



Request
Project Name
Council District
Requested by

Modifications to the DTC
Asurion Headquarters
19 – O’Connell
Chuck Gannaway, with Hastings Architecture Assoc.
Randy Roberson, with Highwoods Realty LP

Staff Reviewer
Staff Recommendation

Wallace
Approve with conditions and disapprove without all conditions

APPLICANT REQUEST

A request to approve modifications of various standards for property located at 120 11th Avenue North (5.42 acres), south of the Church Street viaduct, and within the Gulch South subdistrict of the DTC.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

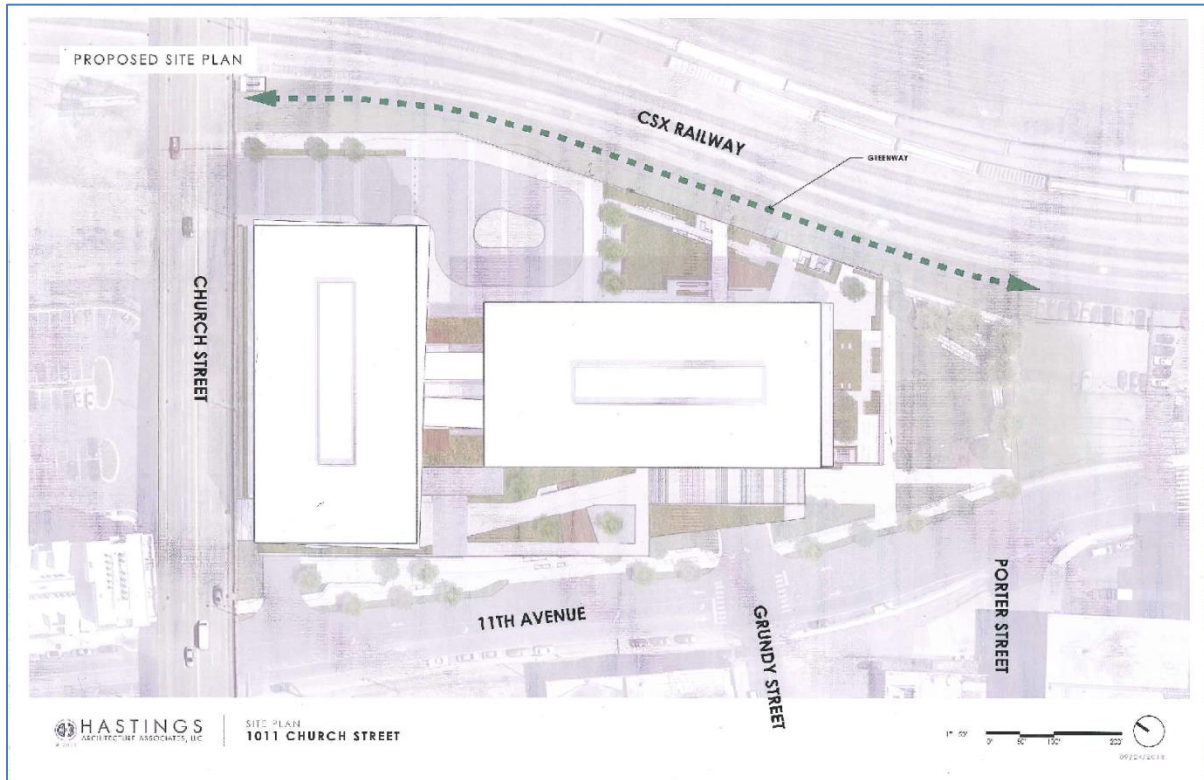
The project proposes an 11-story mixed-use building composed of two interconnected office towers above a podium of structured parking lined by retail along 11th Avenue North.

MODIFICATION REQUEST DETAILS

1. Active Use along a Greenway
 - Required: Ground floor of all Primary and Secondary Streets, Open Space (which includes existing and planned urban greenways), and Pedestrian Passages
 - Proposed: No ground floor active use along the greenway
2. Façade Width along Church Street
 - Required: The building façade must occupy 80% of lot frontage along primary streets.
 - Proposed: The building façade occupies 76% of lot frontage along Church Street.
3. Church Street Build-to Zone
 - Required: 0-10’ BTZ with a 15’ stepback between 4th and 8th stories
 - Proposed: Building envelope begins at back of 15’ bridge easement
4. Church Street Stepback
 - Required: 15’ stepback between 4th and 8th stories
 - Proposed: 11’ cantilever into the frontage zone of levels 4-6.
5. 11th Avenue North Build-to Zone
 - Required: 0-10’ BTZ
 - Proposed: Build-to-zone varies from 17’ to 35’ along the front of the building



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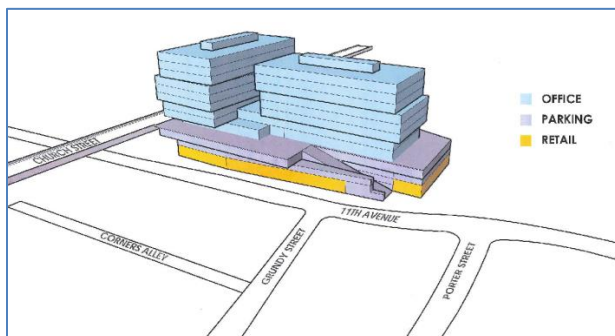
Site Plan



Perspective Rendering from 11th Ave N.



