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City of Novato Planning Division
City Administrative Offices
922 Machin Avenue
Novato, CA 94945

**Re: Project Description and Application Submittal: Grant Avenue Mixed Use project
1316-1320 Grant Avenue / APN 141-261-29**

To Whom It May Concern:

AMG & Associates is pleased to submit an application for the proposed Grant Avenue Mixed Use project to be located at 1316-1320 Grant Avenue in the City of Novato in Marin County. Please find what follows to be a description of the proposed project and summary of the entitlements requested. We look forward to working with the City on this project.

Project Description

The Grant Avenue Mixed Use project is located in Downtown Novato surrounded by a variety of land uses including residential and commercial. According to the current adopted General Plan, the land use designation of the site is Downtown Core which allows an FAR of 2.0 “where housing is incorporated” in the project. The intended uses of this designation include “office, commercial, and retail uses, mixed commercial/residential use with commercial uses located principally on the ground floor.” The Downtown Core is incorporated in the Downtown Novato Specific Plan which seeks to “revitalize and enhance the Downtown”. The site is Zoned Downtown Core Retail with a Downtown Overlay which is consistent with the General Plan and Specific Plan designations of the property. The project is consistent with the General Plan, Specific Plan, and Zoning Code with the exception of those elements requested for concessions or waivers as detailed in the enclosed Density Bonus Memo. The Grant Avenue Mixed Use project will add vital affordable housing to the City’s overall housing stock.

Utilizing the designations detailed above, State Density Bonus Law, and the Streamlined Ministerial Approval Process (also known as SB 35 which is further detailed in the “Entitlements” section), we propose a mixed-use modular project with 7,500 square feet of ground floor retail along Grant Avenue and a mix of 174 studio units and 53 one-bedroom units on the upper floors for a total of 227 units. The project FAR is 3.49. The project will be 100% affordable to lower-income households, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 50079.5.

The six-story mixed-use community will consist of newly constructed studio and one-bedroom units, community amenities for residents, ground floor retail, and a parking garage serving the retail and residential uses. The building is a contemporary interpretation of both the classical and industrial architectural styles. The proposed building design incorporates various elements such as a flat roof, varying colors, and architectural elements to

create fluctuating volumes on all façades. The selection of colors and materials will break up the project's overall massing and add character to the building and intersection. The ground floor retail along Grant Avenue is differentiated with storefront windows and projecting awnings. Select unit windows are affixed with metal railing to add additional interest to the building's façade. Each façade is given similar architectural treatment as the Grant Avenue frontage in order to create a unifying building design.

The ground floor consists of 7,500 square feet of retail space and is proposed to accommodate three retail tenants. A loading area and retail trash room is adjacent to the retail spaces. The hours of operations are unknown at this time. The parking garage consists of parking stalls for 51 vehicles, utility rooms, trash collection rooms, and secure storage for 80 bicycles. Please note that as permitted by SB 35, the City "shall not impose parking standards for a streamlined development" if the development is "located within one-half mile of public transit" [§65913.4(d)(1)(A)]. Within one-half mile of this project are two public transit stops – the Marin Transit Bus Stop located at Grant and Redwood Avenues and Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit station located at 695 Grant Avenue. However, 51 parking stalls are provided to serve both the residential and retail uses. A fire lane is positioned near the northern property line which creates an added buffer between the project and the adjacent existing homes. The ground floor setbacks will be landscaped with ground cover, shrubs, and/or flow-through planters.

Floors two through six of the project will be residential units and amenities. The upper floors are accessible via centrally located ADA-accessible elevators and two stairwells. Entry to the residential units through these access points will be secured with key fob. Each residential floor will have a central corridor with studio and one-bedroom units flanked on either side. On the second floor adjacent to the elevators and centrally positioned are the various community amenities such as the 1,850 square foot leasing office, laundry, mail room, and 1,800 square foot amenity space. Each floor will have a laundry room and two trash rooms. Floor two will accommodate 9,605 square feet outdoor space accessible. This outdoor space will have trellises with picnic areas, barbecues, bench seating, fiberglass planters, community garden, and a central turf activity area. Each unit will have new energy efficient appliances and designed to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and all applicable State standards for universal accessibility and adaptability. All units will be designed for acoustic separation and isolation in compliance with state acoustical standards. All current construction standards will be observed in order to assure that a quality housing development is provided.

Entitlements

The proposed project is submitted under the following State applications and legislation:

- **State Density Bonus Law (California Government Code Section 65915)**

As previously described, the project will be 100% affordable to lower-income households, as defined in Health and Safety Code § 50079.5. Per Government Code §65915(c)(B)(i), the rent for at least 20% of the units in the development shall be set at an affordable rent, as defined in §50053 of the Health and Safety Code. Projects proposing these levels of affordability are eligible to receive four concessions [§65915(d)(1)(D)] and an 80% density bonus [§65915(d)(3)(D)(i)]. Currently the project proposes a 74.5% density bonus (or 3.49 FAR) to the maximum permitted FAR of 2.0. Please review the enclosed Density Bonus Memo detailing the requested concessions and waivers.

Although we are requesting up to an 80% density bonus in accordance with this Law please note that we are also eligible to achieve unlimited density. This is permitted under §65915(d)(3)(D)(ii) which states

that when 80% of the project units are designated for low-income households (exclusive of manager's units) and the remaining 20% are designated for moderate-income households and the project is "located within one-half mile of a major transit stop", then the City "shall not impose any maximum controls on density". The "major transit stop" that qualifies us for unlimited density is the Sonoma-Marín Area Rapid Transit station located one-half mile away from the project.

- **State Streamlined Ministerial Approval Process (California Government Code Section 65913.4)**

The streamlined ministerial approval process applies to projects that meet the specific affordability level applicable to a jurisdiction as determined by HCD and meets the objective planning standards listed in §65913.4(a). SB 35 projects benefit from a streamlined ministerial process, exemption from the CEQA process, and reduced parking standards. This project meets the planning standards as illustrated in the enclosed SB 35 Eligibility Package. This package details how the property and project meets the planning and zoning standards. Where a zoning standard is not met then that standard is requested as a concession or waiver in the enclosed Density Bonus Memo. Per §65913.4(a)(5) a development is considered to have met the objective zoning standards even when a density bonus, concession, and/or waiver is requested.

Table 2-7 in Section 19.12.030 of the City's Municipal Code permits a mixed-use development with a Use Permit in the Downtown Core Retail District. However, as stated in §65913.4(a) a development is "not subject to a conditional use permit if the development satisfies all of...the objective planning standards" listed in this section. Therefore a Use Permit is not submitted at this time. Please refer to the enclosed Eligibility Package which details how the development satisfies each standard. In the event that the City finds we have not complied with one of the standards then we will address it in subsequent submittals either by incorporating into the project design or requesting a concession or waiver.

- **Tentative Parcel Map**

As determined by our civil engineer, the property currently has seven existing parcels. A tentative parcel is required to make a single parcel for the project.

We look forward to working with the City on creating a beautiful and safe project for the community. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any comments or questions. You can reach me at alocke@amgland.com or (818) 380-2600 ext. 13.

Thank you,



Amanda Locke
AMG & Associates, LLC