



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date: 5/15/2023
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Zoom.us/join – ID# 862 5880 9056 and
City Council Chambers
751 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

A. Call To Order

Chair Cynthia Harris called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Cynthia Harris (Chair), Andrew Barnes, Andrew Ehrich, Katie Ferrick, Linh Dan Do (Vice Chair), Henry Riggs, Jennifer Schindler

Staff: Christine Begin, Planning Technician; Kyle Perata, Planning Manager; Matt Pruter, Associate Planner

C. Reports and Announcements

Kyle Perata, Planning Manager, announced an advisory body and commissions training event on May 16, 2023. He said the City Council at its May 23, 2023 meeting would review the Planning Commission's denial of a use permit for 100 Terminal Avenue and the Planning Commission's approval of a use permit and architectural control for 961 El Camino Real both of which actions were called up by separate council members under the call up policy process. He said at the same meeting the Council would consider the Planning Commission's recommendation for approval of the revisions to the planned development permit for 700-800 El Camino Real.

D. Public Comment

Chris Kummer, an architect, expressed concern that Menlo Park Planning Division staff enforced unwritten policies and shared various personal experiences of projects of his that he thought illustrated that and requested that if policies were important that they be codified so applicants were clear on what was required.

E. Consent Calendar

- E1. Approval of minutes and court report transcript from April 10, 2023, Planning Commission meeting. (Attachment)

ACTION: Motion and second (Barnes/Schindler) to approve the Consent Calendar consisting of minutes and court report transcript from the April 10, 2023 Planning Commission meeting; passes 6-1-0 with Commissioner Do abstaining.

F. Public Hearing

- F1. Sign Review/Amrita Meher/2 Meta Way:
Consider and adopt a resolution to approve three illuminated signs with bright colors (red) comprising more than 25 percent of the signage area. Two of the signs would be new wall-mounted signs featuring lettering greater than 24 inches in size, and one freestanding monument sign is also proposed. The signage is associated with the citizenM hotel located on the Meta West Campus, in the O (Office) zoning district and regulated by a conditional development permit; Determine this action is categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301's Class 1 exemption for existing facilities and determine this action is consistent with the certified EIR and the first and second addenda to the certified EIR for the Facebook Campus Expansion Project. (Staff Report #23-034-PC)

Associate Planner Matt Pruter noted staff had no additions to the written report.

Ben McGee, citizenM Hotels, spoke on behalf of the sign proposal project.

Chair Harris opened the public hearing and closed it as no persons requested to speak.

ACTION: Motion and second (Barnes/Riggs) to adopt a resolution to approve three illuminated signs with bright colors (red) comprising more than 25 percent of the signage area and determine this action is categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301's Class 1 exemption for existing facilities and determine this action is consistent with the certified EIR and the first and second addenda to the certified EIR for the Facebook Campus Expansion Project; passes 7-0.

G. Study Session

- G1. Study Session/MidPen Housing Corporation/795 Willow Road (Menlo Park Veterans Affairs Campus):
Request for a study session for a proposed three-story, 62-unit, multifamily affordable housing development located in the P-F (Public Facilities) zoning district on the Menlo Park Veteran Affairs Campus at 795 Willow Road. The proposed affordable housing development is being evaluated for consistency with the R-4-S (High Density Residential, Special) zoning district; Study sessions are not CEQA projects. (Staff Report #23-035-PC)

Planner Pruter presented the item.

Cynthia Luzod, MidPen Housing Corporation, introduced Abby Goldware Potluri, Director of Housing Development, and Alazar Malaban, project associate at MidPen and the architect team of Elaine Wong and Rick Williams from Van Meter Williams Pollack, and landscape architect Leah Farley, Jett Landscape Architecture, and Kathleen Negly, arborist with Aeschylus Consulting.

Ms. Luzod said they found in doing community outreach that there was excitement around affordable housing for veterans, strong interest in tree preservation and curiosity about what services residents would receive. She said of the 125 existing trees they would preserve 94 of which 72 were heritage trees.

Rick Williams, architect, presented the proposed design. He said they tried to minimize impact on the trees and located the building against the lease boundary to be as far from the street as

possible. He noted a combination of natural landscaping along Willow Road, a community garden and additional trees placed along the frontage. He said the units were predominantly one-bedroom with seven units being two- and three-bedrooms, which plan was developed by the VA based on known need.

