

Plaza 2555 Project Narrative

Overview

The Plaza 2555 project (“Plaza 2555”) is located at 2555 Research Park Drive, at the intersection of Research Park Drive and Cowell Boulevard, south of Interstate 80, in South Davis. The project proposes construction of up to 200 apartments on two vacant parcels totaling 7.34 gross acres. APN 069-530-031 totaling 0.995 acre is an abandoned alignment of Research Park Drive (Chiles Road). APN 069-530-030 totals 6.35 acres. The applicant is not proposing to merge the parcels. The application was accepted for filing October 3, 2017 (Planning Application #17-17) and has subsequently been revised.

Land Use Designations

The property has a General Plan land use designation of General Commercial and a South Davis Specific Plan (SDSP) designation of Commercial Recreation. The property is zoned Planned Development (P-D) #7-95 (Modified Commercial Highway). The project as proposed would require a general plan amendment to Residential High Density (GPA #1-17), a SDSP amendment to a new land use designation of Residential High Density (SPA #1-17), rezoning to new PD #1-17 and Preliminary Planned Development for Multifamily Apartments and approval of a development agreement (including an Affordable Housing Plan #1-17).

Project Details

The applicant proposes a total of 200 stacked flat and row style (townhouse) units with no more than 646 total bedrooms. All market rate apartments will be leased by the unit. The affordable housing plan proposes a mix of unit leases and bedroom leases. Of the 200 units, no more than 66 units (or 33 percent) will be larger than three bedrooms, and of that total no more than 20 units (or 10 percent) will have five bedrooms. No unit will contain more than five bedrooms. Of the 134 (or 67 percent) that will be three-bedrooms or less, at least 20 units (or 10 percent) will be “micro” units which are 350 sf studio units with full kitchens and separate bathrooms.

Table 1 shows the proposed unit count by type:

TABLE 1: PROPOSED MAXIMUM UNIT MIX			
Unit Type	% of All Units	# of Units	# of Bedrooms
Smaller Units			
Micro	10%	20	20
One bedroom	57%	114	342
Two bedroom			
Three bedroom (townhouse)			
Three bedroom (flat)			
SUBTOTAL: THREE BEDROOMS OR LESS	67%	134	362
Larger Units			
Four bedroom (townhouse)	23%	46	184
Five bedroom (townhouse)	10%	20	100
SUBTOTAL: FOUR BEDROOMS OR MORE	33%	66	284
Total		200	646

Table 2 shows the proposed illustrative mix of unit types and sizes:

TABLE 2: ILLUSTRATIVE UNIT MIX			
Unit Size	Approx # of Units	Approx SF per Unit	Approx Total SF by Unit Type
Smaller Units			
Micro (flat)	30	350	10,500
One bedroom	4	600	2,400
Two bedroom	11	900	9,900
Three bedroom (townhouse)	29	1,360	39,440
Three bedroom (flat)	60	1,200	72,000
SUBTOTAL	134		
Larger Units			
Four bedroom (townhouse)	46	1,720	79,120
Five bedroom (townhouse)	20	2,050	41,000
SUBTOTAL	66		
Common areas			14,150
Garages			11,160
Approximate Total	200		279,670

Project Approvals

The project requires approval of a general plan amendment, specific plan amendment, rezoning, and development agreement (including approval of an Affordable Housing Plan).

Project Objectives

The applicant has indicated that the project is intended to attract a broad range of occupants, including workforce participants, young professionals, students, and people downsizing their housing. The applicant provided the following more detailed statement describing the targeted renter population:

- **Workforce Housing.** Recent projects have focused on larger units that are designed for students. There are few workforce housing options, and Plaza 2555 will include new options for such residents who want to live either alone or with their nuclear families in relatively small apartments near employment and convenient to neighborhood services like shopping, parks, and schools.
- **Professionals.** Recent student housing projects have not focused on graduates seeking their first housing as young professionals. Microunits without roommates, or two and three-bedroom units with roommates, are likely to appeal to young professionals who are just starting their careers. Providing housing that appeals to young professionals can have the secondary benefit of relieving some of the market pressure on student housing closer to campus, saving that student housing for students themselves.
- **Students.** Students comprise a large proportion of the renters in Davis and would be welcome residents in the Plaza 2555 project.

- Downsizing. There are few rental housing choices for people downsizing into smaller housing. Creating new rental housing of various sizes creates options for people whose living situations change and who want to stay in Davis. Plaza 2555's proximity to transit, neighborhood shopping, and medical services makes it particularly well suited to such people.

