

Lincoln Medical Plaza -Statement of Direction- June 14, 2018

The Lincoln Medical Plaza submitted a Major Special Use Permit amendment application for redevelopment of the property located at 7125 E. Lincoln Drive. The approximate 2.1-acre property has been in operation as a medical office since 1974. A new owner purchased the site in 2018. The new owner is proposing a complete renovation of the site with the continued use as a medical office. ~~However, instead of individual office suites, the medical building will contain a single tenant.~~

Section 1102.3 of the Town's Zoning Ordinance states the Town Council must issue a Statement of Direction for the Special Use Permit application within 45 days of the first staff presentation. In this case, the Statement of Direction must be issued on or before July 8, 2018.

The Statement of Direction is not a final decision of the Town Council and does not create any vested rights to the approval of a Special Use Permit. Any applicant for a Special Use Permit shall not rely upon the matters addressed in the Statement of Direction being the same as those that may be part of an approved Special Use Permit.

Therefore, the Town Council issues the following Statement of Direction for the Lincoln Medical Plaza:

- The General Plan encourages the continued revitalization and improvement of the Town's Special Use Permit properties while protecting the adjacent residential neighborhoods (General Plan Land Use Policy 2.1.2).
- The site is located in a designated Development Area pursuant to the General Plan. As such, in addition to other applicable policies, the following policies may be considered:
 - Consideration of Development Area Special Use Permit applications should balance a need for the Town's fiscal health against a steadfast commitment to protecting adjacent low-density residential character and quality of life (General Plan Land Use Policy 2.2.1.2).
 - The Town shall require development or redevelopment within Development Areas to provide reasonable separation of incompatible land uses from adjacent residential areas through context and scale appropriate land planning and architectural design, greater setback distances, noise mitigation, resort property programming, and landscape buffering (General Plan Land Use Policy 2.2.1.3).
 - The Town should encourage moderate intensity, mixed-use, and context appropriate resort development within the East Lincoln Drive Development Areas that includes reasonable separation between incompatible uses and adjacent residential areas and effective buffering of unwanted noise, light, traffic and other adverse impacts (General Plan Land Use Policy 2.2.3.3).

- The Planning Commission shall focus their review on the visible, audible, and operational effects the amendment may have on the neighbors. In particular, the Planning Commission shall focus their review on:

- Intensity-Use. The property is currently utilized as a medical office. The proposed use is for medical office ~~and will be leased to a single tenant.~~

Section 1102.2 of the Zoning Ordinance defines medical office and lists various medical office uses that may be permissible via a Special Use Permit such as offices for medical practitioners, outpatient surgical for patient stays not exceeding 48 hours, medical laboratories, physical therapy, among other uses.

While the use will not change, more information is needed on the type of medical office uses targeted for the site including overnight stays, ~~urgent care,~~ or other late hour use of the facility. ~~Type of security measures should be reviewed. Any medical marijuana use or retail uses are discouraged.~~ Hours of operation for the facility shall also be reviewed and limited. Weekend hours may be a concern.

The site's location at the border of the City of Scottsdale is adjacent to several existing high-density residential and commercial retail establishments. Traffic access and congestion issues are known to exist along this corridor. Also, the 2.1-acre site is more than half the size of the suggested minimum size for a medical plaza by the Town's Special Use Permit Guidelines that will limit the parking capacity at this facility. As such, it may be prudent to limit some of the allowable uses and discourage uses that generate quick turn-around trips at this medical plaza. These discouraged uses include retail, medical marijuana dispensaries, urgent care, or other similar uses.

Medical uses bring different safety considerations than other type of uses. There are risks associated with drugs used and stored at medical facilities, access to patient records, patient safety, possible targets for illegal acts, among other risks. Many of these security measures will be handled independently by the medical operator via security cameras, key card access, or other similar methods. There are other security measures that may have visual or other impact externally, such as the use of physical deterrents at entry points, that may require review by the Planning Commission and Town Council. It is encouraged that applicant work with the Town's Police Department on such security measures, including application of any pertinent Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies.

