



TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Greg Chavarria, City Manager

DATE: October 18, 2022

TITLE: Quasi-Judicial Resolution Approving a Site Plan Level II Development Permit and Alternative Design Deviation – BLF 2021, LLC and Station Village Development, LLC – Station Village – Case No. UDP-S22002 – **(Commission District 2)**

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Commission consider adopting a resolution authorizing the issuance of a Site Plan Level II development permit for a 36-story, mixed-use building with 400 multi-family residential units and 5,499 square feet of commercial use proposed at 199 NW 5th Avenue and approving an alternative design deviation pursuant to Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR) Section 47-13.20.J.3, that meets the overall intent of the Downtown Master Plan.

Background

The applicant is proposing to build a 36-story, mixed-use building at 199 NW 5th Avenue with an alternative design deviation from the residential transition zone and maximum building streetwall length. The site has an underlying land use designation of Downtown Regional Activity Center (DRAC) and is zoned Regional Activity Center - West Mixed-Use (RAC-WMU) District. A location map is attached as Exhibit 1. The application and project narratives are attached as Exhibit 2. The site plan is attached as Exhibit 3.

The City Commission is to consider the application, the record and recommendations forwarded by the Development Review Committee (DRC), and public comments on the application when determining whether the proposed development or use meets the standards and requirements of the ULDR and criteria for a Site Plan Level II Development Permit and whether the alternative design meets the overall intent of the Downtown Master Plan.

The DRC reviewed the plans on February 8, 2022. All comments have been addressed and are on file with the Development Services Department. DRC comments are attached as Exhibit 4.

Downtown Regional Activity Center Review Process and Special Regulations

The project is located in the Downtown Core Character Area as defined in the Downtown Master Plan (DMP). The purpose of the Downtown Core Character Area is to create a

mixed-use center with high density housing, commercial and civic uses. The RAC-WMU zoning district is a transitional mixed-use district intended to provide a transition area between the Downtown's urban core district and lower intensity areas which abut the Downtown. The area is intended to support the City Center by allowing a wide range of employment, shopping, service, cultural and higher density residential neighborhoods. Regulations are designed to blend with adjacent neighborhoods such as City View located northeast of the site and promote mixed use development to support the Regional Activity Center - City Center (RAC-CC) District, as well as create a gateway to Downtown.

Downtown Master Plan

The following is a summary regarding the project's compliance with the Downtown Master Plan (DMP) design guidelines:

- **Quality of Architecture**
The facades of the building tower and residential portion of the building podium feature extensive glazing, inset balconies and articulation of the facades. Linear LED lighting will accent vertical elements extending from the second floor to the top of the tower's roofline. The ground floor also features extensive transparency and is enhanced with stone tile, simulated wood, and metal panels on the lower floors. The proposed ground floor will provide a 22.67-foot floor to ceiling height and the corner of the building at NW 2nd Street and NW 5th Avenue features a three-story high glazed area. Vertical aluminum panels screen the parking garage enhanced by LED lights curving from the second floor to the top of the parking podium. A metal mesh screen is added behind the aluminum panels to further reduce the impact of vehicular lights on neighboring properties. The varying heights of the rooftop add skyline drama.
- **Active Uses and Building Program**
The ground floor of the building is activated with 5,499 square feet of commercial space facing NW 5th Avenue and a 3,642-square-foot residential lobby at the corner along NW 5th Avenue and NW 2nd Street. Floors two through nine contain parking and multifamily residential units. The tenth floor contains an amenity deck and floors 11 through 36 contain residential units.
- **Streetscape Design**
The project includes minimum seven-foot-wide sidewalks around the development site and active uses for the majority of the ground floor. The proposed 16,004 square feet of open space at grade exceeds the ULDR requirement of 2,392 square feet and includes a landscaped plaza on the western portion of the site along NW 2nd Street. All loading and unloading activities will be completely internalized in the building. The only vehicular entrance to the parking garage is off NW 5th Avenue.
- **TOD Guidelines**
The design encourages pedestrian activity by wrapping two sides with active uses, covered arcades on NW 5th Avenue and NW 2nd Street, and incorporates street trees. Bicycle storage is available on the ground floor.

