



February 24, 2020

**PLEASE NOTE:** This narrative has been revised from the original submittal on 7/19/19. This project has been downsized from 136 units to 106 units via 3 smaller buildings as opposed to 1. Building heights have been revised to comply with all height restricted portions of the site. A height variance is no longer requested.

Project Objectives/Narrative/Design Review for multi-family apartment complex known as CityView, Bellingham, WA.

Parcel number: 3803321721750000

The proposed project is located at 4413 Consolidation Avenue, Bellingham WA 98229. The site is +/-11.15 acres.

Unit count: 106 (all 3 bedroom, +/-1,170 SF each). Type A units: 6. Type B units: 70 Type C unit: 30

Puget Neighborhood, Area 17. Zoning: Residential Multi, Planned\*\*(see 'Density Clarification').

#### DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES:

Our goal is to provide high quality apartments, in a safe and convenient location, with on-site amenities at an affordable price. Multi-family vacancy rates continue to hover at 1-2%, pushing rents to an all-time high. CityView's design will provide a welcome alternative to many Tenants facing high priced, outdated, and 'zero amenity' living options. This project will increase the current short supply of multi-family infill housing, a primary goal of Growth Management proponents. In turn, we believe it will help to lower the high living costs now faced by low-middle income Tenants.

#### PROJECT NARRATIVE:

The proposed project has been revised to include 3 buildings. Buildings A & B (20 units each) are identical 2.5 story, 35' foot tall (height definition #1) residential multi-family buildings. Each building (A and B) consists of 4 walk-up 'daylight' residential units on the basement level. The upper two levels contain 16 residential units. Each building has 4 secure entrances, 3 stairwells, and a riser/utility room. Building C is a 5.5 story, 65' tall (height definition #1) residential multi-family building. Building C consists of 6 walk up 'daylight' residential units on the basement level. The five upper levels contain 60 residential units. The building has 4 secure entrances, a riser/utility room, 3 stairwells and 2 elevators (1 gurney), as well as 3,000 SF of interior common usable area.

Total building area GSF is +/-160,000 SF (mid-wall to mid-wall), over all 3 buildings. Lot coverage, including surface parking/drive lanes, buildings/walkways, and exterior usable space, is minimized at 51.4%. To avoid excessive clearing and to minimize the destruction of existing vegetation (per BMC 20.38.020), 48.6% of the site will be left in open space.

All three buildings have the main entrance located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (Level 3), and centrally located on the east side of the buildings. Secure outdoor covered mailboxes are located in 3 convenient locations throughout the complex. A leasing/management office is located in the lobby of Building C, in addition to 3,000 SF of centrally located common area.



Two garbage/recycling enclosures are located mid-property with ADA routes to each. A large area of exterior common usable space (+/-40,600 SF) is located along the western boundary. This area is strategically located to maximize the buffer to our Nevada St./Marionberry Ct. neighbors. This usable area will include a loop system walking/jogging trail, picnic tables and park benches. Landscaping will provide a relaxing environment. \*Please note: Per BMC 20.32.040 f(2)a, Cityview's 43,600 SF of total usable space far exceeds the required usable area of 26,500 SF (106 x 250).

106 units, all 3 bedroom, require a total of 212 parking stalls. 249 parking stalls are proposed, including 7 accessible (2 van accessible) and 13 electric vehicle charging stations. The total number of bedrooms is 318, putting our stall/bedroom ratio at .78/1. Ingress/egress is via Consolidation Ave. Consolidation Ave. will be improved to ¾ city standard from Nevada St. to fully abut the 45<sup>th</sup> St right of way. 30' is dedicated along the Consolidation Ave. frontage, to 46<sup>th</sup> St. No parking and/or structures are located within the subsequent setback. City approved street trees will line the sidewalk of the Consolidation Ave. improvements. A fire lane loops from the entrance, and exits back to Consolidation Ave. A secondary fire lane (gated) is provided via the Nevada St connector. Riser rooms are located on the north end of each building. An emergency generator is located to the east of Building C. 54 bike racks, both interior and exterior, are located throughout the complex.

