

September 23, 2021

City of Aurora Planning and Development Services Dept.
Ms. Ariana Muca
15151 E. Alameda Pkwy
Aurora, CO 80012

Re: East Bank Shopping Center –Major Site Plan w/ Adjustment and Minor Plat
Letter of Introduction

On behalf of Evergreen Devco, Inc., and Kimco 689, Inc., we are pleased to submit this request for approval of a Site Plan and Final Subdivision Plat to redevelop a portion of the existing East Bank Shopping Center with multi-family residential apartments.

Project Location

The subject property is comprised of approximately 7.5 acres and is generally located northeast of the intersection of S. Parker Road and E. Quincy Avenue and E. 64th Avenue. An existing single-family detached residential neighborhood borders the subject property to the north. To the east, the subject property is immediately adjacent to S. Atchison Way, with an existing single-family attached and condo community located on the opposite side of the right-of way. Directly south and west of the site are existing businesses of the East Bank Shopping Center. The surrounding road network and adjacency to the Cherry Creek State Park are key factors that make this site a great location for a high-quality, market rate multi-family community. This development will strengthen the remaining retail by making a significant re-investment in the mixed-use center and will complement the surrounding community.

Zoning

The subject property is zoned MU-C (Mixed-Use – Corridor). The purpose of the MU-C district is to provide retail goods and services to satisfy the household and personal needs of the residents of nearby residential neighborhoods, those traveling on adjacent collector and arterial corridors, and to allow for higher intensity general business and service activities. The MU-C district should be located and designed to allow for access by pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation, in addition to automobiles. In Subarea B, the MU-C district is intended to promote sustainable infill redevelopment of older commercial sites, while mitigating the impacts of redevelopment on surrounding areas. Furthermore, the subject property is designated Commercial Hub in the Aurora Places comprehensive plan. This Placetype primarily contains uses that provide goods and services to nearby Established and Emerging Neighborhoods but can also serve other Placetypes in the area. This Placetype is characterized by shopping centers and areas that provide a cluster of compatible businesses. The Aurora Places comprehensive plan lists multi-family residential as a supporting permitted use to the primary use of commercial/retail uses. The infill redevelopment of a portion of the existing East Bank Shopping Center with multi-family residential dwelling units meets the intent of the MU-C zone district as well as the Commercial Hub Placetype.

Project Description

With this application, a Major Site Plan with Adjustment as well as a Minor Plat is requested in order to redevelop a portion of the existing shopping center with a 3 and 4-story multi-family residential community. Approximately 311 multi-family residential units are proposed consisting of a mixture of Studio, 1-Bedroom, and 2-Bedroom apartments.

Several community amenity spaces are proposed for future residents to enjoy. Internal to the site are two courtyards. The northern courtyard will feature more active uses such as a pool, spa, bocce ball court, outdoor kitchen & BBQ and other gathering areas. The southern courtyard will offer residents a space for more passive recreation with a gathering area, fire feature and turf lawn. At the north and northeast ends of the site two additional turf areas are proposed, offering residents additional space for recreation and dog walking. Indoor amenities include a fitness

center, community kitchen, lounge, entertainment area, business center, dog wash station, 4th story lounge and community deck and on-site property management with improved security.

Development of this multi-family residential building will require the demolition of a portion of the existing shopping center. Structures that are to be demolished with this project can be seen on sheet 3 (Context Map) of the Major Site Plan. The demolition of these existing structures will result in the relocation of three existing tenants. Kimco is actively working with the tenants currently located in these spaces to find suitable locations for relocation.

