

Downtown Code Design Review Committee

Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2019

Members Present: Casella, Porter, Dickson, Hanan, Hastings

Staff Present: Hammer, Wallace

Others Present: Jonathan Cleghorn, Jeff Conar, Michael Payne, Tim Kinkead, Daniel Johnson, Kevin Snider, Alan Lowe (NES Substation);

Location: 800 2nd Avenue South, Metro Planning Dept. – Davidson Room

I. APPROVAL OF THE 12/6/2018 DTC DRC MINUTES

Hastings moved and Dickson seconded the motion to approve the December 6, 2018 meeting minutes (5-0).

II. APPROVAL OF THE 1/3/2019 DTC DRC MINUTES

Hastings moved and Hanan seconded the motion to approve the January 3, 2019 meeting minutes (5-0).

III. CASES FOR REVIEW

1) NES Substation II

2018DTC-015-001

200 & 308 12th Ave N., 300 George L Davis Blvd, 1214 Church St

Staff Reviewer: Justin Wallace

Request to allow fences of 6' within the build-to zone where 4' are required and to reduce the frontage zone required by the MCSP for a portion of Charlotte Avenue.

Staff Recommendation: Approve with conditions.

APPLICANT REQUEST

A request to modify various standards of the Downtown Code for properties located at 200, 220, and 308 12th Avenue North, 1214 Church Street, and 300 George L. Davis Boulevard (15.79 acres) within the Gulch South subdistrict of the DTC.

BACKGROUND

The Nashville Electric Power Board (NES) maintains several parcels across four city blocks between Dr. Martin L. King Jr. Boulevard and the Church Street viaduct. The requested modifications affect parcels fronting Dr. Martin L. King Jr. Boulevard and 11th Avenue North.

In 2018, NES proposed to relocate its Downtown substation from 10th Avenue North to property on 11th Avenue North in advance of significant redevelopment of the former Lifeway campus. The Downtown Code Design Review Committee (DTC DRC) reviewed the NES substation and approved the following modification requests (with none opposed) on 8/2/2018:

- Eliminate frontage zone requirement along 11th Avenue North
- Eliminate active use requirement along 11th Avenue North

Subsequently, NES has decided to undertake additional site improvements in advance of future redevelopment and is pursuing modification requests of the DTC standards as described below.

DTC MODIFICATION REQUEST SUMMARY

1. Major and Collector Street Plan
 - Required: 4 ft planting strip; 10 ft clear sidewalk; 4 ft frontage zone
 - Proposed: 4 ft planting strip; 10 ft clear sidewalk; 2 ft frontage zone

2. Fence and Wall Standard
 - Height:
 - Required: 4 ft
 - Proposed: 6 ft

PROJECT PROPOSAL

The project consists of streetscape enhancements along Dr. Martin L. King Jr. Blvd. (formerly Charlotte Avenue) and privacy fencing along the perimeter of the property. The purpose of the requested modifications is to construct site improvements in advance of future redevelopment while maintaining existing conditions in the interim. The current use of the site consists of surface parking for vehicles and NES equipment.

ANALYSIS

Streetscape

The Major and Collector Street Plan requires a frontage zone, which is intended to function in conjunction with active uses along the ground floor to create a more lively public realm. Typically these uses, such as retail, restaurant, and residences, may demand a dedicated area for outdoor seating, signage, additional plantings and the like. Because the existing use remains a surface parking lot, the need for a frontage zone is diminished. As future redevelopment occurs over time, the need for frontage will be expected and required at that time.

The proposed site improvements do provide some dimension of the required frontage zone area as a buffer to the existing parking area. The street segment between 11th and 12th Avenues North contains the full 4 ft required width while the street segment between 12th Avenue North and George L. Davis Boulevard varies in dimension to a minimum of 2 ft. This buffer consists of river rock mulch bed, decorative fencing, and plantings and does offer some relief to pedestrians along the street while screening the parking area.

The existing streetscape consists of a substandard sidewalk and chain link fencing around the perimeter of the subject property. In comparison, the proposed streetscape improvements will consist of a 4 ft planting strip that captures existing utility poles and infrastructure, a 10 ft clear sidewalk for pedestrians, and a varying frontage area that provides a small buffer to the surface parking lot beyond. The proposed design results in a more complete street that reflects the streetscape along the north side of Charlotte Pike, which has already been built out.

Fence and Site Wall Standard

The DTC outlines the following requirements for fences and site walls.

- Fences and walls built within the Build-to Zone shall not exceed 4 ft. in height as measured from the sidewalk grade.
- Fences and walls within the Build-to Zone greater than 3 ft. in height shall be a minimum of 30% transparent to allow visibility into the property.
- Fences and walls used to screen parking shall be a minimum of 2 ½ ft. above the grade of the parking lot.
- When a fence or wall is combined with plantings the majority of the plantings shall be between the right-of-way and the fence or wall.

The proposed fencing is consistent with the fence and wall standards above with the exception of height. The proposed height is 6 ft whereas the required height is 4 ft. The increase allows added privacy and screening of the cars and equipment that will be parked in the surface parking lot beyond.

The view as experienced by pedestrians would be of a decorative fence with vertical plantings within a bed of river rock that begins at the back of sidewalk. Although the height does not allow passers-by to view over the fence, the transparency does allow visibility through the material of the fence. While not ideal, the fencing is an improvement upon the current chain link fencing and an intermediate solution in advance of future redevelopment of the site.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The proposed streetscape design offers a more complete street and improvement upon existing conditions. The lack of a frontage zone is reasonable given the existing surface parking lot, while the proposed decorative fence and buffer aid in providing visual relief and separation to the sidewalk.

Staff recommends approval of the modifications with conditions:

1. Fence shall not be greater than 6 ft.
2. Full frontage zone width required when redevelopment occurs.

Casella moved and Hastings seconded the motion to approve the modifications request with staff condition. (5-0)

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the Downtown Code Design Review Committee that case 1) NES Substation II is approved with conditions. (5-0)