



COLLEGE CREEK APARTMENTS
DR20-011: 2150 West College Avenue
Revised Project Narrative
September 2020

Overview. USA Properties Fund, Inc. (USA) proposes the redevelopment of 2150 West College Avenue, the former Sonoma County Water Agency property. USA's development proposal is for a 164-unit apartment home community on 5.79 net acres. The community will consist of one, two, and three bedroom units in three residential buildings with a community center, pool, and other amenities.

Through innovative design and creative site planning on this irregularly shaped 5.79 net acre parcel, College Creek Apartments supports the goals of the City and County by proposing an inclusive community. College Creek will provide housing opportunities for seniors, veterans, lower wage working families, and individuals with incomes ranging from 30% to 120% area median income.

Location. The site is identified as APN 010-320-029 with a current street address of 2150 West College Avenue. The property is located approximately 400' west of the intersection of West College Avenue and Stony Point Road, near the West Side Bus Transfer Center. Finley Community Center and Finley Park are located just east of the project site across Stony Point Road.

Connectivity. The site is well located to transportation alternatives in addition to the West Side Bus Transfer Center which is served by multiple bus lines including a SMART direct bus. The site has a walkable score of 59 for access to neighborhood services, stores, and parks. The sidewalks along the south side of West College, the site frontage, is fully developed; West College is striped with a Bicycle lane. There is also a creek-side trail along College Creek which connects to the larger city-wide creek trail system. The project proposes to extend the existing trail from its current termination point out to West College Avenue.

Background/Site Ownership. The site was acquired by the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) in 1981 for its operation center. In 2008, SCWA was exploring redevelopment of the site for medium/high density workforce housing; and submitted a formal request to the City for a change in the land use designation from Public Institutional to a Multifamily Residential designation. The land use designation change was considered as part of the 2009 Housing Element update and included in the Santa Rosa General Plan 2035 designated as Medium High Density Residential. In September 2013, the Planning Commission initiated a rezoning of the site from PD-0196 (Planned Development) to R-3-30 (Multi-Family Residential), to be consistent with the General Plan.

In March 2014, the County Board of Supervisors declared the property as surplus. In June, 2017, the Board authorized the sale of the property to the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (SCCDC). The property was marketed for development by SCCDC through a lengthy proposal process. In December 2018, USA was selected as the preferred Developer with approval from the Board of Supervisors to enter into an ERNA for the entitlement of a mixed income residential community.

Site Characteristics. The site is 7.46 acres (gross) with 1.67 acres of the parcel reserved for an exclusive easement to the Sonoma County Water Agency for flood channel maintenance and Public Right of way Dedication for a creek-side pedestrian trail. USA's proposal is reserved to the remainder 5.79 acres, leaving the creek environment in its natural state.



The 5.79 acre of developable area is currently developed with three office buildings, a garage building, access driveways, and associated parking areas. The project site is mostly developed and does not support any natural areas or plant communities that are contiguous with offsite habitat. The site contains a robust human-influenced landscape. Ornamental trees planted on site include Glossy Privet, Apple, Sycamore, Chinese Pistache, Tulip Tree, Ponderosa Pine Red Gum Eucalyptus, Cedar, Olive, and Liquid Amber. Native tree species include Valley and Coast Live Oaks with two prominent heritage oaks at the north east corner of the property which will be preserved and featured. Coast Redwood have been planted as ornamentals.

Surrounding Uses. The neighborhood is characterized by civic uses and residential with scattered retail. The site is bordered to the east, west and south by state and local government facilities, and to the north by West College Avenue and a single-family residential neighborhood.

North: West College Avenue and single-family residential

South: City of Santa Rosa utility facilities

East: City of Santa Rosa Fire Department training facility

West: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection facilities

The City's Westside Transfer Center is approximately 400 feet east of the site and is the transfer point for multiple bus routes operated by Santa Rosa CityBus.

General Plan and Zoning Designations. The site is designated as Medium High Density Residential and Zoned as R-3-30 (Multi-Family Residential). Entitlement requested for the implementation of this land use includes:

- Design Review-Major for a 164 unit apartment home community with on-site community center, pool, and other amenities.

Proposed Project. College Creek Apartments is designed to include a development footprint exclusive of the existing creek/drainage channel easement area for a net buildable area of 5.79 acres.

The site plan is designed to maximize density of the net building area with 164 units in three buildings with a mix of one, two, and three bedroom units ranging in size from 622 to 1,240 square feet.

