



KEMBERLIN ARCHITECTURE

To: Ariana Muca, PLA  
Landscape Architect / Planner I  
Planning and Development Services | City of Aurora  
Office: 303-739-7259 Email: [amuca@auroragov.org](mailto:amuca@auroragov.org)

RE: Westlake Vista Development (#1599985) – Letter of Introduction

Dear Ariana,

Please find attached our first Development Application submittal for **Westlake Vista Development**, a proposed residential townhome community located on a rural site at the northeast corner of the intersection of North Sable Boulevard and East 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

Our development proposal is for between 46 and 48 for-sale, single-family attached townhomes on individual, fee-simple lots located on an existing infill site in Subarea A. The site is approximately 2.72 acres and is comprised of three separate parcels on a gently sloping hillside facing west. The site is mostly unimproved farmland with the exception of a one-story single-family home and detached garage located on an elevated promontory at the southeast corner. The house is accessed from E 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue by two driveways – one asphalt/concrete and the other gravel. Other than a few accessory structures and some mature trees there are no other buildings, improvements or landscape features of note.

Our proposal calls for the removal of all existing structures and construction of the required grading, drainage and utility improvements necessary to serve the site. Off-site improvements include new curb, gutter, sidewalks and tree lawns along the two public street fronts. On-site improvements include a new internal private driveway providing resident, service and fire access and a variety of open spaces with integrated detention and water quality using low-impact techniques. Finally, the site will be enhanced with lighting, signage, and outdoor amenities.

The residential community, proposed at a density of 18-20 dwelling units per acre, is comprised of four models of two and three story townhomes with alley-loaded attached private garages. The four models – tentatively named Vistas I, II, III and IV – are arranged in rows of 5 or 6 units with variations in unit order, building orientation and finished floor elevation. Approximately one third the townhomes face a public street. The remainder face a combination of standard and non-standard Green Courts. The four models express different but compatible architectural character and a palette of durable, exterior materials. Townhome size and floorplan varies as well in order to appeal to a variety of potential owners.

In order to make redevelopment possible we propose to rezone the site to R-2 (Medium-Density Residential). The site is currently zoned R-R (Residential Rural). While this zoning reflects the agricultural roots of this part of Aurora it is no longer representative of adjacent neighborhoods or desired development trends. The site is surrounded by existing residential neighborhoods of various densities zoned R-1, R-2, R-3 and R-MH. These existing neighborhoods include older one and two-story single-family homes, some newer three and four-story multi-family apartments and condos and two large manufactured housing communities. The area is considered an Established Neighborhood place type in the Comprehensive Plan due to its strong and consistent residential character and scale and nearby schools and parks.

From a transportation and connectivity perspective, Sable Boulevard, running north-south directly west of the site, is an increasingly important corridor connecting this part of Aurora with the Fitzsimons and Anschutz campuses.

The site also has convenient access to I-225, I-70, E-470 and Denver International Airport. The proximity of the site to higher density residential, transit, and employment centers also makes it a desirable candidate for rezoning and redevelopment as residential.

To facilitate the proposed redevelopment, the Development Application submitted with this letter will require an Application for Zone Map Amendment, a Traffic Impact Study, and a Preliminary Drainage Report. These documents support the basis for the rezoning request in terms of compatibility of the proposed development with surrounding neighborhoods, adjacent streets and stormwater infrastructure.

The Development Application also proposes several Adjustments to the design standards in accordance with the requirements of Section 146-5.4.4. These Adjustments are also indicated on the Cover Sheet and include:

1. A proposed adjustment to reduce the minimum lot size for single-family attached (townhomes) in Subarea A by 10%. The request is intended to recognize the inherent dimensional limitations of an infill site and more efficiently utilize the available site area. The requested adjustment promotes a modest increase in the number of dwelling units that in turn allows for additional unit offerings at a more attainable price. The scale of the community and compatibility of the development with adjacent properties is not compromised by this adjustment. As a betterment/mitigation we propose to enhance the building architecture of the townhomes by implementing the point-based approach intended for single family and two-family detached housing.
2. A proposed adjustment to classify the east-most townhome units as non-standard Green Courts. The request proposes classification of the townhomes directly abutting the east property line as non-standard Green Court dwellings without the associated maximum number of units indicated in the development code. The requested adjustment promotes more efficient utilization of the site and supports the desired density. As a betterment/mitigation we propose increasing the quantity of landscape provided in the Green Courts by 33% over the minimum requirement.
3. A proposed adjustment to reduce the minimum rear setback. The request proposes establishing a minimum rear setback of between 5 and 15 feet for all structures. This adjustment reduces the amount of site area given over to paved alleys and driveways without compromising access for residents or service vehicles. This area will be transferred to the landscaped front yards and Green Courts, increasing the attractiveness of the community and reducing the urban heat-island effect. As a betterment/mitigation we propose to increase the minimum width of the central Green Court open spaces by 50% over the minimum requirement.

