

**PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

Date: September 18, 2024

To: Reno City Planning Commission

Subject: **Staff Report (For Possible Action): LDC25-00001 (Apartments at Dandini) -**
A request has been made for a major site plan review to allow: 1) hillside development; 2) grading resulting in cuts greater than 20 feet and fills greater than 10 feet in height; and 3) disturbance of a major drainageway to allow for a 402 unit multi-family development. The ±60.57 acre site is located on the north side of Dandini Boulevard ±860 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

Ward #: 4

Case No.: LDC25-00001 (Apartments at Dandini)

Applicant: Travis Huff, 691 Reno LLC

APN: 035-011-04

Request: **Major Site Plan Review:** To allow 1) hillside development; 2) grading resulting in cuts greater than 20 feet and fills greater than 10 feet in height; and 3) disturbance of a major drainageway to allow for a 402 unit multi-family development.

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

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

Summary: The ±60.57 acre undeveloped site is located on the north 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; 2) grading resulting in cuts greater than 20 feet and fills greater than 10 feet in height; and 3) disturbance of a major drainageway to allow for a 402 unit multi-family development (**Exhibit B**).

Key project issues include: 1) compatibility with surrounding uses, 2) site design, 3) hillside development and grading, 4) major drainageway disturbance, 5) sewer, and 6) traffic and access. These issues have been mitigated through the project design, code compliance, and/or conditions of approval. Staff recommends approval subject to all proposed conditions.

Analysis:

Compatibility with Surrounding Uses: Immediate surrounding land uses include undeveloped parcels, single-family residences, an elementary school, community college, and research institute. The land uses surrounding the site are summarized in the table below.

	Zoning	Use
North	MDS, PSP (County)	Undeveloped parcels, Lois Allen Elementary School
East	MDS (County)	Single-family residential
South	MS	Undeveloped parcels across Dandini Boulevard
West	ME, PF	Undeveloped parcel, TMCC, DRI

The MS zone is intended to accommodate a mix of low-intensity, auto-oriented uses, while supporting the gradual transition of the city's suburban corridors to a mix of higher-density residential, retail, commercial, and other employment and service-oriented uses. Multi-family residential is allowed by right in the MS zone. Surrounding land uses are mostly undeveloped, residential and educational facilities (primary schools are typically located near residential uses as they are considered complementary uses). Proposed buildings are generally located a significant distance from the residential property lines to the east. Restricted construction hours will reduce potential impacts to nearby residential uses (**Condition 5**). Given all of the above, the proposed use is generally compatible with existing land uses in the area.

Site Design: The project proposes to develop 402 multi-family units in 14 buildings on a ±27 acre portion of the site. The design includes three distinct areas (A, B and C) that have been situated to work with the topography while clustering three-story garden style buildings and a one-story clubhouse (**Exhibit C**) in a manner that takes advantage of views from the site. Twelve of the buildings are located in Areas A and B with two buildings located in the southeast corner of the site (Area C). Buildings include a mix of two, three, and four bedroom units ranging in size from ±851 square feet up to ±1,350 square feet. The project includes a mix of covered/carport and surface parking spaces (558 required, 730 provided).

The project has been designed with buildings clustered on portions of the site to promote fire safety within the wildland urban interface, protect existing drainageways, and avoid ridgelines and other visually prominent areas, including a rock outcropping between Areas A and B. **Condition 6** is

included to protect the outcropping, as it is close to the grading limits for Area B. Potential visual impacts have been minimized through site design, structure location and architectural treatment, including height limitations and colors consistent with the surrounding environment.

As this is a residential development in a mixed-use district, per RMC 18.04.1002(b)(1)(3), the project has been designed in accordance with RMC 18.04.903 (General Standards for Residential Districts). All multi-family use-specific standards from RMC 18.03.302(a)(3)(a), including resident amenities, are included in the project design and will be demonstrated at the building permit stage. Outdoor amenities provided throughout the project include fenced playgrounds, extensive paths, and common green spaces for games and fitness.

The final site improvement plans will include a 10 foot wide multi-use path along the project frontage on the northern side of Dandini Boulevard between the entrances for Areas A and C. The design includes a school bus shelter for Areas A and B and a school bus pullout in front of Area C. Washoe County School District (WCSD) has collaborated with the applicant's representative on WCSD bus pick-up/drop-off locations shown on the Site Circulation Plan (**Exhibit B**). The proposed plan locations/routes are adequate for WCSD's ability to provide school transportation services to the development.

To minimize hillside disturbance, landscaping on the site is limited to immediately adjacent to the buildings, amenity areas, parking areas and roads (**Exhibit D**). Code requires a minimum of 20% of the development area to be landscaped. As designed, the project includes $\pm 239,930$ square feet (20.5%) of formal ornamental landscaping. The project includes a minimum of 780 trees, 50% of which are evergreen trees planted throughout the site.

