

Downtown Code Design Review Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 4, 2021

Members Present: Porter, Lustig, Mosley, Hastings, Oldham, Dickson, Moore

Staff Present: Hammer, Islas, Williams

Others Present: Ben York (MPW), Alex Dickerson (Legal), Eric Klotz, Laura Beene, Andrew Donchez, Andrew Ringie, Philip Neal, Caroline Churchill, Kim Hawkins, Parker Hawkins

Location: Virtual Meeting – Webex Events Platform

I. APPROVAL OF VIRTUAL MEETING FORMAT

Mosley moved and Hastings seconded a motion to approve the committee as essential business and necessity of the virtual meeting format due to the Covid-19 pandemic (7-0-0).

II. APPROVAL OF THE 6/4/2020 DTC DRC MINUTES

Lustig moved and Hastings seconded the motion to approve the June 4, 2020 meeting minutes (7-0-0).

III. CASES FOR REVIEW

1) Voorhees Residential Development – Tower 2

2021DTC-007-001

0 8th Avenue South and 701 7th Avenue South

Staff Reviewer: Jared Islas

Staff Recommendation: Approve with conditions and defer without all conditions

APPLICANT REQUEST

A request for A.) approval of modifying the step-back, floor-to-floor maximum height, and MCSP standards of the DTC and B.) recommendation for overall height modification to the Planning Commission for property located at 0 8th Avenue South and 701 7th Avenue South (0.85 acres), and within the Gulch South subdistrict of the DTC.

A. DTC MODIFICATION REQUEST SUMMARY

1. Step-back
 - o Required: 15-foot minimum step-back is required for buildings 8 stories or greater along public streets between the 4th and 8th stories.
 - o Proposed: Eliminate the step-back requirements due to the termination of 7th Avenue South at the railroad line, adjacent to the property.
2. Floor-to-Floor Maximum Height
 - o Required: 25 feet for first two floors, 18 feet for other floors, 25 feet for top floor for buildings greater than five stories.
 - o Proposed: Height of the third floor to be 27'-3" for liner unit to fully screen garage.
3. MCSP standards
 - o Required: 4-foot wide green zone and 8-foot wide pedestrian zone along the 7th Avenue South frontage.
 - o Proposed: Eliminate the green zone requirement and provide a 6.7' wide pedestrian zone due to the termination of 7th Avenue South at the railroad line, adjacent to the property.

B. OVERALL HEIGHT MODIFICATION REQUEST SUMMARY

4. Overall Height
 - o 10 stories – Maximum Height permitted for Gulch South subdistrict general
 - o 16 stories – Maximum Height with provisions made through Bonus Height Program
 - o 20 stories – Proposed Height as part of Overall Height Modification



Figure 1: View from near the intersection of 8th Avenue South and Division Street



