

RidgeGate Couplet Multifamily

Site Improvement Plan Narrative

August 07, 2023

Introduction

The applicant, Century Living, is proposing to develop a new multi-family project within the RidgeGate East Subarea of Lone Tree. This higher-density residential community aims to establish a vibrant, walkable character within the Couplet District and encourage future growth in the area.

General Information and Project Data

This application is for Lot 2, RidgeGate East subdivision, fourth filing. The vacant 5.65-acre site is located within the Commercial Mixed-Use (CM/U) zone district and Planning Area #4 of the RidgeGate, 6th Amendment Planned Development. The property also sits within the unique "Couplet District" of the RidgeGate East Subarea plan, which is bordered by Ridegate Parkway to the north and south. The proposed multi-family building provides 327 dwelling units, comprised of a mix of 1, 2, and 3 bedroom units. The 601,072 square-foot building (including structured parking square footage) produces a density of 57.88 dwelling units per acre.

Design Intent

Overall Design Concept

RidgeGate Couplet's design intent is to inspire a desirable future of living and activity. This higher-density residential community will be prominently situated within the Couplet District to provide a vibrant, walkable neighborhood and encourage future growth in the area. The project sits at the cusp of developed and undeveloped land, connected to both the city and nature.

Context and Site

The property is located between the RidgeGate Parkway couplet, approximately 350' east of the center of the Couplet. Mid-block streets have been incorporated on both the east (public) and west (private) sides of the property to enhance pedestrian connectivity as well as vehicular access to and from the building. The primary vehicular and pedestrian entrances into the building have been positioned on the west side of the property to take advantage of the reduced traffic volumes along the private drive and provide a direct connection to the planned retail development immediately to the west. Providing the entry in this location is also a direct response to the Subarea Plan's guidance of centering the building on the axis view between focal points within the Couplet District. A secondary garage access is provided on the east side of the building, connecting the proposed public street, in accordance with the applicant's traffic study and DRC stakeholder recommendations for an efficient, safe garage.



