

Village at Burlingame

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

February 20, 2018

A: INTRODUCTION/CONTEXT: What are key changes in our region's housing and traffic conditions? How has that affected who lives and works in Burlingame?

For years, housing development in Burlingame and San Mateo County has not kept up with the thousands of new jobs added, and the problem has gotten worse in recent years. Between 2010 and 2016 San Mateo County added 79,000 new jobs, but only 4,941 new homes of all types. The resulting jobs-housing gap ratio was 16. In other words, only one new housing unit was built for every 16 new jobs created. Very limited growth in housing relative to fast growth in jobs is sometimes called the "jobs-housing gap." These conditions drive up the cost of housing for homebuyers and renters alike, produces congestion and long commutes for workers, and forces friends and family members to move away because they can no longer afford to live here.

Past surveys have told us that Burlingame residents are concerned about their family members, co-workers and fellow residents who can no longer afford to live in the community. People are also concerned about local businesses, schools and service providers that are struggling to hire and retain people. As we face this difficult situation that impacts our entire region as well as our city, we also know that our community has innovators and problem solvers. Together, we can make meaningful progress.

How are communities in San Mateo County responding? Most are encouraging development of new housing near public transit, updating downtown planning policies and exploring new sources of funding. In Burlingame we have a unique opportunity to utilize two city-owned downtown parking lots (F&N) to create new affordable housing as well as a new parking structure. The housing part of this development is called the "Village at Burlingame."

B: DOWNTOWN: What is the City's vision for the Downtown?

1. Why is the city developing the parking lots?

In 2010 the Burlingame City Council adopted the Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan. The culmination of a multi-year community planning process, the Plan provides a framework for sustaining the existing success of the downtown and accommodating new opportunities.

One aspect of the Downtown Specific Plan is a focus on better use of parking facilities downtown, particularly the twenty City-owned surface parking lots. The plan encourages parking lots to be converted to different uses over time, such as housing, open space, and additional parking. Choices about uses are guided by what will most benefit the downtown area.

Consistent with the Downtown Specific Plan, the City Council has expressed a keen interest in expanding the housing options available in Burlingame, including the provision of more affordable housing options, a category of housing that is minimally represented amongst the existing housing stock within the community. Extremely high property values and rental rates for housing within the Bay Area Region and particularly on the San Francisco Peninsula have escalated dramatically in recent years, forcing many who have enjoyed the quality of life in Burlingame to leave due to the ever-increasing costs of housing in the community.

Likewise, as parking is important to Downtown businesses and residents alike, the City Council has been evaluating options for improving parking in the downtown area. This includes accommodating demand by using the land more efficiently with decked or structured parking.

The proposed development of Parking Lots F and N is intended to respond to these objectives with:

- new housing units to support the community, including housing for seniors and for people working in the community;
- additional, conveniently-located parking for use by downtown businesses and residents alike;
- additional open space to be enjoyed by both current and new residents.



Location of Parking Lots F and N

C: MIX OF HOUSING CHOICES: What types of housing are available to enhance Burlingame's overall quality of life (relative to longtime residents, newer residents, economic vitality, etc.?)

1. What is the official government definition of Affordable Housing? And how do federal, state and local governments help support making housing more affordable to more people?

When people talk about "affordable housing, they may be referring to housing that fits a person's or family's budget. In conversation, it is common to hear, "we need more affordable housing" or "I wish I could find affordable housing in the Bay Area."

The term "affordable housing" also has an official technical definition when referred to by local, state and federal governments. In this case, the commonly used definition of affordable rental housing, created by the federal government, is that a household's housing is affordable if that household pays no more than 30 percent of its income towards rent and utilities. "Household income" refers to the combined incomes of all of the residents of a single house or apartment, whether related by family or not.

In expensive areas of the country such as the Bay Area, housing costs for low-income and moderate-income families regularly exceed the accepted definition of affordable housing. In order to create more affordable conditions in high-cost areas, housing may receive some type of subsidy to reduce the cost to the renter.