All utilities are available. City water, sewer and storm are in both Consolidation Ave. and/or Nevada St., both abutting the property. The project's primary storm outfall will be via Nevada St., near the proposed biocell treatment facility. Power, phone, cable and natural gas are all available via Consolidation and/or Nevada St. Adequate fire flow is available via an 8" main in Nevada St. and/or the 10" main in Consolidation Ave. Per City IQ, 70 PSI is available from the 10" main in Consolidation Ave.

#### Puget Neighborhood Plan, Area 17:

This is a largely undeveloped area, which includes a new multi-family complex south of Whatcom Street, wetlands, hillsides and areas, which are relatively flat. The area is an ideal multiple housing area, being convenient to town, parks and commercial areas. Higher densities should be allowed on the level, dry areas, while the wetlands and steep areas should remain open. Water lines for development within this area must be carefully designed to provide adequate fire flow\*

\*Design review standards for Area 17, Puget Neighborhood are extremely limited. Therefore, we turn to the COB Multifamily Design Review Handbook for design guidance:



## DESIGN REVIEW:

### I. SITE DESIGN

#### A. Orientation

Requirement: Orient buildings to public streets and open spaces in a way that corresponds to the site's natural features and enhances the character of the street for pedestrians.

Adherence to Guidelines: Due to the site topography, (15-20% west to east grade) any proposed buildings on this site must be elongated due north/south. The project includes two vehicle entrances and three pedestrian entrances at the front of the site (Consolidation Ave). Pedestrian routes allow easy access via minimally sloped sidewalks that do not go through any parking lots (ADA compliant). Both the pedestrian and vehicle entries will be lined with City approved street trees, to add color and interest. The western (main) entrance to the complex will be enhanced with a site sign, as well as additional lighting and landscaping.

The site plan now contains 3 buildings (A, B & C). Building B is adjacent to the large exterior common usable area. Both buildings A & B are oriented to this CUA. The main entrance to each building is centrally located on the east side, and clearly marked with special lighting and landscaping. Additional entrances are on the west side of each building, as well as stair towers at each end. All buildings have been oriented to the southwest to minimize shadow casting on adjacent properties. CityView's large outdoor usable area (nearly 1 acre in size) is located along our western border. New native species plantings, both deciduous and non-deciduous, will enhance this buffer, adding privacy without blocking solar access in the winter. Please see revised Site Plan, Landscaping Plan, Rendering and Site Sections.

Satisfies all Orientation Guidelines.

#### B. Neighborhood Connections

Requirement: Provide functional pedestrian and vehicular connections to existing neighborhoods.

Guidelines: Cityview's pedestrian connections to Consolidation Ave. allow a safe walking route the entire distance to Lincoln St. Our 'loop system' parking design, as well as sidewalks in each lot, provide connectivity throughout the complex. Bicycle racks are conveniently located near each building.

Three pedestrian routes from the complex are proposed to Consolidation Ave. These sidewalks connect all parking lots and buildings to the entrances. All walkways will be visible from the parking areas.

Walkways through parking areas/drive lanes are minimized (exception: ADA routes to garbage/recycling facilities).

Consolidation Ave. is to be improved to  $\frac{3}{4}$  city standard from Nevada St. to fully about the 45<sup>th</sup> St. ROW.

A pedestrian trail will connect to the sidewalk at Consolidation/45<sup>th</sup> St., with this trail running easterly to Puget St. Please see Prelim Engineering Trail Plan.

Satisfies all Neighborhood Connections Guidelines



C. Parking Location and Design

Requirement: Minimize the impact of parking facilities on the fronting street, sidewalk and neighboring properties by designing and locating parking lots, carports, and garages so that they do not dominate the street front.

Guidelines: The property fronts on Consolidation Avenue. No carports or garages are proposed. Surface parking areas have been broken up into six lots (A-F). No lot, except F, includes more than 8 contiguous stalls without a landscaping strip. All lots have been designed to ensure ease of pedestrian circulation to building entrances, site amenities, garbage & recycling enclosures and Consolidation Ave. Two vehicular points of ingress/egress are proposed via Consolidation, with one continuous looped lane around the buildings.

