

**Project Description for SB330 Formal Application for
Sheridan Drive Apartments
at 320 Sheridan Drive, Menlo Park
*February 28, 2024, revised September 13, 2024***

Location and Current Use: The subject property is a single parcel of land (APN # 055-303-110) totaling approximately 2.52 acres located at the northeast terminus of Sheridan Drive in Menlo Park. On the west side of the property are single family detached homes in the Suburban Park neighborhood of Menlo Park and to the East are Haven House and single-family homes in the Flood Park neighborhood. To the north, behind a tall masonry wall, is Highway 101, and to the South, the San Mateo County owned Flood Park.

Vision and Summary of proposed land use: Formerly a public elementary school site, the land is currently vacant of any structures, fenced off, and owned by the Ravenswood City School District. Like so many of the Bay Area school districts, Ravenswood City School District’s teachers and staff are finding it challenging to secure and afford housing near their jobs. As a result, these school employees are suffering through long commutes which translates to burnout and staff turnover. In a series of public meetings in December 2021 and January 2022, the School Board reviewed proposals to develop the property with below market rate homes, prioritized for teachers and staff, and selected Alliant Strategic Development as the developer and builder.

85 percent of the district teachers and staff are income-eligible for below market rate housing and they will receive preference in the 88 new homes planned for the site by Alliant. Any unsubscribed units will be available to income-eligible residents in the greater community, including first responders, service workers and other lower wage local professionals.

The City selected this property as one of the sites in its recently updated Housing Element to help Menlo Park meet its State mandated housing requirements. In December of 2023, the City rezoned the property with R-3 zoning designation, paving the way for multifamily housing on the site.

Alliant Strategic Development and the School District share in their vision to construct new family housing on this property and to provide the School District teachers and staff, as well as the surrounding area, with much needed affordable housing.

Site Plan and Amenities: Our proposal uses State Density Bonus Law to deliver 88 new homes in three 3-story buildings. The site was designed to preserve the largest and healthiest four heritage oaks on site and to optimize the on-site and adjacent amenities for all new residents in this housing community.

The entrance at the end of Sheridan Drive becomes a private drive through the proposed community with parking on both sides and a total of 116 parking spaces. To enhance emergency access for all, the project proposes a reciprocal emergency access at the northeastern corner of property that will be gated but operable by emergency personnel and only for emergency fire truck access. The plan offers a generous outdoor gathering space located between Buildings 2 and 3 along the southern edge where a picnic grove with a trellis is planned, along with a communal barbeque and play equipment for two distinct age groups of children (0-5 years and 5-12 years). This area is for the apartment residents’ use and includes one of the four Heritage oaks that was retained through the design and a

gated (key fob controlled for security) entry providing a connection for the resident pedestrians and bicyclists to the vast outdoor areas at Flood Park and beyond. The plan includes 14 bicycle parking spaces as required for short-term use and each of the 88 homes has a spacious private outdoor patio that can fit a bicycle on the patio or within the lockable storage room. The future apartment residents residing here will also be able to enjoy a 2,217 square foot communal room inside Building 3 that opens up to the shared outdoor space.

Through the application of a State Density Bonus, the overall density achieved is approximately 35 dwelling units per acre. Waste will be delivered by individuals to the two communal trash enclosures on the property and Recology has reviewed and approved the proposed waste management approach for the project.

Architecture: The proposal offers a variety of floorplans and bedrooms counts to maximize the appeal to families, singles and couples as follows:

	Plan 1	Plan 2	Plan 3
Quantity	42	23	23
Square Feet	600	850	1,118
# of Bedrooms	1	2	3
# of Bathrooms	1	1	2

Stylistically, the architecture was designed to complement the styles found in the surrounding neighborhood. Most of the older homes have traditional elements such as wood siding, gables, composition shingle roofs, while some newer homes have farmhouse and craftsman style elements.

The exterior appearance of our proposed buildings will be a modern farmhouse style with gable and shed roof forms and a combination of board and batten siding, horizontal siding, and exterior plaster. Well defined porches and decks will provide covered outdoor space for each of the units and articulate the building form. Roof forms will be a variety of slopes and roofing will be architectural composition shingle roofing. The railings will be painted metal and there will be wood corbels and beam end accents for additional detail. A unique but complementary color scheme will be used for each of the three buildings. Mechanical equipment will be concealed in a roof well.

Sustainability: The project will be designed to high sustainability benchmarks using LEED for Homes (Silver level), and the latest CalGreen standards, including solar, water-wise plumbing fixtures, drought-tolerant landscaping, and EV-charging stations in guest parking areas. Fifty of the parking spaces in the community will be EV spaces or EV-ready. In addition, specially landscaped features have been employed to meet the State’s stringent C-3 requirements and water conservation and cleansing measures. The project will utilize heat pump HVAC system and heat pump water heating systems as the primary energy system. The project will be dual plumbed to meet the city’s requirements for recycled water use. The building roofs will include photovoltaics as required to comply with the prescriptive Title 24 code requirements and the remaining energy required to meet 100% offset will be purchased from PCE or PG&E.

Approvals being requested: As described in our cover letter, we are seeking approval for the following entitlements, environmental clearance, and permits:

- Architectural Control Approval
- Environmental Review
- Below Market Rate Housing Agreement
- Use Permit, if deemed required
- Heritage Tree Removal Permit – *approved 9/10/24*

Community Outreach: Prior to making a formal application, on December 19, 2023, Alliant hosted a community outreach meeting where residents within the City-recommended 300- foot radius of the property were invited. Approximately 25 of the 60 people invited attended the meeting to learn more about the proposal and the expected timing. Community outreach is ongoing and in early February, Alliant also launched a website <https://www.homesforeducators.org/> with more details about the proposal and an opportunity for the community to pose questions and comments.

In May of 2024, Alliant hosted two additional community engagement events for the two adjacent neighborhoods; one for Flood Triangle residents on May 20th and another for Suburban Park residents on May 21st. Approximately 40 to 50 residents attended these events to learn more about the proposal, to ask questions and to share their thoughts. A wide range of comments were received including concerns over added traffic being the most common concern. Many other questions and comments were related to the number of homes, the amount of parking, building heights, and estimated construction duration. Some residents expressed support for the proposal, citing that more affordable housing was needed to serve the service workers in the area. Many complimented the design changes from the first community meeting, including reducing the building height from 4 stories to 3 stories. Also, many people liked the architectural style with wood type siding.

The project was introduced to the City’s Housing Commission on August 7, 2024 and received questions, comments and encouraging feedback from the Commissioners and majority of the nine residents in attendance.

The project has also been endorsed enthusiastically by the Greenbelt Alliance and The Bay Area Council, two Bay Area non-profits that are stewards of housing and the environment.

The team has also met with several neighbors and smaller groups together individually to answer questions and discuss the proposal and will continue to do so as the project progresses through the approval process. The most recent submittal included the elimination of the dog park in response to comments received from our neighbors at the May engagement events.