



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 2021 Wheeler Road
Application Type: New Residential Building Complex – Informational Review
Legistar File ID # [60923](#)
Prepared By: Janine Glaeser, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Melissa Huggins, Urban Assets Consulting/Kraig Gallagher, The Annex Group

Project Description: The applicant has submitted for an informational presentation for a new Residential Building Complex consisting of approximately 315 units of housing located in a variety of building types and sizes (*three-story 60-unit buildings, two-story 16-unit apartment buildings, and attached townhomes in a mix of configurations*). The proposed development will include such amenities as a clubhouse, play area, community gardens, and pathways connecting to the expanded Whitetail Ridge Park to the south east, future parkland and woods to the east, and a future park north of Wheeler Road. [Six single-family lots located along the southern edge of the site adjacent to the Whitetail Ridge subdivision are not part of the proposed complex and not subject to UDC review.]

Project Schedule:

- The applicant is planning to file land use and subdivision applications once the property is attached to the City from the Town of Burke and the development site is created by the current land owner by land division.

Approval Standards:

The UDC is an **advisory body** on this request. Section 28.151 of the Zoning Code requires that Residential Building Complexes be reviewed by the Urban Design Commission pursuant to the provisions in Section 33.24(4)(c) which states: “The Urban Design Commission shall review the exterior design and appearance of all principal buildings or structures and the landscape plans of all proposed residential building complexes. It shall report its findings and recommendations to the City Plan Commission.”

Summary of Design Considerations and Recommendations

The [Comprehensive Plan](#), adopted in 2018, recommends Low Residential, with a density of up to 15 unit an acre in one- to two- story buildings. The site is also located within the boundaries of the 2007 [Cherokee Special Area Plan, which](#) includes the subject site in the “Hornung Woods and Field Sub-Area.” The sub-area is recommended for low-residential development in a variety of housing types and sizes with a density ranging from 8-15 units per acre. Development densities in the sub-area should vary, with some of the area closer to the higher end of the density range, and some at the lower end. Small- and medium-sized multi-family residential buildings are recommended within the sub-area., with 3-8 units per building. Single-family and two-family dwellings are also recommended, including detached single-family residences adjacent to the Whitetail Ridge subdivision.

During pre-application meetings with the developer, staff raised concerns regarding potential inconsistencies with plan recommendations and the higher density development proposal in a recommended low-density area.

The UDC is encouraged to provide comments on the general layout and massing of the proposed residential building complex. However, Planning staff is concerned that many of the proposed buildings are not consistent with the building forms recommended for the site by the Cherokee Special Area Plan, which recommends smaller multi-family buildings, potentially in a finer-grained development pattern than the one proposed. While staff expressed limited willingness to consider buildings with more than eight units in discussions with the applicants during pre-application discussions with the applicant, it does not feel that the 16-unit and 60-unit buildings proposed are consistent with those discussions and with the adopted plans. Additionally, while the density proposed may technically be within the maximum 15-unit per acre density allowed in the Hornung Woods and Field planning sub-area, it does not appear to be consistent with the recommendation that some of the area be closer to the higher end of the density range and some at the lower end, which suggests that a lower overall density may have been envisioned when the recommendations for the sub-area were developed.

Ultimately, the Plan Commission and Common Council will determine the density of development allowed on the subject site.