

SUBJECT: A report and recommendation on a Final Development Plan for Phase I within Planned Development District 50 (PD-50) along Burnet Avenue in the neighborhood of Avondale.

BACKGROUND

On May 18, 2007, the Cincinnati Planning Commission approved a change of zoning from RMX Residential Mixed and CN-M Commercial Neighborhood Mixed to PD and accepted a concept plan and development program statement for PD-50 located on Burnet Avenue in Avondale. On June 6, 2007, Cincinnati City Council also approved this zone change and the concept plan with the development program statement for PD-50. This concept plan represents the first phase of implementation of the Burnet Avenue Urban Renewal Plan.

DESCRIPTION

PD-50 is within the area bounded on the west by Burnet Avenue, on the north by Hickory Street, on the east by Harvey Avenue and on the south by the southern boundary of 3437 Harvey Avenue, 431 Maple Avenue and the northern boundary of the Post Office property.

Currently this area along Burnet Avenue is predominantly characterized by vacant lots. As the Uptown Consortium acquired properties in the area, older buildings were cleared from the site. Most of the commercial buildings on Burnet Avenue along the length of the project site have been removed. The structures remaining are mostly single-family homes.

FINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

A final development plan has been prepared and submitted by DNK Neyer Partnership. Elements of the Final Development Plan include the following:

The redevelopment plan for Phase I calls for a mixed commercial development along Burnet Avenue and a parking structure. The commercial area will consist of two buildings; a six-story medical office building with a parking garage behind the office building and a mixed-use office building for the Cincinnati Herald.

Building	Height	Square Footage/Spaces
Medical Office Building	6 stories - 109' ht.	126,038 square feet gross
Herald Building - mixed use	3 stories - 48' ht.	44,409 square feet gross
Parking Structure	6 levels - 74' ht. (top of stair tower)	1,445 parking spaces

Medical Office Building

In order to reduce the medical office building to a more neighborhood-oriented scale, the building has been designed to break the mass into smaller pieces using different materials and forms. The ground level will be mostly transparent in order to provide a visual connection between the interior environment and the street. The southern section of the first floor, consists of a curtain wall interspersed with occasional aluminum panels to create a whimsical effect that abstractly interprets the “weaving” concept. The northern section consists of a curtain wall interspersed with occasional Prodema panels to again create a whimsical effect that is child-friendly. The Prodema material is a very sturdy and weather-resistant resin panel that has the look of wood. This material can be seen on the Mayfield Clinic building on the west (southbound) side of Interstate 71 just south of the Smith-Edwards exit.

The upper floors on the southern section of the structure consist of alternating corrugated aluminum panels and windows. A large curtain wall extending from the entrance to the fifth floor, highlights the entrance and breaks up the massing. The sixth floor on the north side cantilevers slightly out over the outdoor dining area, seemingly “punching through” the vertical volume and recalling the “weaving” concept. The northern elevation has the same Prodema material as the rest of the vertical volume described above. The other elevations, including the curved façade of the south side, consist of alternating horizontal bands of corrugated aluminum panels and windows, creating a very modern effect.

The Cincinnati Herald Building

The Cincinnati Herald Building, which will be located at the corner of Burnet and Northern Avenues will anchor the north side of Phase I redevelopment along Burnet Avenue. This building will be mixed-use, with retail and/or a restaurant envisioned for the ground floor, and offices on the top two levels of a three-story building. The design of this building will complement the medical office building and will contribute to the distinct identity of the overall development.

The Burnet Avenue elevation will consist of storefront windows on the first floor. The second and third floors will consist of alternating horizontal bands of Prodema material and windows. Curved aluminum canopies will bracket the corners at the second floor and roof levels. The Northern Avenue elevation will consist of the same materials as the Burnet Avenue elevation. The other, less visible, elevations will consist of alternating horizontal bands of corrugated aluminum panels broken up with Prodema trim pieces and windows.

Parking Garage

The proposed six-level, 1,450-space parking structure (part of Phase I) will be tucked away behind the proposed commercial and residential developments. The residential portion of this PD will be submitted at a later date as Phase IA. Due to the topography of the site, only five of the six levels of parking will be exposed above ground on the east side of the parking structure. Two entries are proposed, both from the extended Northern Avenue. The longest exposed façade of the parking structure will be along Northern Avenue. This façade is also where the most intensive architectural treatment of the façade will occur with design elements intended to break up the massing of the garage and incorporate it into the overall theme of the development. Landscaping will also be provided around the perimeter of the structure where possible, to further soften its edges.

The most important elevation of the parking garage, the one that faces Northern Avenue, is treated with curved metal mesh panels that weave in and out of one another as they follow the column lines and decks of the garage. The other elevations consist partly of the “weaving” concept wrapping around and enveloping the sides of the garage, with the remainder being screened with vertical metal mesh panels. The garage is bracketed by three stair towers that consist of transparent curtain walls with alternating ‘stripes’ of aluminum curtain wall panels. These stair towers will be lighted from the inside and will act as beacons to the community.

Landscaping

A pocket park featuring an outdoor dining and/or gathering area will be located along the Burnet Avenue frontage between the two commercial buildings. Open spaces have been identified between the residential area and the Post Office as well as mid-block along Burnet Avenue. A unified streetscape and landscape design will tie the entire area together and provide a unique identity for the neighborhood.

Lighting

New decorative street lights are being provided as part of the streetscape for Phase I. These lights will be the "Davit Arm" style, similar to what is currently being used nearby along Martin Luther King Drive between Burnet Avenue and Vine Street. The service drive will be lit using the same fixtures. The street lights will be 35 feet high and the service drive lights will be 25 feet high. Pedestrian pathways will be lit with modern-style decorative lights similar to those used in the International Friendship Park. These lights will be 12 to 14 feet high. The service drive will also be lit using recessed lighting under the portion of the building connecting the medical office building and the garage.

