



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 4205 Portage Road

Application Type: Residential Building Complex – Informational Presentation

Legistar File ID #: [72121](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Nick Patterson, T. Wall Enterprises Development, LLC | Interstate Overlook, LLC

Project Description: The applicant is providing an Informational Presentation for a proposed Residential Building Complex consisting of five buildings containing approximately 487 residential units.

Approval Standards: The UDC will be an **advisory body** on this request. [Section 33.24\(4\)\(c\)](#), MGO states that: *“The Urban Design Commission shall review the exterior design and appearance of all principal buildings or structures and the landscape plans of all proposed residential building complexes. It shall report its findings and recommendations to the Plan Commission.”*

Adopted Plans: The project site is located in the Hanson Road Neighborhood Development Plan (the “Plan”) planning area, which was amended in 2021. The Plan recommends the project site for multi-family residential development, including Housing Mix 3 for the eastern side of the project site and the more intensive Housing Mix 4 on the west. The former includes a maximum height recommendation of three and five stories. Subsequent to the Plan amendment, the project site was rezoned to reflect the current Plan recommendations. As part of the rezoning approval an advisory comment was included that stated *“Future development of the site will be expected to reflect the character recommended in the amended Hanson Neighborhood Development Plan, including higher density west of the future north-south street consistent with the Housing Mix 4 recommendation, and reduced scale and density between that street and Interstate 39/90/94 consistent with the Housing Mix 3 recommendation.”* In acknowledging this comment, staff notes that the buildings east of the extended “West Creekwood Lane” are somewhat reduced in scale compared those to the west. While the four-story heights east of Creekwood Lane properties exceed what is recommended, heights up to five stories and 65 feet are permitted under the property’s TR-U1 zoning.

The Plan also provides recommendations related to noise mitigation and future transportation connectivity. With regard to noise mitigation, the Plan notes that the applicable sound mitigation requirements will need to be met for residential development adjacent to Interstate 90/94. Finally, with regard to future transportation connectivity, this proposal depicts the planned extension of Creekwood Lane though an additional east-west connection to Portage Road is not reflected on the applicant’s plans.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommends that the UDC provides feedback on the development proposal regarding the aforementioned standards related to the items noted below. As part of this review, staff requests feedback be provided on the following elements as it relates to the aforementioned standard:

- **Building Orientation and Site Access.** While not detailed in this set, staff raised concerns in a pre-application discussion on how much of the ground level of certain buildings may be exposed above grade. While staff would expect a residential building to have some separation from grade, certain images

suggest that there may be a relatively significant exposure, more so than other typical buildings including the development across the street. Additionally, common building entries and individual unit entries appear to be set back from the street and connectivity to the street is relatively limited, both internally and externally to the public streets. In addition, external connectivity appears to also be limited by perimeter security gates. Staff requests the Commission's feedback regarding overall building orientation to the surrounding streets.

- **Building Design and Proportions.** Staff requests the UDC's feedback on the overall building mass and scale, specifically as it relates to the surrounding context and character, rhythm and articulation (vertical and horizontal building elements), architectural details, including balcony types and details and the building tower elements and roof features, all as they relate to the overall building architecture.
- **Building Materials and Composition.** As shown on the elevations the building materials palette is comprised of metal panel, masonry, wood accents, and fiber cement siding. Staff requests UDC feedback on the overall material palette related to the number of materials proposed, as well as their composition and transitions, ornamentation and detailing.
- **Wall packs.** Also related to the building's exterior design, it appears some wall pack/HVAC louvers are proposed on street-facing elevations. It has been a common recommendation of the UDC to not locate such louvers on street facing facades, though they have been approved in some situations when found to be well-integrated into a façade's design, or otherwise having their appearance minimized. Staff requests UDC feedback on the proposed integration of wall packs.
- **Signage.** As shown on the building elevations, a wall sign area is indicated on the southwest corner of the building, as well as on the retaining wall. Please note that the proposed signage does not appear to be consistent with the Sign Code due to size and mounting height on the building. Special approval would be required through the Comprehensive Design Review process. Staff requests the Commission's feedback and recommendations in identifying clear sign locations, acceptable mounting heights, evaluation of sign quantities, as well as preferred sign types.
- **Landscape.** While a landscape plan is not required as part of the Informational Presentation application materials, staff requests the Commission's feedback as it relates to providing an appropriately scaled, year-round landscape buffer along the interstate and screening of blank walls and exposed foundation.