

TO: City of Gainesville
Development Review Board

Item Number: 2

FROM: Planning and Development Services Department

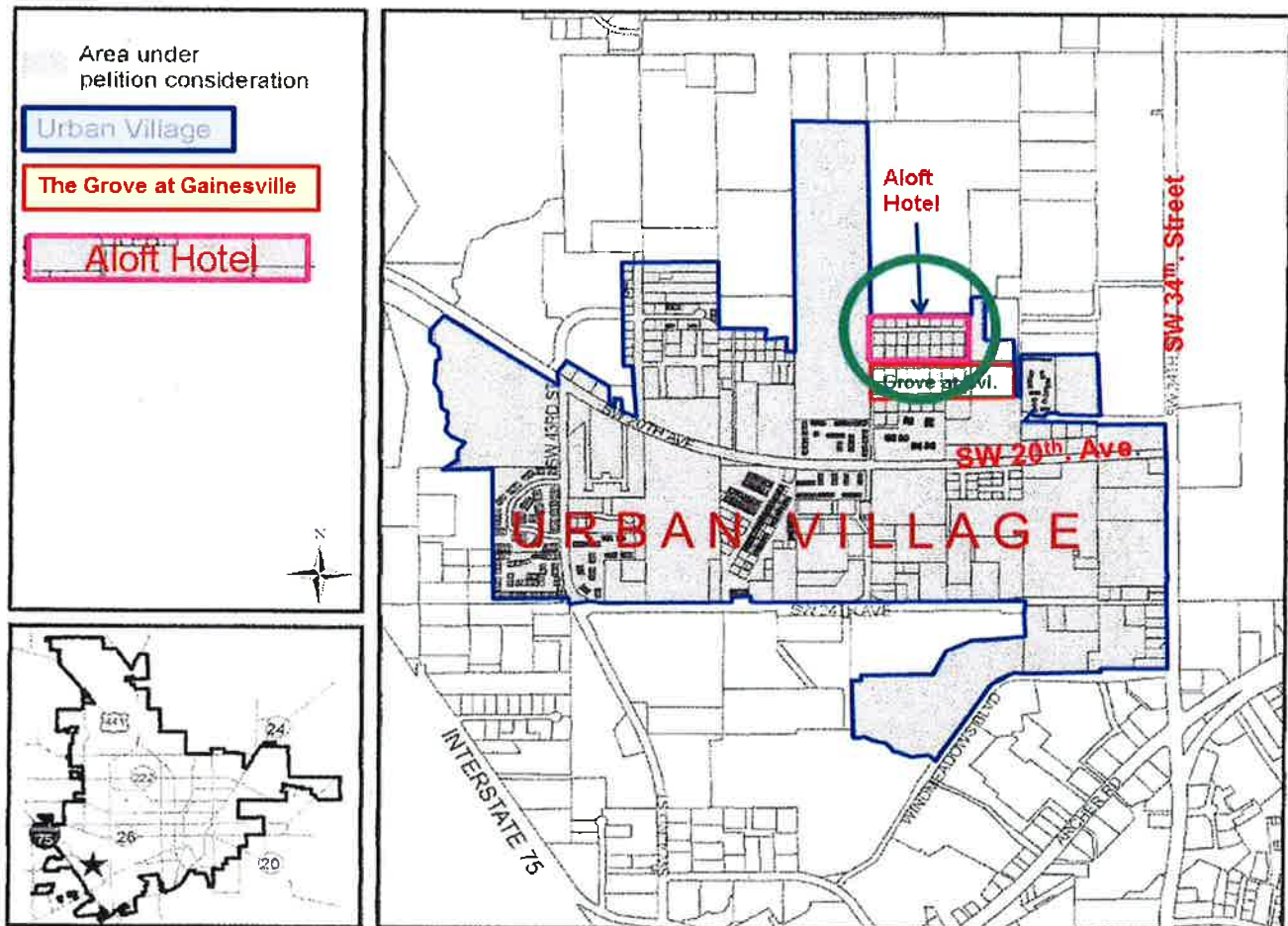
DATE: September 27, 2016

SUBJECT: Petition DB-16-97 SPL: CHW, Inc. (Holly Simon), agent for Garrison SW 17th Avenue, LLC., owner. Major development plan review to allow the construction of a hotel. Zoned: UMU-2 (10—100 units/acre, and up to 25 additional units/acre by special use permit, urban mixed-use district). Located at the 3700 block of SW 17th Avenue (Hull Road Extension).

