



STAFF REPORT
2/5/2020

TO: Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Luis Lopez, Development Services Director

SUBJECT: Coachella Valley Apartments by CHOC Housing

SPECIFICS:

- a) Tentative Parcel Map (TPM 37833) to subdivide 5.76 acres of developed land into two lots (2.79 acres, and 2.97 acres, respectively) to allow a two-phase multifamily residential development project.
- b) Architectural Review (AR 19-10) to allow the demolition of 50 existing dwelling units and the construction of a new 110-unit multifamily residential community in the R-M (Multiple Family Residential) zone located at 84-900 Bagdad Avenue. (APN 768-210-025 and -026) including findings of no significant environmental effects pursuant to a CEQA Guidelines §15183 Analysis.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the Coachella Valley Apartments Project by taking the following actions.

- 1) Motion to Adopt Resolution No. PC2020-01 recommending to City Council approval of Tentative Parcel Map (TPM 37833) to subdivide 5.76 acres of developed land into two lots (2.79 acres, and 2.97 acres, respectively) to allow a two-phase multifamily residential development project with the findings and conditions in the attached resolution.
- 2) Motion to Adopt Resolution No. PC2020-02 approving Architectural Review (AR 19-10) to allow the demolition of 50 existing dwelling units and the construction of a new 110-unit multifamily residential community in the R-M (Multiple Family Residential) zone located at 84-900 Bagdad Avenue. (APN 768-210-025 and -026).

BACKGROUND:

The subject site has a 50-unit multifamily affordable housing project that was built during the 1970's in two phases. There are six clustered buildings in the front portion of the site, and four clustered buildings in the rear portion of the site. The dwellings consist of two and three bedroom dwellings with detached carports serving the residences with common area open space between the buildings and minimal amenities. The site has a reduced street frontage along

Bagdad Avenue such that most of the dwellings are not visible from the street. The aerial photo below depicts a birds-eye view of the existing property as viewed from the south side of Bagdad Avenue, looking north.