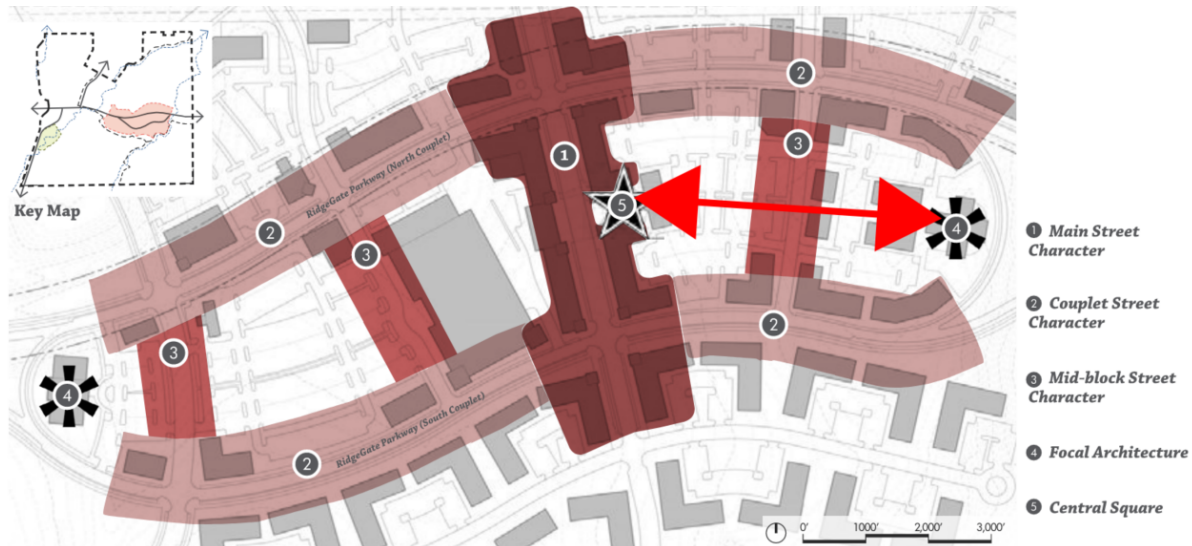


Figure 1 - Focal point locations within the Couplet District

The project utilizes parallel parking along the western private drive to promote convenient pedestrian access to the building and surrounding areas which supports the principles described in the Subarea Plan, such as the “*park once concept*”. Specifically, the Subarea Plan identifies parallel parking as a key way to promote the “Main Street” character as “*it creates a linear hub of activity between the one-way couplet that incorporates a central urban plaza...*” (Pp. 57). Additional off-street parking is provided adjacent to the primary entrance on the west side of the building as well as within the parking garage. The overall site design provides approximately 576 parking spaces for residents and guests, which exceeds the minimum requirement of 573.

Proposed loading and waste removal access is located along the eastern portion of the proposed development, south of the eastern parking garage entrance. A small exterior plaza is sited so that a trash (or loading) truck may access the development without having to back into public right-of-way. An attractive scoring pattern is proposed to articulate the area for its users. A screening fence (5-foot tall) is sited on the development (outside of right-of-way) to screen activity in this area from pedestrians and vehicles traveling along the east side of the development. These design decisions enable basic logistical access for the development and address aesthetic concerns normally associated with back of house activities.

Public Realm

The western edge of the project is designed to activate the public realm on a pedestrian scale with an attractive entry plaza, widened sidewalk, periodic planting cutouts, two large trees which frame the entry, and several different seating areas. Just south of the main entry plaza is an outdoor café-style amenity space



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for the building which has been designed to activate the public realm with bartop seating and festoon lighting fronting the sidewalk.

Two additional pedestrian gathering areas have been strategically placed along the RidgeGate Parkway north of the building and on the northeast corner of the site flanking the monument sign. These areas give relief to pedestrians commuting along widened, multimodal sidewalk throughout the Couplet District and highlight the strong architectural forms proposed at the intersection. The site furnishings in these areas also help to break down the building mass into a pedestrian scale.

Pedestrian circulation is further prioritized throughout the development by using a network of sidewalks with painted concrete crosswalks which connect parking areas, building entrances, gathering spaces, and adjacent developments. The careful planning of pedestrian circulation on-site allows residents of this community and the future project to the east to enjoy walking throughout the Couplet District whether for retail access or for everyday health and wellness as the sub area plan intends.

Architecture

Removed from the context of the greater suburban area of Lone Tree, CO, RidgeGate Couplet is posed to inspire a future of development and activity. The project sits at the cusp of developed and undeveloped land, embodying both the city and nature. The building will be perched upon a sloping site as an icon of new development. The following design concepts have been inspired by three separate typologies that accentuate the location.



The lighthouse (Beacon) - As a device for wayfinding and placemaking, the lighthouse guides ship captains safely towards the shore. The lighthouse typology articulates the corners and building main entry.



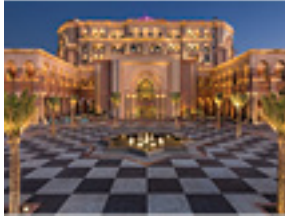
The oasis - A source of comfort and nourishment, the oasis emerges as if from nothingness. The oasis typology expresses the connection between architectural focal points such as corners, entries, amenity spaces.



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The palace - A symbol of wealth and status, the palace is a carefully crafted, grand residence, to be lived in and symbolized. The palace typology articulates the public function of the project program, i.e. leasing, mail, and amenity spaces.

These typologies provide an orienting scheme for the project as well as a guide for its facade articulation. Within each typology, various design strategies such as top/middle/base composition, varied roof lines, stepping in wall planes, architectural projections, and balcony configurations are applied to break down the building mass and to provide a human scale. Façade cohesiveness is achieved by the consistent application throughout the typologies of quality, durable materials and colors, and fenestration patterns.

Development Impacts

Given that this community will be one of the first (if not *the* first) developments within the Couplet District, the largest impact it will have on the adjacent lands is that of establishing the framework and design vernacular for the area. The weight and responsibility of this undertaking is not lost on the applicant and design team, who have worked diligently over the past eleven months with the RidgeGate Design Review Committee, and adjacent landowners and their design teams to ensure that the application attached is thoughtful and well coordinated. As an example, the applicant has collaborated with the proposed project on Lot 3, east of this project, to design a unique right-of-way design that accomplishes the needs of each project as well as provide pedestrian connectivity between the properties.

