

Spirit Senior Housing
July 25, 2023 SPAR - Applicant Statement
106 Unit Mixed Use Senior Housing Project at
500 Hopper St, Petaluma (Lot 5)

Of the nine Bay Area Counties, Sonoma County ranks #2 in its aging population over the last decade,¹ creating a pressing need for more senior housing options for its elderly residents.² Spirit Senior Housing at 500 Hopper Street, Petaluma, seeks to meet this ever growing need.

Spirit Senior Housing is a mixed-use, 106-unit senior housing project on Lot 5 of the Riverfront Master Plan in the City of Petaluma. The 4 story project will provide housing to residents 60 years and over on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors with street-front commercial spaces at both corners of the building and ground floor amenity spaces and back of house functions. The housing project will be licensed as a Residential Care Facility for the Elderly which allows residents to continue living in their unit if they need extra services.³

The current project reflects collective feedback received from planning staff, the Planning Commission and a public neighborhood meeting, a process which was first started in June 2021 and involved 2 Planning Commission study sessions, 2 Design Review Committee meetings and 9 design iterations. Current notable changes include:

- more commercial spaces at the ground level and located at both corners of the building, including a restaurant that would be open to the public while also serving residents of the building
- a larger public commercial easement running through the building
- a redesigned 2nd floor that is fully self-contained with amenities that allow residents needing more care to receive services on that floor, with private outdoor space above the porte cochere

In order to provide adequate housing for seniors at varying levels of mobility and service needs, and to avoid resident displacement due to the natural aging process⁴, the project is designed to house 70 more active seniors on the top two floors as well as 36 seniors who need more

¹ Marin Independent Journal, July 4, 2023

² The California State legislature “declares that [it] is essential to establish and preserve specially designed accessible housing for senior citizens. There are senior citizens who need special living environments and services, and find that there is an inadequate supply of this type of housing in the state.” *Cal Civ. Code Section 51.3 (a)*

³ Residential Care Facility for the Elderly means a housing arrangement chosen voluntarily by the resident where 75 percent of the residents are 60 years of age or older, and where services and care are or can be provided at a subsequent date depending on a resident’s need. *Cal. Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 8, Article 1, Section 87101(r)(5)*.

⁴ Studies show that housing displacement due to aging causes stress and anxiety amongst the senior population.

services on the 2nd floor, with on-site dining facilities, wellness and recreational programs, and outdoor areas.

The project provides a total of 106 units of housing for seniors. The 3rd and 4th floors provide 70 apartments (35 units on each floor) in a combination of studio, 1 BR and 2 BR units. These apartments are nearly identical to a non age-restricted multi-family apartment project with private bathrooms, kitchens and washer/dryer in each unit and are designed to function independently from the rest of the community. Residents on these floors are more independent and active, coming and going as they wish to use the amenity spaces on the ground floor such as the lounge, bar/bistro or dining room, similar to an amenitized multifamily project. In contrast to the 3rd and 4th floor, the 2nd floor is designed for more frail seniors who need more care and services. As such, the 2nd floor contains its own separate common dining, activity, wellness and outdoor area and is designed to be self-contained and safe for residents who may develop memory loss or need extra help. There are 36 studio units on the 2nd floor and all of these units will have private bathrooms and kitchenets, but residents on this floor are expected to have their meals in a common dining area on the 2nd floor. The 2nd floor offers a self functioning and self sufficient living arrangement that can function independently from the rest of the building.

The ground floor includes street-front commercial spaces at both corners of the building. The middle of the ground floor includes amenity spaces such as a lobby, reception, lounge, bar/bistro and back of house area. These spaces are similar to the Courtyard Marriott across the street and other multifamily developments that require amenities to function properly such as a fitness room, lounge, clubhouse, workshare spaces, demonstration kitchen, marketing and staff offices etc. The commercial spaces at the corners will cater to local neighborhood serving retail such as a cafe, ice cream shop, or yoga or Pilates studio. It is our intention to find a small daycare operator for one of the commercial spaces to provide a much needed resource for the neighborhood and encourage intergenerational programs. One of the corner commercial spaces will be a restaurant that will be open to the community while also serving residents of the building. Because most residents of the building will be using the amenity and dining spaces, the ground floor will be activated from day one and promote a vibrant neighborhood feel. In addition, most residents do not drive and still stay active in the daily life of the neighborhood which contributes to the vitality and diversity of the community without adding excess traffic and parking to the residential character of the area.

It is our hope that residents of this project will provide a good base of support to activate the commercial spaces in the building. In addition, the project has been envisioned with an open and engaging design philosophy that provides commercial spaces and amenities at the ground level with open and transparent floor to ceiling glass storefront doors and windows, encouraging a natural engagement between the neighborhood. This design approach is rooted in Spirit's belief that an inclusive community of different age groups adds to the rich and diverse fabric of a neighborhood, allowing a meaningful exchange of wisdom and experiences. As such, the Project's transparent and open design concept seeks to promote resident connection to the neighborhood and invite neighbors to connect to the life of the building and its residents.

Spirit Senior Housing will hire approximately 30 staff and most will be hired locally. The staff will be divided to work between 2 main shifts, which is about 15 staff at the peak of any one shift. Most staff rely on public transportation, carpool or are dropped off by a loved one. The project also provides secured bicycle storage for staff who ride to work. There are 29 parking spaces which is supported by the third party parking and traffic study. In addition, there will be a van with a full-time driver for carsharing and to serve as a free shuttle for staff who use Smart Train which is about 1 mile away.

In summary, Spirit Housing offers residents of Petaluma:

- 106 senior housing units where there is significant need and shortage. Petaluma has only 3 larger purpose built senior care communities, all built in the 90s, and all on the East side, offering only 287 units (or 374 beds if you include the smaller 6 bed board and care homes). By contrast, a city of similar size like Walnut Creek has about 1,400 beds.
- a project with a lower environmental footprint, less parking demand and lower traffic impact because most residents don't drive and don't have cars. This contributes to the vibrancy of the area while supporting the residential character of the neighborhood.
- commercial spaces and amenity spaces at the ground level designed to activate the street front with storefront doors and windows. These spaces will be activated as soon as the project opens as opposed to staying vacant
- inclusion and diversity of seniors who will be living and engaging in community with younger generations as the area continues to develop housing. A homeowner at Tripoint could have their mom or dad living next door. A friend or family member visiting from out of town would walk over from Courtyard Marriott across the street
- a large percentage of residents will be coming from Petaluma which will free up additional housing units
- allowing Petaluma residents and families to continue enjoying their life in the town they call home by supporting them to remain active and engaged as they age in place without having to be displaced as their care needs change

About Spirit Living Group

Spirit Living Group is a local, family run company that has been developing and operating senior housing in the Bay Area for 25 years. The mission of Spirit is to build community and create beauty.

www.spiritlivinggroup.com