

April 1, 2004

Mr. William J. Mueller,
Village President, and
Board of Trustees
Village of Lombard

Subject: PC 04-10; 400-540 E. St. Charles Road (Neri Development)

Dear President and Trustees:

Your Plan Commission transmits for your consideration its recommendation regarding the above-referenced petition. This petition was heard at the March 15, 2004 Plan Commission meeting.

The petitioner requests that the Village take the following actions on the subject property:

1. Approve an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan reclassifying the subject property from Community Commercial to High Density Residential.
2. Approve a map amendment from the B4 Corridor Commercial District to the R4 Limited General Residence District;
3. Approve a conditional use for a planned development with the following deviations:
 - a) A deviation from Section 155.408 (D) (4) to reduce the minimum required lot area for an 80-unit multiple-family dwelling from 224,000 sq. ft. to 96,205 sq. ft.;
 - b) A deviation from Section 155.408 (G) to increase the maximum allowable building height from 4 stories (50 feet) to 5 stories (51 feet);
 - c) A deviation from Section 155.408 (F) (4) (a) and Section 155.508 (C) (6) to reduce the minimum required front yard setback from 30 feet 2 feet for the western building and 4 feet for the eastern building;
 - d) A deviation from Section 155.408 (F) (4) (d) and Section 155.508 (C) (6) to reduce the minimum required rear yard setback from 30 feet to 29 feet for the western building;

- e) A deviation from Section 155.408 (D) and Section 155.508 (C) (7) to reduce the minimum required open space from 40% to 25%;
 - f) A deviation from Section 155.210 (B) (2) (b) and Section 155.508 (C) (6) to reduce the minimum required rear yard setback for a detached garage from 3 feet to 1 foot;
4. Approve variations from the planned development standards as follows:
- a) A variation from Section 155.508 (C) (4) allowing for an increase in the maximum number of dwelling units from 48 to 80 units;
 - b) A variation from Section 155.508 (C) (6) to vary the front and rear yard on the perimeter of the development as depicted on the submitted site plans and as referenced within the petitioner's request for a conditional use for a planned development;
 - c) A variation from Section 155.508 (C) (7) to vary the area of open space provided in a planned development as depicted on the submitted site plans and as referenced within the petitioner's request for a conditional use for a planned development;
5. Approve variations from the landscape standards as follows:
- a) A variation from Section 155.706 (C) (1) of the Zoning Ordinance reducing the required perimeter parking lot landscaping area;
 - b) A variation from Section 155.709 (B) of the Zoning Ordinance reducing the required perimeter lot landscaping area;
6. Approve a conditional use for an accessory garage; and
7. The petitioner also requests Site Plan Approval authority to the Lombard Plan Commission.

The petition was presented in PowerPoint format by Guido Neri of Highland Partners, LLC, 7760 W. Devon, Chicago. (A copy of the presentation is included at the back of this referral letter).

Mr. Neri summarized and explained the request. He noted that the shape of the property was challenging and necessitated a number of setback variations. However, the property has a great location for residences, close to the train station, park, and Great Western Trail. He went over the proposed site plans, landscape plans, interior building plans, and exterior building elevations in detail.

The entrance to the building is on the north side to provide additional privacy to residents and to allow the larger units to face the park. Visitor parking is provided in lots on the east and west sides of the property, and a 12-car detached garage will have resident parking as well as serve as a buffer between the buildings and the railroad tracks. There will be a monument sign at each

driveway entrance. Also, with the exception of the utility pole at the northwest corner of the site, all utility lines will be buried.

The first floor of each building will accommodate 37 indoor parking spaces, private storage lockers, and a party/meeting room for residents. Each building will have five 1-bed/1-bath units, four 2-bed/1-bath units, twenty-five 2-bed/2-bath units, and six 2 bed-plus-den/2-bath units.

The top floors of each building will be stepped back to soften their appearance. The building will be constructed of pre-cast concrete planks with load-bearing masonry that will protect the building from vibrations from traffic and the railroad tracks. There will also be soundproofing and triple-pane glass on the north side of the building. There will be a satellite on the roof so no individual satellite dishes will be placed on the balconies. Also, spandrel glass has been added to the first floor to give it the appearance of additional residences.