Sustainability

The development is sustainable water-wise by proposing responsible plant material selections that are adapted to Lone Tree's climate. These plant selections are proposed in the form of shrub and perennial beds across the development. These plantings will utilize drip irrigation which are the most efficient and sustainable forms of irrigation as irrigable water is deposited directly at the base of a plant, and no water is lost to evaporation. No water-intensive turf grass is proposed within the development's boundary and thus reduces the extent of intensive irrigation required and loss of water due to evaporation.

The building will include on-site recycling for residents, efficient-flow plumbing fixtures, smart thermostats, LED lighting throughout, EV chargers, rideshare zones included on private drive, and bike friendly aspects including an abundance of secure indoor storage and maintenance space. There are planned access points to walking and biking trails with connections to nearby future parks, grocery, retail, and services. RTD's RidgeGate Station is just over a mile away, providing access to western and northern Lone Tree and the



greater Denver metro-area making car-free living possible. The applicant is currently evaluating ways to pursue additional sustainability measures.

Development Phasing and Construction

The RidgeGate Couplet project is to be built in one phase. The project is anticipated to TCO the “southern portion” first, which includes part of the building’s central and southern-most located units, the indoor and outdoor amenities, and parking garage. The “northern portion” contains the remainder dwelling units and is expected to TCO 4-5 months following. The anticipated date for the southern portion’s TCO is winter of 2025. The northern portion’s TCO date is projected for spring of 2026.

SIP Approval Criteria (Sec. 16-27-70)

1) *The SIP is in substantial conformance with and furthers or implements the following plans, standards and guidelines:*

a. *The Comprehensive Plan;*

The following are objectives found within the (2019) Comprehensive Plan that are exemplified with the proposed development:

- Safe, high-quality, mixed-use, compact, and pedestrian and bicycle-friendly development (Pp. 24).
- A distinctive Lone Tree identity and a strong sense of place, where residents and businesses feel a connection and pride for the community and where visitors feel welcome (Pp. 39).
- Improve air quality by minimizing air pollution through promoting compact, energy efficient development and reducing vehicle trips through improving transit, bikeability, and walkability (Pp 61).
- Preservation or enhancement of the natural and man-made visual environment (Pp. 67).

b. *The Design Guidelines and Standards; and*

The proposed development adheres to Design Guidelines and Standards required for landscape, site planning and architecture. The following are a few examples that exemplify these Guidelines and Standards.

- CS-3 | Create unique, inviting places
- CS-7 | Visually enhance street corridors and views
- CS-8 | Locate buildings in proximity to the street edge.
- CS-26 | Reduce heat-island effect.
- CS-27 | Provide safe, attractive parking structures.
- PR-12 | Employ design strategies that foster accessibility.
- PR-13 | Provide streetscape features and amenities.
- AD-16 | Design obvious, pedestrian scaled entryways.
- AD-17 Integrate windows into the function and design of the building.



- GP-1 | Select plants for site adaptability.
 - GP-2 | Select and locate plants to allow for mature growth.
- c. *Any applicable site-specific plans, including but not limited to, Planned Development District, Sub-Area and/or Framework Plans.*

The proposed development conforms with existing site-specific plans found within the RidgeGate East Villages Sub-Area Plan. Specifically, the proposed project adheres to the Framework Plan (Pp. 10) and Block Face & Setback Configuration Diagram (Pp. 56). The framework plan delineates this site as part of the Central Village Couplet District, and carries the designation of Mixed-Use Commercial. As part of this framework, high density residential projects are promoted as a way to complement future commercial development and create the opportunity for community development that relies on multi-modal, pedestrian friendly transportation as opposed to vehicular dependent development. The proposed architecture fronts all streets (both public and private) and provides mid-block street character along the east and west sides of the project to better create a more walkable neighborhood. The couplet street character is provided along the north and south sides of the site as RidgeGate Parkway (eastbound and westbound roads) delineates those boundaries.

