

Willow Commons Fact Sheet

Fast Facts

Address: 4388 Alpine Road
Lot size: 53,473 sq. ft.
Total Building Square Footage: 11,182 NSF (12,135 allowable) Total Lot Coverage Footage: 11,764 GSF (14,428 allowable)
Number of buildings: 6
Alpine Road Building Maximum Building Height: For the building which contains staff office and common programming space the average height is 18ft; the Maximum height is 21 ft 11 in; Town code for height limit is 28 ft
Setback from Alpine Road: 75 ft (similar to existing Linwood Building)
Parking: 17 Spaces (town required 12)
Fire Access: to and from Alpine Road,
Number of residential units: 12 1-Br/1Ba at 500 square feet; 1 2br/2ba ADU at 870 sq ft
Deed restricted units: 11 units for 55 years restricted to Low-Income tenants.

What is the project proposed for 4388 Alpine Road?

Willow Commons will provide supportive housing for individuals with cognitive disabilities.

Who will it serve?

Adults with a cognitive disability (intellectual or developmental delays) who are able and motivated to live independently, and are capable and interested in working or volunteering in the surrounding community. It is not an appropriate environment for individuals with a psychiatric or serious emotional disturbance that would impact behavior or those who have serious medical conditions requiring daily or weekly monitoring/intervention or require 24-hour supervision.

What are the elements of the proposal?

The development will include thirteen residential units and common space for community programming and socialization. Eleven units are intended for residents with an intellectual disability and two units are designated for on-site support staff.

How will this be sited on the property?

Three buildings, each with a footprint of approximately 1100 square feet, will hold four apartment units. Each apartment has 1-bedroom, 1-bathroom, and a small kitchen area in just under 500

square feet. The three buildings comprising the units will all be two-story buildings with two units over two units. They are sited on the lower elevation of the property and all will be below the Town's approved height limit.

A building at the front of the lot will be sited where the Linwood Realty building sits. This building will have a footprint of roughly 3,408 square feet and will also be below the Town's approved height code. This building, which is about 28% of the overall square footage of the project, will contain the critical supportive program spaces for the residents including a kitchen for shared meals and a vocational training room.

There will be a one-story, 870 square foot ADU at the rear of the property along with a one-story 535 square foot creative recreation space.

Why are there thirteen units?

Supportive housing requires a fixed amount of staffing regardless of the number of residents. Eleven units allow these fixed costs to be spread to a degree that the project will be financially viable over the long term, rather than necessitating pro bono work, volunteer work, and fundraisers.

Designating two units for staff increases the likelihood of attracting and retaining high-quality staff for high-quality programming and minimizes an already low traffic impact.

Will the apartment units be rental units or are they privately owned?

The units will be rented to eligible residents for a rental fee of roughly \$600 per month.

Will this project require a change in the Town's zoning code?

No, supportive housing is permitted by-right use in zones where multifamily and mixed uses are permitted, including nonresidential zones permitting multifamily uses. This lot is zoned AP (Administrative-Professional) which allows a mix of uses, including multifamily supportive housing.

Is this project using the new SB 9 and SB 10 Laws?

No. The laws don't become effective until 2022. The two California laws that assist this project are [AB2162](#) which is a supportive housing law passed in September of 2018 and [SB1763](#) which is a 2019 enhancement of the Density Bonus law enacted in 1979. The PV Housing Element has a reporting requirement for "special population needs" which includes people with cognitive disabilities and our housing element shows we still have 0 living in any type of independent supportive housing solutions versus San Mateo county where 34% live in such situations (see page [21 of Housing Element](#)). Lastly, the project has not applied for Section 8 as we would lose local control.

What will the admissions process be for Willow Commons?

There is a very deliberate and multistep process that will be led by the Willow Commons Executive Director and a small committee with the goal of ensuring a long-term fit. No government agencies will have a role in determining who will live there.

Who will manage Willow Commons in the long term?

There will be an operating nonprofit that runs Willow Commons.

Why is it being planned for Portola Valley?

Adults with developmental disabilities are part of the Portola Valley community. Many have been raised here, attended the local schools, and held jobs in the community. Willow Commons offers these individuals the opportunity to live with supported independence in their community. The specific location also offers employment and community engagement within walking and biking distance. The largest Portola Valley employers including Roberts Market, The Woodside Priory, The Sequoias, Alpine Hills, and the Portola Valley School District are all supportive and have expressed an interest in the residents offering a local, loyal labor force.

Have you done a traffic impact study?

There is hardly any traffic to study. Residents are unlikely to have Drivers Licenses and will be employed or volunteering within walking distance. A small handful of staff (likely 4 individuals) will be on-site at a given time and up to 50% of them are likely to live at Willow Commons. There will be a Willow Common van for taking residents beyond Portola Valley, for example to their medical appointments, social interaction, and recreation. Further, because the project is being considered ministerially per state law, there is no state or local legal requirement to analyze traffic impacts, as minimal as they are.

What programs will be offered?