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of Petition DB-16-97 SPL, (The Aloft Hotel) with the proposed conditions and development plan modifications listed in this report and the TRC comments.

MAP 1.
Location of Urban Village



PROJECT ANALYSIS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Development Plan review to allow construction of a Hotel.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

Address/Parcel:	3700 Block of SW 17 th Avenue.
Acreage:	2.47 Acres
Land Use:	UMU-2
Zoning:	UMU-2
Special Features:	Urban Village
Agent/Applicant:	Causseaux, Hewett and Walpole, Inc.,
Property Owner:	The Aloft Hotel,
Related Petitions:	<u>Petition CC-13-04 SUB, DB-13-47 SPL</u>

GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND KEY ISSUES:

This development proposal represents another step in the implementation of a long term vision of the City to implement urban infill, compactness and revitalization in an area immediately west of the University of Florida. That vision is expressed in the Comprehensive Plan as the Urban Village. It is located west of SW 34th Street and north of SW 24th Avenue; Map 1 shows the general location of the area. The Urban Village is directly east and about one mile from the University of Florida. It is within easy access to two major shopping centers Butler Plaza, and the Oaks Mall which are less than three miles away to the south and northwest respectively. Clusters of high density multi-family residential developments surround the area to the east, south and west.

The first major project within the Urban Village included construction of a trunk road extending Hull Road westward across SW 34th Street and southward to SW 20th Avenue via the SW 38th Terrace corridor. Internal local roads connected to the main Hull Road extension were also included in the first phase to serve the adjacent parcels. A student residential development called the Grove lies south of the Hull Road extension and is the second phase of the project which was completed in August 2014.

The Aloft Hotel is another phase of the development and is located north of the Grove, immediately south of Hull Road Extension. The development occupies the east 496 feet of the block, between SW 37th Street and SW 38th Terrace, as depicted on Map 2, (Location of the Aloft Hotel). The Aloft hotel development sits on 2.47 acres and includes approximately 77, 886 square feet of floor area within a five (5) story building comprising a hotel with 146 rooms and associated facilities.

The Key Issues in the Petition are:

1. The site is traversed along its east/west axis by part of a 100-foot wide Florida Power Line easement, a 45-foot Gas right-of-way easement, a 15-foot wide Water Distribution easement and a 5-foot public Utilities Easement. Along the east and west boundaries are two water distribution and sidewalk easements.
2. The site is also bounded on three sides by public rights-of-way.

3. The development site is in a street block that exceeds the maximum 2,000 feet perimeter, allowed by the Urban Village standards.
4. The development offers a design that is requesting waivers from several of the standards associated with Public Realm, streetscape, building placement and orientation, landscape zone, bicycle parking and building entry standards.
5. Is the project consistent and compatible with the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code.
6. The photometric plan is submitted with requests for waivers from certain standards.
7. The proposed building has a unique relationship to an east/west pedestrian corridor, the Urban Walkway, which is an asset to the development and the immediate surrounding developments.
8. Providing adequate lighting to the Urban Walkway and the southern edges of the development is a challenge due to the overhead powerlines.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENCY:

The proposed development fits the intent of the Urban Village; it is a five story hotel complex consisting of 146 rooms with associated facilities. That use is allowed within the UMU-2 district and is also consistent with uses surrounding the development. To the north and immediate west across the Hull Road extension is the Hogtown Creek conservation areas; to the south is a large multi-family residential development; and to the east is a vacant unimproved parcel. Other uses within the general neighborhood are multi-family residential, commercial associated with the Butler Plaza PD, light industrial and undeveloped university-owned properties.

The property is zoned UMU-2 which is fully consistent with the existing underlying UMU-2 land use category of the property. The UMU-2 zoning is also consistent with the overall goals, objectives, and policies of the adopted comprehensive plan as listed below.