Hillside Development and Grading: The proposed disturbed area for the project is ± 27 acres. Per RMC 18.04.402(a), the project is considered a hillside development since slopes exceed 15% on over 25% of the site (**Exhibit E**). Many of the steeper slopes on the parcel are within the northern portion of the site and are not proposed for development. The areas proposed for development are mostly within the 0% - 20% range.

In order to minimize impacts to 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 ± 19.3 acres. RMC also requires additional open space be provided at a rate 2:1 for development on slopes 30% or greater. Since the project proposes to disturb ± 0.79 acres of these slopes, an additional ± 1.58 acres of open space are required, for a total requirement of ± 20.88 acres. Approximately 34 acres (56% of the site) will remain undisturbed and preserved as natural open space.

The proposed grading plan depicts four primary areas within the site where fill is anticipated to exceed 10 feet in height and two areas where cuts deeper than 20 feet are proposed (**Exhibit B**). While the deepest cuts will be ± 35 feet and the maximum fills will be ± 25 feet, those areas are proportionately relatively small. The disturbed areas will be designed to reduce overall scarring and retain a natural appearance through contouring, revegetation, and landscaping. Appropriately designed retaining walls (per RMC 18.04.409) will be utilized where necessary to further minimize grading. Grading practices that are more appropriate in hillsides areas have been incorporated and include hillside adaptive architecture (per RMC 18.04.410), including stepped buildings in a few areas to follow existing slopes and reduce the amount of earthwork necessary, and stabilized/revegetated 2:1 slopes that efficiently meet existing grades and minimize excessive grading. All areas disturbed by grading in the developed core that will not be formally landscaped or developed with walls will be reseeded with a mixture of grasses and shrubs consistent with existing onsite vegetation to provide a transition to native plant species on undisturbed portions of the site.

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 stable steep slopes, fill slopes, location of cut and fill slopes, noxious weed abatement, and revegetation after final grading. **Conditions 7 to 9** are recommended to address enhanced grading techniques including treatment of slopes, riprap, and noxious weeds.

Major Drainageway Disturbance/Hydrology: Stormwater treatment and retention/detention will be reviewed per code with the grading/site improvements permit(s). There is one drainageway, which crosses the parcel from west to east in the northern portion of the site, that drains ± 153 acres and is therefore a major drainageway per RMC 18.04.104(c). The drainageway is a natural drainageway except disturbance from an existing box culvert below a dirt road that crosses the site. This drainageway is in stable condition with no obvious erosion, and the project has been designed to generally preserve the drainageway in its existing condition. To provide two points of access to the project, where the proposed emergency/secondary access road extends to the northeast, the existing box culvert is proposed to be replaced with a new box culvert to convey flows under the access. Final grading plans will include a Best Management Plan (BMP) sheet that includes required BMPs to prevent the mobilization of sediment downstream during construction. All disturbance associated with the installation of the box culvert will be stabilized and revegetated with native and drought tolerant species adapted to the project area.

Application materials indicate that a portion of the off-site flows are proposed to be routed to a detention basin within the major drainageway created by the fill necessary to construct the emergency access road. Although code does not specifically prohibit the location of detention basins within major drainageways, RMC 18.04.104(e)(3) states that no grading shall occur within a natural drainageway except for that which is required for the construction of bicycle/pedestrian

paths or necessary roadway or utility crossings. The applicant shall investigate and analyze other methods for the required flow mitigation that do not rely on additional disturbance to the major drainageway (**Condition 10**).

Sewer: The proposed project is anticipated to generate 281,400 gallons per day. Areas A and B are proposed to discharge to an existing Washoe County sewer main at Sunflower Drive. Area C is proposed to discharge to an existing Washoe County sewer main within Dandini Boulevard near Leonesio Drive. Downstream conveyance will be provided through a combination of Washoe County, Sun Valley General Improvement District (SVGID), City of Sparks, and City of Reno facilities. Treatment will be provided at the Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility (TMWRF). Even though there is currently adequate capacity at TMWRF, multiple approvals are required to ensure that this project is served. The developer will be responsible for all downstream upgrades to existing infrastructure to the satisfaction of Washoe County, SVGID and City of Sparks. The application materials included a draft sewer study that identified $\pm 1,700$ feet of interceptor improvements to the SVGID system. Since the application materials do not indicate if downstream improvements are necessary for the Washoe County and City of Sparks systems, the applicant will need to coordinate with these entities to determine the extent of any improvements necessary to serve the project. The applicant shall coordinate with SVGID, Washoe County, and City of Sparks to obtain all necessary permits and/or approvals from those entities (**Condition 11**).