Mr. Neri concluded by noting this development will generate less traffic than a commercial development, and it will allow the park to be completely surrounded by residential uses.

Chairperson Ryan then opened the meeting for public comment.

Art Frerichs, 248 West Road, stated that this is the best proposed use for the land that he has seen. He generally dislikes the loss of commercial properties, but under the circumstances this is the best use for the land.

No one else spoke for or against the petition.

Chairperson Ryan then requested the staff report. William Heniff, Senior Planner, stated that the proposed development consists of two five-story, 40-unit condominium units located on St. Charles Road between Lombard Common and the Union Pacific Railroad. The project will have indoor parking on the first floor with four floors of condominiums above. There will also be a detached 12-car garage and outdoor surface parking.

This petition requests rezoning to the R4 Limited General Residence District, which will require a Comprehensive Plan amendment. This project will be a planned development with deviations for setbacks, lot area, open space, and height, in addition to variations from the planned development and landscape standards. The petitioner also requests Site Plan Approval authority be granted to the Lombard Plan Commission.

The Fire Department/Bureau of Inspectional Services notes that construction must follow the new 2000 International Codes, along with any changes to the Village's Title XV Ordinances. This requirement will apply only if the petitioner submits a building permit application subsequent to the Village's adoption of the 2000 International Codes.

The Long-Range Plan Map of the Comprehensive Plan identifies this site for Community Commercial uses. The 1998 Comprehensive Plan designation for the subject property was light industrial, recognizing the existing heavy commercial and light industrial land uses. In 1998-99, the Ad Hoc St. Charles Road Committee found that "The unused portion of the Great Western Trail (the old railroad berms on either side of St. Charles Road, between Grace and St. Charles Place) provides a visual break in the St. Charles corridor, a gateway of sorts." The Plan Commission and Board of Trustees later determined that, due to the proximity to residential uses, light industrial was not the best long-term use for the property (PC 99-28).

In keeping with the vision of this property as a gateway into the downtown, staff believes that a change in the Plan designation from community commercial to medium-density residential may be warranted. The Comprehensive Plan states that new medium- and high-density housing should be located in selected "nodal" locations or in areas that serve as a transitional use between low-density residential and nonresidential uses. The proposed medium-density residential designation would be consistent with this goal as a buffer between the single-family homes surrounding Lombard Common and the Union Pacific Railroad.

In addition, the Comprehensive Plan states that site development design should encourage a system of bicycle and pedestrian access. The proposed development will have the ability to provide an additional access point to the Great Western Trail once the proposed bridge and trail improvements have been constructed.

The proposed development is wholly bounded by railroads and publicly owned properties: St. Charles Road, Grace Street, the Union Pacific Railroad, and the Great Western Trail. For this reason, there will be no transitional use considerations. The proposed residential land use would be quieter than the existing land uses, with primary activities occurring within the buildings themselves and with few commercial service vehicles operating on the site. This is an important factor given the close proximity of low-intensity uses such as single-family homes and Lombard Common. As such, staff believes this development would be compatible with the surrounding land uses.

Staff is supportive of the request for rezoning to the R4 designation in the context of this specific proposal. Due to the unique shape and shallow depth of this property, it would be difficult to redevelop this property with high-quality commercial uses.

While the proposed R4 zoning will require a number of variations, it is overall the most appropriate residential designation for this site. In the event this particular planned development is not constructed, an R4 designation would prevent the site from being over-developed under the less restrictive R5 or R6 District requirements. While the R5 District could be considered, that district allows buildings to be constructed up to 65 feet in height, and it also permits a multiple-family dwelling unit density that is 36% greater than that permitted in the R4 District. The R6 District allows 100-foot tall buildings and a density greater than twice what is permitted in the

R4 District. Projects such as Collen Court Condominiums and Park Avenue Condominiums are typical examples of R5 and R6 properties, which would be on a larger scale than would be suitable for this location.

