

Master Site Development Plan

Application Narrative

Introduction. Aurora Mental Health Center, Inc. ("AuMHC") owns an existing 50,000 square foot building on a 7.03-acre site at 1290 South Potomac Street in Aurora, Colorado ("Property") and intends to demolish this existing building and to subdivide the Property into three (3) separate parcels for the development of three (3) new buildings on this Potomac Care Campus ("Campus") comprising a maximum of 120,000 square feet. Each of the three organizations and service providers were selected to offer a continuum of care for the targeted population.

Acute Care Safety Net. The Campus is intended to provide the surrounding community a safety net by providing needed acute care services. The Campus will deploy the latest design and programming to support trauma informed care considerations. A critical component of the Campus is the outdoor landscaped areas intended to promote healing.

Campus Site Plan. The redevelopment of the Campus is shown on the attached Campus Site Plan which contains the following common elements.

- Entry Plaza / Forecourt. Entry Plazas will be featured at all three buildings and will be inviting and calming pedestrian spaces that will have the following elements: enhanced paving, seating options, bike racks, raised planters, and ornamental plantings. The design of these plazas shall be consistent with the architecture and provide a seamless transition between the landscape and the building.
- Therapeutic Garden. The therapeutic garden will be a plant dominated environment purposefully designed to facilitate interaction with the healing elements of nature. There will be accessible pathways through the garden with small seating areas made for quiet individual contemplation or small outdoor meetings for therapy. The plantings will be sensory oriented and will be focused on color, texture, and fragrance.
- Campus Loop. The Campus Loop will be a pedestrian pathway that goes around the entire perimeter of the Property. The Loop be almost a half mile long and will feature benches along the way for resting and trees for shade. The Campus Loop will be a great way to get outside and exercise without having to leave the Campus.
- Patios. Each building will have a patio space of varying size. The patios will be spaces to sit and relax in, dine in, and socialize in. They will feature enhanced concrete paving, movable tables and chairs, shade trees, and ornamental plantings.
- Open Lawn. The Open Lawn will be the center of the Campus Quadrangle space and will be the most flexible amenity on the Campus. It will be a serene and calming environment to walk around and relax in. It will also be a place that can

hold events and large gatherings as well a place for informal games and sports to be played on.

- Outdoor Classroom. The Outdoor Classroom will be a flexible space that can host a variety of gathering sizes. It can be used for larger lectures brought in by users of the Campus, for small therapy sessions, or just for sitting and relaxing. It will feature linear composite seat walls with sod in between them and a small area at the front for the presenter/speaker.
- Outdoor BBQ + Seating. There will be two Outdoor BBQ + Seating areas on Campus. These areas will be used for events and casual gatherings. They will feature built-in grills with countertop space, shade structures, movable tables and chairs, and ornamental plantings.
- Rain Garden. The Rain Garden will serve multiple functions for the Campus. The main function will be to act as a green infrastructure feature that cleans stormwater that lands on the site before being discharged. In addition to the main green infrastructure function, it will also be a beautiful spine that will flow the entire length of the Campus Quadrangle space. It will be filled with native and ornamental plantings and will have pedestrian bridges that connect one side of the Rain Garden to the other.
- Community Garden. There will be two Community Gardens on the Campus. These gardens will be therapeutic for the employees, residents, and patients that use them. Each garden will feature raised garden plots with an integrated irrigation system for ease of maintenance. There will be seating options around the gardens and each will have their own shed for tools and materials.

Amenity Space Activation. The forgoing narratives offer many examples of how residents, staff and visitors will utilize the shared community amenity spaces. Frequent connection to air, light and nature is critical for all people, but for this Care Campus, with its focus on Trauma Informed care therapies, connections to these outdoor spaces will be especially critical to core programming for clients. Also, it's just as important for staff to have places of escape and we expect that each organization's staff will utilize the outdoor areas for breaks from work, for meetings and for socializing.

