

PUD Development Program

**Veridian at County Farm
2270 Platt Road
Ann Arbor, MI
October 23, 2019**

1. Objectives, Purposes and Beneficial Impacts

Objectives

We are requesting a rezoning of 2270 Platt Road from Public Land to Planned Unit Development (PUD) to accommodate the proposed Veridian at County Farm, consisting of Veridian at County Farm South (VCF-S) developed by Thrive Collaborative and Veridian at County Farm North (VCF-N) developed by Avalon Housing.

Our objective is to create a vibrant, mixed-income community with a focus on environmental sustainability. Mixed income housing will be achieved with a total of 149 residential units across the entire site. Ninety-nine (99) market rate units will be at Veridian at County Farm South by Thrive, and fifty (50) affordable housing units will be at Veridian at County Farm North by Avalon Housing. Thirty (30) of the Avalon units will be further targeted as supportive housing. In addition, Veridian at County Farm South site will also include a 6000 sq. ft. retail component (farmhouse), a restored barn with a greenhouse,, open space and community gardens. The Veridian at County Farm North site will include a Community Center and playground.

Both sites will pursue environmental sustainability by committing to all electric utilities on the site, with no gas supply or combustion appliances and equipment. The Thrive site is registered as a Living Community Challenge (LCC) project, and has committed to developing a minimum of 400 KW of renewable energy. Avalon will achieve Enterprise Green Certification and, as part of its registration of its community building with the Living Building Challenge (LBC), is striving to make its Community Building Net Zero. LCC and LBC are known as rigorous and inspiring green-building standards.

Purposes

The purpose of this PUD is to provide for the orderly development of multi-family residential, single family residential, retail and office use, and associated community space in a mixed-income, mixed-use community in a cohesive neighborhood with environmentally sustainable features, and to provide eligible households from the City of Ann Arbor and surrounding communities the benefits from such development.

This proposal seeks to promote development that provides a mix of desirable and beneficial uses arranged in a compatible manner that is sensitive to the surrounding established uses and is conveniently located to serve existing and future residents of the district, its surrounding area and the community at large.

Beneficial Effects

This development achieves a number of beneficial effects for the City, including the following:

- a. Innovation in land use and variety in design, layout and type of structures that furthers the stated design goals and physical character of adopted land use plans and policies.

Veridian at County Farm North and South achieve this beneficial effect by developing a mixed-income and mixed-use development that blends both parcels into one cohesive site. To this end, Avalon and Thrive will create a complimentary exterior appearance throughout the site; develop building layouts and orientations that enhance environmental benefits; utilize creative land division techniques; and maximize access throughout the site to develop a cohesive community through the use of shared community buildings, roads, pedestrian networks, gardens and other common areas.

This development includes:

- A mix of unit types:
 - Affordable housing (99 year affordability commitment)
 - Market rate homes (2300 sq ft)
 - Market rate multi-family housing units and flats (400-800 sq ft)
 - Market rate townhomes (1200-1900 sq ft)
 - Inclusiveness to a diversity of incomes (Market rate homes targeting variety of price points; Affordable housing targeting households at or below 60% of AMI, with a subset of these households at or below 30% of AMI.
- Community oriented design:
 - Compact/clustered units allowing for more public open spaces and green infrastructure
 - Usable front porches facing pedestrian-only greenways
 - Entrances facing drives and gathering spaces
 - Open space greenways linking into County Farm Park and playgrounds
 - A sense of neighborhood built on layered sociality, ranging from; private spaces, semi-private on front porches, and public spaces on greenways, community gardens, farm stop, barn and other gathering places
- Mixed uses, including:
 - Local retail farm stop - walkable to residents and surrounding neighborhoods
 - Restored barn with multi-functional community space

- b. Economy and efficiency of land use, natural resources, energy and provision of public services and utilities

