

Planning & Zoning Commission Hearing: November 16, 2023

Polestar Village PDP220010

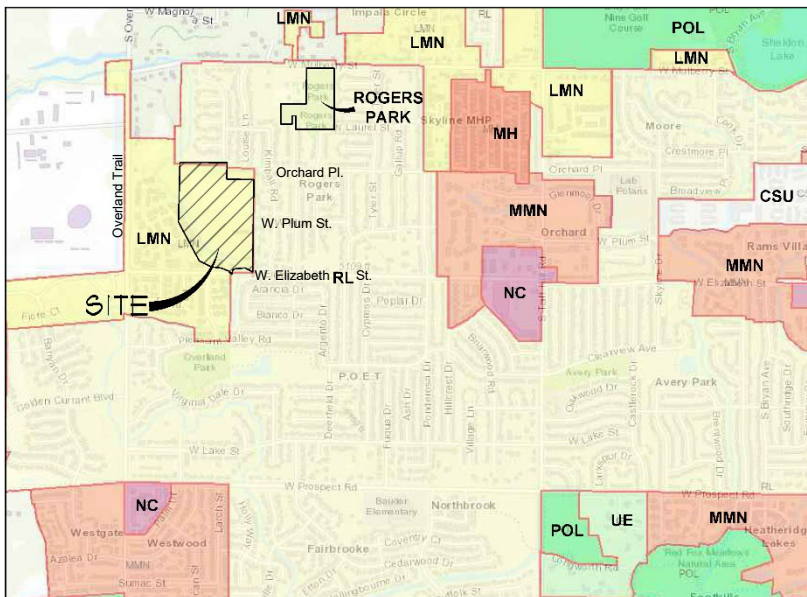
Summary of Request

This is a request for a mixed neighborhood development on a 20-acre infill property. The plan includes a variety of housing types and a neighborhood center comprising a community building with upstairs B&B rooms, a mixed-use building with small commercial spaces, a place of assembly, and an agriculture support building for community gardens and landscape maintenance.

The plan provides stormwater detention facilities in coordination with a larger regional City system, and a natural area buffer along an irrigation canal that forms the southwestern portion of the property boundary.

The plan includes two modifications of standards.

Zoning Map



Next Steps

If approved, the applicant will be eligible to submit a Final Development Plan to finalize engineering and other details and record all plan documents; the applicant could then apply for construction and building permits.

Site Location

The project is located at the current western end of both Orchard Place and Plum Street, about 1/4 mile east of Overland Trail. Parcel #s 9716200037; 9716200023; 9716200031; 9716200001.

Zoning

Low Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood (L-M-N)

Property Owner

Polestar Gardens, Inc.
PO Box 271582
Fort Collins, Colorado 80521

Pleasant Valley Acres LLC
2909 W. Mulberry St.
Fort Collins, Colorado 80521

Applicant/Representative

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Staff

Clark Mapes, City Planner

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Staff Recommendation

Approval of the two Modifications of Standards, and the Project Development Plan.

1. Project Introduction

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The property is a 20-acre pasture and community garden property known for decades as Happy Heart Farm. The site is embedded within surrounding neighborhood development where West Plum Street and Orchard Place terminate at the property line. The property is about ¼ mile east of Overland Trail and is separated from West Elizabeth Street by a single-family residential parcel that used to be part of the subject property but was separated in a parcel split which allowed the owners to sell the Polestar property.

Polestar Village has worked closely with the original owners, who still reside in the existing house on West Elizabeth. Those owners commit to dedicating a pedestrian easement across their property to enable a future walkway connection to proposed West Elizabeth Bus Rapid Transit Corridor improvements which are being worked on by the City. A letter of intent for the easement is attached.

The plan extends Plum and Orchard through and across the property.



144 dwelling units are proposed in a variety of two-unit, townhome, multi-family, mixed use, and single family detached housing types, with both condominium and rental units included; and several modest nonresidential buildings including a community center, a place of assembly, and an elderly group home and wellness center with a caretaker, and an agricultural support building in conjunction with a community garden.

These uses are integrated into a campus-like neighborhood framework with an extensive walkway system.

The property is part of a regional floodway and drainage path, and the plan provides a large regional detention pond in collaboration with the City Stormwater utility.

The angled southwestern edge of the property is an irrigation canal with mature trees, and the plan provides natural resource buffer landscaping along the canal corridor.

The plan includes two modification requests – one for the number of parking spaces for nonresidential uses and one for two building ends facing the street without doorways.

B. DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The former Happy Heart Farm was a community supportive agriculture and community events enterprise and destination. It included the house facing West Elizabeth Street, with a “back 20” – the 20-acre field behind the house.

In 2016, the Happy Heart owners brought a conceptual plan to preliminary meetings with the City for a neighborhood development called Three Seeds, with a mix of housing, community agriculture, and a community center, somewhat similar to Polestar.

The owners did not proceed but instead decided to split the property and sell the 20-acre portion to the Polestar development company.

Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses

	North	South	East	West
Zoning	RL	LMN	RL	LMN
Land Use	Rogers Park Neighborhood--houses	Older single-family houses facing Elizabeth St.	Rogers Park Neighborhood--houses	Saddle Ridge Condos



View of site looking north

C. OVERVIEW OF MAIN CONSIDERATIONS IN STAFF'S REVIEW

Salient issues that were resolved through four rounds of design and review include:

- A large regional floodway and drainage system crosses the property and the applicants and staff collaborated on the solution to re-shape the floodway and create a large regional detention pond consistent with a stormwater master plan. This was a complex technical effort through several plan iterations.
- A large cottonwood tree beloved by long-time neighbors, is in the alignment where Orchard Place needs to be extended westward along the property. The design process resulted in deviating the street edge around the tree and eliminating a lot to preserve the tree in a small open space area.
- The campus-like walkway system was designed through iterations to be complete and convenient. It includes a walkway stub to the property to the south with an easement agreement for future connection to Elizabeth Street.
- The Pleasant Valley and Lake Canal runs along the angled southwest edge of the property and a Natural Area Buffer was carefully designed through iterations to improve the existing conditions and mitigate the loss of a small wetland vegetation area near the canal. This buffer corridor will be completely renovated with grading, weed eradication, and revegetation.

2. Land Use Code Article 2 – Applicable Standards

A. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROCEDURAL OVERVIEW

1. Conceptual Review – CDR210059

A Conceptual Review meeting was held on July 22, 2021.

2. First Submittal

The Project Development Plan was submitted on July 1, 2022.

3. Neighborhood Meeting

A neighborhood meeting was held virtually on May 12, 2022. Q&A topics included traffic increase, extension of existing neighborhood streets in the area; potential for future street connections to Overland Trail and Elizabeth Street through adjoining properties; the uses in the non-residential buildings; the existing large cottonwood tree in the alignment of the needed Orchard Street extension; and walkways/trail connections.

4. Notice (Posted, Written and Published)

Posted Notice: May 2, 2022, Sign #701.

Written Hearing Notice: November 2, 2023, 797 addresses mailed.

Published Coloradoan Hearing Notice: Scheduled for November 5, 2023.

B. DIVISION 2.8 – MODIFICATION OF STANDARDS

The applicant requests two modifications of standards. One is for the number of off-street parking for some of the nonresidential neighborhood center uses; the other is for two apartment buildings with ends facing the street without doorways.

The Land Use Code is adopted with the recognition that there will be instances where a project would be consistent with City Plan, but due to unique and unforeseen circumstances would not meet a specific standard of the Land Use Code as stated. Accordingly, code standards include provisions for modifications. The modification process and criteria in Land Use Code Division 2.8.2(H) provide for evaluation of these instances on a case-by-case basis, as follows:

Land Use Code Modification Criteria:

“The decision maker may grant a modification of standards only if it finds that the granting of the modification would not be detrimental to the public good, and that:

(1) the plan as submitted will promote the general purpose of the standard for which the modification is requested equally well or better than would a plan which complies with the standard for which a modification is requested; or

(2) the granting of a modification from the strict application of any standard would, without impairing the intent and purpose of this Land Use Code, substantially alleviate an existing, defined and described problem of city-wide concern or would result in a substantial benefit to the city by reason of the fact that the proposed project would substantially address an important community need specifically and expressly defined and described in the city's Comprehensive Plan or in an adopted policy, ordinance or resolution of the City Council, and the strict application of such a standard would render the project practically infeasible; or

(3) by reason of exceptional physical conditions or other extraordinary and exceptional situations, unique to such property, including, but not limited to, physical conditions such as exceptional narrowness, shallowness or topography, or physical conditions which hinder the owner's ability to install a solar energy system, the strict application of the standard sought to be modified would result in unusual and exceptional practical difficulties, or exceptional or undue hardship upon the owner of such property, provided that such difficulties or hardship are not caused by the act or omission of the applicant; or

(4) the plan as submitted will not diverge from the standards of the Land Use Code that are authorized by this Division to be modified except in a nominal, inconsequential way when considered from the perspective of the entire development plan and will continue to advance the purposes of the Land Use Code as contained in Section 1.2.2.

Any finding made under subparagraph (1), (2), (3) or (4) above shall be supported by specific findings showing how the plan, as submitted, meets the requirements and criteria of said subparagraph (1), (2), (3) or (4).

1. Modification to Section 3.2.2(K)(1) and (2) Number of Off-Street Parking Spaces

Overview

This modification is included for some of the nonresidential neighborhood center uses.

For purposes of evaluating parking, the site plan cover sheet assigns the following classifications to these uses:

- A bed and breakfast (B&B) use with 6 rental rooms. The B&B fits the standard for Lodging establishment, subsection 3.2.2(K)(2)(a).

- A group home/wellness center with up to 8 residents plus medical/spiritual wellness space. The site plan assigns the standards for Group Home in 3.2.2(K)(1)(f) and Long Term Care Facility, 3.2.2(K)(2)(a).
- A place of assembly, with worship/meditation/yoga space and support space. This fits the definition and standards for Places of Assembly.
- A community facility that building fits the definition of Neighborhood support and recreation facility, which is an accessory use in neighborhood development, and has no stated parking requirement.
- An agriculture support building. This is also an accessory building and has no stated parking requirement.

The site plan shows a total of 38 spaces required for these uses, and 28 spaces provided. The request is to address the calculated shortfall of 10 spaces.

Summary of Applicant Justification

The applicants' modification request is attached. It emphasizes the overall approach to the whole development as a pedestrian-focused residential campus. Its neighborhood center uses are oriented and intended to serve residents, few of whom are likely to bother trying to drive to the center and park, particularly on an occasion when parking demand is higher than for typical everyday living in the neighborhood. The request notes that that the standards apply citywide to uses that cater to the public, with more users presumably arriving by vehicle.

It further explains several reasons why this unique overall development has ample parking for all its uses.

