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Memo

To: Scott Gustin, Senior Planner
From: Eric Farrell *EFF*
Date: April 1, 2022
Re: Cambrian Rise

Introduction

In addition to uploading our application to amend our Cambrian Rise permit, I wanted to also provide you with a summary of our overall initiatives. We will upload this memo, as part of our application.

It has been over a year since our design team and I met with you and Mary, via Zoom, back in December 2020, specifically to confirm the correct methodology for measuring the height of *The Aurora at Cambrian Rise*, our first for-sale (condominium) building. Accordingly, the heights are measured in intervals, due to the steep and challenging grades along our northern boundary with the cemetery.

Since our meeting, we have worked diligently to design a spectacular building that is respectful of the iconic Liberty House, while taking full advantage of the lake and mountain views. The design complies with the methodology we reviewed with you, requiring only a modest administrative waiver at the westerly end and center portion of the building. Our intention is to maximize the living experience at *Cambrian Rise*.

Proposed Building Changes

Reference: Building C Elevations.

Our permit application is primarily to present the *Aurora*, which combines the previously approved Buildings D, E, F and I. The application also reflects the straightening out of Building Q/R (i. e. no more curve) (Lot 7); revising the 4th floor west-section (south-facing) façade on Building C to be the same as the 3rd floor, thereby increasing the number of units in Building C to 134; the addition of two units at the NW corner of the 6th floor of Building M (Lot 4); and various site modifications, including the creation of a more strategically located “Common Green” (Lot 6) adjacent to Kieslich Park.

There are many aspects to this amendment, which I have attempted to summarize in no specific order of priority below.

CAMBRIAN RISE COMUNITY

Housing Density

Reference: First Amendment to Development Agreement

Reference: 4/23/2020 Memo to Max Tracy, President, Burlington City Council

In June 2020, the City Council approved, and the Mayor and I executed, a First Amendment to our Development Agreement, which, among other items, increased the maximum allowable housing density at **Cambrian Rise** from 770 to 950 units.

The Amendment contains several other commitments, by and between the City and **Cambrian Rise**, which are detailed in the agreement.

I refer you to my Memo to Max Tracy, President of the City Council, dated April 23, 2020, in which I articulate the many reasons for supporting our request to increase the density at **Cambrian Rise**.

Uses at Cambrian Rise

Reference: Distribution of Uses at Cambrian Rise, dated 3/29/2022

This table reflects the current mix of uses (residential and non-residential) that are proposed in this application. It is consistent with the underlying traffic analysis. It also reflects the distribution of inclusionary housing units, both rental and for sale. The final mix and distribution is subject to change, based on market conditions, and therefore may be amended in future applications.

Inclusionary Housing

Rental Housing: As of this application, we estimate that there will be approximately 625 rental units at **Cambrian Rise** of which 156 (25%) will meet the Inclusionary Zoning requirements.

For Sale Housing: As of this application, we estimate that there will be approximately 325 for-sale units at **Cambrian Rise** of which 81 (25%) will meet the Inclusionary Zoning requirements.

Although the mix is not finalized, the rental and for-sale IZ units will likely be disbursed among several buildings, including D/E/F (Lot 1), K (Lot 2), L (Lot 3), and Q (Lot 7) and H (Lot 8).

We continue to work closely with our development partners, Champlain Housing Trust and Cathedral Square Corporation, on the number and location of the IZ units. We expect the ultimate mix of rental and for-sale units will not be finalized for a couple of years.

[Work Force Housing](#)

BCCH is committed, although not required by the Development Agreement, to develop some “work force housing”, so-called, meaning housing that is affordable to families whose household income is at 80%, 100% and 120% of the median income for the Burlington-South Burlington Statistical Metropolitan Area.

Many of the units in the *Aurora*, as well as other buildings, should meet the guidelines of workforce housing.

[Phasing Plan](#)

Reference: EXHIBIT – PHASING PLAN sheet L-EX4 dated 3/11/2022

Our project phasing is ever evolving, based upon market demand and conditions. I have attached a revised Phasing Plan, prepared by TJ Boyle Associates that updates the sequencing of development; however, not the completion dates. It’s important to note that the sequencing is subject to change and some phases might overlap others. We will continue to update this plan, when and as conditions warrant.

