



City of Stamford
Zoning Board

STAFF REPORT

TO: CITY OF STAMFORD ZONING BOARD
FROM: VINEETA MATHUR, PRINCIPAL PLANNER
SUBJECT: **ZB #222-08, 222-09, 210 Long Ridge Road, Text Amendment, Special Permit, General Development Plan**
DATE: March 24, 2022

MASTER PLAN: Master Plan Category 8 (Mixed Use Campus)

ZONING: C-D (Commercial- Design District)

Introduction

The Applicants Andrew Banoff and Jewish Senior Services are requesting approval of the related Zoning Text amendment, General Development Plan and Special Permit applications to facilitate the development of the property with a Senior Housing complex comprising of 210 units on a 15 acre parcel located at 210 Long Ridge Road. The Senior Housing and Nursing Home Complex will include 168 independent living units, 14 memory care units, 14 assisted living units and 14 skilled nursing home units.

Background

The eastern portion of the property fronting on Long Ridge and spanning approximately 7 acres was approved for a 200 unit Senior Housing facility through an application submitted by TC NE Metro Development Inc. by in 2020. The current proposal seeks the approval of a Senior Housing facility with a new configuration within the larger 15 acre parcel.

Site and Surroundings

The Site is mostly vacant, has varying topography and tree cover and ground vegetation spanning the site and a parking lot on the south east side. The property to the north is occupied by medical offices (Yale New Haven Health and Stamford Health) and the property to the south is occupied

by several offices (including Equinor, Vision Financial Markets, LLC, JKP Technologies). The land across Long Ridge Road is occupied by single family homes. The Rippowam River borders the site on the west which is flanked by single family residential homes fronting on Stillwater Avenue.

Proposed Development

The Applicant proposes to concentrate the improvements to the center of the parcel. The current General Development Plan proposal spans the 15 acre parcel between Long Ridge Road to the east and the Rippowam River to the west and proposes 210 units of senior housing ranging from nursing home units to assisted living, memory care and independent living.

222-08 - Zoning Text Change

The Applicant requests a Zoning Text Amendment to create standards for development of Senior Housing and Nursing Home Facilities within the C-D district. Senior Housing and Nursing Home Facility Complex is a use permitted by right according to the current Zoning Regulations. The Applicant requests the creation of special standards for this use allowable only by Special Permit which fall between the standards of non-residential and residential uses. The proposed text amendment is as below:

Amend Section 9.G (C-D Designed Commercial District), Subsection 9.G.4 (Standards) by adding new Footnote 3 to “Residential Use”, to read as follows:

³⁾ Senior Housing and Nursing Home Facility Complex as a single use shall not exceed: seventeen percent (17%) Building Coverage; thirty-five percent (35%) Lot Coverage; fourteen (14) units per acre, BMRs satisfied off-site; four (4) stories or 60’ feet where 4-story elements are set back not less than 200’ from the Street Line and 250’ from residential districts.

The standards proposed under the text amendment are appropriate and provide a predictable framework for Senior Housing developments. These standards provide increased setbacks and lot coverage limitation consistent with those for the residential/commercial uses.

The chart below shows the comparison of the current standards for non-residential and residential uses with the standards under proposed text and the actual GDP proposal.

| | Current Regulations | | Proposed text 222-08 | Proposed GDP |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| | Non-Residential Uses and Mixed Uses (Non-Residential and Residential,) | Residential Uses | Senior Housing and Nursing Home Facility | Senior Housing and Nursing Home Facility |
| a. Building Coverage | 12% three story Development 10% four story Development | 25% | 17% | 16.5% |
| b. Lot Coverage¹⁾ | 40% three-story development 35% four-story development | 40% | 35% | 35% |
| c. Density | 0.40 FAR | 12 units / 14 units per acre if all required BMR units are provided on-site | 14 DU/Acre | 210 14 DU/acre |
| d. Building Height | Lesser of 4 <i>Stories</i> or 60 feet | Lesser of 3 <i>Stories</i> or 35 feet | Lesser of 4 stories or 60 feet | 4 stories, <60' |
| e. Setback from Street Line | 50 feet | 50 feet | 50 feet | 75 feet |
| f. Setback from property lines, except Street Line | 100 feet if adjacent to single and two-family districts ²⁾ , 50 feet if adjacent to any other districts | Same as the <i>Rear Yard</i> requirement for each adjacent district but not less than 50 feet | Same as the <i>Rear Yard</i> requirement for each adjacent district but not less than 50 feet; 4 story elements to be set back 200' from Street Line and 250' from residential districts. | North – 100ft West – 250 feet South – 50 feet East – 200 feet |

222-09 Special Permit and General Development Plan

Special Permit

The Senior Housing and Nursing Home Facility complex would be a Special Permit use pursuant to the new regulations. The proposed use is desirable because it meets the growing need for Senior Housing facilities in the City and nationwide. The proposed facility provides a continuum of care allowing seniors various options based on their level of independence. A statement of findings has been submitted in support of the Special Permit.