Chair Harris opened public comment.

Public Comment:

- Kathleen Daly, small business owner in the Willows, expressed support for the proposal.

Chair Harris closed public comment.

Discussion Comment: Commissioner Riggs asked about backup energy sources noting an all-electric building. Ms. Abby Goldware Potluri said they were looking at batteries that might power smaller spaces like their community rooms where residents could gather if needed as a safe place. She said they would follow up with the VA and find out what it already had for backup generators.

Commissioner Riggs noted the intersection of Hospital Drive and Willow Road noting it was challenging at certain times of the day and asked if there were any plans to upgrade the traffic signal. Mr. Perata said he would need to follow up separately to answer that as it would be a city project.

Replying to Commissioner Barnes, Planner Pruter said the idea behind general compliance (about the letter from the Community Development Director) was looking at standards and guidelines of the R-4-S zone. He said it was somewhat contextual as the property was federally owned but within city limits. He said the intent was attaining something that generally was within the range of certain standards and thresholds. Replying further to Commissioner Barnes, Planner Pruter said looking at setbacks for example and the modulation requirement that the project achieved as close as it could to those while providing high density housing within several site constraints. He said for example there were limitations with the setback in the positioning of the building that inhibited achievement of some complete setback distances.

In response to Commissioner Barnes' question about community outreach, Ms. Luzod said they held a virtual neighborhood meeting and sent out mailers to addresses within 500 feet of the property site. Replying further, she said MidPen on all its projects conducted community outreach whether required or not by a city to know if people had any major concerns.

Commissioner Barnes noted the size of the VA campus and suggested a larger radius would have been more suitable for outreach for this project.

Replying to Commissioner Schindler, Planner Pruter said with respect to the affordable housing overlay (AHO) the proposed project was not exceeding the maximum density at the base level and was considered base level for R-4-S zoning and not applicable to AHO.

Commissioner Schindler expressed support for greater community engagement and awareness particularly for projects relevant to the City's Housing Element. She said feedback they received on this proposed project included preserving trees, considering increased density, questions about the parking ratios, and questions about support services residents would receive. She said efforts to

preserve the trees and the logic behind the parking ratios were well documented. She said she would like more details about increasing density and what support services would be provided. Ms. Luzod said regarding the density that the VA had informed them they wanted 50 to 60 units on the site based on the demand they were seeing from Willow Housing. She said they had checked with the VA on that number in response to comments from the public and the VA was certain about the proposed density. She said regarding services that 35 of the units that had HUD vouchers would have case managers through the VA. She said in addition to services received from the VA that MidPen was planning for 1.5 full time services employees, one of whom would live onsite, providing a combination of general services such as general vocational and educational support, independence and life skills development such as food preparation, computer learning, exercise and nutritional help, and supportive services. She said their supportive services staff also prepared individualized service plans with residents to set goals and plans to help them achieve those.

Commissioner Schindler asked about the proposed fence design, noting its visibility. Ms. Luzod said they wanted the fence to be somewhat permeable to allow for visibility in and outside but noted it was a safety feature. She showed inspirational images of classic ornamental metal fence, which was the direction they were heading.

Mr. Williams said they would use wood trellises throughout the landscaping so where they could on the fence, they would probably change out the columns to be hefty wood with a trellis on it to make it warmer and friendlier noting the need to have a six-foot fence. He said they would try to blend the landscaping in and out of the fence as well as potentially having plants grow on the fence but without creating a wall.

Commissioner Ferrick said what she had seen so far in the proposal seemed to comply with the intended spirit of R-4-S zoning. She said the site plan was thoughtful and had project-enhancing landscape amenities. She said the design of the building was responsive to the neighborhood context and noted the roof line pitch was lower on the street side. She asked about school population impact information.

Ms. Luzod said the project was within the Ravenswood School District. She said she did not have information currently on the project's student generation rate. She noted that basically 10% of the units would be two- and three-bedrooms and they could get more information from the VA on potential student generation from its wait list for housing.

Commissioner Riggs said regarding outreach that Commissioner Barnes' idea to do outreach to the most adjacent neighborhood was good. He said he had a heavy prejudice in favor of this project as it was one that he had been hoping to see for decades.