Veridian at County Farm offers significant environmental benefits through its production of renewable energy and connection to public utilities. It will be an all-electric site with no gas supply or combustion appliances and equipment. By excluding any combustion, the entire site will be structured such that it would be possible to transition to fully renewable sources. Other specific examples include:

- Minimum of 400 kW of renewable energy developed by THRIVE Collaborative
- Narrowed neighborhood drives to promote safe pedestrian and bicycle use
- A reduction of impervious surfaces

- Reduction in parking requirements; Thrive is planning bike and car share programs, an on-site bike maintenance shed, bike parking for every unit, as well as EV chargers; neighboring businesses have discussed partnering to allow for shared parking on their properties
- A scale to fit the nearby existing community
- Reduced setbacks; homes will be clustered to optimize green space and will face greenways and gardens with shared common space rather than private lawns; parking will be accessed via laneways behind most of the homes
- A focus on sustainable systems and resource preservation
- Restoration of natural systems using native plants and ecosystems design
- Promote land stewardship
- Increase local agriculture; 30% of landscaping on the Thrive site will be dedicated to food production
- Provide healthier living, cleaner air and cleaner water; Project teams will seek to avoid Red List building materials.
- Create a waste management plan to work toward a zero waste community within the Thrive site.
- Provide a net zero energy community within the Thrive site; producing 100% energy needed on a net annual basis with renewable energy within the Thrive site.
- Storm water from the buildings and site will utilize best management practices with a combination of permeable pavers and on-site infiltration. The central and western portion of the site will drain to the southern area with a small detention area by the proposed public gardens. Any major storm event beyond the 100-year storm will continue to drain along the southern portion south of the commons area and will connect to the city storm drain on Platt Road. Storm water along the eastern portion of the property will utilize the same BMPs and will eventually connect at a different city storm water connection on Platt Rd.

c. Expansion of the supply of Affordable Housing for Lower Income Households

Avalon Housing, Inc. will be providing fifty (50) units of affordable housing for lower income households at Veridian at County Farm North with a 99 year affordability commitment. Thirty (30) of these units are targeted to households at or below 30% of AMI, with supportive services provided to help residents keep their housing. Twenty (20) units are targeted to households at or below 60% of AMI.

2. Beneficial effect cannot be achieved under any other zoning designation

There is no existing zoning category that fits our holistic design for the neighborhood to achieve the beneficial effects proposed. Neither the existing zoning of PL, nor the most appropriate conventional zoning of R4B, would allow for this mix of uses. R4B does not provide the flexibility needed to achieve the beneficial design objectives of Veridian at County Farm. The retail space planned for a local farm stop is one example of this. This is located within the proposed Farmhouse on the site plan. To achieve the cohesive site layout, we are developing creative methods to divide the properties—including by having parking on one site, with access on another, resulting in not meeting standard setback and circulation patterns within a zoning district, but being achievable within the PUD framework. The lot line divisions, the set back adjustments, the reduction in parking, and narrower drives to create a more pedestrian oriented development is a combination only possible under the PUD zoning

While individual proposed components could be pursued under an R4B zoning or other zoning districts, the mixed-use aspect and the high level of coordination and connectedness throughout the proposed development can only be achieved through the PUD structure.

3. Why the use or uses will not have a detrimental impact on public utilities or surrounding properties.

The proposed uses will not have a detrimental impact on public utilities or surrounding properties. Residences are being designed to minimize utility demands of all types, by means including water efficient fixtures, on-site stormwater management, energy efficient construction, and extensive on-site power generation through solar panels.

Impact on Public Schools: The VCF-S units range from micro and studio apartments to single family units with 1 to 4 bedrooms. The units are designed for a mixed demographic of families, young professionals, seniors, and empty nesters. The number of children living in the community is expected to be 40-60. The VCF-N units are anticipated to have approximately 60-70 children in these units. Avalon expects to coordinate with existing schools throughout the planning process even prior to leasing up the development. The overall development will have minimal impact on public elementary and high schools.

