

# Downtown Code Design Review Committee

## Meeting Minutes

September 6, 2018

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

Location: 800 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South, Metro Planning Dept. – Davidson Room

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### **I. APPROVAL OF THE 8/2/2018 DTC DRC MINUTES**

Hastings moved and Casella seconded the motion to approve the September 6, 2018 meeting minutes (7-0).

### **II. CASES FOR REVIEW**

#### **1) Nashville Yards Parcels 2 & 3**

2018DTC-014-001

1001 Church Street and 1010 Broadway, Nashville, TN 37203

Staff Reviewer: Eric Hammer

Request to approve modifications to standards including measurements of height and grade, floor heights, garage openings, frontage/build-to zones, streetscapes, open space standards, and street trees.

Staff Recommendation: Approve with conditions.

#### **APPLICANT REQUEST**

A requested modification to the standards of the Core Subdistrict of the Downtown Code (DTC) for property located at 1001 Church Street, located west of 10th Avenue North and south of Church Street. The proposed project is located on Parcels 2 and 3 of the Nashville Yards development, consisting of 5.07 acres of land. The project contains a 19-story residential tower, a 15-story office tower, a 10-story office tower, publically accessible open space, and a pedestrian walkway that connects these elements. All structures are situated on parking structure that sits below these elements. The pedestrian walkway is lined by active uses and allows pedestrians to circulate through the site from the Broadway viaduct to the Church Street viaduct, also accessing 10th Avenue North at Commerce Street. The project also creates an elevated roadway, which would be built on top of the current right-of-way of 10th Avenue North. The existing 10th Avenue North would be referred to as "Lower" 10th Avenue North and the elevated portion would be referred to as "Upper" 10th Avenue North. Upper 10th Avenue is proposed to connect to Parcels 4 and 5 to the north. Vehicular access to the parking structure would be from Church Street, Upper 10th Avenue North, and Lower 10th Avenue North.

#### **MODIFICATION REQUEST DETAILS**

1. Allow active uses along Church Street and Upper 10th Avenue to fulfill active use standard.
2. Allow frontages that do not meet required lot frontage minimums.
3. Allow frontages that do not meet required build-to zone.
4. Measurements from grade from Upper 10<sup>th</sup> Street.
5. Measurements of height from Upper 10<sup>th</sup> Street.
6. Omission of street trees along Lower 10<sup>th</sup> frontage.
7. Omission of street trees along Church Street frontage.
8. Allowing curb cuts that exceed 35' on Lower 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue
9. Allowing curb cuts that exceed 35' on Upper 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
10. Upper floor height (10' required), proposed at 9'-8" for residential tower.

11. Proposed park doesn't fit within open space types of the DTC.

## **ANALYSIS**

Parcels 2 and 3 of the Nashville Yards project are proposed to have an atypical site configuration that utilizes the Church Street and Broadway elevated viaducts and creates a new elevated street, Upper 10th Avenue North. Many of the modifications are requested due to this unique site design, as the standards of the DTC do not contemplate this site configuration.

Figure 4, shown below, illustrates how Upper 10th Avenue North fits into the other components of the proposal. Although there is no direct vehicular connection between Upper and Lower 10th Avenue North, the site plan does allow for pedestrian circulation between the two levels via the pedestrian corridor connecting the various components of the site.

Figure 4: Upper and Lower 10th Avenue South, Facing West

The DTC emphasizes creating an engaging pedestrian-scale experience that contributes to the vibrancy of Downtown. To this end, the DTC contains standards that are meant to create a continuous active street wall that fosters a sense of place for both passersby and site users.

Due to the unique configuration of Upper and Lower 10th Avenues, the project is proposed to have active ground floor uses on Upper 10th Avenue and Church Street and not on Lower 10th Avenue. The project proposes using the frontage on Lower 10th Avenue for back-of-house operations, including parking structure entrances and loading areas. The frontages proposed also do not strictly meet the Core subdistrict standard of a 0'-10' build-to zone with an 80% minimum façade width along the 10th Avenue North ground floor and the Church Street ground floor.

Figure 5: Ground Floor Site Program

Although the frontages do not strictly meet the DTC standards, the atypical site configuration creates a unique and engaging pedestrian experience. Figure 5, shown above, shows ground floor retail spaces in red and ground floor restaurant spaces in orange. The pedestrian level paseo, as well as the Upper 10th Avenue and Church Street frontages, is lined with pedestrian-oriented active uses. This unique configuration creates an engaging pedestrian experience and fulfills the intent of the DTC.

