

## NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION PLANNED DEVELOPMENT ACTION

**RE:** 321, 339 EASTERN STREET, BELLA VISTA PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT #23, Application and General Plans for Amendment to add 399 Elderly Residential Units and Amenities within existing Boundaries to existing 1,412-Unit Elderly Community (Owner/Applicant: Carabetta Enterprises, Inc.).

**REPORT:** 1448-10

**PDD ACTION:** Approval with Conditions

**PROJECT ADDRESS:** 321, 339 Eastern Street (MBP 117-1032-01900 & 117-1032-01901)

**SITE:** ±22 Acres

**EXISTING ZONES:**PDD #23

**EXISTING DEVELOPMENT:** 1412 Elderly Housing Units with amenities including parking structures.

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:** 399 additional Elderly Housing Units with additional amenities including a parking structure in two new connected buildings

**CONSTRUCTION:** Steel Frame, Pre-cast concrete panels with brick and sand finish.

**PROJECT COST:** \$150 million

**FINANCING:** A combination of sources, including but not limited to 9% and/or 4% LIHTC equity, construction and permanent first mortgage financing through HUD-insured and CHFA loans, State of Connecticut DECD, and Section 8 rental assistance

**DEVELOPER:** Carabetta Enterprises

**ARCHITECT:** Craig A. Laliberte

**ENGINEERS:** Civil, TPA Design Group. Traffic, Connecticut Consulting Engineers LLC

**CITY LEAD:** City Plan **CONTACT:** Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA **PHONE:** 203-946-6379

### SUBMISSION

Application and General Plans received by the Board of Aldermen dated 11/08/10, including a 11 page narrative with exhibits also dated 11/08/10 consisting of a history of the existing PDD as well as an overview and detailed description of proposed amendments, and describing compliance with both the general concept and intent of the existing PDD #23 as well as Planned Development District standards and requirements found in Section 65(a) of the New Haven Zoning Ordinance; a Traffic Report by Connecticut Consulting Engineers LLC describing existing site and area traffic conditions, anticipated post development conditions, parking and pedestrian accessibility issues; Plans (dated 10/29/10) and building plans and elevations (undated) including the following:

#### Site Drawings:

A-2 Survey, 1. Existing conditions, 2. Existing open space plan, 3. Proposed open space plan, 4. Grading, drainage and utilities, 5. Landscaping and lighting plan.

#### Architectural Drawings:

AS Architectural Site Plan, AR1 Rendered West Elevation, AR2 Rendered East Elevation, AR3 Rendered North and South Elevation, A-1. West elevation, A-2. East elevation, A-3. North and South elevation, A-4. Entry level parking deck, A-5. Second level parking deck, A-6. Third level parking deck, A-7. Building entry level plan, A-8. Building second floor plan, A-9. Building third floor plan, A-10. Building 4<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> floor plan, A-11. Building 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> floor plan, A-12. Amenity floor plans, A-13. Unit Plans, A-14. Unit Plans, A-15. Enlarged West Elevation, A-16. Enlarged East Elevation, A-17. Building/site sections, A-18. Building cross section, A-19. Exterior Cladding Details.

Also, a table setting forth the required, existing and proposed zoning requirements (Exhibit D).

*In addition the following information and comments had been submitted to the Commission prior to the 1/19/11 Public Hearing:*

Preliminary Drainage Analysis by TPA 1/13/11, *Preliminary Drainage Analysis for Bella Vista Expansion* by TPA Design Group 1/13/11

E-mail from TPA Design Group responding to issues raised at Site Plan Review Team meeting

Revised Site Drawings from TPA Design Group 1/13/11:

1. Existing conditions, 2. Existing Open Space Plan, 3. Proposed Open Space Plan, 4. Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, 5. Erosion Control Narrative and Details, 6. Grading, Drainage and Utility Plan, 7. Landscaping and Lighting plan, 8. Fire Truck Access Plan, 9. Existing Parking Plan.

E-mail from Craig Laliberte: Sheet AS. Architectural site plan with the traffic modifications to the entrance drive 1/19/11  
E-mail comments on Architectural site plan from Bruce Fischer, Dept. of Transportation Traffic and Parking 1/19/11  
E-mail to CPC from Jim Travers, Interim Director, Dept. of Transportation Traffic and Parking 1/19/11  
Letter from Peggy Rubens-Duhl, South Central Connecticut Regional Planning Commission 1/14/11  
E-mail and article from Pat Wallace 1/19/11.

*Finally, information submitted to the Commission subsequent to the 1/19/11 Public Hearing includes:*

Report from the Consultation Center entitled *Report of Bella Vista Focus Groups, October 2010* evaluating present and future program needs in the Bella Vista Community.

Correspondence from representatives of the following utilities indicating commitment of services to this project:

To TPA from Valentino A. Ferro, Southern CT Gas Company 1/19/11

To TPA from Paul Powers, ATT Connecticut 2/1/11

To TPA from Paul Aiken, the United Illuminating Company 1/21/11

To TPA from David Johnson, South Central Regional Connecticut Regional Water Authority 1/25/11

To TPA from Ricardo Ceballos, P.E., Greater New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority 10/25/10

Revised Site Drawings 2/7/11 responding to issues raised at 1/19/11 Public Hearing and in response to Karyn Gilvarg Memorandum 1/26/11:

1. Existing conditions, 3. Proposed Open Space Plan, 4. Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, 6. Grading, Drainage and Utility Plan, 7. Landscaping and Lighting Plan, 8. Fire Truck Access Plan, 10. Traffic and Pedestrian Improvements, Revised Architectural Drawings 2/10/11:

AS Architectural Site Plan, A-1. West elevation, A-2. East elevation, A-3. North and South elevation, A-4. Entry level parking deck, A-5. Second level parking deck, A-6. Third level parking deck.