Relationship to Neighboring Uses: The residential units will provide additional housing within Ann Arbor proper. The residents are likely to patronize existing restaurants, proposed retail, other businesses in the nearby community, and may attend local religious institutions. The limited amount of proposed local farm stop retail use will provide services for the residents and for the neighborhood with minimal effects on parking and traffic. As a result of the community engagement planning process, the site layout paid particular attention to its orientation towards adjacent residential uses. Adjacent buildings include a mix of commercial and residential uses. Platt Rd is public and this portion of the road is a cut through between S. Huron Parkway and Washtenaw Ave. therefore has less street volume than similar roads in the area.

Impact of Adjacent Uses on Proposed Development: The adjacent uses will benefit residents of the proposed development who will likely patronize the businesses and institutions in the surrounding area and utilize the adjacent public park and recreation center.

4. Conformance to the Master Plan

This proposal conforms to the City of Ann Arbor's Master Plan, including the Land Use Plan, Sustainability Framework, as well as the Housing Affordability and Equity Analysis.

Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan specifically identifies a number of goals that are incorporated into this development. Some of these goals include the development of affordable housing, having a mix of unit types, having mixed uses, the creation of barrier-free units, playground, private residential open space, pedestrian connections, and narrower drives.

Some of the goals being addressed by this development that are specifically cited in the Land Use Plan include the following:

- Land Use Goal A: To ensure that development projects are designed or constructed in a way that preserves or enhances the integrity of natural systems.

The proposed development furthers this goal through its overall stormwater management plan, including the use of pervious pavement, and through the placement of the northernmost access drive into the site designed to save existing trees. Under highest priority actions, Natural Systems, the Plan “encourage developers to use innovative designs (i.e. ‘green construction’) and best management practices for storm water detention to improve water quality.” Along with stormwater management, the project incorporates extensive green infrastructure—ranging from on-site solar energy production to achieving certifications from recognized green development standards.

- Land Use Goal C: To provide a full range of housing choices (size, price, design, accessibility, etc), that meets the existing and anticipated needs of all City residents.

The proposed development furthers this goal through an extensive range of size, price, design and the provision of accessible units. Units size ranges from micro and efficiency units to 4-bedroom homes. Price ranges from subsidized units affordable to persons at 60% AMI and below to market-rate single family homes.. Design includes multi-family, townhouse and single family structures. Accessible units are provided, as well.

Sustainability Framework

This proposal reflects many elements of the Sustainability framework, including significant aspects of each of the four goal areas:

- Climate and Energy Goals: This development includes a commitment to the generation of **Sustainable Energy** on site; the construction of **Sustainable Buildings** that are certified through recognized Green certification protocols; and significant **Energy Conservation** through construction and operations that greatly reduce greenhouse emissions.
- Community Goals: The development process for this project has included extensive community engagement meetings, and Avalon’s long history in Ann Arbor contributes to a strongly **Engaged Community**; **Diverse Housing** is a central aspect of this project, both in terms of unit sizes/types and through affordability in a mixed-income setting; Avalon’s supportive housing model is deeply imbedded in the **Human Services** systems of our community, assuring that those most at risk of housing instability and homelessness are given the supports they need to remain housed; community space integrated into the development that supports **Active Living and Learning** includes a community center, bike facilities, and a renovated barn, along with retail space devoted to supporting local and sustainable food that promote **Economic Vitality**.
- Land Use and Access Goals: Veridian promotes **Transportation Options** for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users through its design, access to County Farm Park, AAATA bus lines and bicycle lanes on Washtenaw, Packard and Stadium; the development design promotes **Integrated Land Use** by providing needed expanded residential development in an area fully integrated with commercial and recreational amenities, nearby residential neighborhoods and commercial corridors with transportation options to downtown; Veridian contributes to **Sustainable Systems** of both natural and constructed infrastructure, including public transportation, parks and recreation, along with energy and water systems.