Phasing. These new buildings will be constructed in phases as shown (**Phasing Plan** included). All three occupier entities will share common elements on the Campus including entry drive, storm water detention, perimeter ring road, pedestrian and bicycle pathways, parking and the outdoor landscaped open areas as shown on the Campus Site Plan. Most of these components will need to be installed along with the Acute Care treatment building prior to the future development of the additional two buildings.

In phase 1, AuMHC will develop a new ground-up 50,000 square foot Acute Care treatment building upon the Campus. In subsequent phases (Phasing Plan included), the remaining land area will be developed by both Aurora Housing Authority ("AHA") who intends to develop up to a new 40,000 square foot affordable housing building comprising approximately 40 units for qualified candidates requiring permanent supportive care and

Stride Community Health Center ("Stride") who intends to develop up to a 30,000 square foot medical clinic.

Timeline. In August 2021, Boulder Associates was hired to lead the site planning design for the new Campus for AuMHC. Over the course of several months, a site plan concept for the proposed new acute care campus was created and submitted to the City of Aurora ("City") through the Office of Development Assistance.

On January 13, 2022, the City conducted a pre-application meeting and presented its comments to all parties. The City determined that the redevelopment of the Campus will require what they call a Master Site Development Plan ("MSDP") showing the entire site's civil design (grading, utilities, storm water, etc.) along with the proposed phasing for each of the three (3) buildings. This MSDP will be processed through the City concurrently with the replat or Subdivision process. In addition, a separate Site Development Plan application will be required and process for each individual building.

As a result of the City's comments, AuMHC modified the site plan concept and again on May 18, 2022 met with key City departments to solicit feedback. The site plan was again modified and resulted in the attached Campus Site Plan concept.

Variance Requests. The Campus Site Plan requests variances for the following:

- Parking. The applicant hired Fox Tuttle to conduct a study of peak parking demand requirements. On May 6th, the **Parking Study** was completed and herewith is being presented to the City with this application. The applicant is requesting a reduction in the code required parking (detailed in the Parking Study) of 242 spaces. The Parking Study is supported by national data, location traffic counts and plans to share parking between all three occupiers whose operating hours vary during the 24-hour day. The Parking Study shows that at peak demand the Campus will require 166 parking spaces. But since the City will only allow a twenty-five percent (25%) reduction (from 242), we request approval to provide 182 parking spaces on the Campus. The attached Campus Site Plan concept is currently showing 207 parking spaces.
- Building Orientation. The applicant is requesting a variance to the City's Section 4.8.4 which states: "Each primary structure shall be arranged so that the primary façade and each façade with a main pedestrian entry, orients onto and provides direct pedestrian access onto, one of the following: A public or private street; a public park, open space or common green; a plaza courtyard; or a pedestrian passage."
 - The **Aurora Housing Authority Low Income Housing** desires to maintain the south facing orientation for the following reasons which are taken from an email provided by Dayna Ashley-Ohm:

"I wanted to share a bit of work we did with the AuMHC design team initially to identify the best placement and orientation for the building. This included hiring Shopworks Architecture as a consultant to review the initial site plan and make comments specifically regarding permanent

supportive housing (PSH) using trauma-informed design principals. The firm designed Providence at the Heights in Aurora <https://shopworksarc.com/works/path-providence-at-the-heights/> and Arroyo Village in Denver, <https://shopworksarc.com/works/arroyo-village/>. In their report to us, Shopworks' recommended, that "the residential common spaces will be well used if the residential amenity areas are south-facing. Our research supports the idea that when indoor amenities are south-facing, and share the resources of an outdoor courtyard that has a seasonal compliment to the indoor programming, it facilitates relationships and community-building for both residents and building staff. The courtyard should be fenced in for resident safety, and smoking, shade, gardening, food (dining, grilling, sharing) should all be considered.

Remote amenities, meaning amenities on upper levels, or separate from the residential lobby should be avoided."

