

January 26, 2021

City of Aurora – Planning & Development Services Department

Debbie Bickmire

15151 E. Alameda Pkwy
 Aurora, CO 80012

Re: Flats on the A at Gateway Park – Letter of Introduction

Dear Ms. Bickmire:

On behalf of the Applicant, Pauls Corp, I am pleased to submit this letter of introduction for the Site Plan application for Flats on the A at Gateway Park.

The following team of consultants has been assembled to complete this application:

<p>Owner : Gateway East Amenities LLC 100 Saint Paul Street Denver, CO 80206</p>	<p>Applicant: Pauls Corp Joe Wilson 100 Saint Paul Street, Ste 300 Denver, CO 80206</p>	<p>Architect: Godden Sudik Kelsey Dague 5975 S Quebec Street, Ste 250 Centennial, CO 80111</p>
<p>Civil Engineer: Harris Kocher Smith (HKS) Michael Moore, PE 1120 Lincoln Street, Ste 1000 Denver, CO 80203</p>	<p>Planner: Norris Design Samantha Crowder 1101 Bannock Street, Denver, CO 80204</p>	<p>Landscape Architect: Norris Design Patrick Hannon 1101 Bannock Street, Denver, CO 80204</p>
<p>Traffic Engineers: Harris Kocher Smith (HKS) Mike Kibbee 1120 Lincoln Street, Ste 1000 Denver, CO 80203</p>	<p>Surveyor: Harris Kocher Smith (HKS) Aaron Murphy 1120 Lincoln Street, Ste 1000 Denver, CO 80203</p>	

Context

Flats on the A at Gateway Park is a planned mixed-use multi-family residential community and future commercial and retail development located immediately south of the East 40th Avenue right-of-way and east of Salida Street in Aurora, Colorado. The project is just north of I-70, near the intersection of Pena Boulevard and east of the 40th and Airport RTD railway station. Due to the site's proximity to the 40th and Airport Station, the community is considered a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and is consistent with the goals and intent for the station area. The project is currently within an Industrial zone district within the Gateway Park East Station Area Plan. To further the intent of TOD development, and provide higher density housing options among easily accessible commercial and neighborhood-level services, the site will be recommended for rezoning to the MU-TOD District. The MU-TOD district is intended to provide immediate access to RTD stations, I-70, I-225, E-470 and Denver International Airport. As part of the larger Gateway Park community, the site's location in proximity to these major travel arteries offers excellent access to all areas of both the Denver metropolitan and the Rocky Mountain Regions.

The approximately 17.62-acre site is currently undeveloped and surrounded by commercial developments to the west, light industrial development to the east, and similar mixed-use residential and commercial development to the north.

Rezoning

The Applicant is requesting an amendment to the zoning of the property from Industrial 2 (I-2) to Mixed Use – Transit Oriented Development (MU-TOD). The project is located within the Subdistrict Edge of the adjacent 40th and Airport RTD Station and proposes higher-density residential and future commercial land uses consistent with the vision for the Edge Subdistrict. Located within the TOD fringe, the proposed residential community provides accessibility to nearby commercial, retail, and industry through walking connections via access-controlled gates. Convenient and walkable access is prioritized to nearby transit options with the opportunity for multi-modal circulation to local and regional attractions, creating a transitional urban character to the adjacent core TOD area. Prominent pedestrian corridors, sheltered by street-screening residential buildings, provide comfortable paths for on-site and off-site pedestrian movement. Small, pop-up, landscape seating and bike parking areas throughout the community create rest areas and places of congregation. Parking will be effectively screened by the building layout in addition to landscape buffering. The proposed site plan will foster a unique and sustainable blend of transitional-urban character that includes nearby opportunities to live, work, shop, and recreate. The property will create an attractive and enticing residential and future commercial point of interest and initiate the transitional growth near the 40th and Airport station. Flats on the A provides residents and visitors the opportunity for modern housing and lifestyle choices with a high level of amenities and social interaction all while promoting RTD ridership, job creation and economic growth through proximity to multi-modal local and regional transportation.

Site Plan

Flats on the A at Gateway Park will continue to high level of design existing today across Gateway Park. The project contributes to the compact, mixed-use vision intended for the area by utilizing 4-story, L-shaped buildings to screen internal surface parking and create space for private community amenities interior to the site while future commercial and neighborhood-level retail are located to the north along E. 40th Avenue. This future commercial will provide a buffer between the proposed multi-family residential and the busier 40th Avenue. The development also helps enforce a consistent streetscape along this corridor by mirroring the commercial character existing to the north. Specific design of the commercial/retail parcel will be coordinated with the City of Aurora as part of a future Site Plan application.