Future Land Use Element

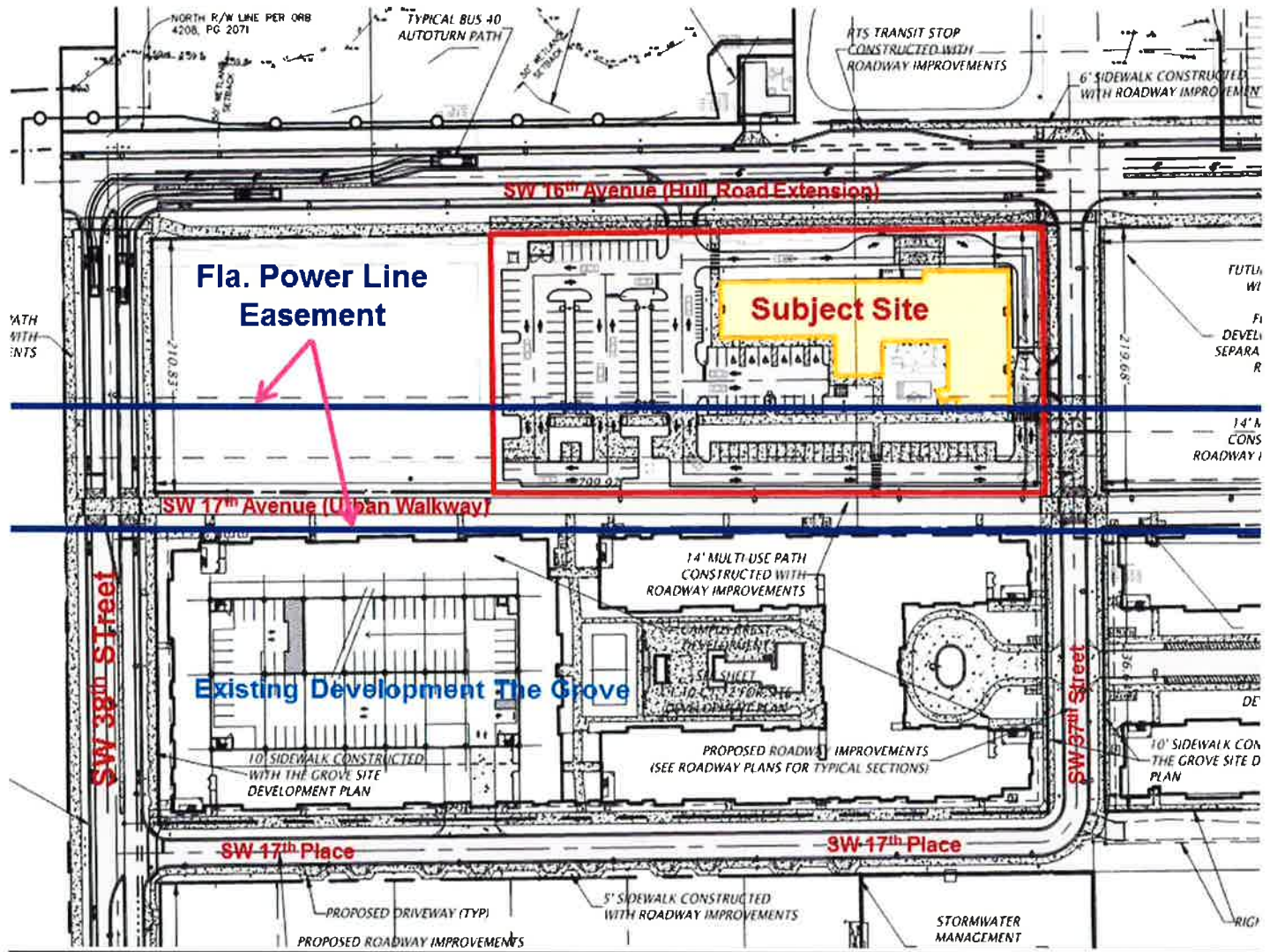
- Goal 2 Redevelop areas within the city, as needed, in a manner that promotes quality of life, transportation choice, a healthy economy, and discourages sprawl.
- Objective 2.1 Redevelopment should be encouraged to promote compact, vibrant urbanism, improve the condition of blighted areas, discourage urban sprawl, and foster compact development patterns that promote transportation choice.

The UMU-2 zoning complements the surrounding uses in several ways. First, it provides the opportunity for residential development that will support nearby commercial development at Butler Plaza and the Oaks Mall. The high residential densities are also anticipated to concentrate future development in a compact area that will reduce sprawl and support the transit system. UMU-2 also allows for innovation economy and high-tech uses in close proximity to the University of Florida.