Staff Findings

Staff finds that the granting of the modification would not be detrimental to the public good and that the request satisfies criteria (1) and (4) in subsection 2.8.2(H):

- A. The modification meets criterion (1), "equal or better", because the uses are oriented to residents, who can easily access the neighborhood center without driving and parking. The standards apply citywide to uses that cater to the public. The streets in the plan provide ample parking for any occasions when the assigned parking spaces might be full. A larger parking lot would displace beneficial building uses and landscape spaces with unnecessary paving, detracting from the plan.
- B. The modification meets criterion (4), "nominal and inconsequential" when considered from the perspective of the entire development plan because the calculated shortfall of 10 spaces is offset by ample parking on the streets in the development which can accommodate any occasions when people would be driving to events that fill up the off-street parking. The available parking on the streets that is not included in residential calculations comprises 13 spaces on Plum and 42 spaces on Orchard, which provide a "cushion" for the whole development including the neighborhood center.

The plan will continue to advance the purposes of the Land Use Code as contained in Section 1.2.2, including:

- 1.2.2 (F) encouraging patterns of land use which decrease trip length of automobile travel and encourage trip consolidation.
- 1.2.2 (G) increasing public access to mass transit, sidewalks, trails, bicycle routes and other alternative modes of transportation.
- 1.2.2 (I) minimizing the adverse environmental impacts of development.
- 1.2.2 (J) improving the design, quality, and character of new development.
- 1.2.2 (L) encouraging the development of vacant properties within established areas.
- 1.2.2 (N) ensuring that development proposals are sensitive to natural areas and features.

2. Modification of a Standard for Street-Facing Facades – 3.5.2(D)(2)

This standard for residential development requires that buildings with 4 or more dwelling units must have a doorway facing adjacent neighborhood streets (could be secondary patio doors.) The intent is to avoid impersonal blank ends of multi-unit buildings, often with only utility meters as the most prominent feature, along neighborhood streets. A doorway indicates the presence of people as an animating architectural feature.

Two such buildings have ends facing Plum Street without doorways -- the two northernmost multi-family buildings -- one being a 6-plex and one a 5-plex.

Summary of applicant justification:

The applicants' modification request is attached. It explains why the request is not detrimental to the public good; and meets criteria (1) and (4) – “equal to or better than” and “nominal and inconsequential from the perspective of the whole plan”.

It explains that:

- The side facades are visually interesting with quality design, materials, & windows.
- The two buildings are only two out of 28 buildings units in the plan, involving two of the 144 units in the plan.
- Applicants and staff agree that Final Plans will show whether electric meter banks must be placed on the ends; and if so, they will be screened with architectural fencing to complement the buildings.

Staff Findings:

Staff finds that the granting of the modification would not be detrimental to the public good and that the plan satisfies criteria in subparagraph (4), “nominal and inconsequential” under Section 2.8.2(H) governing modification requests.

Detriment to the public good

The two building ends are a negligible proportion of the building frontage along the streets.

The building design does not consist of impersonal blank utilitarian walls but rather consists of windows, quality materials, and articulation consistent with the quality design character of the building fronts.

Therefore, the two buildings contribute to visual interest along the street. The elevation of the ends of the buildings is shown below, in two of three possible color schemes, so the two ends will vary in that regard.



For background behind the standard, a Design Manual that accompanies the Land Use Code has a “*This*” “*Not This*” example and explanation for the standard. The intent for what to avoid is shown below.



Applicants and staff will ensure that any meter banks will be screened and integrated architecturally if they prove necessary on these building ends in final plans.

Criterion (4), “nominal and inconsequential”. From the perspective of the entire development plan, the two building ends facing Plum Street without doorways are nominal and inconsequential for reasons stated above and do not affect the purposes of the Land Use Code in Section 1.2.2.

3. Land Use Code Article 3 – General Development Standards

A. DIVISION 3.2 - SITE PLANNING AND DESIGN STANDARDS

Applicable Code Standard	Summary of Code Requirement and Analysis	Staff Findings
<p>3.2.1 Landscaping and Tree Protection</p> <p>3.2.1(D) – Tree Planting Standards</p> <p>3.2.1(D)(1)(c) – Full Tree Stocking</p> <p>3.2.1(F) – Tree Preservation and Mitigation</p>	<p>The standards of this section require development plans to demonstrate a comprehensive approach to landscaping that enhances the appearance and function of the neighborhood, buildings, and pedestrian environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan includes two different types of landscaping, both thoroughly developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an elaborate, highly maintained campus landscape setting to integrate the varied buildings, outdoor spaces, and the walkway system in the developed neighborhood portion of the plan; and - detailed restoration of a Natural Habitat Buffer Zone along the entire west edge of the property and the large regional stormwater detention pond with multiple specialized seed mixes for the gradations of topography from wetland to upland. <p>Specific components include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An inventory of the 115 existing trees on the property. 35 trees are to remain; and mitigation for trees to be removed is accounted for. Perhaps the #1 concern of existing neighbors was the fate of a large cottonwood tree located within the alignment of the extension of Orchard Place. A special solution was found to retain this tree with a deviation in the street edge design and a small open space outlet: <div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree plantings around the buildings, walkways, and parking lots. Street trees in irrigated turfgrass parkways along the streets. Mulched planting beds around buildings. Natural area buffer landscape restoration and landscaping, starting with eradication of existing smooth brome grass and weeds. Detention pond landscaping. Community garden spaces and edible landscape beds in several locations throughout the campus neighborhood area. 	<p>Complies</p>

3.2.2 – Access, Circulation and Parking – General Standard

This standard requires that development projects accommodate the movement of vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and transit throughout the project and to and from surrounding areas safely and conveniently and contribute to the attractiveness of the neighborhood. In compliance, the PDP includes the following:

Complies

- The plan has an elaborate framework of walkways linking all parts of the campus-like development.
- Existing attached sidewalks on streets in adjoining development are extended through the plan with today's detached sidewalk standard.
- Neckdowns with crosswalks are included in Plum Street to highlight the importance of the walkway system.
- Walkways are stubbed to enable useful connections to and through adjoining properties.
- Parking is provided in alley-like drives throughout the plan.



