

Attachment 1 of December 13, 2022 City Council Staff Report



City Council Report

Subject: Placer Creek Apartments
Design Review, DR2017-0006
General Development Plan Amendment, PDG2022-0005
Zone Change, Z2017-0006

Date: October 25, 2022

Submitted by: David Mohlenbrok, Community Development Director
Bret Finning, Planning Services Manager
Dara Dungworth, Senior Planner

Department: Community Development Department

Recommendation

As the entitlement request includes an Ordinance amendment, a two-meeting process is required. At the first meeting the City Council should conduct a public hearing, complete deliberations, provide staff with direction (if appropriate) as to any desired modification(s) to the draft entitlement documents and, if approving, introduce the ordinance(s) and continue the item to the next feasible City Council meeting as indicated below:

October 25, 2022 (first reading of Ordinance and final action on all project entitlements)

The Planning Commission and Staff recommend the following:

MOVE TO ADOPT A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN APPROVING A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND A MITIGATION MONITORING PROGRAM (Placer Creek Apartments / DR2017-0006, PDG2022-0005, and Z2017-0006)

MOVE TO INTRODUCE, WAIVE THE FULL READING AND READ BY TITLE ONLY, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN AMENDING THE NORTHWEST ROCKLIN GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND REZONING AN APPROXIMATELY 10.4ACRE SITE FROM PLANNED DEVELOPMENT COMMERCIAL (PD-C) AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL (PD-BP) TO PLANNED DEVELOPMENT 22 MINIMUM DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE (PD-22+) (Placer Creek Apartments / PDG2022-0005 and Z2017-0006)

MOVE TO ADOPT A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN APPROVING A DESIGN REVIEW FOR A MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROJECT (Placer Creek Apartments / DR2017-0006)

Date December 13, 2022 (final action on Ordinance)

The Planning Commission and Staff recommend the following:

MOVE TO ADOPT AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKLIN AMENDING THE NORTHWEST ROCKLIN GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND REZONING AN APPROXIMATELY 10.4ACRE SITE FROM PLANNED DEVELOPMENT COMMERCIAL (PD-C) AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL (PD-BP) TO PLANNED DEVELOPMENT 22 MINIMUM DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE (PD-22+) (Placer Creek Apartments / PDG2022-0005 and Z2017-0006)

Proposal/Application Request

This application is a request for approval of the following entitlements to allow the development of a 254-unit apartment project on an approximately 10.4acre site:

- A General Development Plan Amendment to update the Northwest Rocklin General Development Plan with the requested land use and zoning changes and to reallocate unused trip caps from the project site.
- A Rezone to modify the existing zoning from Planned Development Commercial (PD-C) and Planned Development Business Professional (PD-BP) to Planned Development 22 minimum dwelling units per acre (PD-22+).
- A Design Review to approve the site design, architecture, and landscaping for a 254-unit multi-family development.

Project Ownership and Location

The applicant is Tiffany Wilson with RSC Engineering. The property owner is Cole Partners Development Company. The subject property is generally located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Whitney Ranch Parkway and University Avenue. APNs 017-084-001 and 017-084-011. **Figure 1.**

Figure 1 – Project Location



Background, Surrounding Land Uses, and Site Characteristics

The project site was annexed into the City in 2003 as part of the Northwest Rocklin Annexation Area and is within the Northwest Rocklin General Development Plan area. The initial conceptual alignment of Whitney Ranch Parkway included a small portion of what is now the proposed project site, known as Area M. With the construction of Whitney Ranch Parkway in its current alignment this remnant, Area M, was no longer of benefit to the City and in April, 2018 the City Council approved the transfer of the portion of Area M to the project developer so that it could be incorporated into the site for development (Resolution 2018-88).

