

# Knox & American II Multifamily (with Opportunity Housing)

Case PL2023-00061 (Pre-Application DRC)  
Case PL2022-00068 (Formal DRC Application)

## Formal Development Review Committee (DRC) Application Project Narrative

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### **Project Overview**

The proposed project is a new, residential development consisting of mixed-income dwelling units (both market-rate and affordable housing) on a vacant lot at the southwest corner of American Boulevard West and Knox Avenue South. The proposal includes 99 new residences ranging from studios and alcoves to 1-bedroom + den units. Amenities include, but are not limited to, a fitness room, structured parking and landscape improvements. The majority of the proposed building is four stories tall, and there is a piece that is three stories tall at the western portion. A resident amenity on the rooftop of the three-story portion features views to the south and west. There are 156 parking spaces proposed --- 50 parking stalls in the underground parking garage, 83 surface parking spaces and 23 (already built) on-street parking spaces.

The proposed project would further the Penn American District Plan's vision, integrate more mixed-income housing within the Penn American District that has existing retail and commercial uses that would greatly benefit from the additional residents, and improve the area with additional, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes. Phase 3 of the Penn American District Plan's vision was the mixed-income housing development directly adjacent to the site along the south – the District Apartments.

### **Opportunity Housing**

Of the total units, 9% (9 units) are proposed to be very low-income units, defined by the City of Bloomington zoning ordinance as household income above 30% to at or below 50% Area Median Income (AMI). Refer also to the applicant's Affordable Housing Plan.

### **Site Design**

The site design strategy locates the building along an east-west axis at the southern portion of the site and solidly engages the District Apartments along the south. Unit patios and decks along the southern and eastern façades are positioned close to the street and help to activate the pedestrian realm along 80th-1/2 Street. Proposed open and green space activates the existing METRO Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit station at the east end of the site along Knox Avenue South.

The landscape design will satisfy the requirements of the City for plantings and screening while also providing additional site enhancements. Trees, shrubs, and grasses will be used in the parking lot to help screen the public streets while also softening and breaking up the needed asphalt. The plantings will help make the building more pedestrian-friendly along the streetscape realm on 80<sup>th</sup>-1/2 Street by visually stepping the building down in scale.

Stormwater is to be surface-drained to multiple catch basins at low points in the proposed parking lot. These catch basins feed into an underground infiltration basin which will provide water quality and rate control compliant with all applicable City and watershed requirements.

### **Building Design**

The building design is a modern style of varied material depths. The proposed configuration and choice in color palette speak to the design language set by the District Apartments. Proposed exterior materials include glass, stucco, masonry veneer, metal, and fiber cement. Final exterior building materials are to be determined.

The applicant understands primary building elevation frontages are Knox, 80-1/2 and American, and secondary building elevation frontage is Morgan (which the applicant considers for purposes of the Ordinance a private drive, not a public street). The applicant complies with the exterior building

materials Ordinance (§19.63.08 (c)) on the north, east and south facades. The applicant acknowledges there is flexibility allowed under the Opportunity Housing allowances (§9.22) for alternative, exterior building materials (fiber cement, engineered wood, EIFS, 20-yr warranty metals) which may cover up to 75% of facades not facing public streets. The applicant is requesting the allowance on the west façade. Refer to Opportunity Housing reduction/allowances further on within this narrative and to the exterior building elevation drawings.

### **Building Statistics**

Overall building metrics and Construction Types are listed in the architectural drawing set.

### **Structure Design Standards**

It is the applicant's understanding that the Structure Design standards (§21.301.03 – Structure Design standards for Commercial, Industrial and Mixed Use Districts, including, but not limited to, the ground-level windows percentage requirement) are not applicable to this project as the applicant is proposing a rezone to a Residential District.

