



MEMORANDUM

Date: November 15, 2016
To: Austin Design Commission
From: Planning & Urban Design Working Group
Subject: Working Group Density Bonus Program review of 1400 Lavaca for substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines.
Meeting Date: November 8, 2016; 4:00 pm
Applicant: CZ Properties
Architect: Genzler

The project location is 1400 Lavaca.

Existing zoning for the project is DMU. The project design includes office and retail uses. The lot area is 35,328 sq ft, and the total proposed project area is 145,220 sf ft.

The FAR for this project is 4.11:1, within the 5:1 maximum allowance for DMU zoning, so an increase in FAR is not being requested.

The applicant is seeking additional height of 51 feet, over the base height limit of 120 feet; the total proposed building height is 171 feet. The maximum height achievable under the density bonus program in this portion of downtown is 400 ft.

The square footage increase due to additional height per density bonus is 66,600 sq ft.

Per the Density Bonus Program ordinance, the applicant is required to provide streetscape improvements along all public street frontages consistent with the Great Streets Standards, and the applicant shall commit to a minimum of 2 star Green Building rating. The Mayor and City Council and the Planning & Development Review Director will determine appropriate bonus area in light of community benefits to be provided.

Positive attributes of the project:

1. LEED Gold goal (exceeds Green Building 2 star rating)
2. Quality materials at ground level- glass & metal screening
3. Building services located in alley, and minimal stair intrusion on street facades
4. Preservation of existing mature oaks
5. Activated ground level to include VR studio space, restaurant, deck seating, incubator space
6. The proposed building height is compatible with several other surrounding buildings.

Concerns/suggestions with the project:

1. Additional set back of building from Lavaca Street due to trees decreases activity along Lavaca.

2. Lack of curb side parking on 14th Street (curb parking is promoted in the Urban Design Guidelines).
3. Rain gardens within canopy of trees will possibly effect the micro-climate of existing trees. Deeper rain gardens with less surface area to retreat from tree canopy is suggested.
4. Conflict of adding new Great Street trees under the canopy of large existing trees.
5. The Great Streets Master Plan indicates that the standard sidewalk width will be 18 ft. (10 ft. pedestrian zone plus 8 ft. planting/street furniture zone). The proposed sidewalks along Lavaca and Guadalupe are currently designed as 16 ft. Lavaca is designated as a Rapid Transit Street and Guadalupe as a Commuter Boulevard in the GSMP. With both existing Metro Rapid services, and virtually every north/south local bus route, using Guadalupe and Lavaca, it is appropriate that the pedestrian realm be consistent with the Great Streets Master Plan to support existing and future walks to transit stops.
6. Minimizing on-site parking could encourage use of public transportation which is readily available on Lavaca and Guadalupe.

We determined that the project, as presented, is in substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines.

The Working Group appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on this project.

Respectfully submitted,
Planning & Urban Design Working Group of the Design Commission
Evan Taniguchi, Chair