

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT**

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**Date:** April 16, 2025

**To:** Reno City Planning Commission

**Subject:** Staff Report (For Possible Action): LDC25-00045 (Apartments at Dandini Offsite Improvements) - A request has been made for a major site plan review to allow: 1) hillside development; and 2) grading resulting in fills greater than 10 feet associated with construction of an access road and installation of a water line (minor utility) associated with the previously approved Apartments at Dandini (LDC25-00001). The ±37.03 acre site is comprised of two parcels located on the south side of Dandini Boulevard, ±825 feet west of its intersection with Sun Valley Boulevard. The site is zoned Mixed-Use Suburban (MS) and has a Master Plan designation of Suburban Mixed-Use (SMU).

**From:** Jeff Foster, Associate Planner

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**Ward #:** 4

**Case No.:** LDC25-00045 (Apartments at Dandini Offsite Improvements)

**Applicant:** 691 Reno LLC/Reno LHA 1, LLP

**APNs:** 035-012-11 and 035-032-01

**Request:** **Major Site Plan Review:** To allow 1) hillside development; and 2) grading resulting in fills greater than 10 feet associated with construction of an access road and installation of a water line (minor utility) associated with the previously approved Apartments at Dandini (LDC25-00001).

**Location:** See Case Maps (**Exhibit A**)

**Proposed Motion:** Based upon compliance with the applicable findings, I recommend that the Planning Commission approve the major site plan review, subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.

**Summary:** The ±37.03 acre undeveloped site is located on the south side of Dandini Boulevard east of the Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) campus and the Desert Research Institute (DRI). The proposed major site plan review would allow 1) hillside development; and 2) grading resulting in fills greater than 10 feet associated with construction of an access road and

installation of a water line (minor utility) associated with the previously approved Apartments at Dandini (**Exhibit B**). Key project issues include: 1) site design and 2) hillside development and grading. These issues have been mitigated through project design, code compliance, and/or conditions of approval. Staff recommends approval subject to all proposed conditions.

**Background:** On September 18, 2024, the Planning Commission approved a major site plan review for a 402 unit multifamily development on the north side of Dandini Boulevard across from the subject site (LDC25-00001). The current project proposes infrastructure in the form of an access road and water line to meet Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) looping requirements to support development of the previously approved Apartments at Dandini project, as well as future development of the subject site. The current project will be constructed in conjunction with infrastructure improvements associated with the Apartments at Dandini.

### **Analysis:**

**Site Design:** The water line improvements have been designed to extend south from Dandini Boulevard to the midpoint of the subject site. The improvements then turn to the west and loop through the adjacent DRI/TMCC parcel, extending to Raggio Parkway, and ultimately loop back to Dandini Boulevard. The road section is proposed to be graded to 35 feet (including shoulders) in anticipation of providing a 26 foot wide primary access for future development on this site (**Exhibit B**). It is anticipated that the roadway will be completed to 35 feet in width, including sidewalks, curb and gutter if and when the parcel is developed. Since no development is proposed on the subject site at this time, the road will be paved to a 15 foot width, providing an acceptable surface for access and maintenance of the water line.

The submitted plans show improvements ending at the DRI/TMCC parcel. The proposed improvements were limited to the portion of the project under the jurisdiction of the City. The portion of the project that will be constructed on the adjacent parcel, within the Dandini Research Park, has been coordinated with Dandini Research Parks, Ltd. through an agreement that will be signed by both parties. The property owner will be responsible for maintenance of the roadway and associated slopes. An easement will be granted to TMWA for access and maintenance of the water line.

RMC classifies construction of water lines as “Utilities, Minor” in the land use table. Per RMC 18.03.305(b)(2)(a), minor utilities are exempt from landscaping and screening requirements. This project is necessary to extend water service to a previously approved project. From the submitted application materials, there is no indication that the project will have any adverse impact on City infrastructure facilities beyond existing use. Restricted construction hours will reduce potential impacts on nearby residential uses (**Condition 5**).

