



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 6910 Seybold Road
Application Type: New Mixed-Use Building in Urban Design District (UDD) 2
UDC is an Approving Body
Legistar File ID #: [83657](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Tom Sanford, Sanford Enterprises, Inc. | Royal Partners

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the construction of a two-story mixed-use building, which will be comprised of a ground floor commercial space (3,500 square feet) and two residential units on the second floor. The site will be served by surface parking lot.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **approving body** on this request. The site is located in Urban Design District 2 ("UDD 2"), 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\(9\)](#).

Adopted Plans: The City's adopted Comprehensive Plan recommends the General Commercial (GC) land use category for the project site. General commercial areas are generally defined as areas that provide a wide range of retail goods and services. While these areas are generally not recommended for residential uses, such uses may be considered as part of a conditional use, especially in cases where there is adequate access to parks, transit and a walkable street network.

The project site is also within the Southwest Neighborhood Plan (the "Plan") planning area. Generally, the Plan recommendations identify goals for the Southwest Neighborhood, which specifically speak to increasing programs and services, as well as promoting economic opportunities and workforce development.

Zoning Related Information: The project site is zoned Commercial Corridor (CC). 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. Such standards are in [Section 28.060](#), and include requirements that speak to building and entrance orientation, façade articulation, door and window openings, and building materials, etc.

Staff notes that as proposed, the Seybold Road storefront **does not** appear to be consistent some of these standards. The amount of spandrel glass in the storefront will need to be reduced to meet the maximum amount allowed, 20% as noted in the Zoning Code. Ultimately, the Zoning Administrator will determine compliance with the Zoning Code requirements as part of the Site Plan Review process.

Summary of Design Considerations

Planning Division staff requests that the UDC review the proposed development and provide feedback and findings based on the above-referenced standards as it relates to the design considerations noted below.

- **Building Design and Composition.** UDD 2 Building Design guidelines and requirements general speak to utilizing natural colors and materials, screening mechanical elements, designing with a sensitivity to

context, as well as incorporating articulation/modulation to break down large buildings and blank walls, and utilizing the same level of design on all side of a building. As proposed the building material palette primarily consists of fiber cement panels with metal accents.

Staff notes, generally and in summary, the UDC's Informational Presentation comments noted the following design considerations:

- Reducing the height of the parapet or increasing the window size to reflect a more residential scale or proportion versus office,
- Looking at how the joints or seams in the material on the upper-level work with or contribute to the other dark components of the building, including windows and storefronts, and
- Incorporating additional windows, or even a window in the door on the north elevation.

Staff requests the UDC provide feedback and findings on the overall building design and composition.

- **Landscape.** UDD 2 Landscape and Screening requirements and guidelines generally speak to functionality, screening views along roadways, complementing architectural features, and the ability of proposed plan to screen throughout the year. In addition, given the project site's frontage on US HWY 12/18, consideration should be given to the density of landscape buffers, berming, fencing, plant height and species, etc.

As shown on the plans there is are modular block retaining walls varying in height from one to five feet that extend from the building to the north side of the parking area and along the east side of the site. The useable open space appears to be located on top of the retaining wall, closer to the on-ramp, separating it from the other usable portions of the site and limiting its accessibility, and the majority of the site landscape appears to be located in front of the walls versus on top of the wall limiting its effectiveness as a screen or buffer.

Staff requests the UDC provide feedback and findings on the proposed landscape plan and retaining walls, especially with regard to providing adequate, year-round screening and buffers, as well as materials.

Staff notes that UDC nor the City has the ability to approve or require any improvements in the ATC easement shown on the plans. Ultimately, ATC approval is required for any improvements to be located in the easement. At the time of report writing, staff is unaware of whether ATC would support any improvements within the easement. If however ATC is amenable to landscape or walls being located in the easement, this could provide opportunities to create a more cohesive landscape buffer and open space amenity.

Generally, and in summary, the UDC's Informational Presentation comments encouraged incorporating an evergreen screen (i.e., Green Giant Arborvitae) along the north edge of the Beltline on-ramp to provide a screen for the residential use.

Staff notes that there are inconsistencies in the plans with regard to landscape and site amenities, including:

- The Lighting Plan shows landscaping located along the western property line where it does not appear on the Site and Landscape Plan,
- The Lighting Plan does not show any retaining walls,
- The Site and Landscape Plan show different extents of the retaining walls than the Grading and Erosion Control Plan, and

- There are two ground signs shown on the Site and Landscape Plan that are not shown on the civil plan sheets.
- **Lighting.** UDD 2 Lighting guidelines and requirements generally speak to site lighting and fixtures being appropriate for the type of lighting and use (i.e., security vs. ambient or accent), residential vs. commercial). Staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings related to the proposed light fixtures, especially fixtures OW3 and OW4, which appear on the elevation drawings to be luminaires that are more suitable for pole mounts instead of building mounts.

Staff also notes and the applicant is advised that there appear to be discrepancies between the lighting plan and MGO 29.36, including as it relates to uniformity ratio (5:1 permitted where 16:1 is proposed) and average light levels for vehicle use areas and parking areas. Revisions to the lighting plan will be required as part of the Site Plan Review process for the Building Inspection Division to complete their review for consistency with MGO 29.36.

- **Signage.** As shown on the Site and Landscape Plan, there are two ground signs; one along Seybold Road and one along the Beltline on-ramp frontage. UDD 2 Sign requirements and guidelines generally speak to signage being appropriate for the use, context and activity, not imposing upon the views of others, as well as being required to meet setback and size requirements as enumerated in the district requirements.

While the size and design of these signs is unknown at this time, the signage as shown on the Site and Landscape Plan **does not** appear to meet setback requirements. In addition, the "pylon sign" is located within the ATC easement.

Staff notes and the applicant is advised that signage is not part of this review or subsequent approval; a separate review and approval is required for all proposed signage. Staff encourages the applicant to continue to work with staff to ensure that any new signage code compliant.

Summary of UDC Informational Presentation Discussion

As a reference, a summary of the UDC's discussion and questions from the June 26, 2024, Informational Presentation are provided below.

Summary of Commission Discussion and Questions:

The Chair inquired about vision glass versus spandrel glass at the building's front, and suggested an inset solid material, wood look, or brighter panel in a different proportion. The cement panel green was discussed as being similar to a student apartment building near the Kohl Center. The applicant noted it is an olive tone meant to differentiate from the mix of grays in the adjacent Verizon building, and the brown tones on the other side, as a nice bridge between the two. Caution was expressed on how the joints will appear, with the storefronts and windows being dark. He suggested bringing the parapet down or the window heads up to appear less office and more residential at the upper portions of the building.

Commissioner Harper commented on the sidewalk termination to the east and lack of total connections for the possible families living here. (It was noted by staff that the adjacent parcels to the east are located in the Town of Middleton.) He encouraged Green Giant Arborvitae along the north edge to screen the residences from the Beltline on-ramp.

Commissioner Klehr commented on the black trim across the top, noting that it doesn't continue down vertically and should do so on both sides of the building. She also suggested adding more "eyes" on the rear of the

building/site in some way, for safety exiting to and in the parking lot, including a possible window in the door. The Chair remarked it will be important for safety, as well as being able to see out when exiting the building.

Further suggestions included recessing the apartment doors and tweaking the triangular strip with plantings to soften the building. The Chair commended the applicant for thinking outside the box; this is not the most walkable or hospitable environment, but it looks well segregated from the retail uses.