<p>3.2.2(C)(4) Bicycle Parking Space Requirements</p>	<p>Residential: A standard requires one bicycle space per bedroom for multi-family dwellings, for a total of 76 bicycle spaces required. Requirements include both “enclosed bicycle parking” and non-enclosed fixed bicycle racks, with at least 60% enclosed (covered), so 46 enclosed spaces are required out of the 76 total. Locations must be convenient and easily accessible to building entrances and walkways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In compliance, the PDP greatly exceeds the requirements with 67 enclosed spaces and 120 outdoor fixed racks totaling 187 spaces. • Locations are distributed throughout the plan. <p>Nonresidential: Standards are based on a chart of uses. Staff finds a total requirement of 13 spaces for Place of Assembly, Lodging Establishment (for the B&B), and Health Facilities (for the Long Term Care and Wellness Center).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In compliance, the PDP greatly exceeds the requirements with 51 spaces including 11 enclosed spaces. 	<p>Complies</p>
<p>3.2.2(C)(6,7) Direct On/Off-Site Access to Pedestrian and Bicycle Destinations</p>	<p>These standards require that the on-site/off-site pedestrian and bicycle circulation system be designed to provide for direct connections to major pedestrian and bicycle destinations, including, trails, parks, schools, Neighborhood Centers, Neighborhood Commercial Districts, and transit stops that are located either within the development or adjacent to the development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan provides a crucial walkway stub to the south which will be extended across the intervening house property to Elizabeth Street if and when a future City capital project builds a sidewalk along Elizabeth. A major effort in the plan review process resulted in a commitment by the owner of the intervening property to provide the needed easement. • Another useful connection is provided in the northwest portion of the site, with a walkway stub to the west that allows access to a path along the abutting detention/natural area, which connects north to the alignment of Orchard Place and is used by people walking in the larger neighborhood. 	<p>Complies</p>
<p>Section 3.2.2(K)(1)(a)&(b) Residential Parking Required</p>	<p>These standards require a minimum amount of parking for residential development of various housing types. For attached and multi-family dwellings the requirement is based on bedrooms. For single detached units the requirement is based on lot width.</p> <p>A detailed chart on the site plan cover sheet shows the required parking for 14 different unit types. The total required parking is 278 spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan exceeds this minimum requirement, with 291 spaces available off-street and along Plum Street internal to the plan. 	<p>Complies</p>
<p>Section 3.2.2(K)(2) Nonresidential Parking Required</p>	<p>The site plan shows a total of 38 spaces required for these uses, and 28 spaces provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The modification request above in this report explains the compliance finding the calculated shortfall of 10 spaces. 	<p>Complies via Modification</p>
<p>3.2.2(K)(5) – Handicap Parking</p>	<p>Handicap parking is required as a ratio of spaces in parking lots. The plan provides off-street parking in various private alleys with portions of the alleys configured as de facto parking lots.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan provides 17 handicap-accessible spaces distributed throughout in a manner that exceeds minimum requirements for the parking lot areas. 	<p>Complies</p>

<p>3.2.4 – Exterior Site Lighting</p>	<p>The purpose of this Section is to ensure adequate exterior lighting for the safety, security, enjoyment, and function of the proposed land use; conserve energy and resources; reduce light trespass, glare, artificial night glow, and obtrusive light; protect the local natural ecosystem from damaging effects of artificial lighting; and encourage quality lighting design and fixtures.</p> <p>Lighting standards are limits on the total quantity of light measured in lumens; detailed technical ratings for fixtures; and light trespass (spillover) across property boundaries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan shows limited, strategic lighting at walkway junctions. There is zero spillover anywhere near any property boundaries. The development will rely mostly on building lighting, which will comply with the standards as part of building permits. Final Plans will include a summary table with a few additional technical ratings to match code terminology. 	<p>Complies</p>
<p>Section 3.2.5 – Trash and Recycling Enclosures</p>	<p>The purpose of this standard is to ensure the provision of facilities compatible with surrounding land uses, for the collection, separation, storage, loading and pickup of trash, waste cooking oil, compostable and recyclable materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequately sized, conveniently located, accessible and fully screened trash and recycling enclosures are provided throughout the plan. 	<p>Complies</p>

B. DIVISION 3.3 - ENGINEERING STANDARDS

Applicable Code Standard	Summary of Code Requirement and Analysis	Staff Findings
<p>3.3.1(C) – Public Sites, Reservations and Dedications</p>	<p>This standard requires the applicant to dedicate rights-of-way for public streets, drainage easements and utility easements as needed to serve the area being developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project includes a subdivision plat that provides right-of-way for extension of W. Plum Street and Orchard Place expansion, and a complete framework of easements for drainage, access, and utilities throughout the plan. 	<p>Complies</p>

