



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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TO: Urban Design Commission

FROM: Chris Wells, Planner

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SUBJECT: 1720 Monroe Street – Informational Presentation/Concept Presentation regarding a proposal to demolish the site’s existing building and construct a mixed-use building with roughly 16,000 square feet of ground-floor commercial space and approximately 68 units above on a property zoned PD (Planned Development District) at 1720 Monroe Street, 13th Ald. Dist.

The applicant, Anne Neujahr Morrison of Urban Land Interests, and her design team of staff from Potter Lawson, Morrison Architecture Studio, and Ken Saiki Design, are before the Urban Design Commission to give a Concept Presentation which is required for all requests to rezone to a Planned Development (PD) district. They are requesting feedback on the proposed development of a five-story, mixed-use building with roughly 16,000 square feet of ground-floor commercial space and approximately 68 units on a roughly 0.77-acre site at 1720 Monroe Street. The site is currently zoned Planned Development (PD). While the applicant plans to maintain this zoning district classification, they currently anticipate filing a new PD application for the proposed development.

Approval and Review Standards

MGO §29.098(5)(a) of the City’s Zoning Code states that for Procedures related to Planned Development Districts: *The procedure for rezoning to a planned development district shall be as required for any other zoning map amendment in this chapter, with the additional requirements specified below.*

(a) *Pre-Submittal Requirements. These requirements are intended to provide opportunities for the applicant to explore issues associated with the proposal prior to the expenditure of significant resources in the development of any design plans. This phase shall include the following:*

2. *Concept Presentation: The concept shall be submitted for review to the Urban Design Commission at an informational meeting. No formal action will be taken by the Commission. Submittals shall include contextual information such as topography, photos of the site and surrounding properties, and a discussion of the initial design direction. The Commission will review the concept in reference to the objectives listed in Subsection 28.098(1) and the other requirements of this Subchapter. The Commission may request that additional materials be submitted to assist in communicating the nature of the site and its context. If the proposed planned development relates to constructing, altering or demolishing a landmark, proposes development on a landmark site, or proposes development in a historic district, the concept shall be submitted for review to the Landmarks Commission at an informational meeting before submission to the Urban Design Commission for its informational meeting under this subsection.*

Project Description

The proposed subject site is bounded on the east by Monroe Street, on the south by W. Lawn Avenue, and on the west by S. Spooner Street. The proposed site is actually parts of two lots, as currently exists. As part of this proposal, the applicant is proposing to carve off a roughly 950-square-foot triangle of land at the southeast corner of the 625 S. Spooner Street lot (which the applicant currently owns) and combine it with the existing, 32,610-square-foot 1720 Monroe Street lot to create a roughly 33,580-square-foot (0.77-acre) lot. The 1720 Monroe Street lot currently contains a one-story, roughly 16,000-square-foot bank with approximately 13 surface parking stalls and detached structure with two drive-through ATMs/service windows located off of a through-lot access aisle with access to both S. Spooner and Monroe Streets. The 625 S. Spooner Street lot contains a 1.5-story, six-bedroom two-unit with a detached, two-car garage. The bank as well as the detached garage (on the S. Spooner lot) are both proposed for demolition as part of this proposal.

The proposed building is oriented to and fronts onto Monroe Street where its roughly 230-footlong façade is set back approximately two to four feet from the property line. The building maintains this street orientation and setback through the approximately 135-degree dog-leg bend onto the 70-footlong W. Lawn Avenue façade before turning the corner onto S. Spooner Street and continuing for another 60 feet.

While there is roughly a seven-foot drop from S. Spooner Avenue to Stockton Court, because the applicant wishes to maintain the pedestrian relationship with the commercial storefronts along Monroe Street (by keeping the finished floor and actual grade close in height, therefore minimizing the use of steps or stairs), they are proposing step the floor slab down to create at least four different interior levels.

For building materials, the applicant is proposing a pallet primarily of brick with cast stone detailing for the bottom four floors. For the fifth floor, the applicant is showing stucco in the renderings but is considering a change to a standing seam metal cladding.

A surface parking lot with 14 automobile parking stalls and roughly nine bicycle stalls will be located on the northwest side of the lot, with access from S. Spooner Street. Seventy residential parking stalls are located underneath the building and accessed via a ramp located on the far east corner of the building, at the intersection of Monroe Street and Stockton Court. The portion containing the ramp is one-story in height in order to provide more of a stepback from the residents to the north on Stockton Court.

