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Mr. Larry Forester, Chairman
Members of the LFUCG Planning Commission
200 E Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507

March 6, 2023

RE: Proposed Zone Change for 262, 266, 270, 276 Midland Avenue and 604 Winchester Road

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members:

Our firm represents the Applicant, UCD Midland, LLC, in this matter before the Commission in which our client seeks a zone map amendment and approval of a preliminary development plan for five lots known and designated as 262/266/270/276 Midland Avenue and 604 Winchester Road. The lots currently contain the principal office of the Lexington Cut Stone, Marble & Tile Company. The property is fronted by the intersection of Winchester Road and Midland Avenue along what is commonly referred to as the “curve” before changing to Third Street and before reaching the “Herald-Leader Building” now owned by the Fayette County Public School System.

UCD Midland is requesting a zone change from the current combination of the B-1 (Neighborhood Business), M-U (Mixed Use), and I-1 (Light Industrial) zones to B-2A (Downtown Business Frame) for all of the lots. The proposed development plan calls for the construction of two (2) residential apartment buildings, each with five (5) floors, and with one of the buildings providing retail on the first floor.

Description of Project:

The five-lot site is comprised of 2.85 acres along Winchester Road and Midland Avenue situated in the Midland Shoppes Area of Lexington. It is adjacent to the Lexington Design Center and is across the street from the DV8 Kitchen, and near both the Met Apartments and the Isaac Murphy Memorial Gardens. The zone change is requested to allow the construction of two apartment buildings designed to complement each other, provide shared amenities, and create an estimated 182 residential dwelling units between the two buildings.

Goals and Objectives of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan:

The proposed zone change to B-2A agrees with the Goals and Objectives of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. This application overwhelmingly meets the criteria of the Themes and Goals as follows:

- Theme A Goal 1(b) Accommodate the demand for housing in Lexington responsibly, prioritizing higher-density and mixture of housing types.

This proposal prioritizes higher density housing by adding 182 additional residential dwelling units.

- Theme A Goal 2(a) Identify areas of opportunity for infill, redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and mixed use development.

This property is currently zoned for neighborhood business, mixed use, and light industrial and is comprised of 2.85 acres. This project takes this land and repurposes it from commercial/industrial use to provide much needed housing opportunities within the downtown infill development area. While largely residential, the project does provide a mixed use through a retail storefront.

- Theme B Goal 2(d) Prioritize multi-modal options to de-emphasize single occupancy vehicle dependence.

This proposal incorporates 22 bicycle rack spaces as well as interconnection with the walking trail system and Lex Tran to de-emphasize dependency on single occupancy vehicle use for travel.

- Theme D Goal 1(a) Support the Complete Streets concept, prioritizing a pedestrian first design that also accommodates the needs of bicycle, mass transit, and other vehicles.

Situated along Midland Avenue, this proposed project will also incorporate and provide a priority connection with the Town Branch Commons Greenway for bikers and walkers from Midland Avenue to Vine Street to the Rupp District and beyond. It is within walking distance and biking distance to the heart of downtown.

- Theme E Goal 1(d) Maximize development on vacant land and unimproved lots within the Urban Service Boundary and promote redevelopment of underutilized land in a manner that enhances existing urban form and/or historic features.

This project takes and repurposes, through adaptive reuse, land previously used for light industrial and commercial retail. The land is utilized for housing instead and also at a high density, saving space while maintaining the current land boundary.

Engagement:

Representatives of the applicant and developer have arranged for and are currently scheduled to meet with members of the Bell Court Neighborhood Association and the Mentelle Neighborhood Association on March 15, 2023, as well as the Williams Wells Brown Neighborhood Association and the Midlands Condominium Association on March 16, 2023.

Place Type/Development Type/Requested Zone Change:

The proposed development fits within the Downtown category and HNRMU (High Density Non-Residential Mixed Use) under the Placebuilder criteria of the Comprehensive Plan. Downtown is the most appropriate place type and HNRMU the most appropriate development type, because at its core,

the project involves mid-rise buildings offering dense residential uses and provides for a variety of transportation options. Further, the project prioritizes density, ground level pedestrian engagement, trail head connection, multi-modal options, and appropriate transition to urban and historic neighborhoods. The applicant is seeking a zone change to B-2A, which is a recommended zone for this place type.