The community will have a total of 374 dwelling units over 12.4 acres (residential parcel) for a density of 30.2 du/acre. Apartments include a mix of studio, 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom units ranging in size from 510 sf to 1,290 sf. Apartment buildings will be 4-stories in height (+/-48 ft) and are intended to reflect simple, rectangular forms with flat roofs, utilizing industrial materials such as brick, stucco, metal panel, and glass to create a color palette consistent with the Gateway Park standards. Buildings are situated to run parallel with proposed existing perimeter and internal roadways to enforce a transitional-urban edge along these corridors, where possible. In addition, building faces shall be broken up visually through a mix of contrasting materials both horizontally and vertically. Segmentation of the buildings are created every 50 linear feet through both material change and façade articulation and building entrances are pronounced with two-story glass feature walls coupled with programmed plaza spaces. These plaza spaces are designed to encourage engagement of the buildings with the adjacent pedestrian corridors and promote social interaction.

Amenities

A variety of amenities are provided on-site for residents and their guests. On-site amenities include a private clubhouse and pool-deck located along the western-central portion of the site, adjacent to Salida Street and between the three proposed residential buildings. The 9,447 sf clubhouse is designed as a free-standing, primarily masonry, painted siding, and metal-paneled, single-story structure with a primarily flat roof that becomes sloping with a painted metal cap near the main entrance. Its design programming will contain mini-bowling, a fitness room, co-working

space, and a club room with kitchen and gaming area. The building will also provide a covered exterior space. The pool and outdoor activity zone will include a pool deck, spa, outdoor kitchen, lounge areas and gaming lawn. In addition, each residential building provides its own mail room as well as bike maintenance and storage. Residents will have access to outdoor bench seating, bike racks, pet waste stations, and trash receptacles throughout.

Other on-site amenities include a designated east-west detached pedestrian corridor, an on-site parklette in the southeast corner of the site, and an enhanced landscape buffer along the northern and eastern perimeters to aid in screening the future commercial parcel and parking lot, as well as the existing industrial/warehouse building to the east. The landscape buffer includes a variety of deciduous and evergreen landscape materials. Landscape materials shall be provided at a rate of 1 tree and 10 shrubs per 40 linear feet and shall meet City of Aurora UDO requirements.

With an emphasis on industrial elements and character the landscape design will foster this intent through linear forms at high impact areas and adjacent to the architecture while transitioning to a more native/natural landscape palette in lower impact areas. The plant material itself will be chosen for their native low water usage and designed to a pedestrian oriented and visually interesting landscape that will provide color, texture and structure all year round.

Parking

Resident parking is provided through a combination of tuck-under garage, carport, and surface parking spaces for a total of 527 spaces. 311 spaces are provided for residents and guests via surface lot spaces, and 216 are provided via covered spaces (84 attached, tuck-under garage spaces and 132 detached carport spaces). 14 surface lot spaces are provided for guests at the clubhouse.

To further emphasize the transitional-urban character of the community, the majority of parking is located internal to the site and screened by buildings, where possible. This helps further enforce the intent of the station area and zoning district, while providing quick and accessible parking to each residential building.

Parking requirements within the TOD zone district recommend parking at a rate of 0.85 spaces per unit. Due to the transitional nature of this development and its location within the fringe of the station area, additional parking is provided in excess of that recommendation. Although the station is within walking distance of the community, many residences still rely on personal vehicles to commute to-and-from their jobs as well as weekend activities where multi-modal transportation may not currently serve. In addition, on-street parking nearby the community is limited as it is bordered by roadways prohibiting on-street parking and a warehousing development on the majority of its perimeter.

Flats on the A provides as mixture of unit types tailored to a variety of lifestyles and to best meet the needs of the residents. Parking is provided based on number of bedrooms within the community versus the number of units. The following assumptions for parking include:

- 1 space / Studio & 1 Bedroom Units
- 2 spaces / 2 Bedroom & 3 Bedroom Units

A total of 527 spaces are provided on site for both residents and guests, averaging to approximately 1.41 spaces per unit and 1.01 spaces per bedroom.

In other similar developments completed by the Applicant nearby, parking has been noted as an issue by residents and managing staff. For example, Station A is a similar multi-family community located approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the Flats on the A community and is located three blocks west of Pena and 2 blocks north of 40th Avenue. This community was development 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ years ago and includes 400 units with a similar mix of unit types. Station A provided approximately 1.65 spaces per unit and 1.23 spaces per bedroom.

