

PROJECT STATEMENT – MONUMENT CREEK APARTMENTS
ZONE CHANGE, DEVELOPMENT PLAN, VARIANCE FOR SETBACK AND FINAL PLAT
MARCH 15, 2017

AmericaWest Housing Solutions (AWHS), a 501 C-3 non-profit organization, proposes to develop and construct a 48-unit multi-level apartment complex for workforce housing. The project will consist of 24 one bedroom and 24 two bedroom units within a single apartment building with a clubhouse and associated uses. It will accommodate 30% to 60% of average median income wage earners and provide housing for individuals and families.

The proposed urban design concept is intended to blend into the fabric of the existing neighborhood. Each unit will have a patio or balcony and the building will have direct access to the Monument Creek Trail. Amenities include a playground, a community garden, and a clubhouse. The clubhouse will provide a gathering space, offices, computers, and an outdoor space with BBQ area and deck space for the residents. The project has been designed to meet Green Communities Design Standards.

The project is centrally located in Colorado Springs along Mark Dabling Boulevard approximately 0.5 miles south of Rockrimmon Boulevard and is within short distance of several large employment centers, including the University Village Retail Center and UCCS. The property is 5.41 acres in size and is currently zoned PIP-2. The property is bounded by Monument Creek on its eastern/southern edge, Mark Dabling Boulevard along the western edge and a private roadway along the northern edge. To accommodate the proposed use, the developer is proposing to rezone the property from PIP-2 to OC.

The site is encumbered by numerous existing easements (utility, drainage, trail), the Monument Creek Trail and Monument Creek. Additionally, the parcel is narrow from front to back and has slope grading limitations due to the existing easements and location of the trail/creek. The combination of these constraints limit the buildable area of the site to two areas and requires creative design solutions to accommodate the development of the parcel.

To accommodate the slope of the property without impacting existing grades within the easements or along the trail, the main access to the building from the parking lot will be to the second floor via "bridges". The first floor units are at "trail level". A retaining wall adjacent to but outside of the existing easements is located between the parking lot and the front first floor units creating an atrium garden level for the front units along the retaining wall.

Given limited area outside of the existing easements, stormwater treatment for the project cannot be accommodated by use of typical above ground methods. Stormwater for the project will be collected and treated (water quality and detention) via an underground system. The proposed system meets the water quality and detention requirements established by the City of Colorado Springs and additional detail is provided within the Final Drainage Report.

The property will be replatted into a new lot and a tract. The tract, Tract A, includes Monument Creek and the Monument Creek Trail. Currently, the creek and the trail are within easements. Tract A will be conveyed via the Plat to the City of Colorado Springs for public uses. Based on our conversations with the City and the upcoming work within Monument Creek, we understand that the City would prefer to own this property. Conveyance of the tract establishes a new side yard property line for the new lot and, given the constraints of the property, the required side yard building setback (20' within the OC zoning district) cannot be achieved. A variance for the side yard setback is necessary to accommodate both the needs of the City and the needs of the development.

Given the location of the property, the site offers residents multimodal transportation alternatives with direct access to University Village, UCCS and Colorado Springs bus routes via Monument Creek Trail. Additionally, the site has easy access to Interstate 25 via Mark Dabling Boulevard, Garden of the Gods Road and Rockrimmon Boulevard.

The proposed project addresses a community wide need of affordable workforce housing and has received the support of the Colorado Springs Community Development Office (Aimee Cox – Past Manager, Steve Posey Interim Manager), The El Paso County Housing Authority (DeAnne McCain – Executive Director), The Colorado Springs Housing Authority (Chad Wright – Executive Director), Colorado Springs Regional Business Alliance (Dirk Draper – Executive Director) and the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Housing (Tim Gough – Housing Development Specialist). Also, the project has been submitted to the Colorado Housing Finance Agency (CHFA) for State and Federal tax credits under the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC) providing financing for the development of affordable housing for those area residents in the 30% - 60% of area median income category.

The applicant requests approval of the following development applications:

- Zone Change from PIP-2 to OC
- Development Plan
- Variance for Side Yard Setback
- Final Plat