



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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TO: Urban Design Commission

FROM: Timothy M. Parks, Planner

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SUBJECT: ID [46928](#) (UDC); [47024](#) and [46775](#) (Plan Commission) – Approval of a request to rezone property addressed as 9910 Watts Road from SR-V2 (Suburban Residential–Varied 2 District) to TR-U1 (Traditional Residential–Urban 1 District) and approval of a conditional use for a residential building complex with 105 apartment units in two buildings and a clubhouse; 9th Ald. Dist.

The applicant, Dan Schmidt, is requesting approval to construct a residential building complex on Lot 1 of the 1000 Oaks residential subdivision. The development will consist of two three-story apartment buildings with 105 total units, and an attached one-story clubhouse and pool. Residential building complexes are conditional uses in the proposed TR-U1 (Traditional Residential–Planned) zoning district, which require approval by the Plan Commission following a recommendation on the design of the project by the Urban Design Commission. The Plan Commission is scheduled to review the proposed zoning map amendment and conditional use for this project on June 5, 2017, with Common Council approval of the rezoning scheduled for June 20.

The subject site is an undeveloped approximately 3.97-acre parcel that is the westernmost of three lots zoned for multi-family use in the 1000 Oaks subdivision. The site is bounded on the south by Watts Road, on the east by a City-owned stormwater management greenway (Outlot 1), and on the north and west by undeveloped land. Most of the western edge of the site contains a wetland and 75-foot regulatory setback. An easement for a future north-south regional multi-purpose path was also dedicated with the 1000 Oaks plat over a portion of the western property line within the wetland setback.

The proposed buildings will extend north to south across the center of the subject site. The southern building, Building A, will be a J-shaped 51-unit structure set back approximately 15 feet from Watts Road. The finished floor elevation of the building will be approximately five feet above the grade of the sidewalk along Watts Road. The proposed one-story clubhouse will be located at its northwesternmost corner of Building A, with the pool and pool deck located between Building A, the clubhouse, and the edge of the 75-foot wetland setback. Building B is proposed as a 54-unit L-shaped structure that will parallel the northern property line. One driveway from Watts Road will be located at the southeastern corner of the site, with surface parking for 65 automobiles proposed between the buildings and parallel to the eastern property line. Structured parking for 105 autos and 109 bicycles is proposed beneath the two buildings. The buildings will primarily be clad with six tones of fiber cement siding above a wainscot of dark-colored brick, and reflect a modern architectural influence that features right angles and a flat roof in this case.

The applicant is requesting a recommendation of *final approval* from the Urban Design Commission. As the Commission reviews the proposed residential building complex and makes its recommendation to the Plan Commission, the Planning Division recommends that the Urban Design Commission provide specific feedback on the following points:

- *The placement of the proposed buildings and orientation to Watts Road:* Staff believes that the 27.9 unit per acre density of the proposed development (minus the delineated wetland) is acceptable despite being slightly denser than the 16-25 unit per acre recommended for medium-density development in the Pioneer Neighborhood Development Plan. The proposed density is within the broader 16-40 unit per acre density recommended for the site by the Comprehensive Plan.

However, staff believes it would be desirable to orient more of the building towards Watts Road. As proposed, more of the building is oriented away from the street, either in north-facing units, particularly in Building B, or towards the side property lines. While the orientation to the west and the adjacent wetland and woodlands is understandable, the eastern and northern orientations overlooking parking or stormwater greenways may not be as aesthetically desirable long-term. Staff suggests that more of Building A parallel Watts Road, and that the amount and location of surface parking, particularly between Building A and the eastern property line, be revised to increase building presence along the southern edge of the site, or at a minimum, to increase the amount of greenspace provided on that side of the development.

- The Urban Design Commission is asked to affirm the architectural direction of the proposed complex. While the scale of the proposed three-story buildings is fine, staff feels that the City has seen a very similar architectural style and material palette from this project team on other sites they have developed around the City. In staff's pre-application meeting with the architect, different possible material palettes were presented, and staff noted a preference for an alternative simplified design concept with stone and wood/metal facade. In reviewing the proposed material palette, the Planning Division is concerned with the number of materials proposed. As currently presented, seven materials are proposed (counted by color and material). Staff suggests that the Commission and architect discuss whether there are ways that the architecture may be simplified and whether other exterior styles and material palettes could be considered for this site. When considering any conditional use to construct a new building, the Plan Commission shall find that the project creates an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability. The Urban Design Commission's affirmation of the architectural direction of the proposed development will directly inform the Plan Commission's finding for this conditional use.