The application for this project was first received in 2017 and was processed and scheduled to be considered by the Planning Commission in February 2019. Staff recommended approval of the project with a condition that it include a ten (10) percent affordable housing component that the applicant was not in agreement with. At that time, the City was just commencing the work to create the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Ad Hoc Committee to study and develop an approach and program for the City to meet its RHNA obligations. The RHNA Committee did not include this site among its recommendations largely because the City was already processing an application for its development. At that time, Staff anticipated that the project would be required to provide 10% affordable units as a condition of approval. The project applicant opted to request the processing of the project be put on hold to see if the outcome of the RHNA process might change that requirement. Since 2019, several changes to State law have limited the City's ability to place certain conditions on particular residential developments which are permitted by right under

the City's General Plan land use designation regardless of underlying and potentially contradictory zoning designation. Staff has also re-evaluated the City's adopted Housing Element policy regarding incorporation of affordable housing into projects that are requesting a General Plan Amendment converting a nonresidential land use designation to a residential use or from a higher density residential land use category to a lower density residential land use category. Staff no longer believes that the project's proposed entitlements would necessitate a provision of affordable units as a requirement of this project as the project does not require a General Plan land use designation amendment. Given the above, staff does not recommend that the City Council condition any of the units in the project to be affordable and the draft conditions of approval do not include any such requirement.

In November 2021, the applicant revived the project with a slightly modified site design, updated architecture, and slightly higher unit count. Staff reprocessed the modified project, updated the original Mitigated Negative Declaration, and took the project back to the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) for review. With the ARC's direction, discussed in more detail below, and their recommendation of approval, staff completed processing the modified application.

The approximately 10.4-acre project site has remained undeveloped since its annexation, and historical uses included ranching. To date, the majority of the project site is undeveloped and is being used as a site to house soil stockpiles from adjacent properties associated with the Placer Creek Corporate Center (PCCC). Since 2007, several construction projects have been completed in close proximity to the site including the development of Whitney Ranch Parkway on the north, University Avenue on the west, the Spring Valley residential subdivision immediately to the south, and the Wildcat (aka Durango) subdivision to the east with an intervening commercially designated property immediately east of the project site.