Response to K. Gilvarg Memo 2/14/11

Preliminary Drainage Analysis by TPA 1/13/11, *Preliminary Drainage Analysis for Bella Vista Expansion* by TPA Design Group 1/13/11, Revised to 2/7/11

*Parking Study Bella Vista Apartments prepared for Carabetta Organization 2/2011* prepared by Purcell Associates, Inc.

CPC Advisory Report by Jim Travers Interim Director, Dept. of Transportation Traffic and Parking 2/16/11 (see Attachment B).

**PDD #23 HISTORY AND GENERAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Original Approval

Planned Development District # 23, known as Bella Vista, was originally created by the New Haven Board of Aldermen on January 11, 1971. The site currently contains 1,412 units of elderly housing in five buildings and is divided into five sections. These five parcels of land (301, 321, 339, 363, 315 Eastern Street) containing a total of approximately 22 acres were arbitrarily created for purposes of FHA financing only and the entire PDD continues to be operated and controlled collectively by Carabetta Enterprises, Inc. The parcels which make up the entire Bella Vista community include the following:

Bella Vista Owners

Building Name

Village Park I Realty Company

Bella Vista Section I, Bldg. A

Village Park II Realty Company

Bella Vista Section II, Bldg. B

Bella Vista Realty Company – Phase II

Bella Vista Phase II, Bldgs. C + D

Bella Vista Realty Company – Phase III

Bella Vista Phase III, Bldg. E

Carabetta Enterprises, Inc. is the General Partner of each Bella Vista owner. The original vision for the Bella Vista community was for a unified residential community, despite the fact that different Bella Vista owners own and operate different buildings, so that all driveways, pathways, community amenities and other common facilities would be available for the use and enjoyment of all of the residents of the Bella Vista community. All five of the buildings at Bella Vista were originally financed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”), as FHA loans. As the original financings neared maturity, the Bella Vista owners elected to remain within the HUD portfolio. At this time, all of the buildings in the Bella Vista community are encumbered by HUD-insured mortgages and are subject to affordability restrictions.

PDD #23 as approved by the Board of Aldermen in 1971 consisted of the following principal uses and standards:

1. Total elderly units - 1,410.
2. Five tower elements at an average height of 17 stories.
3. Grocery and related goods, drug/cosmetic outlet, barbering, etc.
4. Medical office space.
5. 700 residential parking spaces (1 per 2 elderly units and 25 spaces for the commercial tenants).
6. 438 square feet of open space/unit; approved 404 square feet/unit at grade and 34 square feet of balcony per unit.
7. Three (3) acres set aside for active recreation plus nearly three (3) additional acres for inactive recreational use.
8. Distance between facing walls of two buildings 100' instead of 255' and 50' instead of 25' between buildings where no exterior wall of one building intersects perpendicularly to any wall of another building.

Subsequent Minor Modifications/Approvals:

Exhibit B of the Applicants submitted application lists all modifications approved for this PDD subsequent to its original 1971 approval.

Summary Description of Proposed Amendment to PDD #23

The applicant is seeking to modify the existing PDD to permit the construction of 399 additional units of elderly housing on portions of the properties at 321 and 339 Eastern Street located within the boundaries of the existing Bella Vista community. These additional 399 units will be located in two new buildings. Both buildings, one consisting of 133 dwelling units, and the other building consisting of 266 dwelling units, are to be set on top of three levels of parking structure. Additional amenity space, interior and exterior, will be provided. These amenities include:

1. Aqua Therapy Center
2. Day Care
3. Health/Clinic/Therapy
4. Community Rooms
5. Library/Computer Room
6. Victoria "2" Room
7. Roof Top Terrace
8. Exterior Playground Area

The initial 1971 approval required 706 parking spaces (1412 elderly units requiring one space for every two units). This requirement was subsequently modified and reduced by 30 spaces to 676 spaces in 1975 by the City Plan Commission. The proposed construction will provide for 399 units of elderly housing which, pursuant to the Ordinance, will require 200 parking spaces. Thus total parking spaces required will be the existing requirement of 676 plus 200 = 876 spaces. There are presently 809 designated parking spaces on the site. Newly proposed parking will consist of 219 garage spaces plus ten new surface spaces in the immediate vicinity of the new buildings. This 229 space parking gain is offset to some extent by the loss of the newest surface parking lot in the northwest corner of the site due to a proposed stormwater detention basin. Based on the applicant's post development number of 994 on-site parking spaces it appears as though 44 spaces will be eliminated on this portion of the site.

The proposed site for the new residential towers and associated common spaces and parking garage presently consists of lawns, landscaped areas and wooded areas. The proposed development would create approximately 1.76 acres of impervious area, consisting of buildings, pavements and pedestrian plazas and walkways. Approximately 0.33 acres of existing pavement would be removed from the northwest corner of the site, for a net increase of roughly 1.43 acres in impervious area. Storm runoff from these areas would be captured by roof drains, yard drains and catch basins. Runoff would be directed to a detention basin to be built in a portion of the parking lot to be removed. This detention basin would be built as a wet pond to allow for stormwater treatment, groundwater recharge and attenuation of peak discharges to levels consistent with existing storm runoff from the

site, based on the 10-year storm event. An underground detention and infiltration area may also be built to accommodate flow from the entrance drive and drop-off plaza if site conditions make it impractical to convey runoff from these areas to the proposed detention basin.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

The Commission opened a public hearing on January 19, 2011 and concluded it on February 16, 2011. The Minutes of the public hearing proceedings are in Attachment A. (see page 10)

**GENERAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The Need for the Additional Senior Housing

In the Applicant's submitted narrative reference is made to the contemporary American social reality that "As life expectancy lengthens due to advancements in science, technology and medicine, senior citizens in every economic bracket are facing new challenges in the area of housing. Today, senior citizens are the fastest growing population in the country, with 1 in 8 Americans over the age of 65. It is estimated that by 2030, 1 in 4 American citizens will be over age 65, with the fastest growing subgroup being the "oldest population", those age 85 and older. This new phenomenon, coupled with high unemployment and a struggling housing market, has created an urgent need for affordable elderly housing throughout the country". Furthermore the applicant asserts that "New Haven is not only home to one of the largest numbers of senior citizens in the State, but to one of the largest numbers of seniors in Connecticut living below the poverty line". The City's Department of Elderly Services concurs that there is a need for significant additional affordable elderly units and notes that they need be near supportive services and public transit.