Access

The proposed community will be accessed via existing shopping center access points as well as one proposed new access point. Existing access points into the shopping center that will be used include two entrances/exits along S. Parker Road, and a single signalized access off of E. Quincy Avenue, and pursuant to the various leases held by current tenants of the shopping center, the applicant is contractually obligated to not modify or restrict such access points. The proposed site plan involves the removal of an existing access point from S. Atchison Way located in the northeast corner of the shopping center. Through direct communication with area residents, the design team learned that an access point into the shopping center from S. Atchison Way is vital for neighborhood egress and ingress. Understanding this concern, the proposed site plan includes the addition of an improved access point into the shopping center from S. Atchison Way, located along the southern end of the site. This improved access will offer a more direct connection for neighborhood residents to access the shopping center from S. Atchison Way. It also provides an enhanced pedestrian connection for neighborhood residents to utilize and activate the retail south of the project with improved circulation and visibility. On-site circulation is provided via internal drive aisles. Fire access requirements have been closely studied and coordinated with COA staff in advance of this submittal.

Multi-modal connectivity is an important component of the development, and the community is designed to feature pedestrian connections from the multi-family building to the surrounding retail destinations as well as the surrounding sidewalk network. Bicycle use is supported through the provision of 62 bike parking spaces, nearly double the required amount. Future residents will be able to access transit via walkable RTD bus stop locations located along S. Parker Road and E. Quincy Ave. In addition to the stores and restaurants of the shopping center, walkable destinations nearby include Carson Park less than ¼ of a mile to the east and the 4,000-acre Cherry Creek State Park located directly west across S. Parker Rd. Future pedestrian enhancements planned with the City's Parker Road/Quincy Avenue/Smoky Hill Road project will offer residents improved connectivity between the site and the state park.

It should be noted that the surrounding neighborhoods contributed to the redesign of the site, particularly the access from S. Atchison Way along the southern end of the site. This design is absorbing the surrounding pedestrian and vehicular traffic, allowing safe passage through the mixed-use center to both E. Quincy Ave and S. Parker Road, thereby improving traffic safety and congestion in this corridor. The Site Plan was modified to allow enhanced neighborhood access and provide a more vibrant mixed-use neighborhood.

Parking

Parking for the proposed community is provided via a combination of structured parking within the proposed parking garage, along with the use of surface parking stalls. An in-depth parking analysis has been conducted to ensure that the removal and replacement of parking within the shared surface parking lot of the shopping center has no adverse effects on the parking ratio requirements for the remaining existing commercial/retail uses. The parking plan for the site is designed to allow the site to satisfy its own parking needs and limit overflow into the adjacent neighborhood. Access to the parking structure and parking stalls is interior to the site, inherently limiting neighborhood-based parking.

Parking Enforcement

This community will have a dedicated on-site property management team to manage the day-to-day needs of the residents and the property. Parking management and enforcement will be overseen by the Property Management teams for the residents and the shopping center. As requested by the surrounding neighbors, all resident vehicles will be required to be permitted before they may be parked in the designated multifamily parking spaces. The portion of the surface parking lot that will be designated for multi-family residents will be signed as Resident Parking Only. The portion of the surface parking lot that is designated for retail center parking at the northern side of the shopping center will be signed as Retail Parking only. Please reference sheet 5 (Parking & Signage Plan) of the Site Plan for further details. To enforce the parking plan, a towing company will be contracted with and vehicles violating these policies will be towed. The parking plan and enforcement will encourage parking within the new mixed-use community and limit overflow parking in the adjacent neighborhood.

Pet Management

This proposed multifamily development will be a pet friendly community and as such, design features and management best practices have been incorporated that provide a safe and fun environment for residents and their pets. An indoor dog wash and grooming station is included on-site for residents to utilize along with on-site open space areas where residents can walk and play with their dogs. These areas include several designated dog waste stations for residents to use. Care has been taken to provide adequate levels of lighting in these spaces so that it is safe for residents to use throughout the day and night. Additionally, there are several nearby areas for residents to walk their dogs including Carson Park and Cherry Creek State Park which has a 107-acre Dog Off-Leash Area. An enclosed dog park is not proposed with this development.

The following dog breeds are restricted from this community: Pit Bull Terriers, Staffordshire Terriers, Doberman Pinschers, Rottweilers, Chows, Presa Canarias, Alaskan Malamutes, Akitas, and Wolf-hybrids.