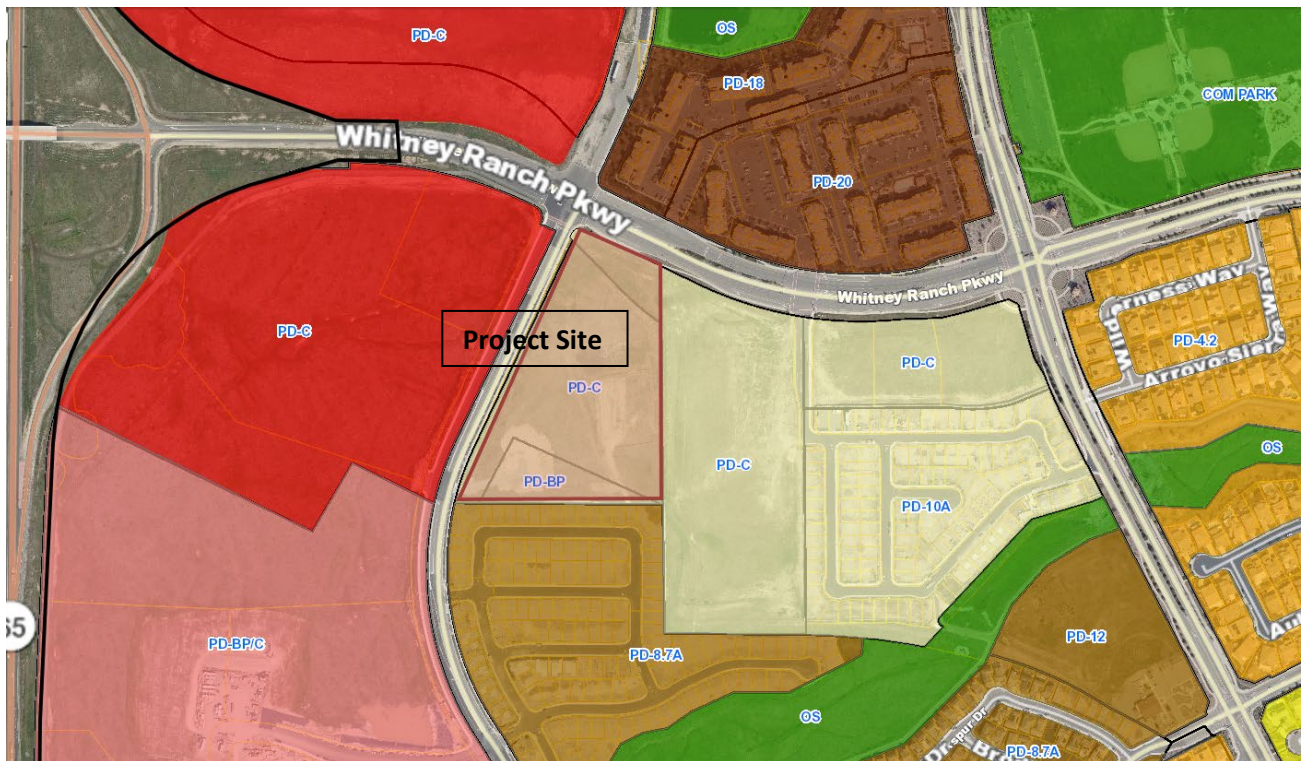
The topography of the site is generally level with elevations ranging from approximately 155 feet to 175 feet. There is a man-made berm that extends along the eastern border of the site and various sized soil stockpiles associated with adjacent development have been placed in the center of the site. The soil stockpiles include erosion and sediment control measures (i.e., silt fencing and straw wattles) around them. The project site also contains a stabilized entrance lined with rocks off University Avenue, a brick retaining wall and a recently constructed concrete-lined v-ditch that runs west to east along the site's southerly property line. The majority of the vegetation on the site is from recent hydroseeding applications, which can still be seen, in addition to straw that was applied for soil stabilization.

See **Table 1** for surrounding uses and see **Figure 2** for the current General Plan and Zoning.

Table 1. Surrounding Uses

	Current Use	Current General Plan / Zoning
Project Site	Vacant	Mixed Use (MU) / Planned Development Commercial (PD-C) and Planned Development Business Professional (PD-BP)
North	Multi-family Residential (Vicara and Montessa, across Whitney Ranch Parkway)	High Density Residential (HDR) / Planned Development 20 units per acre (PD-20) and Planned Development 18 units per acre (PD-18)
South	Single Family Residential (Spring Valley)	Medium High Density Residential (MHDR) / Planned Development 8.7 units per acre (PD-8.7A)
East	Vacant	Mixed Use (MU) / Planned Development Commercial (PD-C)
West	Vacant	Retail Commercial (RC) / Planned Development Commercial (PD-C)

Figure 2. Current General Plan & Zoning



Land Use Designation

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Professional Office | High Density Residential |
| Business Professional/Commercial | Medium-High Density Residential |
| Bus. Prof./Comm./Light Industrial | Medium Density Residential |
| Heavy Industrial | Low Density Residential |
| Light Industrial | Rural Residential |
| Retail Commercial | Recreation/Conservation |
| Service Commercial | Park |
| Mixed Use | Downtown Plan Area |
| Public/Quasi-Public | Future School Site |

Zoning

- PD-C – Planned Development Commercial
- PD-BP – Planned Development Business Professional
- PD-BP/C – Planned Development Business Professional/Commercial
- PD-4.2 – Planned Development 4.2 units per acre
- PD-8.7A – Planned Development 8.7 units per acre
- PD-10A – Planned Development 10 units per acre
- PD-12 – Planned Development 12 units per acre
- PD-18 – Planned Development 19 units per acre
- PD-20 – Planned Development 20 units per acre
- COM PARK – Community Park
- OS – Open Space

Summary of Planning Commission Hearing and Action

On September 6, 2022, the Planning Commission considered the proposed Placer Creek Apartments project. Staff presented the Project, as well as a Blue Memo that included modifications to the draft conditions of approval for the Design Review: one at the applicant's request and one additional condition regarding recently adopted Facilities Impact Fees. The Blue Memo is provided as **Attachment 1**.