Traffic and Access: According to the project's traffic impact study, the Sun Valley Boulevard/Clear Acre Lane and Dandini Boulevard/El Rancho Drive intersection is projected to operate at an unacceptable Level of Service (LOS) E under PM peak hour Cumulative and Cumulative Plus Project conditions. [The study indicates no other intersections are projected to operate at unacceptable LOS under all study scenarios.] To support the proposed use, the study recommends optimizing the signal splits at this intersection, which will allow it to operate at an acceptable LOS. The applicant will need to coordinate with the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) regarding operations/queuing at this intersection. As Sun Valley Boulevard is owned and maintained by the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), the signal work will be required to be completed through an NDOT permit, which shall be obtained by the applicant prior to approval of the site improvements permit (**Condition 12**).

The site is accessed via two driveways off Dandini Boulevard (**Exhibit B**), which is classified by RTC as a moderate access control arterial. RTC access management standards are required to be met with any work proposed on this roadway. The traffic impact study identifies that the west entrance is expected to experience over 60 peak hour northbound ingress turns. In accordance with RTC access management standards, the applicant is required to incorporate a deceleration lane for turns into the west entrance in the final plans. The applicant will need to coordinate and obtain approval from RTC for any work within the Dandini Boulevard right of way. Onsite circulation will be in accordance with the Public Works Design Manual.

RTC identified that Phases 3 and 6 of the U.S. 395/Pyramid Connection project include elements that run directly through the subject parcel. Pursuant to the applicant's subsequent conversation with RTC staff, the intent of their comment is informational for the applicant and the City of Reno. RTC has not initiated a right of way acquisition process to secure land rights for the alignment and there is no nexus for the U.S. 395/Pyramid Connection project to prohibit approval of the current entitlement application.

Public transit routes are available through RTC Route 15 at eastbound and westbound Dandini Boulevard between West and East Leonesio Drive, approximately 1,280 feet southeast of the driveway access to Area C.

Utility Transmission Corridor: There is an existing NV Energy overhead transmission line corridor traversing the northeastern portion of the site in the vicinity of the emergency/secondary access road connecting to Sunflower Drive (**Exhibit B**). The easement is a regional utility corridor, as defined in the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan. Per Reno Master Plan Guiding Principle 2.4G, a minimum setback of 10 feet on each side of existing regional utility corridors is required and allows only for passive uses within these setbacks including, but not limited to, parks, trails, parking, landscaping, and fencing. As fills are proposed within the easement, NV Energy approval is necessary to proceed with these grading activities and secondary access road improvements (**Condition 13**).

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. The SMU land use designation is intended to have a diverse mix of commercial and residential uses. The size, density, and mix of uses will vary depending on access, location, and the character of surrounding areas. 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 2.4G: Regional Utility Corridors
- GP 4.3B: Infill and Redevelopment
- GP 7.1B: Development Constraints Area
- GP 7.1C: Hillside Development
- GP 7.1E: Hydrologic Resources
- GP 7.1F: Major Drainageways
- EA-IA.2: Housing

Public and Stakeholder Engagement: The project was reviewed by various City divisions and partner agencies and comments were incorporated into the analysis as applicable (**Exhibit F**). The

applicant presented the project at the August 15, 2024, Ward 4 Neighborhood Advisory Board (NAB) meeting. A courtesy notice was sent out to surrounding property owners upon initial submittal of the project; one comment in opposition was received (**Exhibit G**). 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. If the construction hours need to be varied for the pouring of concrete slabs, interior construction hours or other modifications, a plan detailing the construction operations and provisions to minimize impacts on nearby residential areas shall be submitted and approved to the satisfaction of the Administrator.
6. Prior to approval of any grading and/or site improvements permit, final plans shall demonstrate that the rock outcropping between Areas A and B will not be disturbed.

7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. Prior to approval of any grading and/or site improvements permit, the applicant shall investigate and analyze other methods for the required flow mitigation that do not rely on additional disturbance to the major drainageway beyond what is necessary for the emergency/secondary access roadway crossing, to the satisfaction of Development Services Engineering.
11. Prior to approval of the site improvements permit, the applicant shall coordinate with SVGID, Washoe County and City of Sparks to obtain all necessary permits and/or approvals from those entities for sewer infrastructure improvements. The applicant is responsible for all costs associated with any such permits/approvals and improvements.
12. Prior to approval of the site improvements permit, the applicant shall obtain a permit from NDOT to complete the proposed signal timing work for the Sun Valley Boulevard/Clear Acre Lane and Dandini Boulevard/El Rancho Drive intersection.
13. Prior to approval of any grading and/or site improvements permit, the applicant shall provide written approval from NV Energy for any grading activities and roadway improvements within the NV Energy transmission line easement.

Findings:

General Review Criteria: 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 and application that provides a public benefit even if the development is contrary to some of the foals, 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.

For developments 10 acres or more in area, the following findings shall be made prior to granting a major site plan review permit, in addition to the general major site plan review findings:

- 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. Preliminary Elevations

Exhibit D. Preliminary Landscape Plan

Exhibit E. Slope Map with Project Overlay

Exhibit F. Agency Comments

Exhibit G. Public Comments