Lots A and B are located to the east of Buildings A and C, far from our westerly neighbors. Lot C has been pushed easterly. A large common area along our western border adds buffer. Building B now shields Lot D from both our Nevada St. and Marionberry Ct. neighbors. All westerly facing stalls in lots C and E are headlight screened with a solid 4' vinyl fence. Marionberry Ct. will be further screened with a dense replant along the northwest border of Lot F. Please see revised Site Plan and Landscaping Plan.

Satisfies all Parking Location and Design Guidelines

D. Clearing and Grading

Requirement: Preserve significant natural features whenever feasible and minimize changes to the natural topography.

Guidelines: The existing grade of the site is +/-15-20%. Parking lots and buildings are located to minimize cut/fill. +/-48.6% of the site will be left in open space. Retaining walls are limited to 4'-6' in height whenever feasible. A 2:1 sloped re-plant will be located to the east of Lots A and B, to minimize changes to the natural topography and blend into the native forest. Please see revised Site Plan, Landscaping Plan, Site Sections and Prelim Grading Plan.

Satisfies all Clearing and Grading Guidelines

E. Fences and Walls Adjacent to Streets

Requirement: When using fences or walls, use designs and materials that will maintain a pedestrian scale along streets or public walkways.

Guidelines: No fences will be installed adjacent to any public street. Required retaining walls near Consolidation Ave. (project front) will be stamped/decorative if visible. The main entrance to the complex will be enhanced with a site sign, lighting, landscaping and street trees. Please see revised Site Plan, Landscaping Plan and Rendering.

Satisfies all Fences and Walls Adjacent to Streets Guidelines



F. Open Space and Recreational Area

Requirement: Locate and design usable space to encourage its use for leisure or recreational activities.

Guidelines: The exterior common usable space has been relocated and re-designed as one large (+/- 40,600 SF) contiguous area on the southwest portion of the site. Recreational amenities added to this area include a walking/jogging trail, picnic tables and park benches.

The interior common usable areas are centrally located within Building C, providing an additional 3,000 SF to Tenants/Guests. Please see revised Floor Levels.

Satisfies all Open Space and Recreational Area Guidelines

G. Mailboxes, Site Lighting and Bus Stops

Requirement: Locate and design functions such as mailboxes and bus stops to promote ease of use and safety. Provide lighting adequate for the function without creating excessive glare or light levels.

Guidelines: Keyed exterior/covered mail and package boxes are located conveniently throughout the complex. These locations to be approved by the U.S. Postal Service. Low intensity lighting is provided for entries, walkways, parking lots and trash enclosures. Parking lot lights are downward facing, no more than 18' feet in height, and directed away from the sky, dwelling and neighboring development. Any flood lights will be shielded to reduce glare. Building lights to be mounted no higher than 10' above ground level, and internally lighted translucent awnings will not be used. CityView will not be directly served by either WTA or any school bus. However, the project will be connected to a continuous sidewalk leading to Lincoln St., which is served by both WTA and Bellingham School District bus stops. Please see revised Site Plan, Landscaping Plan and Lighting Plan.

Satisfies all Mailbox, Site Lighting and Bus Stop Guidelines

H. Trash and Recycling Storage

Requirement: Provide adequate screening for trash and recycling facilities associated with multifamily developments.

Guidelines: 2 large trash/recycling areas are proposed within the project, both located away from Consolidation Ave. and the complex entrance. These areas are enclosed with durable, 6' block walls on 3 sides. Two of these block walls are screened with landscaping. Walk-in access is designed to allow visibility into the area by Tenants approaching the entry. Design and location of both areas to be approved by SSC. Please see revised Site Plan.

Satisfies all Trash and Recycling Storage Guidelines



I. Landscape Design, Overall Project

Requirement: Provide landscaping that is in scale with the buildings and spaces, and compliments the function of the space.

Guidelines: Exposed concrete and/or block retaining walls shall be textured to provide visual interest. Terraced walls to be landscaped to add color and enhance appearance. Larger nursery stock will be used where feasible to provide quicker results.

Areas of building modulation will be landscaped with low water consuming plants/shrubs. A large outdoor common area is provided and enhanced with a walking/jogging trail, picnic tables, and park benches to create a comfortable park-like feel. All main building entries will receive special plantings in conjunction with ample lighting to create a pleasant and safe corridor.