C. DIVISION 3.4 - ENVIRONMENTAL, NATURAL AREA, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION STANDARDS

Applicable Code Standard	Summary of Code Requirement and Analysis	Staff Findings
<p>3.4.1 – Natural Habitats</p>	<p>The purpose of this Section is to ensure that when property is developed consistent with its zoning designation, the way in which the physical elements of the development plan are designed and arranged on the site will protect the natural habitats and features both on the site and in the vicinity of the site.</p> <p>It applies when development is proposed within 500 feet of an identified natural habitat or feature. In this case, the Pleasant Valley and Lake Canal runs along the</p>	<p>Complies</p>

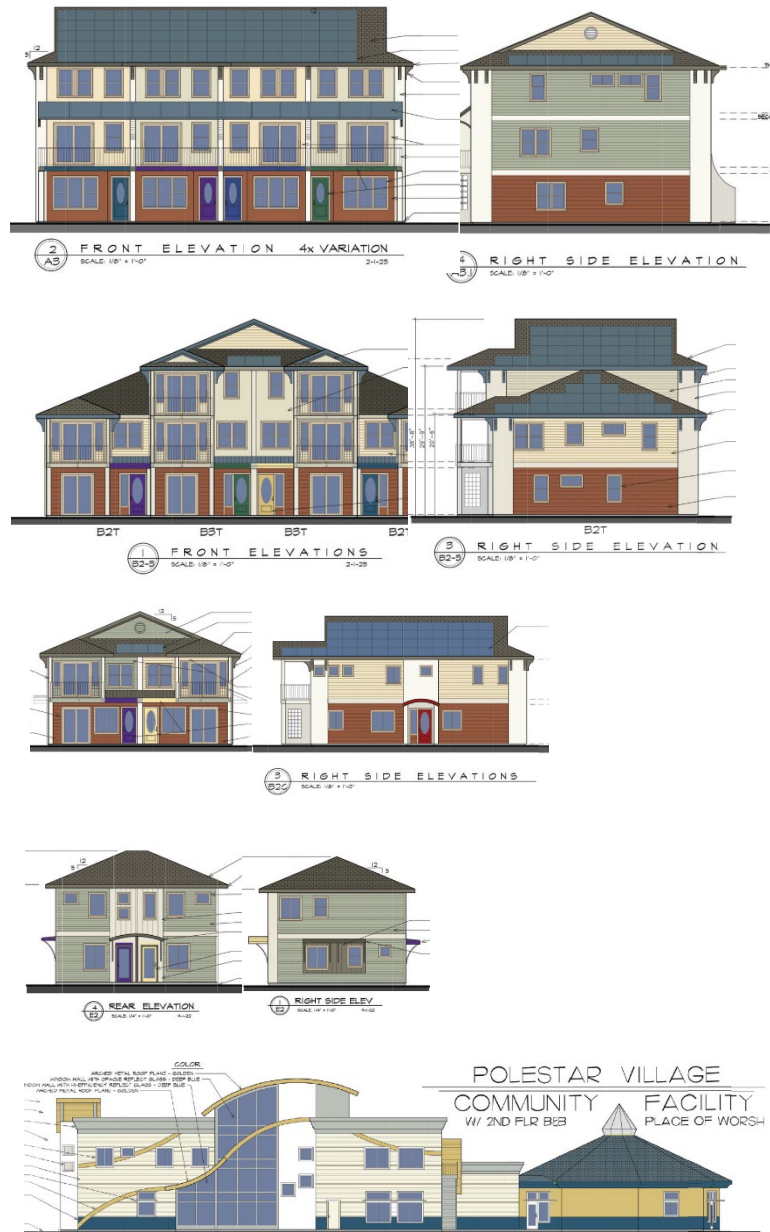
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan includes grading and tailored seed mixes to establish a new wetland area which mitigates the filling of the existing small wetland. Extensive tree planting augments the existing riparian trees along the canal. 	
<p>s3.4.7 – Historic and Cultural Resources</p>	<p>This section applies if there are any historic resources within the area of adjacency of a proposal. The area of adjacency is measured at 200 feet in all directions from the perimeter of the development site.</p> <p>There are no historic resources on the development site. There is a potentially historic property abutting on the south -- the farmhouse, which was split off from the Polestar property, at 2820 W. Elizabeth. But in any case, the designs for the project within the Historic Influence Area meet the design requirements of LUC 3.4.7(E), Table 1, Column A. As a result, the historic survey requirement was waived and the property at 2820 W Elizabeth remains unevaluated but was treated as Eligible for the purposes of this project review.</p> <p>Staff found that the project components that lie within the Historic Influence Area, specifically the Agricultural Building and the closest townhomes, comply with the design compatibility requirements of 3.4.7(E), Table 1, Column A. Staff analysis considered similar scale, massing and articulation, roof forms, lack of visibility from Elizabeth, exterior materials, and window patterns.</p>	<p>Complies</p>

D. DIVISION 3.5 - BUILDING STANDARDS

Applicable Code Standard	Summary of Code Requirement and Analysis	Staff Findings
<p>3.5.1(A) and (B) – Building Project and Compatibility, Purpose, and General Standard</p>	<p>The purpose of this Section is to ensure compatibility of new buildings and uses with the surrounding context. Absent any established character, the standard requires that new buildings set an enhanced standard of quality for future projects or redevelopment in the area. The standards in this section complement the more specific requirements in Section 3.8.30 for multi-family development, and in Article 4 for the LMN zone.</p> <p>Overall, staff finds that the design of the PDP is compatible with the existing context surrounding the site, which includes residential development from different eras in different styles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan’s collection of multiple building types demonstrates a high degree of variation within a distinct unifying overall vocabulary. The design provides visual interest at a human scale consistent with the pedestrian orientation of the overall plan. The design vocabulary includes hip and gable roofs with 5/12 pitch; lap siding; porches and balconies; and details including shaped privacy walls with latticework, varied exposure of siding, and differently colored doors. Color shades are common residential colors, and they vary dramatically within the unifying overall order to distinguish different dwelling units within buildings and highlight design features. Buildings are mostly two stories with some three story portions and a few 3-story apartment buildings which use secondary roofs to divide the mass into proportions that express the base, middle and top. 	<p>Complies</p>

Staff finds no compatibility issue with this neighborhood development in the context of the larger neighborhood development in the general area.