**Hillside Development and Grading:** Grading associated with the improvements is estimated to impact  $\pm 3.07$  acres of land, leaving approximately 35 acres of the site undisturbed. Per RMC 18.04.402(a), the project is considered a hillside development since slopes exceed 15% on approximately 70% of the site (**Exhibit C**). Fills are expected to be up to 30 feet in height with cuts anticipated up to five feet in depth. A total of 60,000 cubic yards of fill material is anticipated to be required.

In order to minimize impacts on hillsides, open space shall be preserved in accordance with RMC 18.04.406. Based on the open space calculations provided in the application, the minimum open space preservation requirement is  $\pm 15.5$  acres. RMC also requires additional open space to be provided at a rate of 2:1 for development on slopes 30% or greater. Since the project proposes to disturb  $\pm 0.56$  acres of these slopes, an additional  $\pm 1.12$  acres of open space are required, for a total requirement of  $\pm 16.62$  acres. Approximately 35 acres (92% of the site) will remain undisturbed and preserved as natural open space.

While the deepest cuts will be  $\pm 5$  feet and the maximum fills will be  $\pm 30$  feet, those areas are proportionately relatively small. Disturbance has been limited to only areas needed for construction of the proposed water line and access road with impacts mitigated in such a way as to replicate natural features where possible. The disturbed areas will be designed to reduce overall scarring and retain a natural contoured appearance by using riprap or other approved slope stabilization techniques. No retaining walls are currently proposed. Grading practices that are more appropriate in hillside areas have been incorporated using stabilized/revegetated 2:1 slopes that efficiently meet existing grades and minimize excessive grading. Once the horizontal and vertical elements of the site design are largely fixed and static, final design will include the addition of slope transitions, integration of variations in slope steepness, and the use of talus slopes, boulders, and mulches in order to provide a more natural appearance.

The project has been designed to meet the general grading (cut and fill) standards in accordance with RMC 18.04.302(e), including preservation of steep slopes, fill slopes, location of cut and fill slopes, noxious weed abatement, and revegetation after final grading. **Conditions 6 through 8** are recommended to address enhanced grading techniques including treatment of slopes, riprap, and noxious weeds.

**Hydrology:** There is an existing natural drainageway near the northern edge of the parcel, south of Dandini Boulevard, that will be crossed by the proposed access road. Storm water runoff currently generated on undeveloped slopes to the west drains to the existing drainageway and eventually along the south side of Dandini Boulevard. This drainageway drains less than 100 acres and is therefore not a major drainageway. Culverts and erosion control will be installed with final design.

***Master Plan Conformance:*** The subject site has a Master Plan land use designation of Suburban Mixed-Use (SMU) and is located within the Innovation Employment Areas per the Structure Plan Framework of the Master Plan. As proposed, and with the recommended conditions, the project is in substantial conformance with the Master Plan land use designation and the following applicable Master Plan goals and policies:

- GP 2.4C: Water Supply
- GP 7.1B: Development Constraints Area
- GP 7.1C: Hillside Development
- GP 7.1E: Hydrologic Resources

***Public and Stakeholder Engagement:*** The project was reviewed by various City divisions and partner agencies. Comments received were incorporated into this report (**Exhibit D**). The applicant presented the project at the March 20, 2025, Ward 4 Neighborhood Advisory Board (NAB) meeting. A courtesy notice was sent out to surrounding property owners upon initial submittal of the project; one public comment was received regarding hillside development (**Exhibit E**). Any future comments will be forwarded to the Planning Commission as they are received.

**Recommended Conditions of Approval:** All conditions shall be met to the satisfaction of Development Services Department staff, unless otherwise noted.

1. The project shall comply with all applicable City codes, plans, reports, materials, etc., as submitted. In the event of a conflict between said plans, reports, materials and City codes, City codes in effect at the time the application is submitted shall prevail.
2. The owner or developer shall apply for a building permit for the entire project within 18 months of the date of approval of the major site plan review application and maintain the validity of that permit, or the major site plan review approval shall be null and void.
3. Prior to the issuance of any building permit associated with this project, the applicant shall attach a copy of the final approval letter. The approval letter shall accompany a narrative provided by the applicant that describes how the requested permit addresses each of the approved conditions of approval.
4. The applicant, developer, builder, property owner, or business proprietor, as applicable, shall continuously maintain a copy of this approval letter on the project site during the construction and operation of the project. The project approval letter shall be posted or made readily available upon demand by City staff.