Commissioner Ehrich asked about the other parking lot to the east and its use. Ms. Luzod said it was for resident, resident staff, and visitor parking use.

Commissioner Ehrich said he was also excited about the project. He noted it was difficult for a pedestrian to cross Willow Road in that area from the Willow Oaks neighborhood. He encouraged the city in the future to consider ways to bring the proposed development into the community by making it possible to cross Willow Road and visit what looked like would be a lovely site.

Replying to Chair Harris, Mr. Perata said staff would follow up on the question about the intersection operations and pedestrian connectivity across Willow Road and follow up with details if there was anything planned.

Commissioner Do said the building sat well on the site, noting the limitations of an existing structure. She said the one area with no trees was a bonus for the community garden site. She said she appreciated the generous distance between parking and the building.

Chair Harris said this was an exciting project that would provide needed housing for veterans. She said she appreciated the landscaping, the green space, the community garden, the dog park, the use of solar and the all-electric building, and the reduced number of parking spaces. She said she thought it met the spirit of the R-4-S zoning well.

H. Informational Items

H1. Future Planning Commission Meeting Schedule.

- Regular Meeting: June 5, 2023

Mr. Perata said the June 5 agenda would shortly be finalized. He said they were tentatively looking at June 20 as the date for a joint meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission.

- Regular Meeting: June 26, 2023

I. Adjournment

Chair Harris adjourned the meeting at 8:53 p.m.

Staff Liaison: Kyle Perata, Planning Manager

Recording Secretary: Brenda Bennett

Approved by the Planning Commission June 26, 2023

citizenM signage



where we started



what we've done



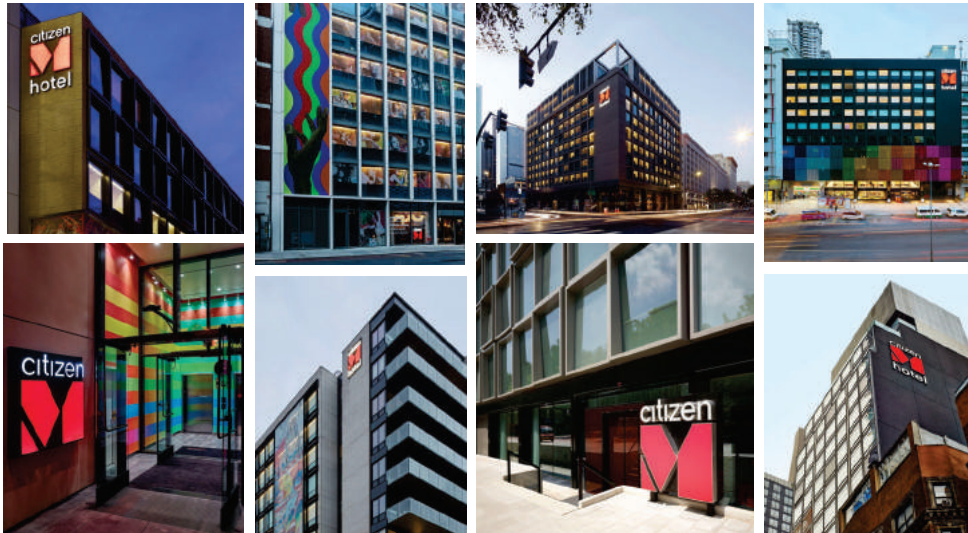
where we're at



why are we here?