Figure 2: South Elevation

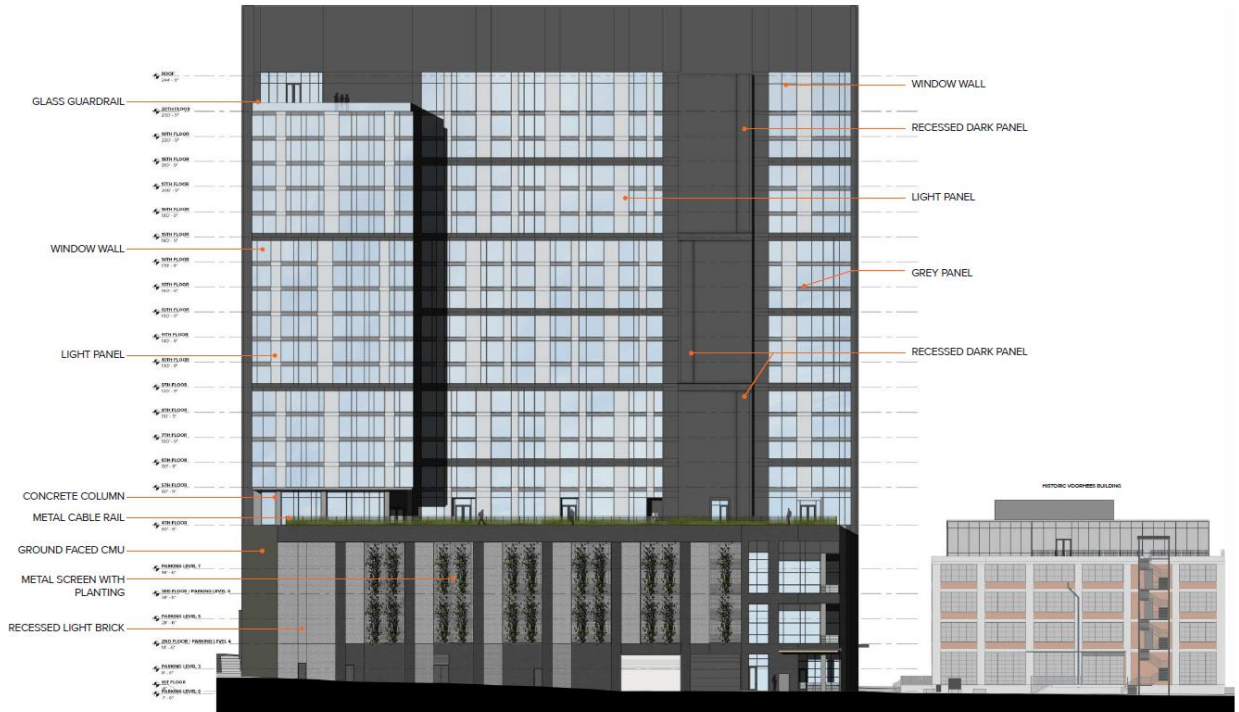


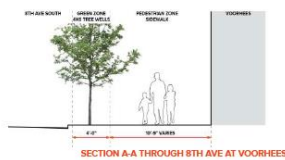
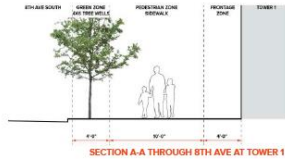
Figure 3: North Elevation



Figure 4: West Elevation (left) and 7th Avenue South Elevation / East Elevation (right)

VOORHEES MASTER PLAN

1. ACTIVATED ALLEY WITH OUTDOOR DINING
 2. ELEVATED PLAZA
 3. ELEVATOR FOR ACCESS TO PLAZA AND ALLEY
 4. COVERED PASEO WITH RETAIL ACTIVATION
 5. SIGNAGE ELEMENT TO ESTABLISH DISTRICT
 6. RIDE SHARE DROP OFF
 7. SHARED BACK OF HOUSE AREA
- L. LOBBY ENTRY
R. RETAIL ENTRY
T. TENANT ENTRY



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ARCHITECTS
Hawkins Partners, Inc.

