

**METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HEARING EXAMINER**

September 25, 2025

Case Number: 2025-APP-003 (Amended)
Property Address: 620 East 21st Street
Location: Center Township, council District #13
Petitioner: DeQuan Branch, by Jorge Gonzales
Current Zoning: PK-2
Request: Park District Two Approval to provide for a 2½ -story single-family dwelling with an attached garage.
Current Land Use: Vacant
Staff Recommendations: Denial.
Staff Reviewer: Kathleen Blackham, Senior Planner

PETITION HISTORY

The Hearing Examiner continued this petition from the August 14, 2025 hearing, to the September 25, 2025 hearing, at the request of the petitioner's representative. No updated documents have been provided but if those are submitted in time for review, staff will provide comments at hearing.

Based upon the updated documents, file dated August 9, 2025, the height of the dwelling has been decreased by 5.48 feet to 2½ stories. Staff, however, is concerned that a more detailed site plan that provides for pedestrian connection from the dwelling to the existing sidewalk along East 21st Street, as well as providing features (such as a front porch) that are common throughout the neighborhood.

The Hearing Examiner continued this petition from the July 24, 2025 hearing, to the August 14, 2025 hearing, to provide additional time for further discussions with the petitioner's representative.

The Hearing Examiner continued this petition from the August 14, 2025 hearing, to the August 28, 2025 hearing, at staff's request, to provide additional time for submittal and review of amended documents. Staff has reviewed the amended documents and continues to **recommend denial** because the site plan does not provide site access in terms of sidewalk and a driveway. Staff believes that the development does not align with the Ordinance requirements for the PK-2 development district that would provide appropriate integration into the neighborhood development pattern.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Denial.

PETITION OVERVIEW

This 0.03-acre site, zoned PK-2, is vacant and surrounded by single-family dwellings to the east and west and a detached garage to the north, all zoned PK-2 and a park to the south, across East 21st Street, zoned PK-1.

This site was included in Petition 70-Z-260 that rezoned 80 acres to the PK-2 district.

Park District One Approval

The Ordinance classifies Park District One and Two as Development Plan Districts. “No use, building or structure shall hereafter be established, constructed or used on any land in a Development Plan district for any purpose, until a Site and Development Plan for such land, including the proposed use or uses, has been filed with and approved by the Commission in accordance with this zoning ordinance.”

“The Commission may consider and act upon any such proposed use and Site and Development Plan, approve the same in whole or in part, and impose additional development standards, requirements, conditions, or commitments thereon at any public hearing of the Commission.”

Land in the development plan districts is subject to the following site and development requirements. In review of the proposed Site and Development Plan, the Commission must assess whether the Site and Development Plan, proposed use, buildings and structures must:

- a. Be so designed as to create a superior land development plan, in conformity with the Comprehensive Plan;
- b. Create and maintain a desirable, efficient and economical use of land with high functional and aesthetic value, attractiveness and compatibility of land uses, within the development plan district and with adjacent uses;
- c. Provide sufficient and adequate multi-modal access, such as parking and loading areas, transit provisions, and bicycle facilities;
- d. Integrate a multi-modal transportation network using active and passive traffic control with the existing and planned public streets and interior roads;
- e. Provide adequately for sanitation, drainage and public utilities in a sustainable, low impact manner;
- f. Allocate adequate sites for all uses proposed - the design, character, grade, location and orientation thereof to be appropriate for the uses proposed, logically related to existing and proposed topographical and other conditions, and consistent with the Comprehensive Plan; and
- g. Provide pedestrian accessibility and connectivity, which may be paths, trails, sidewalks, or combination thereof. Pedestrian accessibility to available public transit must be provided. Sidewalks along eligible public streets consisting of the walkway and any curb ramps or blended transitions must be provided. If sidewalks are required to be installed, the Administrator or the Commission must be guided by the provisions of Section 744-304 for the installation of sidewalks.

The Site and Development Plan must include layout and elevation plans for all proposed buildings and structures, and must indicate:

- a. Proposed uses, buildings and structures.
- b. All existing uses, buildings, and structures, in addition to any proposed to be demolished.
- c. Proposed buildings and structures and the use of each.
- d. Elevations of all sides of each building.
- e. Zoning and existing land uses of adjacent properties.
- f. Off-street vehicle and bicycle parking layouts with summary table of the number of required off-street parking, loading, and stacking spaces.

