



PLANNING GUIDANCE LETTER

DATE: November 29, 2023

PERMIT: PP2023-6297

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: CONSTRUCTION OF A 34-UNIT HOUSING NAVIGATION CENTER CONSISTING OF MODULAR UNITS, INDOOR AND OUTDOOR DINING AREAS, STORAGE, OFFICE SPACE, FENCING, AND MOBILE SHOWERS, WITHIN A GATED FACILITY ON A PORTION OF THE PROPERTY.

ADDRESS: 5 CHERRY COURT

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING

BACKGROUND

The Westview Presbyterian Church has partnered with Dignity Moves and the Counties of Monterey and Santa Cruz to build a 34-unit housing navigation center at 5 Cherry Court (APN 017-172-31). The subject property is designated Public/Quasi-Public in the General Plan Land Use Diagram and is within the Institutional (N) Zoning District. The N Zoning District allows emergency shelters by right subject to a building permit issued by the Building Division. The project proposes to provide 34 modular units, an indoor and outdoor dining area, storage, office space, fencing, and mobile showers within a gated facility for housing unsheltered occupants of the Pajaro River encampment. This letter serves to inform the applicant of the requirements for the submittal of a building permit application meeting the Watsonville Municipal Code (WMC) standards for emergency shelters.

PLANNING

[WMC Chapter 14-43](#) outlines the development standards for emergency shelters. All emergency shelters established within the City of Watsonville must comply with the following development standards:

1. Lighting. Adequate external lighting shall be provided for security purposes. The lighting shall be stationary, directed away from adjacent properties and public rights-of-way, and of intensity compatible with the neighborhood. At the time of building permit submission, a lighting photometric plan shall accompany the construction documents for the emergency shelter project.
2. Vehicle Parking. Off-street vehicle parking shall be provided as follows:
 - a. Shelter facilities within one-quarter (1/4) mile of an existing bus route or rail station shall provide one (1) space per employee (based on the highest ratio of staffing on site) and one-eighth (1/8) space per adult client.
3. Bicycle Parking. Bicycle racks that allow for the secure storage of bicycles shall be provided. Bicycle racks shall accommodate at least one (1) bicycle storage space for every five (5) adult client beds. All bicycle racks are required to be on-site and located in a secure area that is not visible from the public right-of-way. The site plan must identify the location of the required bicycle parking. Please identify, for the project, how many beds will be provided for the emergency shelter.
4. Intake Areas. If the intake area occurs on-site, an enclosed or screened waiting area, such as provided in a courtyard building configuration, shall be provided between the intake area and the public right-of-way. There shall be no queuing within the public right-of-way. Queuing within any parking lot is allowed only if the parking lot is not visible from the public right-of-way. The construction plans must identify the required intake areas for the emergency shelter project.

5. Shower and Toilet Facilities. Toilets, sinks, and showers shall be provided on-site. The emergency shelter manager shall be responsible for ensuring that all restrooms and shower facilities comply with the City’s building code requirements.
6. Separate Housing for Families with Children. Families with children shall be housed separately from other clients and be provided with separate restrooms and shower facilities.
7. Spacing. An emergency shelter shall not be located within three hundred (300') feet of another parcel or lot with an emergency shelter.
8. Refuse. Emergency shelters shall provide a refuse storage area that is per the requirements of the Public Works Department.

Setbacks and Development Standards [WMC § 14-16.801](#)

Minimum Development Standards	N Zoning District
Minimum Net Lot Area	N/A
Front Setback (feet) ¹	10
Rear Setback (feet) ^{1,3}	10
Side Setback (feet) ^{1,2}	5
Side Setback, Street Side (feet) ²	5
Maximum Structure Height (feet)	T/B

N/A = Not Applicable

T/B= To be determined

1 = Except as required by the California Building Code.

2 = Side and rear yard setbacks shall be a minimum of 10 feet adjacent to a residential zoning district.

3 = For parcels adjoining alleys, the rear yard setback adjoining the alley may be reduced to a minimum of 5-feet.

Emergency Shelter Provider [WMC § 14-43.030](#)

The agency and/or organization operating the shelter shall comply with the following requirements:

1. Temporary shelter shall be available to residents for no more than six (6) months.
2. Security. The facility shall have City-accepted on-site security during hours of operation. Parking and outdoor facilities shall be designed to provide security for residents, visitors, and employees.
3. Full Supportive Services. Social services offered at an emergency shelter, with full supportive services, including intake, assessment, and individualized case management services for homeless clients, shall be located on-site. Full supportive social services can be offered to people other than the residents of the shelter. Emergency shelters that provide full supportive services shall allocate sufficient areas to provide the following:
 - a. Food preparation and dining areas;
 - b. Laundry facilities, for emergency shelters providing ten (10) or more beds;
 - c. Restrooms and showers;
 - d. Indoor and outdoor recreational facilities and/or open space; and
 - e. A private area for providing referral services to assist shelter clients in entering programs aimed at obtaining permanent shelter and income. “Referral services” refers to the initial assessment of a homeless client to identify the areas in which assistance is needed and connect clients with appropriate off-site programs and services depending on their needs.

