additional information we can provide to alleviate the neighbors' concerns about this project. We are confident that this development will be a compatible neighbor and will have less impact on the adjacent homes than many of the permitted commercial uses allowed under the existing commercial zoning.