- 2) *Approval of the SIP is consistent with the intent of this Chapter.*

"The intent of this Site Improvement Plan (SIP) Article is to ensure compliance with the development and design standards and provisions of this Chapter through a development review and approval process to create a well-designed community that enhances the quality of life for citizens in keeping with the vision expressed in the City's Comprehensive Plan."

Despite this community being one of the first (if not *the* first) developments within the Couplet District, great care has been made to adhere to all applicable planning and policy documents to set a precedent for all future developments within the Couplet District. This includes the design of vibrant streetscapes, activated exterior amenities, and attractive architecture that exemplifies the City's architectural Design Guidelines and Standards. RidgeGate Couplet will be a premiere community that will anchor future development within the district by creating an existing resident population. The proposed development embodies a multifamily project in line with the vision expressed in the City's Comprehensive Plan.

- 3) *The SIP shall be in conformance with the applicable sections of this Chapter; Planned Development zoning as applicable; Roadway Grading, Drainage and Erosion Control Standards; and other requirements as applicable.*

The Site's existing topography generally slopes from the southwest to the northeast with an approximate grade change of 22-feet from the southwest corner to the northeast corner. There will be an approximate 20-feet of fall between the two northern access drives and 23-feet between the two southern access drives. The grade change throughout the Site will be made up within the building



through the implementation of a lower level of dwelling units along the eastern property line and a portion along the north-eastern property line, as well as a lower-level parking garage. The remainder of the grade change will be made up through the use of hardscape, landscape, and retaining walls as necessary. All applicable design features meet the City of Lone Tree design requirements and criteria.

- 4) *The SIP is consistent with previously approved plats, Planned Developments, and other land use approvals affecting the subject property.*

The SIP is consistent with the Commercial Mixed Use (C/M-U) planning area as designated by the previously approved RidgeGate Planned Development District, 6th Amendment. The C/M-U planning area intends for residential uses to be of a higher density as proposed with RidgeGate Couplet (57.88 dwelling units per acre). The planning area also promotes a pedestrian friendly environment with an interconnected street network and the use of exterior spaces as a central focus to proposed development. This is exemplified in the Couplet as great effort has been put forth to create a thoughtful pedestrian experience along the periphery of the project's boundary and center the development's activity toward exterior entrances and outdoor courtyards/ amenities.

- 5) *The proposed development mitigates or offsets to the maximum extent practicable any adverse impacts reasonably anticipated to result from the use.*

The proposed development utilizes existing ponds within the vicinity for treatment of stormwater. The majority of the site's drainage basins will be conveyed to the existing pond located northeast of the site where it will be treated for water quality and detention. Two minor basins on site will be conveyed to the existing pond southeast of the site where it will be treated for water quality and detention. These ponds have previously been planned to accommodate detention requirements for the "Couplet District" and are a part of the greater Badger Gulch Drainage Basin. This detention planning effort assists in the mitigation of potential adverse impacts that could come with new development.

Due to the topographic grade of the site and tolerances allowed within ADA accessible limits, expanses of wall are anticipated with many developments like RidgeGate Couplet. Through project team coordination, the addition of attractive retaining features and plant material are proposed to mitigate large wall expanses and step grade change to a more friendly pedestrian level. Plant material proposed is meant to screen walls at the ground level while columnar tree selections follow vertical architecture elements, creating a complimentary design. This coordination and design effort helps mitigate adverse aesthetic impacts of the development due to the site's topographic condition.





6) *The site of the proposed development does not have any active zoning violations under this Chapter, unless otherwise approved by the Director for good cause shown.*

It is the understanding of the applicant that there are no active zoning violations against the site of the proposed development.

Project Team Contact Information

Developer

Century Living
Natalie Dustman, VP of Development
E: natalie.dustman@centurycommunities.com
P: 309-287-5921



Civil Engineer

Merrick
Kristofer K. Wiest, PE
E: kris.wiest@merrick.com
P: 303-353-3695



Planner/Landscape Architect

Ripley Design
Sam Coutts, PLA
E: sam.coutts@ripleydesigninc.com
P: 970-498-2980



Architect

KTGY
Nicholas Elster
E: nelster@ktgy.com
P: 303-389-6052



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