### **Anticipated Applications**

Anticipated applications are as follows:

- 1) Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Re-guidance request from Community Commercial (CC) to High Density Residential (HDR)
  - To create consistency in land use and increase housing units --- of various income levels --- to meet current housing and market demands (a significant goal within the Comprehensive Plan, Section 3)
- 2) Rezoning request from C-5 (Commercial) + Planned Development Overlay to RM-100 (Multiple-Family Residential) + Planned Development Overlay
  - Proposing deviations from RM-100

### **Anticipated Deviations**

The applicant is requesting flexibility in the following areas:

#### **Parking Between Building and Street (§21.203.09 (d))**

- Requesting exemption for multiple street frontages and proposing alternative compliance (enhanced street wall and building frontage) using C-5 frontage standards for proposing parking between building & street
- Exemptions for sites having multiple street frontages may be allowed through the PD process (§21.301.02 (f)(2) and (6)).
- Under the *Street Enclosure* standards of C-5 (§21.301.02 (f)(3)):
  - (A) *Primary street*. At least 50% of the linear primary street frontage must be enclosed by buildings. An additional 20% must be enclosed by buildings and/or other vertical elements located along the minimum building setback line. Vertical elements may consist of: trees, shrubs, walls, fences and sculptural elements. Vertical elements over four feet in height must be consistent with the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) objectives in the Planning Manager's *Landscaping and Screening Policies and Procedures* document as may be amended from time to time.

(B) *Secondary street*. At least 30% of the linear secondary street frontage must contain buildings. An additional 20% must be enclosed by buildings and/or vertical elements, located along the minimum building setback line. Vertical elements over four feet in height must be consistent with the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) objectives in the Planning Manager's *Landscaping and Screening Policies and Procedures* document.

- The applicant is proposing an enhanced street wall along Knox and an enhanced streetscape along Knox, American and 80th-1/2 per drawings. Unit patios and decks along the southern and eastern façades are positioned close to the street and help to activate the pedestrian realm along 80th-1/2 Street. Proposed open and green space activates the existing METRO Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit station at the east end of the site along Knox Avenue South.
- It is the applicant's understanding that the remaining Mixed Use District standards (§21.301.02 (f)) are not applicable to this project.

#### **Parking Setbacks (§21.301.06, i)**

- Proposing deviation: 19 surface parking spaces at northwest corner of site at a 6 ft setback (instead of the 20 ft min.-required setback)
- The applicant is proposing surface parking in this area to match those on the adjacent-to-the-west Red Lobster property in order to provide a consistent street frontage along American. To maintain the consistency between the two properties surface parking extents at the north edge, the 19 parking spaces are proposed within the required parking setback.
- There was a ROW dedication along American Blvd in a 2016 final plat of 'Knox American Addition' by Sunde Land Surveying (included as an attachment). Per the applicant's discussions with City staff, it was stated the City would consider an encroachment agreement.

#### **Opportunity Housing Reductions/Allowances Applied**

The applicant is applying the following Opportunity Housing allowed reductions:

- **Site Area** (§ 9.16.02) ---- Requesting the reduction (25% for 9% units at very low income) and proposing 78,691+/- sf (1.806+/- acres (60,000 sf modified min.-required)
- **Site Width** (§ 9.16.03) ---- Requesting the reduction (25% for 9% units at very low income): and proposing 196 ft 3 in (150 ft modified min.-required)
- **Usable Open Space** (§ 9.16.05) ---- Requesting the reduction (25% reduction for 9% units at very low income) and proposing 27,149 sf +/- (22,275 sf modified min.-required)
- **Storage Space** (§ 21.302.09, (d)(7); § 9.23) ----- Requesting the reduction (50% reduction for 9% units at or below 60% AMI) and proposing 50 storage spaces (49 storage spaces modified min.-required):
  - Options available to the residents in the parking level include:
    - Dedicated bike storage (a cage for common bike storage) has been provided.
    - Dedicated unit storage of 96 cu ft (for 50 storage lockers) has been provided.
    - Dedicated unit storage in the form of over-stall locker boxes also has been provided.
  - The District requested flexibility to provide a **reduced quantity of 125 storage units (for 248 DUs = 50.4% storage)** instead of providing the required 248 storage units (for 100% of units) and provided multiple storage unit options.
  - Even with the reduced quantity requested and approved, there is a **20% vacancy rate** in built storage units at the District: 117 of 146 total storage units are currently being leased (only 80%).