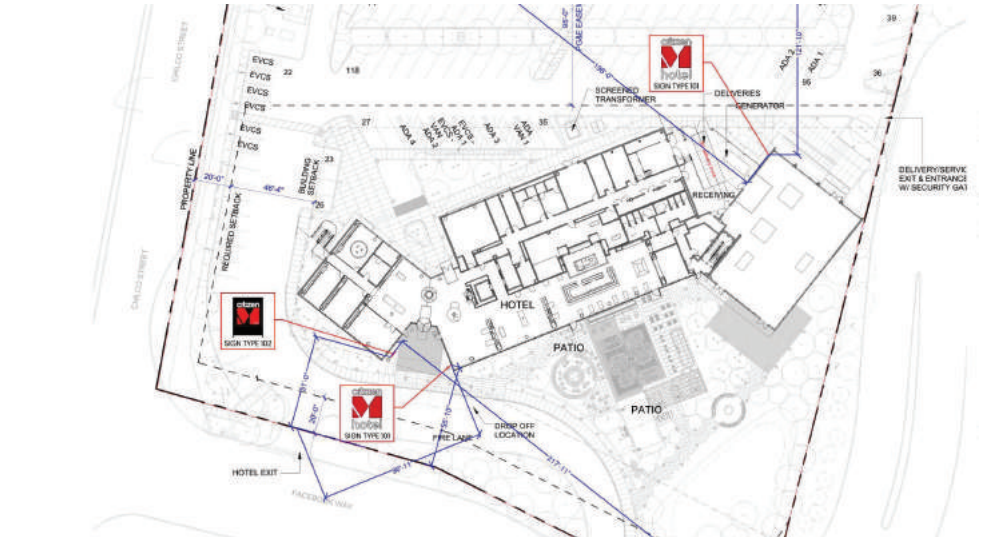


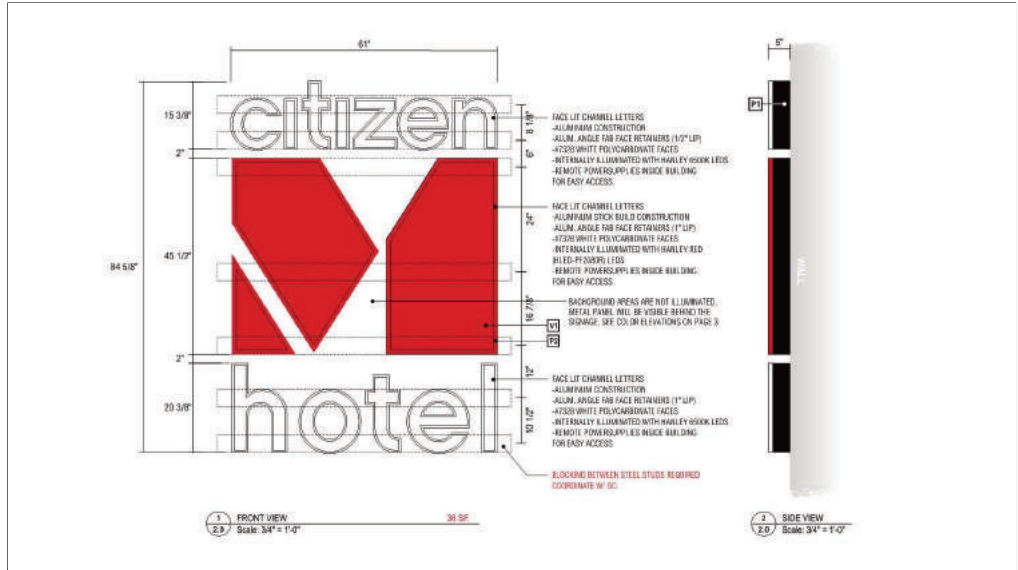
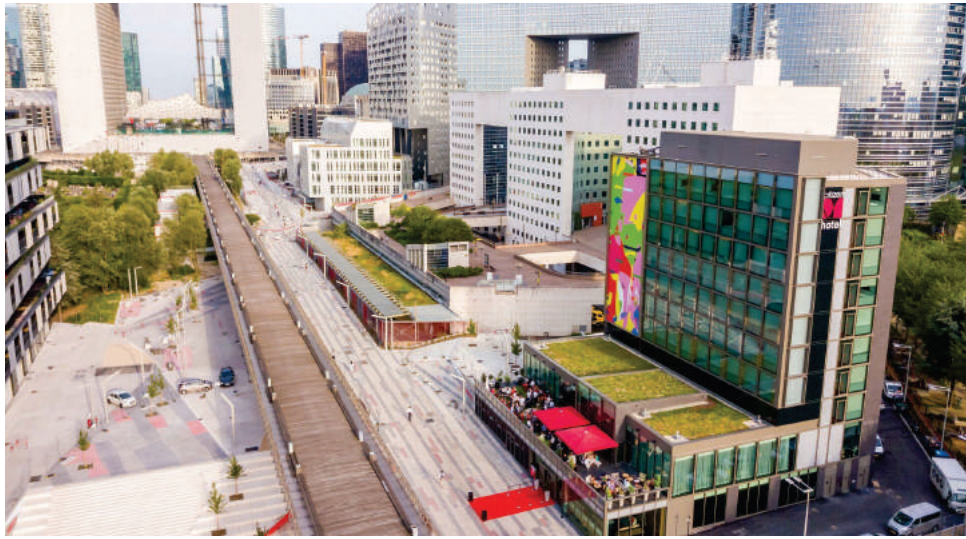
our logo is
a large red
M(ish) thing