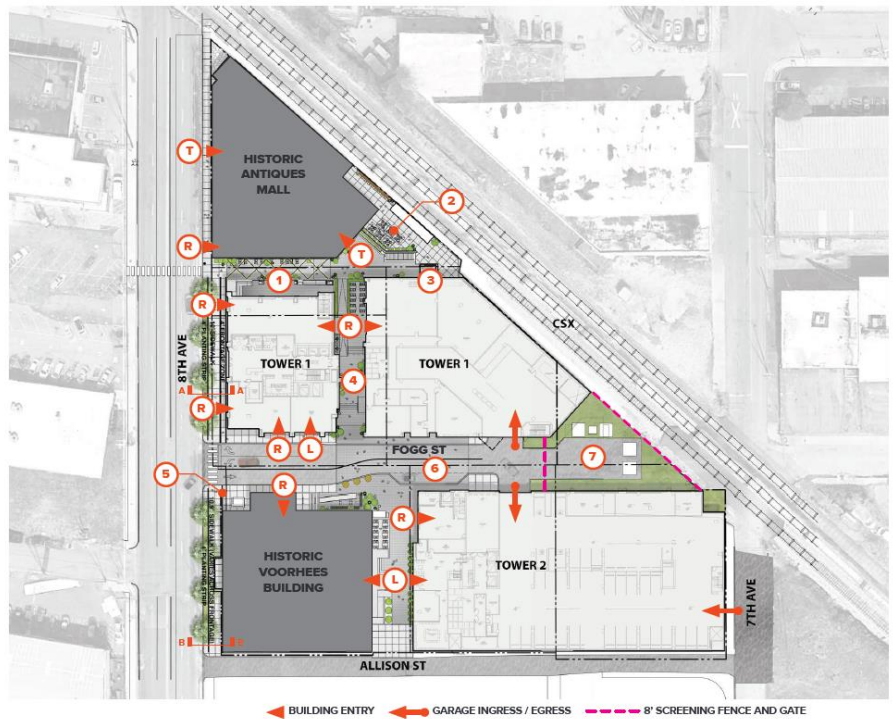


Figure 5: Voorhees Master Plan

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Voorhees Master Plan proposes a 20-story residential building consisting of approximately 328 apartment units, ground-level retail space, office space, and both underground and structured parking for a total of 395 vehicular parking spaces. This building is referred to as Tower 2.

The proposals for Voorhees Tower 2 and Tower 1 along with the renovations of the Historic Antiques Mall and Historic Voorhees Building are intended to create a unique master plan site. Retail activation and outdoor dining at the base of each building, along with a covered walkway through Tower 1, allows for an engaging pedestrian experience.

PLAN DETAILS

Voorhees Tower 2 is located north of the intersection of 8th Avenue South and Division Street. Tower 2's only frontage is on a portion of 7th Avenue South, a tertiary street per the DTC, that terminates at the CSX railroad lines adjacent to the property. Due to this, the eastern façade is generally thought of as the back of the building. Tower 2's primary vehicular entrance is off Fogg Street, which was abandoned in 2019. There is another vehicular entrance off 7th Avenue South. The building's primary pedestrian entrances are on Fogg Street and the pedestrian space between the Historic Voorhees Building and Tower 2. The southern façade fronts Allison Street – which is categorized as an alley by the DTC. Service and loading occur from Fogg Street. Pick-up and drop-off will occur within an internal circulation pattern.

A. DTC MODIFICATIONS ANALYSIS

7th Avenue South Step-backs

The DTC requires buildings in the Gulch South subdistrict, that are greater than 8 stories, to have a 15-foot step-back at some point between the 4th and 8th story. Voorhees Tower 2 proposes to eliminate the step-back requirements due to the termination of 7th Avenue South adjacent to the property.

The intent of a step-back is to allow light and air to reach the street for the benefit of pedestrians and to avoid a canyon effect. Step-backs are most important for narrow streets, as increased proximity of buildings on the other side of the right-of-way has a greater potential to create a canyon effect.

The termination of 7th Avenue South, and the adjacent CSX railroad lines combine to allow for more light and air to reach the street level. In addition, the termination of 7th Avenue South at the railroad lines will limit the pedestrian activity along this street.

Floor-to-Floor Maximum Heights

The DTC requires the maximum height of an individual story, above the second story, to not exceed 18 feet in height. The intent of this is to establish reasonable floor-to-floor heights, while preserving proportionality. Without reasonable limits to the height of each floor, unpredictable outcomes could occur that are contrary to the intent of height limitations. In this case, the third floor is being proposed with a height of 27'-3" for the liner unit to fully screen the parking garage.

Staff finds that the proposed height of the third floor is not enough to negatively affect the proportions of the building. Achieving an upper-level garage liner is a worthy trade-off for the increased height of the floor. In addition, there have been reasonable efforts made on the exterior of the building to visually break up the height of this floor and match it with the other liner unit floors.

MCSP Standards

The DTC requires properties to make improvements to the sidewalk corridor according to the Major and Collector Street Plan (MCSP). The MCSP calls for 7th Avenue South, adjacent to the property, to provide a 4-foot wide green zone and an 8-foot wide pedestrian zone. The intent of this is to provide a wide enough sidewalk for pedestrians to pass each other, and a buffered space between those pedestrians and vehicular traffic. The proposed modification is to eliminate the required green zone and provide a 6.7-foot wide sidewalk due to the termination of 7th Avenue South adjacent to the property.

When these MCSP standards were put in place, 7th Avenue South still bridged over the CSX railroad lines and was a direct connection between Lafayette Street and Division Street. With the bridge demolished and the connection lost, it is reasonable to expect less vehicular and pedestrian traffic at this location. For these reasons, staff is in support of the proposed modification to the MCSP standards.