Site disturbance is minimized at just 51.4%. A +/- 20 ft strip along a large portion of our western boundary will be densely replanted. A retaining wall with fencing above will also be installed for privacy. Street trees will be added along our Consolidation Ave. frontage to create a welcoming entrance to the complex. Wherever feasible, plants/trees/shrubs requiring low amounts of water, chemicals and fertilizers will be used. Trees and shrubs planted near windows or patios/porches will be sized to avoid blocking ingress/egress or impeding views. Finally, all buildings are abundantly landscaped at ground level. Please see revised Site Plan and Landscaping Plan and Rendering.

Satisfies all Landscape Design, Overall Project Guidelines

J. Landscape Design, Parking Areas

Requirement: Use landscaping to help define, break up, and screen parking areas.

Guidelines: Canopy trees with shrubs/ground cover to be installed within parking areas, minimum 1 tree per 8 stalls (only exception is lot F, see site plan). Landscaping will add privacy and screening to our Nevada St./Marionberry Ct. neighbors. Wheel stops, curbs and walkways are designed to protect landscaping from vehicles. Landscaping is provided between buildings, sidewalks and parking areas to create a natural transition between uses. Please see revised Site Plan, Landscaping Plan and Rendering.

Satisfies all Landscape Design, Parking Area Guidelines

K. Signs

Requirement: Minimize the amount of signage needed to identify the multi-family development.

Guidelines: One site sign, lit with indirect lighting, is to be located at the main entrance of the complex. Sign design compliments the building style, via the use of similar architectural details. The maximum size of the sign is 8'x 12', making it easy to read but within proper scale to the complex/buildings. Please see revised Site Plan and Landscaping Plan.

Satisfies all Sign Guidelines

L. Sidewalk Design



Requirement: Design sidewalks to be consistent with the existing or proposed street design for the subject area.

Guidelines: Consolidation Ave. will be improved to  $\frac{3}{4}$  City standard to fully abut the 45<sup>th</sup> St. ROW. Curb, gutter, sidewalk and street trees will be installed to City standard. The new sidewalk along Cityview's frontage will connect to the existing sidewalk at Consolidation Ave./Nevada St. Please see revised Site Plan and Landscaping Plan. See also Prelim Civil/Consolidation Ave. improvements.

Satisfies all Sidewalk Design Guidelines

#### M. Site Drainage

Requirement: When open storm water facilities are proposed to be located on the site, minimize negative impacts on natural site features and incorporate them into the overall landscape scheme.

Guidelines: No open storm water facilities are proposed. A stormwater vault will be located under parking lot D. Stormwater will be treated via a stormwater treatment bio-cell located at the low point of the site, within the westerly buffer area. Stormwater runoff from the Consolidation Ave. street improvements will be collected and treated separately. Please see revised Site Plan and Prelim Civil/Storm Plan.

Satisfies all Site Drainage Guidelines

## II. BUILDING DESIGN



A. Neighborhood Scale

Requirement: The scale of those portions of the building facing an existing developed neighborhood shall conform to the scale established in the neighborhood or the scale identified for the district.

Guidelines: The site plan has been re-designed to contain 3 buildings (A, B & C). Buildings A and B, closest to Nevada St./Marionberry Ct., are both 2.5 stories (not to exceed 35' per Definition 1). These buildings are identical, each containing just 4 sections of 44' (each section is similar in scale to adjacent homes, which are 50' to 60' in width). The existing neighborhood homes are also similar in height to Buildings A and B, ranging from 1 to 3 stories. Cityview's 2.5 story buildings are placed to transition from the existing 1-3 story homes, to our larger Building C (5.5 stories, set back 200'-250' from our westerly neighbors). All buildings have basement units facing west, designed similarly to single family 'walk up' units. In addition to scale transition, single-family elements such as covered entries, assorted hipped and gable roof lines, and siding/window configurations help blend Cityview with the adjacent Pacific Northwest style residential homes. Please see revised Site Plan, Landscape Plan, Building Elevations and Rendering.