Because the proposed dwelling would not be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and the established architectural character, the Infill Housing Guidelines should be reviewed and considered as this site is redeveloped. Staff would note that historically the dwelling occupied the entire parcel, which would not be acceptable but the request, as submitted, would not be supportable.

The dwellings in this area are typically two-story with detached garages and larger footprints than the proposed dwelling. Admittedly, the site presents development challenges but in staff's opinion, the proposed site plan and elevations are not acceptable and do not align with the Ordinance or the Infill Housing Guidelines.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Existing Zoning	PK-2	
Existing Land Use	Vacant	
Comprehensive Plan	Traditional Neighborhood	
Surrounding Context	<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Land Use</u>
North:	PK-2	Detached garage
South:	PK-1	Park
East:	PK-2	Single-family dwelling
West:	PK-2	Single-family dwelling
Thoroughfare Plan		
East 21 st Street	Local Street	Existing 60-foot right-of-way and proposed 48-foot right-of-way.
Context Area	Compact	
Floodway / Floodway Fringe	No	
Overlay	No	

Wellfield Protection Area	No
Site Plan	June 16, 2025
Site Plan (Amended)	August 9, 2025
Elevations	June 27, 2025
Elevations (Amended)	August 9, 2025
Landscape Plan	N/A
Findings of Fact	May 15, 2025
Findings of Fact (Amended)	N/A
C-S/D-P Statement	N/A

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ANALYSIS

Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan recommends Traditional Neighborhood typology. The Traditional Neighborhood typology includes a full spectrum of housing types, ranging from single family homes to large-scale multifamily housing. The development pattern of this typology should be compact and well-connected, with access to individual parcels by an alley when practical. Building form should promote the social connectivity of the neighborhood, with clearly defined public, semi-public, and private spaces. Infill development should continue the existing visual pattern, rhythm, or orientation of surrounding buildings when possible. A wide range of neighborhood-serving businesses, institutions, and amenities should be present. Ideally, most daily needs are within walking distance. This typology usually has a residential density of five to 15 dwelling units per acre, but a higher density is recommended if the development is within a quarter mile of a frequent transit line, greenway, or park.

Pattern Book / Land Use Plan

The Comprehensive Plan consists of two components that include The Marion County Land Use Pattern Book (2019) and the land use map. The Pattern Book provides a land use classification system that guides the orderly development of the county and protects the character of neighborhoods while also being flexible and adaptable to allow neighborhoods to grow and change over time.

The Pattern Book serves as a policy guide as development occurs. Below are the relevant policies related to this request:

- *Conditions for All Land Use Types – Traditional Neighborhood Typology*
 - All land use types except small-scale parks and community farms/gardens in this typology must have adequate municipal water and sanitary sewer.
 - All development should include sidewalks along the street frontage.

- In master-planned developments, block lengths of less than 500 feet, or pedestrian cut-throughs for longer blocks, are encouraged.
- *Conditions for All Housing*
 - A mix of housing types is encouraged.
 - Should be within a one-mile distance (using streets, sidewalks, and/or off-street paths) of a school, playground, library, public greenway, or similar publicly accessible recreational or cultural amenity that is available at no cost to the user.
 - Primary structures should be no more than one and a half times the height of other adjacent primary structures.
 - Should be oriented towards the street with a pedestrian connection from the front door(s) to the sidewalk. Driveways/parking areas do not qualify as a pedestrian connection.

- Developments with densities higher than 15 dwelling units per acre should have design character compatible with adjacent properties. Density intensification should be incremental with higher density housing types located closer to frequent transit lines, greenways or parks.
- *Detached Housing* (detached housing refers to detached single-family homes. While this type of housing may include a secondary dwelling unit (such as a mother-in-law suite or carriage house), the secondary dwelling unit is usually smaller than the primary home and the entire property is under a single ownership).
 - The house should extend beyond the front of the garage. Garages should be loaded from an alley or side street when possible and should be detached if located on the side of the house.
 - Secondary units are encouraged.
 - Lots should be no larger than one and a half times the adjacent lots.

Red Line / Blue Line / Purple Line TOD Strategic Plan

Not Applicable to the Site.

Neighborhood / Area Specific Plan

Not Applicable to the Site.