- Height. The applicant is proposing a two-story structure with a maximum height of 36 feet to the top of the mechanical roof equipment screening, 30 feet to the top of the roof, and height measured from the finished floor elevation. The SUP Guideline for medical offices suggest a height of 30 feet for principal structures, with possible consideration for higher height to accommodate architectural features. The mechanical screen is not considered an architectural feature. The proposed height measurement from the highest portion of the building to the finished floor elevation is also not a method the Town has used to measure height.

It is recommended that the Planning Commission evaluate the proposed height as to its impact to adjacent properties and the operational needs for medical office use; minimizing height where possible through means such as articulation of the roofline, reducing the area of the roof mechanical equipment screening, and reduction of the overall height. A compelling reason must be given for height proposed over 30’.

Finished floor is not an appropriate measurement point. It is recommended that all heights be taken from existing finished grade ~~and that finished grade cannot be raised more than two feet above existing grade. Fill shall (or shall not) be counted in height measurement.~~ If any portion of the rooftop is visible off-site, care should be taken to minimize the impact. White roofing material is discouraged if visible off-site.

- Viewsheds. The Open Space Criteria is a Special Use Permit Guideline to preserve viewsheds, encouraging the massing of tall structures in the center of the site. It does not appear that the Open Space Criteria can be met as a setback of 120 feet is required for a 36-foot height. Only a 56-foot setback is provided on both sides, and 67-foot front yard setback (prior to roadway dedication). The rear yard setback is over 120 feet.

The Planning Commission shall evaluate the impact to adjoining properties by the additional encroachment outside of the imaginary plane suggested by the Open Space Criteria. However, due to the small size of this lot, it’s location adjoining other commercial uses, and that the existing structures do not meet the Open Space Criteria, a heavy focus on preserving view corridors is not necessary. If Open Space Criteria is applied the measurement may be taken from the existing property line along Lincoln Drive.

- Setbacks. This site is unique in that the adjoining properties are all non-residential. As such, the only Special Use Permit Guideline that applies on setback is the suggested 40-foot setback from a public street. The proposed setbacks of 67 feet in the front yard (35 feet with full right-of-way dedication), 56 feet in the side yards, and 185 feet in the rear yard is consistent with Town Special Use Permit Guidelines.

Setbacks meet SUP Guidelines but may need to be increased along Lincoln Drive to accommodate the recommended 50-foot wide landscape buffer adjoining a major arterial. If covered parking is provided, setbacks from these structures will also need to be reviewed.

In evaluating the appropriate depth of the landscape buffer relative to the Special Use Permit Guidelines, the Planning Commission shall take into consideration, at a minimum, the Property’s irregular shape, undersized lot, existing conditions, scope of the proposed development, and the Town’s desire for additional Right-of-Way along Lincoln Drive

- Impact to Adjacent Uses. Adjacent uses include resort guest units to the south and future resort guest uses/residences proposed to the west of the site.

The Planning Commission shall consider how the proposed setbacks, building heights, location of uses, and any other related design aspect of the project may negatively impact nearby properties located outside the subject site with or regarding unwanted noise, light, traffic and other adverse impacts. Of particular concern, is any outdoor employee areas and service uses such as maintenance, trash collection, mechanical equipment (roof/ground), etc. They should be explained or shown. In particular, trash pickup/storage shall be studied.

- Density - Lot coverage. The proposed lot coverage increases from 13.5% to 18.7%, still under the 25% Special Use Permit Guideline. The floor area ratio increases from 27.8% to 37%. There are no guidelines for Floor Area Ratio.

The proposed density and lot coverage are consistent with Special Use Permit Guidelines, not a major concern, and are generally acceptable.

- Landscaping/Buffering. The Special Use Permit Guidelines recommend a 50-foot buffer adjacent to Lincoln Drive. Currently a 34-foot Lincoln Drive buffer (16-foot in the right-of-way) exists.

