

MIAMI BEACH

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Staff Report & Recommendation

Design Review Board

TO: DRB Chairperson and Members

DATE: April 5, 2022

FROM: Thomas R. Mooney, AICP
Planning Director



SUBJECT: DRB21-0704
West Avenue Phase II Right of Way improvements

An application has been filed requesting Design Review Approval for the construction of improvements in the rights-of-way for the area generally bound by 8th Street to the south, Collins Canal to the north, just west of Alton Rd. to the east, and Biscayne Bay to the west, including all side streets in-between. Improvements include, but are not limited to, infrastructure for storm water drainage, sanitary sewer and water mains, elevation of roadways, new hardscape and landscaping, new protected bike lanes on West Avenue, new street and pedestrian lighting, harmonization to adjacent properties, bay walk and seawall construction at the Lincoln Rd. street end, and small parks with storm water pump stations and associated infrastructure at the street ends of 10th Street, 14th Street, 16th Terrace, 16th Ct., Bay Rd, and Lincoln Road.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval.

BACKGROUND:

On January 2, 2019, the West Avenue Phase II Improvements, and specifically the conversion of the street-ends into parks, was reviewed by the Design Review Board as a discussion item.

At the January 4, 2022 meeting, this application was presented to the Board. The Board continued this application to a date certain of March 1, 2022, to allow the applicant to provide more details concerning the project. At the March 1, 2022, meeting, this item was continued to a date certain of April 5, 2022, at the request of the applicant.

THE PROJECT:

The applicant has submitted revised plans entitled "West Avenue Improvements Phase II", as prepared by **Shwebke-Shiskin & Associates** dated, signed and sealed 6/26/19, entitled "Landscape Planting Plans- West Avenue Improvements Phase II", as prepared by **Savino Miller Design Studio**, dated, signed and sealed 10/11/19, and entitled "Lighting Plans", as prepared by **CWI Civil Works, Inc.** dated, signed and sealed 9/30/19.

COMPLIANCE WITH ZONING CODE:

A preliminary review of the project indicates that the application, as proposed, appears to be consistent with the City Code. The above noted comments shall not be considered final zoning review or approval. These and all zoning matters shall require final review and verification by the Zoning Administrator prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.

COMPLIANCE WITH ZONING CODE:

A preliminary review of the project indicates that the application, as proposed, appears to be consistent with the City Code. The above noted comments shall not be considered final zoning

review or approval. These and all zoning matters shall require final review and verification by the Zoning Administrator prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.

COMPLIANCE WITH DESIGN REVIEW CRITERIA:

Design Review encompasses the examination of architectural drawings for consistency with the criteria stated below with regard to the aesthetics, appearances, safety, and function of the structure or proposed structures in relation to the site, adjacent structures and surrounding community. Staff recommends that the following criteria is found to be satisfied, not satisfied or not applicable, as hereto indicated:

1. The existing and proposed conditions of the lot, including but not necessarily limited to topography, vegetation, trees, drainage, and waterways.
Satisfied
2. The location of all existing and proposed buildings, drives, parking spaces, walkways, means of ingress and egress, drainage facilities, utility services, landscaping structures, signs, and lighting and screening devices.
Satisfied
3. The dimensions of all buildings, structures, setbacks, parking spaces, floor area ratio, height, lot coverage and any other information that may be reasonably necessary to determine compliance with the requirements of the underlying zoning district, and any applicable overlays, for a particular application or project.
Satisfied
4. The color, design, selection of landscape materials and architectural elements of Exterior Building surfaces and primary public interior areas for Developments requiring a Building Permit in areas of the City identified in section 118-252.
Satisfied
5. The proposed site plan, and the location, appearance and design of new and existing Buildings and Structures are in conformity with the standards of this Ordinance and other applicable ordinances, architectural and design guidelines as adopted and amended periodically by the Design Review Board and Historic Preservation Boards, and all pertinent master plans.
Satisfied
6. The proposed Structure, and/or additions or modifications to an existing structure, indicates a sensitivity to and is compatible with the environment and adjacent Structures, and enhances the appearance of the surrounding properties.
Satisfied
7. The design and layout of the proposed site plan, as well as all new and existing buildings shall be reviewed so as to provide an efficient arrangement of land uses. Particular attention shall be given to safety, crime prevention and fire protection, relationship to the surrounding neighborhood, impact on contiguous and adjacent Buildings and lands, pedestrian sight lines and view corridors.
Satisfied

8. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic movement within and adjacent to the site shall be reviewed to ensure that clearly defined, segregated pedestrian access to the site and all buildings is provided for and that all parking spaces are usable and are safely and conveniently arranged; pedestrian furniture and bike racks shall be considered. Access to the Site from adjacent roads shall be designed so as to interfere as little as possible with traffic flow on these roads and to permit vehicles a rapid and safe ingress and egress to the Site.
Not Applicable
9. Lighting shall be reviewed to ensure safe movement of persons and vehicles and reflection on public property for security purposes and to minimize glare and reflection on adjacent properties. Lighting shall be reviewed to assure that it enhances the appearance of structures at night.
Satisfied
10. Landscape and paving materials shall be reviewed to ensure an adequate relationship with and enhancement of the overall Site Plan design.
Satisfied
11. Buffering materials shall be reviewed to ensure that headlights of vehicles, noise, and light from structures are adequately shielded from public view, adjacent properties and pedestrian areas.
Satisfied
12. The proposed structure has an orientation and massing which is sensitive to and compatible with the building site and surrounding area and which creates or maintains important view corridor(s).
Satisfied
13. The building has, where feasible, space in that part of the ground floor fronting a street or streets which is to be occupied for residential or commercial uses; likewise, the upper floors of the pedestal portion of the proposed building fronting a street, or streets shall have residential or commercial spaces, shall have the appearance of being a residential or commercial space or shall have an architectural treatment which shall buffer the appearance of the parking structure from the surrounding area and is integrated with the overall appearance of the project.
Not Applicable
14. The building shall have an appropriate and fully integrated rooftop architectural treatment which substantially screens all mechanical equipment, stairs and elevator towers.
Not Applicable
15. An addition on a building site shall be designed, sited and massed in a manner which is sensitive to and compatible with the existing improvement(s).
Not Applicable

16. All portions of a project fronting a street or sidewalk shall incorporate an architecturally appropriate amount of transparency at the first level in order to achieve pedestrian compatibility and adequate visual interest.
Not Applicable
17. The location, design, screening and buffering of all required service bays, delivery bays, trash and refuse receptacles, as well as trash rooms shall be arranged so as to have a minimal impact on adjacent properties.
Not Applicable
18. In addition to the foregoing criteria, subsection [118-]104(6)(t) of the city Code shall apply to the design review board's review of any proposal to place, construct, modify or maintain a wireless communications facility or other over the air radio transmission or radio reception facility in the public rights-of-way.
Not Applicable
19. The structure and site complies with the sea level rise and resiliency review criteria in Chapter 133, Article II, as applicable.
Not Applicable

COMPLIANCE WITH SEA LEVEL RISE AND RESILIENCY REVIEW CRITERIA

Section 133-50(a) of the Land Development establishes review criteria for sea level rise and resiliency that must be considered as part of the review process for board orders. The following is an analysis of the request based upon these criteria:

- (1) A recycling or salvage plan for partial or total demolition shall be provided.
Not Applicable
- (2) Windows that are proposed to be replaced shall be hurricane proof impact windows.
Not Applicable
- (3) Where feasible and appropriate, passive cooling systems, such as operable windows, shall be provided.
Not Applicable
- (4) Resilient landscaping (salt tolerant, highly water-absorbent, native or Florida friendly plants) shall be provided, in accordance with Chapter 126 of the City Code.
Satisfied
- (5) The project applicant shall consider the adopted sea level rise projections in the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Action Plan, as may be revised from time-to-time by the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact. The applicant shall also specifically study the land elevation of the subject property and the elevation of surrounding properties.
Satisfied
- (6) The ground floor, driveways, and garage ramping for new construction shall be adaptable to the raising of public rights-of-ways and adjacent land and shall provide

sufficient height and space to ensure that the entry ways and exits can be modified to accommodate a higher street height of up to three (3) additional feet in height.