Perspective Rendering from Church Street



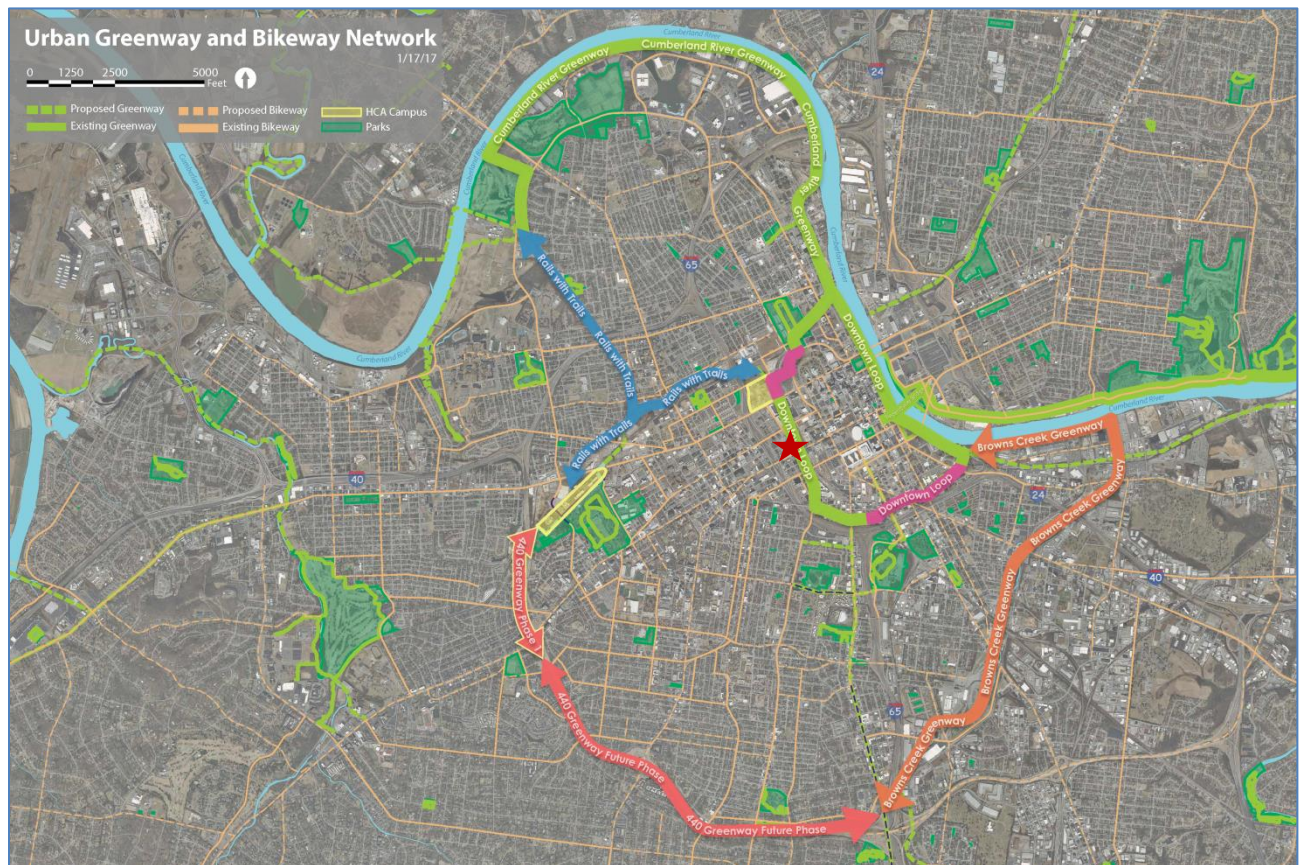
Massing Diagram



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PLAN DETAILS

The site is bounded by the Church Street viaduct to the north, 11th Avenue North to the west, CSX right-of-way to the east. The site plan proposes to subdivide the lot so that the parcel to the south may be developed separately and at a later time. An unbuilt segment of the City Central Greenway System is also planned to traverse the property.



City Central Greenway Network

The site receives vehicular access from three points - one in alignment with Grundy Street, a second at the north end of the site, and a third at the third level to the west side of the site. Valet and drop-off area occurs on-site at the third-level entry.