Included with the petition is a request for conditional use approval for a planned development. Since the intent of a planned development is to address the unique attributes surrounding the existing and proposed land uses, staff recommends the establishment of a planned development for this site. Moreover, the planned development process provides the Village with the ability to consider specific design elements to ensure compatibility with the adjacent land uses.

The R4 District requires multiple-family dwellings to have 2,800 sq. ft. of lot area for each dwelling unit. The proposed development has only 1,202 sq. ft. of lot area for each dwelling unit. (Note that these lot area requirements refer to the surface area of the lot, not the square footage of the units themselves, which will average 1,425 sq. ft.) The majority of R4-zoned properties within the Village abut single-family residential properties, which requires additional space to accommodate transitional yard and transitional building setback requirements. As this project does not need to allow for such transitional elements, the lot area deviation may be warranted.

In the R4 District, buildings of 50 feet or 4 stories can be approved through the conditional use process. Although the proposed buildings will only exceed the height limit by one foot, the advantages to a greater building height are significant in this case. The increased building height will permit future residents to have unobstructed views from their homes, whereas a reduction in height would force second-floor residents to be impacted by traffic on St. Charles Road and the Union Pacific Railroad. Given the considerable distance between the proposed development and any neighboring buildings, the increased building height would have a minimal impact on surrounding properties.

Also, the petitioner has modified the original elevations to lessen the visual impact the buildings will have on the surrounding area by incorporating decorative elements to de-emphasize the building's apparent bulk.

This property is uniquely shaped, with a depth ranging from 60 feet at its western end and tapering to 0 feet at its eastern end, with a maximum depth of approximately 145 feet at its widest point. With 30-foot front yard and 30-foot rear yard setbacks applied to this property, there is very little developable area remaining. As such, setback variations would be necessary to construct nearly any type of development and staff is therefore supportive of these requests.

The proposed plans as drawn have approximately 30 percent open space. Although the petitioner is requesting a reduction in open space from 40 percent to 25 percent, the 25 percent figure is only a minimum amount that is intended to accommodate any minor changes in the site plan that may be deemed necessary. Given the project's location adjacent to the Great Western Trail and

directly across from a 49-acre park, the need for visual open space in this development is lessened. Furthermore, there will be a generous amount of landscaping on the property that will effectively lessen the impact of the proposed buildings and parking areas.

The petitioner is requesting relief from the Zoning Ordinance's perimeter lot and parking lot landscaping requirements. As noted in previous sections, this lot has a unique shape that significantly impacts its developable area. The requested relief is for landscaping along certain areas near the bottom of the steep grade change that leads up to the railroad tracks, an area that would only be visible within the development itself. Given that the majority of the development will be heavily landscaped, including a total of 48 shade trees, staff feels that there is sufficient landscaping on the property to create an aesthetically pleasing development and the proposed landscape plan meets the intent of the Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, staff is supportive of the variations for perimeter lot and parking lot landscaping.

As conditions of approval, staff suggests that the petitioner provide easements on the corners of the property for public amenities. On the westernmost corner of the development at the intersection of Grace and St. Charles, staff requests an easement for the construction of a pocket park. Similar pocket parks are located at the southeast corner of the intersection and on Grace Street north of the railroad tracks.

Also, staff suggests that an easement be granted over the eastern corner of the property to allow future access to the Great Western Trail. Once the trail bridge is constructed over the Union Pacific tracks, an access point to the trail will be beneficial to future residents of the development as well as the general public. As an alternative, the petitioner may possibly do a swap land with DuPage County to exchange this corner area for a strip of land behind the existing site.

The Zoning Ordinance requires 1.5 parking spaces per unit for one-bedroom and two-bedroom units, which would amount to 120 parking spaces for the proposed buildings. All required spaces shall be provided as part of the petitioner's proposal.

This project is envisioned to be constructed in two phases. To ensure adequate access for residents, construction traffic, and emergency vehicles throughout all phases of construction, staff recommends that a temporary access drive be constructed between the two buildings. This drive should be removed upon completion of Phase II of the project.