- **Vehicle Parking, Overall Spaces** (§ 9.19) ---- Requesting the reduction (Transit Tier I = 15% for 9% units at very low income) and proposing 156 parking spaces (136 parking spaces modified min.-required)
- **Enclosed Vehicle Parking** (§ 9.20) ---- Requesting the reduction (50% reduction for 9% units at very low income) and proposing 50 enclosed parking spaces (49 enclosed parking spaces modified min.-required)
- **Exterior Building Materials** (§ 9.22) --- Requesting the Opportunity Housing allowance on the west façade for alternative, exterior building materials (20-yr warranty metals) which may cover up to 75% of facades not facing public streets.

### **Phasing/Construction Scheduling**

The project will be built and completed in a single phase. There are currently no plans for additional phases. Construction sequencing will be appropriate to the site and approved by City staff when a general contractor is selected.

### **Anticipated Employment**

At the Knox and American II building, it is anticipated there would be one caretaker and one maintenance person (likely both full-time).

The applicant anticipates conducting all leasing services out of the adjacent District Apartments building. At the District, there are a manager, an assistant manager, a caretaker and a maintenance person (all full-time). Once the Knox and American II apartments building is operational, a leasing agent (likely part-time) may be added.),

### **Anticipated Hours of Operation**

Exclusive of the janitorial, service and specific storage closets for building operations staff, residents of Knox and American II will have access to the remainder of the building 24-hours per day, seven days per week.

Once complete, anticipated hours of operation for the District Apartments leasing staff are anticipated to remain 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday and Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm. The District's leasing office is closed to residents and the public after-hours.

### **Covenants/Agreements**

The applicant will work with the City to create any new agreements that may influence the use and maintenance of the proposed development. This site falls under the existing Reciprocal Easements and Operating Agreement (Doc #10699442), so the owner is responsible for one-half of the maintenance of the North/South service drive. In addition, a Reciprocal Easements and Operating Agreement exists by and between Knox & American I, LLC, and Housing and Redevelopment Authority in and for the City of Bloomington (Doc #10740793). There are multiple variances: to reduce lot size and width (Doc # 10665846) and to approve a platting variance (Doc # 10665845).

### **Traffic**

Refer to the traffic memo by Alliant. The 23 on-street parking spaces along 80<sup>th</sup>-1/2 are for the subject project per historic documents from the District's entitlement.

**Water**

The project has 99 dwelling units with 99 bathrooms and kitchens. The applicant can provide plumbing details and calculations when available at a future date.

Stormwater is to be surface-drained to multiple catch basins at low points in the proposed parking lot. These catch basins feed into an underground infiltration basin which will provide water quality and rate control compliant with all applicable City and watershed requirements.

**Utilities**

The infrastructure improvements around the site planned for the proposed development include:

**Water Main**

- A water main exists, running N-S along the private drive to the west of the site. A water main stub exists, intended for this development. The 8" DIP water main stub includes a gate valve and extends east from an existing 8"X8" Tee in the proposed drive entrance into the site. The water main is proposed to connect into the NW of the building. Two hydrants are currently proposed to be added throughout the site.

**Sanitary Sewer**

- A sanitary stub exists in the NE corner of the site. This stub is 8" PVC at a 0.40% slope and connects into the sanitary main running along American Blvd W. The plan is to connect sanitary from the NE side of the building into a proposed Sanitary Manhole, then from the proposed manhole into the existing sanitary stub. Details are to be coordinated with City staff.

**Storm Sewer**

- There is a large public storm chamber system to the south of the site and extensive large storm piping to the east of the site along Knox Ave S. These areas are to be left undisturbed. The proposed plan is to convey stormwater on the site into an underground infiltration and storage chamber in the north of the site underneath the proposed parking lot. This system will discharge stormwater to the north into the public stormwater system running along American Blvd W.

**Electrical**

- The electric main runs along Knox Ave S. A portion serves the street lighting on the project's side of 80<sup>th</sup>-1/2 for the full width of the project site.
- The location of the building transformer – one will likely be required – will be integrated into the design and will be coordinated with the local utility.

**Gas**

- There is a current gas service running north-south in the existing private drive on the west side of the site.