B. OVERALL HEIGHT MODIFICATION ANALYSIS

The process for an Overall Height Modification is outlined in the DTC as follows:

1. The Executive Director of the Planning Department shall determine whether the development has made reasonable efforts to pursue all appropriate bonuses available in the Bonus Height Program.
2. The applicant shall hold a community meeting providing notices to all property owners within 300 feet.
3. The Planning Commission shall review the modification request and may grant additional height for exceptional design, including but not limited to unique architecture, exceptionally strong streetscape, and improvement of the project's relationship to surrounding properties.

Bonus Height Program

A Determination Letter, signed by the Executive Director of the Planning Department, is attached to this staff report, and states the development has made reasonable efforts to use all appropriate bonuses available in the Bonus Height Program. The Historic Building Preservation bonus is being used to transfer unused entitlements from the Historic Antiques Mall and the Historic Voorhees Building to Voorhees Tower 2. Additional bonuses being utilized include Public Parking, Pervious Surfaces, and Upper Level Garage Liner and Underground Parking.

Community Meeting

The applicant held a virtual community meeting on Friday, February 26, 2020 at 4:30 P.M. and sent notices to properties within 300 feet. With no community members present at the start of the meeting, the applicant recorded the planned presentation and shared a copy with Planning staff.

Exceptional Design

The architecture of Tower 2 provides a contemporary interpretation of the industrial character established by the Historic Voorhees Building in the form of materials and façade articulation and division. The strategic shifting of the massing creates a unique yet controlled architectural language that terminates with a dynamic roofline. Additionally, Tower 2's podium relates to the overall massing of the Historic Voorhees Building to create a common scale.

The Voorhees Master Plan provides pedestrian-only walkways between Tower 2 and the Historic Voorhees Building, between Tower 1 and the Historic Antiques Mall and through the middle of Tower 1. Together, with the sidewalks along Fogg Street and 8th Avenue South, a campus-like pedestrian atmosphere has been designed. Pedestrians would be able to use these walkways to access various retail and lobby entries for each of the four buildings associated with the Master Plan. Ground-level and upper-level garage liners, space for outdoor dining, and street trees and landscaping throughout the Master Plan site contribute to a vibrant and active streetscape.

The applicant has also proposed an 8th Avenue South mid-block crosswalk that would connect pedestrians to and from the Voorhees site. This connection is currently being discussed with Metro Public Works to assess the final configuration.



Figure 6: Common scale between podiums and Historic Voorhees Building



Figure 7: View from intersection of 8th Avenue South and Fogg Street showing an active streetscape with Tower 2 in background

Supplemental Policy Considerations

In addition to these considerations, this property is part of a supplemental policy (09-T6-DN-GS-Division Street) that was put in place after the construction of the Division Street Bridge. Supplemental Policy is put in place within a Community Plan when areas need more specific guidance than is included in the Community Character Manual. It reads as follows:

Properties along the Division Street Extension may be considered for high-rise building height (20 stories and taller) in exchange for public benefits provided by the development, including, but not limited to, affordable and workforce housing, the Downtown Code's Bonus Height Program, modification processes, or rezoning to a Specific Plan. Building design should also result in a unique architecture that seeks to improve the public realm and city skyline.

The construction of the bridge, which improved mobility throughout the Gulch South and Pie Town neighborhoods, transformed this section of Division from a dead end into a major mobility corridor. The Voorhees Tower 2 project is maximizing the DTC bonuses available to the site and proposes using the overall height modification process to achieve a height (20 stories) that is mentioned specifically within the supplemental policy as acceptable for this site.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The project offers unique qualities and architectural expression in its site design, building massing, and overall aesthetic and staff is recommending approval of the modifications requested.

Staff recommends approval of the overall height modification with the following conditions and deferral without all conditions:

1. All bonus height actions identified in this application, including those that require a deed or restrictive covenant, must be approved prior to building permit approval.
2. The applicant shall coordinate with Metro Public Works on the proposed 8th Avenue South mid-block crosswalk.
3. All overhead lines along the master plan site's 8th Avenue South frontage shall be buried.
4. Both the Historic Antiques Mall and the Historic Voorhees Building must be designated as Historic Landmark Zoning Overlays prior to building permit approval.