Following staff's presentation, the Planning Commission asked about and/or commented on the following:

- Distance to the existing single family residential development to the south
- Traffic and adequacy of the existing four-way stop at University Avenue and Whitney Ranch Parkway
- Whether the project site was on the RHNA available sites inventory
- Whether an analysis had been performed to assess land use needs and if there is a surplus or not of commercially designated land, given this project and other known and potential future projects
- The project's proposed art program
- Wall height

The public hearing was opened and with no one from the public wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

The Planning Commission proceeded to deliberate expressing concerns about the loss of commercially designated land in Northwest Rocklin, but overall the Commissioners felt it was a good project that was consistent with the University Architectural District, and as a multi-family project, it is an appropriate location.

The Commission then voted whether to recommend approval of the project to the City Council as follows on the various entitlements:

- Mitigated Negative Declaration: 5-0 in favor
- General Development Plan and Rezone: 4-1 in favor
- Design Review: 5-0 in favor (including the revised conditions from the Blue Memo)

The approved minutes for the Planning Commission hearing are provided as **Attachment 2**.

Project Updates Subsequent to the Planning Commission Hearing

Prior to the Planning Commission hearing, the applicant expressed a desire to have the option to gate the project in the future as reflected in Exhibit A. Based upon the information available at that time, the Planning Commission staff report noted that due to concerns about potential traffic impacts and site design changes that would be needed to accommodate gating of the project, Staff was not in support of allowing the gate option. Subsequent to the Planning Commission hearing the applicant provided Staff with an optional design, provided as Exhibit B to the Design Review

resolution. The City Engineer has reviewed this design option and determined that it should be acceptable provided that the applicant is able to provide documentation, to the satisfaction of the City Engineer, that the gates would not result in traffic conflicts on University Avenue. Therefore, the following condition has been added to the draft resolution for approval of the project's design review:

4.d.iii To accommodate possible gating of the project, the improvement plans may incorporate an alternate entry design generally consistent with Exhibit B provided that the applicant is first able to provide documentation to the satisfaction of the City Engineer that the gates would not result in queuing or other traffic conflicts on University Avenue, including taking into account the planned future traffic signal at the southern driveway. The design for the entry gates shall accommodate the following minimum standards:

- a) Fire apparatus turning radii of 36 feet inside and 50 feet outside;*
- b) Adequate queueing distances to prevent conflicts with traffic on University Avenue;*
- c) Gates shall be electrically operated and must comply with the requirements of ASTM F2200 and be listed in accordance with UL 325;*
- d) Provide for a minimum clear opening width of 20 feet and a clear vertical height of 13 feet 6 inches; and for dual gates with a median, provide for a minimum clear opening width of sixteen 16 feet and clear vertical height of 13 feet 6 inches;*
- e) Incorporate an approved traffic pre-emption device on both sides of the gates as well as a Knox key switch. The gate is required to open with a radio frequency controlled by "Click-2-Enter";*
- f) The gate is required to fail in the open position with loss of power;*
- g) A pedestrian gate is required within ten feet of the electric vehicular gates;*
- h) The gates shall match the tubular steel fencing of the project.*

In addition, all residents of the complex shall be provided with an automatic gate opening clicker (or equivalent device), one for each vehicle kept on site, to limit or avoid queueing backlogs for those vehicles trying to enter the complex. All gates and associated improvements shall be to the satisfaction of the Fire Chief, City Engineer and, Community Development Director.