April 2022







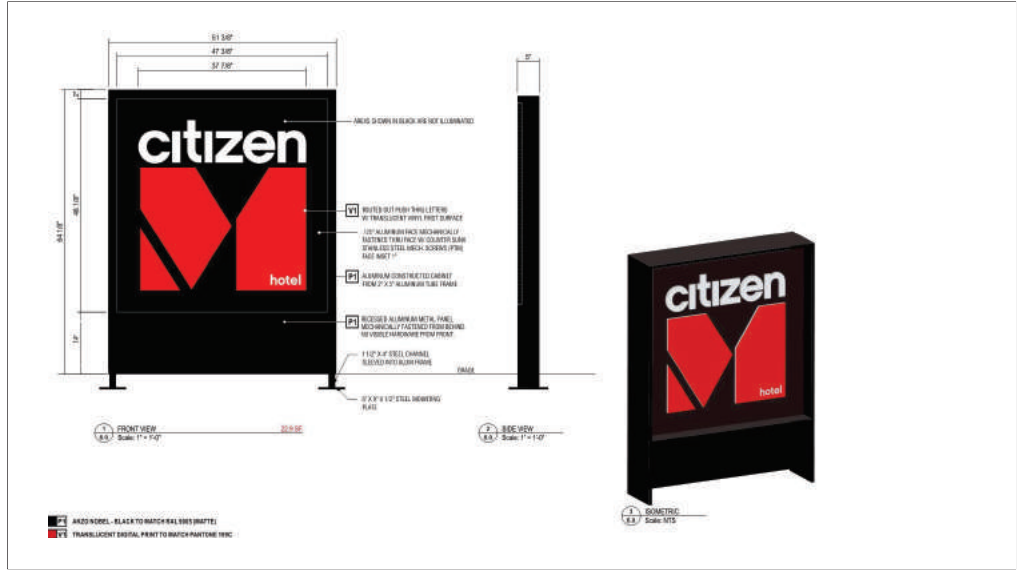
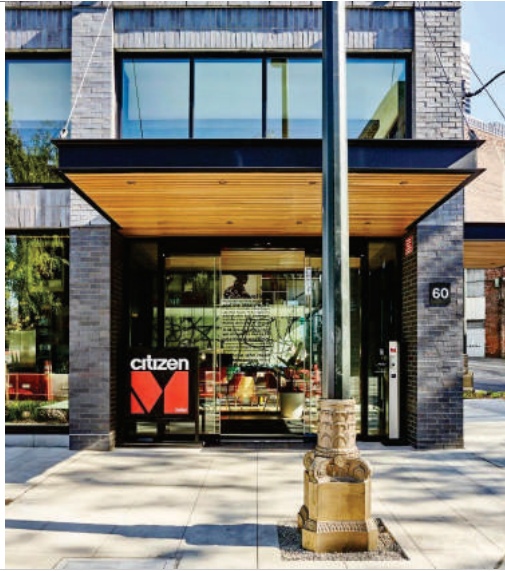
expressway view



neighborhood view



welcoming our
 guests the same
 way
 everywhere.



next time...



thank you



795 Willow Road Veteran Housing

Menlo Park
Planning Commission
May 15, 2023



MidPen Housing

Building Communities. Changing Lives.