Signs

The Uptown Consortium and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC) are currently working together to develop a comprehensive sign package that encompasses the Uptown district, CCHMC, and Burnet Avenue. This planning is in the very early stages and is not expected to be complete before this development is well into construction. The sign guidelines will need to be reviewed by the Planning Commission at a later date as a major amendment to the final development plan.

Parking Analysis

Use	Approx. Area (s.f.)	Ratio (spaces : s.f.)	Spaces Required
<i>Medical Office Building</i>			
Medical clinic	37,131	1:150	248
Office	88,907	1:400	223
<i>Herald Building</i>			
Office	33,309	1:400	84
Retail	4,093	1:250	17
Restaurant	3,548	1:150	24
Outdoor dining	1,200	1:300	4

Total spaces required for commercial/mixed use: 596
 Total spaces provided in parking garage: 1,445

Excess parking will be used by Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center main campus employees.

Density and Open Space

Parcel	Gross Floor Area (s.f.)	Land Area (acres)	Density (F.A.R.)	Open Space Area (acres)
Med Office / Garage	594,654	3.5	3.9	1.1
Herald Building	44,409	0.5	2.0	0.2
Future Northern Ave.		0.8	0.8	
Undeveloped Area		1.0	1.0	
Total	639,063	5.8	7.7	1.3

Statement of Uses

Use	Area (g.s.f.)
<i>Medical Office Building</i>	
Medical Clinic	37,131
Office – General	88,907
Total	126,038
<i>Herald Building</i>	
Office – General	33,309
Retail	4,093
Restaurant	3,548
Common Area	3,459
Total	44,409
<i>Parking Garage</i>	
Parking Garage	468,616

Project Sponsors and Ownership

Ownership

- Uptown Consortium, Inc.
- City of Cincinnati

Sponsors

- Children’s Hospital Medical Center
- Sesh Communications, Inc. (Cincinnati Herald)

Future ownership and control

Parcel	Future Owner
Medical Office Building / garage	Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
Herald Building	Sesh Communications, Inc.
Future right-of-way	City of Cincinnati
Undeveloped area	NTP Development, LLC

Maintenance and upkeep will be the responsibility of the future landowner of each parcel. The future right-of-way streetscape will be maintained by the adjacent landowner and the vehicular pavement and street lighting will be maintained by the City of Cincinnati. Common spaces in the commercial area will be maintained initially by the developer, and later by a property owners association to be formed by the owners of the medical office building, the parking structure and the Herald Building.

Project Investment

The Uptown Consortium is putting approximately \$5 million into infrastructure improvements to prepare the site for development. The total investment by all the project partners is approximately \$50 million. The City of Cincinnati effectively contributed about \$1 million to the project by selling the city land for \$1 in exchange for the infrastructure improvements.

Phase schedule:

Building	Start construction	Finish construction / core & shell
Combined sewer relocation	October 2007	November 2007
Water main	December 2007	January 2007
Other public utilities	February 2007	March 2007
Road improvements	July 2008	September 2008
Streetscape improvements	September 2008	October 2008
Herald Building	November 2007	July 2008
Parking structure	November 2007	December 2008
Medical Office Building	November 2007	November 2008

CONSISTENCY WITH EXISTING PLANS

This Final Development Plan for PD-50 represents Phase I of the Burnet Avenue Urban Renewal Plan.

CODE REQUIREMENTS

Under Section 1429-15, the City Planning Commission may approve a Final Development Plan for a development in a PD District on consideration of the following:

(a) Consistency

This Plan is consistent with the purpose of the PD District because it:

- Allows for more efficient development of property
- Allows the developer to be more creative with the use of the space, creating a mixed-use development that would not be possible with conventional zoning.
- Includes open space areas interspersed throughout the development, and features landscaping that creates an aesthetically pleasing environment.

(b) Adequate Streets

- The development has an adequate street network

(c) Adequate Infrastructure

The following statements relate to the site infrastructure:

- The developer worked with MSD to determine sufficiency of sewer credits and impact
- The developer worked with GCWW to ensure no interference with water mains, and appropriate hydrants and sprinkling.
- The developer worked with DOTE to determine roadway design.

(h) Sufficiency of Provisions for Maintenance of Common Areas

The Burnet Avenue and Northern Avenue streetscapes and other common spaces in the commercial area will be maintained initially by the developer, and later by a property owners association to be formed by the owners of the medical office building, the parking structure and the Herald Building.

(f) Compatibility

The proposed uses and arrangement are compatible with surrounding land uses because:

- The site is located near commercial uses, but is also adjacent to several residential streets. The mix of uses proposed in the Burnet Avenue development is consistent with uses found in the area. The low-intensity of the residential and office uses are compatible with the nearby residential neighborhood.
- The development will assist in the continued revitalization of this important commercial corridor.

FINDINGS

The Burnet Avenue Redevelopment will be an asset to the Avondale community and will help to spur additional revitalization efforts in the Burnet Avenue Business District. This project offers a good mix of uses, high quality construction and design that is compatible with the neighborhood.

Therefore, it is the opinion of staff of the Department of City Planning that the proposed Burnet Avenue Redevelopment Phase I is in compliance with Section 1429-15 “Planning Commission Approval of Final Development Plan”. The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the Planned Development District Regulations and the approved Concept Plan and Development Program Statement.

RECOMMENDATION

The staff of the Department of Community Development and Planning recommends that City Planning Commission take the following actions:

Approve the Final Development Plan for Burnet Avenue Redevelopment Phase I within PD-50.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED:

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Senior City Planner

Charles C. Graves III
Director of City Planning Department

Attachments