The intent of the Urban Village is to encourage redevelopment of the low to medium-density residential properties along the SW 20th Avenue and SW 24th Avenue corridors. This area is seen as a key location for high residential density and mix of uses that will serve the University and surrounding commercial developments. Furthermore, the "village" concept implies a level of self-sufficiency for this area. The proposed UMU-2 zoning will provide the opportunity for retail, office, residential, and recreational uses, supported by high-density residential development.

MAP 2.

LOCATION OF THE ALOFT HOTEL RELATIVE TO HULL ROAD EXTENSION



LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE:

The Aloft hotel occupies a foot print of 17,754 square feet on a 2.47 acre parcel. It contains a five-story building with a total of 146 rooms, associated parking, a pedestrian circulation system, stormwater, lighting and required open space. The developable space is constrained by the existence of easements occurring on all sides of the property. The site is approximately 218 feet wide within which the south 70 feet is occupied by a gas and power easement and the north 23 feet is occupied by a public utilities and water distribution easement. Those easements force development within the central areas of the parcel as designed and illustrated in Map 2 above. The result is a development with major design constraints leading to the inability to comply with several of the development standards of the UMU-2 zoning district.

Condition 1.

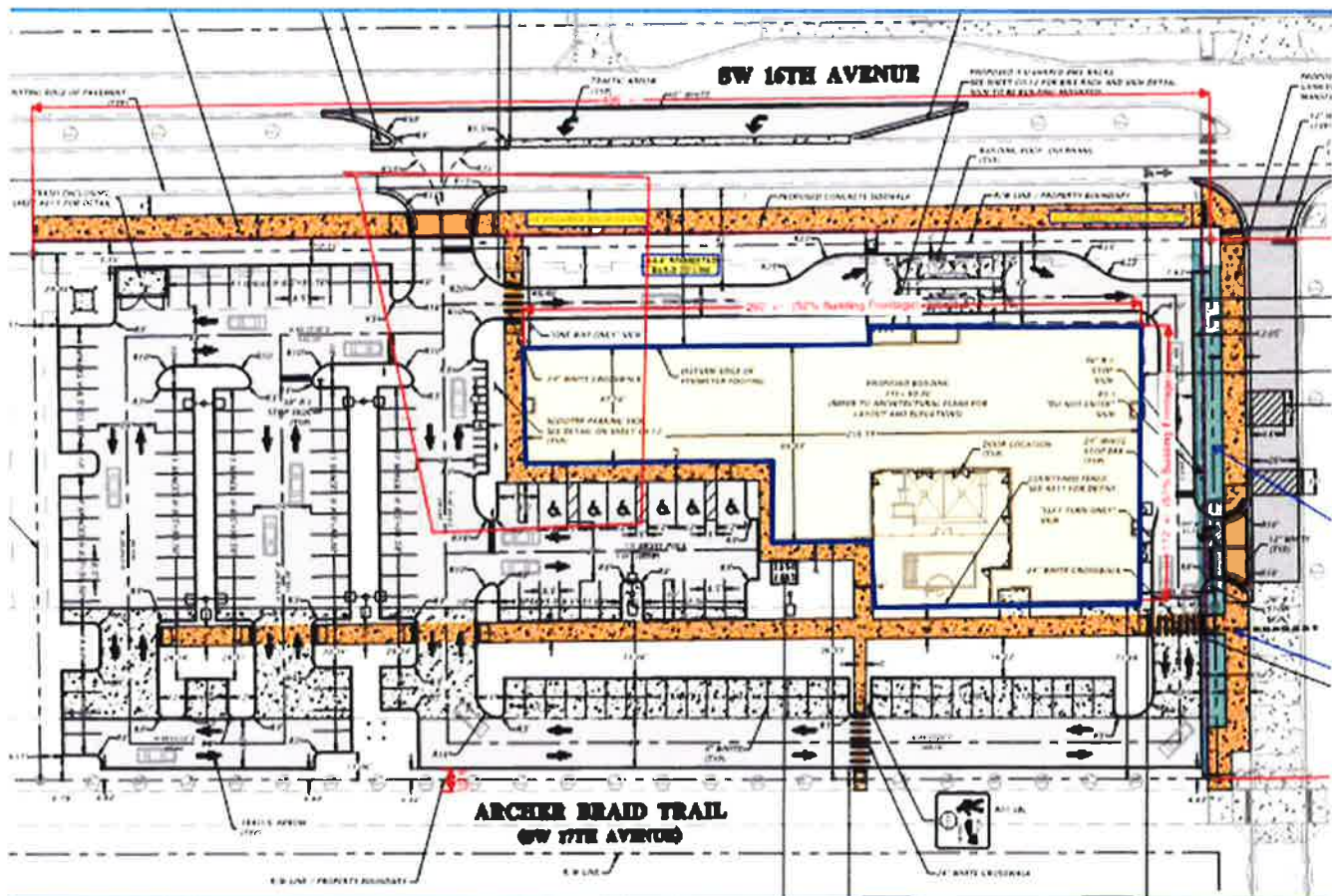
The applicant shall be required to comply with all requirements of the Technical Review Committee as included in Attachment "A".

DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND SITE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The proposed development has general compatibility with the site standards and placement of the building as required by the UMU-2 district. The development parcel meets lot size requirements, the setbacks, lot coverage, density and intensity, building height, building frontage and glazing requirements.

The building does not satisfy the 70% frontage exposure along any of the adjoining streets. The building frontage is about 52% along both the pedestrian Urban Walkway and the other roadways. The limitations to compliance are due to the type of use, the narrow width of the property and the existence of very large and wide easements traversing the property. A waiver from the 70% building frontage is requested which staff supports.

MAP 3.
Aloft Hotel Development Plan



The development does not meet the build-to line requirement on any of the street frontages. The inability to meet the standard along the southern roadway, the Urban Walkway, is due to the existence of easements over which buildings are prohibited. The building is pushed back along the east and north roadway frontages to make allowance for driveways and entry access to the building.

In terms of building entrance, the development complies with the UMU-2 requirements on all sides except the north side facing Hull Road Extension. There is only one entrance along the north side which spans a distance of more than 150 feet. This requirement is not included because of the nature of the use and the need to facilitate safety of patrons; it is also the side where the major entrance is located.

A functional system of sidewalks provides an efficient network of routes to facilitate pedestrian circulation internal and external to the development. In addition to the routes displayed, a north/south route is planned along the western boundary of the development to facilitate connectivity across the street block between SW 37th and 38th Streets.

The design of the building complies with the building orientation and glazing requirements of the district. The building elevations also demonstrate the required architectural elements to depict the vertical variation in the number of stories.

Condition 2.

A minimum four-foot wide north/south corridor shall be reserved along the western boundary of the development with cross-access easements to facilitate construction and use of a north/south sidewalk between the subject development and future developments to the west.

One of the main objectives of the UMU-2 district and Urban Village is to promote multimodal transportation and create high-quality urban streetscapes by using buildings, sidewalks, and street trees to form a pleasant, convenient and safe environment designed for pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit, and automobiles. Some of the most important implementation strategies are the standards required to facilitate pedestrian use and circulation associated with the development. The applicant is providing 50% of the 40 bicycle parking spaces required for the project. The basis of the request is the type of use. The applicant claims that very little patron traffic arrives via bicycle and that the number required is too high. The bicycle parking provided is distributed throughout the site making it easy for cyclist using the facility, to easily access the development. Staff supports the requested waiver.

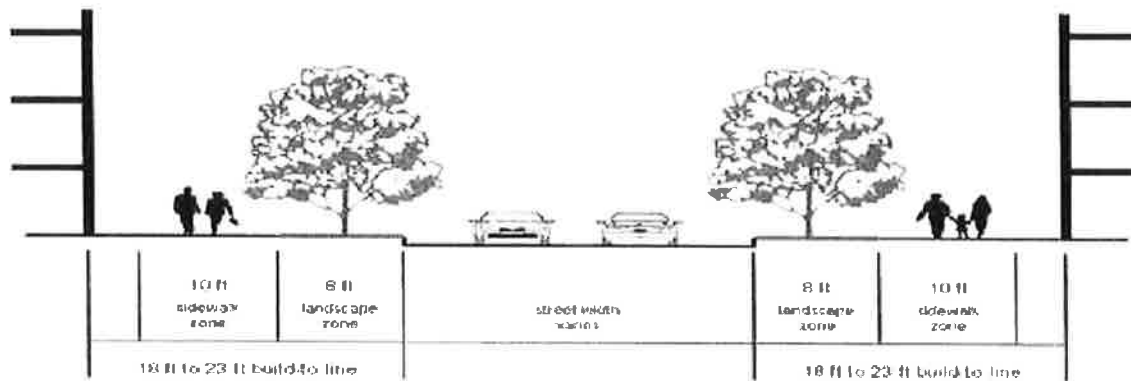
The overall development is consistent with the intent of the UMU-2 as expressed in Section 30-65.2 of the Land Development Code.

