

DESIGN REVIEW WORKSHOP STAFF REPORT

MEETING

DATE: December 4, 2019

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SUBJECT: **HOMEWARD BOUND – WORKFORCE & VETERAN HOUSING
P2019-055; DESIGN REVIEW
APN 157-970-07; VACANT PARCEL**

REQUESTED ACTION

Conduct a public workshop to review and provide comments regarding conceptual site design and circulation, building massing, design, and landscaping for Homeward Bound’s Workforce and Veteran Housing project, including 50 residential apartment units and an 8,928 square foot commercial/training kitchen with combined event gathering spaces at APN 157-970-07, the vacant parcel south of 1385 Hamilton Parkway (hereafter “Project”).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Project site is an approximately 2.83 acre parcel located north of State Access Road and south of 1385 Hamilton Parkway (Next Key New Beginnings Center). The SMART train rail line runs adjacent the eastern portion of the Project site.

Immediately south of the Project site are the locations of the proposed [Hamilton Village](#) (80-unit townhome residential project) and the [Novato Village](#) (48-unit senior apartment residential project nearing completion). South of the Project site, across State Access Road, is the Lanham Village residential neighborhood.

The Project site is fairly flat with little or no topographic relief, and has an average slope of approximately 3.53 percent. The Project site and the adjoining parcels make up what is known as the “Commissary Triangle”, as identified in the Hamilton Reuse Plan. This area was the former site of the military base commissary, and shops for the Hamilton Army Airfield. The Project site currently has (3) three vacant buildings, and is mostly paved, with little vegetation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant, Homeward Bound of Marin, has proposed development of 50 residential units and one (1) 8,928 square foot events/commercial kitchen building. The residential units are one-bedroom units that would range in size from 593 square feet to 603 square feet. The residential units are located within two (2) two-story buildings with 26 units located in one building and 24 units located in the other. The buildings are sited towards the outer portions of the parcel, with a total of 100 surface parking stalls located within the interior areas of the parcel. The

events/commercial kitchen building and one of the residential buildings are grouped together directly south of the existing Next Key building across the existing parking lot, while the second residential building would be located southeast of the existing Next Key building, along the outer portion of the parcel.

BACKGROUND

Applicant: Homeward Bound of Marin
Property Owner: City of Novato

Property Size: ± 2.83 Acres

General Plan Designation: Community Facilities (CF); Maximum FAR of 0.8

Existing Zoning: Planned District (PD)

Existing Use: Vacant

Adjacent Zoning & Uses: North - Planned District (PD); Next Key New Beginnings
West - Planned District (PD); Hamilton Village (Proposed)
South - Planned District (PD); Novato Village (Residential)
East - Planned District (PD); Residential



Figure 1 - Aerial view of Project site highlighted in red (Property lines locations are approximated)

DEVELOPMENT ENTITLEMENTS

The applicant has submitted a design review application for early feedback from planning staff, residents, and the Design Review Commission. It is anticipated that the applicant will submit additional entitlement applications subsequent to this design workshop. The following City approvals are required for the proposed project:

- **Precise Development Plan (PDP).** A PDP will need to be approved to address the design and operational characteristics of the project.
- **Design Review.** Approval regarding the project's site design, architecture, and landscaping. Design Review is required as a component of the PDP.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The project is subject to environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) however, an environmental assessment is not required for a preliminary project review, such as a Design Review Commission workshop hearing. Prior to a pending Planning Commission hearing, the City will determine and complete the necessary level of environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

A neighborhood meeting was held on November 13, 2019 at 6 P.M. at the Next Key New Beginnings Center. The meeting was attended by a few local residents who expressed interested in the project, however staff did not receive any specific comments related to the project proposal.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The Design Review Commission (DRC) is asked to conduct a workshop to obtain public comment and provide feedback to the applicant and staff with respect to the conceptual site design and architecture proposed for the request to develop 50 new residential units and an events/kitchen building.

The workshop is an opportunity to have an informal discussion regarding the project's design. As such, the DRC will not be making a decision to approve or deny the proposed project at a workshop. A formal design recommendation from DRC to the Planning Commission and City Council will be requested once a complete set of conceptual site, architecture and landscape plans are prepared and submitted.

To assist the DRC with its review of the proposed project, staff has listed the framework of findings, policies, and development standards that apply to the project. These items are provided to help guide the DRC and public's review of the project. Staff will prepare a detailed analysis on whether the proposal meets the noted findings, policies and development standards when the project returns to the DRC for a formal decision.

