



Space Village Apartments

**Variance of Use
Letter of Intent**

APPLICANT-OWNER/CONSULTANT INFORMATION:

OWNERS

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ENGINEERING

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LETTER OF INTENT: SPACE VILLAGE APARTMENTS VARIANCE OF USE

Property Information:

Site Address: 6895 Space Village Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80936
Parcel ID #: 54170-000-019
Zoning: CC (Commercial Community) District
Acreage: 0.628 acres

REQUEST:

Approval of a site development plan to provide formal documentation of uses approved by the variance permit (File No. VA-20-1) to authorize a multifamily use in the CC zone. The Development Plan identifies compliance with the development standards of the Code and conditions of approval to permit the continued reuse of a multifamily residential housing within an existing motel structure together with the historic parking ratio in the CC zoning district. The structure contains a total of 22 units: 12 one – room (studio) units, & 10 two-room (efficiency) units. Each unit has a small kitchen and individual bathroom. Each dwelling unit will be given a secondary address (101-1XX) for the first floor and (201-2XX) on the second floor, to be finalized with Enumerations.

The site development plan includes parking, vehicular circulation, open space, fencing, screening, and landscaping details associated with the site and use. Additional detailed site development plan review is required to demonstrate compliance with all applicable development standards of the Land Development Code under an administrative process. The existing infrastructure and levels of public service which have served the property is in use and adequate to support the multifamily residential use of the existing hotel/motel structure.

PARKING CONSIDERATIONS – ALTERNATE PARKING PLAN/COMPLIANCE

REQUEST:

The applicant proposes an alternate use of the historic hotel parking ratio of 1 space per unit instead of the multifamily parking ratios. Application of this ratio requires 22 resident spaces, seven (7) guest spaces, and two (2) ADA compliant spaces. The plan maintains the previous parking ratios with the addition of a third ADA complaint parking space as depicted on the site plan.

As a multifamily use, parking ratios require 1.5 spaces per single bedroom units and 1.7 for two-bedroom units. The motel structure contains 12 single (1) bedroom units and 10 two (2) bedroom units. According to the multifamily parking ratios, 18 spaces are required for the 12 single-bedroom units, and 17 spaces are required for the 10 two-bedroom units. One (1)

space per three (3) units is required for guest parking for a total of 7 guest spaces (22units/3= 7.33 spaces, rounded down to 7 spaces). ADA requires 2 compliant spaces where 26 to 50 standard spaces are required.

- A total 44 spaces are required to meet multifamily parking ratio requirements to include:
- 35 resident spaces
- 7 guest spaces
- 2 ADA compliant spaces (to include a van accessible space)

The applicant wishes to use the existing historic hotel parking ratio of 1 space per unit instead of the multifamily parking ratios. The applicant requests approval of an alternate parking plan to multifamily parking requirements (parking) to authorize 33 parking spaces (22 resident, 8 guest, & 3 ADA spaces to include a van accessible space), where 44 spaces are required (see parking category totals above) based on an equitable consideration of the conditions affecting the property, finding that the burdens of strict compliance with the zoning requirement(s) significantly exceed the benefits of such compliance for the specific piece of property.

The property is irregularly shaped. The property width tapers from 118.00 feet at the Space Village Avenue frontage to a width of 53.77 at the property rear. The site was designed to maximum spatial capacities in support of the existing structure, compliance with setback requirements, and parking & vehicular maneuverability for the previous authorized use.

The applicant requests PCD Director approval to use the existing historic hotel parking ratio of 1 space per unit instead of the multifamily parking ratios. The original development plan approval included a parking ratio for motels/hotels of one (1) space per lodging unit. A total of 22 spaces were provided for patrons, with additional spaces for non-patron guests and ADA parking.

The site has operated as a multifamily use with hotel parking ratios for several decades. Despite the reduced number of parking the site has maintained its viability as a multifamily housing option. According to the applicant, parking or the availability of adequate parking for residents has not been an issue since acquiring and operating the site in 2013.