5. Approval of this Overall Height Modification shall be reconsidered by the Planning Commission if either the Historic Antiques Mall or the Historic Voorhees Building are not able to achieve or maintain Historic Landmark Overlay status.

Lustig has declared a conflict on this item and recused. Hastings moved and Mosley seconded the motion to approve the modification request and recommend that the Planning Commission approve the overall height modification with staff conditions. (6-0-1)

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the Downtown Code Design Review Committee that case 1) Voorhees Residential Development – Tower 2 is approved with a recommendation of approval of the overall height modification to the Planning Commission. (6-0-1)

2) Voorhees Residential Development – Tower 1

2021DTC-009-001

618-620 8th Avenue South, 708 Fogg Street

Staff Reviewer: Jared Islas

Staff Recommendation: Approval with conditions and deferral without all conditions

APPLICANT REQUEST

The request is to modify the maximum height of an individual story above the second story for property located at 618-620 8th Avenue South and 708 Fogg Street (0.86 acres), within the Gulch South subdistrict of the DTC.

DTC MODIFICATION REQUEST SUMMARY

1. Floor-to-Floor Maximum Height
 - Required: 25 feet for first two floors, 18 feet for other floors, 25 feet for top floor for buildings greater than five stories.
 - Proposed: Height of the third floor to be 27'-3" for liner unit to fully screen garage.