The vocabulary is demonstrated below with just a few of the approximately 16 different residential building designs, with additional differences in exact color schemes. An image of the focal community building is included.



<p>3.5.2- Residential Building Standards</p>	<p>These standards are intended to promote variety, visual interest, and pedestrian-oriented streets in residential development. Development projects containing residential buildings shall place a high priority on building entryways and their relationship to the street. Pedestrian usability shall be prioritized over vehicular usability. Buildings shall include human-scaled elements, architectural articulation, and in projects containing more than one (1) building, design variation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan exemplifies the intent of each of these points. 	<p>Complies</p>
<p>3.5.2(D)(1) – Orientation to a Connecting Walkway 3.5.2.(D)(2) Street-Facing Facades</p>	<p>This section requires that every front facade with a primary entrance to a dwelling unit faces a connecting walkway with no primary entrance more than two hundred (200) feet from a street sidewalk. A primary entrance may be up to three hundred fifty (350) feet from a street sidewalk if the primary entrance faces and opens directly onto a connecting walkway that qualifies as a major walkway spine.</p> <p>Additionally, a standard requires each multifamily building with four or more units to have at least one entrance facing the adjacent local street.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All buildings comply, except for two buildings with four or more units that do not have doorways facing the street. These are the two northernmost buildings along Plum St. As discussed previously in the staff report, a modification to 3.5.2(D)(2) is included. 	<p>Complies / Modification Requested</p>
<p>3.5.3(C)(1) – Orientation to a Connecting Walkway</p>	<p>This section requires that a main entrance to a commercial or mixed-use building must open onto a connecting walkway with pedestrian frontage, with no intervening vehicular use area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The buildings comply, facing onto a walkway with pedestrian frontage leading directly to and from Plum Street. 	<p>Complies</p>

E. DIVISION 3.6 - TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

This Section is intended to ensure that the transportation network of streets, alleys, roadways, and trails is in conformance with adopted transportation plans and policies established by the City.

Applicable Code Standard	Summary of Code Requirement and Analysis	Staff Findings
<p>3.6.2 – Streets, Streetscapes, Alleys, and Easements</p>	<p>This Section requires transportation network improvements for public health, safety, and welfare, with requirements in accordance with the Larimer County Urban Area Street Standards and requires necessary easements for utilities and access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan extends the streets that currently terminate at the property boundaries in conformance with standards. The plan includes a subdivision plat that dedicates needed ROW and easements. 	<p>Complies</p>

Applicable Code Standard	Summary of Code Requirement and Analysis	Staff Findings
3.6.3(F) – Street Pattern and Connectivity Standards	<p>This Section requires development plans to connect and extend streets that are stubbed to the boundary of the plan by previous development.</p> <p>The plan extends Plum Street and Orchard Place through the site, with Orchard stubbed to the western boundary for further extension in any future development. Existing development to the west limited the ability to continue Plum beyond this subject property.</p>	Complies
3.6.4 – Transportation Level of Service Requirements	<p>This Section contains requirements for the transportation needs of proposed development to be safely accommodated by the existing transportation system, or that appropriate mitigation of impacts will be provided by the development to meet adopted Level of Service (LOS) standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Traffic Impact Study was reviewed and accepted by staff. The 143-page study is attached. It concludes that no operational concerns related to levels of service were identified. • Pedestrian facilities are mostly adequate in the area surrounding the Project site, which is primarily residential. Bicycle lanes are present along nearby major streets. Sidewalks and crosswalks are proposed as part of the Project. • Local streets within the Project site will have detached sidewalks on both sides. • Crosswalks will be installed at neck-downs in the street to promote safe pedestrian crossings. • Sidewalks along Orchard Place will provide access to the existing path along the canal west of the site. 	Complies
3.6.6 – Emergency Access	<p>This Section requires access for emergency vehicles and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has been reviewed by Poudre Fire Authority (PFA) and meets the needs and requirements for emergency access. 	Complies

F. DIVISION 3.7 - COMPACT URBAN GROWTH

Applicable Code Standard	Summary of Code Requirement and Analysis	Staff Findings
3.7.3 – Adequate Public Facilities	<p>The proposed project provides adequate service design for water, wastewater, storm drainage, fire and emergency services, and electric facilities. There are no special needs or requirements necessary to serve the development.</p>	Complies

G. 3.8.30 MULTI-FAMILY AND SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED DWELLING DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The standards in this section apply to all multi-family developments that contain at least four (4) dwelling units and single-family attached developments that contain at least four (4) dwelling units where there is no reasonably sufficient area for outdoor activities and useable outdoor space on an individual per lot basis. This section is intended to promote variety in building form and product, visual interest, access to parks, pedestrian-oriented public or private streets and compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.