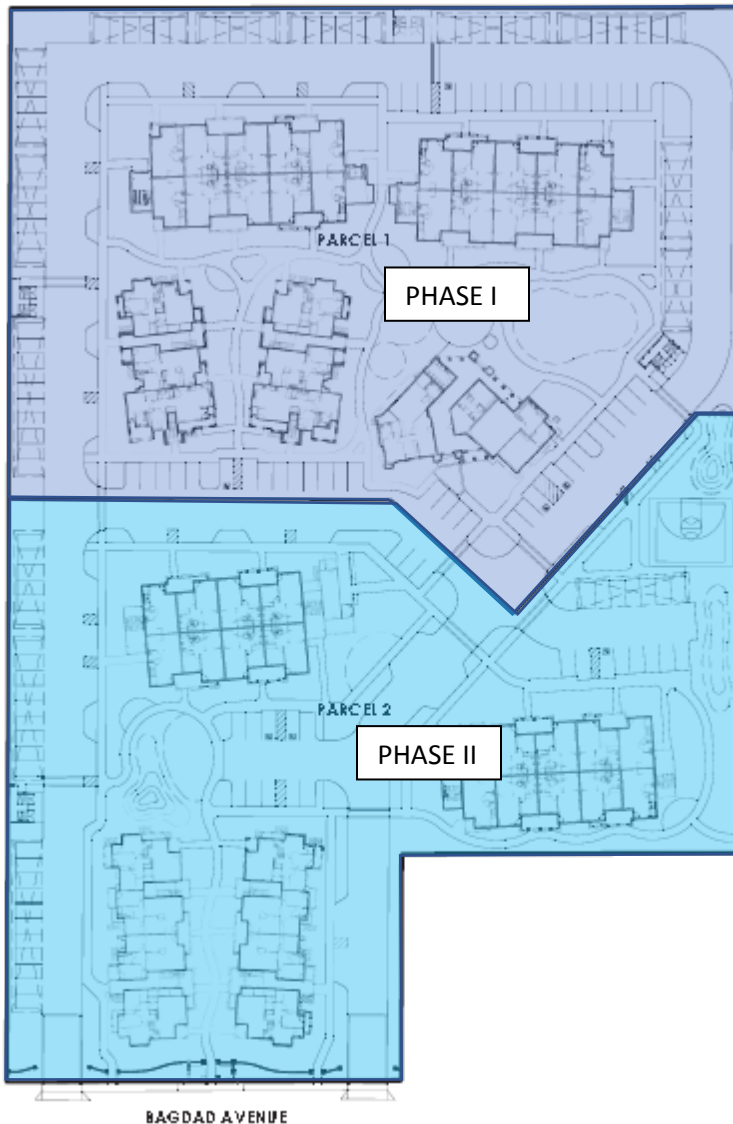


Google Earth Image – CV Apartments

The applicant and current owner, Community Housing Opportunities Corporation (CHOC) is a recognized affordable housing development corporation from Northern California. They have purchased the project and have been securing several funding sources in order to fund the new development and for reinstatement of the affordable housing covenants, through state and federal funding opportunities.

Zoning and General Plan Designation:

The subject site is in the R-M (Residential Multiple Family) zoning district which allows development densities that are consistent with the City’s General Plan. The General Plan designation for this site is “Urban Neighborhood” which allows very high density residential uses between 20 – 38 dwelling units per acre. The proposed project proposes a density of approximately 19.09 dwelling units per acre, which is substantially consistent with the intended density and character of this sector of the City. The General Plan Land Use Map and the City Zoning District Map samples are shown below.



Phasing Exhibit – CV Apartments

Product Mix:

The project will consist of eight (8) freestanding buildings each containing a variety of floor plans and elevation facades. The buildings are all two-story and three-story structures, except for the freestanding community building in the central part of the project which will be a one-story structure. The project seeks to obtain “development incentives” for affordable housing in order to allow a reduced unit size of 600 square feet for one-bedroom unit (750 sq. ft. minimum), 870 square feet for two-bedroom unit (900 sq. ft. minimum), and 1030 square feet for three-bedroom units (1050 sq. ft. minimum). The floor plans include one-story units on the ground floor, and

two-story “townhouse style” units with one-story “flats” on the 3rd floors. A breakdown of the building types is shown in the matrix below.

BUILDING & UNIT MATRIX						
BLDG A						
# of Bldg 2	<i>3B-flat</i>	<i>3B-TH</i>	<i>2B-flat</i>	<i>2B-TH</i>	<i>1B-flat</i>	<i>Units / flr</i>
<i>1st Floor</i>	2		2			4
<i>2nd Floor</i>	2		2			4
<i>3rd Floor</i>	1		2			3
Total per bldg type	5		6			11
Total units	10		12			22
BLDG B						
# of Bldg 2	<i>3B-flat</i>	<i>3B-TH</i>	<i>2B-flat</i>	<i>2B-TH</i>	<i>1B</i>	<i>Units / flr</i>
<i>1st Floor</i>	1		2			3
<i>2nd Floor</i>	1		1	2		4
<i>3rd Floor</i>	1		1			2
Total per bldg type	3		6			9
Total units	6		12			18
BLDG C						
# of Bldg 3	<i>3B-flat</i>	<i>3B-TH</i>	<i>2B-flat</i>	<i>2B-TH</i>	<i>1B</i>	<i>Units / flr</i>
<i>1st Floor</i>		6		4		10
<i>2nd Floor</i>						
<i>3rd Floor</i>					9	9
Total per bldg type	6		4		9	19
Total units	18		12		27	57
BLDG D						
# of Bldg 1	<i>3B-flat</i>	<i>3B-TH</i>	<i>2B-flat</i>	<i>2B-TH</i>	<i>1B</i>	<i>Units / flr</i>
<i>1st Floor</i>		4		4		8
<i>2nd Floor</i>						
<i>3rd Floor</i>			3		2	5
Total per bldg type	4		7		2	13
Total units	4		7		2	13
TOTAL UNITS	38		43		29	110
PERCENTAGE PER APT UNITTYPE	35%		39%		26%	

Site Plan/Circulation:

The applicant submitted a preliminary site plan which was reviewed through the City’s Pre-Application Review projects. Several modifications were made to create the optimal circulation and parking scenario for the project. The site plan submitted with this application is shown below.



