



Project Address: 3915 Lien Road

Application Type: New Two-Story Building with Drive-Thru in Urban Design District (UDD) 5
UDC is an Approving Body

Legistar File ID #: [86494](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Mylena Oliveira, Plaza Street Partners | Colin Hooper, Republic Madison Outparcels

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the construction of a two-story building for a coffee shop with drive-thru.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **approving body** on this request. The site is located in Urban Design District 5 ("UDD 5"), which requires that the Urban Design Commission review the proposed project using the design standards and guidelines for that district in MGO Section 33.24(12).

Zoning Related Information: The project site is zoned Commercial Corridor-Transitional (CC-T). Within the mixed-use and commercial zoning districts there are general provisions related to building and site design that are intended to foster high-quality development. These standards are in addition to the UDD 5 standards and are outlined in [Section 28.060](#), including those that speak to building and entrance orientation, façade articulation, door and window openings, and building materials.

In addition, the project site is located in the Transit Oriented Development Overlay (TOD) zone. New development with the TOD Overlay is subject to the requirements as outlined in [MGO 28.104](#), including those that speak to:

- Maximum principal building setbacks – At least 30% of the primary street facing façade (E Washington Avenue) shall be setback no more than 20 feet,
- Entrance orientation – Principal building entrances shall be orientated towards the primary abutting street (E Washington Avenue) and be located within the maximum setback (20 feet),
- Minimum number of stories – A minimum of two stories is required for a minimum of 75% of the building footprint, and
- Site standards for automobile infrastructure.

Staff notes that ultimately, the Zoning Administrator will determine compliance with the TOD Overlay requirements. As proposed, the development **appears to meet** the TOD Overlay requirements, including those related to site standards for automobile infrastructure. A complete Zoning review will be conducted as part of the Site Plan Review process.

Summary of Design Considerations

Planning Division staff requests that the UDC review the development proposal, provide feedback and make findings related to the UDD 5 requirements and guidelines, especially as it relates to the design considerations noted below.

- **Building Design.** UDD 5 Building Design guidelines and requirements generally speak to buildings being designed with sensitivity to context, low maintenance materials that are complementary to those present in the area, utilizing four-sided architecture and limiting large unbroken facades, especially on elevations visible from roadways or other properties.

Based on the site's surrounding context, all sides of the building will be highly visible, including the north, south end elevations and west elevation, all of which will be visible from E Washington Avenue. Given the high level of visibility from the street and adjacent properties, the project site really has multiple "fronts."

As shown on the building elevations there are blank walls on both the first and second floors, varying window sizes and proportions, design and detailing of building components (i.e., differentiating top, middle, base), and multiple parapet wall heights. Given the size and scale of the building, consideration should be given to simplifying design details and utilizing a similar design aesthetic across all sides of the building. Staff requests the Commission provide feedback and make findings related to the overall building design and composition, especially as it relates to creating one cohesive architectural expression and minimizing blank walls.

- **Building Materials.** UDD 5 "*Building Design*" guidelines and requirements generally speak to utilizing building materials that are low maintenance and that are harmonious with those of adjacent buildings. As indicated on the elevations, the material palette is primarily comprised of architectural cement board faux brick Nichiha panels and metal panel.

Staff requests the UDC review, provide comment, and make findings related to the proposed exterior building materials.

- **Landscape and Screening.** The UDD 5 guidelines and requirements state that "*Landscaping shall be used for functional as well as decorative purposes, including framing desirable views, screening unattractive features and views, screening different uses from each other, and complementing the architecture of the building.*" As part of the Commission's review, consideration should be given to providing adequate year-round screening for parking and drive-thru areas, as well as the softening the proposed modular block retaining wall which will be visible from the inside of the site, and incorporating a variety of plantings to provide year-round color and texture.

In addition, consideration should also be given to reducing the site paving, including potentially reducing or eliminating the "pass thru" lane. Doing so could result in additional landscape and open space areas, especially along the north property where there is a pedestrian path, as well as the south property line. Staff notes that in coordination with Traffic Engineering staff, the "pass thru" lane could be reduced or eliminated.

Staff requests the UDC provide comments and make findings with regard to the proposed landscape plan's consistency with the UDD 5 guidelines and requirements, especially those related to screening.

- **Lighting.** UDD 5 Lighting requirements note that lighting shall be adequate, but not excessive, as well as serve functional and decorative purposes. Staff notes and the applicant is advised that additional information is needed to confirm that the proposed lighting meets UDD 5 requirements, as well as MGO 29.36, including as it relates to light levels at the property line, average light levels in vehicle use areas (drive driveways and drive thru lanes), and pedestrian and parking areas. In addition, as indicated on the lighting plan and elevation drawings building lighting is proposed, and while several fixture cutsheets were provided it **does not** appear that all are accounted for in the photometrics for the site.

Staff recommends the UDC address lighting in their formal action, including whether the continued review could be completed administratively.