Real Estate Development

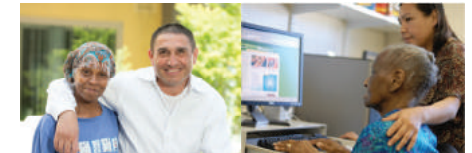
- Over **8,500** affordable homes developed or rehabbed
- **50+** professionals
- **3,000+** homes in pipeline, plus **15** communities under construction

Resident Services

- **3 distinct programs** that serve families, seniors, special needs individuals
- **100+** in-house staff & **300+** service providers partners
- **Intentional support** to help residents advance in all areas of their lives

Property Management

- Manages **124 communities**, serving over **18,800** residents
- **98%** occupancy rate



Project Information



- Located on **2.14 acres** on the VA Palo Alto Healthcare System Campus, Menlo Park Division
- **62 homes** (54 one-bdrm, 4 two-bdrm, 2 three-bdrm, 2 Manager's units)
- **Permanent Supportive Housing** for Veteran Households (formerly homeless and at risk of homelessness) earning **30% - 50% AMI**
- Identified as a **Housing Opportunity site** in the 2023-2031 Housing Element



Who Will This Community Serve?

Veterans and their families who are formerly homeless or at-risk of homelessness, and earning between 30% - 50% of Area Median Income

"After the grievous loss of my wife triggered trauma from my experience in Vietnam, I spiraled into alcoholism, which led to me losing my job and my home. I became homeless. Between a beautiful apartment and valuable services, MidPen gave me a second chance at life. I'm sober and healthy and love volunteering in my community. We need more programs like this."

- Ron Rodriguez, Formerly Homeless U.S. Veteran and Current MidPen Resident living at Onizuka Crossing



Stakeholder Engagement

- Stakeholder meetings: City Councilmembers, Menlo Together, Housing Leadership Council, Housing Commissioners, City Staff, San Mateo County
- Hosted a Virtual Neighborhood Meeting in July 2022
- Feedback from Menlo Park Fire District, City Departments (Planning, Building, Engineering, Public Works, Transportation), West Bay Sanitary



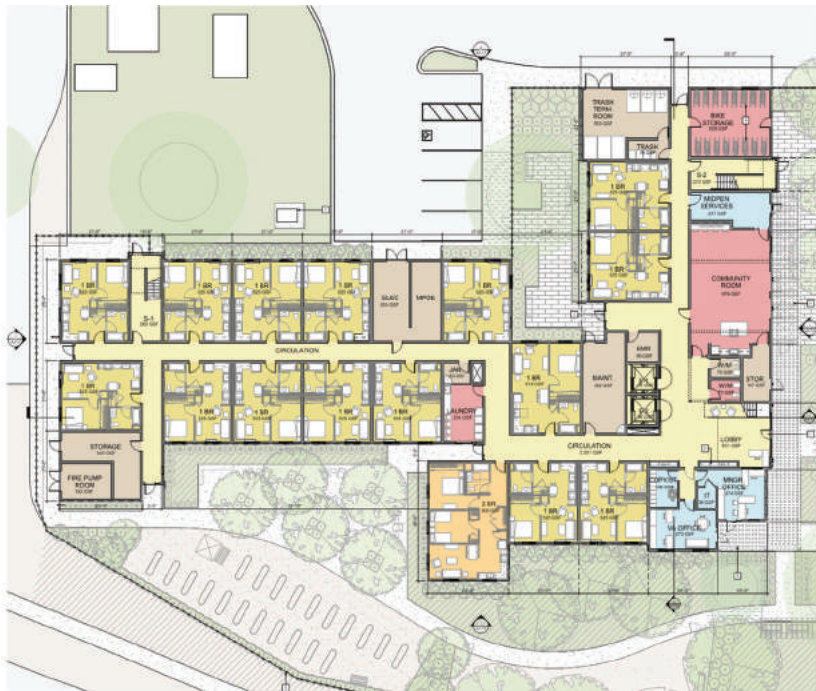
Design Vision & Goals

1. Bridge health & housing
2. Design that transitions the VA Campus to Willow Road
3. Enhance landscaping, while preserving existing trees