On the above site plan, Bagdad Street is located along the left-hand side of the exhibit, and the north arrow would be pointing to the right. The project will consist of two driveway entrances from the street and two internal circular driveways giving residents two points of access from any part of the development. There are only two “dead end” aisles which will be mostly assigned parking and this is not expected to create circulation conflicts due to their limited accessibility to outside visitors. Overall, the project provides an improved circulation pattern which today consists of two separate driveway areas that are not interconnected.

There is a combination of 90-degree and parallel parking along the interior driveways, and a series of carports along the perimeter of the project site. Thus, there is good separation between the pedestrian and vehicular movement patterns. The front entry from the sidewalk shows a traditional garden courtyard with a 20-foot view corridor from the street, and most of the carports are completely screened from view to the street. This provides an attractive pedestrian environment along the street.

The Community Building and immediate surroundings will be the focal point of the project, where residents will have a place to recreate, and for residents to have after-school care programs. The building is centrally located adjacent to open parking stalls on two sides, a tot lot

Architectural Theming:

The project is designed in a contemporary Spanish / Colonial/ Moorish architectural theming with the use of smooth plaster, terra-cotta concrete S-tile roofing, ceramic tile mosaics, rounded arches and gothic arches with tiled accents, wrought iron railings / gates/ decorative gills, canvas awnings with spire supports, brick veneers, and decorative pavers. There are numerous tower elements on each of the buildings that create architectural variation and the roof lines are varied in the front portions of the site where it transitions from two to three stories, in order to be more compatible with the single story character of the homes to the south. The elevations below depict the architectural theming for the various residential buildings, the community building, an artistic rendering, isometric drawing, and details of the architectural finishes.





