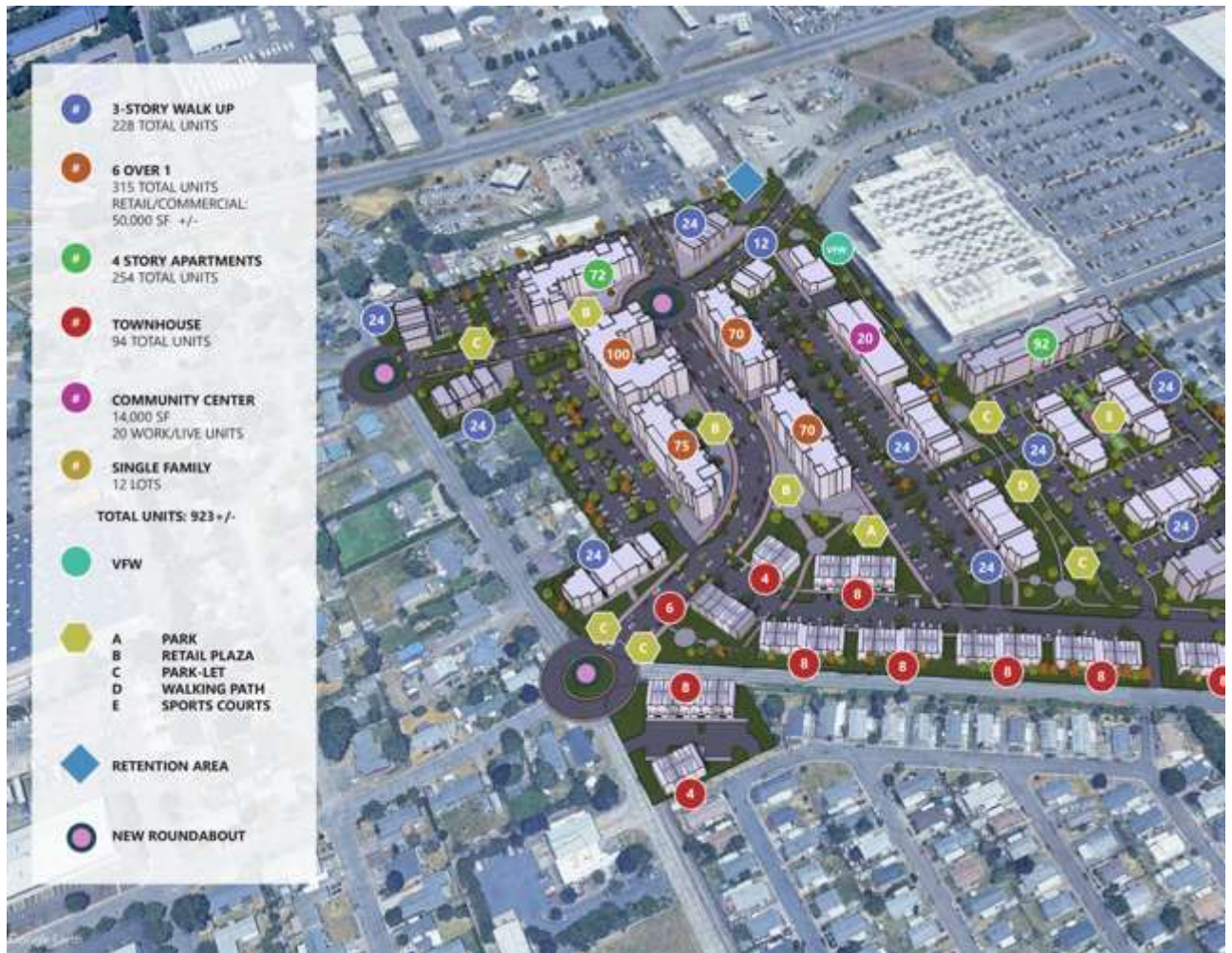


TOP STORY

Here's what the East Albany Town Center could look like

Hans Boyle

Jun 13, 2025



A rendering by Forward Architecture LLC of the East Albany Town Center project showing the different proposed ho
Photo courtesy Forward Architecture, LLC

Hans Boyle

Albany is getting the ball rolling on securing land east of Interstate 5 that site developers are eying for potentially over 1,000 housing units.