- Resource Management Goals: Veridian promotes **Responsible Resource Use** through its commitment to renewable energy and the elimination of combustion sources; **Local Food** consumption is promoted both through the choice of edible landscaping and through retail space devoted to local farm produce; these strategies along with site design enhance **Healthy Ecosystems** and promote **Clean Air and Water**.

Housing Affordability and Economic Equity Analysis

In particular, this project addresses the following goals found in the assessment:

- The addition of 50 units of affordable rental housing in Ann Arbor contributes towards the annual goal of 140 of these units and the 2035 goal of 2,797 of these units
- These units are well located in relation to public transportation and are close to job centers— thus providing affordable housing in a location that is convenient for residents and less likely to contribute to increased commuting pressure.
- These units are less than ¼ mile from AATA bus stops providing direct access to downtown Ann Arbor, shopping, UM Hospital and jobs.
- The Executive Summary indicates: “Right now, the market is a doing an adequate job of addressing significant portions of the rental housing needs of working families. But families with poor credit and work histories, disabilities, or other challenges are not being served by the market.” These are exactly Avalon’s target tenant households and Veridian at County Farm North is reserving thirty (30) of its units for households that are homeless and/or have a special need.

5 Increased residential density

The current zoning for this property is PL, and the Master Plan continues to show it as a Public/Semi-Public use. The PL zoning does not have a residential component _____, so 15% of the total units should be affordable housing. Fifty of the 146 units at this combined site will be affordable units. That is 34% of the total units, exceeding the 15% required. These units will all be provided on-site.

6. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation

Veridian is designed to provide for significant and convenient non-motorized transportation alternatives, along with adequate and convenient vehicular circulation. There are pedestrian walkways throughout the site, including pathways to access the adjacent County Farm Park. There are a total of 179 bicycle parking spaces, 124 of which are enclosed.

Veridian is proposing a total of 251 spaces of on-site parking which includes; 96 spaces of interior garage parking, 155 spaces of on-street parking, and dedicated exterior/lot parking. The total will include 97 spaces of EV parking, we will dedicate car share parking in the future..

7. Disturbances of natural or historical features

This project will not negatively impact natural features, historical features or historically significant architectural features.

Impact on Air and Water Quality and Existing Natural Features: No significant impact on air and water quality is expected. Veridian is saving most of the landmark trees on the site, and has a plan to harvest and replace any trees marked for removal.

Impact on Historic Sites/Structures: The site is not located in or adjacent to a Historic District. There are no existing buildings on the site.

8. Requested modifications to the City Code

Veridian at County Farm North is requesting the following modifications:

The PUD is requesting consideration of the following modifications for the area in the Veridian at County Farm North Site Plan: Reduced driveways widths; Reduced setbacks with the shared property line along the south side; Reduced setback along the rear property line shared with the County Farm Park; Allowance for sixteen (16) parking spaces in a row; Reduced distance between buildings; Reduced number of parking spaces; and No conflicting land use buffer along the shared property line to the south property that is being proposed in conjunction with this site plan.

Veridian at County Farm South is requesting the following modifications:

The PUD is requesting consideration of the following modifications for the area in the Veridian at County Farm South Site Plan: Reduced driveway widths; reduced district setbacks with the shared property line along the North side of Veridian at County Farm South; Reduced setback along the rear property line shared with the County Farm Park; Reduced distance between buildings; Reduced number of parking spaces due to a multitude of methods of increasing mobility options for the community (Sway, Vineyard Church Parking, and Genze's MOU's); and No conflicting land use buffer along the shared property line to the North property that is being proposed in conjunction with this site. In addition, height of buildings requested to be 36 feet instead of 35 feet to allow for three stories and smaller footprints. Also requesting a decrease of open space area to 52% for this site plan.

These requests for VCF North and VCF South serve to achieve the unique cohesive community we have planned, and to provide the community benefits identified above.