

STAFF REPORT

Case Number: 18-ZA-03

Request: Amend Planned Development District No. 22 (PD-22) to allow hotel uses subject to approval of a Specific Use Permit, and a request for a Specific Use Permit with an associated Detailed Site Plan for a hotel.

Address: 13998 Diplomat Drive

Lot Size: 1.82 Acres

Petitioner: Triangle Engineering

Zoning Request

The City has received a request from Triangle Engineering, the applicant, to amend the Planned Development No. 22 (PD-22) zoning district to allow hotel uses subject to approval of a Specific Use Permit for a 1.82-acre property located at 13998 Diplomat Drive, including a request for a Specific Use Permit and an associated Detailed Site Plan for a hotel. The subject property represents the southern portion of an overall larger parent tract which is 3.36 acres.

The subject property is located within the Valwood Industrial Park, west of IH-35 / Stemmons Freeway at the northeast corner of Diplomat Drive and Delegate Drive. The property is surrounded by industrial and commercial uses on all sides, except to the north which is currently vacant (i.e. the remainder of the overall parent tract).

Existing Zoning

PD-22 was created in 1977 to rezone the City's West Side from Light Industrial to PD-22 allowing light industrial and commercial uses. Since then PD-22 was amended several times; Ordinance 2512 was created in 1999 and includes the subject site. Ordinance 2512 for PD-22 includes a list of uses permitted by right or subject to a Specific Use Permit. PD-22 allows for a wide variety of commercial, recreational, entertainment, retail and industrial uses. Hotel uses are not included in the list of permitted uses.

Site Design

The applicant is proposing to divide the 3.36-acre parent tract into two lots. The northern tract will contain 1.54 acres. Although the applicant is not requesting detailed site plan approval at this time, it is staff's understanding that the property owner intends to develop this property for future use as retail. The southern tract, Lot 1, will contain 1.82 acres, and is proposed to be developed as a hotel use. The applicant is requesting the zoning amendment, the Specific Use Permit with an associated Detailed Site Plan only for the southern tract, Lot 1, in order to be developed as a hotel use.

The subject property is proposed to be developed with a four-story hotel building, approximately 41,565 square feet in area, containing 95 rooms. The hotel will have a main lobby with two (2) entries: the main entry with the drop-off area at the northwest corner facing Diplomat Drive and a pedestrian entry on the southwest corner facing Delegate Drive. A lobby with reception desk, a “grab and go” breakfast area, and fitness room will be located on the first floor.

Elevations

The applicant is proposing a modern style for the hotel, to reflect the brand style, with clear lines and clean and smooth surfaces. The proposed hotel will be four (4) stories in height with an overall height of approximately 52 feet. All exterior façades will contain minimum 75% masonry (limestone) and maximum 25% stucco. The lobby area will be a typical storefront design.

Parking

The subject property will have two driveway access points, one from Diplomat Drive and one from Delegate Drive. The proposed Detailed Site Plan includes a total of 100 parking spaces in the surface parking lots. The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance requires one (1) parking space per room unit for hotel and motel uses, therefore 95 parking spaces are required for this development.

Landscape and Open Space

Approximately 16% of the site is proposed to be landscaped open space. The trees (47 trees proposed) will be a combination of Elm, Oak and Crape Myrtle trees and are distributed in the parking lot islands and along Diplomat Drive and Delegate Drive. PD-22 requires 5% of the overall site to be landscaped open space. PD-22 also includes screening requirements for parking areas located forward of the building line, street trees placed at maximum every 30 feet, a three-foot high earthen berm, and evergreen shrubbery hedge. The proposed Landscape Plan complies with all PD-22 landscape requirements.

A five-foot wide sidewalk is proposed to be installed along Diplomat Drive and Delegate Drive.