LANDSCAPING (ALTERNATE LANDSCAPE DESIGN REQUEST):Buffer between Non-residential and Multifamily Uses

A 15' landscape buffer is required between the eastern 330' site boundary between the multifamily use and the adjacent school site (Colorado Military Academy) zoned CS-CAD-O. 1 tree is required per 25 linear feet (13 total trees) of the boundary. 13 mature evergreen trees are located within this buffer area.

Internal Landscaping Requirements

The 27,625 SF site requires 15%, or 4,144 SF, of internal landscaping. The site currently provides 8,377 SF where 4,144 SF is required. Per the Code, the minimum number of trees in this landscape area (category) is 1 tree per 500 SF of required internal landscaping. The required internal landscaping is 4,144 SF, therefore a minimum of 8 trees is required.

3 existing mature trees are located within the internal landscape area. An additional 10 fully mature juniper shrubs with an average height of 5' tall exist within the internal landscape area. An additional 16 existing trees are located on site which have not been designated to meet roadway or multifamily/non-residential buffering counts. 13 are located along the eastern boundary within the landscape setback. These have not been counted towards any other category or requirements.

Parking Lot Landscaping Requirements

Based on the need for the alternate parking plan/compliance request (see above section), the existing parking areas will not accommodate the required landscape islands and maintain the current parking space counts. The applicant requests consideration of the existing site design, irregular shape of the property, and existing access/circulation easements as justification to consider the parking lot landscaping as legally-nonconforming with respect to the permitted (historic) use of a hotel/motel and the historic relationship between the current hotel use on the west and the subject property.

The Code requires a minimum of 2/3 of the parking lot be screened from roadway views. The parking area (12 spaces) adjacent to Space Village Avenue sits approximately 3-4' below the ROW. The elevation difference acts as a natural berm to shield headlights from the ROW and provide partial concealment of the parking areas. There are two parking lot islands near the entrance of this parking area which have existing shrubs that are a minimum 3' in height that provide additional screening of this parking area.

The parking area located on the southern edge of the site is not visible from the ROW. This area is partially screened by existing maintenance buildings located on the Travel Lodge property and parking lot landscaping at the shared property line between the Travel Lodge and the Colorado Military Academy.

Roadway Landscaping Requirements

A 20' roadway landscape buffer and setback has been provided for the Space Village Avenue (minor arterial) frontage. The frontage is 118' and requires 1 tree per 25' of frontage (5 trees). There are currently 3 existing mature trees within this buffer/setback. One roadway tree is located outside the 20' buffer but within 50' of the road ROW. The roadway planting area has limited space to provide additional street trees. the parking area has been shifted southerly to accommodate a 5' sidewalk extension easterly along the roadside frontage. Additional roadway plantings would require possible reduction in parking area to accommodate needed spacing and retaining walls. The applicant requests approval of an alternate landscape design that allows the existing roadway landscaping to meet planting requirements, per justification below:

ALTERNATE LANDSCAPE DESIGN REQUEST

The benefits to be achieved and the overall purposes of the landscaping required by this [Landscaping] (6.2.2.A) Section are:

(1) to create a positive image and visual appeal both along the road which is highly visible and internal properties which provide a working, shopping and living environment;

The existing landscaping provides a positive image and visual appeal along the Space Village Ave frontage.

(2) to decrease the scale of parking lots, provide shade, and reduce heat, glare and noise;

Per the requested Alternate Parking Plan/Compliance request, the availability of parking and additional parking amenities is limited by existing building placement and shared parking easements between the site and the Travel Lodge on the west.

(3) to separate circulation systems; to soften and reduce the mass of buildings; to screen and buffer lower intensity uses from higher intensity uses and protect residential privacy; and

The existing landscaping does provide separation of circulation systems. Existing roadway landscaping separates the vehicular/pedestrian travel along Space Village Ave and the proposed sidewalk extension along the roadway frontage. internal landscaping provides limited separation between the sidewalks provided access to ground level units and the sidewalks that provide access along the parking areas. Existing landscaping does provide softening of the building mass which is primarily east/west facing. the building frontage from the roadway view is only 25' in width which is less than 20% of the roadway frontage (118'). The existing landscaping

provides screening against the private school property to the east. The western boundary is hotel/motel use (Travel Lodge by Wyndham) as the subject property prior to approval of the variance to permit the conversion from a hotel to a multifamily housing use. Except for the revolving occupancy of the existing Travel Lodge, the uses on the properties are relatively the same.