If the applicant elects to not install gates, City standard commercial driveway Drawing #3-23 shall be constructed at both project entrances. (FIRE, PUBLIC SERVICES, PLANNING, ENGINEERING)

General Plan Consistency

The project site is designated in the City's General Plan as Mixed Use (MU). The purpose of this designation is to provide "for land use patterns and mixed use development that integrate residential and non-residential land use" among others. Mixed Use designated parcels may be developed as all commercial, all office, all residential, or as any combination of those uses. As mixed-use areas develop, the City shall strive to ensure that there is ultimately a mix of residential and non-residential uses. In the project vicinity, there are four vacant parcels currently zoned as Planned Development – Commercial that are able to provide for that mix. Residential density in a

MU area is specified at a range of 10 to 40 dwelling units per acre (du/acre). Because of the proximity to major arterial roads, Highway 65, and the commercially designated land to the immediate west, as well as the project's proposed density of 24 du/acre, Staff concluded that this residential project could be considered to be appropriate within this Mixed Use designated location and is, therefore, consistent with the General Plan.

General Development Plan Amendment and Rezone

Although the entire site has a General Plan land use designation of MU, a majority of the site is zoned PD-C, excluding a portion on the south side of the site that is zoned PD-BP. While the MU land designation would allow multi-family development without the need for a rezone to provide land use consistency, Staff is including the rezone to provide clarity in the Citywide Zoning Map and within the Northwest Rocklin General Development Plan. The General Development Plan Amendment is required to update the appropriate tables within that document to reflect the project's zoning and land use change. The City is currently processing several projects the Northwest Rocklin General Development Plan, including the Estia project at the corner of University Avenue and Sunset Boulevard. Each of these projects require updates to the Northwest Rocklin General Development Plan. There is some uncertainty as to which of these projects the City Council will take final action on first and, of course, what that action may be. Depending upon how those timing issues play out and the action taken by the City Council, it is likely that the anticipated General Development Plan revisions for some of these projects, including the Placer Creek Apartments, may need to be revised between Planning Commission and City Council to reflect the changes approved (or not) with these other projects.

The parcel is identified as Northwest Rocklin General Development Plan Highway 65 Corridor Planning Area 107B. Traffic Capacity in the Northwest Rocklin General Development Plan assumed 2,310 Average Daily Trips (ADT) for the 10.4-acre site if developed with commercial uses as originally designated and anticipated. However, the residential project now proposed for the site would, per the Traffic Capacity generation rates and formula in the Northwest Rocklin General Development Plan, only generate 1,651 ADT. Parcels in the Highway 65 Corridor Planning Area in the Northwest Rocklin General Development Plan have their development potential limited by "trip caps" which was intended to help maintain LOS C for area intersections in the City. As such, these trip caps pose certain marketing and economic development disadvantages, therefore staff believes it is in the City's and area property owners' best interest for the "excess capacity" of 659 ADT not needed for the Placer Creek Apartment project site to be re-allocated to Highway 65 Corridor Planning Area 107A, immediately west of the project site across University Avenue and owned by the same ownership entity, to preserve that development potential within the Highway 65 corridor.

The Rezone would modify the existing zoning from Planned Development Commercial (PD-C) and Planned Development Business Professional (PD-BP) to Planned Development 22 minimum units per acre (PD-22+). PD-22+ is an existing zone district within the Northwest Rocklin General Development Plan and with the approval of the Rezone by City Council, the project would be consistent with the zoning of the site. The project as proposed complies with the density and development standards set forth in the PD-22+ zone.

Staff recommends approval of the Rezone because the project site is consistent with the desirable characteristics of high density residentially designated land including being close to commercial centers, employment centers, public facilities, other high density residential uses, and arterial and collector streets. The rezone would allow the construction of an additional high density, 24 units per acre, 254-unit residential project that helps maintain a mix of housing types and costs in the City. In addition, it provides an increased customer base for future commercial development as well as housing opportunities for employees of future business professional (office) development in the project vicinity, and as such it may be considered as complimentary to, and supportive of, the development of the remaining commercially designated properties along University Avenue and Whitney Ranch Parkway. In addition, recent amendments to the state's Planning and Zoning Law have significantly reduced the City's ability to deny a housing project for lack of zoning consistency when the housing project is consistent with the City's General Plan.