Downtown Master Plan Alternate Design

In accordance with ULDR Section 47-13.20.J.3, in the event the developer of a parcel of land in the Downtown RAC districts desires to deviate from the requirements of Section 47-13.20.B, Downtown Master Plan Standards, the developer may submit the design of the proposed development for review and approval by the City Commission if the alternative design meets the overall intent of the Downtown Master Plan. Regarding specific DMP dimensional elements, the applicant is requesting alternate site design solutions for the building length and residential transition zone, as follows:

- Residential Transition Zone:

The proposed development abuts the residential zoning district, Residential Low Rise Multifamily/Medium Density District (RM-15). Per ULDR Section 47-13.29 (F)(2), a residential transition zone applies where a Downtown RAC zoning district abuts any residential zoning district. The residential transition zone extends from the edge of the abutting residential zoning district to mid-block of the proposed development site or a length of 200 feet, whichever is less. The ULDR requires that no structure may exceed a height of two and one-half times the height of the maximum height of the residential zoning district abutting the Downtown RAC.

The distance mid-block within the project site from the abutting Residential Low Rise Multifamily/Medium Density District (RM-15) is 184 feet. The abutting RM-15 zoning district to the north has a maximum height of 35 feet and therefore per the ULDR, the maximum building height is 87.5 feet within 184 feet of the RM-15 zoning district, unless the City Commission approves a deviation from the requirements of the residential transition zone.

The proposed building is 97-feet high at the northern edge of the podium 50 feet from the RM-15 zoning district. The northern façade of the 364-foot tower is located 70 feet from the edge of the abutting RM-15 district. To create the transition from the proposed project to the RM-15 zoning district, the applicant has framed the street with a nine-story podium and a 20-foot tower stepback to break up the massing on the northern end of the building. The building has also been set back 50 feet from the centerline of NW 5th Avenue to the east to provide more space between the project and existing residential development to the northeast within the RM-15 zoning district.

Per the applicant, the project was designed to maximize the separation between the proposed tower and potential future development of the property to the south. The tower is placed 142.1 feet from the southern property line, which will allow significant light and air flow between the two properties once the area is fully developed. In addition, the project was also designed to have residential uses facing the RM-15 residential zoning district to the north and the parking garage facing uses within the Downtown RAC.

- **Maximum Building Streetwall Length**
The maximum building streetwall length for buildings in the Downtown RAC must not exceed 300 feet in length. Building streetwalls that exceed 300 feet in length are encouraged to create variation in the physical design and articulation of the streetwall. The principle of minimizing the impact of very long building frontages with site-specific solutions ensures that the treatment and articulation along elevations provides attractive and pedestrian-friendly walking environments.

The overall length of the building along NW 5th Avenue is 334.6 feet. The length of the building along NW 5th Avenue is broken up by a column of channel aluminum panels over the entry to the parking garage which divides the parking podium from the residential uses on the eastern façade. Proposed linear LED lighting will accent vertical elements from the second floor to the tower’s angled roofline further articulating the building façade.

Table 1 provides a summary of the quantitative dimensions in the DMP and those proposed for the project. Specific design solutions, as described in detail above, are categorized by topic and compliance with the requirements.

Table 1 – Downtown Master Plan Design Guideline Comparison Summary

	Downtown Core	Proposed	Complies or Specific Request
Maximum Building Height	No Limit	36 Floors/364 Feet	Complies
Maximum Building Streetwall Length	300 Feet	120 Feet (NW 2 nd Street) 334.6 Feet (NW 5 th Avenue)	<i>Specific Request</i>
Maximum Tower Floorplate Size	12,500 Square Feet	12,500 Square Feet	Complies
Maximum Building Podium Height	9 Floors	9 Floors/97 Feet	Complies
Minimum Tower Separation	30 Feet to Side and Rear Lot Lines	35 Feet to Side (West) Lot Line 142.1 Feet to Rear (South) Lot Line	Complies
Minimum Residential Unit Size	400 Square Feet	400 Square Feet Minimum 821 Square Feet Average	Complies

Residential Transition Zone Building Height (Development is within 184 Feet of abutting residential zoning district)	87.5 Feet	97 Feet (Podium) within 50 Feet 394.3 Feet (Tower) within 70.3 Feet	Specific Request
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Adequacy Requirements

The adequacy criteria of ULDR Section 47-25.2 are used to evaluate the demand created on public services and facilities by a proposed development. A traffic impact study was prepared by the applicant’s traffic consultant, DC Engineers in July 2022. The development is projected to generate 1,842 new daily vehicle trips, resulting in 94 additional vehicle trips in the AM peak hour and 123 additional vehicle trips during the PM peak hour. The July 2022 Traffic Impact Study is attached as Exhibit 5. Adequate public services are available in the area to meet the needs and demand of the project. Water and wastewater are serviced by the City of Fort Lauderdale. A capacity letter has been issued by the City’s Public Works Department dated May 24, 2022 which identifies the facilities and associated infrastructure servicing this project and the project’s impact on capacity. The capacity letter indicated no required improvements and is attached as Exhibit 6.