Other Project Features

The project will include a variety of architectural elevations, in-unit laundry facilities and wireless internet in each unit, sound-proofing, a 5,400 sf leasing office and study area, a grab and go coffee kiosk, multiple indoor activity areas for activities such as yoga, dance, and private events, a gym, co-working space, pedestrian pathways, landscaped courtyards and common open space areas, approximately 367 uncovered vehicular parking spaces, approximately 607 uncovered/exterior bicycle parking spaces, a tot lot and outdoor gathering area, mail and package pickup/dropoff, car share/hail area, and a transit plaza.

As described by the applicant, the coffee kiosk would serve the transit plaza and common area with grab-and-go food and beverages. Co-working space is common area with workspaces available for residents to work within the apartment complex, but outside of their homes.

Project Design

As described by the applicant, the overall site design and architectural theme for the project is a pedestrian-scaled village. The project is proposed to have an eclectic architectural style, blending traditional features of gabled and shed roofs with streamlined parapets. Windows, balconies and porches are proposed to emphasize a neighborhood feel. Finishes will be primarily lap siding, stucco, and composition roofing with some areas accented by steel and wood railings, canopies, posts and exposed rafters. The arrangement of the apartments into rowhouses is intended to reduce the overall massing and increase the project compatibility with the neighborhood. Further articulation is proposed through the use of various elevations along the street front.

Sustainability

The project is proposed to be built as an "LEED GOLD for homes" certified project. The buildings would be at least 15 percent more energy efficient than required by Chapter 6 of Title 24. Furthermore, the buildings and landscaping would be designed to use 25 percent less water than the average household uses in the region. As shown in the conditions of approval, the City will require compliance with all of the City's sustainability requirements including groundwater recharge, bicycle parking, and electric vehicle charging, among other things. The project is proposed in a location adjacent to transit (see below) and within walking distance to shopping, parks, medical facilities, and schools to promote alternative transportation options. The applicant has proposed the co-working space and coffee kiosk to discourage peak-hour traffic to and from the project. The applicant also plans to include ride hail and bicycle sharing areas as additional sustainability features.

Project Transportation Access

The applicant has provided the following information about project mobility:

Transit proximity is an important sustainability characteristic of the project. Plaza 2555 is located to be convenient to employment opportunities in Sacramento, Davis, and on campus, as well as to neighborhood and local services. The project is oriented and designed to encourage the use of alternative transportation—including pedestrian, bike, and transit use—rather than cars.

- Pedestrian Access. The units will be located within an 8-minute walk from the Oakshade Town Center neighborhood shopping center and an 8-minute walk from the University Research Park (Interland Business Park) and its employment opportunities, using the bike path and parkways.
- Bicycle Access. The bicycle parking and storage will be proximate, safe, and convenient so that residents have easy access to their bicycles for transportation. The site is adjacent to designated bikeways that permit safe, direct access to campus and throughout the City and beyond. Plaza 2555 provides bicycle access in all directions. For cyclists traveling east to Sacramento along Cowell/Chiles, access to the Causeway bike path is just over 2 miles to the east. For cyclists traveling to downtown Davis, there is a bike path on the adjacent Pole Line overcrossing or to the west along the Richards Boulevard overcrossing. For cyclists traveling to the University, the most direct route travels along Research Park Drive to the I-80 bike undercrossing.
- Transit Access. The proposed project location is on an existing transit corridor, recognized by SACOG, on Cowell and Research Park Drive: the site is on two Unitrans bus lines, and a third Unitrans line and the Yolo Bus line are one block away. The Unitrans M line provides service to and from the Memorial Union on campus. The Unitrans W line provides service to and from the Silo on campus. Both of these routes stop at Plaza 2555. The Unitrans P line provides service downtown Davis before the Memorial Union, and proceeds clockwise around Davis. The Unitrans Q line provides services east to the Nugget Market center, continues on to Target, and proceeds clockwise around Davis. The Yolo Bus 42 Express line provides service to and from Sacramento. Stops for the P, Q and 42 are all within a block of the project site.

The project proposes a transit plaza at the apex of the property at the intersection of Cowell Boulevard and Research Park Drive. This will create a transit hub in a central location convenient to the project interior, as well as to the adjacent bus lines and bike lanes. Pedestrians from the project would access the transit plaza via the proposed landscaped pedestrian path system. The transit plaza will provide bus access, protective shelters (from sun and rain) with benches, a bus schedule up-date board, street furniture, seating areas, planters, the car-share/car-hail area, and the proposed café.

The applicant has indicated that the parking design and access will make the use of private cars less convenient and attractive when compared to the proposed pedestrian, bicycle, and bus system. Exiting the parking areas will require a turn away from campus, making car commute to campus less convenient comparatively.