

STAFF REPORT

Case Number: 14-ZA-02
Request: Amend PD-81 and approve Conceptual Site Plan
Address: 11771 Mira Lago Boulevard
Lot Size: 10.58 Acres
Petitioner: T. Sorrento Incorporated

Existing Conditions:

T. Sorrento Incorporated (TSI) is proposing to build a multi-family community within the Mira Lago peninsula. This proposed site is the 10.58 acre tract located on the southwest corner of the LBJ Freeway and Mira Lago Boulevard. To the east of the site is undeveloped lot zoned for future retail, office land uses. To the south of proposed site is the senior living community called “Evergreen at Farmers Branch”. This multi-family development is a three story building containing 91 dwelling units. South of Evergreen is another multi-family development known a Portofino Apartments. The Portofino community is four stories and consists of 224 apartments, and also contains an internal multi-level parking garage.

To the west of the site is undeveloped land located in the floodplain of the Elm Fork of the Trinity River.

The entire Lago Vista peninsula (consisting of approximately 66 acres) is zoned Planned Development No. 81 (PD-81).

This PD allows for a wide variety of retail, office and high density residential development. This 10.58 acre undeveloped tract, however, is located within the “**Employment Core**” zoning subdistrict, which does not allow residential land uses. PD-81 does allow multi-family development within the “**Mixed Residential**” subdistrict. Therefore the applicant is requesting an amendment to PD-81 changing the subdistrict classification of this tract from “**Employment Core**” to the “**Mixed Residential**” subdistrict.

Site Design:

The applicant is proposing to build 2 buildings consisting of 448 dwelling units in two phases. Phase One will be located on the easternmost 5 acres and consist of 224 dwelling units in one building. Phase Two will consist of the remaining property to the west and also have 224 units in one building. Both phases will be 4 story buildings with internal parking structures.

The architectural style of the exterior of each building will be Contemporary Mediterranean. All exteriors will consist of brick, stone and stucco material, and be comparable in style to the existing buildings on the peninsula.

The applicant originally proposed 40% brick and stone, and 60% stucco.

Although stucco is defined as a masonry material within PD-81, City staff is not supportive of the high percentage of stucco proposed (60%) on the exterior of these buildings. All the existing buildings within PD-81 have more stone or brick than this project. City staff has recommended adding more stone or brick to the project. In addition, City staff has suggested TSI increase the thickness of the proposed stucco to at least ¾" and use a "3 step gypsum-plaster" application process.

Note:

The stucco percentage issue was discussed at length at the June 9th Public hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission. Although the public hearing was properly closed, the Planning & Zoning Commission voted to continue discussion on this case at the next meeting June 26th.

At the June 23rd Planning Zoning Meeting the applicant agreed to increase the percentage of brick and stone to 60%, and limit the amount of stucco to 40%. The P&Z eventually passed a successful motion recommending approval of this zoning amendment, including the new 60% brick and stone requirement.

Most of the dwelling units for both phases will be either one or two bedroom designs. Only 28 of proposed 448 units will be three bedroom units (6% of total). All proposed dwelling units meet or exceed the minimal square footage requirements outlined in PD-81.

The applicant is proposing the development of only Phase One at this time. City staff has recommended that Phase Two be delayed until several needed planning elements are in place within the peninsula, or PD-81. These elements are described later in report (See Conditions).

Within the Phase One the applicant proposes to build a four story building containing 224 units. Included in this first building will be a leasing center and main community area for the project. This community area will also include an internet café and have access to the large pool courtyard. A second courtyard, more passive with landscaping and outdoor seating areas, is also included in the first building. All units will have a private balcony or patio.

PD-81 requires that all developments containing residential units provide at least 20 square feet of retail space for every residential unit (224 units x 20sf= 4,480 sf of required retail space). In an effort to meet this requirement, the applicant is proposing to develop 7 "Live-Work" units, consisting of approximately 4,480 square feet. These Live-Work units will be constructed to commercial building standards, but will be allowed to be temporarily used as dwelling units. Eventually, as the demand for more retail space increases within PD-81, these units will transition into retail and office space. All of the proposed Live-Work units are located along the eastern edge of the site facing Mira Lago Boulevard and will have direct access to the sidewalk.

The majority of the roofs for both buildings will be of clay or concrete pipe design and material. All HVAC equipment will be hidden from public street view and located on the roof (inset platforms will be designed on the courtyard slope of the roofs to accommodate the HVAC equipment).

Other amenities offered within this residential community will include climate controlled hallways, elevators, 24 hour fitness center, internet café, common outdoor kitchens, and extra on-site storage areas.

The estimated cost for the proposed development (both phases) is \$60 million.

Landscaping and Open Space

The applicant has proposed to provide approximately 25% of the site as landscaped open space. PD-81 requires 10%.

Two interior courtyards are included in Phase One. Three courtyards are included in the Phase Two building.

The proposed streetscape along Mira Lago Boulevard (in front of the proposed Live/Work units) will include wide sidewalks with paver brick accents and canopy trees to provide ample shade for the future retail corner. This streetscape will be comparable with the existing streetscape elements south of the site (in front of Evergreen and Portofino Apartments).