Unit Type	Unit Square Feet	Number of Units
1 bed/1 bath	622	64
2 bed/2 bath (avg)	906	58
3 bed/2 bath (avg)	1,162	42
Total		164

Building mix includes two 3-story walk-up buildings and one 4-story elevator served building; all within the 45-foot height restriction. The combination of building types and building sizes provides options for a variety of households including singles, families, senior, and special physical needs. The inclusion of elevators and adaptable design features in the four-story building provides increased accessibility to most units.

Density. R3-30 Zoning allows 18-30 units per acre. The density of the proposed project for the buildable area is 164 units or 28.33 units per acre.



Affordability. With the objective of prioritizing housing product and maximizing affordability, USA proposes to develop College Creek as a 164 unit multi-generational, mixed-income apartment home community consistent with the City's Housing Allocation Plan with no less than 15% of the units available to households with incomes at or below 80% Area Median Income. The total income range for apartment homes is expected to range from 30% to 80% Area Median Income. Thoughtful, efficient unit plans provides housing alternatives with whole dollar rents that are well below other market rate projects in the City. USA's diverse mix of affordability levels will provide housing opportunities to seniors, veterans, homeless, and lower wage working families and individuals. The project is designed to bring people together through shared spaces and attentive, experienced management.

Amenities. This mix of people places creates opportunities for indoor and outdoor recreation and passive activities. The Community Center, located on the ground floor of the 4-story building, will include the leasing office with leasing lounge, Wi-Fi in common areas, and fitness room. A clubroom with hospitality kitchen, large screen TV, and game tables, Wi-Fi workstations are also planned. Outdoor amenities will include a pool with lounges and seating, barbecue counter with seating, 2-12-year-old children's play area, synthetic turf area, 13-17-year-old multi-purpose sport court, enclosed bike storage and a bike repair station. The spaces are all connected with a network of internal walkways.

Access and Circulation. Vehicular access will be from W College Avenue with two driveways, one near the western boundary and one near the eastern boundary. The western entry features a large heritage oak tree and serves as a landmark to the project. The internal loop drive aisle provides access to parking and building entries. Pedestrian access to and from W College Ave occur at multiple locations with a pedestrian paseo enhanced entry, sidewalks at both vehicle entry drives, as well as direct access walks to the street facing buildings.

An inviting pedestrian paseo at the center of the site with decorative landscape, trees, and benches adds to the neighborhood atmosphere by breaking up the building mass along West College Ave. This pedestrian paseo remains elevated as it crosses the east-west drive aisle, prioritizing the pedestrian experience into the community while also creating a traffic calming feature at the clubhouse entry. Pedestrian circulation within the community is accommodated with a combination of accessible walkways connecting the community to the clubhouse and outdoor amenity areas as well as direct access to the adjacent creek trail.

Sonoma County Water Agency controls the existing channelized creek area along the eastern and southern boundary of the community. At the present time, the Creekside trail does not extend through to West College Avenue. The applicant proposes to coordinate with the Sonoma County Water Agency and the City of Santa Rosa in completing the trail out to the street providing enhanced accessibility to the miles of creek trails meandering throughout the City. A direct access gate for residents to the creek-side trail is also planned along the eastern edge of the community.

Parking. The project as presented includes 272 parking spaces. This represents an overall reduction of 23% of the current multifamily market rate residential parking standards but exceeds the parking standards permitted under the affordable housing density bonus ordinance. Each apartment will have one reserved parking space with the remainder spaces open. This reduction is supported by the close proximity to the Westside Transfer Center (within 400 ft. of the entry) with multiple bus lines and access to SMART. Neighborhood retail services and the Finley Community Park are also within ¼ mile of the site.

The site is also designed with ride share pick-up/drop-off areas near the clubhouse with a furnished clubhouse lobby where residents can watch for arrivals as well as an outdoor seating area outside the clubhouse near the mail center.



Bicycle Parking. Enclosed bicycle parking will be provided for at least 84 bikes fitted with hanging, lockable bike racks. Bike “garages” will be in multiple locations in all three buildings. Fifteen additional short-term bike parking spaces will be scattered throughout the site.

Fencing and Gates. The project design includes 6’ tube steel fencing along the eastern and southern boundaries along the creek edge, leaving an open view to the creek area. This design enhances the open space experience while adding passive observation of the trail as well as ambient lighting from the developed site. USA also proposes a resident gate for direct access to the creek trail. Other fencing includes a screening wood fence along the western boundary adjacent to the CalFire property, as well as fencing around the sport court area deterring loose balls from running into the street, creek, and parking areas.