The council approved a motion Wednesday night directing city staff to begin the process of annexing properties in the mostly empty 30-or-so acre spot east of I-5, and the proposed site for a project billed as the East Albany Town Center.

The council also gave the go-ahead for staff to work on drafting a development agreement with the project's developers for future consideration.

The proposed East Albany Town Center, backed by local consulting firm Nichols & Irish LLC, Gerding Builders and **Affordable Housing Oregon**, among others, would be situated just south of Highway 20 and nestled between Spicer Drive and the Walmart on Goldfish Farm Road.



An artistic rendering provided by Forward Architecture, LLC, of the East Albany Town Center project. The project could add 1,000 housing units.

Courtesy Forward Architecture, LLC.

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Concept stage

According to proposals and conceptual drawings presented to the council, the development would include a mix of housing like four-story apartments, townhomes, and single-family duplexes and cottages.

The proposal also includes a 12,000-to-16,000 square foot community center, and potentially over 30 units of veteran housing.

The artistic renderings, which also showcase concepts for six-story apartments atop commercial spaces, show a significantly revamped East Albany.

But according to the city's Community Development Director Matthew Ruettgers, “conceptual” is the operative word when talking about the proposals.

“It’s not the final development plan by any stretch of the imagination,” he told councilors this week, adding any proposed development still needs to go through proper land use process.

That entails public hearings with the city planning commission and the city council.

East Albany Plan

The proposed project falls within **the East Albany Plan** the city **adopted in 2023**, a kind of blueprint for future development.

According to Ruettgers, the council’s move to begin annexing properties from the proposed project site would be advantageous for Albany and developers.

With annexation, the East Albany Town Center takes a first step toward development, while Albany gets help with long-awaited improvements identified in the city’s Transportation System Plan, Ruettgers said.

Among those desired improvements: a signal on Highway 20 and Timber Street, the extension of Timber Street south to Spicer Drive, and the addition of two roundabouts.

The city has tried to get state funding for the Timber extension multiple times, Ruettgers said.

“The infrastructure cost for this is huge,” he said.

“Having a developer that comes in and is interested in this, and that does not scare them away, provides an interesting opportunity for the city,” he said.

Council discussion

Mayor Alex Johnson II showed his support for the project, saying he liked the mix of housing options in the proposal.

Councilor Steph-Newton-Azorr asked about community engagement — Ruettgers said the development team had been talking to property owners — while Councilor Carolyn McLeod asked how the project would affect local schools.

Ruettgers said Greater Albany Public Schools is involved in the development review process.

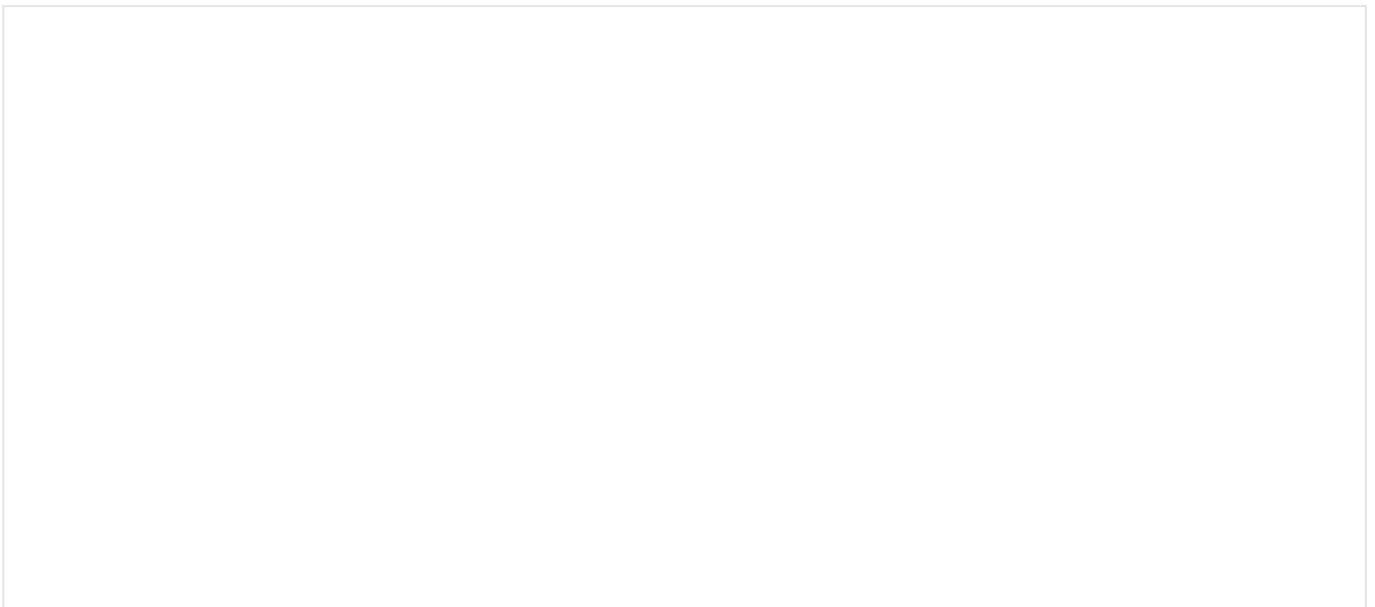
As in previous meetings, Councilor Michael Thomson shared his concern about “high densities coming to Albany,”