Not Applicable

- (7) In all new projects, all critical mechanical and electrical systems shall be located above base flood elevation. Due to flooding concerns, all redevelopment projects shall, whenever practicable, and economically reasonable, move all critical mechanical and electrical systems to a location above base flood elevation.

Not Applicable

- (8) Existing buildings shall be, where reasonably feasible and economically appropriate, elevated up to base flood elevation, plus City of Miami Beach Freeboard.

Not Applicable

- (9) When habitable space is located below the base flood elevation plus City of Miami Beach Freeboard, wet or dry flood proofing systems will be provided in accordance with Chapter of 54 of the City Code.

Not Applicable

- (10) In all new projects, water retention systems shall be provided.

Satisfied

- (11) Cool pavement materials or porous pavement materials shall be utilized.

Not Applicable

- (12) The project design shall minimize the potential for a project causing a heat island effect on site.

Not Applicable

STAFF ANALYSIS:
DESIGN REVIEW

The Office of Capital Improvements Projects (CIP) has submitted an application to the Design Review Board seeking approval for the West Avenue Phase II Improvement Project. The project site extends northward from 8th Street to Collins Canal, and eastward from Biscayne Bay to just west of Alton Road, encompassing all side streets in-between. This application was heard at the January 4, 2022, meeting where the Board continued the application to allow the applicant to gather and present more details on the large project.

The West Avenue Phase II Improvements Project, along with Storm Water Treatment System (SWTS), represents a comprehensively defined Neighborhood Improvement program that is focused on resolving challenges associated with climate impacts and ageing infrastructure. In addition to the improvements proposed in the application, the City Commission approved a harmonization policy for West Avenue. The City's strategy regarding the Phase II improvement project has been thoroughly reviewed and analyzed by the City and the community, and it also was part of a joint initiative of 100 Resilient Cities and Columbia University.

The program proposes new infrastructure improvements that include storm water drainage systems, fire hydrants, sanitary sewer mains, water and service lines, the elevation of the

roadways, construction of new gutter and sidewalks. Significant above ground improvements include installing new crosswalk pavers, new signage, pedestrian lighting, traffic signals and pavement marking, and new protected bicycle lanes. Finally, the project includes the harmonization of new roadway elevations with all abutting private properties.

The project also includes converting the street-ends at 10th Street, 14th Street, 16th Street, 16th Court, Bay Road and Lincoln Road into landscaped parks. Generators are proposed within the street-ends at 6th Street, 10th Street, 14th Street and 17th Street. In each instance, the generator is tucked into the side of the site and buffered with landscaping.

The overall design of the project placed significant emphasis on pedestrian safety by implementing a landscape barrier between pedestrian and vehicular traffic, as well as incorporating new, protected bike lanes.

One of the most significant components of the project is the harmonization of the raised roadways to existing, abutting private properties. While each method of harmonization will be unique to the abutting private parcels, the strategies proposed to effectuate a sensitive connection include, but are not limited to, raised walkways with railings, sloped driveways, ramps and landscaping. Additionally, the City is making every effort to ensure that the connection of existing private properties with the raised roadway is done sensitively, safely and with the full input of the abutting property owners. Since the last DRB meeting, additional information has been provided regarding the typical elements required for a successful harmonization, including typical railings and additional street view renderings.

The CIP Department has put forth a significant amount of effort in addressing all of the concerns and issues raised at the previous meeting. After careful review, Planning staff believes that all the issues previously raised have been fully addressed. Staff remains highly supportive of the improvements in this application and finds that as designed, they will positively impact the West Avenue neighborhood. In addition to the sustainable benefits of elevating the roads, the project includes extensive aesthetic improvements that will further enhance the vibrant pedestrian realm of West Avenue, as well as create a safer pedestrian corridor.

RECOMMENDATION:

In view of the foregoing analysis, staff recommends the application be **approved**, subject to the conditions enumerated in the attached Draft Order, which address the inconsistencies with the aforementioned Design Review criteria, Sea Level Rise criteria and Practical Difficulty and Hardship criteria.