



Austin Design Commission

November 30, 2016

To: City of Austin Staff
From: Design Commission

Re: Review of 1400 Lavaca commercial office building
for substantial compliance with Urban Design Guidelines

Meeting date: November 28, 2016

Applicant: CZ Properties

The applicant is seeking a density bonus of 51 feet, over the base height limit of 120 feet. The square footage increase due to additional height per density bonus is 66,600 sq ft.

Per ordinance, the applicant is required to provide public streetscape improvements consistent with the Great Streets Standards, commit to a minimum of 2 star Green Building rating, and meet the Urban Design Guidelines. The Mayor and City Council and the Planning & Zoning 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, 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. Proposed building height compatible with several surrounding buildings.

Concerns/suggestions with the project:

1. Additional setback of building from Lavaca Street due to trees decreases activity along Lavaca.
2. Lack of curbside 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 (GSMP) indicates that the standard sidewalk width will be 18 feet (10 foot pedestrian zone plus 8 foot planting/street furniture zone). The proposed sidewalks along Lavaca and Guadalupe are currently designed as 16 feet. 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 appropri-

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ate 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.

We appreciate your efforts and the presentation of your project, and this opportunity to provide our insight/comments.

Respectfully submitted,

Evan K. Taniguchi

Evan K. Taniguchi, AIA
Chair

cc: Katie Mulholland, COA Design Commission Executive Liaison (for distribution)