In consideration of these facts it is evident that proposed senior housing of almost any type would help to address not only a current need but one that will become more critical over the next twenty to thirty years. Having acknowledged this it then becomes a matter of whether the site itself is suitable for this particular use. A forty year history of this use on these properties indicates that it is. The remaining issue then becomes one of whether this particular site can accommodate this intensity of use in the particular form in which it is presented.

Architectural Design & Building Materials

The proposed new buildings are 17 stories, similar in height to the existing buildings and sit on the parking structure as a podium. They are set between the existing complex on what is now a grassy hillside that currently forms an extensive buffering yard for the tall structures, and Eastern Street. The two new towers will be linked by a 2 story building which houses communal spaces such as an aqua-therapy pool, a gathering center and a health clinic, topped by a roof garden. The 133 unit building is a rectangular tower similar in bulk to the existing buildings, and the 266 unit building has a tee-shaped floor plan. The buildings are proposed to be constructed of pre-cast concrete, with precast panels with inset window panels, some of which have a colored brick facing. The upper three stories of each building limit the color and texture of these panels to plain light colored pre-cast only, to provide a cap to the structures. The linking structure has similar window panels and solid brick faced panels with small decorative motifs. No roof structures, utilities or elevator penthouses are shown.

The entry structures and the linking building use virtually the same architectural vocabulary and the same size windows as the apartment stories. These areas should have far more glass, of a different scale, to emphasize their more public uses. The ceiling height in the common room is only 8'6". This could and should be raised substantially, in proportion to the room size, as there are no additional floors over this portion of the building.

The vertical and horizontal ribbing shown in the elevations are equal in width and depth of relief; variation could be introduced to break down the flat mass of the tower surfaces. (On the existing structures there are setbacks which create strong vertical shadow lines and provide relief from the large flat plane of the facades.) There is little variation in the window panels (only two types single or double) and all windows are centered in the panels; again some variation should be introduced to break down the monotony. Window frame material and color is not discussed and the type and color or tinting of the glass is not discussed. There also are some inconsistencies in window locations between the elevations and the plans. Opportunities to allow corner units to have additional windows are not taken.

The “caps” on the towers appear rather heavy and overly large, making them look more squat than the existing buildings. Vaguely traditional references such as the columned entry porticos and the diamond decorative motifs seem unrelated to each other and to the existing complex. The open-air parking structures have arched openings and a brick facing similar to that shown on the buildings. No materials or samples have been provided, so it is difficult to understand the colors and textures proposed.

The attempt to vary and enrich the original rather Spartan existing architectural scheme is noted, however the architect’s work in this regard can be considered to have only just begun. **The Commission recommends that an architect peer reviewer, agreeable to the developer and to City staff, work with the developer’s team to improve the exterior appearance, and the common spaces.**

#### Parking/Loading/Accessibility

As described earlier this new proposal will bring the total number of parking spaces on-site to 994 and the number of dwelling units to 1811. This results in a ratio of approximately .55 spaces per dwelling unit. This compares with the existing ratio of approximately .57 spaces per dwelling unit. It is not so much the relatively small discrepancy in ratios that is of staff concern as much as the apparent inadequacy of either to meet the parking needs generated by this type of use at both existing and proposed densities. Recent site visits indicate that use of “informal parking” on lawns, along narrow driveways and in cul-de-sacs is necessitated by a parking demand that may exceed the current parking availability. The serious concern about approving amendments that would lower the existing parking ratio without a management program that would clearly justify such an approach should, in light of current conditions, be obvious.

The applicant has recently submitted a parking study. Although the study **describes** existing and proposed conditions it provides little or no justification for proposed parking, other than to cite the general standard for elderly housing parking found in the New Haven Zoning Ordinance. The study does not document current patterns of parking use, establish peak periods of use, or utilize such information in the formulation of a realistic set of standards and requirements for the entire site. The report does however make some recommendations, none of which have found their way on to a site plan. Of more concern is the report statement that “The owners of Bella Vista Apartment complex are actively looking into additional parking to the site, beyond what has been formally presented”. It implies acknowledgement on the part of the applicant that the currently proposed parking arrangements may well be problematic.

The issue of accessibility has become less problematic as the review process has progressed . Original plans for this site depicted Bella Vista Drive as extending up and around Buildings C, D, and E with a narrower driveway extending down the south side of the buildings back down to Eastern Street. While this connection was initially established it has since been fenced in along the south side of Building D and blocked with a guard rail at Eastern Street. This results in a long narrow dead-end driveway of nearly 500 feet in length with informal parking on both sides as noted in the previous paragraph. The Fire Marshal has noted with concern that under present conditions emergency vehicle access in this portion of the site is difficult, and turnaround of any fire truck would be virtually impossible.

While the new plan initially showed continuation of this driveway through the proposed parking structure, across the front of the new buildings and back to Bella Vista Drive, concern that the height limitations of the parking structure would effectively deny full circulation to fire equipment led to staff requests that the applicant reestablish a second curb cut. Subsequent plan revisions now show a driveway extension that provides full site access for fire apparatus and other emergency vehicles.