Circulation

Vehicular access to the site is provided through one primary entrance located on the south-west edge of the site, adjacent the clubhouse/leasing building and a secondary access is provided on the northwest corner of the site, adjacent to the future commercial development. Internal vehicular circulation is provided by private drives. Fire access is also served through these private drives with designated fire lanes looping within the internal parking lots. Fire lanes shall be a minimum 26' in width.

Pedestrian circulation is facilitated through a combination of attached and detached sidewalks. Pedestrian gates will be provided for easy pedestrian movement through the access-restricted fence surrounding the residential buildings. A north-south pedestrian spine moves residents and guests through the site connecting them from the commercial area south of E 40th Avenue to the clubhouse and southern residential building. Strong pedestrian circulation corridors are also proposed to facilitate east-west movement through both the northern and southern portions of the site. This allows easy pedestrian navigation through the internal parking lots to the clubhouse and the RTD station to the east.

Adjustments

The Applicant is requesting the following adjustment from the City of Aurora Unified Development Ordinance:

Code Section 146-4.8.5.D Maximum Building Length | *“The maximum building length of any multifamily or mixed-use building shall be 200 feet in Subareas B and C.”*

Request: The Applicant requested the allowance for an increase in the maximum building length to 870 ft.

Justification: To best provide a transition of character across the site building facades are proposed to vary in length from west to east. Buildings along the Salida ROW are proposed with facades which parallel the ROW encouraging an transitional-urban character along the street frontage. As buildings transition to the east toward the existing industrial development, building facades are encouraged to lengthen. The maximum length of a proposed building façade of the multi-family buildings is +/-422 lf. While in excess of maximums outlined by the UDO, the building is an appropriately scaled transition from the adjacent existing industrial building measured at +/-870' long. In addition, future commercial buildings near the transit station as well as to the north may be up to 400' in length. In comparison to existing and anticipated adjacent building lengths, the proposed building length provides a desirable transition in scale. In addition, all multi-family buildings will provide visual variety by creating segmentation of the facades every 50' by use of contrasting materials as well as horizontal articulation and pronounced architecture at the main entrances. These architectural elements will help reduce the visual scale of the façade as well as create visual interest.

Approval Criteria

Flats on the A at Gateway Park is in compliance with the Unified Development Ordinance's following approval criteria for Site Plan.

- A. The application complies with the applicable standards in this UDO, other adopted City regulations, any approved Master Plan that includes the property, and any conditions specifically applied to development of the property by the Planning and Zoning Commission or City Council in a prior decision affecting the property.

Response: The project is recommended to be rezoned from I-2 to MU-TOD (Mixed-Use – Transportation Oriented Development) District, Subdistrict Edge to allow for the proposed residential and future commercial land uses. The proposed high-density living, accessibility to nearby commercial, retail, and industry, as well as the emphasis on connection to the 40th and Airport Station will foster a special and sustainable blend of

transitional-urban character that include nearby opportunities to live, work, shop, and recreate. The project gives residents and visitors the option for modern housing and lifestyle choices with a high level of amenities and social interaction while striving to reduce reliance on the automobile and encourage the use of public transit, encourage job creation and economic growth through proximity to multi-modal local and regional transportation.

The site is located within Gateway Park IV East and is subject to the Gateway Park Design Review Requirements. The project will meet or exceed the standards of the design requirements and will create a high standard for future building sites and a basis for consistent architectural and landscape treatments throughout the Gateway Park plan area.

- B. The City's existing infrastructure and public improvements, including but not limited to its water, wastewater, street, trail, and sidewalk systems, have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development, and any burdens on those systems have been mitigated to the degree practicable.

Response: Public improvements proposed for this development include a 6' detached sidewalk on Salida Street and updated curb ramps to meet current standards. The curb ramps at the existing access will be updated as well as the ramps on the south side of the intersection of 40th Avenue and Salida Street and sidewalk improvements along the 40th Avenue frontage.

A traffic signal will be installed at the intersection of Salida St and access (to be named). The traffic signal will be properly installed and operating prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

The site plan proposes a channelized right turn into a drop lane giving access to the main clubhouse and resident amenity areas. The lane will be marked with "Right Turn Only" signs at the 40th Avenue western access and shall be installed per the most current editions of The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and City Standards.

With these public improvements, among others, the proposed development shall comply with the master drainage, utility and infrastructure plans and will not induce any additional burden on the existing surrounding development.

- C. Major Site Plans shall be designed to preserve and protect natural areas, ridgelines, swales, natural landforms, water quality and wildlife habitat of riparian corridors, wetlands, and floodplains affected by the proposed development and to integrate those areas into site design where practicable.