[Site Plan Revisions and Aesthetics Overview](#)

Reference: TJ Boyle Associates Memo dated 3/11/2022

TJ Boyle’s memo articulates our strategy in the following areas:

- Landscaping
- Open Space
- Public Views / Buildings and Infrastructure
- Circulation & Parking
- Outdoor Lighting

[Overall Site Plan](#)

Reference: Rendered Site Plan by TJ Boyle Associates (80 scale) undated

Reference: Rendered Site Plan by TJ Boyle Associates (50 scale) undated

The site plan depicts 14 buildings, as originally approved. Several of the buildings are interconnected (B/G and D/E/F and Q/R), such that they operate internally as a single building.

The 12-acre Kieslich Park with the “Stone House” (so-called) abut the developed area of the original site on the south and west. This parcel was sold to the City in 2016.

[Site Plans for Specific Buildings dated 3/11/2022](#)

**Reference: Building DEF Site Plan Updates (sheet L-201)
TJ Boyle Associates**

**Reference: Building B, G, C, & H Site Plan Updates (sheet L-202)
TJ Boyle Associates**

**Reference: Building Q Site Plan Update (sheet L-206)
TJ Boyle Associates**

[Site Sections dated 3/11/2022](#)

Reference: EXHIBIT L-R2: SECTION, TJ Boyle Associates (sheet 1 of 5)

Reference: EXHIBIT L-R2: SECTION INSET 1, TJ Boyle Associates (sheet 2 of 5)

Reference: EXHIBIT L-R2: SECTION INSET 2, TJ Boyle Associates (sheet 3 of 5)

Reference: EXHIBIT L-R2: SECTION INSET 3, TJ Boyle Associates (sheet 4 of 5)

Reference: EXHIBIT L-R2: SECTION INSET 4, TJ Boyle Associates (sheet 5 of 5)

These five sections present Buildings D/E/F (**Aurora**) and Buildings Q/R.

The **Aurora** is the primary focus of this permit amendment. Other modifications are referenced above under the heading “Proposed Building Changes”.

Any additional modifications that we might propose for Buildings H, P and/or Q/R would be the matter of a future permit amendment application.

[Vehicle Parking](#)

Reference: Chart 2: VEHICLE PARKING CALCULATION dated 03/29/2022

The plan reflects a total of 1,345 parking spaces, representing a ratio of 1.42 spaces per 950 residential units. This is an increase of 219 spaces over what is currently approved at **Cambrian Rise**. A substantial component of the parking continues to be developed below the buildings and within parking structures, approximately as follows:

1. Understory: 979 (73%)
2. Surface: 366 (27%)

We are also providing five Car-Share spaces and 6 EV Charging stations.

Accordingly, we are requesting a parking waiver of 19% (219 spaces). TJ Boyle Associates has prepared a summary in support of our request for your consideration, in advance of the DRB meeting.

It is important to note that Building M, which is currently under construction, has 219 spaces that were previously approved. This building alone skews our overall numbers disproportionately.

If you take Building M out of the mix (consider it “grandfathered”), our “Maximum Allowed Spaces” is reduced to 932 and our “Total Proposed Spaces” is reduced to 1,126. This would correspondingly reduce our waiver request to 194 spaces or only 17%.

It is also important to note that *Cambrian Rise*, unlike a typical downtown location, is not surrounded by hundreds of on-street public parking spaces, is not in close proximity to public parking garages, and is not within easy walking distance to essential services. In other words, *Cambrian Rise* functions more like a “suburban” location where some form of transportation is required to access essential services.

Even though we provide significant incentives to encourage the use of alternative means of transportation, our residents, particularly homeowners, own a least one vehicle and very often two vehicles, which they need to park, regardless of their frequency of use.

[Bike Parking](#)

Reference: Chart 1: VEHICLE PARKING CALCULATION

The plan reflects 172 Short Term (106.9 required) and 926 (453.1 required) Long Term for a total of 1,098 bike parking spaces (559 required).

In addition to these spaces, we are also providing 8 Bike-Share spaces (none required).

[Floor Area Ratio \(FAR\)](#)

Reference: FLOOR AREA RATIO - AS APPROVED & AS PROPOSED

The total development parcel measures 21.65 acres or 943,074 sf. The allowable FAR in the NAC-CR Zoning District is 2.0, for a total building area of 1,886,148 sf.

The total building area, as currently proposed, measures 1,217,950 sf, representing an increase in the FAR from 1.16 to 1.29.

[Lot Coverage](#)

Reference: LOT COVERAGE Sheet No. L-EX6 dated 3/11/2022

Considering only the Development Parcel (21.65 acres), the overall lot coverage is 67.6%, representing a slight increase from the previously approved 63.6% (72.0% allowed).