Comprehensive Plan Consistency

The proposed development supports Future Land Use Element Objective FLU 2.3 encouraging a mixed-use, multimodal environment improving livability and discouraging urban sprawl and Policy 2.3.1 which requires mixed use residential development to promote an urban form, which creates well integrated land use combinations, balances intensity and density, and promotes safe, interconnected vehicular, pedestrian, and other mobility options. In addition, the project supports Urban Design Element Policy UD 1.1.6 which states that where buildings engage streets, high quality building design will be promoted through the use of high-quality materials and building façade features such as transparency that include plenty of windows.

The project fulfills Objective FLU 2.4 which states that the City will direct growth to designated Urban Redevelopment/Downtown Revitalization Areas to discourage urban sprawl, maximize the use of existing public facilities and centralize commercial, governmental, retail, residential, and cultural activities. It supports Policies FLU 2.4.1 by creating a vibrant mixed-use Downtown, combining new homes with office space, shops, and restaurants through the Downtown Master Plan.

Residential Unit Allocation

The Comprehensive Plan requires that the City track development in the Downtown RAC and monitor the number of units allocated to individual projects. The subject property is also located within the City’s Unified Flex Zone and is eligible for residential flex unit allocation. Should the allocation of the 400 residential flex units be approved, 5,027 residential flex units, including projects under review pending approval, will remain. This includes the last remaining release from Broward County Planning Council (BCPC) of the City’s available flex units. Table 3 identifies a breakdown of flex unit allocation to date.

Table 3 – Unified Flex Summary

	Flex Units
Permitted	12,008
Assigned to Date	6,581
Pending Approval of Station Village	400
Remaining*	5,027

**Remaining includes projects under review pending approval*

Conditions of Approval

Should the City Commission approve the development, the following conditions apply:

1. Prior to issuance of building permit, applicant will be required to pay a Park Impact Fee for the proposed residential units in accordance with ULDR Sec. 47-38A.
2. Prior to final DRC, applicant shall provide a final School Capacity Availability Determination (SCAD) letter that confirms that school capacity is available, or if capacity is not available, that mitigation requirements have been satisfied.
3. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requires a review for interference by the proposed construction. Provide FAA approval prior to issuance of building permit.
4. Prior to issuance of the certificate of occupancy, the applicant shall upgrade and refurbish pavement markings including stop bars and ADA ramps at the adjacent signalized intersection of NW 2nd Street and NW 5th Avenue.

Resource Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

Strategic Connections

This item is a *2022 Commission Priority*, advancing the Smart Growth initiative.

This item supports the *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2024 Strategic Plan*, specifically advancing:

- Neighborhood Enhancement
- Goal 4: Build a thriving and inclusive community of neighborhoods.

This item advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035 Vision Plan: We Are Community*.

This item supports the *Advance Fort Lauderdale 2040 Comprehensive Plan* specifically advancing:

- The Neighborhood Enhancement Focus Area
- The Future Land Use Element
- Goal 2: The City shall encourage sustainable, smart growth which designates areas for future growth, promotes connectivity, social equity, preservation of neighborhood character and compatibility of uses.
- Objective 2.3: Encourage mixed use developments to enhance the livability of the City in order to discourage urban sprawl.
- Objective 2.4: Direct growth to designated Urban Redevelopment/Downtown Revitalization Areas in order to discourage urban sprawl, maximize the use of existing public facilities and centralize commercial, governmental, retail, residential, and cultural activities.
- The Urban Design Element
- Goal 1: The City of Fort Lauderdale shall promote high-quality and sustainable building design elements which complement the public realm.
- Objective UD 1.1: Strengthen the urban form throughout the City by building upon the character and fabric of the built environment while allowing complementary new development through urban design criteria that supports exceptional sense of place.

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – Location Map

Exhibit 2 – Application and Applicant’s Narratives

Exhibit 3 – Site Plan and Renderings

Exhibit 4 – February 8, 2022 DRC Comments

Exhibit 5 – July 2022 Traffic Impact Study by DC Engineers

Exhibit 6 – May 24, 2022 Water and Sewer Capacity Letter

Exhibit 7 – Resolution Approving

Exhibit 8 – Resolution Denying

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