Satisfies all Neighborhood Scale Guidelines

B. Neighborhood Compatibility

Requirement: New buildings should reflect some of the architectural character of the surrounding buildings when locating in a neighborhood where the existing context is well defined.

Guidelines: CityView's rooflines, architectural style and details, assorted siding materials and colors, window sizes and patterns, as well as entry configurations (basement level 'walk up' units) are designed to be similar to the existing character of the Puget neighborhood. Please see revised Building Elevations and Rendering.

Satisfies all Neighborhood Compatibility Guidelines

C. Privacy

Requirement: Orient buildings to provide for privacy, to the extent practical, both within the project and for adjacent residential uses.

Guidelines: Building A is 2.5 stories. It is set back +/-160' (mid-point average) from Cityview's westerly boundary. Building B is identical to Building A, it is set back +/-90' (mid-point average) from Cityview's westerly boundary. Building C is set back +/-240' (midpoint average) from Cityview's westerly boundary. Building C lies to the east of the smaller Building B. Building B is designed and located to transition from the westerly single family homes. A densely forested re-plant, along with a retaining wall and fencing above, are strategically placed along a large portion of the site's westerly border, adding privacy and separation. No decks are proposed. To maximize privacy for adjacent westerly homes, upper floor units are designed with a 6' slider protected by a 42" railing (Juliet balcony). Tenants will have access to plenty of fresh air, while minimizing impact to neighbors' privacy. Finally, windows within the complex are placed so that Tenants cannot look directly into adjacent units. Please see revised Site Plan, Landscaping Plan, Building Elevations and Rendering.

Satisfies all Privacy Guidelines



#### D. Façade and Articulation

Requirement: Use architectural features that break up blank, flat walls and roofs and give the building a human scale.

Guidelines: Building articulation is achieved by modulating exterior walls. Maximum distance between modules is +/-26', minimum module distance is +/-10'. A common, unifying design theme is proposed throughout the buildings. Conventional sized windows, covered entries (basement units), along with variation in textures and lines, are designed to reduce the perceived mass of the buildings and give them a human scale.

Each modulation is stepped 4', along with alternating roof lines (both gable and hipped). 3 different styles of siding are proposed: 1) 2'-3' stone veneer (basement floors), horizontal lap siding on lower floors, and vertical siding on upper floors. A minimum of 4 different siding colors add further visual interest.

Variation in gable and hipped roof lines is achieved by using an assortment of pitch and width. Please see revised Site Plan, Building Elevations and Rendering.

Satisfies all Façade and Articulation Guidelines

#### E. Windows

Requirement: Provide articulation of the building façade by using well-proportioned and spaced windows.

Guidelines: Each upper floor unit contains a 6' slider in the living room, protected by a 42" railing. The exterior lines created by these Juliet balconies add attractive vertical proportion to the building façades. All bedrooms contain at least one 3'x5' single hung window, adding vertical lines, as well as a typical residential appearance. Windows have been added to the north and south walls of each building, as well as the east and west facades. In addition, large windows have been added to each building's central core. The overall wall to window ratio is designed to reflect what is customarily seen in Pacific Northwest style residential buildings. Please see revised Building Elevations and Rendering.

Satisfies all Window Guidelines

#### F. Building Foundations

Requirement: Design a building foundation to blend visually with the site.

Guidelines: All building foundations are designed to blend visually with the site. This is achieved by minimizing exposure via backfill and landscaping. An array of siding styles and/or stamped concrete are proposed to blend landscaping with the building. A 2'-3' stone veneer base adds architectural interest.

Finally, any foundation areas where +/-2 feet are exposed, proper spacing and species of landscaping will be used for cover. Please see revised Building Elevations, Rendering and Landscaping Plan.

Satisfies all Building Foundation Guidelines



#### G. Entries

**Requirement:** Clearly define the main entrance of the building, orient it to a pedestrian walkway and enhance safety through lighting and visibility.

**Guidelines:** The main entrances are centrally located on the east side of each building. They are defined by directional signage, large covered areas, and ample walkways leading to each entrance. These entrances are well lit, lined by landscaping, and clearly visible from the adjacent parking lots and drive lanes.