Pedestrian access is provided at several points as well. A primary entrance is provided from Church Street and 11th Avenue North. A proposed connection to the Church Street viaduct allows pedestrians to enter the site and onto a monumental staircase that leads down to 11th Avenue North, where the building is lined with several retail entry points.

ANALYSIS

Active Use along Greenways

The Downtown Code requires an active ground floor use along greenways. The Code defines an active ground floor use as, “a habitable space occupied by retail, office, residential, institutional or recreational uses, specifically excluding parking and mechanical uses. Active ground floor uses are required on all Primary streets, Secondary streets, Open Space and pedestrian passages. In addition



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to an active ground floor use, when buildings front on open space, the building shall have a minimum of one primary pedestrian entrance on the open space.

This site is unique because the property contains a significantly large amount of frontage along three sides of the lot. The total length of frontage is approximately 1,500' and includes 405' along Church Street to the north, 610' along 11th Avenue North to the west, and 560' along the Greenway to the east. The project successfully creates an interactive environment along Church Street, connecting to the viaduct at two points due to the incline of the bridge. While 11th Avenue North is designated as a Tertiary Street by the DTC, active use is encouraged by the Code, but it is not required. The project proposes activation of 11th Avenue North, and staff supports the activation of 11th Avenue North over the greenway, given existing conditions in the area. 11th Avenue North is building out as an activated frontage, while the City Central Greenway, along this segment, has been constructed primarily along inactive frontages to the rears of buildings.

Church Street Façade Width

The DTC façade width standard requires the building to occupy 80% of the total lot frontage along primary streets. Because the proposed building façade occupies 76% of the lot frontage along Church Street, the deviation is less than 20% of the DTC numerical standard and may be considered a minor modification reviewed by staff.

The site lies between approximately 135' of CSX right-of-way to the east and 75' of public street right-of-way to the west. Because the intent of this standard is to establish a consistent "street wall" effect, and the adjacent properties are right-of-way, the slight deviation seems to have little impact to the perception of a continuous street wall along the Church Street viaduct.

Church Street Build-to-Zone

Buildings with storefront frontage along primary streets are required to have a 0-10' build-to-zone. The submitted site survey indicates the presence of an existing 15' easement beginning at the back of the Church Street viaduct, but the DTC does not contain language pertaining to non-buildable easements. Staff believes that the existing easement creates a unique condition for this building and therefore supports the modification, but because the proposed building placement does not meet the 0-10' build-to-zone requirement of the DTC, this is considered a major modification.

Church Street Stepback

The DTC requires buildings greater than 4 stories to have a 15' stepback occur at some point between the 4th and 8th stories. The proposed project does not meet this stepback requirement. Rather than stepping the building back, the applicant seeks approval for a portion of the building to cantilever beyond the build-to line between the 4th and 6th stories along Church Street. The remaining 7th – 9th stories are to be built to the build-to line. The extruded portion cantilevers to a maximum of 11' within the bridge easement and does not encroach into the public right-of-way.

11th Avenue North Build-to-Zone

Buildings with storefront frontage along tertiary streets are to be built between 0-10' from the property line. The proposed building location varies 17-35' from the property line along 11th Avenue North.



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Planning staff took into consideration the overall form, bulk, and massing of the building to determine any impact the requested modifications have on the public realm and adjacent properties.

- The existing bridge easement along the Church Street viaduct presents a unique condition whereas the allowable buildable footprint is constrained in this area. The proposed building is built to the back of the easement.
- The overall height of the building at 12 stories is well below what this sub-district would otherwise permit (up to 15 stories).
- The building layout responds efficiently to the shape of the lot in the form of a T-shape configuration and maintains a well-defined street edge.
- The massing contains two tower elements separated by a large open space that allows for light and air to penetrate through the building and onto the street.
- Each tower is composed with stacked or cantilevered sections that further break up the massing and give a unique quality to the building. The architectural expression promotes a more interesting interaction between the private and public realm.
- The property is surrounded by right-of-way and/or open space on all sides of the building.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The project offers unique qualities and architectural expression in its site configuration, building form, and massing. Several points of concern remain with the lack of active use and blank façade proposed along the greenway frontage. A design alternative to the façade along the greenway should promote both a safe and enhanced pedestrian experience.

Staff recommends approval with the following conditions and disapproval without all conditions:

1. The relocated stairway should not be an isolated element but rather a much stronger and robust design component that integrates with the building and aligns with the future street crossing at Church Street.
2. The façade along the Greenway should not be left exposed and should be screened appropriately and integrated with the remainder of the building. In lieu of an active use, the façade should incorporate design elements that would enhance the pedestrian experience along the greenway. A mixture of various design elements might include, but is not limited to, the following: integrated stair or ramp to activate the frontage, a mural wall, architectural screening, landscaping, and/or a dedicated bike facility area.



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