



PROJECT AND DECISION CRITERIA NARRATIVE

Date: September 4, 2024
To: City of Littleton, Community Development
From: Norris Design

RE: VRP WEST DRY CREEK CIRCLE CONCEPTUAL MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

On behalf of Vista Residential Partners (VRP), Norris Design is pleased to submit a formal application for a Master Development Plan with Conceptual Detail for the VRP 16 West Dry Creek Circle community located at the northwest corner of West Dry Creek Circle, immediately east of the Highline Canal. This application has been prepared by and for the following parties to the benefit of the residents of the City of Littleton:

Applicant/Developer

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Please find the following documents included in this submittal:

- Project & Decision Criteria Narrative
- Response to Written Comments
- Response to Redlines
- Conceptual MDP Site Plan Set
- Preliminary Drainage Study
- Preliminary Sanitary Sewer Study
- Traffic Impact Study

ABOUT VISTA RESIDENTIAL PARTNERS

Vista Residential Partners is active in 50 cities across 17 states and has built 100 communities since its founding in 2000. Among Vista's core values is its commitment to building diverse communities that meet the housing needs of multiple populations. This translates to the creation of communities that address a broad range of income levels and lifestyles. Vista is committed to being part of the solution that provides affordable, healthy, and sustainable neighborhoods while enabling all people to live in new, modern housing at a reasonable price point.



SITE CONTEXT

The approximately 5.9-acre site is situated north and west of W Dry Creek Cir, generally at the southwest corner of S Broadway and W Fremont Ave. The site consists of three parcels of land: Parcels 2077-27-3-00-005, 2077-27-3-14-021, and 032189576. The two primary parcels are situated between existing single-family residences to the north and offices to the south and east. The High Line Canal and Trail border the western edge of the property. Lot 1, Block 14, of the Bel-Ve Heights Subdivision is immediately north of the primary parcels, south of West Fremont Avenue, and immediately west of the high line canal property.

INTENT

The majority of the site is zoned CM (Corridor Mixed), PL-O (Planned Overlay District). Littleton's Unified Land Use Code allows development applications to be processed under either the underlying zoning or the existing General Planned Development Plan. The development team intends to pursue approval under the underlying CM zone district. Concurrent with this application the development and design team has submitted a proposed amendment to the Future Land Use and Character Map, converting the site designation from Suburban Commercial to Suburban Residential Multifamily.

Lot 1 Block 14 will retain its existing MLR (Medium Lot residential) zoning and Suburban Residential designation within the Future Land Use and Character Map. It will not be used for multifamily development, but rather as pedestrian and utility access between the multifamily site and West Fremont Avenue.

PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN

The proposed concept plan features a multifamily residential community of 173 units within three 4 to 5-story buildings arranged around two amenity spaces. The site layout and buildings create a boutique multifamily community that provides a transition of land uses from the offices to the south and east, and the residences to the north. Water quality and detention are proposed at the northwest corner of the site, near the Highline Canal frontage.

Vehicular access to the community is taken from the cul-de-sac in the western portion of W Dry Creek Circle. Buildings' main entries are all oriented toward the site access at the south, with secondary entrances on other facades. The main amenity area and leasing office are in the building immediately north of the main entry. With the acquisition of Lot 1, Block 14 the site now provides additional pedestrian and bicycle access to the north; however, no public vehicle accesses are contemplated with the addition.

Internal vehicular and bicycle circulation is provided via private drives in a modified grid-format that wraps the central buildings to provide fire and building access. Pedestrian circulation is addressed with sidewalks provided along the south, west, and north perimeters of all blocks, including crosswalk connections to West Dry Creek Circle. Parking is provided with 199 pull-in spaces on the private drive aisles and 31 tuck-under private garages for a total of 230 spaces (and 13 tandem spaces). Since the last review, an additional sidewalk has been added along the western side of the westernmost building, to provide pedestrian connection to Lot 1, Block 14.

The northern internal drive, parking on both sides of it, and a 15' landscape buffer offers an 85' transition between the proposed multifamily community and single-family residences to the north. Thoughtful landscaping is proposed throughout the site to create an attractive, livable community.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The development team views the City of Littleton and neighboring residents as collaborators in developing this site. The first conceptual site plan, submittal in September of 2022, contemplated 228 dwelling units, across four residential buildings, the central two of which ran from east to west. In October of 2023, the team submitted a second concept plan, adding in the parcel immediately west, providing frontage to the Highline Canal. This plan showed revised building shapes, locations, and quantities to minimize the building massing perception for single family detached neighbors to the north.

A neighborhood meeting was held in November of 2023, introducing the proposal, development team, and Littleton process and requirements to nearby residents. Neighbors were concerned about the mass of the proposed buildings, removal of existing trees, the 10' parking setback, impacts of parking-area lighting, impacts to traffic, spillover parking, and need for active transportation infrastructure.

In response, the team has increased the parking setback from the northern boundary to 15', providing additional space, and additional opportunity to preserve existing trees. On the south side of the northern drive-aisle, Building B and C facades were pushed further south, providing additional parking spaces, and additional setback from the northern property line. Lighting, connection to the High Line Canal Trail, and other infrastructure matters will be detailed at the time of the Site Plan.

The development team met with several concerned neighbors in January of 2024 to discuss these updates to the plan and maintain open lines of communication.

A second neighborhood meeting was hosted on June 18, 2024 to update residents on the plan process and introduce the required update to the Future Land Use and Character Map. Neighbors shared comments regarding concern over landscape buffer, building heights, shading from buildings, and traffic.

A third neighborhood meeting is scheduled for September 19, 2024 to share information about the addition of Lot 1, Block 14 to the MDP. The applicant team will continue to work with neighboring residents and business owners to address their concerns.

ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT

Buildings are oriented for maximum solar access, while minimizing the building frontage to the north residential neighbors, therefore not having a large mass blocking their views. The "L" shaped buildings create pocket parks and amenity spaces, accessible directly from building common spaces. The multi-family buildings allow for residents to park in a secured, reserved tuck-under garage space and progress to their units. There is ample parking surrounding the buildings for ease and close proximity to everyone's units.

The exterior elevations provide balconies for nearly every apartment, while providing an aesthetic that is varied in appearance but still subscribes to the architectural theory of base, mid, and top uniting forms. Building A will consist of 5 stories including a walkout basement on the western end to take advantage of the naturally sloping landscape. Buildings B and C will both cap out at 4 stories to further reduce the impact these buildings have on the existing northern neighbors.

The buildings will have a brick base in varying hues with accent cornices and articulation. Other materials include stucco, fiber cement panels, and fiber cement board and batten, painted. Large windows create light-filled units throughout the building. The balconies will be articulated forms to vary the building appearance from the corner to the inset portions.



LANDSCAPE CONCEPT

The landscape design provides color, texture, and interest throughout the seasons while also providing a pleasant, secure living environment for residents. The project provides walkable connections throughout the property's amenity zones, open spaces, and parking, with pathways designed for ease of access and circulation. Bike parking throughout will allow for and encourage the use of bicycling as a desirable and efficient mode of transportation to surrounding areas. The landscape common areas provide a collection of outdoor amenities including a variety of seating, paths, shade, and enhanced planting introducing benefits to residents. Two spacious courtyards allow for exterior dining and patio areas, water feature, game lawns and flexible plaza spaces, and other enhanced outdoor gathering nodes and hardscape, while offering opportunities for resident interaction and enjoyment. An aesthetic landscaped perimeter is provided on all sides of the community to buffer neighboring residences. The west side of the property provides a natural preserved landscape with a detention pond and open space for residents to immerse themselves in nature adjacent to the Highline Canal Trail. The Conceptual Landscape Plan indicates potential tree preservation areas around the perimeter of the main property, and within Lot 1, Block 14, to preserve as many of the existing trees within the property, as possible.

CIVIL CONCEPT

The civil engineering design incorporates existing infrastructure located near the site. There is an existing water main within a 50-foot water easement on the neighboring parcel east of the property. There is also an existing water main in Dry Creek Circle (near the southeast corner of the site). The proposed water main will be looped through the project site and connect into the two existing water mains. A water quality/detention pond will be on the west side of the site (adjacent to the Highline Canal Right-of-Way). The addition of Lot 1, Block 14 will provide a route for gravity fed storm and sanitary sewer outfall options. Downstream sanitary pipe analysis will be provided during the construction drawing phase.

DECISION CRITERIA

The Director shall make a recommendation to Planning Commission and the Commission may approve, approve with conditions, or deny a MDP based on conformance with the criteria. The decision criteria are as follows:

1. Zoning District Conformance. The plan demonstrates compliance with the applicable zoning district and design standards.

In keeping with the purpose of Corridor Mixed-use zoning, this conceptual plan promotes a walkable mixed-use center that support transit usage, and provide opportunities for additional housing types and formats, by providing higher-density within a 10-minute walk to transit on Broadway, near major employment and retail centers.

The plan exceeds design standards, providing a minimum 68' setback from all property lines, exceeding the 20' setback requirement, and doubling the required bulk plane distance from single family detached residences to the north.

2. Layout. The MDP demonstrates a site layout and circulation plan that is efficient relative to its context and location and is designed to achieve the intent and purpose of the underlying zone district.



The site is designed to provide ample circulation around all three buildings, with pedestrian connections made between the buildings and their amenity areas, as well as to the entrance/exit on W Dry Creek Circle. The layout provides a minimum of 86' of setback from the Highline Canal and locates the detention pond in the area closest to it, providing an intentional natural area within its proximity.

3. Quality Design. The MDP provides for high quality design of building architecture and landscape architecture to establish visual interest, aesthetic appeal, and a unique identity for the development including human-scale amenities, and integration of civic spaces for public interaction;

The exterior elevations of the apartment buildings provide balconies for nearly every apartment, while providing an aesthetic that is varied in appearance but still subscribes to the architectural theory of base, mid, and top uniting forms.

Buildings' bases will be comprised of brick in varying hues with accent cornices and articulation. Upper floor materials include painted stucco, fiber cement panels, and fiber cement board and batten. Consistent window patterns provide natural light to units, and visual interest, and symmetry to the elevations.

The landscape design provides color, texture, and interest throughout the seasons while also providing a pleasant, secure living environment for residents. The landscape common areas provide a collection of outdoor amenities including a variety of seating, paths, shade, and enhanced planting introducing benefits to residents. Two spacious courtyards allow for exterior dining and patio areas, water feature, game lawns and flexible plaza spaces, and other enhanced outdoor gathering nodes and hardscape, while offering opportunities for resident interaction and enjoyment. An aesthetic landscaped perimeter is provided on all four sides of the project in an effort to buffer neighboring residential uses. The west side of the property provides a natural preserved landscape with a detention pond and open space for residents to immerse themselves in nature, while having easy accessibility to the adjacent Highline Canal Trail.

4. Natural Resources. The MDP identifies unique and desired natural features of the site and when possible, preserves or enhances those features;

The west side of the property, adjacent to the Highline Canal and trail provides a natural preserved landscape with a detention pond and open space for residents to immerse themselves in nature.

On behalf of the development and design team, we look forward to working with the City of Littleton to make this proposed community a reality. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or any other member of the team, should you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Norris Design

Elyse Applegate
Senior Associate