Connecticut Transit bus-service and para-transit are also provided to the complex along the private road, and those services should be consulted for their comments, along with a car-sharing service such as Zip-Car to see if this is a good location for their service.

### Traffic Impact Study

Connecticut Consulting Engineers LLC, traffic engineers and transportation planners, in accordance with the City of New Haven Zoning Ordinance Section 65, prepared a traffic analysis for the development designated as "Traffic Report Prepared for Bella Vista Expansion New Haven, Connecticut October 18, 2010" (Applicant's submission Exhibit E). The study concludes that the proposed development can be safely and efficiently accommodated by the area roadways. No discussion of the need or lack of same for State Traffic Commission review is provided. Staff analysis of the study will be provided to the Commission by the Department of Transportation, Traffic, and Parking separately.

### Stormwater Drainage Discharge and Management

The applicant makes reference to this portion of the plan in their submitted narrative, largely in a very general and descriptive manner. The application does not contain the level of technical detail that a proposal of this scope warrants, especially one located adjacent to a watercourse (Hemingway Creek) with an ongoing and recent history of stormwater related issues. Additionally, the narrative makes reference to measures that "may also be built" under certain circumstances.

City staff has reviewed a preliminary drainage analysis for the project by TPA Design Group originally submitted on 1/13/11, later revised to 2/7/11 and 2/15/11. Under the proposed site development plan, there will be 0.74 acres of impervious roof area and 1.12 acres of pavement and pedestrian areas resulting in a proposed runoff coefficient of 0.66. When completed, runoff from the proposed facility will discharge to a wet detention basin to be constructed on the north side of Bella Vista Drive with an overflow to an existing stormwater outfall under Eastern Street. Underground detention may also be considered, although the applicant states that due to weather conditions there has not been a full analysis of the condition of the existing pipes under Eastern Street nor has there been on-site testing of soil in the area of the proposed wet detention basin. Stormwater from an emergency access drive along the southern property line will be managed separately from the remainder of the proposed project.

The applicant states that the intent of the conceptual stormwater management plan design is to keep the peak off-site discharge rate to pre-development levels. Prior to development of detailed plans the applicant will undertake a field survey and condition assessment of the existing storm drainage system in order to assess its ability to accommodate the flow from the proposed development. Modifications to or replacement of portions of the existing system may be identified as part of that inventory, and will be incorporated into the proposed development work. Additionally the detailed analysis will assess the impacts of 50-year and 100-year storm events, in combination with season high tide levels in the receiving waters west of Eastern Street in the vicinity of Hemingway Creek, in order to thoroughly understand and mitigate the potential impacts of the proposed development on the project, its vicinity and receiving waters. Such detailed analysis and detailed stormwater drainage plans shall be submitted as part of the Detailed Plan submission.

### Paving Standards

Paving required to support vehicular and pedestrian traffic on the Site will consist of reinforced concrete, bituminous concrete and various unit pavers. Any pavement within the right-of-way of Eastern Street will have to conform to City of New Haven standards. Further details will be provided for review with Detailed Plan submission; however the Commission may wish to require that all access roads and drives be built to City standards given the terrain and the sensitive population.

### Soil Erosion and Sediment Control

The application as originally submitted did not include any information pertaining to on-site soil erosion and sediment control. The relatively large scale of the developed area and the recent history of nearby roadway flooding all underscored the need for such information at this stage of review. Significant areas of open land, and the difference between existing and proposed topography indicate a need for a detailed plan that provides for a minimum of site erosion and sediment runoff, both during and after construction. Recently submitted plan revisions have largely addressed these concerns.

### Utilities

Correspondence from all of the various utilities involved in this project indicating their ability to provide service has been forwarded to this Commission.

Landscaping and Site Lighting

The plan as submitted includes a landscaping plan as well as site lighting locations. Photometric information concerning lighting will be required at Detailed Plan review.

Open Space

Submitted plans indicate a post-development total of 11.64 acres of open space on-site where a minimum of 5.20 acres would be required. This total includes balconies, undisturbed areas and greenspace, as well as a .36 acre roof terrace located above the parking structure and between the two new Building #'s 7 and 8.

Schedule

The developer proposes to build the two buildings separately, according material submitted and discussions with other City departments outside the PDD submission. It is imperative that the common spaces and the amenities as well as proportional parking be built with the initial structure, so that the already fully-subscribed infrastructure of the complex is not further strained. The developer has stated that building permits for the entire project including the second apartment structure will be obtained within ten years.

**PDD CONSIDERATIONS**Delineation of Uses to Be Permitted As of Right in PDD

The Site currently comprises the total 22 acre extent of PDD #23. This proposed amendment does not change or in any other way affect the uses permitted in the District. Elderly housing and a variety of what are essentially the same types of accessory uses will continue to be permitted.

Bulk/Yard Statistics – Deviations from Existing Zoning Requirements

Attachment D in the applicant's submission sets forth the bulk and yard requirements for the existing and proposed PDD #23. These "before and after" standards represent what amounts to no more than an intensification of use on the site. The proposal for new apartments results in more dwelling unit density, building coverage, reduced distance between window walls, reduced parking space size and less total open space. Yard, building height and parking space ratios remain essentially the same.

Compliance with Tract Area Requirements

The PDD boundaries will not change. The total area of PDD #23 will remain approximately 22 acres.

