

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT – Addendum #2

JANUARY 11, 2017 URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

JANUARY 23, 2017 PLAN COMMISSION



Project Address: 801 E. Washington Avenue

Application Type: Conditional Use

Legistar File ID # [45531](#) [Also see [44825](#) for additional information on this project.]

Prepared By: Timothy M. Parks, Planning Division
Report includes comments from other City agencies, as noted.

Requested Actions: Approval of a conditional use in the TE (Traditional Employment) zoning district to allow construction of an eight-story commercial/ office building containing 152,925 square feet of floor area at 801 E. Washington Avenue in Urban Design District 8.

Addendum

The applicant, Gebhardt Development, LLC, is proposing to construct either a four-story or eight-story commercial building on an approximately 1.17-acre parcel extending along S. Livingston Street from E. Washington Avenue to E. Main Street. The four-story version of the “Cosmos” development includes 52,900 square feet of retail and office space to be located surrounding a two-story, 40,025 square-foot theater/ concert hall, while the eight-story version of the project calls for an additional 40,000 to 60,000 square feet of office space to be constructed on four additional stories to be located above the four-story retail/ office/ entertainment complex. Automobile parking for the project will be provided off-site in a parking garage to be developed by the City at the southeastern corner of S. Livingston and E. Main streets.

At its November 30 meeting, the Urban Design Commission (UDC) granted the four-story version of the project initial approval and referred consideration of the eight-story version until concerns about the design of the structure could be addressed and the Plan Commission could address some of the land use questions related to the project. At its December 12, 2016 meeting, the Plan Commission approved most of the conditional uses required for the project (ID [44825](#)), including approval of the concert venue; restaurant-tavern and general retail uses; and the reduction in auto parking required, all of which would allow the four-story version of the project to proceed. The approval [letter](#) for the four-story version of the project is attached. However, the Plan Commission did not consider the conditional use in TE zoning to allow a building taller than five stories and 68 feet of height required for the eight-story version pending a recommendation by the UDC.

The applicant submitted revised plans on December 21, 2016 to address the outstanding issues related to the project, including the concerns raised by the UDC on November 30. The revised materials include a deeper third loading/ trash area adjacent to S. Livingston Street; refinements to the fenestration of the upper four floors; and extension of the galvanized steel bar screen proposed at the third floor to enclose the mechanical equipment for the concert venue adjacent to E. Main Street the full height to the bottom of the cantilevered fifth floor. The applicant indicates that this screen will be planted as a “green screen.”

As part of its December 12 approval, the Plan Commission stipulated that no administrative reduction in the number of required bike parking stalls be granted, although the Commission allowed the Zoning Administrator to designate that a certain number of the bike parking stalls be provided with vertical racks, and recommended that the distance of bike parking from the Cosmos may be increased beyond 100 feet for some of the stalls. Per the December 21 submittal, the applicant is proposing a total of 226 bike parking stalls to serve the project, including 58 stalls on the subject site adjacent to the public sidewalk in traditional racks; 50 vertical stalls to be located along a proposed screening wall adjacent to the plaza area to be shared with the Spark office building at 819 E. Washington Avenue; 60 interior spaces in the fourth floor lobby for use by office tenants; 50 standard

stalls in the plaza to be shared with The Spark subject to a reciprocal easement agreement; and 8 stalls within the E. Main street right of way (reduced from 26 racks/ 52 stalls throughout the adjacent terraces). The location of the at-grade bike parking and revised landscaping plans for the project are noted on the following in the revised plans: Sheet C200, “Landscaping Plan,” and “Site Plan, Urban Design Commission 12.21.2016”. The Zoning Administrator has determined that 181 bike stalls are required for the eight-story Cosmos project. Final approval of the bike parking plan by Planning and Zoning staff for consistency with the Plan Commission’s December 12 approval will be required prior to issuance of permits for the project.

Analysis and Conclusion

The Planning Division believes that the proposed Cosmos retail/ office/ entertainment complex at 801 E. Washington Avenue can meet the standards for conditional use approval, including standard #12 regarding height in excess of that allowed in the district. The eight-story building is generally well designed and complies with the requirements in Urban Design District 8 and with the recommendations for the subject site in the East Rail Corridor Plan, East Washington Avenue Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan, and Comprehensive Plan, including recommended building heights and required setbacks and stepbacks.

During its review of the revised December 21 plan set, the Planning Division requests that the Urban Design Commission give consideration to the screening treatment proposed overlooking E. Main Street at the third-fifth floors of the eight-story building. While the full-height treatment proposed by the applicant addresses some of the concerns expressed by staff about the void in building mass as previously proposed, staff is concerned about a potential lack of architectural cohesion created by the proposed screen and the appearance of the “green screen” during the winter. Specifically, staff requests that the applicant and UDC consider articulating the screening so that it reflects some of the patterning proposed on the rest of the building in an effort to create a more cohesive mass at the rear of the building that is attractive year-round.

Recommendation

In closing, the Planning Division recommends **approval** of the eight-story version of the Cosmos mixed-use project subject to input at the public hearings, final approval by the Urban Design Commission, and the conditions of the December 12, 2016 Plan Commission approval ([44825](#)) as may be amended specifically for the eight-story building.