Subsidies can occur in two ways – directly to the renter through such programs as the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) or indirectly to the building owner who then agrees to use the subsidy to charge below-market rate rents. Owner subsidies are accomplished in many ways such as, land donations (reducing the cost of development), tax credit financing (federal and state), direct government payments (San Mateo County's Affordable Housing Fund), low interest loans or zoning incentives.

2. What does "workforce" housing mean?

Workforce housing is a term that is increasingly used by governments, planners and organizations concerned with housing policy or advocacy. The term does not have a

well- recognized definition, but is often used to describe a portion of the population that is seen as earning too much to qualify for subsidized housing and earning too little to be able to afford rents in a region.

In the Bay Area, the term is frequently used to describe households earning between 80% - 120% of Area Median Income (AMI). Some planners reduce the lower end to 60% of AMI because housing subsidies are not available to households earning above this level.

3. How does eligibility for “affordable housing” work?

Every housing subsidy program uses a central statistic — the area median income, or AMI — to determine whether families are eligible for the program and at what level. The area median income (AMI) is the household income for the median — or middle — household in a region.

Each year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) calculates the median income for every metropolitan region in the country. HUD focuses on the region — rather than just a city — because families searching for housing are likely to look beyond the city itself to find a place to live. In San Mateo County, the HUD-defined “Unadjusted Area Median Income” (AMI) for a family of four currently is \$115,300.

4. What is the meaning of low, very low, moderate, etc. income?

By government definition, “Moderate-Income” means a household with an income that is 120% of the “Area Median Income” (AMI), “Low-income” means a household with an income that is 80% of AMI, “Very-Low Income” means a household with an income that is 50% of AMI, and “Extremely-Low Income” means a household with an income at 30% of AMI.

The chart below lists these income definitions and the amount of rent a family in San Mateo County can “afford” (i.e., that is no more than 30% of their household income).

U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Defined Income Levels	Percent of “Area Median Income” (AMI)	Household Income (for a 4-person family in San Mateo County)	Rent for a 2-Bedroom Unit that equals 30% of the Household Income
“Moderate Income”	120% of AMI	\$ 138,350	\$ 3,459 *
“Low Income”	80% of AMI	\$ 92,250	\$ 2,306 *
“Very Low Income”	50% of AMI	\$ 57,650	\$ 1,481 **
“Extremely-Low Income”	30% of AMI	\$ 34,600	\$ 888 **

5. What ages qualify for Senior Housing?

Depending on the project and circumstances, possible answers can be 55+ or 62. At the Village at Burlingame the age qualification will be 55+.

D: ABOUT THE VILLAGE: Project Overview and City's role

1. What are the number of units in the building?

The current proposal for the Village at Burlingame, which will evolve over time, is designed to be an intergenerational complex with approximately 132 units over all, 78 for workforce and 54 for seniors. The proposal envisions a mix of one and two bedroom units.

2. How tall will the project be?

In the current proposal, the height is proposed to be 55 feet to the top of the roof parapet (in other words, the top of the outer wall). Enclosures for the elevators and stairwells will extend an additional 10 feet to contain mechanical equipment and to allow emergency access to the rooftop.

3. Who will rent these units?

The broad intent is for the units to be rented by people working in Burlingame, and Burlingame seniors. Prospective residents must fall within the income limits and pass typical tenant background checks. To the full degree allowed by fair housing regulations, Burlingame residents and/or workers will receive preference for selection.

It is intended that the proposed project has a mix of families and ages. The program design is still under review, but in general is intended to give a preference for public agency employees as well as persons living or working in Burlingame.

4. What are the requirements to rent here?

The workforce units are intended for people who work in the local area, so all units will have income requirements. The income requirements will vary depending on the designated income level assigned to each unit, ranging from 50% of area median income up to 120% of area median income.

The senior units are intended for seniors with incomes ranging from 50% of area median income, up to market rate. The income requirements will vary depending on the designated income level assigned to each unit.