In response to concerns over the possible impact this development will have on traffic along St. Charles Road, Kenig, Lindgren, O'Hara, Aboona, Inc. has conducted a traffic study for the proposed development. Their report states that the amount of traffic generated by the development will be very low and there will be fewer conflict points. They do not anticipate any difficulties with vehicles turning right from the westernmost driveway, even during peak hours.

With the creation of a planned development, the petitioner requests future site plan approval by the Plan Commission to address outstanding site design issues that may arise as part of the final design of the development.

Mr. Heniff concluded by stating that approval of this project will be contingent on approval of a companion development agreement, the conditions and terms of which will be discussed by the Board of Trustees prior to any approval of this petition and the relief requested herein. Staff recommended approval of the petition, subject to the conditions of approval noted in the staff report.

Chairperson Ryan opened the meeting for discussion among the Plan Commission members.

Commissioner Flint stated that this is a very high-quality development and he is glad to see it come into the community. It should be very attractive next to the park. He asked about the proposed phasing of the project. Mr. Heniff stated that the eastern building will most likely be constructed first.

Commissioner Burke approved of the development and asked about the plans for detention. Mr. Neri stated that the civil engineering drawings place a retention vault at the eastern portion of the site, under the parking lot and driveway. All required detention will be provided in this underground vault system.

Commissioner Sweetser stated that this should be a great addition to Lombard. She noted that although the number of cars produced by this development would be less than that produced by a commercial development, they will be grouped together differently. She noted that it would be difficult for fast-moving traffic traveling westbound on St. Charles Road to anticipate vehicles that might be turning out of the development. Mr. Heniff stated that this issue could be brought to the Traffic & Safety Committee to investigate appropriate signage and/or pavement markings.

Commissioner Melarkey noted that traffic turning left out of the development onto eastbound St. Charles Road would be a concern and should be examined.

Chairperson Ryan stated that although he had previously been concerned with the building's height, the architectural treatments on the first floor lessened its impact and it made sense to elevate the residential portion of the building above the traffic level.

Commissioner Zorn stated that she was also no longer very concerned with the building's height as they have developed a beautiful design that should be a great improvement to the area.

Commissioner Burke made a motion to recommend approval of the petition, which was seconded by Commissioner Flint.

After due consideration of the petition and the testimony presented, the Plan Commission found that the proposed request complies with the standards of the Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, the Plan Commission, by a roll call vote of 5 to 0, recommended to the Corporate Authorities **approval** of PC 04-10, subject to the following conditions:

1. The site shall be developed substantially in accordance with the site plans prepared by Neri Architects, dated February 11, 2004 and last revised March 1, 2004.
2. During the construction phase, the petitioner will construct a temporary access drive between the proposed buildings to ensure unobstructed access around the site. The design of the driveway shall be subject to review and approval by the Director of Community Development and the Fire Chief.
3. All comments in the Inter-Departmental Review Committee Report shall be satisfactorily addressed as part of a building permit application.
4. Accessible parking spaces shall be provided in compliance with the provisions of the Illinois Accessibility Code.
5. The petitioner shall provide a photometric plan to the Village showing compliance with Village Code.
6. The petitioner shall either:
 - a. grant a cross-access agreement over the eastern corner of the property for pedestrian/bike access and construction; or
 - b. exchange the eastern corner of the property for DuPage County-owned property to the rear of the side.
7. The petitioner shall provide a public access and landscape easement over the western corner of the property (west of the proposed parking area). The developer shall install a pocket park of like design as found at the northwest corner of St. Charles Road and Grace.
8. The petitioner shall modify the landscape plan to include the following, subject to the approval by the Director of Community Development:
 - a. continuous shrubbery along the eastern boundary of the public access and landscape easement; and
 - b. low-growth plantings in the public access and landscape easement along St. Charles Road and Grace Street.

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9. Any existing and proposed public overhead utility lines located on the subject property and within the St. Charles Road right-of-way adjacent to the subject property shall be buried.

Respectfully,

VILLAGE OF LOMBARD

Donald Ryan
Chairperson
Lombard Plan Commission

DR:JB

attachments

- c. Petitioner
Lombard Plan Commission

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