Figure 1: View from 8th Avenue South looking at Voorhees Tower 1

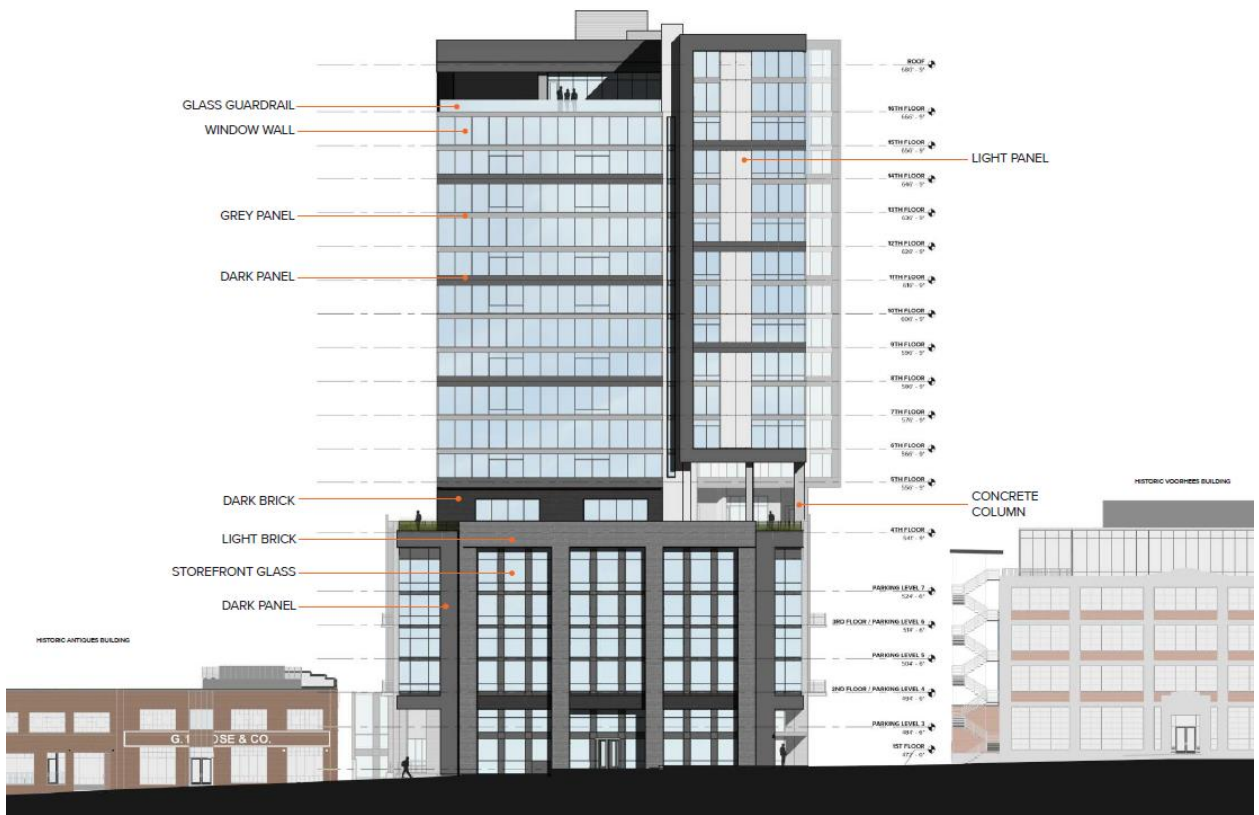


Figure 2: 8th Avenue South / West Elevation



Figure 3: Fogg Street / South Elevation

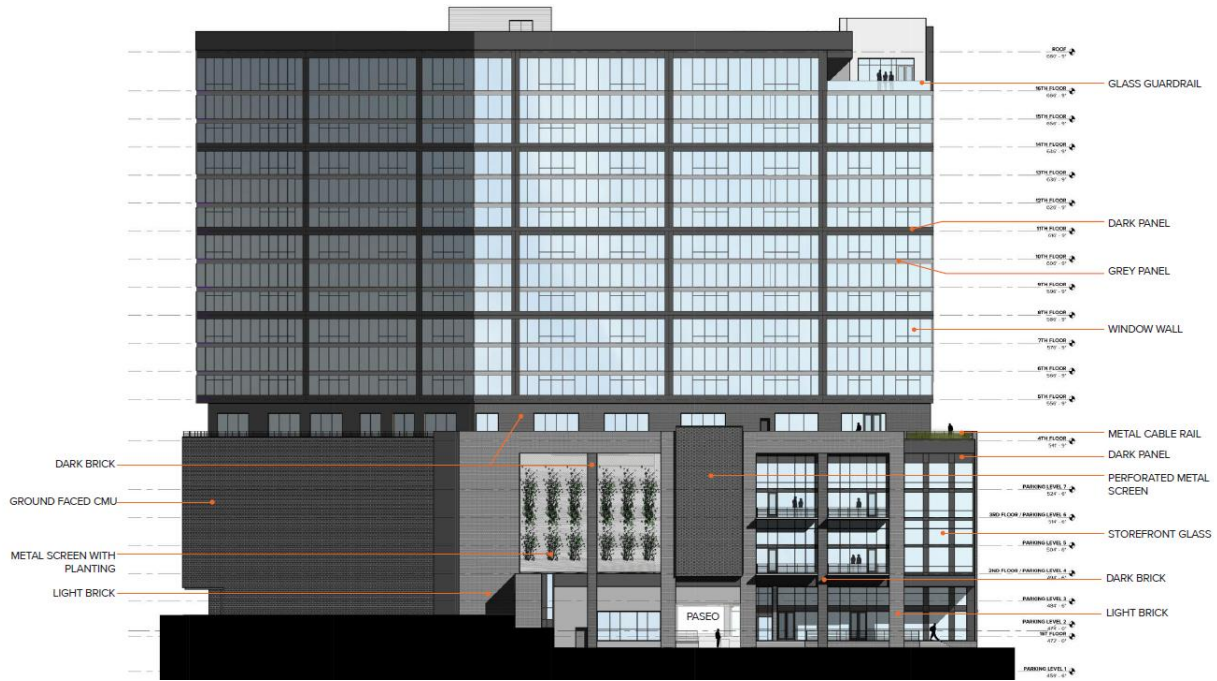
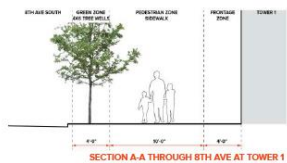


Figure 4: North Elevation

VOORHEES MASTER PLAN

1. ACTIVATED ALLEY WITH OUTDOOR DINING
2. ELEVATED PLAZA
3. ELEVATOR FOR ACCESS TO PLAZA AND ALLEY
4. COVERED PASEO WITH RETAIL ACTIVATION
5. SIGNAGE ELEMENT TO ESTABLISH DISTRICT
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MANUEL ZEITLIN ARCHITECTS
Haskins Partners, Inc.

