

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: PRAIRIE FIRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE FOR 321 STATE AVENUE LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT (LIHTC) PROJECT

BACKGROUND:

City Council selected Prairie Fire as the developer of affordable rental housing for the City's 321 State Avenue affordable housing project. The City entered into an agreement on December 22, 2020 with Prairie Fire for preparation of an Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) LIHTC application submittal by March 12, 2021. The agreement provides that Prairie Fire will prepare an application to receive tax credits for the development of low income housing, and if they are awarded the state tax credits the City will then transfer Lot 27 of the Baker Subdivision to the developer to construct affordable apartment housing. (Subdivision Plat-Attachment A)

At the time of selection of the Prairie Fire proposal, City Council and staff identified desired adjustments to the project prior to submitting a final application to IFA. The development agreement also requires that Prairie Fire seek final approval from City Council of the development concept. Final City approval would occur only if Prairie Fire is awarded tax credits by the state.

Staff provided feedback to Prairie Fire and its architecture firm, Odimo, about the layout of the site and the appearance of the main apartment building presented in the original design. **City Council noted that it seemed bulky and the appearance of a flat roof did not work well together with the townhome design that was also part of the project.** The original information from October 27th is included as Attachment B.

Odimo has addressed the comments with updates to the site plan and with adjustments to the primary apartment building (New Concept-Attachment C). The site plan has been modified to move the apartment building to the east near the driveway accessing the site. The townhomes are now divided into three groupings of buildings rather than two. The primary open space still remains along the west boundary of the site with parking situated along the east side. With the adjustments to the townhomes, the number of apartments can be increased from the original 36 units to 37 units by adding one additional 3-bedroom townhome apartment. Staff supports the updated site plan as addressing our comments regarding layout with the additional benefit of potentially adding one unit to the development.

The architectural changes for the apartment building are significant. The original design was based on one building with the concept of a base that was differentiated from the top with the top levels set an angle. The apartment building also contains the community room on the first floor. **Odimo proposes changes to the building to break the building**

up into three smaller connected buildings with varying roof forms. The design concept allows for a final design detail of either external or internal stairwell access to the upper units. The building design will continue to include the community room on the ground floor and have apartment units addressed on Tripp Street as originally shown in the design.

The building materials will continue to include brick as the primary 1st floor material along with other brick accents on the facades. The remaining siding will be cement board. These are the same materials as will be used with the townhomes. High quality and durable materials are a requirement of the LIHTC process to maximize scoring. Final selection of colors and materials and refinement of the concept will occur upon approval of the tax credits by the state. **Staff believes the changes maintain a distinct architectural character for the project and address comments about bulk and appearance related to the first design.**

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Accept the update regarding the Prairie Fire Development Concept and proceed with preparation of the final LIHTC application.
2. Provide direction to the developer to adjust the design for City Council approval prior to submitting the final LIHTC application.

