

# TRAMMELL CROW RESIDENTIAL

3715 Northside Parkway, Suite 1-200  
Atlanta, GA 30327

July 25, 2018

RE: Maple Multi-Family Land SE, LP's Alexan Gateway Project and Rezoning to CBD-PD

Dear City of Avondale Board of Mayor and Commissioners and Planning and Zoning Board:

We appreciate the opportunity to work with the City of Avondale and are hopeful to be able to develop the Alexan Gateway project in the City of Avondale. In response to various issues raised by Avondale residents during the numerous public meetings regarding the project, we thought it was important to respond to some commonly raised concerns from the community.

- I. CBD-PD Zoning and Variances – Pursuant to Section 1115.01 of the City of Avondale Estates Zoning Ordinance, the requested CBD-PD zoning district “is intended as a site-specific overlay zone whereby the Board of Mayor and Commissioners may approve a development as a whole which might otherwise not strictly comply with one or more development controls for the Central Business District zone.” In considering a CBD-PD zoning, the Board of Mayor and Commissioners shall consider the extent to which the project complies with the CBD development regulations and whether the development contributes toward the development of the CBD district consistent with the intent of the Downtown Master Plan. The CBD-PD district was created to allow developments that do not meet the CBD district regulations but that further the intent of the Downtown Master Plan. The proposed development furthers the intent of the Downtown Master Plan. Additionally, the plans are being revised to further reduce the variances needed to the CBD district and provide consistency with the variances granted for South City’s development.
- II. East College Avenue Streetscape– The streetscape proposed for the development is and has been equivalent in width from the curb to the building with the South City development under construction. The design team had originally proposed an alternative streetscape design that reduced the landscape buffer and sidewalk widths proposed in the Downtown Master Plan and South City’s development but allowed for additional landscaping and a public courtyard on the building side of the sidewalk that is not contemplated in either plan. Based on the stakeholders’ comments, the project design is being revised to provide a minimum 8 foot landscape zone and 7 foot sidewalk consistent with the recommendation in the Downtown Master Plan (see page 134 (T-7)).
- III. Connectivity – The development improves connectivity within Avondale by providing a new publicly accessible road and creating pedestrian friendly streetscapes on all road frontages around the property.
  - a. New Road - A new publicly accessible road will be developed on the north side of the property to connect Hillyer Avenue and Maple Street as contemplated in the Downtown Master Plan (see pages 88 and 91).

- b. New Streetscape – The development greatly improves walkability by adding pedestrian sidewalks and landscaping along East College Avenue, Hillyer Avenue, the new street and Maple Street. The development also removes two existing curb cuts on East College Avenue which enhances the pedestrian experience. Additionally, the illustrative plan included in the Downtown Master Plan shows surface parking lots on East College Avenue. The proposed development, with active uses and a public patio area along the East College Avenue frontage is significantly more pedestrian friendly than the surface parking areas reflected in the illustrative plan.
- IV. Massing– The majority of the building’s mass is concentrated along the MARTA/CSX line and is architecturally differentiated. In comparison to South City’s project, the proposed development has less mass visible from East College Avenue and a commensurate amount of massing on Hillyer Avenue given that both projects occupy the block on the Hillyer Avenue frontage. The development also accommodates for a stepping down of the building toward downtown Avondale along East College Avenue. The proposed building height along the East College Avenue frontage for South City’s development is 77 feet whereas the proposed development has a 49.5’ height proposed along the frontage.
- V. Density - The density is concentrated on a block with (proposed) connectivity to downtown via Elm Street, Maple Street and Hillyer Avenue. Additionally the project is located 0.25 miles from MARTA with two separate pedestrian routes for access. The additional density can be supported by the combination of existing and proposed streets and MARTA proximity. Density will also help support local businesses and use of MARTA.
- VI. Block Size – The property has 249 feet of frontage on East College Avenue, 417 feet of frontage on Hillyer Avenue and 204 feet of frontage on Maple Street. The Downtown Master Plan does **not** depict a new street bisecting the property (see page 88, Transportation Plan, which expressly labels new proposed streets as “new street” and Figure 42 on page 91 labeling proposed new streets recommended by the Downtown Master Plan). The driveway or service alley depicted on the Downtown Master Plan does not reflect a pedestrian path but a service alley for the surface parked retail along East College Ave. The proposed development is internally serviced which provides an aesthetic benefit.
- VII. Lack of Greenspace – The proposal includes additions to the public realm in the form of an open lawn along Maple Street and a public courtyard along E College Ave. Additionally, the development proposal includes implementing greenspace improvements on a four acre property owned by the City of Avondale that is contemplated for a currently unfunded park. The Downtown Master Plan includes a finding that the study area is underserved by park space (see page 30) and that one of the goals is to provide spaces to gather, including public plazas and large parks (page 63). The proposal, together with the commitment to improve the City owned park, furthers those goals.
- VIII. Retail – Due to lack of visibility and the proximity of the MARTA tracks, retail is not viable along Hillyer Avenue, the new road, or Maple Street, nor is it anticipated in the Downtown Master Plan. The Downtown Master Plan specifically provides that retail uses in mixed use environments should be concentrated on one side of a mixed use building to foster healthy

retail streets (see page 69). Given the existing and proposed development fabric, East College Avenue is the most viable location for retail. The frontage of the development along East College Avenue is limited to approximately 249 feet so only a limited amount of retail can be developed in that space. The development proposes 4,834 sf of restaurant/retail space along East College Avenue with outdoor dining and a pedestrian courtyard. The 4,834 square feet proposed is an approximately 5% increase to the current retail stock in Avondale.

- IX. Precedent – The CBD-PD zoning district requires a two acre minimum lot size pursuant to Section 1115.05 of the City of Avondale Zoning Ordinance. Further, the Downtown Master Plan only recommends building heights exceeding 3 stories in the Western Gateway and the Mill District. There are not any remaining properties in the Western Gateway that exceed 2 acres or that could be assembled to exceed two acres. Lot size and height limitations preclude the possibility that approval of this development would open the door to additional, similarly scaled development east of the site in the Rail Arts District, Northside Avondale District, the Tudor Village or the Northern Gateway.

We appreciate your thoughtfulness in reviewing this application.

Best,

W. Justin Adams & Leonard Wood, Jr.