Design Review Findings

When the project comes back to for a formal decision, the DRC will need to make the following three design review findings:

Design Review Finding No. 1: The design, layout, size, architectural features and general appearance of the proposed project is consistent with the general plan, and any applicable specific plan and with the development standards, design guidelines and all applicable provisions of this code, including this title and any approved master plan and precise development plan.

Design Review Finding No. 2: The proposed project would maintain and enhance the community's character, provide for harmonious and orderly development, and create a desirable environment for the occupants, neighbors, and visiting public.

Design Review Finding No. 3: The proposed development would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare; is not materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity; does not interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future developments and does not create potential traffic, pedestrian or bicycle hazards.

1996 Novato General Plan

The 1996 Novato General Plan provides a framework of policies that were adopted to coordinate all major components of the City of Novato's physical development over a 20-year period. These policies serve as a basis to assess whether public and private development proposals are consistent with the General Plan.

The project site currently has a land use designation of Community Facilities (CF) in the Novato General Plan. The CF land use permits uses a range of civic oriented uses, including privately-owned uses that operate in conjunction with public use. The civic benefits derived from Homeward Bound's services (i.e., affordable housing and jobs training for persons in need) are considered to be consistent with the intended uses of lands designated CF. The CF land use designation permits a floor area (FAR) of 0.80. The subject parcel has an area of approximately 2.83 acres (123,274.8 square feet). Therefore, the site can accommodate a maximum of 98,619 square feet of building area. The applicant has proposed 45,454 square feet of building floor area (workforce housing, homeless veteran housing, and events/commercial kitchen), which is below the allowable FAR of 0.80.

The Design Review Commission should consider the design concepts in light of the design related policies set by the [Novato General Plan 1996](#) and the [Novato Housing Element 2015-2023](#) as listed below.

HO Policy 1.3 Neighborhood Meetings. Continue to require developers of any major project to have neighborhood meetings with residents early in the process to undertake problem solving and facilitate more informed, faster and constructive development review.

HO Policy 3.1 Housing Design Process. The City will review proposed new housing, subject to design review, to achieve excellence in development design in an efficient process.

HO Policy 3.2 Design that Fits into the Neighborhood Context. It is the City's intent that neighborhood identity and sense of community will be enhanced by

designing all new housing to have a transition of scale and compatibility in form to the surrounding area.

HO Policy 3.3

Housing Design Principles. The intent in the design of new housing is to provide stable, safe, and attractive neighborhoods through high quality architecture, site planning, and amenities that address the following principles:

- a. Reduce the perception of building bulk. In multi-unit buildings, encourage designs that break up the perceived bulk and minimize the apparent height and size of new buildings, including, for example, the use of upper story stepbacks and landscaping. Application of exterior finish materials, including siding, trim, windows, doors and colors, are important elements of building design and an indicator of overall building quality.
- b. Recognize existing street patterns. Where appropriate, encourage transitions in height and setbacks from adjacent properties to respect adjacent development character and privacy. Design new housing so that, where appropriate, it relates to the existing street pattern.
- c. Enhance the “sense of place” by incorporating focal areas where appropriate. Design new housing around natural and/or designed focal points, emphasized through pedestrian/pathway or other connections.
- d. Minimize the visual impact of parking areas and garages. Discourage home designs in which garages dominate the public façade of the home (e.g. encourage driveways and garages to be located to the side or rear of buildings, or recessed, or along rear alleyways or below the building in some higher density developments).

HO Policy 4.1

Resource Conservation. The City will promote development and construction standards that provide resource conservation by encouraging housing types and designs that use renewable and/or sustainable materials, cost-effective energy conservation measures and fewer resources (water, electricity, etc.), and therefore cost less to operate over time, supporting long-term housing affordability for occupants.

HO Policy 4.2

Renewable Energy Technologies. Promote the use of sustainable and/or renewable materials and energy technologies (such as solar and wind) in new and rehabilitated housing when possible.

HO Program 4.A

Promote Solar Design. Promote design standards relating to solar orientation, including lot layout for subdivisions, location and orientation of new structures and landscaping.

HO Program 4.B

Implement “Green” Building Standards and Processes. Consistently implement the City’s adopted “Green Building Program” to encourage the use of green building materials and energy conservation.