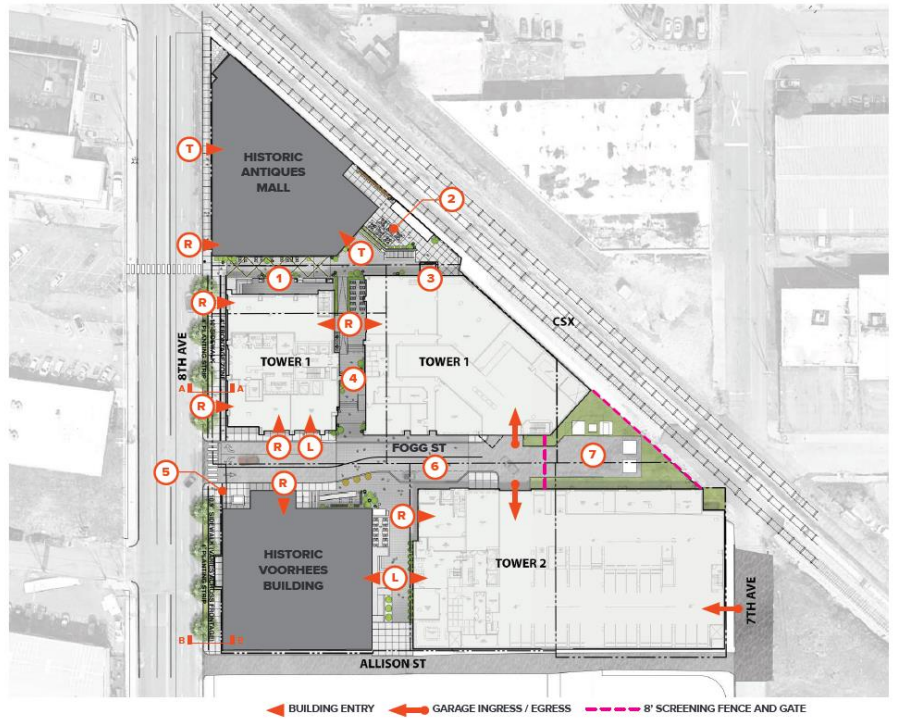


Figure 5: Voorhees Master Plan

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Voorhees Master Plan proposes a 16-story residential building consisting of approximately 278 apartment units, 9,000 square feet of retail/restaurant space, 20,000 square feet of office space, and both underground and structured parking for a total of 290 vehicular parking spaces. This building is referred to as Tower 1.

The Gulch South subdistrict allows a maximum of 10 stories and allows an additional 6 stories through the Bonus Height Program. The Historic Building Preservation bonus is being used to transfer unused entitlements from the Historic Antiques Mall and the Historic Voorhees Building to Voorhees Tower 1. Additional bonuses being utilized include Public Parking, Pervious Surfaces, and Upper Level Garage Liner and Underground Parking.

The proposals for Voorhees Tower 1 and Tower 2 along with the renovations of the Historic Antiques Mall and Historic Voorhees Building are intended to create a unique master plan. Retail activation and outdoor dining at the base of each project, along with a covered walkway through Tower 1, allows for an engaging pedestrian experience.

PLAN DETAILS

Voorhees Tower 1 is located at the northeast corner of 8th Avenue South and Fogg Street. Tower 1's only frontage is on 8th Avenue South, a primary street per the DTC. Entrances to retail and lobby spaces are planned for 8th Avenue South, Fogg Street (which was abandoned in 2019), and a covered pedestrian walkway that cuts through Tower 1. An additional pedestrian walkway is positioned between the north façade of Tower 1 and the Historic Antiques Mall. Service and loading occur from Fogg Street. Pick-up and drop-off will occur within an internal circulation pattern.

ANALYSIS

Floor-to-Floor Maximum Heights

The DTC requires the maximum height of an individual story above the second story, to not exceed 18 feet. The intent of this is to establish reasonable floor-to-floor heights, while preserving proportionality. Without reasonable limits to the height of each floor, unpredictable outcomes could occur that are contrary to the intent of height limitations. In this case, the third floor is being proposed with a height of 27'-3" for the liner unit to fully screen the parking garage.