Infill Housing Guidelines

The Infill Housing Guidelines were updated and approved in May 2021, with a stated goal “to help preserve neighborhood pattern and character by providing guiding principles for new construction to coexist within the context of adjacent homes, blocks, and existing neighborhoods. These guidelines provide insight into basic design concepts that shape neighborhoods, including reasons why design elements are important, recommendations for best practices, and references to plans and ordinance regulations that reinforce the importance of these concepts.”

These guidelines apply to infill development in residential areas within the Compact Context Area and include the following features:

Site Configuration

- Front Setbacks
- Building Orientation
- Building Spacing
- Open Space
- Trees, Landscaping, and the Outdoors

Aesthetic Considerations

- Building Massing
- Building Height
- Building Elevations and Architectural Elements

Additional Topics

- Secondary Dwelling Units, Garages, and Accessory Structures
- Adapting to the Future

“As established neighborhoods experience new development, infill residential construction will provide housing options for new and existing residents. Increased population contributes positively to the local tax base, economic development, lively neighborhoods, and an interesting city. As infill construction occurs, it is important to guide development in a way that complements current neighborhoods. Each home in a neighborhood not only contributes to the existing context of adjoining houses and the block, but to the sense of place of the entire neighborhood.”

Indy Moves

(Thoroughfare Plan, Pedestrian Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, Greenways Master Plan)

The Marion County Thoroughfare Plan (2019) “is a long-range plan that identifies the locations classifications and different infrastructure elements of roadways within a defined area.”

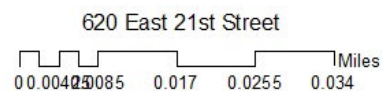
The following listed items describe the purpose, policies and tools:

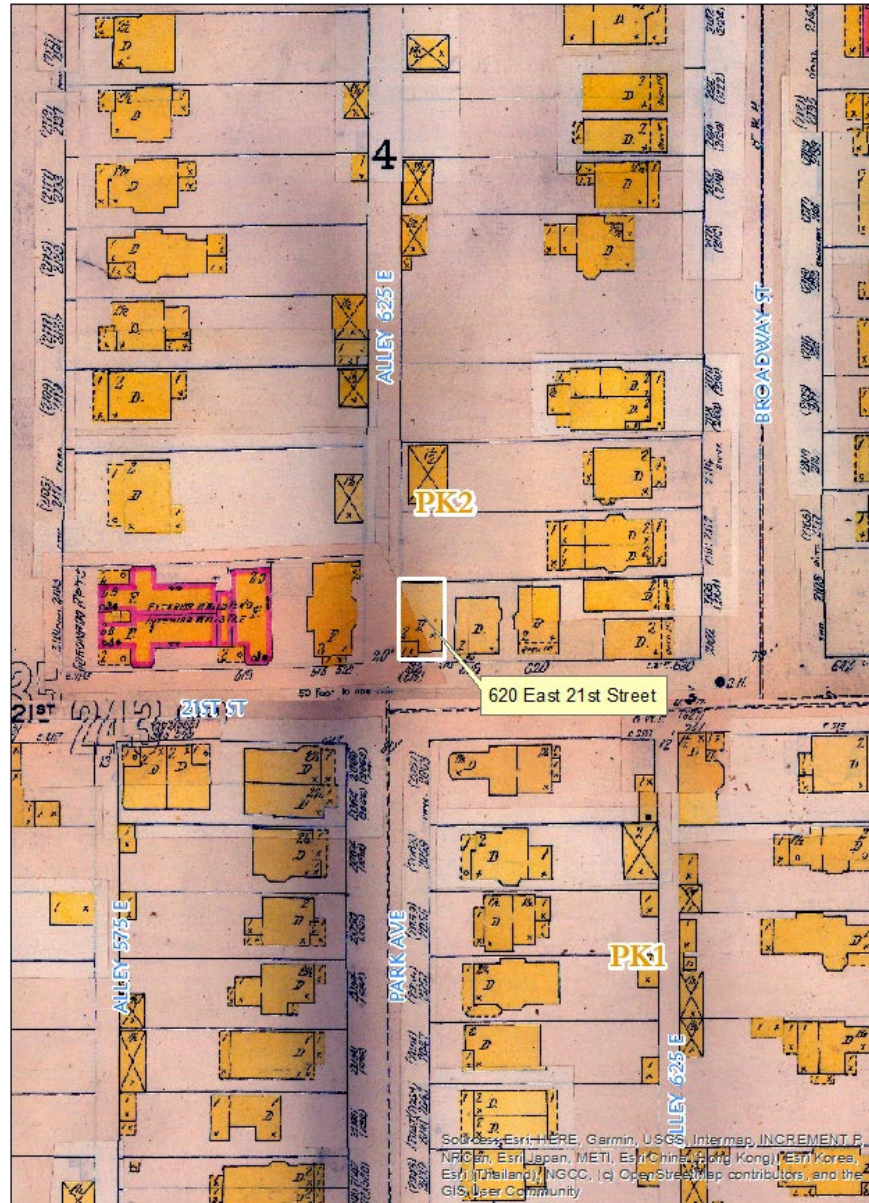
- Classify roadways based on their location, purpose in the overall network and what land use they serve.
- Provide design guidelines for accommodating all modes (automobile, transit, pedestrians, bicycles) within the roadway.
- Set requirements for preserving the right-of-way (ROW)
- Identify roadways for planned expansions or new terrain roadways
- Coordinate modal plans into a single linear network through its GIS database