Our proposed development conforms to the specific Approval Criteria for Site Plans (Sec. 146-405 (F)) in the following ways:

1. Consistency with comprehensive plan. The proposed site plan is consistent with the provisions of the comprehensive plan, the City Code, and plans and policies adopted by city council that apply to the affected area.
  - a. The proposal helps meet a stated need in the comprehensive plan for a variety of quality, attainable housing options within the City. In addition, development on an infill site promotes more sustainable development patterns that place less burden on existing roadways, infrastructure, and greenfield sites far outside the city limits.
2. Impact on existing city infrastructure and public improvements. The proposed development does not result in undue or unnecessary burdens on the city's existing infrastructure and public improvements, or that arrangements are made to mitigate such impacts.
  - a. The proposal is for medium-density residential, a very suitable use for the area with demonstrated lower impacts on existing infrastructure. On-site private garages mitigate the visibility of vehicles from surrounding areas. The proposed sidewalk improvements and private driveway establish better connections between the site and adjacent properties.
3. Density. If the density is different from those of adjacent properties, specific steps are to be taken to achieve compatibility. For residential site plans abutting residential zones of lower density, the

development shall provide for transitions in density and building height to protect the character of the lower-density residential areas.

- a. The development proposes lowering the high point of the site along the east property line by three feet to create both vertical and horizontal separation from the adjacent single-family homes. The mixing of two and three story residential units creates a more comfortable transition with the surrounding one and two-story homes while providing greater architectural variety and interest, particularly in the roof line. An alley-loaded garage design avoids placing rows of garage fronts where they can be easily viewed from adjacent properties or public streets. Finally, the design adjustment betterments proposed contribute to buffering of the development with adjacent properties.
4. Protection and appropriate use of environmental features and topography to enhance the development. New development shall be designed, where reasonable, to preserve and protect the water quality and wildlife habitat of riparian corridors, wetlands, and floodplains affected by the proposed development. Open space and natural areas shall be preserved, where reasonable, and integrated into developed areas to provide visual diversity in the landscape and to define neighborhood and community character. The design and placement of buildings on a site incorporate and protect view corridors. Where reasonable, the design of the development shall maintain the approximate topographic form of major ridgelines, swales, and landforms.
  - a. The design maintains the general topography to minimize cut and fill, sloping down in a series of terraces and retaining walls from east to west.
5. Landscaped area. All site plans shall conform to adopted landscaping standards or guidelines adopted by city council. Certain portions of the city may be designated for special design treatments and standards.
  - a. New landscaped areas integrate natural forms and materials and, where possible, native and adapted species.
6. Internal efficiency of design. The proposed design of the site plan achieves internal efficiency for its users, including safe and convenient pedestrian access to common areas for recreation and other services, facilities, and amenities provided by the development. The proposed design shall provide for safe and convenient access for service and maintenance personnel performing routine duties related to but not limited to mail delivery and pick-up, utility meter reading, and other services.
  - a. The internal site is organized around two Green Court Open spaces fronting a single internal private street that connects to both Sable Boulevard and East 21st Avenue. This framework provides residents with a logical and understandable structure for the community as well as convenient access to a variety of outdoor spaces. The private drive also provides fire, utility and service vehicle access as well as resident access to their private garages.
7. Control of nuisance impacts. The proposed development controls nuisance impacts on itself and surrounding land uses including heat and glare, traffic congestion, noise, arrangement of signs and lighting, features to prevent littering and accumulation of trash, the amount and quality of storm drainage, the provision of adequate light and air, compatible screening of rooftop mechanical units, and other factors deemed to affect public health, safety and general welfare.
  - a. Site and building lighting is limited to what is necessary to achieve safe illumination for sidewalks, front entrances, and driveways. Light fixtures are shielded or downward facing to eliminate light "spill-over" onto adjacent properties or rights of way. Signage is similarly limited to a single entry monument and directory signage identifying the dwelling units for both visitors and emergency personnel. Finally, screened trash and snow removal areas are distributed to prevent the accumulation of trash and debris.
8. Urban design, building architecture, and landscape architecture. The site plan shall establish a high quality of design, demonstrate how compatibility with adjacent development and surrounding urban design elements will be achieved as well as internal consistency of design, and satisfy the city's adopted design standards and/or guidelines. The relationship between mass and space shall be combined and integrated to produce aesthetic and functional buildings and landscapes.
  - a. The development proposes four unique but complementary dwelling units emphasizing a high quality of design and materiality. Design elements include unique front building facades and articulated roof lines, differentiation of exterior materials and fenestration. Variations in unit

