PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

March 5, 2025

PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address:	**3361-3375 E Washington Avenue + 922-930 N Fair Oaks Avenue**
Application Type:	Informational Presentation for a New Mixed-Use Multi-Family Building in Urban Design District 5 **UDC will be an Approving Body**
Legistar File ID #:	87242
Prepared By:	Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Kevin Burow, Knothe & Bruce Architects | Travis Fauchald, Volker Development, Inc.

Project Description: The applicant is proposing a 5-story, mixed-use multi-family building with 153 residential units and 142 parking stalls.

Staff notes that as part of the development proposal, the applicant is actively seeking to rezone those portions of the project site along N Fair Oaks Avenue that are zoned Traditional Residential-Consistent 1 (TR-C1) to Commercial Corridor-Transitional (CC-T).

Approval Standards: The UDC will be an **approving body** on this request. The site is located in Urban Design District 5 ("UDD 5"), 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(12).

Zoning Related Information: The project site is zoned Commercial Corridor-Transitional (CC-T). 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 development. These standards will be in addition to the UDD 5 standards and are outlined in Section 28.060, including those that speak to building and entrance orientation, façade articulation, door and window openings, and building materials.

Staff notes that ultimately, the Zoning Administrator will determine compliance with the Zoning Code requirements.

Adopted Plan Recommendations: The project site is located in the Northeast Area Plan planning area, which recommends the project site for Community Mixed Use (CMU) land uses. As noted in the plan, development within the CMU land use category is intended to provide a more intensive mix of residential, commercial and civic uses, including mixed use buildings that range in height from 2-6 stories. Generally, development in these areas should be walkable and well-connected to surrounding development, transit oriented with buildings placed close to the sidewalks, and where structured and on-street parking are encouraged, and where surface parking shall be screened from view. The plan further identifies the corner of E Washington Avenue and N Fair Oaks as a Commercial Core, which are areas where ground floor commercial uses intended to provide goods and services to the surrounding residential development.

Summary of Design Considerations

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

- **Building Design and Composition.** UDD 5 Building Design guidelines and requirements generally speak to buildings being designed a with sensitivity to context, low maintenance materials that are complementary to those present in the area, utilizing four-sided architecture and limiting large unbroken facades, especially on elevations visible from roadways or other properties.

  Considering the very long lengths of both street facing façades, over 300 feet and 200 feet on East Washington Avenue and N Fair Oaks, respectively. Staff has concerns regarding the overall building length and scale, as well as the repetition in the design and detailing contributing to the perceived length of the building. Staff requests the UDC provide feedback on ways to break up the overall length of these façades not only in terms of massing, but also in terms of providing a richer level of architectural detailing to maintain a pedestrian scale. Consideration should be given to incorporating changes in plain where materials transition or deeper setbacks in the building wall to break up the proposed long mass.

  In addition, the project site located at a flat iron corner at the intersection of E Washington Avenue and N Fair Oaks Avenue, a major intersection. As such, consideration should be given to maintaining a strong corner presence.

  Staff requests UDC provide feedback on the overall building design and composition relative to the architectural detailing (vertical and horizontal elements) and architectural corner element, as well as the application of materials and details, including as it relates to providing the same level of detailing across all elevations and the treatment/screening of blank wall expanses, especially those along pedestrian pathways.

- **Materials.** UDD 5 "*Building Design*" guidelines and requirements generally speak to utilizing building materials that are low maintenance and that are harmonious with those of adjacent buildings. As indicated on the elevations, the material palette is primarily comprised of composite lap siding and panels (TBD) and a brick veneer base course.

  Staff requests the UDC provide feedback on the proposed exterior building materials.

- **Wall Packs.** While not indicated on the elevations, wall pack units are commonly associated with residential units. It has been the current practice to locate wall packs and their associated louvers so that they are not located on street-facing or on highly visible facades, although they have been approved in some situations when found to be well integrated into the façade's design. Staff requests the Commission's comments on the potential use wall packs and the preferred location, as well as it relates to the design detailing and their overall integration with architecture.

- **Landscaping and Screening.** The UDD 5 guidelines and requirements state that "*Landscaping shall be used for functional as well as decorative purposes, including framing desirable views, screening unattractive features and views, screening different uses from each other, and complementing the architecture of the building*." As part of the Commission's review, consideration should be given to providing adequate year-round screening of the surface parking areas, as well as incorporating a variety of plantings to provide year-round color and texture, especially along pedestrian pathways.

  In addition, the project is adjacent to single-family residential development. As such, consideration should be given to providing adequate transitions, buffers and screening.

- **Site Plan Considerations.** Overall, while parts of the external site and building design appear to reflect the urban environment in which the site sits, with active building entries and uses oriented toward E

Washington Avenue, there are portions of the site and building design that appear to be more reflective of a suburban context, including the through-site access drive and surface parking area with head-in parking, as well as the limited connectivity of individual units to both the at-grade amenity space and along N Fair Oaks Avenue.

- Building Orientation. The project site has frontage on two streets, within an active mixed-use corridor. In addition, the project site will be served by a through-site access drive with surface parking and a centrally located amenity space. Consideration should be given to improving the building orientation to not only to N Fair Oaks, where, as noted on the Concept Site Plan, active unit entries are not provided, as well as the internal access drive and amenity space.

- Connectivity. Given the project site location in an area that is well served by transit, as well as mixed use, there will be a high level of pedestrian activity. As such, consideration should be given to both internal, as well as external connectivity, including providing a continuous through-site pedestrian pathway, as well as individual unit connections to the street and amenity spaces.

- Surface Parking Layout. As indicated on the Concept Site Plan, the project site will be served by a through-lot access drive and surface parking area. Consideration should be given to the design of the parking area and access drive, including utilizing more of a “complete street” design character with an alternate parking configuration (i.e., parallel parking or angled parking) to limit head light glare into residential units that are oriented towards the parking area and reduce vehicle overhangs into the pedestrian pathways, detached sidewalks with terraces or wider sidewalks to accommodate both pedestrian circulation and vehicle overhang, utilizing a combination of compact and standard stall sizes which could result in less paving and more landscape or open space, and/or providing enhanced pedestrian amenities (striped crossings or alternative paving, benches, wider sidewalks, etc.).