ZONING HISTORY

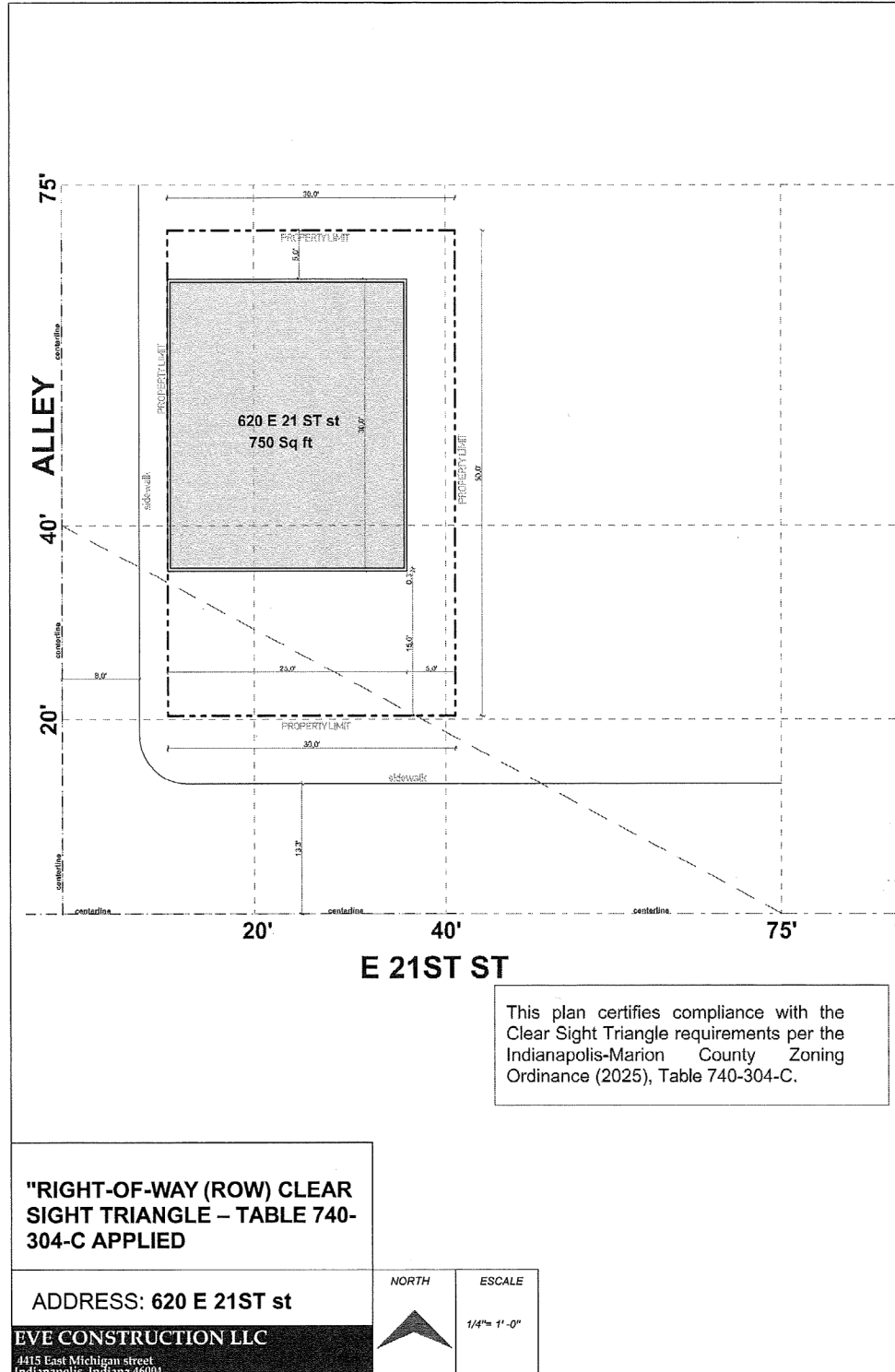
70-Z-40; Park Avenue / Broadway Street and 17th / 21st Streets, requested rezoning of 12.88 acres, being in the D-8 and PK-1 districts to the PK-1 classification to provide for park use, **approved**.