EXTERIOR ELEVATION - WEST



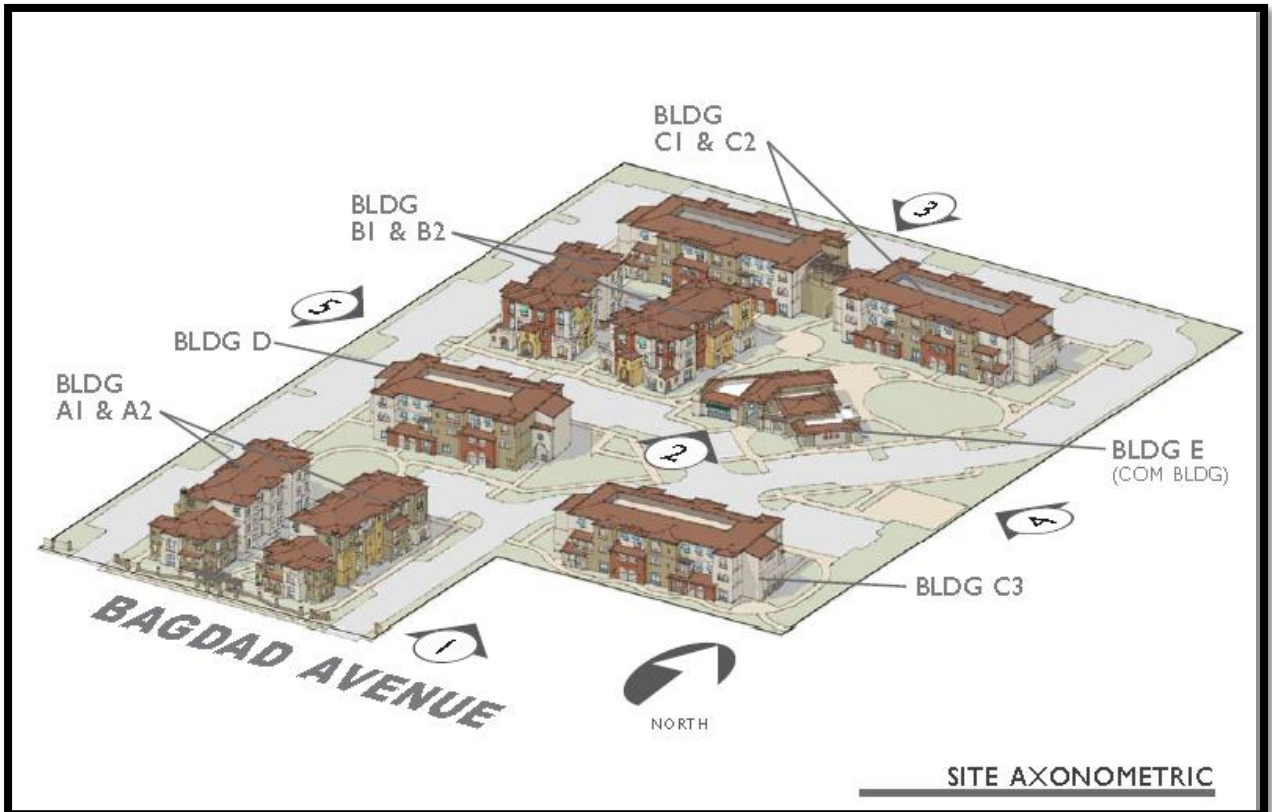
EXTERIOR ELEVATION - SOUTH

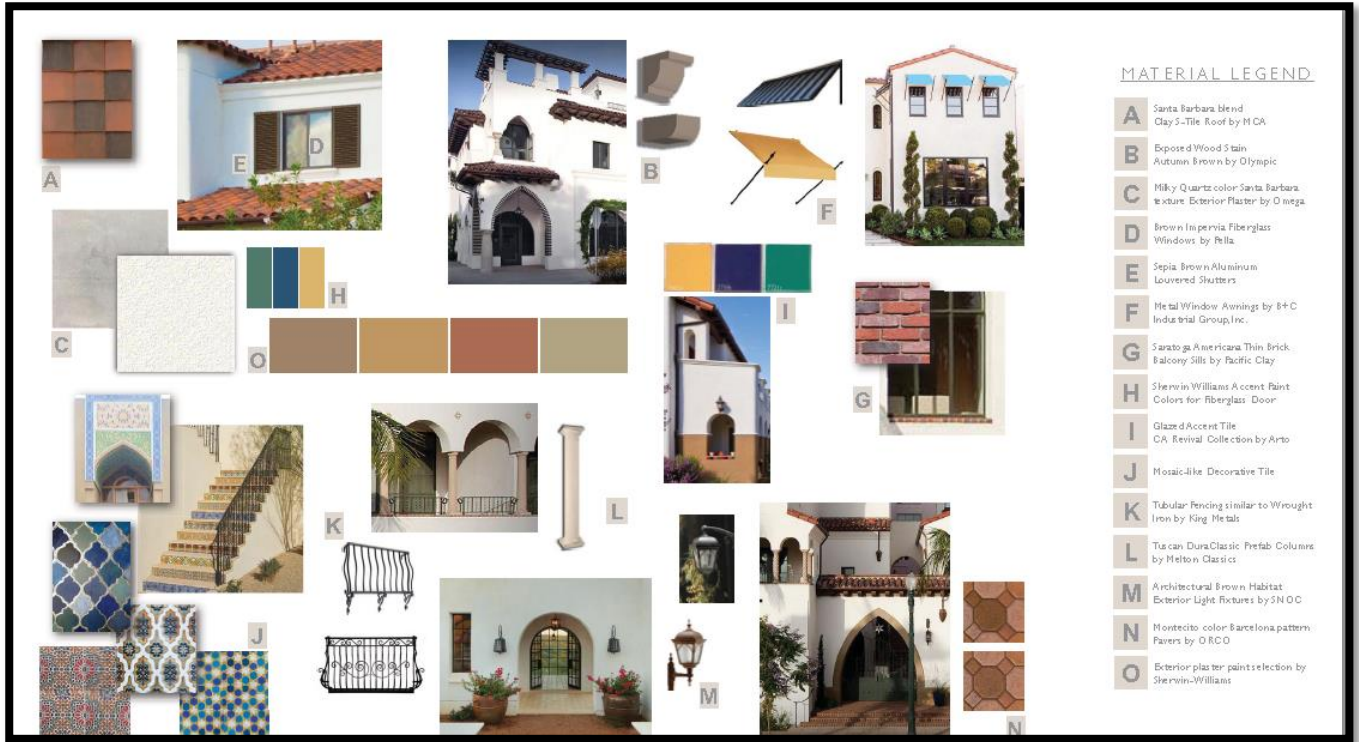


EXTERIOR ELEVATION - NORTHEAST



EXTERIOR ELEVATION - SOUTH





Use of Elevators:

There is a shared elevator thru a bridge between Building C1 and C2 on the north side of the project. This vertical circulation is enhanced with a stair tower and the opportunity to further enhance the architectural