

October 26, 2018

Office of Development Assistance  
15151 E. Alameda Parkway, Suite 5200  
Aurora, Colorado 80012

**RE: Letter of Introduction  
Development Application  
Element by Westin  
Aurora, CO**

Dear Mr. Cammarata:

Thank you for your comments regarding the Pre-Application Meeting. Please see below and the attached submittal drawings.

Planning Department:

1. Zoning and Land Use Issues

The Abilene Station TOD General Development Plan regulates development on this site in addition to City Code. This project requires Design Review Board (DRB) approval of both the site and building designs. The existing GDP includes a Public Improvement Plan (PIP) which outlines required improvements to the detention pond north of Abilene Street as an "Interpretive Park." Please indicate how this will be accomplished.

**Response: The Interpretive Park will be developed both in design and construction by the overall developer David Erb. The design team for this Park has submitted for a pre-application meeting.**

2. Traffic and Street Layout Issues

2A. Please see the Urban Street Standards applied to Blackhawk Street, 2nd Place and 3rd Avenue defined in the Marriott at Abilene Station Site Plan, which applies to this case. Apply these cross sections to the streets adjacent to your project. All proposed streets whether public or private need to be labeled according to our street standard ordinance, Chapter 126-1 and 126-36 of the city code.

**Response: Blackhawk, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue have been constructed.**

2B. This proposal is within the core of a Transit Oriented Development (TOD). A TOD emphasizes pedestrian comfort and movements. The proposed drop-off loop off 3rd Avenue does not meet this intent as it puts a priority on vehicular movement along the street frontage over pedestrians. The site has adequate land to accommodate drop-off facilities internal to the site.

**Response: Drop off has been revised to be internal to the site.**

2C. Please include the Urban Street cross sections within the Site Plan.

**Response: Please see A001.**

2D. This parcel is responsible for improvements to Abilene Street in accordance with GDP PIP, requirements, which includes a 9-foot wide sidewalk.

**Response: The sidewalk along Abilene Street has been constructed, the majority of this sidewalk is part of the transit station.**

3. Environmental Issues

3A. No environmental issues have been identified to date.

4. Site Design Issues

4A. Pedestrian Circulation and Linkages to Off-Site Trails & Open Space. Please proposed a linkage across 4th Avenue from the site to the Interpretive Park Space. Provide connections to the (at grade) pedestrian rail crossing at the west edge of the site as described further in subsection 4C below.

**Response: A crosswalk will be provided across Abilene Street to the Interpretive Park Space, we will work with the design team to ensure a curb cut is put in place parallel to Blackhawk Street.**

4B. On-Site Amenities and Use of Open Space. On-Site Amenities and Use of Open Space. The GDP Section 11.0 requires a minimum of 6,800 square feet of private open space amenities onsite. The expectation is that these open space amenities are meaningful, usable spaces. Portions of this requirement should include a consolidated plaza, courtyard or patio areas integrated into the streetscapes along both Blackhawk Street and 3rd Avenue. These spaces should include decorative pavement treatments, pedestrian-scaled lighting, site furniture and formalized landscape designs such as raised planters with seat walls. These areas should also be integrated with the function and design of the building, typically situated at building entrances and utilizing recesses and projections relating to the building footprint. Please use defined site furnishings within the GDP that are utilized throughout the master planned development.

**Response: Patio areas will be utilized for both franchise mandated areas and patio areas per the GDP along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. We have a waiting for franchise comments back from Marriott to ensure the space is appropriate for the hotel and will develop remainder of patio area to ensure it is cohesive with GDP.**

4C. Parking. Please use the TOD Parking Standards in the Zoning Code Section 146-729. These standards require shared parking and establish minimum parking standards at a rate of one half of the standard elsewhere in the community resulting in ½ a parking space per accommodation. A shared parking situation is required. The GDP also includes additional requirements for bicycle parking and guest parking. A portion of the bicycle parking should include bicycle lockers.

The parking lot design should include a direct and continuous pedestrian connection to the existing at-grade pedestrian rail crossing at the west edge of the site to the pedestrian building entrances and to all public rights of way and light rail platform. This connection should minimize the frequency and length of drive aisle crossings and include landscape adjacent to the pathway whenever possible.

**Response: See A001, quantity of parking spaces has been reduced. See LP-1, a continuous pedestrian connection from the front entrance to the transit station will be constructed with inviting landscape features. The bicycle parking and lockers will either be designated along 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**avenue or near the Porte Cochere at the entrance of the building, depending on patio layout comments from Marriott.**

4D. Site Lighting. Section 14.0 of the GDP provides standards and guidance for lighting. Also, Section 146-1509(H) governs the design of parking lot lighting not addressed in the GDP. Please show typical details of lighting on the plan and/or building elevations. Please match lighting outlined in the GDP or those associated with the light rail platform. The GDP also requires development of an “Interpretative Park” north of 4th Avenue. This will require landscape and site design enhancement to the existing detention pond (Please see additional comments in section 5B and the PROS section of this letter).

