

The Commons Lane Project Description

Project Summary

The Commons at Calabasas, LLC (“Applicant”) proposes to improve a portion of The Commons at Calabasas (“The Commons”), located at 4799 Commons Way¹ (“Project Site”) within the City of Calabasas (“City”) with the construction of two, new mixed-use buildings (“Project”). The Project’s new mixed-use buildings (referred to herein and on the plans as Buildings A and B) contain 210,921 square feet of total new floor area with up to 119 residential units, including 12 affordable units, and up to 24,163 square feet of neighborhood-serving commercial uses. To accommodate the Project, the existing theater building (approximately 33,091 square feet) will be demolished, along with a portion of the existing surface parking lot and associated landscaping.

Background and Project Site

The Commons is an international award-winning retail, dining and entertainment center set against the gentle hillsides of the City. Since opening in 1998, The Commons has been embraced by the community as its *de facto* town square. Over the last 25 years, it has become a gathering point for residents of Calabasas, and its community events, including the annual Menorah lighting, have become beloved local traditions.

Development of The Commons began with a vision of an Umbrian village, designed along the shape of a long, subtle arc to create enveloping warmth. Some of the signature accents include meandering fountains and ponds, hand-carved statuary, public plazas, and beautiful landscaping, including a rose garden.

The Project Site is comprised of five adjacent parcels that contains approximately 839,902 square feet of net lot area (19.3 acres)² and is bordered by Park Sorrento and the Calabasas Civic Center to the west, Calabasas Road to the north, and Park Granada to the east and south. The Project Site is currently improved with a shopping center that contains a variety of retail and restaurant uses, distributed throughout multiple buildings, including an approximately 52,000 square-foot grocery store (Ralphs), an approximately 17,000 square-foot pharmacy (Rite Aid), an approximately 33,000 square-foot theater (currently occupied by Regency Theatres on a short-term interim basis), an approximately 30,000 square-foot bookstore (Barnes and Noble), and a mix of community-serving retail and restaurant uses. The Commons also contains ample landscaping and water features throughout the Project Site. A summary of the existing parcels is shown below.

- **Parcel A:** 1.43 acres (62,159 square feet of net lot area) and includes two buildings: Building K which includes five restaurant tenants (Unit Nos. K-1 through K5) and Building L (Citibank).
- **Parcel B:** 8.40 acres (365,821 square feet of net lot area) and includes five buildings: Building F includes eight tenant spaces (Unit Nos. F-1 through F-7B); Building G (Barnes

¹ The Project Site address is commonly known as 4799 Commons Way but also includes the following addresses: 4710 Commons Way, 4719 Commons Way, 4732 Commons Way, 4735 Commons Way, 4751 Commons Way, 4754 Commons Way, 4767 Commons Way, 4776 Commons Way, 4783 Commons Way, 4798 Commons Way, 4799 Commons Way, and 4809 Commons Way.

² Project Site gross lot area is 1,085,731 square feet (24.93 acres).

and Noble); Building H, which includes four tenant spaces (Unit Nos. H-1 through H-7); Building I (Theater); and Building J, which includes three tenant spaces (Unit Nos. J-1 through J-3).

- **Parcel C:** 7.35 acres (320,067 square feet of net lot area) and includes three buildings: Building C (Ralphs); Building D, which includes four tenant spaces (Unit Nos. D-1 through D-5); and Building E (Rite Aid).
- **Parcel D:** 0.85 acres (37,113 square feet of net lot area) and includes Building B which includes four tenant spaces.
- **Parcel E:** 1.25 acres (54,742 square feet of net lot area) and includes Building A (Kings Fish House).

The Project improvements would be limited to the boundaries of Parcel B. As discussed below, the Project requests approval of a Vesting Tentative Tract Map to resubdivide Parcel B.