5. How many people will be occupying each unit? Is this limited?

The units have either one or two bedrooms. While too soon to adopt occupancy standards, the City will insist that best industry practices be followed by the owner/operator.

6. How close to the property line will the building be?

The front of the building is designed to be built up to the sidewalk with no setback, in the manner of traditional downtown buildings. The sides are proposed to vary from 3'-4" to 10 feet, depending on the portion of the building. The rear is proposed to be 5 feet from the property line.

7. Can my friends or family get on the wait list for these units?

A process, including any local preferences, will be established when completion is closer and that outreach will be especially intensive within Burlingame.

8. When will the construction start?

Building Permits are estimated to take approximately 5-6 months after the project is approved by the City Council. Preliminary grading and excavation may begin prior to full permits depending on time of year. Obtaining funding commitments from the state and, if needed, from the county are variables that may add to the timeline. Depending on the timing of the City approval and finalizing the funding commitments, a possible timeframe could be in 2019 or 2020 for all permits to be issued and construction of the structures to be underway.

9. How long will construction last?

Both the housing and the parking structure are anticipated to be completed within 24-28 months of start of construction. The duration of construction will depend on the time of year excavation can begin and the final requirements imposed through the project review process.

10. What is the rent charged?

By rent is determined by income category and household size. Generally rents are set to be no more than 30% of their household income for each income category. The

income categories and rents are adjusted each year based on the area median income of San Mateo County.

11. Will this be “Section 8” housing?

Families with vouchers may not qualify for this housing depending upon the target income requirements of the development. In general, because the building is anticipated to be built with other housing subsidies, vouchers would not be appropriate.

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, commonly known as Section 8, is a federal program of rental subsidies that is administered by local housing authorities. It is not an entitlement program and the amount available for subsidies each year depends upon federal budget allocation.

In general, a qualifying family's income may not exceed 50% of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which the family chooses to live.

A family that is issued a housing voucher is responsible for finding a suitable housing unit that meets program maximum rental limits as well as health and safety requirements. A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the housing authority on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program.

E: ABOUT PARKING AND LOCAL TRAFFIC FLOW

1. What will parking be like with the new apartments?

Parking will be provided at the same ratio as other downtown apartment projects. There will be 1 space for each 1-bedroom unit, and 1.5 spaces for each 2-bedroom unit. In practice, the residents of some two bedroom units will need two spaces, whereas others will only need one space, so the 1.5 space ratio is an average. The City has found these parking ratios are suitable for downtown residential apartment developments, given the proximity to transit and services.

2. Where will the cars park that used to park in the lot?

As a part of the overall project, the developer is required to replace the 97 public parking spaces displaced by the construction of the apartment development on parking Lot F. These spaces will be replaced via construction of a five-level public parking

structure on parking Lot N that would aggregate the public parking spaces on Lots F (97 spaces) and N (109 spaces) for a total of replacement 206 spaces.

3. Where will guests visiting the apartments park?

Guests would most likely park in Parking Lot G, across Park Road from the apartments, or parking structure at Lot N, through the park and across Lorton Avenue.

4. Who is building the parking garage?

The parking garage would be built by the housing developer, Pacific West Communities. However the City of Burlingame would ultimately own the structure.

5. How tall is the parking garage and how many stalls will there be?

The parking structure would have five parking levels. The fifth parking level would be on the roof, so the structure would more closely resemble a four-story building. The total height would be 46'-6".

6. How many parking stalls will be in the new garage, and how many more is that compared to the current, surface lots?

The proposed garage would have a total of 388 spaces. This includes 182 new, additional spaces that will be provided beyond those in the existing lots. The additional spaces are intended to serve the downtown area and its surrounding neighborhoods as public parking.

7. Where will the drop off and pick up of the school happen since many parents use the city lot for this purpose?

Public Parking Lot G, across Park Road and adjacent to St Catherine of Siena School, will remain a public parking lot and continue to be available.

Did you find this document useful?

If you have suggestions for other information we should include, please contact Kevin Gardiner, Planning Manager, by phone at 650-558-7253 or by email at kgardiner@burlingame.org.