The County Regional Center (GGRC) will provide supportive living services to encourage and support residents' independence. These supports will include and are not limited to: employment supports, scheduled social activities, vocational training, and communal dining. Similar residences in other areas have also benefited from the broader community member's engagement via offerings such as book groups, art classes, or neighborhood hikes.

Will this development help fulfill Portola Valley's RHNA obligations?

Yes, the units will qualify within the "Low Income" which is one of the two categories that the town has not met their current RHNA requirements (it has only achieved 7 of 15 units and the 8 unit shortfall is 89% of all the housing categories shortfall over the current eight-year RHNA cycle). [The March 21, 2021 Annual PV Housing Element Progress Report](#) to the state shows on page 59 the town's current status as described. We expect the Willow Common's units to be included in the next eight-year RHNA cycle which will be even more difficult to achieve - the Low-Income category goes from 15 to 42 (we have achieved 7 in the last eight years). Willow Commons offers 11 units or over 26% of the units in one project. Lastly, Willow Commons will be deed-restricted units which the state more favorably looks upon versus judgemental determinations to income classification which is essentially all of the units to date for the town - historically the town only has one deed-restricted income unit in the last eight-year cycle.

What is the approval process for this project with the Town?

Town staff are currently reviewing our proposal. This should be done by early November. In December, there will be at least one ASCC Meeting to review the objective standards and the incentive/concession requests that we are awarded with the Density Bonus in exchange for 100% of the units being deed-restricted as low-income.

What opportunities will there be for public comment?

The ASCC meetings will provide a formal process for public comment. We also welcome more informal comments before the public meeting. Please email jimw@shv.com or paobw1@gmail.com if you would like to schedule a time to meet with us or walk the site. Feel free to invite others who are interested in learning about the project to join us.

Is this the same or different process than anything else the town will approve?

This project qualifies for a more streamlined and focused approval process enabled by Supportive Housing laws so that this needed housing will be available as soon as possible. The Supportive Housing is a permitted use so does not need a conditional use permit process and the approval determinations are focused on the objective standards, such as height, lighting, setbacks, and other town design and development standards.

Is this project subject to CEQA ?

The project qualifies for ministerial approval under AB2162 and as such is exempt from CEQA.

How will Town committees be involved?

We shared our plans with Chairs of the following Committees: Bike and Pedestrian Safety, Historic Resources, Trails and Paths, and Wildfire Preparedness. The Conservation Committee reviewed plans and did a site walk through the property to collect the comments they will offer to the Town.

Has Woodside Fire Protection District reviewed the proposal?

Yes, the plan has been reviewed by the Fire Protection District and we have followed their guidance in refining the plan and clearing brush at the back of the lot.

Is there a creek at the back of the lot?

In the back of the lot, there is what is considered to be an "ephemeral creek," meaning that it has flowing water only for a short duration after precipitation events in a given year. The beds are located above the water table year-round. The siting of the buildings on the property respects boundaries of this natural resource area. The creek is not one of the "named" town creeks that trigger additional development standards under the Town's zoning code.

Who is the developer and architect?

There is no 'developer' per se. Jim and Patty White are 20+ year residents of Portola Valley. We decided to create Willow Commons after many frustrating years of searching for adequate housing for our daughter, Amy, who is 23 and has cognitive impairment. We selected [C.JW](#)

[Architecture](#) of Portola Valley and [Anderson Brule Architects](#) of San Jose to design the project and used the Portola Valley Town Center as the inspiration.

What are the impacts to the Town of Portola Valley?

1. The project provides the Town with much-needed (and some of the first) deed-restricted, low or very low-income housing units. These housing categories are required by state mandates (RHNA) and identified as a priority for the Town. See links above in the RHNA Q&A.
2. The project provides the Town its first example of a residential setting that provides Home Based and Community services (HBCS), dedicated to providing qualified individuals with successful community integration. This is currently an unmet need in the Town's General Plan/Housing Element.
3. The project prioritizes and facilitates residents' initiative, independence, and integration in the larger community, providing the Town with a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable community, priorities identified by the Town's new Equity Committee.
4. The location sits adjacent to a commercial corridor on a very accessible flat lot within the moderate zone in the 2008 Moritz Fuel Hazard Map and has a relatively lower risk to seismic activity. The location does not interrupt existing trail systems or wildlife corridors.
5. Concerns about the impact of additional vehicles on emergency evacuation will be negligible since the significant majority of residents will not be drivers. The need for parking on a per unit basis will be low for the same reason.
6. The project offers an example of intentional building and landscape design that reflects the stated mission and goals of the Town's Conservation and Sustainability Committees.
7. Local employers will benefit from having a source of loyal, local employees. The residents are potential candidates for some difficult-to-fill staffing and/or volunteer positions.

What are the costs to the Town?

There are no new costs to the Town. We have applied for a grant or forgivable loan from the town Inclusionary Funds which have built up over the last 10 years primarily from the Blue Oaks project requirement for affordable housing creation that was not created.

How will property taxes be paid?

Because the project is supportive housing it will be exempt from property tax.

How can I get more information?

You can contact Jim and Patty White at jimw@shv.com and paobw1@gmail.com