**COMPLIANCE WITH PDD OBJECTIVES IN § 65(a) OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE**

Section B of the applicant's petition addresses this issue in the following manner:

*The proposed amendment to PDD # 23 fully complies with the four standards for a planned development district set forth in Section 65 (a) of the Zoning Ordinances which are as follows:*

1. *"In accordance with the Comprehensive Plan of the City, including all plans for redevelopment."*

*The proposed amendment is in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan of Development of the City of New Haven dated October 15, 2003 ("the Comprehensive Plan"). The Comprehensive Plan specifically recognizes the "need for affordable housing, human resources, health, recreation, social services and interpersonal communications." It "encourages the development of housing which will meet the needs for both low and moderate income households." The proposed amendment, adding 399 affordable housing units and amenities for the elderly, is an outstanding response to the suggested criteria set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.*

2. *"Composed of such uses and in such proportions as are most appropriate and necessary for the integrated functioning of the planned development and for the City."*

*There are no proposed changes in the existing uses permitted in PDD # 23. The two buildings being proposed will be used for residential purposes and the amenities and parking will be related to said use and available to all residents.*

3. *"So designed in space allocation, orientation, texture, materials, landscaping and other features as to produce an environment of stable and desirable character, complementing the design and values of the surrounding neighborhood, and showing such unusual merit as to reflect credit upon the developer and upon the City."*

*The design of the two additional buildings and additional facilities and their orientation is in keeping with the surrounding area. Further, by incorporating the proposed buildings into the existing buildings and existing space, the proposal both preserves and expands the distinctive and positive features of the Bella Vista community including expanding walkways, recreational areas and providing for additional landscaping.*

4. *“So arranged as to provide a minimum of 250 square feet of usable open space per dwelling unit on the tract, except 125 square feet in the case of elderly housing units, subject to the specific minimum standards enumerated in Section 15 (a) (1) (g) of this ordinance.”*

*The required usable open space as set forth above is satisfied. Open space areas were calculated for the existing site conditions and for the proposed development. All buildings, parking areas, driveways, roadways and sidewalks were excluded from open space, along with the inaccessible disturbed area at the northeast corner of the property. Balconies were counted as open space, along with communal recreational spaces including the green roof terrace and the secure play area. The total open space provided at present is 12.06 acres, against a requirement of 4.05 acres based on 1,412 units at 125 square feet per unit, per Section 65 (a) (4) of the New Haven Zoning Ordinance. The total open space with the proposed expansion would be 11.54 acres, against a requirement of 5.20 acres based on 125 square feet per unit for 1,811 units.*

### COMMISSION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Section 65. (a) regarding Planned Developments of the New Haven Zoning Ordinance requires certain findings based on specific standards that provide evidence of the fact that the tracts of land that are the subject of a PDD application “are developed, redeveloped or renewed as integrated and harmonious units, and where the overall design of such units is so outstanding as to warrant modification of the standards contained elsewhere in this ordinance”.

The following represents application of each of the four objectives of Section 65. (a) to the Bella Vista proposal. The plan should be:

*(1) In accordance with the comprehensive plans of the city, including all plans for redevelopment and renewal;*

The project as proposed is essentially in accordance with Comprehensive Plan of Development of the City of New Haven dated October 15, 2003 (“the Comprehensive Plan”) as evidenced by the following:

1. Section IV (Housing and Neighborhood Planning) includes a number of what are termed Planning Considerations, chief among which is the idea that “Affordable housing remains an integral component to the city’s housing strategy.” Because the proposed units will be subject to affordability restrictions this consideration is directly addressed by the project.
2. Also in Section IV are recommendations, including one that in part would “Encourage the development of low and moderate income housing.” As mentioned above affordability restrictions associated with this project represent accordance with the recommendation.

*(2) Composed of such uses, and in such proportions, as are most appropriate and necessary for the integrated functioning of the planned development and for the city;*

This project involves a nearly 30% expansion of an existing 1412 unit elderly housing complex. Such a significant level of expansion of the primary use (housing) should be accompanied by a proportional expansion of typically associated accessory uses. The proposed accessory uses, including an Aqua Therapy Center, daycare, rooftop terrace and library, all available to both new and existing residents, will facilitate the integration of both new structures and new residents into the existing physical and social community.

*(3) So designed in its space allocation, orientation, texture, materials, landscaping and other features as to produce an environment of stable and desirable character, complementing the design and values of the surrounding neighborhood, and showing such unusual merit as to reflect credit upon the developer and upon the city;*

As an addition to an existing PDD this project should reference existing conditions in terms of scale, location and appearance. In its current form there is an easily discerned physical relationship between existing and proposed structures that extends to both function and appearance. The new structures are located in close enough proximity to existing structures to facilitate the use of amenities in the new areas by all residents. Although not identical in appearance to the existing buildings, the new structures will reference existing buildings in terms of material and basic form. Additional proposed landscaping and water features



will serve to enhance the appearance of not only the site but also the surrounding area.

*(4) So arranged as to provide a minimum of 250 square feet of usable open space per dwelling unit on the tract, except 125 square feet in the case of elderly housing units, subject to the specific minimum standards enumerated in section 15(a)(1)g. of this ordinance.*

This quantitative standard has been met as mentioned in the "Open Space" portion of this report.

Based on the preceding considerations and specific findings, the proposed Bella Vista PDD#23 Amendment is found to be in accord with the comprehensive plans of the City of New Haven. The General Plans for the PDD demonstrate appropriate use of the property in terms of its treatment of form, design, and open space to the extent that the Commission has determined that the proposal is in accordance with the objectives of Section(s) 65.A. and 64(d)(2)a. Submission of detailed plans for review and approval, in accordance with text recommendations and conditions of approval and Section 65.E requirements will assure the project continues to meet requisite design standards.