1st Floor Plan



Northeast Corner of the Site





Southeast Corner of the Site



Supporting Slides for Discussion

Affordability

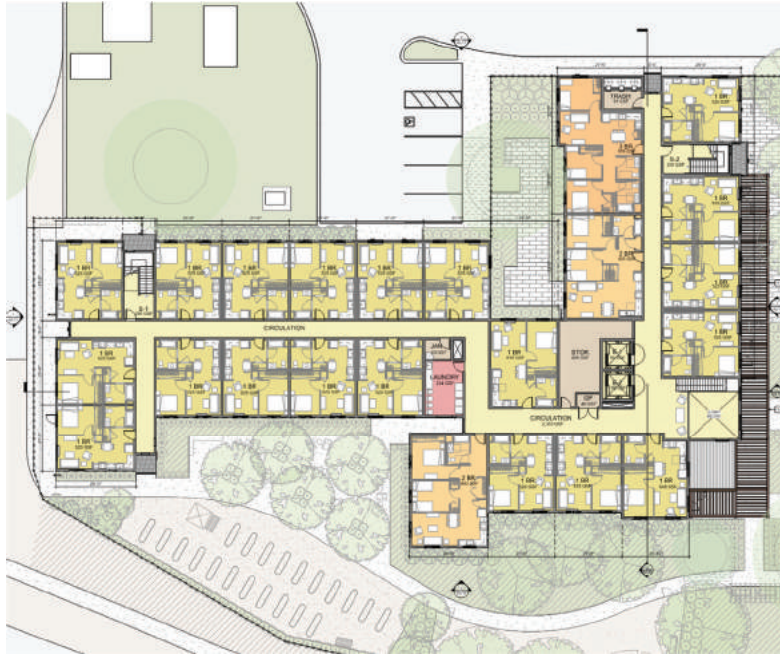
This community will serve extremely low to very low-income households, earning between 30% - 50% of Area Median Income

Income Level	Household Size					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
% of Area Media Income						
Up to 30% AMI	\$39,150	\$44,750	\$50,350	\$55,900	\$60,400	\$64,850
40% AMI	\$52,200	\$59,667	\$67,133	\$74,533	\$80,533	\$84,467
50% AMI	\$65,250	\$74,600	\$83,900	\$93,200	\$100,700	\$108,150

Source: 2022 HUD Income Limits



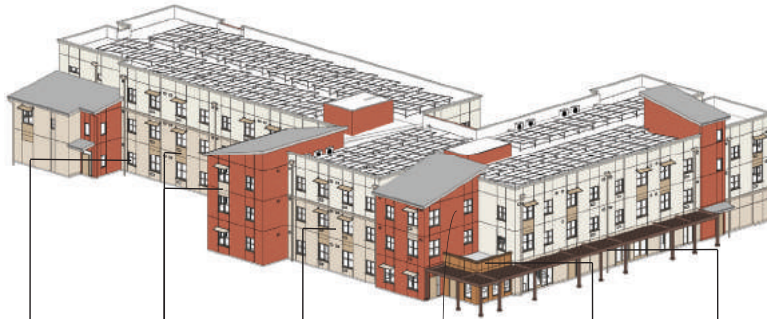
2nd Floor Plan



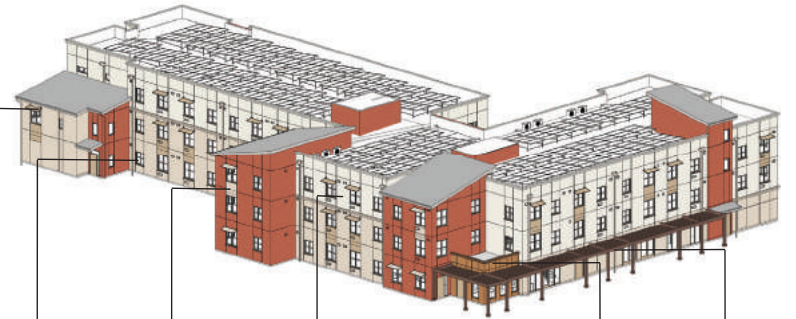
3rd Floor Plan



Entry Inspiration



Entry Inspiration



Financing Momentum

Permanent Financing Source	Amount	Status	Timing
San Mateo County AHF 10.0	\$500,000	Committed	Aug-2022
HUD-VASH Vouchers	35 Vouchers	Committed	Dec-2022
Veterans Affairs - Value of Donated Land	\$7,320,000	Committed	Oct-2024
Menlo Park BMR Funds	\$2,000,000	Applied	Jan-2023
FHLB-SF Affordable Housing Program	\$1,000,000	Applied	Feb-2023
HCD – SuperNOFA VVHP	\$11,120,220	Anticipated	Jun-2023
San Mateo County AHF 11.0	\$5,500,000	Anticipated	Jul-2023
9% Tax Credits – Investor TBD	\$32,116,263	Anticipated	Feb-2024