“Intent. The UMU-2 zoning district is created to promote and encourage redevelopment of the existing urban commercial areas and neighborhoods near the University of Florida. The district is intended to encourage multimodal mobility and to allow uses and development compatible with each other and with surrounding residential areas and which are consistent with the land use policies of the comprehensive plan...

- (3) *Promote multimodal transportation and create high-quality urban streetscapes by using buildings, sidewalks, and street trees to form a pleasant, convenient and safe environment designed for pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit, and automobiles;.....”*

The development has adequately addressed the essential elements of the standards prescribed in the UMU-2 and the intent of the Urban Village. The project site is highly constrained by the easements traversing the property and the proposed design has attempted to closely pattern the required standards. The requested waivers will not compromise the integrity of the district but will only facilitate the development in overcoming the uncontrollable encumbrances.

Map 3.
Required Street Cross-section for Local Streets



PHOTOMETRIC PLAN

Along the southern boundary of the development lies a 30-foot wide pedestrian route called the Urban Walkway. That route sits below a corridor of high voltage lines running the full length of the Urban Walkway and the property line. The utility operators have determined that typical pole lighting should not be installed below the high voltage power lines. This restriction has made it challenging to provide a system of lighting that can be safely placed within the corridor and provide adequate lighting to allow safe use of the Urban Walkway. Staff and the developer are working to find a solution that would be consistent with the demands of the utility operators and the safety needs of the Urban Walkway.

Condition 3.

The applicant shall engage the companies holding easements for electricity and gas distribution across the southern edge of the property to implement a photometric plan that provides a minimum of 0.5fc at the southern boundary of the property to light the Urban Walkway. Alternate approaches to lighting the walkway should also be explored.

Conclusion:

The project has been determined to be generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the intent and objectives of the UMU-2 and Urban Village. It complies with the essential elements of the Land Development Code except for the modifications referenced in the report, which can be addressed during final development plan review. Waivers have been considered for block size, build-to line, and percentage of building façade at the build-to line, placement of the landscape zone, bicycle parking, building entrances and photometric plan. The waiver flexibility is built into the review process for developments within the UMU-2 zoning district but the board must make a finding that the requested waivers satisfy the criteria for allowing them. The waivers requested are primarily due to the unique shape of the parcel and the occurrence of so many large easements on the property. The development as proposed meets the overall intent of the UMU-2 district and the objectives of the Urban Village, Staff has determined that given the comments and conditions of the TRC, the proposed development will be operated in a manner that will enhance the integrity of the general area, improve existing conditions and encourage future high quality developments. Staff supports the requested waivers and modifications.

Respectfully submitted,

Lawrence Calderon
Lead Planner

Development Plan Review Conditions:

Condition 1.

The applicant shall be required to comply with all requirements of the Technical Review Committee as included in Attachment "A".

Condition 2.

A minimum four-foot wide north/south corridor shall be reserved along the western boundary of the development with cross-access easements to facilitate construction and use of a north/south sidewalk between the subject development and future developments to the west.

Condition 3.

The applicant shall engage the companies holding easements for electricity and gas distribution across the southern edge of the property to implement a photometric plan that provides a minimum of 0.5fc at the southern boundary of the property to light the Urban Walkway. Alternate approaches to lighting the walkway should also be explored.

List of Attachments

Attachment A - Technical Review Committee Comments

Attachment B – Application and Neighborhood Workshop information

Attachment C - Request for Waivers and Response to Comments

Attachment D - Comprehensive Plan and LDR References

Attachment E - Development Plan Maps