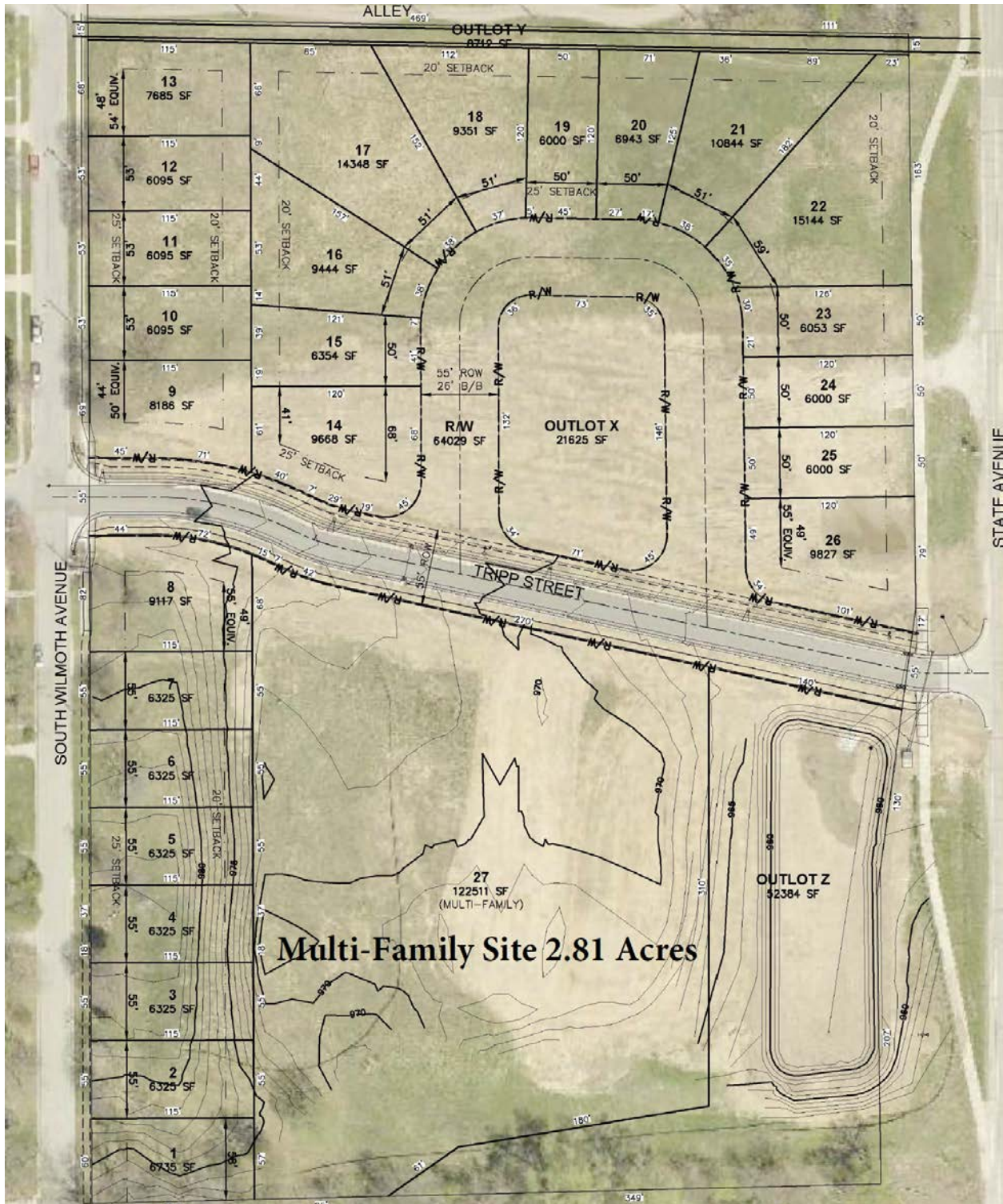
CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Prairie Fire, through its architectural firm Odimo, has updated the development concept from the original proposal selected on October 27th. **Although it is a conceptual design at this point to prepare the LIHTC application, approval of the update will fulfill the requirement of the development agreement on the design concept and become the basis for final design in the fall of 2021.**

City Council originally selected the proposal due to its variety of housing units, ample open space, a strong building to street connection and relationship, and a contemporary architectural appearance. **Staff finds the proposed plan changes maintain the integrity of the original concept and address concerns about location of the apartment building, opportunities for additional housing units, and changes to the architectural appearance of the principal apartment building.**

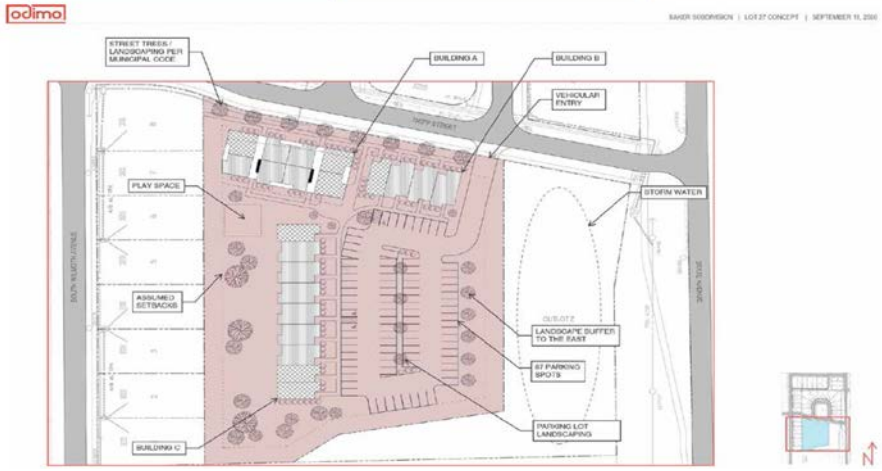
Therefore, it is the recommendations of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative #1, as described above.