Staff finds that the proposed height of the third floor is not enough to negatively affect the proportions of the building. Achieving an upper-level garage liner is a worthy trade-off for the increased height of the floor. In addition, there have been reasonable efforts made on the exterior of the building to visually break up the height of this floor and match it with the other liner unit floors.

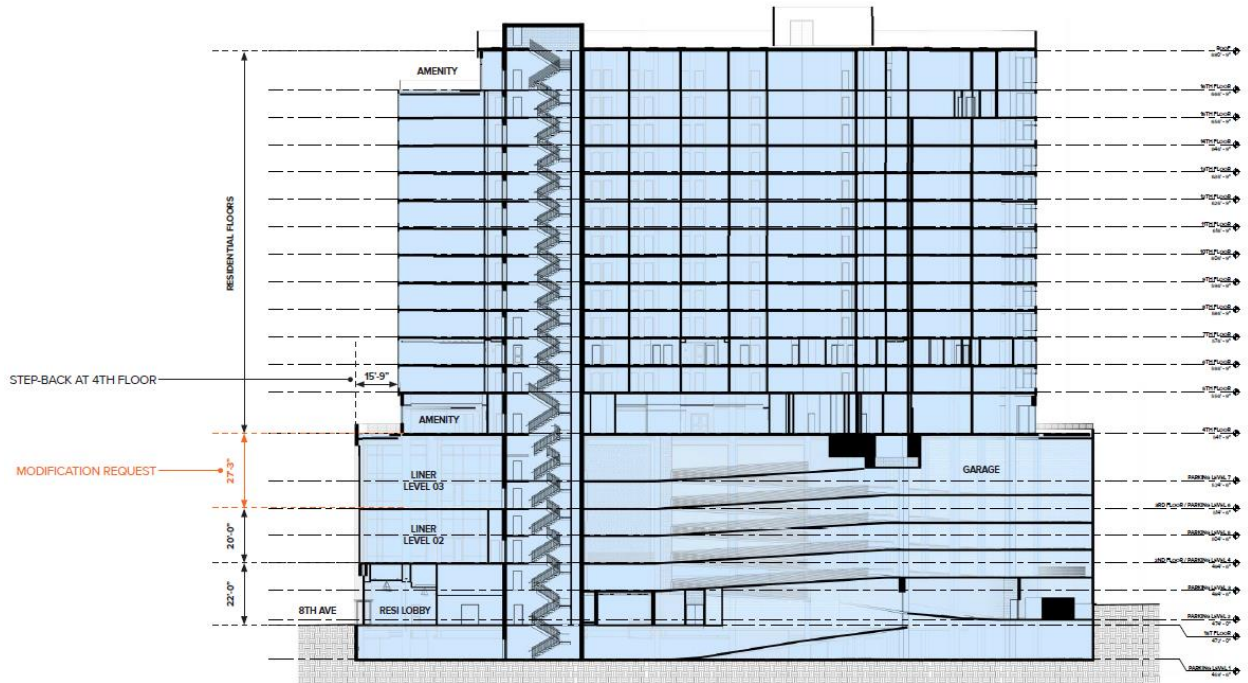


Figure 6: Modification Request Diagram

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the requested modification with the following conditions and deferral without all conditions:

1. All bonus height actions identified in this application, including those that require a deed or restrictive covenant, must be approved prior to building permit approval.
2. The applicant shall coordinate with Metro Public Works on the proposed 8th Avenue South mid-block crosswalk.
3. All overhead lines along the master plan site's 8th Avenue South frontage shall be buried.
4. Both the Historic Antiques Mall and the Historic Voorhees Building must be designated as Historic Landmark Zoning Overlays prior to building permit approval.
5. Approval of this modification shall be reconsidered by the DTC Design Review Committee if either the Historic Antiques Mall or the Historic Voorhees Building are not able to achieve or maintain Historic Landmark Overlay status.
6. The applicant shall provide documentation confirming their ownership of the property included on the plans to the west of Parcel Number 09314022500 prior to building permit approvals.

Lustig has declared a conflict on this item and recused. Mosley moved and Moore seconded the motion to approve the modification request with staff conditions. (6-0-1)

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the Downtown Code Design Review Committee that case 2) Voorhees Residential Development – Tower 1 is approved. (6-0-1)

IV) Adjournment