There are currently 1,059 parking spaces within the Project Site located within a surface parking lot north of the existing buildings and along a service access road located behind the existing buildings. Vehicular access to the Project Site is provided from Calabasas Road to the north, Park Granada to the east and Park Sorrento to the west and would remain the same with the Project. The majority of the Project Site is relatively flat with the exception of an upward open space slope located at the rear of the Site, which includes a variable one to 45 feet in height retaining wall (as measured from the top of wall to ground surface directly below) located between The Commons improvements and the open space slope. Landscaped open space is also located on the western portion of the Project Site and provides a pedestrian connection to the Calabasas Civic Center, which includes City Hall, the Library, and the Senior Center.

Project Details

Building A

Proposed Building A is a mixed-use building that includes up to 101 apartments and approximately 2,033 square feet of neighborhood-serving retail located on the ground floor and would be entirely located within the footprint of the existing theater space, except for a small projection in the southwest portion. The front portion of the existing theater foyer entrance is approximately 60 feet wide and flanked on either side by retail spaces which would remain. The existing theater foyer space adjacent to the existing retail would be replaced with a new retail storefront and vehicular driveway that would provide access to residential parking within the building. Five levels of residential units would be located above the ground floor retail and intentionally stepped back from the level below to create an appropriately pedestrian scaled environment at the ground level and to provide overall massing relief at the residential upper levels. The residential units are dispersed on five levels (Levels R1 through R5) and include 24 one-bedroom units, 67 two-bedroom units, and 10 three-bedroom units. Note that the unit mix may evolve as the Project progresses through the design development and construction phases. Building A would also include a lobby, mail room, storage and utility rooms, and co-working lounge on the ground level, and a fitness center, resident work room and roof deck with pool, restrooms, landscaping, and outdoor seating areas on the uppermost level. The pedestrian entrance to the building lobby would be oriented northwest and aligned with an existing landscaped area providing pedestrian access to existing commercial buildings and adjacent Civic Center Plaza.

Two hundred and twenty-five spaces would be provided within one subterranean level (Level B2), within a portion of the ground floor level (Level B1), and within a portion of the first level above grade level (Level P2). Parking located on Levels B1 and P2 would be buffered by existing and proposed retail uses and resident amenity spaces, including a lobby and co-working lounge, and thus would not be visible to the public. In addition, 113 bicycle parking spaces would be provided for the residential and retail uses in compliance with the CMC, which includes 101 spaces for residents, 11 spaces for resident guests, and one space for the retail use.

Building A would reach a maximum height of approximately 85 feet, excluding exempt elevator overruns and mechanical equipment. Locating Building A approximately 400 feet from Calabasas Road allows it to blend into the ascending hillside to the south and it would be further screened by the existing surface parking and abundant existing and proposed landscaping. In addition to the significant setbacks and building stepbacks, the building articulation along the front façade helps to open the horizontal and vertical view corridors. Additionally, the new building will help to further screen the existing retaining wall, that runs along the access road at the rear of the Project Site which has a height up to 45 feet and visually appears larger as viewed from Calabasas Road given the elevation of the Site slopes significantly downward from the retaining wall to Calabasas Road.

Building B

Proposed Building B is designed to face the existing commercial uses and is located across the drive aisle from proposed Building A to create a new pedestrian oriented “main street” within The Commons lined with small scale shops and restaurants in a mixed-use format creating a distinct sense of place. Building B would contain four intimate buildings referred herein and on the plans as Buildings B1, B2, B3, and B4 and, collectively, contain up to 18 apartments comprised of six one-bedroom units, 12 two-bedroom units, and 22,130 square feet of new ground level neighborhood-serving retail. 45 parking spaces for Building B’s residential units are provided within a subterranean parking level. In addition, 24 bicycle parking stalls would be provided for the residential, retail, and restaurant uses in conformance with the CMC with 18 bicycle stalls for residents, two for resident’s guests, and four for the retail and restaurant uses.

