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## Eden Housing Meets Orinda Community

By Andrea Firth



A view of the proposed senior housing building looking across the Community Park. A drawn rendering with photographs of the park and landscape superimposed. Image provided by Eden Housing.

median income) said Karp.

"It's an absolutely beautiful site," stated Sean Reynolds, an architect from the Dahlin Group that is working with Eden, in describing the heavily treed and fairly sloped property. "One of our main design goals was to retain as many trees as possible to maintain the screening of the property and soften the site," said Reynolds. The proposed building is mostly two to three stories tall, and due to the steep slope, four stories in one part reaching 52 feet at its highest point, he explained. To fit with the eclectic mix of traditional and modern architectural styles in Orinda's downtown area, the proposed building has lots of glass, heavy corbelling, and an exterior with a combination of wood siding, stucco, and stone accents. The building has a flat roof, which Eden hopes will translate to some energy efficiency savings. "We want to put solar panels on the rooftop to the extent that we can pay for those up front," stated Karp. In addition to the 71 one-bedroom units, the design includes a community room, library, and exercise room.

The creation of community connections to the adjacent Orinda Senior Village and the downtown district were also integral to the design. Eden has proposed to add a sidewalk along Irwin Way and a pathway that extends through the property from the edge of the Senior Village parking lot to a stairwell leading to the sidewalk on Orinda Way. The potential synergy between the Orinda Senior Village and the proposed senior housing project is one of the most attractive elements of the location, noted Karp. "We are hoping to be able to work with Orinda Senior Village to create coordinated programs and interact fully," he added.

One resident questioned whether the 37 parking spaces in the proposed design were sufficient to accommodate the residents, staff members, and visitor needs. An Eden representative responded that the ratio of .6 parking spots per unit has been an adequate parking ratio for their other senior residences, noting that many seniors no longer drive. The parking in the Orinda Senior Village, which has 175 units and 74 parking spaces, was cited as an example.

Another resident asked if story poles for the proposed project would be installed. Karp explained that the project is scheduled to go before the City's Planning Commission in September. To minimize the time that the parking lot next to the Community Park tennis courts is closed, he said story poles would probably be placed about a month prior to the Commission's review.

To identify and qualify residents, Eden will open the apartment lease process to the community six months prior to the completion of construction, explained Jan Peters of Eden's Housing Management Company. A third party verifies the applicants' income and assets, and Peters noted that there is very little fraud. She added that new properties usually fill up within a month of opening and often within a few days, and the vacancy rate is generally about 1%. Although the units can legally accommodate up to three people, Eden finds that the vast majority of units house just one senior.

The second community meeting regarding the proposed senior affordable housing project will be held on Thursday, June 17th starting at 7:00 p.m. at the Orinda Community Church.



A view of the proposed senior housing building standing at the firehouse and looking across Orinda Way. A computer-

generated image of the building with photographs of the existing street and landscape superimposed. Image provided by Eden Housing.

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