Signage (includes variance)

The applicant is proposing to install wall signs on three façades (north, south and west). The wall sign for the north and south façades will be approximately 122 square feet in area each and placed under the cornice of the roof, on the upper side of the façade. Additionally, the wall sign on the west façade will be approximately six (6) square feet in area and will be placed above the side entry to the main lobby.

PD-22 allows for one wall sign per tenant on a building, not to exceed five percent (5%) of the building façade (i.e. all signs collectively on a single façade). Therefore, on the proposed hotel building, a single sign consisting of 470 square feet could be allowed on either façade.

With this request the applicant is requesting a variance related to attached signs. The applicant is proposing to install three (3) wall signs corresponding to the north, south and west façades, for a collective sign square footage area of 250 square feet instead of one (1) wall sign on a single façade for this development (maximum 470 square feet).

Considering the fact that this is a single-tenant building, and considering the relationship between the overall building mass of the proposed hotel (four-story in height) and the size of the proposed wall signs (that does not exceed cumulatively on three façades the allowable sign area for one single façade), staff is in support of the proposed variance.

Additionally, the applicant is also proposing to install one (1) monument sign along Delegate Drive, four (4) feet tall and approximately 24 square feet in area. PD-22 allows one (1) monument sign per lot, maximum 40 square feet in area and maximum four (4) feet in height. The monument sign is required to be setback no less than ten (10) feet from the street right-of-way line. The proposed monument sign complies with PD-22 requirements.

Market Study

The applicant submitted a Market Feasibility Study for the proposed hotel prepared by U.S. Hotel Appraisals. According to page 2 of the study, the feasibility of the proposed hotel project is confirmed. (Chapter 7 further explains the feasibility analysis.)

The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance

The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) requires the approval of a Specific Use Permit (SUP) prior to the development and use of a property for a hotel in Farmers Branch, and further establishes guidelines for the City Council in considering the SUP request related to compatibility with surrounding uses; representative of equivalent or better development as compared to other hotel / motel uses within the area; and that the requested use will not affect the future ability to locate additional uses that are allowed within the existing zoning district within the area of the proposed hotel/motel.

The CZO also establishes requirements and standards for hotel uses. Among these, the CZO specifies that a hotel shall be located on a lot with an area of not less than four (4) acres but allows the City Council to consider requests and approve hotels with lesser acreage if the proposed hotel / motel is an appropriate use, design and layout for the subject site. The subject property is 1.82 acres thus being less than the minimum 4 acre requirement; however, the proposed development has adequate access and satisfies all remaining PD-22 development standards.

Comprehensive Plan

The West Side Plan was adopted by the City in 2003. The West Side Plan designates the area generally located at Valwood Parkway and IH-35 / Stemmons Freeway as one of the proposed

Regional Centers for the West Side in addition to industrial district. Regional Centers are destinations that include jobs, service, and retail. The plan further describes Regional Centers as (see page 171):

- Uses serving the region;
- Have proximity to highways or regional thoroughfares;
- Area gateway opportunities;
- Include campus development; and
- Include thoroughfare related uses such as gas stations, convenience retail, and restaurants in smaller centers that serve the regional and local area.

Additionally, the West Side Plan states that the convenience retail and restaurants at these centers would largely cater to the traveling public, both automobile and truck traffic (e.g. gas stations, restaurants, retail, and hotels), in addition to serving the needs of the employees in the area (See page 130).

The proposed zoning amendment to Planned Development District No. 22 (PD-22) to allow hotel uses subject to approval of a Specific Use Permit, as well as the requested Specific Use Permit and an associated Detailed Site Plan for a hotel is consistent with the recommendations of the West Side Plan.

Public Response

Staff mailed seven (7) zoning notification letters on August 9, 2018. Two (2) zoning notification signs were placed on the site on March 30, 2018. Staff has received five (5) letters of opposition from property owners within the notification area and four (4) letters of opposition from property owners outside of the notification area.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the Zoning amendment including the requested Specific Use Permit and associated Detailed Site Plan.