Considering the Development Parcel combined with Kieslich Park (12.0 acres), which was originally part of the Burlington College Parcel that we purchased, and subsequently sold to the City for a Public park, the overall lot coverage is only 45.5%.

The Development Agreement with the City expressly states that the 12-acre “Public Open Space” is to be counted in BCCH’s application, which means the lower coverage calculation (45.5%) should be determinant.

Building Height

Reference: EXHIBIT - BUILDING HEIGHT Sheets L-Ex3 dated 3/2/2022 and L-Ex3a dated 2/18/2022

All the buildings at **Cambrian Rise** will be at or lower than the allowable building height, as set forth in the new NAC-CR zoning district, except for occasional administrative amendments that may be required to address unique situations.

We are requesting a 5% height waiver for Building M, to accommodate a higher quality method of construction, which request we have already made administratively, however, are repeating here, if it requires the approval of the DRB.

The **Aurora** also requires an administrative waiver at the west end (Sections 1N and 1S), and in the middle of the building (Section 4 and 5) covering an area that represents approximately 10% of the overall roof area; however, an even larger area of roof at the east end of the building, fronting on North Avenue, and adjacent to Liberty House, is significantly (and intentionally) lower than what the ordinance allows.

Transportation Demand Management Plan

Reference: Memo from TJ Boyle Associates, dated 3/29/2022

As set forth in Boyle’s memo **Cambrian Rise** will meet all Transportation Demand Management requirements, as set forth on the CDO.

Traffic Impacts

Reference: Memo from Wall Consulting Group dated 13 December 2021

Wall’s memo represents an update of an identical analysis performed by Wall’s predecessor, RSG in 2019, in support of increasing the density at **Cambrian Rise** from 770 to 950 units. The 2019 analysis was accepted by DPW and relied upon by the City Council when it approved the density increase in June 2020.

The conclusion reached in RSG’s 2019 analysis represented a reduction of overall traffic impacts from the original **Cambrian Rise** development program approved in 2016, primarily because housing generates less traffic than many commercial uses.

The conclusion reached by Wall in its current analysis is the result of even less overall traffic impacts due to a further reduction of commercial uses.

Simply said, our migration to more desperately needed housing and less commercial uses will result in less overall traffic impacts at **Cambrian Rise**.

Wall's memo concludes with the following statement: "This reduction in new external primary vehicle trip generation is expected to improve traffic operations and reduce transportation impacts compared to the originally evaluated and permitted land use development program from December 2016".

In addition to the reduced traffic impacts of housing:

1. **Cambrian Rise** remains committed to the use of bicycles as an alternative form of transportation and provide facilities in each building that support and encourage the use and enjoyment of bicycles. **Cambrian Rise** will also boast a direct, paved recreation path connection to the existing Building Bike Path, providing direct and easy access to Burlington's Beaches, Waterfront and Downtown.
2. **Cambrian Rise** has contracted with Carshare Vermont and currently subsidizes a car at Liberty House for use by renters, owners, and neighbors alike. The number of Carshare vehicles will increase as **Cambrian Rise** is built out and demand increases.

Subdivision Plat

The Subdivision Plat will eventually be revised; however, we have many details that remain to be finalized. Therefore, we intend to submit a separate application soon that will depict an adjustment of some boundaries between certain lots and may also involve the consolidation of lots.

Shading Calculation

Reference: Sheet No. L-EX1 dated 3/11/2022

The total shade on site is 36.0%; whereas 30.0% is required.

Fire Protection

Reference: FIRE ACCESS & HYDRANT LOCATIONS PLAN Sheet No. L-EX2 dated 3/11/2022

Fire truck routes, existing fire hydrant locations, proposed fire hydrant locations and Fire Department Connections are depicted on the above referenced plan.

Resident Amenities - Overall Site

Reference: EXHIBIT - RESIDENT AMENITIES sheet L-EX7 dated 3/11/2022

Each lot at **Cambrian Rise** has certain areas designated as outdoor amenity space for the residents of only the building on that lot. The Central Green depicted on the plan is on reconfigured Lot 6 and is intended to be a common amenity space for all the residents of **Cambrian Rise**.

The space labeled “Public Transit” at the southeast corner of Building B is a separate condominium that will be owned by the **Cambrian Rise** Lot Owners Association. It will be occupied as a climate-controlled bus stop operated by Green Mountain Transit.