It is the opinion of the City Plan Commission that the Bella Vista PDD#23 Amendment General Plan complies with the standards of Section 65.E of the Zoning Ordinance, and Conn. Gen. Stat. § 8-2m., and that the resulting development would have a positive effect on the economic health and quality of life within the existing Bella Vista community and the City. The Commission therefore approves the Application and General Plans for Planned Development designation with the following conditions:

#### **CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

1. Detailed Plans shall be submitted within 18 months.
2. The developer will engage in a peer architectural review to be conducted by an architect agreeable to both developer and the City Plan Department, prior to submission of Detailed Plans. The architectural review will not cover structural or code compliance issues, but will focus on the exterior, and on interior public and common spaces and the appearance of the building, grounds and amenities, with a report to be delivered to the City Plan Commission at the latest by the Detailed Plan Review submission.
3. Proportional Parking, landscape improvements and interior common amenity and service spaces (therapy pool, assembly room, library, health clinic and daycare) shall be fully completed as part of the initial building schedule for use before Certificates of Occupancy are issued for residential dwelling units.
4. The Detailed Plan Review submission shall include a written Parking Management Plan.
5. Parking and Traffic Impact Studies are incomplete. Supplemental materials requested by Department of Transportation, Traffic and Parking (TTP) must be submitted to and reviewed by City Plan Department and TTP Department with a copy to the Board of Aldermen before Final vote on these General Plans. The final studies shall incorporate recommendations from both the developer's consultants and the TTP Department.
6. All spaces on Bella Vista Drive shall be pavement marked and signed to indicate whether they are Visitor parking, and/or Handicap parking. All buildings shall have dedicated accessible parking spaces per current ADA and Code standards. All Fire hydrants and buffer areas shall be clearly marked.
7. All new units shall be universally accessible, i.e. "visitible" units, at a minimum.
8. The developer shall maintain the existing level of health, transportation and recreational services to residents and provide increased services at least in proportion to the increase in units.
9. The developer will ensure that coordinated provision of, and access to all existing and proposed retail, health, recreation and transportation amenities and services will continue to be available to all residents of the entire PDD complex; even upon sale of any of the separate existing LLCs, or the new LLCs (to be created for the structures contemplated in this amendment) to an entity that is not owned or controlled by the Carabetta organization.
10. Developer shall submit copies of land use approvals and use agreements for any parking or other accessory uses which are on properties outside the PDD, and/or outside the New Haven city boundary.
11. Developer shall mark or fence the boundary between the PDD and the adjoining property in East Haven on which quarrying, grading and/or rock crushing is or has taken place.
12. City shall be copied on all correspondence with Connecticut Housing Finance Authority concerning Low Income Housing Tax Credit Financing.
13. All building permits shall be obtained by the 10 year anniversary of approval of these General Plans by

the Board of Aldermen.

14. Developer shall respond to and address recommendations of the Consultation Center Report entitled *Report of Bella Vista Focus Groups, October 2010* evaluating present and future program needs in the Bella Vista Community.

**ADOPTED:** February 16, 2011  
Edward Mattison  
Chairman

**ATTEST:**



Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA  
Executive Director

**Attachment A – MINUTES OF CITY PLAN COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING****January 19 and February 16, 2011**

Ms. Karyn Gilvarg, City Plan Executive Director, described the proposed amendment, noting that its primary feature was that of increased density in two new structures the existing PDD boundary. Thomas Talbot, Deputy Director, Zoning, outlined the concerns identified in the draft report. He noted that, 1.) while the proposal met the previously approved parking ratio of .5 spaces per unit for elderly housing in New Haven, based on observable current site conditions a parking study was necessary to catalog and survey the existing parking patterns and to determine whether the proposed level of parking was acceptable; 2.) the second access drive back onto Eastern Street (south of the existing buildings), which had been blocked, was now to be reestablished per plan revisions submitted to the department today as the second point of access; 3.) the Transportation, Traffic and Parking Dept. would provide a separate review of the submitted Traffic Study; 4.) there were concerns of storm drainage and stormwater management due to flooding history in the area; 5.) a more complete soil erosion and sediment control plan was necessary at this point to assure staff and the Commission that the site could be managed during construction; 6.) there was an area on the site plan noted as “disturbed” in the northeast portion of the site which appeared to be a quarried area, a use not permitted in the PDD.

Attorney Jim Segaloff of the law firm Susman Duffy and Segaloff, introduced his law partner Laura Sklaver, David Golebiewski of TPA Design Group; Tony Fidelli, Project Manager from Carabetta; Bill Johnson, on site manager and Bella Vista resident; and Craig Laliberte, the architect.

Mr. Segaloff noted the \$150 million project proposal was for a 399 unit addition to the existing 1412 unit complex incorporating both market rate and Section 8 units. Mr. Segaloff was concerned that the reviewers of the application had requested a number of additional items, some which had been provided but hadn't been reviewed by City staff. TPA had provided a plan showing existing parking. David Golebiewski of TPA Design Group noted the garage spaces had been measured but spaces in the snow covered lots and informal parking had not. They intended to commence a parking study as soon as they had feedback from commissioners. His concern was that local approvals needed to be in hand as they submitted for financing purposes by mid-April. Ms. Sklaver elaborated of the elements of the financing package: low income housing tax credits the application for which needed to be filed by April 15 with all zoning approvals in place, soft financing from the State DECD, a first mortgage which would likely be a construction mortgage, and Section 8.

Craig Laliberte, Laliberte Architects, said the 44 car parking lot on the north side of Bella Vista Drive would be eliminated and returned to green space except for an access driveway into parking areas in the upper portion behind Building A. The new entry drive off Bella Vista Drive to the south would access new Buildings 6 (a T-shaped structure with 266 units) and 7 (133 units) both atop a 3 level parking garage interconnecting to all levels. The core between would be a roof top terrace and new amenities for existing and proposed tenants. Both buildings have lobbies on the first level. The reason for the steep inclines at Eastern Street was in order to match the elevation of the existing parking deck on level D, providing accessible access from the upper to lower portion of the site. Service, loading and trash collection would be at parking deck D at the rear of the buildings. Mr. Laliberte then reviewed floor plans for the residential spaces and the core. Residential units and amenities began at level 4. Amenities including a library, 9,000 SF play center, aqua therapy center, 2,800 SF community center new 4,500 SF community room, and clinic space. A roof top terrace was atop the amenities core with gardening and relaxation areas. Exterior elevations showed aggregate similar to what was on the existing towers, precast and newly introduced brick inlay, decorative coinage, with retaining walls. There was introduction of color, maintenance of green space, and segmentation of the buildings to avoid the impression of mass.