Particular attention shall be paid to the buffer along Lincoln Drive based on ~~the proposed Visually Significant Corridor study and the improvements proposed at~~ the Ritz property just to the north. A stipulation may be considered to ensure replacement of any buffer should the landscaping die. A landscape plan shall be required. The Commission shall evaluate the proper balance of landscaping to soften the building while not obscuring it from the street. Hardscaping and pedestrian access shall be considered with the landscape plan.

- Infrastructure and Utility Improvements. Drainage and related improvements are reviewed with redevelopment projects. The material provided to-date does not give enough information to evaluate these improvements.

The applicant shall address and identify the location of on-site retention and identify how the on-site retention may affect parking and circulation. Utility improvements that may have a visual impact or service level impact should be explained and mitigated. Water impact service study, utility information, and hydrology report shall be reviewed.

- Traffic, Parking, and Circulation. The proposed medical use and location within a heavily-traveled and mixed-use density area near the City of Scottsdale creates a heightened need for ensuring the proposed redevelopment does not have a negative impact on traffic safety, parking, and circulation.

The primary concern when evaluating impact of this project is safety. Safety for motorists, pedestrians, and any persons that access Lincoln Drive or the properties nearby. Attention shall be beyond the subject site. Staff and/or applicant shall present relevant information to the Planning Commission for consideration that may include~~Some considerations for review shall include:~~

- Number of access points in/out of the site
- Emergency access to the site
- Design of entry/exit and roadway medians related to the restriction of vehicular movements in/out of site (e.g. right in/right out movements)
- Deceleration turn lane for eastbound traffic entering the site.
- Any cross-access easement(s) with the owners of the AJs to the ~~east~~west/Andaz to the south/SmokeTree to the west.
- Sidewalk and other pedestrian circulation
- Necessary roadway dedication/easement, with consideration of what may be necessary in the short term and long-term
- Number of parking spaces, use of shared parking, and ride-share
- Full build-out of the Ritz Special Use Permit
- Coordination of improvements/impacts with neighboring non-residential properties
- Coordination with Town improvements along Lincoln Drive

The Planning Commission shall refer to Council any significant decision points that would be based upon incomplete information for further direction.

- Signage. The elevation shows a sign on the front elevation of the building and the site plan shows an entry monument that is ground mounted.

Planning Commission review shall focus on the impact of project sign location, dimensions, and illumination on the resulting impact to the streetscape. Particular attention shall be paid to any building mounted signage. The Commission shall look at the broader signage plan for the whole of this area of Lincoln Drive including proposed gateway signs, identification signs, and Ritz-Carlton and Smoketree signage, as well as any Andaz signage that may be re-located to Lincoln Drive. ~~Particular attention shall be paid to any building mounted signage and the resulting impact to the streetscape.~~

The Planning Commission shall refer to Council any significant decision points that would be based upon incomplete information for further direction.

- Community Spaces/Public Benefit. There are General Plan policies that address Development Areas providing public gathering areas, pedestrian amenities, and public art.

More review and information shall be explored regarding community spaces/services that will provide public benefit(s) to Town residents. There is no defined connection from the future sidewalk on Lincoln Drive to the building. This area is important for pedestrian connections within the immediate vicinity. ~~and~~

Pedestrian circulation shall be addressed, as well as any hardscape improvements.

- Context -Appropriate Design. Several General Plan policies encourage context-appropriate and responsive building design and site planning on Special Use Permit properties that mitigates the scale of larger buildings through careful use of building massing, setbacks, facade articulation, fenestration, varied parapets and roof planes, and pedestrian-scaled architectural details. The applicant provided several visuals on conceptual architectural design, material, and colors.

As necessary, the Planning Commission may require that the applicant provide more precise information to verify how the project meets the vision and policies of the General Plan related to context-appropriate design. This includes impact related to exterior lighting, screening of mechanical equipment, and the choice of material pallet of the improvements. This may include providing at least one west-east and one north-south building cross section and updating provided renderings.

As per Section 1102.3.C.3.c of the Zoning Ordinance, at any time during the review process, the Planning Commission may request clarification and/or expansion of this Statement of Direction based on additional information that has evolved. However, the Planning Commission shall complete their review of this application no later than October 16, 2018.