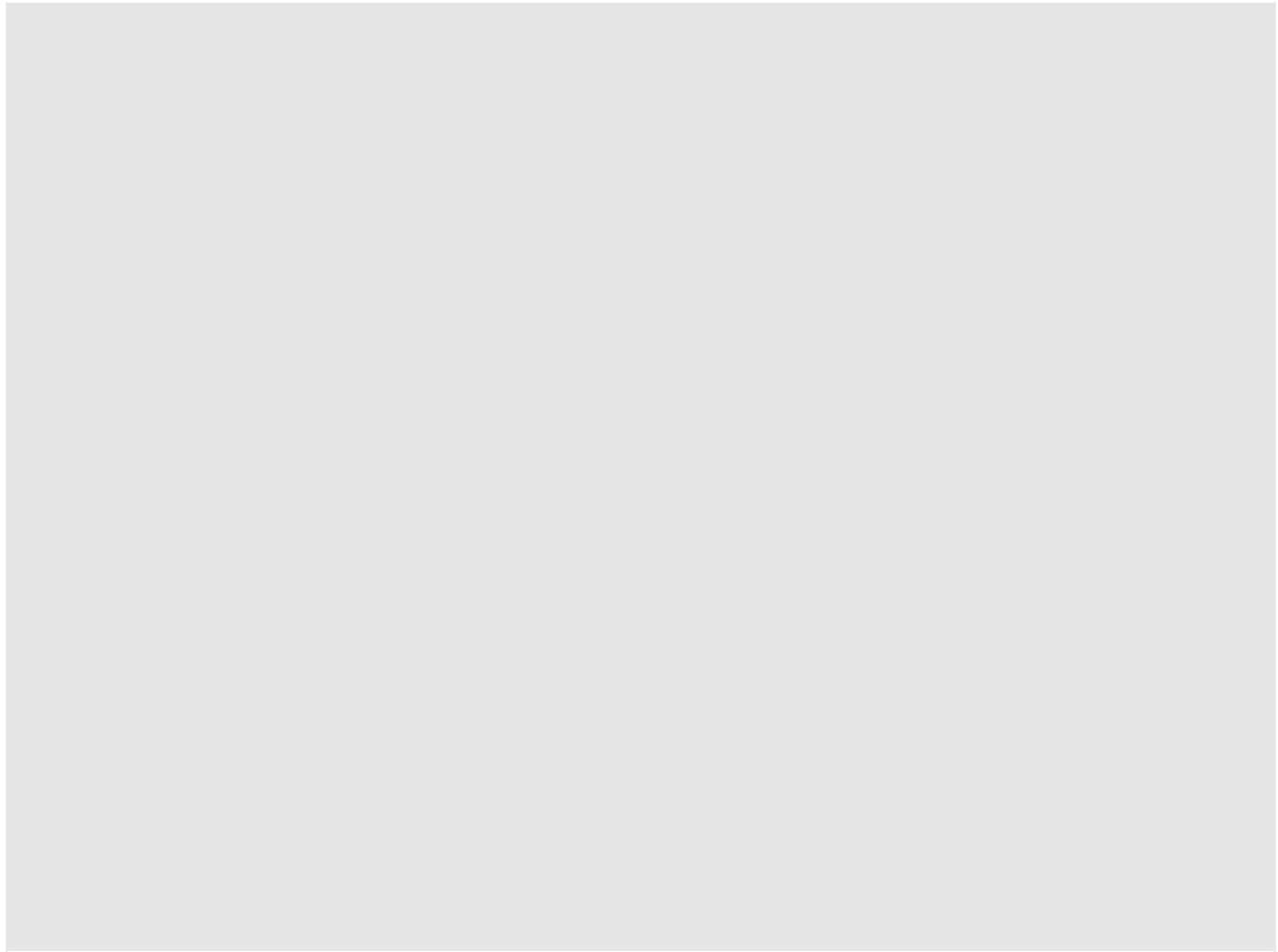
“It would be amazing if we planned for [the project] so perfectly that there wasn’t resultant traffic issues and crowded schools,” he said.

