



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 5003 University Avenue & 659 N Whitney Way
Application Type: New Mixed-Use Building in Urban Design District 6
UDC will be an Approving Body
Legistar File ID #: [94294](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Steve Doran, Galway Companies, Inc. | Garrett Tomesh, JLA Architects

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the construction of a mixed-use development comprised of three seven-story buildings, with 480-490 residential units and 6,000 square-feet of commercial space. The development will be served by a combination of underground and surface parking.

Approval Standards: The UDC will be an approving body on this request. The site is in Urban Design District 6 (UDD 6), 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\(13\)](#).

Adopted Plan Recommendations: The project site is located in the [West Area Plan](#) (the Plan) planning area. The Plan recommends Regional Mixed-Use (RMU) development for the project site. More specifically, the Plan recommends building heights of up to 10 stories. The Plan also recommends that new development follow various design guidelines that are aimed at creating an engaging public realm by encouraging development that is more transit, pedestrian and bicycle friendly than the traditional suburban-style development that may exist along some corridors. Generally, and in summary, the design guidelines, which be found on pages 44-45 of the Plan, speak to minimizing building setbacks, incorporating changes in plane where materials transition, locating active uses and other design elements along street-facing elevations and at the ground level, avoiding blank walls, incorporating front porches, stoops, balconies, etc. that are well-integrated into the building design to add interest, and locating parking behind buildings, designing building entries to be prominent architectural features.

Zoning Related Information: The project site is zoned Regional Mixed-Use (RMX). 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.

The project site is also within the Transit-Oriented Development Overlay District (TOD), which enumerates development standards related to setbacks, entrance orientation, height, and automobile infrastructure.

Ultimately, the Zoning Administrator will determine compliance with all applicable Zoning requirements.

Summary of Design Considerations

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

- **Building Orientation and Ground Level Activation.** As reflected on the site plan, the building site is located at a prominent intersection, Whitney Way and University Avenue, and it has significant street frontage along Whitney Way. In addition, the internal site circulation of the site is designed to take on more of a street design than a surface parking lot. As such, consideration should be given to the building orientation along both internal and external pedestrian pathways, including as it relates to:
 - Creating strong building corners framing/anchoring the street intersections/site entrances,
 - Providing a richer level of design/detailing at the pedestrian level, including incorporating active unit and building entries along the ground floor, using architectural elements, landscaping, human-scale materials, and changes in plane where materials transition to reduce mass and scale, blank walls, and to add interest, and
 - Although little information was provided related to the building designs internal to the site, the exterior building design/detailing of the first-floor parking.

Staff request the Commission's feedback on the overall building orientation and ground level activation.

- **Building Design and Composition.** The project is located within the University Avenue corridor in an area that is comprised of a mix of residential and commercial uses, and that is also transitioning to a higher level of intensity, which is reflected in the more recent development in proximity to the project site, including Madison Yards, University Row, and those projects situated at the intersection of Old Middleton Road and S Whitney Way.

UDD 6 Building Design requirements and guidelines generally speak to designing with a sensitivity to context, avoiding large unbroken wall expanses, and designing with a consistent level of design across all elevations. Staff requests the UDC's feedback on the following design considerations as it relates to the UDD 6 guidelines and requirements:

- The design of building components (top, middle, base) and their proportions, especially given the high visibility of the upper floors along University Avenue as it relates to creating positive termination and interest at the top of the building,
 - Breaking down the overall building mass and scale, including the longer elevations and along the ground level,
 - Incorporating the same level of design across all elevations, both internal and external to the site, and
 - Minimizing blank walls; while the impacts of the site grading is largely unknown at this stage, there is grade change across the site and building exposure is anticipated. This is reflected in the elevation drawings near the corner of University Avenue and Whitney Way and along Whitney Way. Consideration should be given to future design solutions to reduce/minimize blank walls, including landscape, terraced planters, changes in materials, etc.
- **Exterior Materials.** UDD 6 Building Design requirements state that *"Exterior building materials shall be low maintenance and harmonious with those used on other buildings in the area."* As reflected on the elevation drawings, the exterior material palette is comprised of masonry and case stone, fiber cement lap siding and metal accents.

As shown on the elevation drawings, masonry is shown wrapping from the street-facing elevations into the interior surrounds of some balconies. As the more durable, high-quality material, consideration should be given using it in more prominent, visible locations.

Staff requests UDC's feedback on the overall material palette.