(4) to create an overall pleasant and attractive surrounding.

The existing landscape treatments create an overall pleasant/attractive surrounding.

TRAFFIC AND ACCESS

Public access to the site is from Space Village Avenue via existing shared access easements with adjoining properties which provide additional access to Space village Avenue and Peterson Road. Although located within unincorporated El Paso County, the property is not adjacent to county-controlled rights of way. Space Village Ave is a State controlled access road and Peterson Drive is controlled by city of Colorado Springs.

A traffic memo prepared by Drexel, Barrell & Co. dated, July 2, 2020 has been submitted in support of the use variance. The finds that the “proposed change in use for this site, vehicular traffic will be more than adequately accommodated by the existing access locations and Space Village Avenue”. Additional detailed review of traffic, drainage, and other plans and reports will be reviewed at the site development plan process and completion of the final plat for the property.

DRAINAGE:

No new drainage or stormwater improvements are proposed. A drainage report was prepared in support of the development. No adverse impacts were identified, and no additional drainage improvements are planned.

PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

Water and wastewater municipal services for the development will continue to be provided by Cherokee Metropolitan District. The District has committed to continue to provide service at historic levels. A finding of sufficiency is expected with the final plat approval (PCD File No. SF-21-25)

Utility and public services will be provided by the following associated districts:

1. Water: Cherokee Metropolitan District
2. Wastewater: Cherokee Metropolitan District
3. Gas: Colorado Springs Utilities
4. Electric: Colorado Springs Utilities
5. Fire: City of Falcon Fire Department
6. Police Protection: El Paso County Sheriff

WATER MASTER PLAN COMPLIANCE:

The property and use have been served by Cherokee water since 1985. The district issued a “Recommitment Letter #01”, dated February 3, 2020 as a formal Letter of Recommitment from the CMD to provide municipal water and sewer services to the site in order to comply with County subdivision submittal requirements. According to the Letter, “Cherokee Metro District staff, along with the developer, have determined that 2.3 AF/yr, the highest water use in the preceding 5 years, will be sufficient for this development. There is no irrigation planned on the property.”

The development area is located in REGION 5 as identified on the El Paso County Water Master Plan Planning Regions Map and is within the Cherokee Metropolitan District (CMD) Service Area. Region 5 consists of areas served by CMD and is not expected to experience significant growth by 2060. The District issued a “recommitment letter” of service since the property is currently served by Cherokee.

Required analysis, reports, and documentation of service commitments, including available water supply information have been provided with the variance and final plat applications in support of the objectives, goals and policies of the El Paso County Water Master Plan.

Relevant policies include:

Policy 6.0.7 – Encourage the submission of a water supply plan documenting an adequate supply of water to serve a proposed development at the earliest stage of the development process as allowed under state law. The water supply plan should be prepared by the applicant in collaboration with the respective water provider.

A water supply plan (resources report) including water supply information summary that documents the planned and committed water supply from Cherokee Metropolitan District is adequate to meet the needs of the development.

Policy 6.0.10 – Encourage land use proposals to expressly declare water source(s), quality, quantity, and sustainability in terms of years and number of single-family equivalents.

Water (and wastewater) service is currently provided by Cherokee Metropolitan District. Adequate water resources in terms of quality, quantity, and sustainability are available to serve the continued multifamily use of the property.

EI PASO COUNTY MASTER PLAN:

Findings that the use is in conformance with the Master Plan were made with the variance of use approval. Associated findings are anticipated with the final plat approval (PCD File No. SF-21-25). The property is located within a transition area as depicted on the Your El Paso County Areas of Change Map. The current master plan characterizes. Per the Transition area description, development in this type of area is *“expected to be intense enough to transition the existing development setting to an entirely new type of development”*. In this instance, an old highway motel has been converted into a multifamily housing development as an infill land use.