- HO Policy 7.2 Variety of Housing Choices. In response to the broad range of housing needs in Novato, the City will strive to achieve a mix of housing types, densities, affordability levels and designs. The City will work with developers of ‘non-traditional’ and innovative housing approaches relating to the design, construction and types of housing that meet local housing needs, which may include, but not limited to, provision of the following types of housing at varying affordability levels:
- a. Owner and renter housing
 - b. Small and large units
 - c. Single and multi-family housing
 - d. Housing close to jobs and transit
 - e. Mixed use housing
 - f. Supportive housing
 - g. Single Room Occupancy units (SRO’s)
 - h. Shared living opportunities and co-housing
 - i. Manufactured housing
 - j. Self-help or “sweat equity” housing
 - k. Cooperatives or joint ventures
 - l. Assisted living
- HO Program 9.D Apply CEQA Exemption and Expedited Review. Consistent with CEQA Section 15332 (“Infill Development Projects”), the City will facilitate infill development within urbanized areas consistent with local general plan and zoning requirements that may be categorically exempt from CEQA review. In addition, the City will consider area-wide assessments or Program EIR assessing area-wide infrastructure and other potential “off-site” impacts to expedite the processing of subsequent affordable housing development proposals.
- HO Program 9.E Facilitate Affordable Housing Development Review. Affordable housing developments shall receive priority and efforts will be made by staff and decision-makers to:
- a. Provide technical assistance to potential affordable housing developers in processing requirements, including community involvement.
 - b. Consider project funding and timing needs in the processing and review of the application.
 - c. Provide the fastest turnaround time possible in determining application completeness.
- HO Policy 12.1 Special Needs Groups. The City will actively promote the development and rehabilitation of housing to meet the needs of special needs groups, including the needs of seniors, people living with disabilities, farmworkers, the homeless, people with long-term physical illnesses, people in need of

mental health care, single parent families, large families, and other persons identified as having special housing needs in Novato.

- HO Policy 12.2 Provision of Affordable Housing for Special Needs Households. The City will continue to work with groups to provide opportunities through affordable housing programs for a variety of affordable housing to be constructed or acquired for special needs groups, including assisted housing and licensed board and care facilities. Specific types of housing include:
- a. Smaller, affordable residential units, especially for lower income single-person households.
 - b. Affordable senior housing to meet the expected needs of an aging population, including assisted housing and board and care (licensed facilities).
 - c. Affordable units with three or more bedrooms for large family households.
 - d. Affordable housing that can be adapted for use by people with disabilities (specific standards are established in California Title 24 Accessibility Regulations for new and rehabilitation projects).
- HO Policy 12.5 Housing for the Homeless. Continue to support the New Beginnings Center Homeless Shelter at Hamilton Field, including its integration with job training and housing placement programs. The City will support countywide programs to provide for a continuum of care for the homeless including emergency shelter, transitional housing, supportive housing and permanent housing.
- CI Policy 1 Compatibility of Development with Surroundings. Ensure that new development is sensitive to the surrounding architecture, topography, landscaping, and to the character, scale, and ambiance of the surrounding neighborhood. Recognize that neighborhoods include community facilities needed by Novato residents as well as homes, and integrate facilities into neighborhoods.
- CI Policy 7 Landscaping. Encourage attractive native and drought-tolerant, low-maintenance landscaping responsive to fire hazards.
- CI Policy 12 Parking Standards. Reduce the visibility of parking facilities and the amount of land necessary for them to the maximum extent feasible
- CI Policy 14 Open Areas and Landscaping. Require provision of adequate landscaped, open areas in project design.
- CI Policy 15 Pedestrian Paths. Provide for maximum feasible pedestrian circulation.
- CI Policy 32 Public Art. Promote public art that enhances the cultural life of the community.

Hamilton Army Airfield Reuse Plan

The project site has a current land use designation of Community Facilities (CF) in the [Hamilton Army Airfield Reuse Plan](#) (“Reuse Plan”), consistent with the General Plan land use designation.

The Hamilton Army Airfield Reuse Plan was adopted by the City of Novato in October 1995 and serves as the Master Plan for a large portion of the former Hamilton Army Airfield. The Reuse Plan represents Novato's vision of new development and redevelopment within the Reuse Plan area. Accordingly, the Reuse Plan contains policies that describe the type, location, and intensity of new development, as well as policy guidance addressing the design of new residential and non-residential buildings.

The Reuse Plan provides general and planning area specific policies. In this instance the Project site is located within the Reuse Plan’s Planning Area 4, identified as the “Commissary Triangle”. As such, the Project is subject to not only the general policies listed in the Reuse Plan, but those that are noted to be applicable to the Commissary Triangle. Recognizing the Design Review Commission is tasked to consider the Project’s site design, architecture, and landscaping, it would be appropriate for the Commission to consider the design guidelines provided in Section 8 of the Reuse Plan (Page 8-1 of [Reuse Plan](#)).