5. Hours of construction, including grading, shall be limited to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. There shall be no construction on Sundays. This condition shall not apply to dust control or storm water management operations. A note to this effect shall be placed on the title sheet of all building permit plan sets.
6. Prior to approval of any grading and/or site improvements permit, the applicant shall have final grading plans approved demonstrating that the edges of all created cut and fill slopes will be feathered and rounded to properly transition into the adjacent undisturbed slopes.
7. Prior to approval of any grading and/or site improvements permit, the applicant shall have plans approved that demonstrate the color of any riprap will match the surrounding natural landscape and will be treated with Permeon or similar product. The riprap shall also be backfilled with soil and revegetated.
8. Prior to approval of any grading and/or site improvements permit, the applicant shall prepare a noxious weed monitoring and adaptive management plan to address construction concerns and ensure ongoing consistent noxious weed monitoring, prevention, and removal, subject to staff approval. This plan shall be implemented and enforceable throughout the life of the project.

### **Findings:**

***General Review Criteria and Considerations:*** The decision-making body shall review all development applications for compliance with the applicable general review criteria stated below.

- 1) Consistency with the Reno Master Plan. The proposed development shall be consistent with the Reno Master Plan. The decision-making authority:
  - a. Shall weigh competing plan goals, policies, and strategies; and
  - b. May approve an application that provides a public benefit even if the development is contrary to some of the goals, policies, or strategies in the Reno Master Plan.
- 2) Compliance with Title 18. The proposed development shall comply with all applicable standards in this Title, unless the standard is lawfully modified or varied. Compliance with these standards is applied at the level of detail required for the subject submittal.
- 3) Mitigates Traffic Impacts. The project mitigates traffic impacts based on applicable standards of the City of Reno and the Regional Transportation Commission.
- 4) Provides Safe Environment. The project provides a safe environment for pedestrians and people on bicycles.
- 5) Rational Phasing Plan. If the application involves phases, each phase of the proposed development contains all of the required streets, utilities, landscaping, open space, and

other improvements that are required to serve or otherwise accompany the completed phases of the project, and shall not depend on subsequent phases for those improvements.

***Major Site Plan Review:*** In addition to meeting the criteria in Section 18.08.304(e), *Approval Criteria Applicable to all Applications*, the following findings shall be made prior to granting a major site plan review permit:

- a. The proposed design is compatible with surrounding development;
- b. The proposed design is consistent with applicable development standards;
- c. Public services and facilities are available to serve the project, or will be provided with development;
- d. The characteristics of the project as proposed and as may be conditioned are reasonably compatible with the types of development permitted in the surrounding area; and
- e. The approval will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare. The factors to be considered in evaluating this application shall include:
  1. Property damage or nuisance resulting from noise, smoke, odor, dust, vibration, or illumination; and
  2. Any hazard to persons and property.

In addition to the general major site plan review findings, the following findings shall be made prior to approving a major site plan review for the following: (1) grading resulting in fills greater than 10 feet in height; (2) hillside development meeting the criteria in Section 18.04.402:

- a. The proposed project mitigates environmental degradation, including slope failure, erosion, sedimentation, and stormwater run-off;
- b. The proposed project utilizes grading practices that are appropriate for hillsides and designed to minimize the visibility of unsightly scarring;
- c. The proposed project provides open space based on hillside constraints;
- d. The proposed project adheres to applicable hillside development design standards and to Master Plan provisions related to development in sloped areas; and
- e. The proposed project's site layout and design features adequately mitigate potential visual impacts of development near prominent ridgelines and within other visually prominent areas.

**Attachments:**

**Exhibit A. Case Maps**

**Exhibit B. Preliminary Civil Plans**

**Exhibit C. Slope Map with Disturbance Area Overlay**

**Exhibit D. Agency Comments**

**Exhibit E. Public Comment**