Urban Design & Plan Consistency

Planning Division staff are primarily concerned with how the proposal conforms to the recommendations of the [Monroe Street Commercial District Plan](#),* particularly the massing, scale, and height of the proposed five-story building. While the plan typically contains detailed site-specific development guidelines (which generally includes recommendations for the building's footprint; build-to lines; height; composition, articulation, and scale; orientation of entrances, etc.) for several blocks of the street, for the subject site, the plan provides very minimal guidance stating only, *"This block currently is home to Associated Bank. It should remain commercial."*

* Click on the hyperlink for a copy of the neighborhood plan

The plan does however provide some guidance for development on the subject site under its *General Development Standards and Process Section* on Page 48. Of particular note regarding Planning Division's concerns related to the proposed height, under the section on Building Height, it states:

"Monroe Street's visual character derives from the great predominance of two-story commercial and two-story residential buildings. Only a few three-story buildings front the street. The Clarendon Apartments at the northeast end, and the four-story building on the 1900 block of Monroe Street, are the only true four-story buildings and they are set far back from the street.

Generally, buildings of four stories (or more) would be out of character with the traditional street and the residential neighborhoods, all the more since at most sites' setbacks would be very limited. To gain support, buildings higher than three stories would need creative design and presentation, consideration of contextual impact, lot size, proximity to other building forms, setbacks, stepbacks, floor-to-floor heights, important compensating value-added features, and effective prior consultation with the neighborhoods."

Conclusion

The Urban Design Commission should provide comments as they apply to the applicant's Concept Presentation. The Zoning Code requires the Urban Design Commission to review the concept in reference to the Planned Development (PD) District Statement of Purpose and Approval Standards, listed in the attachment on the following page. Additionally, Planning Division Staff ask that the Commission provide feedback regarding the proposed building's height and massing – particularly the five-story, 230-footlong, nearly flat Monroe Street façade – as it relates to the recommendations of the [Monroe Street Commercial District Plan](#). Staff also ask for feedback regarding the proposed fifth floor materials. Staff note that in their letter of intent, the applicant addresses the Plan's related design guidelines as they relate to the proposed development and provided their own analysis.

ATTACHMENT
PD Zoning Statement of Purpose and Standards

28.098(1) Statement of Purpose

The Planned Development (PD) District is established to provide a voluntary regulatory framework as a means to facilitate the unique development of land in an integrated and innovative fashion, to allow for flexibility in site design, and to encourage development that is sensitive to environmental, cultural, and economic considerations, and that features high-quality architecture and building materials. In addition, the Planned Development District is intended to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

- (a) Promotion of green building technologies, low-impact development techniques for stormwater management, and other innovative measures that encourage sustainable development.
- (b) Promotion of integrated land uses allowing for a mixture of residential, commercial, and public facilities along corridors and in transitional areas, with enhanced pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections and amenities.
- (c) Preservation and enhancement of important environmental features through careful and sensitive placement of buildings and facilities.
- (d) Preservation of historic buildings, structures, or landscape features through adaptive reuse of public or private preservation of land.
- (e) Provision of more adequate, usable, and suitably located open space, recreational amenities, and other public facilities than would otherwise be provided under conventional land development techniques.
- (f) Facilitation of high-quality development that is consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.

28.098(2) Approval Standards for Project

The standards for approval of a zoning map amendment to the PD District, or any major alteration to an approved General Development Plan, are as follows:

- (a) The applicant shall demonstrate that no other base zoning district can be used to achieve a substantially similar pattern of development. Planned developments shall not be allowed simply for the purpose of increasing overall density or allowing development that otherwise could not be approved unless the development also meets one or more of the objectives of (1) above. Conditions under which planned development may be appropriate include:
 - 1. Site conditions such as steep topography or other unusual physical features; or
 - 2. Redevelopment of an existing area or use of an infill site that could not be reasonably developed under base zoning district requirements.
- (b) The PD District plan shall facilitate the development or redevelopment goals of the Comprehensive Plan and of adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.
- (c) The PD District plan shall not adversely affect the economic health of the City or the area of the City where the development is proposed. The City shall be able to provide municipal services to the property where the planned development is proposed without a significant increase of the cost of providing those services or economic impact on municipal utilities serving that area.
- (d) The PD District plan shall not create traffic or parking demands disproportionate to the facilities and improvements designed to meet those demands. A traffic demand management plan may be required as a way to resolve traffic and parking concerns. The Plan shall include measurable goals, strategies, and actions to encourage travelers to use alternatives to driving alone, especially at congested times of day. Strategies and actions may include, but are not limited to, carpools and vanpools; public and private transit; promotion of bicycling, walking and other non-motorized travel; flexible work schedules and parking management programs to substantially reduce automobile trips.

- (e) The PD District plan shall coordinate architectural styles and building forms to achieve greater compatibility with surrounding land uses and create an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose of the PD District.
- (f) The PD District plan shall include open space suitable to the type and character of development proposed, including for projects with residential components, a mix of structured and natural spaces for use by residents and visitors. Areas for stormwater management, parking, or in the public right of way shall not be used to satisfy this requirement.
- (g) The PD district shall include suitable assurances that each phase could be completed in a manner that would not result in an adverse effect upon the community as a result of termination at that point.