Utilities

Relocation of existing utilities including water and sanitary along with the associated easements is proposed. Both domestic service and fire suppression lines are tapped from the relocated water line, located within a proposed fire access and utility easement. The building's sanitary service will tie into a relocated sanitary main, located within a proposed fire access and utility easement. Water quality and detention will be provided on site.

Grading

The proposed grading loosely follows the existing grades on site. There is an existing ridge at the northeast corner that divides the site into two distinct basins, and the proposed grading and drainage follows this historic pattern. There is an existing dilapidated retaining wall along the northern edge of the property that is proposed to be replaced as a part of this redevelopment. The finished floor of the proposed multi-family dwelling units is shown to be approximately 2-feet higher than the adjacent parking lot, creating a vertical buffer.

The subject property is adjacent to land uses and zone districts that require conformance to the Neighborhood Protection Standards per Section 146-4.4.3 of the UDO (Unified Development Ordinance). The proposed building has been designed to accommodate the required height limitation within 100 ft. of a lot in a protected zone district by limiting the overall height for the portion of the building within 100 ft. of the protected zone district to the north to a maximum of 38 ft. Along the east elevation facing S. Atchison Way, the building has been setback so that no portion of the 4-story structure will be located within 100 ft. of the protected zone district to the east.

Architecture

The architectural building elevations included in the proposed Major Site Plan identify how the required building design standards are met by the proposed building. Items such as changes in roof massing, height, façade materials, and building step backs are utilized to create vertical articulation. Additionally, the proposed building is designed to provide clear delineation between the base, middle and cap per 146-4.8.5.c through the utilization of material, color,

and physical articulation of the building. There are also several attached planters at the base of the building that help to create a buffer between the residents and the busy pedestrian areas of the overall shopping center. The proposed building provides a distinct covered main entry and one secondary entry, utilizing patterned concrete and landscape features, along the main surface parking area. Along S. Atchison Way, two entries are proposed which utilize similar, pedestrian scaled detailing.

Adjustment

A single adjustment to the proposed Major Site Plan is requested to address the maximum building length proposed with this building.

The Aurora UDO limits the maximum building length for multi-family residential development within this Subarea to 200 feet. An adjustment is requested to allow a maximum building length of 610 feet to accommodate the proposed redevelopment. As this is an infill development, this adjustment is necessary to accommodate the site constraints, including the adjacency of existing commercial/retail structures and parking, etc. The proposed multi-family building is intended to create an active and engaging residential street frontage. Several architectural elements are incorporated to reduce the building massing and create a familiar residential quality that is equal to the quality that would have been required without the adjustment. These include residential quality materials such as lap siding, board & batten siding, brick, and trim elements that mimic the architecture of the surrounding residential community. Dutch hip roof elements further break up the roof to create a roof dormer look and further add interest and articulation to the roof forms. Columnar vertical elements, inset private balconies, and large building setbacks with clearly contrasting material changes provide vertical articulation to create a visual look that provides the feel of multiple buildings on the site. The top, middle and base not only meet the UDO requirements, but are crafted to create a human scale to the overall height of the building. The base ties in the commercial portion of the center, while providing inset and protected balconies and landscaping for the security and privacy of the residents. The middle has inset lap siding to divide the brick and create more horizontal and vertical breaks. The wide cornice and lighter material in the top portion are intentionally scaled to give the perception of a shorter building height. Currently the existing bank of retail stores is roughly 950 ft in length with very little vertical or horizontal articulation to break up what essentially functions as one long building. The proposed multifamily community would improve the architectural character of the shopping center by breaking up that existing mass of building. The proposed adjustment fulfills the criteria for a Major Adjustment required by Section 5.4.4.D of the UDO.

