

BACKGROUND

Lincoln Medical Plaza

Council Statement of Direction

The Town Council issued a Statement of Direction (SOD) on June 14, 2018. Height, use, landscaping/buffering, and traffic, parking, and circulation were of particular concern.

History and Conditions

Use of the property for medical office use was established by the Town in 1974 by Special Use Permit (SUP) approval. Prior to annexation in 1961, the site had a structure on the south end of the site. It is unclear from available records the use of the site prior to 1974. The latest SUP approvals were for a pharmacy and urgent care center in 2011.

Use

The property is currently utilized for medical office, along with the proposed use. 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, and physical therapy, among other uses. See the attached Section 1102.2 for more information.

While the use will not change, more information is needed on the type of medical office uses targeted for the site including overnight stays or other late hour use of the facility. Hours of operation for the facility shall also be reviewed and limited. Weekend hours may be a concern.

The site's location adjacent to several existing high-density residential and commercial retail establishments, along with known traffic access and congestion issues along Lincoln Drive resulted in the Town Council's SOD suggesting the limitation on allowable uses and discouraging uses that generate quick turn-around trips at this medical plaza. These discouraged uses include, but are not limited to, retail and medical marijuana dispensaries. The traffic-circulation-parking study has not been submitted and will be important in assessing the impact of the uses on this site.

General Plan/Zoning

The subject property has a General Plan designation of "Medical Office" pursuant to the Town's General Plan Land Use Map. The zoning on the subject property is "Special Use Permit – Medical Office". The proposed medical office use is in conformance with this designation and zoning.

Several General Plan policies apply related to the request for redevelopment of the Lincoln Medical Plaza property. Primary policies that apply are the policies of Goal LU 2.1.2, Special Use Permit Property Revitalization, and several of the policies of Goal DA 2.2.1, Development Area Policy. The site is located in the East Lincoln Development Area that encourages moderate intensity, mixed-use, and context appropriate resort development that includes reasonable separation between incompatible uses and adjacent residential areas and effective buffering of unwanted noise, light, traffic and other adverse impacts. Also, the General Plan encourages upgrading existing structures and properties to improve their physical condition to acceptable Town standards.

Enforcement

There are no known active code violations on the subject site.

Site Location/Size

The subject site is unique in that it does not directly adjoin residential-zoned property. The AJs shopping plaza is to the east, the Andaz resort is to the south, and the Smoke Tree Resort is to the west. The site and land south and west are also part of the East Lincoln Development Area that encourages moderate intensity, mixed-use, and context appropriate resort development. The boundary of this Development Area is shown on the attached map. Retaining the medical use on this site will maintain a mix of uses within the East Lincoln Development Area. This Development Area presently has medical office, resort, and residential uses.

The site is located on the east end of the Town along the main west-east route through Town. This area is near the new development of the Ritz Carlton, along with many commercial and retail uses within the City of Scottsdale. Traffic access and congestion along Lincoln Drive is known to exist between Mockingbird Lane and Scottsdale Road.

The subject site is 2.1 acres. This parcel size is approximately half the size of the suggested minimum site size for a medical plaza by the Town's Special Use Permit Guidelines. The Special Use Permit Guidelines suggest a minimum site area of five acres. These Guidelines did not exist in 1974 when the Town approved the medical use on this site. However, the property has managed to accommodate medical office use without any substantial violations or negative impact to the surrounding area over the last several decades.

Right-of-Way

The applicant has been asked to provide clarification of the existing dedicated right-of-way width, along with the proposed right-of-way dedication and/or easement width along Lincoln Drive. From available records, the existing right-of-way width appears to be either 33 feet or 40 feet in width. Per the Major Arterial cross-section of the Town General Plan, the typical required half-width of right-of-way along Lincoln Drive is 65 feet. Further discussion on this point will be necessary as the project moves forward. Timing with the Town's existing improvement project for Lincoln Drive is critical for median construction and any water, sewer, and utility improvements.

The Town is not looking to add any additional travel lanes, but there will be intersection improvements made at Quail Run Road, median improvements and new sidewalk.

Right-of-way dedication can affect how various metrics are calculated, such as lot coverage, landscape buffers, measurement of Open Space Criteria, and setbacks. Typically, these metrics are calculated based on the post-dedicated area. The SOD does provide some flexibility in considering calculation using the pre-dedication condition. Options may exist for a mix of right-of-way dedication and easement. Staff suggests the applicant dedicate the typical 65 feet of half width along Lincoln Drive.

Landscaping/Buffering

The existing landscape buffer along Lincoln Drive varies between 27 feet and 34 feet from the back of the existing curb, with approximately 10 feet of this depth within the 40-foot right-of-way. 17 feet to 24 feet of this landscape buffer depth is within the boundaries of the subject site. Right-of-way dedication to a 65-foot depth under the existing built condition would result in all the landscape buffer falling within the right-of-way. The existing landscape buffers along the sides and rear yard are approximately 3.5 feet in depth.

The Special Use Permit Guidelines recommend a 50-foot landscape buffer adjacent to Lincoln Drive. The SOD states particular attention shall be paid to the buffer along Lincoln Drive based on 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. The applicant has been asked to consider plant material of the draft Visually Significant Corridors Plan as the location of the property is at a major gateway in/out of the Town.

Setbacks

The existing buildings have a front yard setback of 80 feet from the closest point of the building to the south point along the 40-foot dedicated right-of-way line. Other portions of the building have a front yard setback of 94 feet. With a 65-foot dedication along Lincoln Drive, the existing front yard setback reduces to 55 feet from the closest point of the building to the south point along a 65-foot dedicated right-of-way line. Other portions of the building would have a front yard setback of 69 feet. There is still confusion regarding the exact setback until the applicant provides a title report for this property. Existing side yard setbacks are 49 feet. The existing rear yard setback is 130 feet to the main building and 45 feet to the covered parking.

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 front yard setback is 67 feet from the closest point of the building to the south point along the 40-foot dedicated right-of-way line. Other portions of the building have a proposed front yard setback of 72.5 feet. With a 65-foot dedication along Lincoln Drive, the proposed front yard setback reduces to 42 feet from the closest point of the building to the south point along a 65-foot dedicated right-of-way line. Other portions of the building would have a front yard setback of 47.5 feet. Proposed side yard setbacks are 56 feet. The proposed rear yard setback is 185 feet to the main building and unclear regarding any covered parking.

Setbacks meet Special Use Permit Guidelines. However, setbacks may need to be increased along Lincoln Drive to accommodate the recommended 50-foot wide landscape buffer adjoining a major arterial. The SOD states 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.

Height

The existing buildings are two-story. The maximum height is 27 feet to the top of the mechanical roof screening, with some screens lower in height. The height to the top of the roof deck is 24 feet. These heights are measured from finished floor.

The applicant is proposing a two-story structure with a maximum height of 30 feet to the top of the roofline and 36 feet to the top of the mechanical roof equipment screening and entryway feature. Height is measured from the finished floor elevation. The Special Use Permit Guideline for medical offices suggest a height of 30 feet for principal structures, with possible consideration for higher height to accommodate architectural features. Mechanical screening is generally 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.

The SOD recommends 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 feet. Please refer to the applicant's narrative for a detailed description of the request for the additional height including ceiling heights, duct clearances, and mechanical screening requests.

Finished floor is not an appropriate measurement point. It is recommended that all heights be taken from existing finished grade. 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.

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