The basement floor entrances are centrally located on the west side of each building. These entrances are also clearly defined, with sidewalks leading to doorways. Directional lighting (downward facing) helps guide tenants and guests. Two additional secure entries are located on the north and south stair towers of each building.

Again, non-invasive lighting and clear pathways lead to these additional points of pedestrian ingress/egress.

Please see revised Site Plan, Landscaping Plan, Lighting Plan, Building Elevations and Rendering.

Satisfies all Entry Guidelines

#### H. Building Materials

**Requirement:** Use durable exterior finish materials that provide visual detail, reduce the perceived scale of the building through texture or pattern and appear similar to those used in the neighborhood.

**Guidelines:** 2 different types of durable vinyl siding are proposed: horizontal (6"-7" reveal) and vertical. An array of siding colors will be used, and the basement level will feature 2'-3' of stone veneer. A well designed mix of colors will be used to reduce the perceived scale of the buildings. These various siding components, in addition to multiple colors and stone veneer, add a 'Pacific Northwest' style. This design is similar to the existing neighborhood and helps reduce the perceived scale of the buildings. Please see revised Building Elevations and Rendering.

Satisfies all Building Materials Guidelines

#### I. Garages and Accessory Buildings

**Requirement:** Design garages and carports in a way that does not dominate the streetscape or obscure building entries. Accessory buildings shall be subordinate in scale to the main buildings.

**Guidelines:** No garages or carports are proposed. Please see revised Site Plan.

Satisfies all Garage and Accessory Building Guidelines



**\*\*Density clarification:**

The Hawley Replat, or Cedar Ridge Plat received Preliminary Plat approval in May 1994 in Bellingham Resolution No. 19-94. The plat included 46.71 acres and provided for a total of 123 units, including 64 single family lots, one duplex lot, one triplex lot, one fourplex lot, and a 50 unit multifamily tract. It also contained a 15 acre open space parcel that was dedicated to the City and a tract that was labeled Future Development. The tract labeled Future Development is the subject property. The plat conditions provided that additional public review would be required prior to the development of the reserve tract. No unit count was assigned to the Future Development tract in the Preliminary Plat Resolution. Division 1 of the plat contained the seven single family residences abutting Nevada Street north of Consolidation Avenue and immediately to the west of the subject property. Final Plat approval for Division 1 was granted in April 1996 in Resolution 26-96.

Division 2 of the Cedar Ridge Plat received Final Plat approval in July 2002 in Resolution 2002-24. Division 2 consisted of 48 single family lots, one duplex lot, one triplex lot, one fourplex lot, a 50 unit multifamily lot and a reserve tract (the subject property). The Final Plat Resolution shows a site plan identifying the subject property as Tract F Future Multi Site, See Sheet 4 of 4. Sheet 4 is not attached to the Final Plat Resolution. Sheet 4 as recorded with the Whatcom County Auditor has the notation: "176 units" on Tract F. Attachment 1 to the proposed Final Plat Resolution included in the City Council Agenda Bill, described in the proposed Resolution as the Site Plan, shows the same notation for Tract F, "Future Development (176 units)".

In October 2004, Cypress Ventures, LLC requested a Plat Alteration and Subdivision Variance for a portion of the property located in Division 2 of the Cedar Ridge Plat. Part of the proposal was to transfer 3 units from Tract F (the subject property) to Lot 12 and Tracts C and D. The plat alteration was approved to allow further division of Lot 12 (the duplex site) and Tract B (the triplex site) so that the units could be developed on lots that would be individually owned. Tract C (the 50 unit multifamily tract) was also altered to allow single family attached, cottage, carriage and townhouse units on individual lots to provide an alternative to condominium or apartment development on the sites. The transfer of units from Tract F to Lot 12 and Tracts C and D was denied. The Order of November 29, 2004 indicates that the existing unit count (176) shall remain.

The maximum density for the entire 46.71 acre parcel included in the Cedar Ridge Plat under the Residential Multi, Planned, 5,000 square feet per unit designation was 406 units. If density was not clustered on the subject site by the Cedar Ridge Plat the subject property would be able to accommodate 97 units at 5,000 square feet per unit zoning.