Building B1 is a standalone one-story building that includes a 2,603 square-foot ground floor restaurant with 1,448 square-foot outdoor dining patio. Building B2 is a three-story building that includes 6,576 square feet of ground floor retail within six proposed tenant spaces and four residential units located on the second and third floors respectively. Building B3 is also a three-story building that contains 6,319 square feet of ground floor retail within five proposed tenant spaces and a 2,105 square foot café space, along with five apartments located on the second level and two apartments located on the third level. The second and third levels of Building B2 and B3 are connected by elevated pedestrian walkways. Building B4 is a standalone two-story building with a 4,527 square-foot ground floor restaurant and 925 square-foot outdoor dining patio, along with three residential units on the second level. The maximum height of Building B is approximately 53 feet measured to the top of the architectural cupola located on Building B3.

Pedestrian pathways flanked by landscaping are provided at the front and rear of each building and between buildings, which creates a pedestrian-oriented environment. Adjacent to Building B3 and B4 are two proposed public open space plazas that may be programmed and/or used organically at different times and seasons and are activated by the retail and restaurants uses abutting these public spaces.

Architectural Design

The Project design is intended to create a timeless, elegant town center that reflects the unique fabric of Calabasas accomplished through close attention to planning, scale, and architectural details. Building B was inspired by the desire to create more of a “main street” experience in The Commons. Locating Building A across from the proposed Building B creates an active, pedestrian scale street, lined with shops and restaurants. A significant sized open space plaza complements the new “village” area providing a distinct sense of place. This open space area may be programmed for temporary community events and used organically throughout the year.

Building A has been designed to complement the existing Commons buildings by introducing a timeless yet contemporary aesthetic that incorporates soft earth tones typical of Calabasas and The Commons architecture, which allows it to blend into the surrounding topography. Landscaping along the façades also helps to conceal and soften its edges so the building further blends into the hillside to the south. As noted, the upper residential levels of Building A are setback from the retail ground floor façade below so that the residential apartments will not be visible from the sidewalk in front of the existing and new retail spaces within Building A. In addition to the building stepback at the upper levels, the massing of Building A will be softened by incorporating podium gardens at the first residential level and step backs in the façade at the upper levels and penthouse. Proposed deep balconies and shadow lines and recessed windows provide rich architectural details to increase articulation and visual interest while providing needed residential open space. The color and materials palette will be similar to the existing architecture in The Commons and the structured parking will be located behind the existing and proposed retail stores, entirely within the existing theater footprint, and screened from public view. Additionally, the rooftop deck and mechanical screens will be coordinated and include landscaping to blur the designations between resident-occupied and mechanical areas.

Whereas Building A has intentionally been designed with a distinct yet complementary contemporary architectural aesthetic, Building B has been designed to mirror The Commons existing architecture in terms of both materiality and style with additional architectural touches, which will enhance the design quality and authenticity of the new building. Retail storefronts, doors, and patio furnishings will be influenced and customized by future tenants to add to the visual interest and authenticity while trees, paving, curbs, accessories, and lighting will match the existing pedestrian sidewalks. Additionally, Building B serves as a transitional zone as viewed from Calabasas Road, by terracing the height southwards to Building A in the rear portion of the Project Site.

Summary of Previous Approvals

In 1995, the City approved a Master Conditional Use Permit (“1995 Master Plan”) for the development of the Calabasas Park Centre, a master planned project with retail, civic, office, hotel, and residential, which comprised approximately 66 acres of land bounded by Calabasas Road to the north, Park Granada to the east and south, and Parkway Calabasas to the west (“Master Site”). The 1995 Master Plan approvals permitted the construction of approximately 200,000 square feet of retail uses and 1,095,000 square feet of office uses on the Master Site.

In 1997 the City approved a new Master Conditional Use Permit (CUP 97-12) (“1997 Master Plan”) to revise the development program permitted in the 1995 Master Plan and permitted the development of up to 900,000 square feet, including approximately 200,000 square feet of retail uses on The Commons Project Site.