70-Z-260; 16th / 22nd Streets and Central Avenue / College Avenue, requested rezoning of 8-0 acres, being in the C-3, C-3, C-4 and D-8 districts, to the PK-2 classification, **approved**.





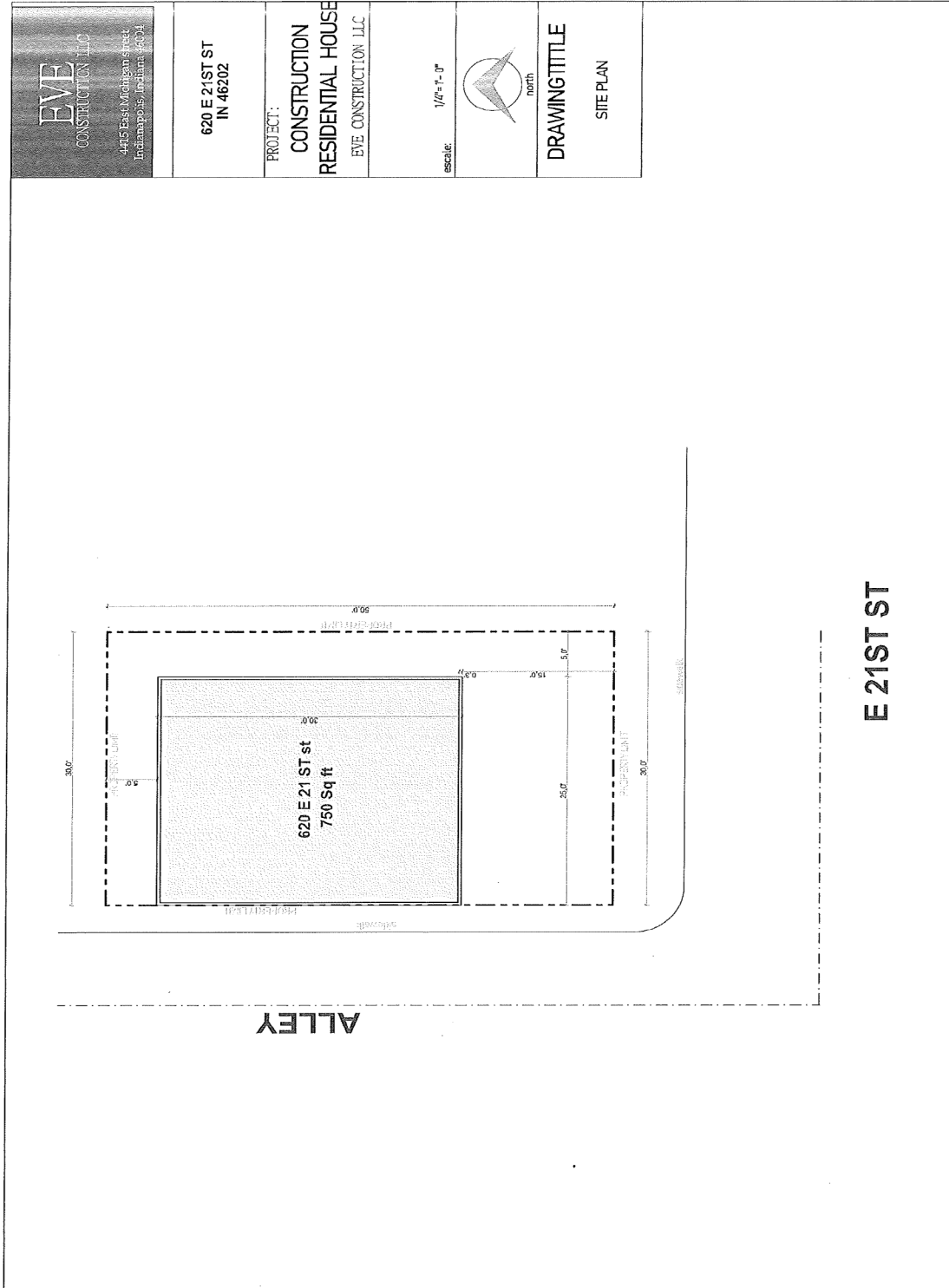
Site Plan - June 27, 2025



Elevations -June 24, 2025



Site Plan – August 9, 2025



Elevations – August 9, 2025



Petition Number _____

**METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA
PETITION FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER ONE/TWO APPROVAL
PETITION FOR PARK DISTRICT ONE/TWO APPROVAL
PETITION FOR HOSPITAL DISTRICT ONE/TWO APPROVAL**

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Metropolitan Development Commission finds that the site and development plan file-dated _____, 20____

A. Has been designed to create a superior land development plan, in conformity with the Comprehensive Plan because:

The project aligns with the Comprehensive Plan by maximizing efficient land use and integrating harmoniously with the nearby park. This location enhances the quality of life for residents by providing direct access to green space and promoting a healthy, sustainable environment.

B. Creates and maintains a desirable, efficient and economical use of land with high functional and aesthetic value, attractiveness and compatibility of land uses, within the development plan district and with adjacent uses because:

The project optimizes land use by combining efficiency and aesthetics. Being near a park ensures compatibility with adjacent uses, creating an attractive and functional environment for residents and the community. Loading areas, and nearby public transit options. Additionally, bicycle facilities are incorporated, promoting sustainable and accessible transportation choices for all users.

C. Provides sufficient and adequate multi-modal access, such as parking and loading areas, transit provisions, and bicycle facilities because:

The project is designed to ensure easy and efficient access through various modes of transportation, including adequate parking, loading areas, and nearby public transit options. Additionally, bicycle facilities are incorporated, promoting sustainable and accessible transportation choices for all users.

D. Integrates a multi-modal transportation network using active and passive traffic control with the existing and planned public streets and interior roads because:

The project design ensures the integration of a multi-modal transportation network by effectively linking with existing and planned public streets as well as internal roads. Traffic control measures, both active and passive, are included to ensure smooth and safe traffic flow, enhancing accessibility and connectivity within and outside the development.

