



Project Address: 1801-1841 Northport Drive

Application Type: Construction of a One-Story Building with Vehicles Sales and Service Window in a Planned Multi-Use Site
UDC is an Advisory Body

Legistar File ID #: [72313](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Pat Schmitt, PS Architecture | Northside Town Center

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the construction of a new MOKA drive-thru restaurant with a vehicle access sales and service window.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC Granted Final Approval on July 27, 2022.
- The Plan Commission reviewed this proposal on August 29, 2022 and referred the item to a future meeting date to allow the applicant to work with staff to address the site design and traffic circulation concerns related to pedestrian safety.
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to re-review this proposal on January 23, 2023.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **advisory body** on this request. [Section 28.137\(2\)\(e\)](#) of the Zoning Code requires that a planned multi-use site containing more than forty thousand (40,000) square feet of floor area and where twenty-five thousand (25,000) square feet of floor area is designed or intended for retail use or for hotel or motel use, shall require conditional use approval following a recommendation on the design of any specific proposal by the Urban Design Commission. [Section 33.24\(4\)\(f\)](#) of the Urban Design Commission ordinance states that proposals for additions, exterior building alterations, or site alterations to existing structures currently used for, or originally designed to accommodate, a retail development that has a floor area of forty thousand (40,000) square feet or more square feet shall be approved pursuant to the applicable ordinances relating to the alteration of approved projects and shall comply with these requirements to the extent possible, given the constraints of the existing sites and structures.

Zoning District: The project site is located in the Commercial Corridor - Transitional (CC-T) zoning district. 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 building and site design and pedestrian and bicycle transit as well as automobile circulation. Such standards are outlined in [Section 28.060](#), including those that speak to building and entrance orientation, façade articulation, door and window openings, and building materials. As noted in the Zoning Code, the requirements pursuant to this section are applicable to only the portion of the building or site that is undergoing alteration.

Adopted Plans: The City's Comprehensive Plan (the "Plan") recommends the project site for Community Mixed Use (CMU) development. As part of the CMU land use recommendation, the Plan includes recommendations for building form and heights. More specifically, the Plan recommends building heights of 2-6 stories noting that *"one-story anchor retail is allowed as part of a larger comprehensively planned mixed-use project or as part of a project transitioning from a suburban car-oriented layout to a more urban, pedestrian-oriented layout."*

The project site is also located within the Northport Warner Park Sherman Neighborhood (the “Plan”) Plan planning area. As noted in the plan, the project site is located with the Northside Town Center, which is a primary commercial destination within the neighborhood. Two concept plans and design goals are included in the plan that illustrate a series of idea and design principles for the redevelopment of the Center. Generally, the design goals speak to integrating mixed-use development within the Center, encouraging street-oriented building design, providing enhanced connectivity both within the Center, as well as providing linkages to the surrounding neighborhood, including gathering spaces, and encouraging an enhanced streetscape and building design. Also noted in the plan are maximum building heights of two-four stories. Staff notes that while the proposed development is not consistent with either of the adopted Plan’s height recommendations, the Commission, as part of their July 27, 2022 review and recommendation to the Plan Commission made findings that a one-story building is acceptable given the limited size and scale of the structure and redevelopment.

Summary of Design Considerations

As part of the Plan Commission’s initial review of the proposed development, the Plan Commission referred this item to a future meeting date pending reconfiguration of the project site to address the concerns related to limiting pedestrian and vehicular conflicts and providing a direct, separate pedestrian connection from the sidewalk to the building. While the site design has changed significantly, the building has not.

Staff notes that there have been multiple concepts discussed with the applicant since the previous UDC and Plan Commission reviews of this item. The Planning Division supports this revised design and believes it addresses the concerns raised by the Plan Commission. It also complies with the Zoning Code and is supported by the City Traffic Engineering Division.

Staff requests the UDC review the revised submittal including landscape plan and the previous advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission (as noted below), and provide a recommendation to the Plan Commission as it relates to the items note below.

