

## **STAFF REPORT**

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**Date:** July 27, 2022

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**Thru:** Doug Thornley, City Manager

**Subject:** Staff Report (For Possible Action): Review, discussion and potential approval of request for an affordable housing fee reduction in accordance with Reno Municipal Code 1.08, consisting of \$1,342,192.50 in sewer connection fees and up to \$241,918.08 in building permit fees for the Copper Mesa Apartments located on a ±13.52 acre site situated north of Silver Lake Road and west of Red Rock Road.

**From:** Monica Cochran

**Department:** City Manager's Office – Housing & Neighborhood Development

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**Summary:** Reno Municipal Code (RMC) Chapter 1.08 provides a process for affordable housing projects to request a reduction or subsidization of building permit fees and sewer connection fees, if they meet certain affordability criteria and subject to Council approval. The Copper Mesa Apartment development is a 290 unit affordable housing apartment project located on a ±13.52 acre site located north of Silver Lake Road ±346 feet west of its intersection with Red Rock Road. All 286 apartment units will be income restricted at or below 60 percent of the Washoe County Average Medium Income (AMI) and four additional units will be set aside for households earning at or below 50 percent of the AMI. The affordable housing apartment project is eligible for the fee reduction and is requesting a reduction of both building permit fees and sewer connection fees. Staff recommends Council approve the request for a subsidization of up to \$241,918.08 in building permit fees and \$1,342,192.50 in sewer connection fees, in accordance with RMC Chapter 1.08.

**Alignment with Strategic Plan:** Economic Opportunity, Homelessness, and Affordable Housing

**Previous Council Action:**

March 9, 2022 – Council approved the Vintage at Washington Street Apartments request for subsidization of \$837,168.75 in sewer connection fees.

March 9, 2022 – Council approved the Orovada Street Senior Apartments request for subsidization of \$22,316 in building permit fees and \$217,800 in sewer connection fees.

April 14, 2021 – Council approved the Marvel Way Empowerment Center Apartments request for a subsidization of \$26,943 in building permit fees and \$228,690 in sewer connection fees.

April 14, 2021 – Council approved the Springview by Vintage Apartments request for a subsidization of \$735,075 in sewer connection fees.

February 12, 2020 - Council adopted RMC Chapter 1.08 establishing the criteria that a project for affordable housing must satisfy to qualify for the fee reduction.

**Background:** State Law was passed in the 2019 Legislative Session enabling local governments to reduce or subsidize impact fees, building permit fees and sewer connection fees to assist in maintaining or developing affordable housing. Criteria and overall parameters for the fee reduction/wavier were later established through an ordinance and adopted by City Council in February of 2020. Affordable housing projects must meet the following standards and criteria in order to be eligible:

RMC 1.08.040. - Standards and criteria.

- (1) Projects providing housing for families with an average total gross income not exceeding 60 percent of the area median income (AMI) for Washoe County are eligible to apply for a 75 percent reduction in the associated fee(s) for those units at or below 60 percent of the AMI.
- (2) Projects providing housing for families with an average total gross income not exceeding 50 percent of the AMI for Washoe County are eligible to apply for a 100 percent reduction in the associated fee(s) for those units at or below 60 percent of the AMI.

(3) Projects providing housing for families with an average total gross income not exceeding 30 percent of the AMI for Washoe County or 100 percent of the units being affordable for 50 percent of the AMI for Washoe County are eligible to apply for a 100 percent reduction in the associated fees.

(4) Projects meeting RMC 1.08.040 (1) are eligible to apply for an additional 10 percent reduction for the following:

(a) Project site is located within ¼ mile of a bus rapid transit route; or

(b) Project site is located within a mixed use area or within one mile of an employment area as identified within the structure plan of the City of Reno Master Plan.

The 290 housing units meet the criteria established under item 1, as 100 percent of the units will be income restricted to at or below 60 percent AMI and are eligible for a 75 percent reduction in fees. The site is also located within one mile of an employment area, as identified within the City of Reno Master Plan, making it eligible for an additional 10 percent reduction.

**Discussion:** Approval of the request will provide for 290 affordable housing units, of which 286 units will be provided at 60 percent AMI, and four units will be at 50 percent AMI. All 290 of the units will be income restricted for a minimum of 20 years, as required. The applicant is requesting 85 percent of the fee reduction, resulting in an impact of up to \$241,918.08 in building permit fees and \$1,342,192.50 in sewer connection fees.

In order to approve the reduction or subsidization, Council must make a determination that reducing or subsidizing the fees will not impair adversely the ability of the city to pay, when due, all interest and principal on any outstanding bonds or any other obligations for which revenue from such fees was pledged must be made.

If approved, the applicant must obtain a building permit within 24 months of Council approval. The income restriction must remain in effect for a minimum of 20 years or the fees will be reinstated and assessed on the property by recordation of a lien. A deed restriction or similar property restriction must also be recorded against the property.

**Financial Implications:** The applicant is eligible and requesting 85 percent fee subsidization consisting of up to \$241,918.08 in building permit fees (Building Enterprise Fund) and \$1,342,192.50 in sewer connection fees (Sewer Enterprise Fund).

**Legal Implications:** In the 2019 Legislative Session, NRS 278.235(1)(a) and (2) was implemented to enable local governments to reduce or subsidize in whole or in part impact fees, fees for the issuance of building permits collected pursuant to NRS 278.580, and fees imposed for the purpose for which an enterprise fund was created to assist in maintaining or developing a project for affordable housing only when the project would be affordable on average for a family with a total gross income that does not exceed 60 percent of the median gross income for Washoe County. Pursuant to State Law and RMC 1.08, the City is required to determine how the criteria are met and determine that reducing or subsidizing such fees will not adversely impair the ability of the City to pay, when due, all interest and principal on any outstanding bonds or any other obligations for which revenue from such enterprise fees was pledged. In order to approve the reduction or subsidization, Council must determine through a public hearing the effect of the reduction or subsidization of such fees on the economic viability of the general fund and the affected enterprise fund.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends Council approve the request for a subsidization of \$1,342,192.50 in sewer connection fees and up to \$241,918.08 in building permit fees for the Copper Mesa Apartments, in accordance with RMC Chapter 1.08; and, make the determination the criteria are met and reducing or subsidizing such fees will not adversely impair the ability of the City to pay, when due, all interest and principal on any outstanding bonds or any other obligations for which revenue from such enterprise fees was pledged nor affect the economic viability of the general fund and the affected enterprise fund.

**Proposed Motion:** I move to approve staff recommendation.

**Attachments:**

Exhibit A-Copper Mesa Vicinity Map

Exhibit B-Copper Application

## Copper Mesa Presentation