Applicable Code Standard	Summary of Code Requirement and Analysis	Staff Findings
3.8.30(B)(1)(2)(3)(4) – Mix of Housing Types	<p>A complete range of the permitted housing types is encouraged in a neighborhood and within any individual development plan, to the extent reasonably feasible, depending on the size of the parcel. A minimum of two (2) housing types is required on any development parcel sixteen (16) acres or larger.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan greatly exceeds the standard and exemplifies aspirations in the comprehensive plan which are the basis for the standard. Nine housing types are provided which correspond to types recognized in the standard. Plus there are additional variations within several of those types involving garages/no garages, and side-by-side vs over/under. 	Complies
3.8.30(C) – Access to a Park, Central Feature or Gathering Place	<p>At least ninety (90) percent of the dwellings in all development projects containing two (2) or more acres shall be located within 1,320 feet (¼ mile) of either a neighborhood park, a privately owned park or a central feature or gathering place that is located either within the project or within adjacent development, which distance shall be measured along street frontage without crossing an arterial street.</p> <p>A privately owned park would have to be at least 10,000 sq. ft.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rogers Park, a City Neighborhood Park, is 1,000 feet to the northeast. The plan includes park-like landscape areas with a pavilion plaza, an open picnic area, a tot lot, pickleball, a covered patio with tables at the community building, a large community garden, a walkway along the entire western edge of the property along the canal landscape corridor, and other seating areas and community garden spaces distributed throughout the plan, all of which are linked by the campus-like walkway system. 	Complies
3.8.30(F) – Building Design	<p>This subsection requires a basic level of building variation, with at least 3 different building designs; clear prominent entrances; roof forms; façade articulation; and use of color and materials for variety and individuality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As discussed on other sections, the plan exceeds and exemplifies the standards. 	Complies

4. Land Use Code Article 4 – Applicable Standards:

A. DIVISION 4.4 – LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD (R-L)

This zone district is intended for predominately single-family residential areas which were existing at the time of adoption of this Code. Only one standard pertains to this PDP, for density.

Applicable Code Standard	Summary of Code Requirement and Analysis	Staff Findings
4.4(B) – Permitted Uses	This zone permits single-family houses along with a few other uses that characterize suburban subdivisions including parks, churches, schools, group homes and child care. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan includes lots for single-family houses along Orchard Place, essentially as an extension of existing subdivisions along Orchard. 	Complies
4.4(D)(1) – Density	This zone limits density with a minimum lot size of 6,000 sq. ft. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lots in the plan are at least 6,000 sq. ft. 	Complies

B. DIVISION 4.5 – LOW DENSITY MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD (L-M-N)

The Low Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood District is intended to be a setting for a predominance of low density housing combined with complementary and supporting land uses that serve a neighborhood and are developed and operated in harmony with the residential characteristics of a neighborhood. The main purpose of the District is to meet a wide range of needs of everyday living in neighborhoods that include a variety of housing choices, that invite walking to gathering places, services, and conveniences, and that are fully integrated into the larger community by the pattern of streets, blocks, and other linkages. A neighborhood center provides a focal point, and attractive walking and biking paths invite residents to enjoy the center as well as the small neighborhood parks.

Applicable Code Standard	Summary of Code Requirement and Analysis	Staff Findings
4.5(B)(2) and (3) – Permitted Uses	This zone envisions and permits a complete range of housing types along with neighborhood-supportive nonresidential uses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mix of housing types on the site plan exemplify the list of permitted uses – the plan is an unprecedented model example of the vision for neighborhoods to accommodate a variety of households, especially with “missing middle” types that in the gap between single-use single detached house subdivisions and single-use apartment complexes. • Likewise, the proposed nonresidential uses exemplify the kinds of neighborhood-supporting uses envisioned for neighborhoods to provide focal points, gathering spaces, and services. 	Complies
4.5(D)(1) – Density	This zone requires a housing density within a range of 4 dwelling units per acre minimum and 9 dwelling units per acre maximum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 144 dwelling units on 20.5 acres equal 7 du/acre. 	Complies
4.5(D)(2) – Mix of Housing	This zone would require at least three housing types on this 20.5-acre site. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan includes nine housing types, with additional variations among those types. 	Complies

Applicable Code Standard	Summary of Code Requirement and Analysis	Staff Findings
4.5(D)(6) – Small Neighborhood Parks	<p>This zone requires access to a park that is redundant with the requirement in Section 3.8.30 discussed previously.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As discussed under 3.8.30(C) above, the plan meets and exemplifies the standards. 	Complies
4.5(E)(4) – Design Standards for 3-Story Apartment Buildings and Apartment Buildings Containing More Than 8 Units	<p>This subsection builds upon and in some cases duplicates standards found in 3.8.30 as detailed earlier in the staff report.</p> <p>The goal of these standards is to ensure that larger residential buildings can be aesthetically integrated into low density neighborhoods.</p> <p>They require massing proportions, roof proportions, and other characteristics similar in scale to those of houses, so that such larger buildings can be aesthetically integrated into the low density neighborhood.</p> <p>Standards call for variation among repeated buildings; clearly identifiable entrances; articulation of roofs, articulation of facades, and use of building materials and colors to provide variety and individuality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan meets and exemplifies these standards. The plan meets and exceeds the standards for variation among repeated buildings; clearly identifiable entrances; roof forms and articulation; façade design; and use of building color and materials to provide variety and individuality as called for in the standards. 	Complies
4.5(E)(2) – Design Standards for Nonresidential and Mixed Use Buildings	<p>This subsection contains a few basic standards for nonresidential buildings in LMN neighborhood development. They limit the size of buildings, require roof articulation, require entrances to face onto the adjoining local street.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan meets the standards, with an interpretation that the private parking drive in front of the community facility and group home/B&B buildings serves in lieu of a local street. The stated requirement in 4.5(E)(2)(f) calls for entrances to, “face and open directly onto the adjoining local street with parking and any service functions located in side or rear yards and incorporated into the development according to the provisions of this Code.” <p>This requirement overlaps with the requirement for buildings to face onto a ‘connecting walkway’ in Section 3.5.3, which the plan meets.</p>	Complies

5. Comprehensive Plan Background:

A. CITY PLAN (2019)

The City's comprehensive plan (2019 City Plan) was developed with the participation of thousands of community members and embodies the vision and values of the community for the future. The plan is the main basis for development standards in the Land Use Code.