- **Landscape Plan.** The revised site plan includes multiple areas of larger landscaped areas. Staff requests the Commission’s feedback and recommendations related to the proposed planting plan in terms of plant quantity and variety as it relates to providing year-round color and texture, as well as the use of washed stone mulch as noted in the Commission’s initial recommendation.
- **Lighting.** The photometric plan appears to have inconsistencies with the City’s Outdoor Lighting requirements (Section 10.085, MGO) for medium level activity areas, including light levels in excess of 1.5 footcandles in driveways. As a potential code compliance issue, the applicant is advised that an updated photometric plan, consistent with MGO Section 10.085, will be required to be submitted for review and approval prior to permitting.
- **Signage.** Signage approvals would require separate applications and will not be reviewed by the Plan Commission. Staff do note some potential sign-code issues. While multiple signs are shown on the building images shown on sheets P-1 through P-4 in the plan set, staff notes that only one sign would be permitted per street or parking lot facing elevation, which are the north and west elevations. The applicant is advised that approval of signage as shown on the building renderings is not a part of the UDC’s review and recommendation. A Comprehensive Design Review would be required for the signage to be permitted as shown on the building renderings.

Summary of UDC Final Approval Action

As a reference, the Commission's comments and action from the July 27, 2022 Final Approval motion are provided below:

- You have to loop around multiple times to get to that window, it may be quicker to get out and walk. It looks like the dedicated loop is just to this coffee shop, you're not expecting to have traffic for other retail tenants come through here?
- It would be nice to have a pedestrian connection off of Northport Drive. The large row of hedges on the south side of the parking lot seem to impede visual access.
 - That may be considered by the DOT as something that gives higher value to that portion of the property in the setback.
- I love Moka coffee and I'm familiar with the other Madison locations. Traffic can get backed up, if people are parked on the north side of the building and there's a back-up, how do they get out of those parking spaces?
 - There will be times of the day when those are open, we expect them to be used mostly by employees. We made an exit access from that queuing line in case they want to just get out towards Northport.
- Those spaces are there because they're required?
 - No, we're just trying to get as much parking on the site as we can, we sacrificed a lot from what's there now. Not that they'll be used that much.
- Is there an opportunity for landscaping instead of all the striping? The skinny little striped area with all the bollards, those will be confusing. Have you considered curbs and plantings instead?
 - We're trying to maintain the natural drainage of the site. The concept right now flows to the south and the west, if we start putting curbs in those areas there's going to have to be considerable engineering done.
- Maybe just something as a planting area similar to where you have the inlets on the other length of parking.
 - The plantings in the striped areas north of the property line is something we could do.
- I do think parallel parking may be just as much a challenge as parking to the north of the building, as people are coming through.
- Have you considered diagonal parking along the north? If somebody is queued up, and since it's one-way, you'd give yourself a little bit more room and more drive aisle space to do that. In the diagonal areas you have plenty of room to go ahead and angle some parking.
 - We could probably eliminate that parking totally. I think it's going to be used by people who know when a good time to use them is.
- Diagonal parking also serves to visually show people that you can only go in one way.
- I had problems reviewing this material. I was able to see the staff memo and these plans, I could not download and see the plans themselves.
- You have a decent selection of plants, but you should use bark mulch rather than washed stone, that is not a happy environment for plants.
 - We totally agree with that.
- Is there much in the way of interior seating at this location?
 - No, it's a drive-up/walk-up facility only.
- Interesting way to find your way through there, looks like a best solution for a non-ideal situation.

On a motion by Klehr, seconded by Braun-Oddo, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (5-0).

The motion provided for the following:

- Replace the washed stone mulch with bark mulch.
- Consider angled parking in place of head-in parking along the north side of the building.
- Consider replacing the striping and bollards on the southside of the building with a curb barrier and landscaping.
- Consider keeping the utility meters on the west side of the building.
- The Commission finds that a one-story building is acceptable given it size.