Design Review

General Project Design

The proposed 254-unit multi-family development includes a clubhouse/recreation facility with a swimming pool and several common area amenities including two cabanas and three covered dining areas, six three-story residential buildings, as well as seven detached garages and several carport structures. Three residential building types are proposed. The project as proposed is consistent with the proposed PD-22+ zoning, adopted Citywide Design Review Criteria, and as noted above the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) found that the project design complies with the University Architectural District Guidelines.

Architecture and Public Art

Staff and the ARC support the project as consistent within the contemporary aesthetic of the University Architectural District, incorporating more than three architectural or construction elements as required, including strong geometric elements, use of metal surfaces, use of color accents, and corner accentuation. The current version of the project received a recommendation of approval from the ARC in January 2022. Prior to the ARC meeting, the applicant worked with staff to make some modifications to the architecture such that staff could recommend full support of the project to the ARC. The ARC provided additional direction to increase the functionality of the window canopies, add a pitched roof element to the monument sign at the corner, add elements to the pool building to increase its consistency with the rest of the project architecture, and add a metal finish element to the building corners at street facades and project entries. The ARC was supportive of the applicant working with Staff prior to moving forward to Planning Commission and determined that, with the modifications noted, the project's architecture generally complied with the University District requirements.

Because the proposed buildings have heights that exceed thirty feet and have more than two stories, the design review of the project is required to be reviewed by the Planning Commission with final approval by the City Council pursuant to Rocklin Municipal Code section 17.72.070(B)(2). The accompanying General Development Plan Amendment and Zone change requests also require City Council approval.

The applicant has indicated a desire to create a comprehensive public art element to include this project, as well as the other properties within the same ownership entity west of University Avenue. Staff is supportive of this approach as it would provide continuity within this portion of Northwest Rocklin and support the concept of place-making within and between these properties as they relate to each other through future development. Accordingly, Staff has included a condition of approval to allow the voluntary art installation for this project to come later when a comprehensive art program for the applicant's properties is developed and ready to be implemented. The condition includes the location of the art installation at the corner near the monument sign being shown on construction drawings and for any modification to the location to require review by Community Development staff to ensure no conflicts with utilities or other improvements and to modify the landscape plan accordingly.

Fencing

The project proposes tubular steel fencing along the street frontages and an eight-foot masonry wall along the eastern boundary with the adjacent commercially zoned property. There is an existing six foot high masonry wall along the southern property line that was constructed with the Spring Valley single family subdivision to the south of the project site. Staff is concerned that the grading of the project site, particularly along the easterly portion of the south property line, will result in the existing masonry wall having an effective height of less than six feet, negatively impacting the buffering, security, and privacy that the wall provides the existing residents. Staff has included a draft condition of approval to require that the project be modified to increase the height of the existing masonry wall to provide a minimum six-foot wall height (as measured from the higher finished grade on either side of the wall) or provide equivalent screening to the satisfaction of the Community Development Director

Signs

The project's proposed freestanding signs comply with the standards set forth in the Municipal Code, the Design Review Criteria, and the applicable University Architectural District Guidelines, with respect to location, size, height, and the use of colors and materials to match the project. Two signs are shown, one at the northern driveway and one at the corner of the project facing the intersection of Whitney Ranch Parkway and University Avenue. Should the developer elect to construct a third sign at the southern entrance in the future, staff has included a condition of approval that it be consistent with the approved signs and comply with any other applicable conditions of approval.