Conformance to Section 146-5.4.3.B.2 of the City of Aurora Unified Development Ordinance – Site Plan Criteria

- a. The application complies with the applicable standards in this UDO, other adopted City regulations, any approved Master Plan that includes the property, and any conditions specifically applied to development of the property by the Planning and Zoning Commission or City Council in a prior decision affecting the property.

The proposed land uses are consistent with the MU-C zone district as well as the Comprehensive Plan land use designation of Commercial Hub. The addition of a multi-family residential component into this existing shopping center is anticipated to increase the customer base for the existing commercial uses as well as support the revitalization of the center as a whole.

- b. The City's existing infrastructure and public improvements, including but not limited to its water, wastewater, street, trail, and sidewalk systems, have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development, and any burdens on those systems have been mitigated to the degree practicable.

The existing City's infrastructure is over capacity from a traffic standpoint. It should be noted that the proposed residential development will generate less traffic than a fully occupied retail center, and any existing traffic problems are not caused by the proposed development. The applicant will continue working with the City on providing any necessary mitigation within the realm of the scope of the development.

From a utility standpoint, it is understood that the existing infrastructure has the capacity to serve the proposed development, with no mitigation measures required.

Sidewalks with curb ramps and delineated crossings are proposed from the multi-family building to its adjacent retail shops. The existing public sidewalk within the Atchison Way right-of-way is being widened with this development providing a safer and more pedestrian friendly path for the public.

- c. Major Site Plans shall be designed to preserve and protect natural areas, ridgelines, swales, natural landforms, water quality and wildlife habitat of riparian corridors, wetlands, and floodplains affected by the proposed development and to integrate those areas into site design where practicable.

Not applicable. There are no riparian corridors, wetlands, or floodplains affected by the proposed development.

- d. The application will improve or expand multi-modal connections with adjacent sites, neighborhoods, and urban centers.

The proposed multi-family residential community is a part of an existing commercial/retail shopping center and abuts established single-family attached and detached residential neighborhoods. The proposed Site Plan includes the addition of a new centralized vehicular access point into the shopping center from S. Atchison Way, located along the southern end of the site. This improved access will offer a more direct connection for adjacent neighborhood residents to access the shopping center from S. Atchison Way. This new access point also provides an enhanced pedestrian connection for neighboring residents to utilize to access the existing commercial/retail land uses. The proposed Site Plan considers access to and through the center; multiple pedestrian connections are provided along the eastern building elevation of the proposed multi-family building along S. Atchison Way. This improved access will further help to support the revitalization of the shopping center as a whole.

- e. The application is compatible with surrounding uses in terms of size, scale and building façade materials.

The subject property is adjacent to land uses and zone districts that require conformance to the Neighborhood Protection Standards per Section 146-4.4.3 of the UDO. The proposed building has been designed to accommodate the required height limitation within 100 ft. of a lot in a protected zone district by limiting the overall height for the portion of the building within 100 ft. of the protected zone district to the north to a maximum of 38 ft. Along the east elevation facing S. Atchison Way, the building has been setback so that no portion of the 4-story structure will be located within 100 ft. of the protected zone district to the east. The proposed architectural treatment has also been reviewed for compatibility with the remaining commercial/retail center. The materials, color, and height of the base portion of the facade of the project were intentionally chosen to match the character and scale of the existing adjacent retail, while updating and enhancing the overall look of the commercial center as a whole.

- f. The application mitigates any adverse impacts on the surrounding area to the degree practicable.

Overall, this redevelopment will result in improved conditions from a building elevation and pedestrian connectivity standpoint for the adjacent existing neighborhoods. The existing eastern building elevation of the shopping center contains multiple dock doors and a commercial loading zone. The proposed landscape treatment of the eastern site frontage, adjacent is S. Atchison Way, provides appropriate screening of the proposed multi-family building to the adjacent properties. Resident parking is supported through a reallocation of surface spaces and an internal parking garage. This plan exceeds the parking requirements of the UDO to

ensure that sufficient parking for residents and guests will be provided on-site and will not result in parking spillover onto S. Atchison Way. The proposed vehicular access from S. Atchison Way into the shopping center will improve the connection between S. Atchison Way and S. Parker Road.