Ruettgers said the hope is the project encourages more walking, biking and public transportation use.

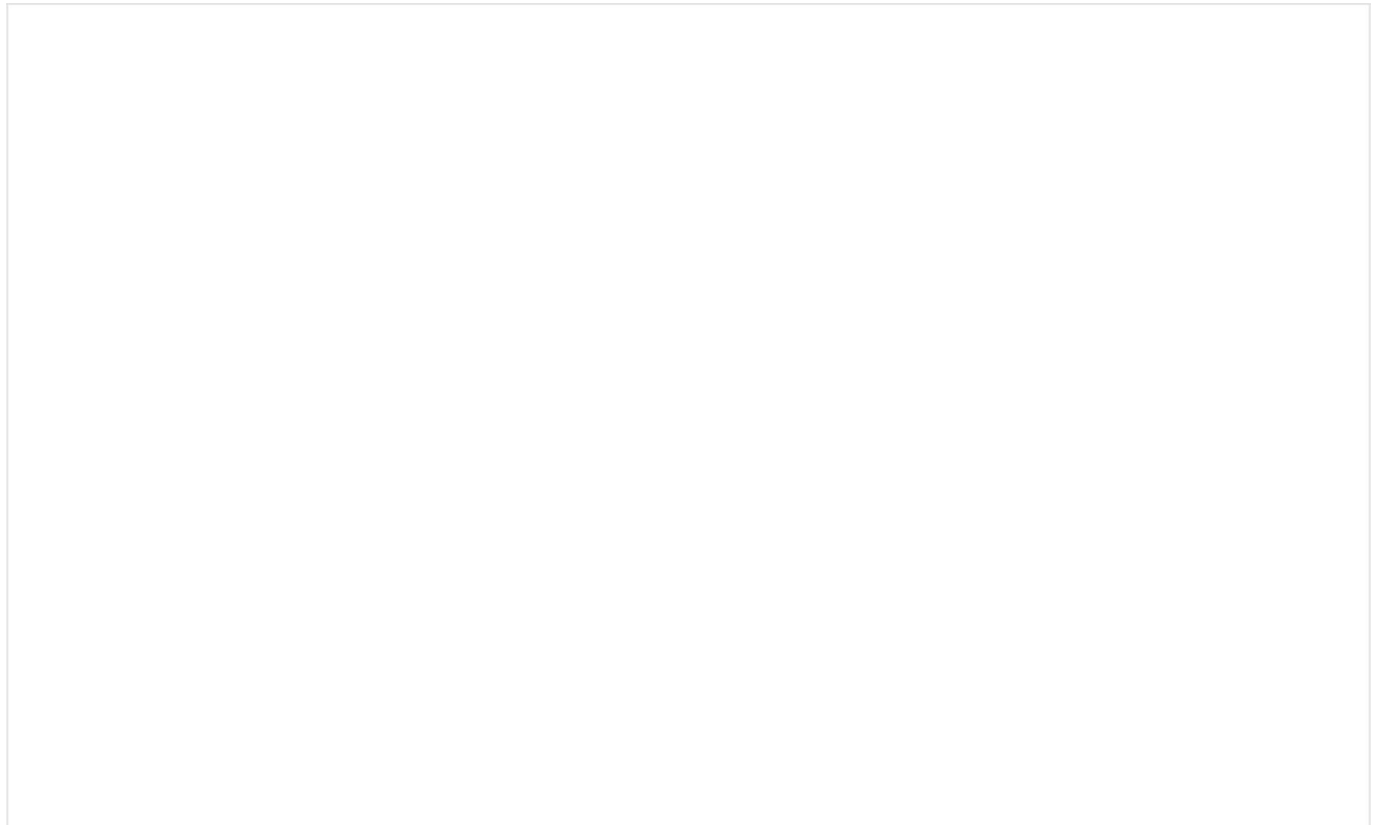
In the end, Thomson was the only “no” vote on the motion. Councilor Ramyica McGhee wasn’t present.