General Development Plan

The applicant has submitted a General Development Plan which shows the proposed building footprint, building heights, pedestrian walkways, driveways, parking and drop off areas, loading area and the parking entrance. The development includes a main building located in the center of the parcel and two smaller villas containing multiple units each. The GDP defines the general location, height and orientation of the buildings as well as the limit of site disturbance. The future final site plan application will include additional details including site engineering and detailed architectural and landscaping plans. The plans show the construction of a sidewalk along the length of the property on Long Ridge Road as was contemplated during the last approval for this site.

Building Design

The main building will be oriented at an angle with intersecting wings and an internal courtyard. The building orientation minimizes the visual impact of the building from the street or adjoining properties. The building will vary between three and four stories. The nearest corner of the four story portion of the building is situated 200' from the eastern property line and 250' from the R-7 ½ zoning district along Long Ridge Road with the remainder of the four story portion being located further back. The two villas will be located along the southern portion of the property.

Access

The site will be accessed through the existing signalized intersection on Long Ridge Road leading to an exclusive driveway through the northern property boundary. The access driveway will lead to an entrance drop off area leading to the center of the building and will also connect to a driveway circling the main building and connecting the villas.

Below Market Rate Housing

The proposed Zoning Text Amendment includes a provision for providing the Below Market Rate housing off-site. The details of any fee-in-lieu or off-site arrangement will need to be detailed as part of the final site plan approval. The current regulations per Section 7.4 require 5% of the independent living units to be Below Market Rate units. The approximate fee-in-lieu payment is \$1.5 million based on approximately 226,123 sf of floor area and the 2021 fee per square foot of \$137.5 for housing for elderly. An off-site or fee-in-lieu BMR provision may be

beneficial if it results in deeper affordability or a larger number of units than what would be provided on-site.

Parking

The GDP proposes a total of 275 parking spaces including 191 parking spaces in two underground garages and 84 surface parking spaces located along the driveway circling the building. The design of the parking areas will need to be refined prior to the submission of a final site plan to ensure compliance with the Section 12 regulations for parking lot design including landscaped islands and location of EV charging facilities and bike facilities.

Landscaping and Open Space

The Rippowam River runs along the western portion of the site and a Conservation Easement Area is proposed to protect the regulated areas. A 20' river walk easement is located along the waterfront. The proposed development is located outside all the regulated areas.

The proposed development allows the retention of the tree cover and site topography along Long Ridge Road which allows the appearance of the site from Long Ridge Road to remain unchanged limits disturbance of the knoll.

Final Site plan application will require the applicant to provide a detailed landscaped plan which shows all new trees and vegetation and all trees that will be removed. Staff recommends that the Applicant maximizes the new plantings in order to promote a balanced and sustainable site.

Referral Comments

Stamford Planning Board

The Stamford Planning Board, during its regularly scheduled meeting held on March 10, 2022 recommended approval of the applications for Zoning Text Change, Special Permit and General Development Plan and found the request to be compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #8 (Mixed Use-Campus).

Buildings Department

In a letter dated March 17, 2022 the Buildings Department provided technical comments on the application stating that that detailed building and site plans will be needed at the time of future plan review and noted that the pedestrian walkway should be extended to the main building entrance.

Environmental Protection Board

Jaclyn Chapman, Environmental Analyst, Environmental Protection Board provided comments in a memo dated March 24, 2022 and listed the plans and assessments required to be submitted prior to final site plan review.

Fire Marshall

Fire Marshall Bud Seeley in an email dated March 03, 2022 stated that he had no issues with the proposed land use. He noted that plans with more detail of the buildings and the surrounding parking/driveways would need to be reviewed to assess for any fire department access issues prior to the final site plan approval.

Summary

Staff believes that the proposed project will add to the much needed senior housing stock and recommends the approval of the related Text Amendment, GDP and Special Permit applications. The development will facilitate the use of a long vacant office park with a low intensity use and provide a range of economic and social benefits for the City of Stamford replacing potential office use which would have peak hour traffic. Off-site improvements including Below Market Rate housing and sidewalk improvements will further benefit the City.