Figure 6: Perspective of Paseo Program

The DTC requires both measurements from grade and measurements of height to be calculated from the average elevation from the public sidewalk. Building P03-B, as shown in Figure 1, is adjacent to Church Street as well as both Upper and Lower 10th Avenue North and Building P03-A is adjacent to both Upper and Lower 10th Avenue North. These standards do not anticipate this atypical situation where multiple streets front the same façade at different grades. The modification would allow all measurements from grade and of height to be taken from Upper 10th Street, which has active ground floor uses. The DTC emphasizes the relationship between buildings and the public realm and allowing these measurements to be calculated from the active ground floor elevation is consistent with this intent.

The design team for this project has also requested to omit street trees along two frontages: Lower 10th Avenue and Church Street. Lower 10th Avenue is not an ideal location for street trees, as access to natural light will be limited by the presence of Upper 10th Avenue. At this location, Church Street is an elevated viaduct with no existing planting strips or tree grates, making adding street trees infeasible. In addition, omitting already infeasible street trees along

this frontage will allow for the addition of an off-street north-south bicycle facility. The DTC emphasizes the sidewalk corridor as a vital part of the urban character of every neighborhood and identifies pedestrian paths, landscaped planters, street furnishings, and street trees as elements that contribute to that character. Parcel 1 of the Nashville Yards development faced a similar challenge along the Broadway viaduct and proposed 2.5' x 9' planters with perennials in lieu of street trees, as shown in Figure 7. Due to the site conditions, planning staff is in support of this request, but is recommending that similar planters be used along the Church Street frontage.

Figure 7: Broadway Planters

The site plan proposes four access points along Lower 10th Avenue of 40'-0", 42'-3", 18'-0", and 40' in width, one right-in/right-out access point of 25' in width on Church Street and one curb cut of 40' width on Upper 10th Avenue. The site plan proposes using Church Street and Upper 10th Avenue as the active frontage for pedestrian activity and proposes using Lower 10th Avenue for entrances to structured parking and loading areas. The intent of the DTC's limits on the width and frequency of vehicular access points is to minimize disruption to the sidewalk corridor. The site plan proposes to locate four of the six vehicular access points on Lower 10th Avenue, a much less visible and active frontage than Church Street and Upper 10th Avenue. By placing vehicular access points and loading areas away from active frontages, the requests are consistent with the goals of the DTC. Church Street and Upper 10th Avenue are proposed with one vehicular access point each. Although the Upper 10th Avenue access point exceeds the maximum allowed by 5', most pedestrians are anticipated to circulate through the Nashville Yards site, rather than travel down Upper 10th Avenue to its planned terminus, lessening the impact of the request.

Figure 8: Pedestrian Circulation Pattern

All vehicular accesses will be required to comply with all other standards of the Parking and Access section, including utilizing protective devices, like bollards, and clearly indicating the distinction between vehicular lanes and pedestrian areas through changes in grade, color, texture or material.

The residential building (shown as P02 on Figure 1) is proposing floors 2 through 17 of the hotel tower to have a 9'-8" floor to floor height, where 10' is the DTC minimum height. The top three floors have a height of 12'-8" The difference of 4" over 15 floors is relatively minor and only results in a 5' reduction to the height of the overall building. The 10' upper floor height requirement is intended to prevent short and squatty buildings, and for the possible transition of commercial buildings to multiple potential users over time. However, hotel and residential uses are adequately served by 9'-8" floor to floor heights.

The DTC also emphasizes the need for high-quality open spaces in Downtown and the park feature is being proposed in an area with an open space deficiency, as identified by the Open Space Plan of the DTC. However the proposed park does not fit strictly within any one category of open space identified by the DTC: greens, squares, plazas, courts, pocket parks and playgrounds. Instead, the proposal incorporates both structured and unstructured open space, as well as green space. The unusual shape of the parcel, adjacency to the CSX rail lines, and grade change create significant design challenges to the site. Although the open space is intended to be accessed by the public, it is not proposed to be dedicated to the public, nor will it have a public access easement. However, the open space is also not being provided to achieve additional height through the Bonus Height Program (BHP). The open space is unique and well-designed, allowing direct pedestrian access from Broadway into the activated paseo area. Planning is in support of this proposed open space.

Figure 9: Proposed Park

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval with conditions. Although the site layout is atypical, the proposed project is consistent with the DTC's vision for activated ground floor uses, pedestrian-scale site design, and unique open space.

1. Add planters along the Church Street façade to mitigate the omission of street trees, staff to review prior to final site plan approval.

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Casella moved and Kennedy seconded the motion to approve the modifications request as submitted. (7-0)

**RESOLUTION**

**BE IT RESOLVED by the Downtown Code Design Review Committee that case 1) Nashville Yards is approved. (7-0).**