Location Map- Attachment A

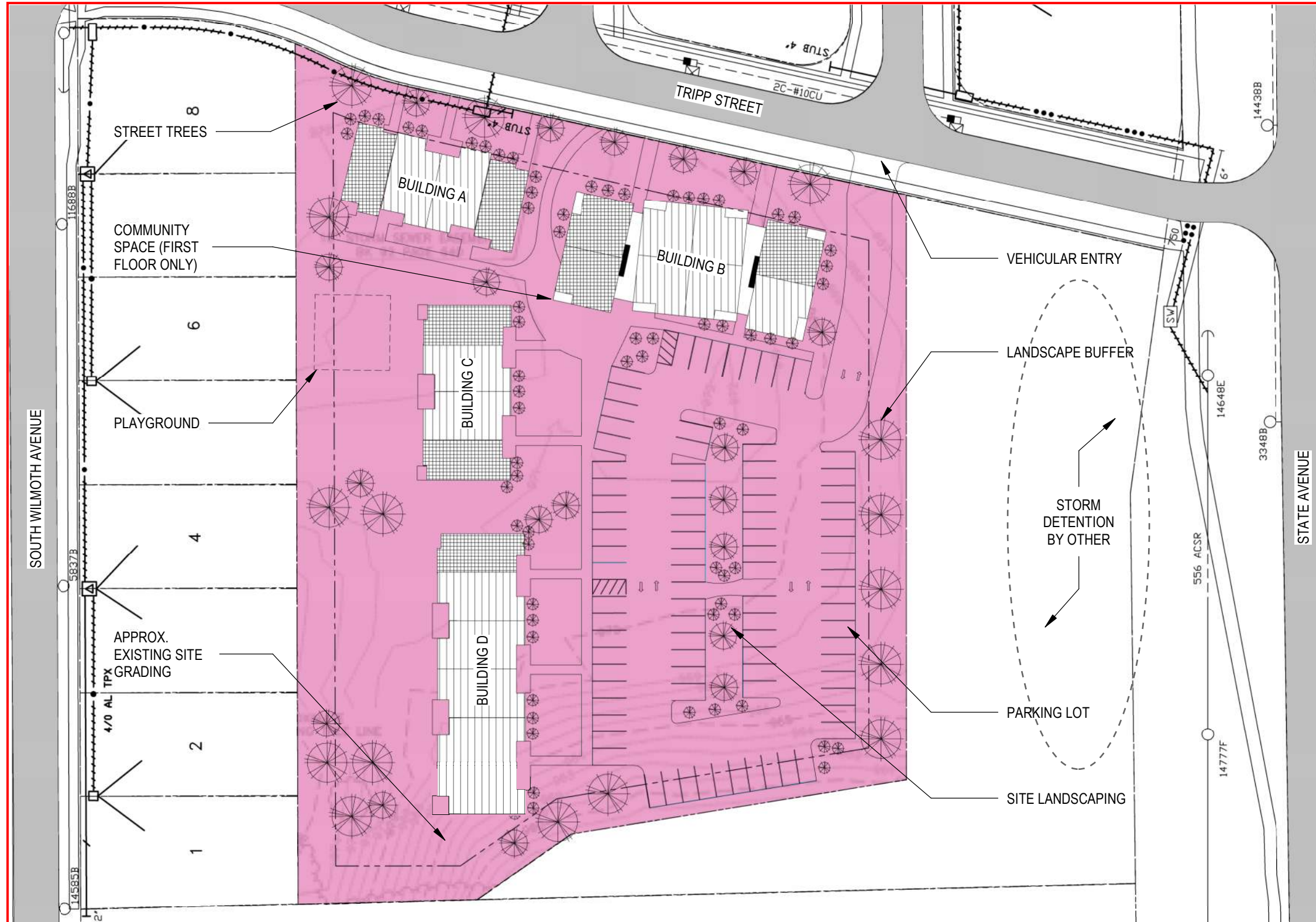


Attachment B-Original RFP Concept

Prairie Fire



Attachment C-Updated Concept January 2021

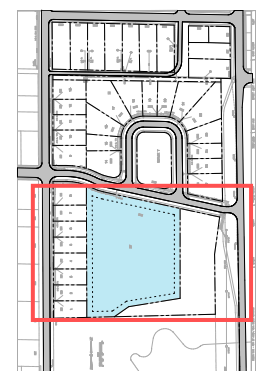


GENERAL NOTES:

- UNIT MATRIX - (37) UNITS TOTAL
- (8) 2 BEDROOM TOWNHOMES
 - (15) 2 BEDROOM APARTMENTS
 - (5) 3 BEDROOM TOWNHOMES
 - (9) 3 BEDROOM APARTMENTS

PARKING: (87) REQUIRED
(87) PROVIDED

COMMUNITY ROOM: (1) PROVIDED





FIBER CEMENT LAP SIDING - COLOR 2

FIBER CEMENT LAP SIDING - COLOR 1

BRICK

PEDESTRIAN GREENWAY CONNECTOR TO TOWNHOMES / COMMUNITY SPACE

BRICK

FIBER CEMENT - COLOR 1

APARTMENT MAIN ENTRY

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"FRONT DOOR" AESTHETIC AT ALL APARTMENT PATIOS