Development Criteria: Downtown/High Density Non-Residential Mixed Use

The following are some of the criteria which are either not included on the development plan or warrant further discussion:

Site Design Building Form & Location:

A-DS5-3 Building orientation should maximize connections with the surrounding area and create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere.

Building design is oriented toward the street front. In addition to widened pedestrian sidewalks and social hub area there are connections to the Town Branch Commons Greenway for pedestrian access to downtown area and adjoining neighborhoods.

A-DS5-4 Development should provide a pedestrian oriented atmosphere and activated ground level.

The project incorporates widened sidewalks that merge into walking paths/greenways that tie into trailheads that are connected for pedestrians and various modes of transportation. Corner outdoor plaza area serves as social gathering hub for the community.

A-DS10-1 Residential units should be within reasonable walking distance to a focal point.

High density residential units situated within pedestrian community-wide masterplan for easy access to focal points such as the DV8 Kitchen, Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden and the Met, the National Ave bar and restaurant district and downtown Lexington.

A-DN1-1 High density residential development (HR) should be located on corridors and downtown.

The project is designed for two high density residential multi-family apartment buildings and is situated at the intersection of Midland and Winchester Road (Third Street) which is located in the downtown area.

C-LI6-1 Developments should incorporate multi-family housing and walkable commercial uses into development along arterials/corridors

High density residential apartment buildings integrated with community greenspace areas and retail component along major arterial Midland Avenue and Winchester Road.

C-LI7-1 Developments should create mixed use neighborhoods with safe access to community facilities, greenspace, employment, business, shopping and entertainment.

Development incorporates high density multi-family housing with pedestrian friendly access to greenway/walking trail system with retail component. Includes safe and easy access to downtown and University employment, historic neighborhoods, entertainment, dining, and increased greenspace.

E-GR9-4 Development should intensify underutilized properties and develop vacant and underutilized gaps within neighborhoods.

This project takes underutilized commercial and industrial space and repurposes it for high density residential use. Creates 182 new housing unit where there are presently none.

E-GR10-2 Developments should provide walkable service and amenity oriented commercial spaces.

The project design incorporates and provides for a corner retail/public space. This is accessible for the building residents but also for the Downtown/ East End residents as well.

A-DS4-1 A plan for a connected multi-modal network to adjacent neighborhoods, greenspaces, developments, and complementary uses should be provided.

The project provides for connectivity that links to LexTran and the Town Branch Commons greenway/trail system and Legacy Trail through its expanded sidewalks fronting the project along the arterial.

A-DS5-1 Adequate multi-modal infrastructure should be provided to ensure vehicular from other modes of transport.

Bicycle racks, pedestrian walkway system, and integration with the existing transit stop in front of the project provides separate transportation access from vehicular transport.

D-CO2-1 Safe facilities for all users and modes of transportation should be provided.

Integration with Lexington's three major trail systems that meet at Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden will include potential accommodation of the Brighton trail on the property, bicycle racks, and a transit stop in front of the project all provide for and encourage multi-modal forms of transportation. Additionally, adequate parking contained within the facility but with separation from other forms of transportation provides for safe operation of all forms of transportation.

A-EQ7-3 Community open spaces should be easily accessible and clearly delineated from private open spaces.

Project provides for open space community plaza in front of active retail area. There is a clear delineation between this public space and the private green space located within the rear of the development and oriented away front the front of the development.

B-PR7-1 Connections to greenways, tree stands, and stream corridors should be provided.

Development provides for widening of sidewalks and trail head connectivity to Town Branch Commons greenway trail system.

B-PR7-3 Developments should improve the tree canopy.

This project will increase the tree canopy over the existing coverage.

E-GR3-1 Physical and visual connections should be provided to existing greenway networks.

The project will create signage directing pedestrians and bicyclists to various links to the Town Branch Commons trail/greenway system.

No variances are requested by the Applicant at this time.

This proposal provides for essential residential multi-family housing opportunities for the community at a high density level.. It makes the most and best use of the available land space for this and further, makes use of underutilized land situated within the Urban Service Boundary. It supports and is made in conformity with the Place Builder and is in agreement with the Goals and Objectives of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher M. Clendenen

CMC/ptb