composition of these buildings in relationship to each other as shown in the images below:



Streetscape Design:

The proposed project will significantly improve the built environment appearance as viewed from the street. This will be accomplished by placing new buildings that have a one-story element feature including front porches, covered walkways/ arches, a view into the main garden courtyard, and trellis/arbor entry feature directly adjacent to the sidewalk. The pedestrian experience will be improved, giving all residents a pleasant and safe access into and out of the community from the sidewalk in keeping with the General Plan design policies. This includes removing overhead utility lines. The images below show a “before and after” comparison.



Existing (Before) Streetscape:



Proposed (After) Streetscape

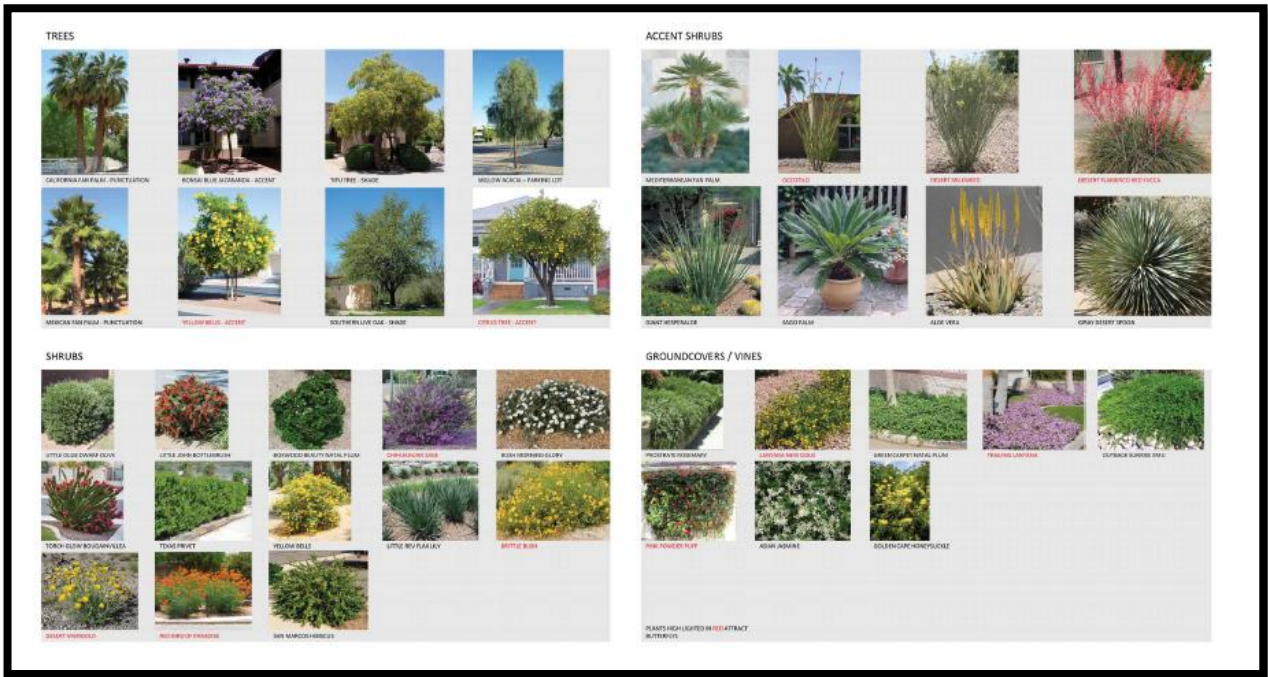
Landscaping:

The project is designed with a series of garden courtyards that will function as common open space for the residents. The plan shows a desert-friendly plant palette with willow acacia, citrus, jacaranda, southern live oak and tipu trees. Shrubbery and hedges will include yellow bells, aloe vera, hibiscus, red bird of paradise, desert spoon, brittle bush, texas ranger, and texas privet. Groundcovers include trailing bougainvillea, natal plum, sunrise emu, trailing lantana, and rosemary. Vines and espaliers include pink powder puff, honeysuckle, and jasmine plants. The planters will be finished with $\frac{3}{4}$ inch gravel, boulders, and a variety of small ornamental accent plants including Mediterranean fan palm, sago palm, ocotillo, and red yucca. Staff is in support of the water-efficient plan palette, which provides a variety of textures and colors to the common area landscaping.

The images below depict the conceptual landscape plan, a close-up of the community center landscaping, and overall plant palettes and details on the landscape features including freestanding arbors and trellis that are located at the main entrance and near the garden courtyards.



Conceptual Landscaping



Plant Palette



Landscape Features

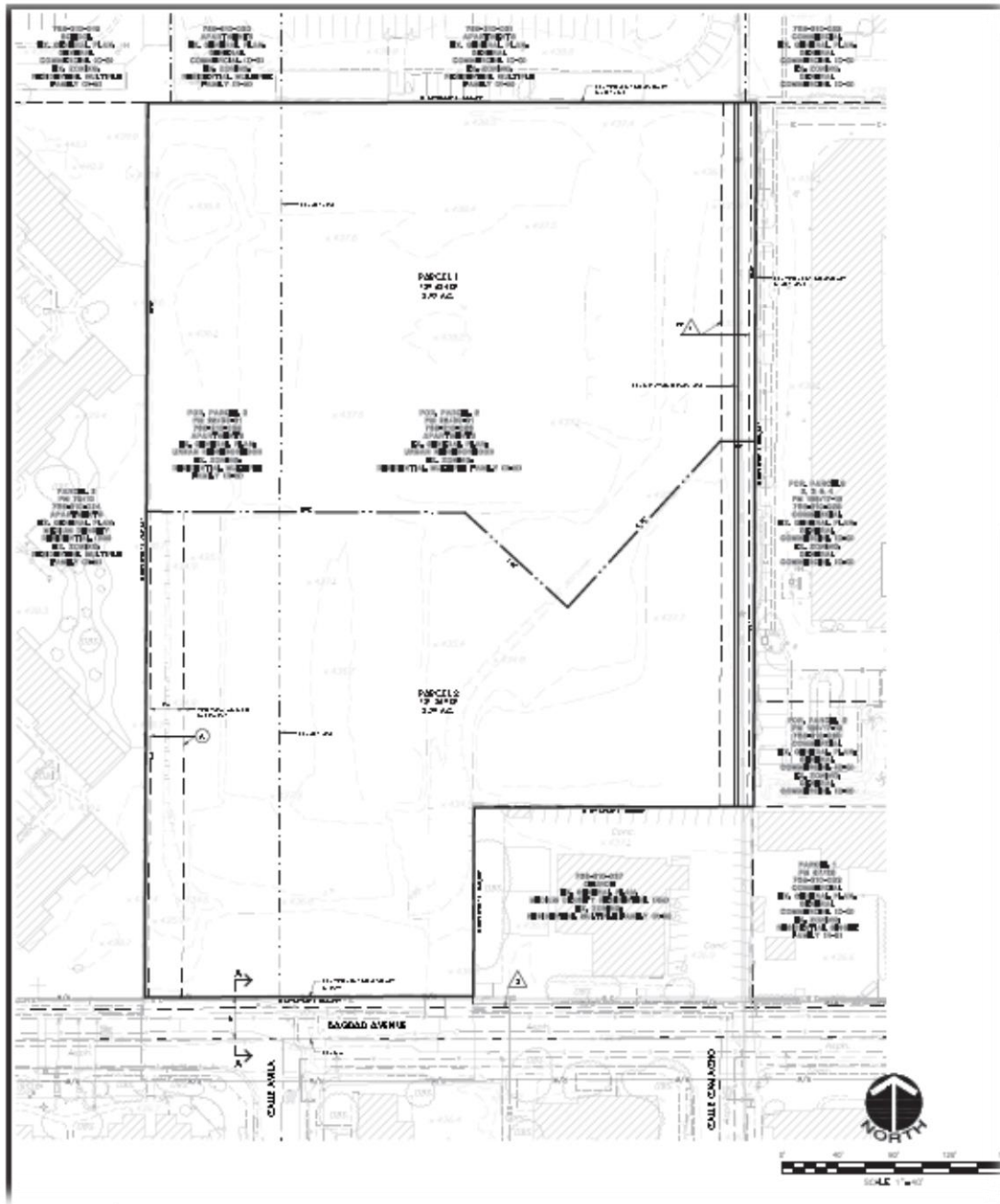


Community Center Landscaping

The Landscapign Features images above show the entry trellis/arbore and a combination of decorative masonry/wrought iron fencing along the front property boundaries. The project is not a gated community but will create a front courtyard for safety of children playing in the common open space areas. Additionally, there is one monument sign proposed adjacent to the driveway, for identification. The community center landscaping shown above includes a tot lot, splash pad, pocket park, and bbq / picnic areas.

TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 37833

The proposed tentative parcel map will create two lots that are intended solely for financing and construction phasing purposes. At buildout, the two lots will be indistinguishable as portions of the development site. The new lot line / subdivision configuration is shown below.



As proposed, Parcel 1 on the north does not have direct street frontage and will be accessed via a recorded ingress-egress easement. While this scenario is not ideal for a typical “stand alone” development, the map will have reciprocal access over the common driveway areas to maintain the site as one development project site. The Coachella Municipal Code and the Subdivision Map Act require the Commission and City Council to make specific findings in order to grant the

approval. Staff has included these findings and the standard conditions of approval in the attached resolution. The required findings for the tentative map are as shown below.