- size, floor plan, and number of levels contributes to additional architectural interest. Building groupings and landscape forms are designed in concert so that no exterior area feels “left over.”
9. Adequacy, accessibility, and connectivity of traffic and circulation plans. The design and efficiency, and connectivity of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation systems, linkages to open space and trails, availability of resident and guest parking, loading spaces, convenience of location, and access to public transit facilities shall be adequate and functional.
    - a. The proposal includes public street dedications and improvements to both public street fronts in order to maintain connections to adjacent properties. Access to the site from Sable is via a new curb cut located mid-block, directly across from an opposing, existing curb cut. This curb cut and the extension of the private drive through the site to 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue subdivides the block into smaller block sizes.
  10. Street standards. Public and private streets included in the site plan shall conform with city street standards.
    - a. The internal streets and alleys conform with recognized and appropriate street standards and cross-sections.
  11. Past Performance. The city council and the planning commission are authorized to consider the past performance of an applicant in their consideration of any site plan. The planning commission or city council may deny any approval of a site plan if the applicant or developer thereof is determined to be in violation of any requirements, conditions or representations on a prior development.
    - a. Westlake Developments LLC is a relatively new development entity and has not developed before in Aurora.

The following table organizes our responses to your pre-application comments dated 2/3/2022. For brevity, comments are paraphrased. Where a comment is best addressed by reference to a submitted drawing or other document, that reference is indicated.

DEPARTMENT	PRE-APPLICATION COMMENT	RESPONSE
<b>Planning and Development Services</b>		
1A.	Zoning	With the growth of nearby employment centers and transit facilities, the current R-R zoning no longer reflects desirable or sustainable development trends in this part of the City. A rezoning to R-2 would allow for the type of medium-density residential development that satisfies a key goal of the comprehensive plan - to provide quality housing options for a diverse, growing population on infill sites within the City limits.
1B.	Subarea	Although located in Subarea A, this site and the surrounding context exhibits very different development patterns than what is typically seen further west in the portions of Subarea A platted shortly after WWII - smaller, urban-scaled blocks fronting orthogonal streets. In spite of these differences the proposed development strives to bring a sense of that urban scale and order to what is currently a large, single rural block.
1C.	Placetype	The proposed density and dwelling type is compatible with the wide variety of housing types and densities that exist in the established neighborhoods surrounding the site – from single-family homes to multi-family and manufactured housing. In addition, medium-density, for-sale housing is both economically stable, contributes to a sense of community and is supportive of nearby schools and businesses.

2A.	Land Use	Assuming a successful rezoning, the proposal is redesigned for single-family attached (townhome) dwelling units fronting both public streets and Green Courts.
3A.	Dimensional Standards	The proposal is redesigned to meet the various dimensional standards for townhomes, subject to certain requested design standard adjustments.
3B.	Subdivision Standards	The private access drive from Sable connecting through to 21 <sup>st</sup> Avenue divides this long, rural block into manageable block sizes and establishes direct connections to existing and proposed site access driveways serving adjacent properties. This internal street and associated alleys are wide enough to accommodate the required elements. Individually platted lots are both rectangular in shape and orthogonal to this internal street network.
3C.	Common Space and Amenities	The proposed Green Court spaces meet or exceed the minimum width requirements. Each is designed as a usable open space combining landscape and hardscape elements and integrating low-impact stormwater detention features.
3D.	Access and Connectivity	Improvements to the Sable and 21 <sup>st</sup> Avenue street frontages include new curb and gutter, tree lawns and detached sidewalks. The internal private street is designed like a public street to include parking and sidewalks on both sides and a tree lawn with pedestrian-scale lighting on one side. The internal network of sidewalks is designed to be both convenient and safe and connects all dwelling unit front doors with outdoor amenity spaces, mail kiosks, bike racks, and other site features.
3E.	Parking, Loading and Stacking	The required off-street parking is provided entirely within 2-car attached private garages loaded from the alleys and designed to be less visible from the public right of way and outdoor amenity spaces. Site access points provide for adequate vehicle stacking. Loading occurs primarily from the alleys adjacent to the individual units.
3F.	Landscape, Water Conservation and Stormwater Management	Landscape plans are provided with the application demonstrating design intent and compliance with the standards. The proposed design includes the landscaping of Green Court spaces, front and side yards, and street frontages and entrances. The design also includes the integration of vegetative swales and raingardens in certain areas to accommodate stormwater detention. Irrigation plans and tree preservation/replacement calculations will be provided in a subsequent submittal.
3G.	Building Design Standards	Architectural elevations are provided demonstrating compliance with (and in many cases, exceeding) the requirements for building massing, orientation, detail and materiality. Front facades incorporate the greatest material changes as well as articulated front entrances, stoops, porches and in some cases, balconies. Design elements are carried consistently around all visible sides.
3H.	Exterior Lighting	The plans include a preliminary exterior lighting concept and photometric plan. This concept will be developed in a subsequent submittal.