David Golebiewski, TPA Design Group, Site Engineers, reviewed the site plans, including new Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan and details. He reviewed the grading, drainage and utilities plan showing relocated sanitary sewer and relocated drainage, pumped to wet basin/detention basin across Bella Vista Drive. He addressed emergency access and turning movements of fire trucks per Fire Marshal request, including bringing back the emergency access drive which was feasible to construct as an egress drive. He showed a new parking plan with measured garage spaces and areas of informal parking. He noted the new preliminary storm drainage analysis per direction of Mr. Miller, including roof and site runoff discharging to the wet pond and distributed opposite the existing outfall on Eastern Street. Mr. Segaloff noted there had been a residents' meeting with only the alderwoman attending, and only one letter from an adjacent property owner. People seemed satisfied with what was occurring at Bella Vista.

[The Developer's presentation concluded at 8:30 PM.]

Speakers from the sign-up sheet including Patricia Wallace, Director of Elderly Services in New Haven, and Maureen O'Sullivan Best, Alderwoman of the Ward.

Ms. Wallace noted the applicants had hired consultants who had prepared a report based upon several focus groups on the services offered, and some of the findings had been reflected in the plans. She submitted an article "Fountain of Youth-Get there in a Walk" which stressed the importance to the elderly of exercise and walking and said the site should show a system of walking paths. She expressed concerns about both building accessibility, and lack of accommodation for pets and pet care. She pointed out that present zoning requirements don't consider service providers and their needs and said the consultant's report should be made available to the Commission and to the Elderly Services Department.

Alderwoman Maureen O'Sullivan Best, 54 Foxon Street, noted residents of Building D were concerned they would lose their view. Parking was definitely a concern as many units had two cars and emergency vehicles had difficulty circulating around the parked cars. Bella Vista was the single highest generator of emergency calls in the city, and an EMT service on site should be considered. William Johnson was good at handling complaints of residents, and good at handling the snow.

She said few developers were developing elderly housing and Carabetta was willing to provide some with services. There was a need for senior housing and a waiting list at Bella Vista.

Mr. Mattison then opened the floor for staff questions. Ms. Gilvarg asked about the tax status of the existing buildings and whether they'd be seeking assessment deferral for the new buildings. Ms. Sklaver said some of the existing buildings had PILOTs and whether assessment deferral would be sought depended upon whether they were awarded Section 8 contracts. She asked if all the units would be Section 8, and Ms. Sklaver replied yes. Ms. Gilvarg asked about incorporation of renewable energy. Craig Laliberte said there would be a LEED consultant hired, but the heating system had not yet been designed or addressed.

She asked about exterior material of the retaining walls. Mr. Laliberte replied the same aggregate as the building and faced with pre-cast panels.

She asked if the south access drive would be for emergency access only. Mr. Golebiewski replied the traffic report showed the existing drive could accommodate the traffic and the steep grade would be difficult if the drive were to be used as secondary access.

Mrs. Ford asked about the flood plain line on the plan. Mr. Golebiewski responded there would be no filling within the flood plain which was in the extreme northwestern corner of the site adjacent to Eastern Street.

Mr. Talbot asked if the wet basin would have standing water. Mr. Golebiewski replied that it would be considered a water feature.

Mr. Mattison then took questions from Commissioners.

Mr. Miller said he was concerned about the existing pipe under Eastern Street and requested a meeting with the civil engineers as soon as possible.

Mr. Diadamo asked about the infiltration area. Mr. Golebiewski said they would rely on infiltration as well as the wet basins. Mr. Miller said a popular use for stormwater was for on site irrigation.

Mr. Elicker asked if there was a grocery store on site. Jon from Carabetta Management replied there was a small commercial area leased to a convenience store with Monday to Sunday hours, with a small deli with beer sales and produce.

Mr. Elicker asked where residents were headed in their cars, and if shuttle access would help the need instead of providing lots more parking. Mr. Talbot replied that at his site visit, the parking lot on the north side of the drive was being used, and cars were parked every which way in areas not intended for cars. The ratio of current ratio of .5 cars per unit did not appear to be addressing current demand. The standard study should not only measure conventional demand but consider TDM measures as well.

Mr. Elicker asked if there was shuttle access now. William Johnson replied Bella Vista was on the CT Transit D line every 15 minutes. CT Transit was upgrading its line to tandem buses with increased seating capacity from 37 to 54 passengers. They had asked that management remove some of the parking spaces on the drive to allow for the swing of the new buses. There was shuttle service to Mary Wade programs, also MyRide New Haven Transit District.

Mr. Elicker asked if there was a need for more shuttles. Ms. Wallace said the residents would like more perhaps to grocery stores. She thought the GNHTD trolleys were a great resource for an elderly loop. Mary Wade shuttles provided rides to medical appointments.

Mr. Elicker noted the parking study should have a component addressing needs of residents for additional shuttle service or services which should be incorporated in Bella Vista.

Mr. Mattison said existing issues at Bella Vista should be identified and addressed, such as parking and drainage. He asked about project phasing and whether the amenities would be built in the first phase. Ms. Sklaver said whether the buildings were built simultaneously or in sequence would be the function of the financing. The amenities would be built with the first building. He urged connection of the aging in place theory with what was being provided.