Along the western edge of the site is a wooded floodplain area adjacent to the Elm Fork of the Trinity River. This property is controlled by the Dallas County Utility and Reclamation District (DCURD). Future development within this area is extremely limited and will most likely remain as a natural open space. An existing 10' hard surface trail is located within this area and is maintained by the local Property Owners Association (POA). TSI has agreed to create several pedestrian trail connections to this existing trail network for both Phase One and Two.

In addition, the applicant has agreed to develop the southern tip of the central block within PD-81 into a small common green or pocket park. The size of this small park will be approximately ½ acre. TSI has also agreed to develop a 5' wide hard surface walking trail around the remaining perimeter of this central undeveloped block. TSI has also agreed to allow the remaining portion of the block to be used temporarily as a large common open space. TSI has agreed to re-grade, add topsoil, and reseed to this central block area to allow more recreational use of this area. Upon completion of these park and open space improvements to the central block area the local Property Owners Association (POA) will be responsible for future maintenance.

Parking

PD-81 requires a minimum of 1.5 parking spaces for every dwelling unit (448 units x 1.5 = 672 spaces). The future retail space will eventually require a minimum of 18 spaces (4,480sf / 250sf). Therefore, upon total build out of the project, including the future retail space in Phase One, the City will require 690 on-site parking spaces.

For Phase One, the applicant is proposing 336 garaged spaces (using a 4 level internal parking structure) and 17 surface parking spaces on the western and northern side of the building. In addition, 8 parallel parking spaces will be available along Mira Lago Boulevard.

For Phase Two, TSI proposes at least 336 garaged spaces and 14 surface parking spaces located along the northern side of the building (for a total of 350 parking spaces). Therefore the total proposed parking spaces for the site is 703.

PD-81 does limit the amount of allowed surface parking. The **Mixed Residential** subdistrict only allows 10% of the required parking to be surface parked. This project meets those parking requirements.

Conditions

As the peninsula becomes more developed, especially with residential communities, the City staff would like to see several a few critical planning elements developed in the area. One element is an additional point of egress from the peninsula. Currently there are is only one way into the peninsula and two ways out. As the population within this area grows staff recommends an additional point of egress be developed along the LBJ Freeway eastbound frontage road.

Another needed element is the development of a park. In the original Conceptual Site Plan for PD-81, a small ½ acre park was identified on the southern tip of the large 13 acre central block. This central block as remained undeveloped as the surrounding properties, closer to the lake, slowly become developed with residential projects.

Therefore based on the requested amendments to PD-81 the City staff is recommending the following conditions be included:

1. Phase Two, or the western portion of this site containing approximately 224 units, shall not be developed until all of the following elements have been completed.
 - a. Development of a new boutique hotel (containing approximately 90 rooms) immediately east of the site, along either Mira Lago Boulevard or the LBJ Freeway
 - b. Development of a new public street connecting Mira Lago Boulevard with the LBJ Freeway eastbound frontage road. This street would be located somewhere within either Lot 1 or Lot 2, Block B of the Mira Lago Addition.
 - c. Development of a ½ acre pocket park at the southern tip of Lot 1, Block E of the Mira Lago Addition. Once completed this park will be maintained by the Property Owners Association (POA).
 - d. Development of a 5' wide hard surface walking trail around the perimeter of the central block bounded by Mira Lago Boulevard, Lago Vista West and Lago Vista East. In addition the remaining portion of this central block will be re-graded and dressed with new topsoil and reseeded with grass to be used temporarily as a common open space area. Once completed this open space and trail will be maintained by the POA.
2. The exterior for both buildings will be composed of at least 60% brick or stone, and no more than 40% of the exterior be composed of stucco. All stucco shall be at least ¾" thick and use a "three step gypsum-plaster" application process.

Special Exception #1

PD-81 requires all buildings fronting a street to be set back no further 10 feet from a property line. Although this Conceptual Site Plan meets this requirement along Mira Lago Boulevard, it intentionally has located both buildings further away from the LBJ Freeway. It has also placed some of the surface parking between the building and the freeway.

Special Exception #2

PD-81 requires that all developments containing residential units provide at least 20 square feet of retail space for every residential unit. TSI has met this requirement for Phase One (the easternmost tract) with frontage along Mira Lago Boulevard. However, due to the shape and lack of direct street access to Phase Two (the western tract), future retail or office land use is highly unlikely. Therefore, the applicant has requested a Special Exception to this requirement for Phase Two.

City staff supports both of these requested Special Exceptions.

Comprehensive Plan:

The West Side Plan designated the Mira Lago peninsula as a Neighborhood Center. A Neighborhood Center is defined as an area that could support both office, retail and residential development. Therefore the proposed amendment and Conceptual Site Plan is consistent with the West Side Plan.

PD-81 allows up to 1,200 dwelling units within the district. Currently PD-81 has 520 dwelling units, however approximately 500-600 more units could be developed within the undeveloped tracts already coded for “Mixed Residential”. Therefore, with this proposed expansion of “Mixed Residential” land area that total could easily grow to 1,500 units. Part of the applicant’s request with this zoning amendment is to increase the number of allowed dwelling units within PD-81 from 1,200 to 1,500.

Public Response:

Four (4) zoning notification letters were mailed to the surrounding landowners on May 28th, 2014. Two (2) zoning notification signs were also posted on the site on that day. As of July 10th, no written opposition to this request has been received by the City.