1. The proposed tentative map is consistent with the General Plan and the City of Coachella Official Zoning Map. The proposed subdivision is within a land use designation of General Neighborhood according to the General Plan 2035 Land Use Element which allows very high density residential. The subdivision is consistent with the development intensity permitted by the Urban Neighborhood Land Use category. Tentative Parcel Map 37833 is in compliance with the standards of the Zoning Ordinance with respect to the R-M (Residential Multifamily) including minimum lot size, minimum lot depth, and minimum lot width. Additionally, This subdivision will accommodate for a variety of housing types and is consistent with the City's vision for this area to be redeveloped with urban residential uses with close proximity to commercial and open space amenities.
2. The site is physically suitable for the future commercial development and density. The proposed subdivision will provide adequate sized lots for a phased multifamily residential development. The two proposed lots will have adequate dimensions, and ingress and egress to accommodate future development by recording easements for ingress and egress and reciprocal access over the private driveways.
3. The design of the subdivision and type of improvements are not likely to cause substantial environmental damage or substantially and avoidably injure fish or wildlife or their habitat. There are no sensitive habitats or bodies of water in the immediate vicinity of the site. For future development proposed on the site, all drainage from increased impervious material on the site will be contained on site for a 100-year storm event, as required by City regulations. As such there would be no impact to the Coachella Valley Whitewater Channel which is more than two miles away from the site.
4. The design of the subdivision and type of improvements are not likely to cause any serious public health problems. The proposed subdivision would allow for future development of residential uses intended and identified in the General Plan and the zoning code. All future development would be reviewed for compliance with applicable California Building Code regulations prior to issuance of any building permits.
5. The design of the subdivision and type of improvements will not conflict with easements, acquired by the public at large, for access through or use of, property within the proposed subdivision. The proposed subdivision would create two lots for future residential development with adequate street access, and utility connections to all lots. There are no known easements that would conflict with the proposed subdivision.
6. The City of Coachella has determined that the proposed project will not have significant environmental effects upon the environment pursuant to a Section 15183 CEQA analysis that was prepared for the project, and which tiers off of the City's General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report. As such, there are not additional mitigation measures required and no additional environmental reviews for the subdivision to be approved.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

City staff determined that the proposed project qualifies for a streamlined environmental review process pursuant to Section 15183 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines for projects which are consistent with the development density established by existing zoning, community plan, or general plan policies for which an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was certified, except as might be necessary to examine whether there are project-specific significant effects which are peculiar to the project or its sites. Therefore, the City has limited its examination of environmental effects to those which the City has determined: (1) are peculiar to the project or the parcel on which the project would be located; (2) were not analyzed as significant effects in a prior EIR on the zoning action, general plan, or community plan, with which the project is consistent; (3) are potentially significant off-site impacts and cumulative impacts which were not discussed in the prior EIR prepared for the general plan, community plan or zoning action; or (4) are previously identified significant effects which, as a result of substantial new information which was not known at the time the EIR was certified, are determined to have a more severe adverse impact than discussed in the prior EIR.

The study found that the project does not require new mitigation because it is consistent with the findings of the Coachella General Plan Update EIR that was certified in 2015. Potential project-related impacts, including cumulative and off-site impacts, were fully addressed in the EIR, and applicable mitigation measures were provided to reduce project-specific impacts. There are no significant off-site or cumulative impacts that are peculiar to the project or its site that have not already been fully addressed in a previous environmental analysis or that cannot be substantially mitigated through the application of uniformly applied standards and policies. A copy of the 15183 analysis is attached to this staff report.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the Coachella Valley Apartments Project with the attached resolution and conditions of approval.
2. Approve the Coachella Valley Apartments Project with modified conditions.
3. Continue this matter and give staff direction.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The proposed project substantially complies with the City's General Plan policies for the Urban Neighborhood designation, and will comply with City standards except for the development incentives which are being sought for reduced unit size and off-street parking. The project provides a generous amount of common open space, and all units provide private patio space. Additionally, the community building and pocket park/splash pad provide livability amenities for the families that will reside in the community. Accordingly, staff has prepared the attached resolutions approving the project with findings and conditions of approval. The City Council has final decision authority over the Tentative Parcel Map, and this item will be forwarded to them for final approval.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):

Staff recommends Alternative #1 or #2.

Attachments: Resolution No. 2020-01 approving TPM 37833
Resolution No. 2020-02 approving AR 19-10
CEQA Section 15183 Analysis
Correspondence