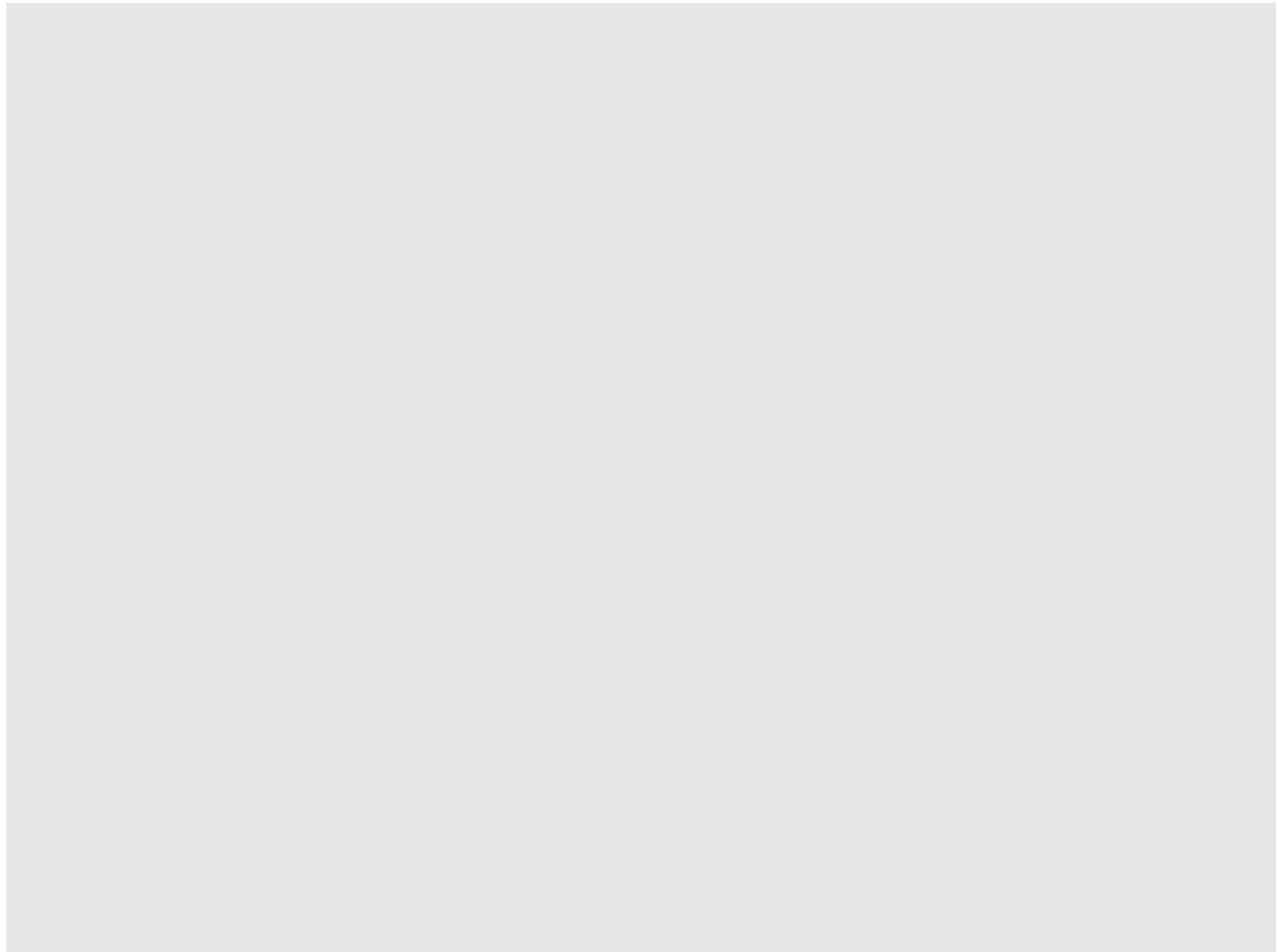
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