



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 411-433 W Gilman Street

Application Type: Informational Presentation for a Mixed-Use Building in the Downtown Core (DC)
UDC will be an Advisory Body

Legistar File ID #: [89582](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Jason Doornbos, LCD Acquisitions, LLC | Angie Black, Carlson Black O’Callaghan & Battenberg, LLP

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the construction of a 16-story, mixed-used building with 261 residential units and ground floor commercial space. The development will include residential amenities including a clubhouse, fitness room, outdoor amenity deck and swimming pool, and be served by structured parking.

Staff note that, both a land division to combine parcels and rezoning the portion of the project site that is currently zoned Urban Mixed Use to Downtown Core, consistent with the remainder of the project site, will be pursued as part of a future Land Use Application request.

Approval Standards: The Urban Design Commission (“UDC”) will be an **advisory body** on this development request when a formal application is submitted. Pursuant to [Section 28.074\(4\)c](#):

All new buildings and additions greater than six (6) stories shall obtain conditional use approval. In addition, the Urban Design Commission shall review such projects for conformity to the design standards in the [Downtown Urban Design buildings](#) and shall report its findings to the Plan Commission.

Adopted Plans: The project site is in the [Downtown Plan](#) planning area, in the State Street Neighborhood. Generally, the recommendations included in the Downtown Plan speak to encouraging a diverse mix of uses, and creating a unique sense of place, an enhanced design at the pedestrian level and human-scale development.

Zoning Related Information: The project site is zoned Downtown Core (DC). The Zoning Code outlines design standards that are applicable to all new buildings in the Downtown and Urban Zoning Districts ([MGO 28.071\(3\)](#)), including, but not limited to those related to parking, building entrance orientation, façade articulation, design of street-facing facades, door and window openings, and building materials. Staff notes that ultimately, the Zoning Administrator will determine compliance with Zoning Code requirements.

In addition, as noted in the Downtown Height Map, pursuant to MGO 28.071, the subject site crosses three different height zones, including six stories (88 feet) for the parcel closest to State Street (411 W Gilman Street), eight stories (116 feet) for the parcels located mid-block along W Gilman Street (415-421 W Gilman Street), and twelve stories (172 feet) for the remaining parcels along W Gilman Street (425-433 W Gilman Street).

While the proposed building at its tallest is 16 stories (approx. 163 feet), which is in excess of the maximum height allowed in the Downtown Height Map in stories, staff note that additional stories may be requested as part of a voluntary land use restriction agreement to provide income restricted dwelling units provided the overall building height in feet (172 feet) is not exceeded. It is staff’s understanding that the applicant is proposing to pursue the land use restriction agreement. With that, the applicant is encouraged to work with the Zoning Administrator to

confirm that the proposed building will meet the height limitations in feet and that stories are being reported correctly.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommends that the UDC provide feedback on the development proposal regarding the aforementioned standards as it relates to the design considerations noted below.

- **Building Scale and Massing.** As noted in pre-application meetings with the applicant's design team, staff have identified the overall mass and scale of the development as a concern. Given the extent of the project site, comprising almost half of the block face, staff have suggested that techniques are employed to break down the mass, including having the structure read as a collection of multiple buildings, and/or utilizing other design techniques to reduce the perceived mass and scale. Staff refers the Commission to some of the other large-scale buildings that have been recently reviewed by UDC which have utilized design strategies to create the appearance of multiple buildings versus one large building.

Staff have seen different iterations of the project to date and believe the current plans before the UDC are much improved over earlier concepts, though staff have some comments. While staff have suggested breaking the building down to reflect the appearance of multiple buildings, the current approach generally creates a street level character with a distinct different upper-level design for the entire development, as opposed to a design that creates the appearance of individual buildings.

Staff also note there appear to be some areas with limited articulation and modulation, resulting in flat shear walls. Consideration should be given to the overall shape and design of the building and incorporating visual relief and interest in the design of the upper stories.

Consideration should be given to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, especially those guidelines that generally speak to creating visual interest as a means of breaking down mass and scale, including utilizing building modulation and articulation to distinguish architectural components (top, middle, base), the appropriateness of setbacks/stepbacks to minimize perceived mass and scale, balancing proportions and horizontal and vertical datums, incorporating articulation in transitions between materials, creating positive termination at the top of the building, and utilizing an enhanced level of design and detailing at the pedestrian level, etc.

Staff requests the UDC's feedback related to the overall mass and scale.

- **Building Orientation.** The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines generally note that how a building addresses the street and defines the public/private spaces along the public way is the primary factor in creating an active urban environment. Consideration should be given to locating active uses at the street, incorporating a richer level of design detailing at the pedestrian level, minimizing the presence of service-oriented uses (i.e., dumpster enclosure, utility rooms, garage doors, etc.), utilizing architectural elements to identify main building entrances, as well as incorporating landscape elements to add interest, texture, and color, etc.

As proposed, there appear to be multiple blank walls along the street, including refuse pick-up, garage entry/exit and utility. Consideration should be given to the location and design of these areas in terms of minimizing blank walls and maintaining an enhanced design at the pedestrian level. In addition, there are two units located at the street level, where individual unit access is not provided. Consideration should be given to providing active unit entries for these units.

Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the overall building orientation.

- **Building Design and Composition.** Staff requests the Commission's feedback on the overall building design and composition as it relates to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, including those that generally speak to size and rhythm of windows, building mass and scale and proportions and articulation (vertical/horizontal), incorporating positive termination at the top of the building, integrating the rooftop equipment and stair/elevator overruns into the overall building design, etc.
- **Materials.** The exterior material palette is anticipated to primarily be comprised of two-tone masonry on levels 1-4 with ribbed metal panel accents, and composite terracotta metal panel on the upper levels.

The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines generally speak to utilizing a simple, high-quality palette of materials and maintaining a consistent level of design and detailing across all sides of the building. Staff requests the Commission provide feedback related to the proposed material palette, especially as it relates to the surrounding context, utilizing a consistent level of design detailing across all elevations, incorporating articulation in material transitions, etc.

- **Landscape and At Grade Amenity Spaces.** The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines note that *"...how a site is landscaped can soften hard edges, make a site more inviting, and bring color and interest to a development."*

As noted on the site plan, there is an access easement from W Gilman Street to W Gorham Street, ultimately providing a through-block pedestrian connection. As such, consideration should be given to the design and detailing of this area as an active, safe pedestrian pathway, including as it relates to incorporating lighting, landscape, minimizing blank walls, etc.

In addition, landscape does not appear to be included along the W Gilman Street side of the building.

Staff requests the UDC's feedback on the conceptual landscape plan, especially as it relates to softening hardscape area, appropriateness of the plant selections, and providing year-round color and texture.