Response: The site does not include existing natural or riparian areas, ridgelines, swales, or natural landforms. Water Quality conservation measures will be taken into account at the time of Site Plan submittal.

- D. The application will improve or expand multi-modal connections with adjacent sites, neighborhoods, and urban centers.

Response: This project will encourage the development of a higher density residential and future commercial area adjacent to the transit station. The automobile-oriented character of the existing industrial zoned lands in the core of the study area will be changed to a shared vehicular/ pedestrian-oriented, high density mixed-use area that will promote bicycle, transit, car-sharing and pedestrian transportation. The project will promote multi-modal local transportation to larger transportation networks located near the site such as Denver International Airport, additional RTD stations, and I-70, I-225, and E-470.

- E. The application is compatible with surrounding uses in terms of size, scale and building façade materials.

Response: The land uses proposed, high density multi-family and commercial/retail, will create a transition in building height, development density, and range of uses, between the Core subdistrict to the west and south, the adjacent non-TOD developments such as industrial/warehousing to the east and future and existing neighborhoods to the north.

The project will also create a more walkable, pedestrian-friendly context for the 40th and Airport RTD Station and buffer the Industrial land uses to the east. Residential and commercial buildings will be designed to emphasize the modern, industrial context of the site and promote the lifestyle associated with MU-TOD districts and multi-modal transportation opportunities. Building facades will incorporate material changes and architectural features such as glazing, textured surfaces, projections, color, overhangs, and changes in parapet height to improve the façade and create an inviting and attractive street presence. Buildings will be designed to create a clear base, middle, and cap as well as horizontal and vertical articulation. The ground floor designs, and adjacent site and landscape design will support a positive resident experience, create a pedestrian-friendly environment, and provide visual interest.

- F. The application mitigates any adverse impacts on the surrounding area to the degree practicable.

Response: No major adverse impacts are created with the proposed land uses and proposed site plan. However, landscape buffers are proposed to mitigate impacts on the resident experience from the proposed commercial uses to the north and industrial use to the east of the multi-family buildings. In addition, the proposed channelized right turn into a drop lane for access to the site and clubhouse will mitigate any adverse impacts on traffic flow on Salida Street.

Additional Standards in MU-TOD District

- A. Any new exterior construction or landscaping, or any exterior changes to existing development including changes to building façades, signage, streetscape, landscaping, public rights-of-way, parking areas, drives, or other Site Plan changes shall meet the building and site design standards of Section 146-4.8 (Building Design Standards) subject to the Touch Rule defined in Article 146-6.

Response: New buildings and landscape will meet the standards outlined in Section 146-4.8, Building Design Standards. There are no modifications to existing buildings or designed landscape.

- B. To allow greater intensity in the MU-TOD district over time:
- I. Buildings and surface parking (if allowed) shall be located on the lot so that the layout will accommodate future structured parking garages.

Response: The site does not anticipate any future structured parking with this development. All parking is accommodated through tuck-under garages, cover surface and open surface parking. All parking is shielded by nearby development by proposed multi-family buildings or landscape buffering, where possible.

- II. Drives within commercial parking lots shall be located so they can conform to urban street standards in the future.

Response: Adaptation of drives within surface parking lots on the northern commercial lot will be addressed in future Site Plan applications.

- III. Both sides of major pedestrian streets shall be developed to establish the streetscape character and pedestrian connections.

Response: Private drives servicing the multi-family residential building will be developed to foster positive pedestrian experiences and streetscape character by providing deciduous street trees, adjacent attached and detached sidewalks, and pedestrian gates for easier pedestrian access on and off-site. Pedestrian sidewalks will be installed on Salida Street and E 40th Avenue and will also include the streetscape enhancements mentioned above.

- IV. Important public parks and plazas shall be constructed in the initial phase of development to establish a public amenity and the area's identity.

Response: Parks and plazas are not proposed with this development. Private amenities serving the residents of the Flats on the A at Gateway Park are proposed in addition to improvements to the public ROW and connections provided therein.

Gateway Park Design Review Committee

As required by the Gateway Park community, an application to the Gateway Park IV Design Review Committee (DRC) is required for review and approval prior to approval by the City. The Applicant is currently working with the DRC regarding the application and is under review concurrent with this Site Plan and Rezoning application. A letter from the DRC has been provided with this application to confirm coordination in progress.

We look forward to working with the City of Aurora on the review and approval of this next phase of the Gateway Park community. Feel free to contact me directly should you have any comments, questions, and/or requests for additional information.

Sincerely,
Norris Design



Samantha Crowder
Senior Associate