Architectural Concept. The architectural design for the buildings utilizes simple forms with contemporary architecture. Flat roof with varying height parapets articulate the massing of the apartment buildings. A variety of materials including horizontal composition board siding, board-and-batt composition siding, and plaster are used throughout the project to articulate the building surfaces and to provide variety in the texture of the building elements. Metal awnings, trellis, railings and balcony elements on the apartment structures provide a natural element to the design.

Throughout the project, natural colors and earth tones are proposed for the stucco base and siding features. The variety of finish materials and colors on the buildings provides layering of the design composition both horizontally and vertically. This layering reduces the overall mass of each building and relates to the pedestrian scale.

All the residential buildings are designed with four-sided architecture creating natural surveillance and maximizes visibility of people, parking, and building entries. Residential buildings along the street frontage are arranged in a manner that provides street presence and visual interest. The project accomplishes this by orienting the widest part of the buildings towards the street. These frontages provide windows and balconies that place eyes on the street

Landscape Concept. Landscaping is designed to complement the buildings and make a positive contribution to the overall aesthetics of the site. HVAC units will be roof-mounted and screened from sight to create more areas for landscaping.

Low-profile landscaping, including screen shrubs, grasses, and groundcover will be utilized and compatible with the bio-retention areas. All parking lot areas will be landscaped according to the city’s Design Guidelines. The pedestrian paseo at the center of the community will include tree-lined, ornamental landscaping and seating areas.

The planting design will call for new trees, shrubs, native, drought-tolerant, and low-fuel species to create layers of seasonal color and texture to complement the architecture style and setting.

Tree Preservation and Mitigation. The existing site is heavily planted with a variety of native, non-native, and ornamental trees. Except for extending the pedestrian trail out to West College Ave, no development is anticipated in the creek easement area. Trees within the creek corridor will remain. Within the developable area of 5.79 acres, the applicant will, to the extent possible, preserve in place heritage trees including two major oak trees at the eastern entryway. Where trees cannot be preserved due to site design or construction impacts, the applicant will work with the City to mitigate lost trees with on-site replacement trees and mitigation fees as required per City Municipal Code 17-24 Trees.



Green Technologies. The project will be designed to incorporate elements from the City's Climate Action Plan and City of Santa Rosa's CALGreen requirements, and CalGreen Tier 1 Standards for 2020. These features can include energy and water efficient design measures including incorporating solar power design, the installation of several electric charging stations in the parking area, and water efficient landscaping consisting of drought tolerant plant species separated into hydro-zones for irrigation needs. The Project will include high efficiency lighting, energy efficient appliances, and low-flow plumbing faucets and fixtures. The applicant will also utilize a construction waste recycling program during demolition and construction to minimize waste to the extent practicable. A copy of the Climate Action Plan for the community is attached as exhibit A to this narrative.

Project Ownership and Management. The project will be owned and managed by USA Properties Fund, Inc. USA Properties has developed, constructed, or rehabbed more than 12,000 units of family and senior apartments in approximately 90 communities throughout California and Nevada. USA Properties owns and manages six apartment communities in Santa Rosa including Terracina Santa Rosa a few blocks east of the site at 471 W College Ave.

Public Outreach. This site has a long history of public outreach through the City (General Plan Update and Rezone) and the County Community Development Commission as they prepared to release the Request for Proposal for Multifamily housing.

More recently, USA has also engaged with the neighborhood up to a 1.5 mile radius of the site to gather feedback about the proposed project. USA is assisted in those efforts by Muelrath Public Affairs who is also managing an informational website for the project. The website (www.CollegeCreek.com) provides a resource for the public (in English and Spanish) to follow the progress of the project through the design and entitlement process.