Resident Amenity - The Boardwalk

Reference: Boardwalk Concept, TJ Boyle & Associates

Reference: Boardwalk Illustration (2 sheets), Lincoln Brown Illustrations

The Boardwalk is a landscaped veranda on the roof of a portion of **Aurora** at the 225' elevation with units and garage parking below.

The Boardwalk affords the residents of **Liberty House**, **The Rise** and **Sunset House** (apartments) a grilling and fire pit area with views of Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains.

A northern extension of the **Boardwalk** affords the residents of **Aurora** a private grilling and fire pit area, also with panoramic views of Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains.

Capacity Letters

Reference: *Memo dated 5/17/21 from Cindi Wight, Director
Parks Recreation & Waterfront*

Reference: *Letter dated 5/27/21 from Jon Murad, Acting Chief
Burlington Police Department*

Reference: *Letter dated 5/5/21 from Derek R. Libby, Deputy Chief of Operations
Burlington Fire Department*

Reference: *Capacity Form, dated 5/27/21 from Tom Flanagan, Superintendent
Burlington School Department*

THE AURORA CONDOMINIUMS

Building Area

The **Aurora** replaces originally approved Buildings D, E, F and I, which combined had a total area of approximately 185,000 sf. The current design of **Aurora** measures approximately 318,000 sf for an increase of 133,000 sf.

Building Elevations

Reference: *Cambrian Rise Building D-E-F-I, East Elevation*

Reference: *Cambrian Rise Building D-E-F-I, North Elevation & South Elevation*

Reference: *Cambrian Rise Building D-E-F-I, West Elevation*

The exterior fenestration of *Aurora* includes a mixture of fiber-cement panels, faux wood slats and extensive fiberglass windows.

Each unit includes a generous metal-clad balcony of varying sizes and configurations, presenting a dynamic overall building exterior. Color tones are a mix of naturally muted greys and browns.

[Resident Amenity - Rooftop Community Gardens, Greenhouse and Lounge](#)

Reference: Sky Deck Concept (R7 Level), TJ Boyle & Associates

Reference: Rooftop Illustration (2 sheets), Lincoln Brown Illustrations

The upper roof of *Aurora* will feature community garden plots, a working Greenhouse and recreational veranda areas with panoramic views of Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains for the benefit of the residents of *Aurora*.

A second (smaller) veranda on the roof of the 5th floor (6th floor access) facing east affords the residents of *Aurora* sunrise views of the Green Mountains.

[Historic Review](#)

Reference: Report by Britta Tonn, Preservation Planner, VHB, dated 12/21/2021

Britta Tonn prepared a self-explanatory report on the impacts of *Aurora* on four historic resources. The report supports the development of *Aurora*, as proposed.

1. [Liberty House](#) (former St. Joseph's Orphanage)
State Listed and eligible for National Register
2. [Howard Mortuary Chapel](#) (within Lakeview Cemetery)
State and National Register listed
3. [North Avenue Neighborhood District](#)
Eligible for National Register
4. [House at 422 North Avenue](#) (colonial revival style)
State Listed

[Cambrian Rise Upon Completion](#)

Reference: 12 Illustrations by Lincoln Brown Illustrations, dated 11/30/21 variously 3/4/2022 and 3/8/2022, except #7, dated 11/30/2021

The 12 illustrations are intended to provide a depiction of *Cambrian Rise* upon completion 5 years (estimated). Views 4, 5 and 6 also depict Building P with the additional (6th) floor. View 7 depicts Building M with two additional units at the northwest corner of the 6th floor. Views 8, 9 10 and 11 depict Building Q, as it is proposed to be straightened out (i. e. curve moved/no other change in design architecture).

Ward 4/7 NPA

Reference: Ward 4/7 NPA Meeting Agenda, Wednesday, March 24, 2021

We presented our plans to the Ward 4/7 NPA in March 2021.

Summary

Our intentions from the outset have been to develop **Cambrian Rise** as a dynamic *urban* neighborhood on the shores of Lake Champlain. Our commitment to construct a direct paved connection to the Burlington Bike Path will enable the residents of **Cambrian Rise** to be within easy walking distance of Burlington's beautiful beaches and the many recreational opportunities surrounding Waterfront Park. **Cambrian Rise** is also within an easy bicycle commute to the Church Street Marketplace and will be served by a climate-controlled "Transportation Hub" operated by Green Mountain Transit. The design of **Cambrian Rise** is intended to foster sustainable living and a strong connection to the land, fostering and supporting the health and wellness of its residents.

attachments