



NARRATIVE

Date: May 31, 2024
To: City of Littleton, Community Development
From: Norris Design

**RE: VRP WEST DRY CREEK CIRCLE PROJECT, DECISION CRITERIA, AND
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ALIGNMENT NARRATIVE**

On behalf of Vista Residential Partners (VRP), Norris Design is pleased to submit a formal application for an Amendment to the Future Land Use and Character Map, to enable development of the VRP 16 West Dry Creek Circle multifamily community located at the northwest corner of West Dry Creek Circle, immediately east of the Highline Canal (MDP24-0001). 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:

- Narrative (this letter)
- Letters of Authorization
- Neighborhood Meeting Summary
- Submittal Requirement Checklist
- Title Insurance Commitments

SITE CONTEXT

The approximately 5.6-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 two parcels of land (Parcels 2077-27-3-00-005 and 2077-27-3-14-021) situated between existing single-family residences to the north and offices to the south and east. The Highline Canal and Trail border the western edge of the property.

INTENT

The development team intends to pursue approval of a 173-unit multifamily community and proposes an amendment to the Future Land Use and Character Map (FLUC Map) to align with the proposed uses, as permitted by CM zoning. Currently, the FLUC Map identifies the site as Suburban Commercial, in keeping



with the original land uses permitted by the Highline Professional Center Planned Development. The site has more recently been re-zoned CM (Corridor Mixed), PL-O (Planned Overlay District). This change is part of an update to city-wide zoning that encourages a mix of land uses along corridors such as Broadway; and the uses already approved in the PD, in order to utilize under-performing land assets, as directed by the Comprehensive Plan. To align the FLUC Map with the zoning and proposed use, the development team proposes an amendment to the map, giving the subject parcels “Suburban Residential Multifamily” land use and character designation.

The Suburban Residential Multifamily designation is for properties where multi-family residential development is intended to blend with a suburban residential character. The site at 16 W Dry Creek Circle is bordered by Suburban Residential land uses to the north and west, and Suburban Commercial to the east and south so the proposed designation will provide a natural transition between business uses and the residential neighborhood to the north. Further, this change in the land use will enable development of much-needed homes in an area that can benefit from activation at new times: business parks being busy on weekdays, and residential communities being more active on weeknights and weekends.

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 a drop to 173 units and 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 proposed land use, 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 design team 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 Highline Canal Trail, and other infrastructure matters will be detailed at the time of the Site Plan.

Additionally, 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. The team is committed to collaborating with neighbors and looks forward to a future meeting to discuss the updates made to plans and accept feedback.

FUTURE LAND USE AND CHARACTER MAP AMENDMENT DECISION CRITERIA

The Director shall make a recommendation to Planning Commission and the Commission may approve, approve with conditions, or deny an Amendment to the Future Land Use and Character Map based on conformance with the criteria. The decision criteria are as follows:

1. **Compatibility.** The land use types and characteristics of the proposed land use category will be compatible with the properties in the immediate vicinity of the subject property;

The Suburban Residential Multifamily land use type is intended to allow multifamily land use that blends in with a Suburban character. The MDP site plan demonstrates great efforts to minimize



impact on neighboring suburban single family detached homes, with deep setbacks from residences to the north, stepped buildings, and heavily planted landscape buffers.

2. **Impact Mitigation.** The amendment may serve to mitigate adverse impacts of the use and development of land on the natural or built environments, including, but not limited to, mobility, air quality, water quality, noise levels, stormwater management, and vegetation, or will be neutral with respect to these issues;

As a redevelopment within an established area, the proposed amendment to the Future Land Use and Character Map builds-on and improves existing city infrastructure. As a residential land use, it will provide efficient use of land near Broadway, a major arterial road with high frequency bus service, will enable the planting of new trees and shrubs, and will provide a stormwater quality pond within the site. All impacts are neutralized to the greatest extent possible. Further, development of this large-lot single-family home-site furthers the goals of utilizing under-performing assets to provide a steady rate of growth within the community.

3. **Comprehensive Plan.** The proposed amendment supports the goals of the comprehensive plan;

Suburban Residential Multifamily land use in this area supports all the Housing and Neighborhoods goals from the Comprehensive Plan:

GOAL H&N 1: A quantity and diversity of housing options that makes living in Littleton attainable for a wide range of age groups and income levels.

Multifamily residences are often more affordable to rent than single family homes and a better “fit” for smaller households.

GOAL H&N 2: Appealing housing choices for families drawn by Littleton’s educational, recreational, and other amenities.

Suburban Residential Multifamily in this particular neighborhood offers more residences within short walking distance of several schools, the Highline Canal Trail, and Littleton Hospital.

GOAL H&N 3: Neighborhoods that are safe and comfortable for all residents.

Suburban Residential Multifamily in this area will better activate the existing office park outside of traditional work hours, providing more eyes on the street, and on the Highline Canal Trail.

GOAL H&N 4: Neighborhoods that maintain their character or are carefully managed when headed toward transition.

Suburban Residential Multifamily enables densification within proximity of Broadway, while avoiding traffic impacts on the surrounding residential neighborhood. Additionally, the proposed plan in the MDP is designed to minimize the visual impact of multifamily buildings on the single family detached residences to the north.

GOAL H&N 5: Housing that supports choice in mobility and investments in transportation infrastructure.

Suburban Residential Multifamily within proximity of high-frequency transit on Broadway and Highline Canal Trail will support both transit and trail use among residents and visitors.



4. **Changing Conditions.** The amendment may serve to address a changing condition that was not anticipated by the Comprehensive Plan.

The Future Land Use and Character map was adopted in 2019, three years prior to adoption of the current zoning map in 2022. With the Zoning Map update, the site's zoning was updated from a PL-O to Corridor Mixed, with a PL-O overlay. The Corridor Mixed zoning is intended to "encourage good standards of site planning, sustainable design, architecture, and landscape design to maintain quality of place and a desirable community character."

ALIGNMENT WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Anchored**
Amending the map to enable Suburban Residential Multifamily development in an infill context enables the city to welcome new residents near the jobs, schools, lifestyle amenities, and services, which make Littleton special, without expanding city boundaries and overextending resources.
- **Authentic**
Amending the map to enable Suburban Residential Multifamily development will provide additional housing options for people who appreciate Littleton's distinctive identity and wish to become or remain members of the community, but are seeking right-sized living for smaller households.
- **Connected**
Amending the map to enable Suburban Residential Multifamily development on this particular set of parcels will enable future residents of the Suburban Residential Multifamily community to connect to the Highline Canal Trail and high-frequency transit on Broadway, within a few minutes' walk or roll from their homes. New residents here will contribute to community activities and support nearby businesses.
- **Active**
Amending the map to enable Suburban Residential Multifamily development adjacent to the Highline Canal will support future residents' use of the trail network to maintain a healthy lifestyle and make the most of the nearby natural resources.
- **Engaged**
Amending the map to Suburban Residential Multifamily will enable development that has been discussed extensively with Littleton residents in proximity of the site. The development and design team has engaged with residents and nearby business owners to design a community in a manner that is respectful to those already established nearby.

We look forward to working with the City of Littleton to make this proposed community a reality. Please do not hesitate to contact our team, should you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Norris Design

Elyse Applegate
Senior Associate