3I.	Signs	The plans include a preliminary concept for building address location and size. This concept and the design and location of a monument sign will be developed in a subsequent submittal.
<b>OIL and GAS DEVELOPMENT</b>		
1	No known P&A wells within the site	No action required
<b>PARKS, RECREATION and OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT</b>		
1	Open space land dedication	Not required for infill development
2	Land dedication cash-in lieu	Recalculated based on 46-48 units
3	Park development fees	Recalculated based on 46-48 units
<b>FORESTRY DIVISION</b>		
1	Trees on site that are 4" or greater in caliper that will be impacted by development require tree preservation or mitigation	Mitigation selected. Mitigation calculations to be provided in subsequent submittal
2	Ash trees prohibited	No ash trees are proposed to be planted
<b>AURORA PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b>		
1	Cash-in-lieu for land obligation of .3124 acres required	Will be provided prior to plat approval
<b>AURORA WATER</b>		
1	All units will require individual water and sanitary sewer connections to the main	The following comments/requirements are shown on the drawings.
2	Extensions of 8" water and 8" sewer mains through the site is required	
3	Detention and water quality required, within drainage easements	
4	An irrigation water meter is required for common areas	
5	A domestic allocation agreement will be required for connections 2" and larger	Will be provided in subsequent submittal.
6	Payment of utility development fees required prior to approval	Acknowledged
<b>PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT</b>		
-	Traffic Impact Study required	Provided with application
-	Preliminary Drainage Report required	Provided with application
-	Various comments...	Refer to drawings
<b>FIRE and LIFE SAFETY – BUILDING DIVISION</b>		
1	Approved address directory sign required	Preliminary address sign design shown in drawings and site plan details
2	Adjacent roadways or fire lane easements must provide emergency access to within	Refer to site plan for compliance

	150' of all exterior portions of the first floor of each structure	
3	Site and civil plans must reflect the setback requirements of the 2015/2021 IBC and IFC...	Refer to site plan for compliance.
4	Fire lane easement for aerial fire apparatus and two points of entry requires.	Refer to site plan for compliance.
5	Additional fire hydrant(s) required.	Refer to site plan for compliance.
6	Fire sprinklered structures not required for R-3 single-family residences, as amended by Aurora.	Single family attached housing (townhomes) separated by independent fire resistance rated fire walls is proposed.
7	Reflect the location of an access to the outside mail kiosk	Refer to site plan and site details for compliance.
<b>OTHER</b>		
1	Site Plan legend required	Provided.
2	Phasing Plan required	Provided.
3	Cover sheet notes required	Provided.
4	Site Plan Data Block	Provided.
5	Special Design Considerations	Provided as applicable. Refer to site plan.
6	Trash Enclosures	Two trash enclosures are shown on the site plan.
<b>REAL PROPERTY DIVISION</b>		
1	Property is required to be replatted	Preliminary plat process will run concurrent with subsequent site plan submittal.

Other documents included with this submittal are: Traffic Impact Study, Preliminary Drainage Report, Mineral Rights Affidavit, and the Letter of Authorization.

Thank you for consideration of our formal Development Application. We look forward to continuing this process with you. Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to me or our development team. Contact information is provided on the drawing title block.

Sincerely,



Collin C. Kemberlin  
Kemberlin Architecture