ShopWorks also expressed in the report that, "South facing amenities are always well-used and beloved in housing. It should be prioritized. West facing amenities are too hot, north facing are too cold."

Further, they cautioned us about security, stating that, "Security will be a significant management concern for the apartments, and single point on entry is a mandatory programmatic element. Residents and guests will access the apartment through the front door, and from there access apartments and amenities including the residential courtyard. Prohibiting access to the building from doors other than the front door is critical."

On this site plan AHA worked with AuMHC to bring the residential building to the front of the overall site, while maintaining visual connections, and a southern entrance for our building. As we learn more about formerly homeless residents (with either substance abuse or mental health issues), we have become keenly aware of what we can control on the front end of the design process to facilitate feelings of safety and security among residents. Because of this, AHA supports the building orientation as it is currently placed on the site.

- The **Medical Clinic building** will have an entry that orients east towards its primary parking field and patient drop-off areas. It's not possible to create a viable open landscaped area between all three buildings and have the Medical Clinic entry on the west side facing Potomac which would require an adjacent visitor parking area. Utilization of an open landscaped area is critical to the functioning of this trauma informed care campus. We intend to use wayfinding signage to direct patients to this drop-off and building entry area. We will also consider adding a faux entry feature along

this west side and as an egress location for access to the open landscaped area.

- Perimeter Fence. The applicant is requesting a variance to the City's requirement that states: "Where screen walls and fences are permitted between property lines, they shall be placed at the inward edge of the buffer and shall not be used as a mechanism to reduce the buffer width less than required or prohibit the installation of the required landscaping unless permitted as stated in Table 4.7-2." We respectfully request that the City allow us to place the fence on the property line on the outward edge of the buffer. There will be a trail that goes around the property as an amenity and we don't want to have the fence right at the edge of the trail. We will use the buffer landscaping to separate the trail from the fence. The fence we are using will be a 6' tall ornamental steel fence that will be mostly transparent. You will be able to see through the fence to the buffer landscaping provided on the inward side of the fence.
- Encroachment into landscape buffers. The applicant is requesting an adjustment to section 146-4.7.5 requirements which state: "no buildings or portions of buildings including porches or patios, drive lanes, sidewalks, structured or unstructured detention ponds, parking stalls, dumpsters, or dumpster enclosures may encroach into the minimum required buffer." an adjustment is being requested in order to provide a loop trail with bench seating and required retaining walls around the campus, as a means of respite and a shared community amenity for patients and staff at the site.
- Intersection Reimbursement. The City has requested that AuMHC pay its proportionate share or 25% (\$114,185) of the total costs (\$456,740) to improve the intersection of Potomac & Louisiana. AuMHC respectfully requests a reduction in this amount. According to the attached **Traffic Impact Study**, the data currently shows AuMHC trips were calculated to be 5.8% of the AM peak hour traffic and 7.5% of the PM peak hour traffic (average of 6.6%). Therefore, AuMHC requests a reduction to \$30,145 (\$456,740 X 6.6%). Raising additional money for these types of improvements creates a hardship for these non-profit entities whose limited capital sources and on-going resources are scarce.

Operation Plans. Each of the three occupier organizations completed and we are herewith providing an overview of each operation.

Landscaping. The City has requested a concept landscape plan. After meeting with Kelly Bish, it was determined that this could be provided during the SDP for the Phase 1 Acute Care building that will be constructed first. Therefore, a detailed landscape plan will be completed upon AuMHC making application for its site-specific Site Development Plan. This SDP includes, along with landscaping, all the design for the shared common areas.

Design Guidelines. As an exhibit to each land lease, we will provide guidelines that will assure a uniform design consistency and quality for the entire Campus. These guidelines will include building design criteria, allowed materials, general landscape

information, site lighting, signage (campus and individual building), etc. which will inform the design criteria for the Acute Care building and the other buildings. We have also inserted the design guidelines as a separate sheet in the plan submittal.