



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 575 Zor Shrine Place
Application Type: Advisory Recommendation on a Planned Residential Building Complex
Initial/Final Approval is Requested
Legistar File ID # [65583](#)
Prepared By: Kevin Firchow, Acting UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Robert Gorsuch, Zor Shrine Shriners International | Mark Laverty, Saturday Properties

Project Description: The applicant is proposing a residential building complex containing 479 residential apartment units in two buildings with underground parking. The property is currently zoned SE Suburban Employment. As part of the overall request, the applicant is also seeking a rezoning to TR-U2 Traditional Residential-Urban District.

Project Schedule:

- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review this proposal on July 12, 2021.
- The Common Council is scheduled review the rezoning on July 20, 2021.

Approval Standards:

The UDC is an **advisory body** on this request. Section 28.151 of the Zoning Code requires that Residential Building Complexes are reviewed by the Urban Design Commission pursuant to the provisions in Section 33.24(4)(c) which states: "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 City Plan Commission."

Summary of Design Considerations and Recommendations

Planning Division staff requests that the UDC provide findings and recommendations as required by the Zoning Code.

Adopted Plan Recommendations

In regards to adopted plan recommendations, the Comprehensive Plan recommends "community mixed-use development" for the subject property and surrounding areas. That recommendation generally includes buildings between 2-6 stories in height and up to a density of 130 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). The subject site and surrounding West Towne Mall area also includes a note stating, "West Towne Mall, the Odana Road corridor, and Westgate Mall are shown as future mixed-use areas. However, redevelopment that includes substantial residential components...should be preceded by adoption of a detailed City plan. Such a plan should address connectivity improvements, more parks and open space, and other amenities and infrastructure necessary to support residential development." Staff note that a planning effort is underway and could be completed later this year.

Design Considerations

In making their advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission, Planning Division staff requests that the UDC include feedback on the following design-related considerations:

- **Building Modulation, Articulation, and Long Views.** Staff requests that the UDC provide comment on the adequacy of façade modulation and articulation, especially vertical modulation along the portions of the building's long facades that may have greater visibility. In addition, staff request the UDC provide feedback on the longer views of the property that will be visible from the Beltline.
- **Landscaping and Open Spaces.** Considering the current lack of parks within walking distance of the site, staff previously requested that the development team demonstrate that they have adequate on-site open space amenities. Staff requests that the UDC provide feedback on the overall design of the on-site landscaping and programming of open space areas and relationship to buildings. Comments are requested on features such as the central plaza area, amenity decks, and other provided spaces. Additionally, the adequacy of parking lot landscaping should be considered.
- **Building Orientation, Future Streets, and Circulation.** The desire to provide a future public street extension of Zor Shrine Place has been discussed during multiple pre-application meetings with the development team. Staff believes such an extension is ultimately an important to accommodate additional density in the area and to provide the opportunity for future connectivity if/when properties to the east redevelop. City Engineering will be recommending that that a right-of-way reservation be established along the north side of the site, in the parking lot area designated as Outlot 1. The construction of a street here would be a possible future improvement. Traffic Engineering staff have prepared a concept showing how a street could be design based on the current building placement, allowing for a 15-foot setback at its closest point between the right-of-way and front of buildings.

Aside from noting the possible construction of a future street, staff request that UDC provide feedback on the overall orientation of the buildings and pedestrian circulation. The buildings don't have a strong street orientation, which is recognized as a challenge prior to the extension of a public street. In considering the current plans and the potential of a future street, staff requests that the UDC provide recommendations or findings related to the orientation of the buildings and whether changes to building design and site landscaping could improve the overall orientation and pedestrian circulation and character through the site.

- **Tree Preservation.** Considering the existing vegetation on site, staff requested that the applicant provide additional tree survey information.