- **Community Presentation.** March 2019 Open House Community Presentation at Finley Community Center. Outreach 1.5 mile radius of site.
- **Letter Campaign.** May 2019, second presentation to project with brochure, comment card, and introduction to website. Outreach 1.5 mile radius of site.
- **Website Launch.** May 2019 www.collegecreek.com launched. Updated and maintained by Muelrath Public Affairs.
- **Follow-up correspondence.** June 2019-August 2019, follow-up correspondence to those who submitted questions via the project website or returned a comment card with questions or comments regarding the conceptual proposal. Outreach extends up to 1.5 miles from the site, contingent on the home address of each individual comment card or website respondent.
- **Neighborhood Meeting by City.** The Neighborhood Meeting was held on 9/18/19. Most attendees expressed concern regarding traffic on West College Avenue and the potential for parking on neighborhood streets. Information was given on who to contact in the City regarding restricting on-street parking in neighborhoods.
- **Design Review Board-Concept Design Review:** The Design Review Board reviewed the project in a public hearing on 9/19/19, providing feedback on the site planning and aesthetics of the proposed project. A summary of changes to the community design based on that valuable feedback is noted below.



Summary of Project Revisions-Design Review Board Concept Design Feedback

Architecture Features and Design:

The Design Review Board provided feedback on the overall aesthetics and site utilization. To address those comments, the College Creek design team note the following:

- Color Palette: While much of the original color palette remains the same, the use and placement of colors has been rearranged to create a more vibrant appearance, and accent gathering spaces, entries, and architectural features.
- Board and Batten has been introduced into more of the elevation to soften the architecture
- Parapet heights remain as originally proposed; OSHA requires a minimum of 42" above the roof for protection of workers servicing roof mounted equipment. Decorative features and change of materials have been introduced to reduce the visual impact of these parapets.
- The accessory structure previously located along the western boundary has been eliminated with the placement of maintenance room into the larger building and the addition of additional bicycle parking in each of the smaller buildings.
- The entries into the 3-story buildings along West College and the entry into the Clubhouse/Main building have been treated to create a sense of place with trellis and enhanced landscaping.
- The community center area on the first floor of the 4-story building has been reconfigured within the building to provide a line of vision out to the street. The entry into the community center has also been redesigned creating another "destination" feature.

Common Open Spaces:

The design team embraced several comments from the Design Review Board regarding open space and amenity area designs including placement, intent, people experience, addressing varying ages, and creating spaces with broader appeal. The revised site plan notes the following enrichments:

- The central pedestrian paseo from West College through to the clubhouse is now all on one plane, from front sidewalk and continuing across the east-west drive aisle on to the Clubhouse entry. The effect of this raised walkway through the drive areas prioritizes the pedestrian experience and serves as a traffic calming feature at a potentially high pedestrian traffic area.
- Swimming pool has been moved east, farther away from the buildings, to provide better sun exposure. This shift opened space within the courtyard for improved outdoor activity spaces.
- Children Play Area has been moved closer to the building and enlarged. Free-form play equipment appeals to a wider age-range of children.
- Turf area added in central courtyard.
- Re-arranged parking plan has opened additional outdoor space along the creek border for a Multi-purpose Sport Court programmed with half-court basketball, 4-square, tetherball, and hopscotch. This area will also include benches and will be fenced to contain balls within the sport court.



Natural and Built Environment:

College Creek Apartments has been designed to integrate into the existing neighborhood and with the surrounding natural site features. Two three-story buildings front directly onto West College Avenue with common entries and units that face directly toward the street. These buildings conceal most of the parking behind them and separate the vehicular entrances away from the adjacent street intersection.

A four-story building is set back behind the three-story buildings and away from the surrounding neighborhood. This building is connected to West College Avenue with a pedestrian paseo that bisects the street-facing buildings opposite Navarro Street.

The four-story building frames three sides of a central amenity-filled courtyard that opens to the southeast and to a tree-lined bike path and drainage channel. Direct access is provided for residents to the bike path which also serves as an amenity for the surrounding community.

Architecture:

The overall building forms have been articulated to emphasize the scale and rhythm of the individual residential unit with a consistent level of detail applied to all building elevations. Parapets of varying height modify the building profile and individual unit balcony forms extend out in-front of the main building to break up the overall building mass.

Throughout the project, natural colors and earth tones are proposed for the stucco base and siding features to compliment the colors of the surrounding tree canopy. The variety of finish materials and colors on the buildings provides layering of the design composition both horizontally and vertically. This layering reduces the overall mass of each building and relates to the pedestrian scale. An accent color provides additional interest at building corners and at building entries.

All the residential buildings are designed with four-sided architecture with a consistent level of detail on all elevations. Trim at all windows and doors, sunshades, cornices and other decorative elements add further detail to each elevation.

Landscaping:

The landscape design has integrated the trees, plants and built features throughout the project site to enhance the articulation of the architectural features and provide a cohesive outdoor environment for residences and guests alike. Species of appropriate size and shape have been selected to offer a sense of place appropriate to the architectural building massing and site conditions. These include parking lot trees to provide shade, screening shrubs to afford privacy and accent plants to offer seasonal color and interest throughout the year.