Maximum Occupancy [WMC § 14-43.040](#)

The project is proposing to establish 34 modular units for housing the unsheltered. The number of beds and units for the project must meet the minimum requirements of the Building and Fire codes of California. The plans must be stamped by a California Licensed Architect and a California Licensed Fire Protection Engineer.

Length of Stay [WMC § 14-43.050](#)

The maximum term of staying at an emergency shelter is 6 months in a consecutive 12-month period.

Management and Operation Plan [WMC § 14-43.060](#)

The applicant or operator of the shelter shall submit a management and operation plan for the emergency shelter accompanying the building permit plans. The management and operational plan shall be reviewed concurrently with the building permit application. The plan shall remain active throughout the life of the facility with any changes subject to review and approval by the Zoning Administrator in consultation with the Chief of Police. The plan shall be based on best practices, and, at a minimum, the plan shall contain provisions addressing the areas outlined below:

1. Eligibility and intake and checkout process;
2. Operator qualifications—with a list of qualifications of the shelter operator to ensure the operator has demonstrated experience and qualifications to operate a safe and secure emergency shelter;
3. City of Watsonville Police Department Coordination Plan—to ensure sufficient beds are available for use by the Watsonville Police Department;
4. Hours of operation;
5. Ratio of staff to clients;
6. Staff training;
7. Ongoing outreach plan to the City of Watsonville homeless population;
8. The City may inspect the facility at any time for compliance with the facility's operational plan and other applicable laws and standards. The City Council may establish a fee by resolution to cover the administrative cost of review of the required management plan;
9. Security plan—with the emergency shelter operator responsible for ensuring that the approved security plan is implemented at the emergency shelter at all times and staff is fully trained to implement the plan. Security measures shall be sufficient to protect staff, clients, and neighbors;
10. Loitering control—with specific measures regarding off-site controls to deter the congregation of homeless clients in the vicinity of the emergency shelter during hours that homeless clients are not allowed on site;
11. Management of outdoor areas—include a system for daily admittance and discharge procedures and monitoring of waiting areas to prevent disruption to nearby land uses. For noise abatement, organized outdoor activities may only be conducted between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.;
12. Communication plan—the emergency shelter operator shall designate a liaison to coordinate with police, fire, City officials, local businesses, and residents on issues related to the operation of the emergency shelter;
13. Screening of homeless clients for admittance eligibility—with objectives to provide priority to City of Watsonville homeless persons;
14. List of services offered and organizations offering those services along with any referrals to outside assistance agencies—to ensure a full range of supportive services are offered to assist the residents of the shelter;
15. Transportation plan—that addresses bus access, parking lot use, vehicle abandonment, shuttle services, and bicycle usage/storage. The transportation plan shall include details on off-site shuttle pickup locations and times and a plan to minimize the time homeless clients spend waiting at the pickup location to reduce loitering. The selected pickup locations shall take into consideration community impact and safety considerations;
16. Litter control—to provide for the elimination of litter attributable to the emergency shelter and/or homeless clients within the general vicinity of the emergency shelter;
17. Lock-out plan—that addresses how to house on-site clients that arrive at the facility inebriated or otherwise violate shelter rules to keep both the client and the general public safe by not releasing the client back out into the community;
18. Pet shelter plan—that addresses the care and sheltering of pets of homeless clients; and
19. Temporary beds plan during emergency event—identify the number, location, and spacing of temporary beds and other support equipment for adequate building occupancy clearance by the Fire Marshal and Chief Building Official.

Staff Security [WMC § 14-43.070](#)

The WMC requires staff and/or security to be on the premises at all times for emergency shelters open 24 hours a day, when shelter guests are present, as detailed and approved in the management and operation plan. A 24 hour contact number shall be provided to the Chief of Police to contact in case of emergency.

Building and Fire Code Compliance

The project proposing to establish a 34 modular unit housing navigation center is subject to meeting the California Building and Fire Codes. Examples of building and fire code requirements are accessibility, ingress and egress, fire sprinklers, and emergency access. Therefore, the project plans must be stamped by a California Licensed Architect and a California Licensed Fire Protection Engineer. For questions relating to the building code requirements, please reach out to Building Official Joseph DeSante at joseph.desante@watsonville.gov or 831-768-3065.

Before submitting a building permit application, ensure the project plans adhere to the standards provided above. Attached to this letter is a checklist and form to assist the applicant with submitting a building permit application. Staff looks forward to working with the applicant to bring the project to fruition.

Flood Plain Development

The subject property located at 5 Cherry Court is located within the FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) Zone AH. All development located within the FEMA SFHA Zone requires meeting the Floodplain Management standards found in [Title 9 Chapter 2](#). All development must demonstrate that the new construction is located one foot above the base flood elevation and must be designed by a California Licensed civil engineer or architect.

(End of Planning Comments)

The City looks forward to working with you to bring the emergency shelter to fruition. If you have any questions regarding this letter or the development process, you can reach me at 831-768-3078 or ivan.carmona@watsonville.gov.

Attachments:

1. Commercial Project Checklist
2. Building/Fire Permit Application
3. Construction Waste Management Plan
4. Erosion and Sediment Control Plan