Neighborhood Outreach

Communication with area residents has been, and will continue to be, an important part of this project. Neighborhood feedback and collaborative planning based on that feedback has had a significant impact on the site plan layout and building design. The plan reflects many changes that were either suggested directly by the neighborhood or were designed to address specific neighborhood concerns. The project team has gone above and beyond the UDO requirement of one neighborhood meeting. As of the date of this letter, five outreach events have been held with neighbors over the past three months and additional outreach efforts are ongoing. At each of these events the project team has shared plans with neighbors, answered their questions, and listened to their feedback. The project team is fully committed to working with area residents to create a site plan which both respects their concerns and meets the City's required standards.

From the feedback received at these outreach events, as well as public comments submitted directly to the City, four major neighborhood concerns emerged.

1. Ingress and egress into the Pier Point neighborhood from East Bank Shopping Center

The site plan which was initially proposed removed an existing access point into the East Bank Shopping Center from S. Atchison Way. The project team has learned, through conversations with neighbors, that because there is no traffic light at the intersection of S. Atchison Way and E. Quincy Avenue, residents of the Pier Point community rely on access into the East Bank Shopping Center to get in and out of their neighborhood. Subsequent conversations with City staff indicated that they would not support a traffic light at the intersection of S. Atchison Way and E. Quincy Avenue because of their traffic signal spacing requirements. After learning that the access from S. Atchison Way into East Bank Shopping Center is of vital importance to area residents, the project team reworked the site plan and building footprint to create an access point through and into the site so that Pier Point residents could maintain connections in and out of their neighborhood. The location of this new access point will offer Pier Point residents a more direct and significantly enhanced neighborhood connection into the Shopping Center than the existing access.

It should be noted that neighborhoods surrounding a traditional mixed-use center generally want to limit the traffic from that center from flowing into the neighborhood. After several neighborhood meetings, the neighbors still want to limit internal traffic from flowing into the neighborhood but need access through the center to address existing ingress and egress issues that already exist in the neighborhood. To directly accommodate the concerns of the Pier Point neighborhood, the Site Plan was modified to absorb the existing neighborhood traffic pattern while intentionally limiting impacts to the surrounding neighborhood. Our new ingress and egress plan for the Pier Point neighborhood, from and through the East Bank Shopping Center, is of particular benefit to the surrounding neighborhood and creates safe passage to both E. Quincy Ave and S. Parker Road.

2. Concerns Regarding an Increase in Traffic

An additional concern raised by residents was the idea that the addition of a proposed multi-family community would result in an increase in traffic. However, the traffic study completed for this project indicates that a change from the existing use commercial when the center is fully leased to the proposed residential use, would result in a decrease of trips in and out of the site by over 16%. It should be noted that two of the existing commercial spaces that would be replaced with this proposal are currently vacant. As these vacancies do not currently generate traffic, the move to a residential use will technically increase traffic from what is currently coming in and out of the site. However, the change to a residential use would decrease trips in and out of the site when compared to a fully leased commercial site, which could happen

under the existing land use approvals. The appropriate baseline for comparison is what is entitled today, not today's actual traffic counts, given vacancies, pandemic effects, and other anomalies. Therefore, the decrease in traffic that comes with this proposed site plan is a net decrease in traffic generation for the site. It should also be noted that this site plan envisions the creation of a mixed-use community between the existing commercial uses, and this proposed residential community. The shopping center's future as a mixed-use community is what was envisioned when this site was zoned Mixed-Use Corridor with the adoption of the Unified Development Ordinance in 2019. The surrounding road network and adjacency to the Cherry Creek State Park are key factors that make this site a great location for a high-quality, market rate multi-family community. This development will strengthen the remaining retail by making a significant re-investment in the mixed-use center and will complement the surrounding community. One benefit the proposed Site Plan seeks to produce by creating a mixed-use community is offering residents walkable access to adjacent commercial uses, which will reduce the need for residents to use their cars. As Aurora continues to grow future land uses will continue to impact overall traffic conditions, and by providing a mix of uses on a single site, the proposed Site Plan supports a sustainable solution as compared to segregated uses that require greater vehicle dependency.