Outdoor amenities are surrounded with landscapes of drought tolerate and low-fuel trees, shrubs and grasses that offer a peaceful and tranquil settings. A tree lined paseo with seating and an arbor structure provides a pedestrian entry path that transitions them from the public space to private space. A large central courtyard with a swimming pool, barbecue area and children's play area has incorporated

landscape planting and trees to soften the hardscape and provide a buffer between the buildings and the site amenities.

To the extent possible, heritage trees have been preserved in-place and a prominent grouping of preserved mature oaks trees is featured on the eastern entry to the project site as a focal point. Thoughtful care has been taken to try and balance the relationship between the hardscape materials with the softscape of the landscape plants and trees.

Placemaking/Livability:

The outdoor environment has been designed to offer its' residences a sense of place. Communal areas provide outdoor activities for family and friends of all ages and abilities. Whether it's taken a swim in the community pool or playing a game at the sports court, we are offering a wide range of activities for the residence. This also includes passive areas, such as the paseo seating area and the game tables near the mailboxes.

A large outdoor courtyard provides a central place to connect and interact with family and friends. An outdoor barbecue and seating areas offer outdoor dining under a shade structure or on an open patio. Benches and seating areas have been provided to allow parents seating areas while they can still keep an eye on the children. Pedestrian pathways connect all of these activities and extend out to the sports court area. Special attention has been given to the placement of the outdoor activities to ensure compatibility and accessibility.

Indoor communal spaces and the outdoor environment combine to create integrated resident amenities. The Community Center, located on the ground floor of the 4-story building, will include the leasing office with leasing lounge, Wi-Fi in common areas, and fitness room. A clubroom with hospitality kitchen, large screen TV, and game tables, Wi-Fi workstations compliment the outdoor areas on each side of the building. Bike parking has been incorporated within each building to encourage residents to utilize the adjacent bike path.

This mix of people places creates opportunities for indoor and outdoor recreation and passive activities. The Community Center, located on the ground floor of the 4-story building, will include the leasing office with leasing lounge, Wi-Fi in common areas, and fitness room. A clubroom with hospitality kitchen, large screen TV, and game tables, Wi-Fi workstations are also planned. Outdoor amenities will include a pool with lounges and seating, barbecue counter with seating, 2-12-year-old children's play area, synthetic turf area, 13-17-year-old multi-purpose sport court, enclosed bike storage and a bike repair station. The spaces are all connected with a network of internal walkways.

Sustainability:

The project will be designed to incorporate elements from the City's Climate Action Plan and City of Santa Rosa's CALGreen requirements, and CalGreen Tier 1 Standards for 2020. These features can include energy and water efficient design measures including incorporating solar power design, the installation of several electric charging stations in the parking area and 15% EV capable spaces, and water efficient landscaping consisting of drought tolerant plant species separated into hydro-zones for irrigation needs. The Project will include high efficiency lighting, energy efficient appliances, and low-

flow plumbing faucets and fixtures. The applicant will also utilize a construction waste recycling program during demolition and construction to minimize waste to the extent practicable.

The project will also preserve on-site natural resources. The existing site is heavily planted with a variety of native, non-native, and ornamental trees. Except for extending the pedestrian trail out to West College Ave, no development is anticipated in the creek easement area. Trees within the creek corridor will remain. Within the developable area of 5.79 acres, the applicant will, to the extent possible, preserve in place heritage trees including two major oak trees at the eastern entryway. Where trees cannot be preserved due to site design or construction impacts, the applicant will work with the City to mitigate lost trees with on-site replacement trees and mitigation fees as required per City Municipal Code 17-24 Trees.

The landscape plant material will be drought tolerate and low-fuel trees, shrubs, groundcovers and grasses. Native species will be integrated and proper spacing will be used to reduce the amount of maintenance. Drip irrigation will be provided to reduce the amount of water use and overspray.

Where possible, local building and landscape materials will be specified and sourced.

All units will have operable windows to allow fresh air into each unit. Each unit will also have its own air handling unit with ducted fresh air and Merv 8 air filters. Common areas will also have operable windows and fresh air serving the air handling units.

The Building envelope will have Quality Insulation Installation (QII) as well as enhance building envelope performance under CAL Green Tier 1 requirements.