Concurrent with approval of the 1997 Master Plan, the City approved the Calabasas Park Centre Development and Design Guidelines (“Master Plan Guidelines”) that include project-wide development and design standards applicable to the entire Master Plan area and specific development and design standards applicable for eight planning zones within the Master Plan area. The Project Site is located within Planning Zone 3 (north of vacated Park Sorrento) and Planning Zone 7 (south of vacated Park Sorrento).

The vast majority of the existing buildings and site features within The Commons were approved by the City in 1997 with an Implementing Conditional Use Permit (No 97-13) and Site Plan Review (No 97-12) in conformance with the 1997 Master Plan and Master Plan Guidelines. Since the original development, minor changes have occurred, including modifications to the theater space, addition of outdoor dining areas, a new bank building, and ongoing interior and exterior improvements associated with maintenance and re-tenanting.

General Plan and Zoning Designations

The City’s General Plan designates the Project Site as Mixed-Use 0.95 and it is zoned CMU 0.95 (Commercial Mixed-Use). The CMU zone permits a variety and commercial/retail uses subject to site plan review and multi-family residential uses with approval of a Conditional Use Permit. Under the CMC, the CMU zone permits a floor area ratio (“FAR”) of 0.95 and a maximum residential density of 20 dwelling units per acre.

As noted above, the 1997 Master CUP provides that all projects within the Master Plan area be developed consistent with the City’s Development Code contained within the Calabasas Municipal Code (“CMC”), as supplemented by the Master Plan Guidelines. Thus, the Project is subject to compliance with the specific development standards in the Master Plan Guidelines, as proposed to be amended, and the City’s Development Code.

Inclusionary Housing Ordinance

CMC Section 17.10.020.A provides that all residential projects proposing five or more housing units shall include housing that is affordable to low, very low and/or moderate-income households within the Project. In compliance with the City’s Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, the Project provides 10 percent of the proposed units, 12 units, affordable to households with an income of up to 75 percent of the county median income (low-income units). By complying with the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance and providing 10 percent of the units for low -income affordable units, the Project is eligible for State Density bonus incentives/concessions along with waiver of development standards as permitted in CMC Section 17.22.030 and State Density Bonus law.

Requested Entitlements

1. Pursuant to CMC Section 17.62.060, an **Amendment to the 1997 Master Plan Conditional Use Permit** to (a) allow additional total square footage on the Project Site, (b) include the proposed residential use in the list of uses consistent with the underlying CMU zone, and (c) utilize Vehicular Miles Traveled (VMT) for Project trip thresholds consistent with SB743 in lieu of Average Daily Trips (ADT).
2. Pursuant to CMC Code Section 17.62.060, a **Conditional Use Permit** to permit a (a) mixed-use development with residential uses in the CMU zone, (b) sale and consumption of a full line of alcoholic beverages within the proposed new restaurant and café tenant spaces, and

(c) restaurant space exceeding 10 percent of the gross leasable floor area within a shopping center.

3. **Amendment to the Calabasas Park Center Project Development and Design Guidelines** to (a) confirm residential as a permitted use in the Planning Zones on the Project Site, (b) amend the minimum percentage of landscaping (given the existing Shopping Center), (c) amend the minimum internal setbacks required between buildings, (d) amend the permitted maximum number of parcels to accommodate the proposed airspace lots for Buildings A and B.
4. Pursuant to CMC Section 17.22.020 and Government Code Section 65915 (State Density Bonus Law), the following **Density Bonus Incentive and Waiver of Development Standard**:
 - a. Incentive to permit reduced parking stall width for the residential spaces.
 - b. Waiver of Development Standard to permit a maximum 85-foot building height for Building A and a maximum 53-foot building height for Building B.
5. Pursuant to CMC Section 17.28.050.B, **Shared Parking** approval for the existing and proposed commercial uses based on a parking demand study.
6. Pursuant to CMC Section 17.41, a **Vesting Tentative Tract Map** for the resubdivision of Parcel B into one master ground floor and six airspace lots.
7. Pursuant to CMC Section 17.62.020, **Site Plan Review** for the proposed commercial and residential development and associated improvements, including landscaping and building identification and tenant signage.