**Response: Please see E111 –E113.**

5. Landscape Design Issues

**Response: See attached sheets LP-1 – LP-3.**

6. Architectural and Urban Design

6A. Design Standards.

Section 146-405(F)8 of the Zoning Code establishes the approval criteria for building architecture and urban design. Building elevations will need to be included as part of your site plan and should call out dimensions, exterior finishes and color schemes. We will also ask for color and material samples with the initial submittal. As a general rule, “high quality of design” usually means that architectural details should be continued on all four sides of all buildings open to view. Staff suggests that you incorporate material changes and architectural features such as glazing, textured surfaces, projections, color, overhangs, and changes in parapet height to improve the façade and create an inviting and attractive street presence. Emphasis should be placed on ground floor design. Ground floor designs should support a pedestrian-friendly environment, provide visual interest, and help to create an atmosphere that promotes foot traffic. Use changes in the wall planes, both horizontally and vertically, a variety of durable materials, and quality architecture to create visually interesting buildings. Architectural details shall be continued on all four sides of the buildings to reduce the back of house appearance. Street level facades should be “permeable” to animate the public streetscape and improve the interest, comfort, and safety for pedestrians. Significant proportions of transparent display windows and door openings should occur along street fronts.

Responses:

In addition, the Abilene Station TOD General Development Plan contains design standards for architecture, materials, street furniture and some other items.

All buildings should have a primary façade and primary entrance oriented toward the street. Along both Blackhawk Street and 3rd Avenue the build-to setback range is between 4’ and 10’. A larger setback may be considered when used to break up the horizontal façade of a building with inset plazas or courtyards integrated with the public street. The GDP requires 60% masonry for the first three stories on each elevation (GDP Section 16.3). The corner of the building at 3rd Avenue and Blackhawk shall be prominent relative to the rest of the building and incorporate two or more design elements identified in the GDP Section 16.5. Also, the Blackhawk elevation requires at least one major vertical marker in the form of an offset or projection (GDP 16.4). Examples of successful architecture and their design elements are included in the GDP. These examples depict the quality that is to be the basis for the development of Abilene Station. Street facing facades are very long and need to include significant building offset and inclusion of prominent pedestrian entrances. Pedestrian entrances should integrate with and enhance the streetscape

and include a variety of elements including decorative pavement treatments, pedestrian lighting, formal landscape arrangements and site furniture. The expectation is that facades facing public streets include high levels of fenestration including a predominance of storefront-style windows. Approval of the DRB is required prior to the Public Hearing.

**Response: See G011 for exterior elevations.**

6B. Screening of Roof Top Mechanicals. Code Section 146-1300 states the requirements for screening mechanical equipment. Please see that code section and the standard notes included in the Site Plan Manual. In general, these require that the site plan show the location of any rooftop or mechanical equipment and vents greater than eight inches in diameter on the elevation drawings. All such equipment must be screened. Use drawings and notes to explain how this will be accomplished. Screening may be done either with an extended parapet wall, or a freestanding screen. In either case the screening must be at least as high as the equipment it hides. The following note to be labeled Roof-Mounted Equipment Screening” must be added to the general notes section of all Site Plans: (click here for the specific note).

**Response: The parapet wall will be extended to hide any roof top mechanical equipment. Above referenced note is on A001.**

The GDP provides additional guidance in Section 16.8. Ground level mechanical equipment should not be located between the building and the public street and all mechanicals should be screened or painted to match the adjacent wall surfaces.

**Response: All mechanical equipment will be placed on the roof.**

## 7. Signage

7A. Where objective standards are available, Section 15.0 of the Abilene Station T.O.D. GDP applies. Please refer to Article 16 under sign standards for TOD’s of the Zoning Code for complete regulations where no standards are available in the GDP. Please include a detailed sign program and design with your site plan submittal.

**Response: See proposed signage on G011.**

## 8. Waivers

If you decide to request any waivers, you must clearly list them in your Letter of Introduction and justify them according to the criteria listed in Section 405 of the Zoning Code. You must also list them on the cover sheet of your Site Plan or other drawings on which they occur.

**Response: A waiver will be pursued to eliminate the minimum 10’ building setback along 3<sup>rd</sup> avenue. Working with the case manager, a pedestrian friendly plaza will be installed along this street that will tie in with required franchise patio.**

## 9. Mineral Rights Notification Requirements

Please fill out the Mineral Rights Affidavit / Severed Mineral Rights Notice and supply this document to your Case Manager at the time of site plan submittal.

**Response: See attached mineral rights affidavit.**

## 10. New CAD Standards

The City of Aurora has developed a CAD Data Submittal Standard for internal and external use to streamline the process of importing AutoCAD information into the City's Enterprise GIS. Digital Submission meeting the CAD Data Submittal Standard are required by consultants on development projects when submitting to the City for signature sets and on capital projects funded by the City. Details of the CAD Data Submittal Standard can be found on the CAD Standards web page.

**Response: This will be completed once DA is approved.**

Please let us know if you require anything further or have any questions.

Kind Regards,

Kate Kvamme, AIA