Development plans are reviewed for compliance with the code. They are not reviewed for compliance with City Plan per se; rather, City Plan can be used to add perspective on the background and purposes behind the code standards; to help interpret standards that warrant a degree of interpretation; and to aid review of requests for modifications of standards.

Encouraging more housing options is a major theme in City Plan. And specifically, more housing options are encouraged (pp. 25, 29, 98.) General themes are a feeling of inclusion, a distinctive and attractive community, and framework of streets, walkways spines and other public spaces (p.42).

An overall premise is that additional housing options help support the plan's broader housing affordability goals to expand workforce and affordable housing.

- The Polestar plan's wide variety of two-family, townhome, and apartment types, including 'micro units', add options in addition to new single-family house lots.

Pertinent Policies:

Neighborhood Livability and Social Health

Principle LIV 3: Maintain and enhance our unique character and sense of place as the community grows.

POLICY LIV 3.1 - PUBLIC AMENITIES. Design streets and other public spaces with the comfort and enjoyment of pedestrians in mind ...such as plazas, pocket parks, patios, children's play areas, sidewalks, pathways...

Principle LIV 5: Create more opportunities for housing choices.

Policy LIV 5.1 - HOUSING OPTIONS To enhance community health and livability, encourage a variety of housing types and densities, including mixed-used developments that are well served by public transportation and close to employment centers, shopping, services, and amenities.

Policy LIV 5.3 - LAND FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT Use density requirements to maximize the use of land for residential development to positively influence housing supply and expand housing choice.

Culture and Recreation

Policy CR 2.2 - INTERCONNECTED SYSTEM Support an interconnected regional and local system of parks, trails, and open lands that balances recreation needs with the need to protect wildlife habitat and other environmentally sensitive areas.

Fort Collins City Plan is easily found online.

6. Findings of Fact/Conclusion

In evaluating the request for the Polestar Village Project Development Plan #PDP220010, Staff makes the following findings of fact and conclusions:

1. The Project Development Plan complies with the applicable procedural and administrative requirements of Article 2 of the Land Use Code.
2. The Project Development Plan complies with applicable criteria for approval of Modification of Standards located in Division 2.8 of the Land Use Code.

Staff supports the request for Modification of Standards to subsection 3.2.2(K)(1) and (2) for the Number of Off-Street Parking Spaces for nonresidential uses in a neighborhood center.

The modification would not be detrimental to the public good and the request satisfies criteria (1) and (4) in subsection 2.8.2(H) because the uses primarily serve residents of the neighborhood who will be familiar with the situation, and higher parking demands can be accommodated on the streets within the development.

Staff supports the request for Modification of Standards to subsection 3.5.2(D)(2) for street-facing facades on the ends of two buildings without doorways.

The modification would not be detrimental to the public good and the request satisfies criterion (4) in subsection 2.8.2(H) because the two building ends are a negligible proportion of the building frontage along the streets, and the building design does not consist of impersonal blank utilitarian walls but rather consists of windows, quality materials, and articulation consistent with the quality design character of the building fronts. Therefore, the two buildings contribute to visual interest along the street.

3. The Project Development Plan complies with relevant standards located in Article 3 – General Development Standards, subject to approval of the three Modifications of Standards.
4. The Project Development Plan complies with relevant standards located in Division 4.5 – Low Density Mixed Use Neighborhood (L-M-N) in Article 4.

7. Recommendation

- Staff recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission make a motion to approve two Modifications of Standards to Land Use Code subsections 3.2.2(K)(1) and (2) for the Number of Off-Street Parking Spaces; and 3.5.2(D)(2) for Street-Facing Facades without doorways.
- Staff recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission make a motion to approve the Polestar Village Development Plan, #PDP220010 based on the Findings of Fact and supporting explanations found in the staff report and hearing materials.
- Staff recommends a condition of approval that prior to signing of Final Plans for Polestar Village, the owners of 2820 West Elizabeth Street, which abuts the Polestar Village property on the south, provide a letter of intent for a public access easement across the west portion of that property for a future 6' walkway that will connect from the Polestar Village property to West Elizabeth Street; stating that they agree to work with Polestar Gardens, Inc. for this easement, and intend to convey to the City the needed 8' public access easement for this walkway and also a Temporary Construction Easement for construction of the walkway. The future walkway construction would be done by the City in conjunction with construction of a sidewalk on West Elizabeth Street to which it would connect.

8. Attachments

1. Applicants' Narrative
2. Plan Illustration
3. Site Plan
4. Landscape Plan
5. Architecture
6. Lighting Plan
7. Utility Plans
8. Plat
9. Environmental Characterization Study
10. Traffic Impact Study
11. Letter of Intent for Walkway Easement to Elizabeth
12. Modification Request – Nonresidential Parking
13. Neighborhood Meeting Notes