E. Provides adequately for sanitation, drainage, and public utilities in a sustainable, low-impact manner because:

The project is designed to meet sanitation, drainage, and public utility requirements using sustainable, low-impact solutions. Efficient stormwater management systems, proper drainage infrastructure, and reliable public utility services will be implemented without compromising the natural environment, promoting responsible and environmentally respectful development.

F. Allocates adequate sites for all uses proposed, - the design, character, grade, location, and orientation thereof to be appropriate for the uses proposed, logically related to existing and proposed topographical and other conditions, and consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, because:

The project is designed so that the sites allocated for each proposed use are appropriately located, considering existing and proposed topographical conditions and other environmental factors. The design, orientation, and character of each area are suitable for the intended uses, ensuring harmonious integration with the surrounding environment. Additionally, the layout follows the principles of the Comprehensive Plan, promoting a coherent and sustainable development.

G. Provides pedestrian accessibility and connectivity, which may be paths, trails, sidewalks (If sidewalks are required to be installed, the Administrator or the Commission must be guided by provisions of Section 744-304 for the installation of sidewalks), or combination thereof; provides pedestrian accessibility to available public transit; and provides sidewalks along eligible public streets consisting of the walkway and any curb ramps or blended transitions because:

The project ensures efficient and safe pedestrian connectivity through the installation of paths, trails, and sidewalks in accordance with required regulations. Pedestrian accessibility to public transit and internal spaces of the development is prioritized, promoting sustainable and accessible transportation options for all users. Additionally, sidewalks along eligible public streets are provided, ensuring barrier-free accessibility and safe movement for pedestrians.

DECISION

IT IS THEREFORE the decision of this body that this APPROVAL petition is APPROVED.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 20 ____

Commission President/ Secretary



View looking east along East 21st Street



View of site looking northeast across East 21st Street



View of site looking north across East 21st Street



View of site looking east across abutting north / south alley



View looking west along East 21st Street east of site