Landscaping

The project proposes a mix of groundcovers, shrubs, and trees. The landscape plans included as a part of Exhibit A demonstrate that the project generally complies with the City-wide Design Review Criteria, including the shade requirement for a minimum of 50% pavement shading at fifteen (15) years. Staff has included a condition of approval to require enhanced landscaping at the project entrances and the entry median, consistent with the Design Review Criteria.

Parking

The project complies with the City's parking requirements for apartments providing 262 spaces within garages and carports and 251 uncovered spaces for residents and guests. The total of 513 parking spaces provides exactly the required number of spaces.

Access & Traffic

Public access to the project will be via two driveways off of University Avenue. The northern driveway requires a modification to the existing median to construct a southbound left turn pocket of 170 feet. Southbound left turns out of the project from this driveway are not allowed. The southern driveway also requires modifying the existing median to construct a left turn pocket of 245 feet. These requirements were identified in the February 16, 2018 KD Anderson & Associates "Revised Access Assessment for Placer Creek Apartments on University Avenue, Rocklin, CA" report and are incorporated into the project as a mitigation measure (MM XVI.-1) and a condition of approval (condition 4.e.).

According to the October 1, 2018 KD Anderson "Placer Creek Apartments: University Traffic Signal Installation Schedule" report, a traffic signal is anticipated to be required at the project's southern driveway within ten years, assuming all background growth in the Northwest Rocklin General Development Plan area has occurred and approximately 45% of local development (e.g. the vacant retail and office property west across University Avenue and other development in the immediate vicinity of the project) is constructed. The City will monitor when installation of the traffic signal will be required. Installation timing will also be examined when the City reviews development applications for the properties to the west.

In addition, a twenty (20') foot wide emergency vehicle access to University Avenue was provided at the northerly end of the project site to comply with minimum Fire Code access requirements.

The applicant had indicated an interest in being able to gate this project in the future. However, the plans provided up to that point did not provide adequate and unobstructed Fire truck turning radii, and staff had significant concerns that limited room for vehicle queueing, particularly at the southerly, signalized entry, would lead to vehicles being stranded in the north bound University Avenue travel lanes creating operational and safety hazards. As discussed above, subsequent to the Planning Commission hearing the applicant provided an alternative gated entry design that the City Engineer believes may be acceptable subject to the provision of acceptable documentation showing that queueing would not impact traffic on University Avenue. Therefore, a condition to conditionally allow for the project to be gated has been included in the draft design review resolution.

Staff also included conditions of approval to ensure that prior to improvement plan issuance the project plans are modified as needed to accommodate access and minimum Fire truck turning radii to the satisfaction of the Fire Chief and the Community Development Director.

Environmental Determination

Consistent with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, an Initial Study was prepared to determine the Placer Creek Apartment project's potential impacts on the environment. The study found that the project could have significant impacts with regard to Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Noise, and Transportation and Traffic; however, it was also able to identify mitigation measures that would reduce each of these potential impacts to a less than significant level. Therefore, a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) of environmental impacts was prepared for the project. The identified mitigation measures have been incorporated into the conditions of approval in the draft Design Review resolution.

Public Correspondence

Public correspondence received prior to the publication of the Planning Commission agenda is provided as **Attachment 3** to the staff report.

Prepared by Dara Dungworth, Senior Planner

Attachments to the October 25, 2022 City Council Staff Report

Attachments to the October 25, 2022 City Council Staff Report, listed below, have not been included in this packet but are available for review at the following links: [Agendas and Minutes webpage](#); [Online Agenda link](#).

Attachment 1: Planning Commission Blue Memo and Attachments, September 6, 2022

Attachment 2: Approved meeting minutes, Planning Commission September 6, 2022

Attachment 3: Public Correspondence Received prior to the publication of the September 6, 2022 Planning Commission agenda

Blue Memo (Addendum) to the October 25, 2022 City Council Staff Report

Available at the [Agendas and Minutes webpage](#); Post Agenda Items link.