The Reuse Plan also specifies that the maximum allowable FAR within the Commissary Triangle Area is 0.40 (Page 3-9 of Reuse Plan), and building heights are restricted to a maximum of 30-feet (Page 3-31 of the Reuse Plan). The project as proposed currently has an FAR of 0.37, with a peak building height of 29’-7”.

Novato Zoning Ordinance

The Project site currently has a zoning classification of Planned District (PD). This zoning classification allows flexibility to develop project and site specific development and operational standards through the adoption of a Precise Development Plan (PDP). That is, the proposal does not need to be designed to comply with traditional site design and development standards of Novato’s Zoning Ordinance. This flexibility is offered to PD zoned sites with the caveat that a project proposing alternative development standards must result in a development that is compatible with surrounding structures and be of superior quality to a project that might otherwise result from application of the traditional standards of the Novato Zoning Ordinance.

The Design Review Commission may review the proposal’s site design, architecture, and landscape plan from the perspective of whether the project, as designed, is compatible with surrounding development and will result in a high quality project.

This project proposal will be returned to the Design Review Commission for a formal recommendation to the Planning Commission and City Council. At that time, staff will draft detailed statements of fact to support each of the findings required to approve a general plan amendment, master plan amendment, precise development plan, and design review.

Affordable Housing Requirements: Based on the proposed residential unit count, 20 percent of the units are required to be affordable. It is anticipated that the project proposal satisfies this requirement due to the nature of this housing project (i.e., 100 percent of the units are scheduled to be affordable), and the programs associated with this development.

Art Program: The project may need to comply with NMC [Division 19.21](#) (Art Program), which requires an art project that has a value of not less than one-third of one percent of the construction cost of the completed development project, or payment of an in-lieu fee.

Light and Glare: NMC [Section 19.22.060](#) (Light and Glare) requires that light or glare shall be shielded to prevent emission of light or glare beyond the property line.

Landscaping: NMC [Division 19.28](#) (Landscaping) has minimum landscape standards for new development projects, including setback areas, parking lots, and open areas.

Open Space: NMC [Section 19.34.124](#) (Multi-Family Dwellings) specifies standards for open space in multi-family residential project.

Parking: NMC [Section 19.30.040](#) (Number of Parking Spaces Required) specifies the number of parking spaces required for the project. The project proposal’s parking configuration is listed in the table below.

Parking Requirements by Land Use and Project Proposal’s Parking Configuration		
Parking Ratio Required by NMC Section 19.30.040	Project Proposal	Project Parking Required
1 parking space for every 50 square feet of assembly area	3,479 square feet of events/assembly area proposed	$3479/50 = 69.58$ rounded up to <u>70 required parking stalls</u>
1 parking space for every 1,000 square feet of general manufacturing and processing uses	5,449 square feet of commercial kitchen area proposed	$5449/1000 = 5.45$ rounded up to <u>6 required parking stalls</u>
1.5 parking spaces for each 1-bedroom unit	50 one-bedroom multi-family dwelling units proposed	$50 \times 1.5 =$ <u>75 required parking stalls*</u>

*This project proposal has used a traffic study prepared by George Nickelson, dated January 27, 2005 which cited an average of 20 percent auto ownership for residents of these types of living arrangements facilities as a factor to reduce the overall required parking on-site. Staff is working with the applicant to provide a comprehensive parking needs assessment to demonstrate that the project is adequately parked. Said assessment will be presented to the Planning Commission for consideration prior to making its recommendation on the Project entitlements to City Council.

RECOMMENDATION

Conduct a workshop to receive public input and provide comments to the applicant and staff regarding the Project’s proposed conceptual site design, circulation, building massing, architecture, and landscaping.

FURTHER ACTION

This project will return to the Design Review Commission for a public hearing to prepare a formal recommendation to the Planning Commission and City Council regarding the Project's site design, architecture, and landscape plan

PROJECT INFORMATION AVAILABLE FOR VIEW AND DOWNLOAD

1. [Workforce and Veteran Housing Project Webpage](#) (City of Novato maintained webpage)
2. [Project Plan Set \(dated November 13, 2019\)](#)
3. [Hamilton Army Airfield Reuse Plan](#) (Design Guidelines found in Section 8)
4. [Hamilton Field Design Guidelines](#) (Informational reference document only)