Mr. Mattison said he could not see how there could be a vote tonight.

Mrs. Ford read into the record an e-mail from Jim Travers, Interim Director of the Traffic Department, who had some additional concerns needing to be addressed. She also read a letter from the Regional Plan Commission urging careful consideration of the plans for accommodating stormwater.

Upon motion by Mr. Elicker, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to continue the hearing to February 16, 2011. Voting to continue: Diadamo, Elicker, Mattison, Smith. Participating: Miller.

On February 16, 2011, Chair Mattison reopened the hearing at 7:30 PM, and Mr. Talbot acknowledged receipt of additional items since January 19 (see CPC report 1448-10 under submissions).

The Development team (Attorneys Laura Sklaver and James Segaloff, David Golebiewski of TPA Design Group, Steve Ulman of Purcell Associates, Craig Laliberte, Architect, and William Johnson, Jr. Property Manager for Carabetta) was present to address the concerns of the Commission and to review the draft conditions of approval.

Jim Travers, Interim Director of the Department of Transportation, Traffic and Parking, delivered his advisory report to the Commission (see Report Attachment B) primarily addressing the deficiencies of the Parking Study presented by Purcell Associates.

Mr. Miller noted that upon review of the Stormwater Management Plan and preliminary drainage report, although the drainage was not yet designed, he felt comfortable with the concept presented. He would await the Detailed Plan submission.

Alderswoman Maureen O'Sullivan-Best reiterated concerns over the circulation ability of CT Transit tandem buses, and the fencing off of the quarried area to the east and requested clarification on discrepancies in number of parking spaces.

Following response by the development team to Commission and staff questions, and as there were no further speakers, Mr. Mattison closed the hearing at 8:30 PM and proceeded to deliberate over the matter.

Upon motion by Mr. Diadamo, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to adopt the staff report as amended. Voting in favor: Diadamo, Elicker, Mattison. Participating: Miller.



Transportation, Traffic & Parking Department

# City of New Haven

200 Orange Street G3  
New Haven, CT 06510

John DeStefano, Jr.  
*Mayor*

Michael Piscitelli, AICP  
*Director*

## CPC ADVISORY REPORT

RECEIVED  
FEB 16 2011  
CITY PLAN DEPT.  
165 CHURCH ST.  
NEW HAVEN, CT 06510

To: Ed Mattison, Chair  
City Plan Commission  
FROM: Jim Travers  
RE: **CPC 1448-10**  
**Bella Vista, Planned Development District**  
DATE: February 16, 2011

Per your request, the Transportation, Traffic and Parking Department reviewed the above-referenced application for construction of 399 new units of residential housing at Bella Vista and respectfully offers the following for your consideration:

The Parking Study presented by Purcell Associates does not effectively survey the existing parking demand. The department respectfully requests the following information to accurately assess the parking needs:

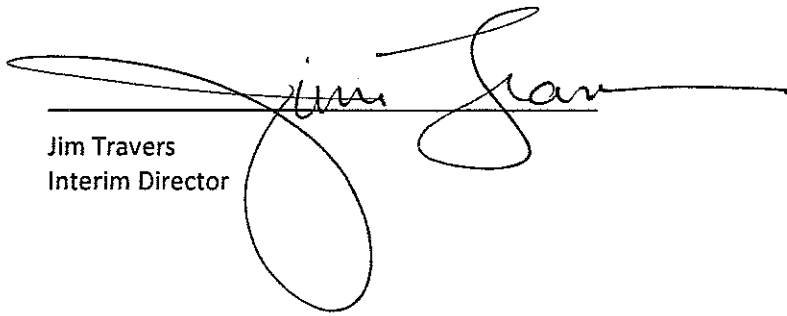
- Point in time occupancy counts that are conducted on a Thursday and Sunday
  - These times should be at 8:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m., and 9:00 p.m.
  - Occupancy of each garage, lot, and on-street parking is required separately.
  - Are those with passes only allowed to park in assigned spaces?
  - Are there passes in those vehicles that are parked in visitor spaces?
  - Are there plans to discourage multiple vehicles per unit?
- The report references current usage and demand for assigned spaces. However, we further request information regarding how spaces are assigned. By unit, or by license plate? Can spaces be claimed without owning a vehicle?
- The estimate of existing parking spaces is unclear. For instance, many are not clearly marked. The department requests a reconciliation of the number of available spaces. This reconciliation should include:
  - Accurate dimensions of each parking garage
  - Accurate dimensions of each parking lot
  - Linier footage of on-street parking with the space allocated for each vehicle
- Page 4 of the report references 28 parking spaces allocated for Management/commercial/medical staff is available for visitor parking from 6:00 pm. To 6:00 a.m.; however page 1 states there are 32 spaces assigned to these groups. It is unclear if any staff works an overnight shift or how the availability is communicated to the visitors.
- The submitted report clearly indicates issues with existing parking. The proposal does not address the deficiencies. The parking counts used in this report indicate .66 spaces per unit currently in place. Under the total proposed spaces after development this is reduced to .60 spaces per unit. PDD requirement is .66 spaces per unit. A minimum of this amount is required and consideration should be given to address parking demand issues.

- Page 8 of the report identifies several items to meet the parking demand. Resolutions are required for each item with specific performance metrics.

In closing, the developers were presented instructions on completing a parking study. We recommend the following link as a reference. <http://www.mapc.org/resources/parking-toolkit/parking-study-howto>

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me direct at (203) 946-8067.

TRANSPORTATION, TRAFFIC AND PARKING DEPARTMENT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Travers", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Jim Travers  
Interim Director

cc: Kelly Murphy, AICP, Economic Development Administrator  
Karyn Gilvarg, AIA, City Plan Director