Finally, as noted above, in the ingress and egress section, the existing neighborhood traffic pattern is to travel through East Bank Shopping Center to access both E. Quincy Ave and S. Parker Road. The neighborhood reinforced consistently, in written and verbal testimony, that access to either east bound E. Quincy Ave or south bound S. Parker Road is nearly impossible from S. Atchison Way, thus, traffic into the neighborhood is not the problem today. As the proposed Site Plan will result in a net decrease in traffic generation for the site if it were a fully leased retail center, the revised site plan is a significant improvement for the surrounding neighborhood.

3. Concerns about Existing Retail Tenants

Another topic which neighbors brought up at outreach events was concern about existing tenants being displaced as part of the development. Kimco is in active discussions with existing tenants to find the best possible solution given the project's impact on their businesses.

The neighborhood has clearly voiced their support for some of the existing tenants on the site. The feedback has guided the project team's outreach to existing businesses, and it is the hope to include many of the neighborhood businesses to further enrich the planned mixed-use community. The project team will continue to conduct outreach directly with both the surrounding neighborhood and area businesses to create a thriving neighborhood that allows existing businesses to remain and provide additional residents to support their long-term viability.

4. Concerns about Crime Mitigation

During neighborhood outreach, questions were raised as to how this project addresses crime, because crime prevention and resident safety is vital to housing operation.

All potential residents need to pass certain qualification requirements including criminal background checks, credit history and income verification before they are accepted as residents. The building incorporates access control and other security measures such as cameras to help create a safe and secure environment for residents. The parking garage has been designed internal to the site and will also have access control to minimize safety concerns. The on-site property management team will implement a "See Something, Say Something" security program, similar to a community watch, which gives residents a platform to notify management of any non-emergency concerns that they see or hear.

Additionally, the site and building design of this community has integrated CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles to help create a safe environment for residents and the surrounding community.

1. Provisions of Natural Surveillance – Design promotes street level activation on all four sides of the building through pedestrian walkways, landscape planting areas, recreational space, and seating. These elements maximize visibility between the building and adjacent uses including the shopping center and Atchison Way.
2. Provision for Natural Access Control – As the site is designed to be walkable, a network of wide paths, lighting, and landscaping elements work together to create clear routes from building entrances to surrounding sidewalk connections.
3. Provision of Territorial Reinforcement – Site design incorporates a variety of pavement treatments and landscape areas to clearly define and outline the property. Additional elements such as public art or festoon lighting may be proposed in the future further reinforcing the community's sense of place.
4. Maintenance – Low maintenance landscaping and lighting further reinforce natural surveillance, natural access control, and territorial reinforcement.

It is also worth noting that in its very essence, the creation of an active, walkable mixed-use community through the proposed residential development will work to deter crime by putting more “eyes on the street”, especially when compared with the vacant retail storefronts that currently exist on the site.

The project team understands that an important part of being a good neighbor is listening to area residents and working with them to create a plan which both takes into consideration the feedback from neighbors and respects the intent of the City of Aurora's Unified Development Ordinance. Revising the plans based on neighbor feedback and continued neighborhood engagement are a testament to that endeavor by furthering sustainable infill development while acknowledging and adapting to the concerns of the surrounding community. The attached plans have been greatly enhanced because of the significant community involvement and the project team's renewed commitment to community-based inclusive planning.

The property owner and development team look forward to continuing to work with the City of Aurora to make this new development a success! Please let us know if you have any immediate questions or need anything further as part of your review.

Sincerely,
Norris Design



Daniel Jennings
Associate