

# PROJECT NARRATIVE

622 Graceland Avenue  
Des Plaines, IL

Application for:

131 Luxury Apartments  
New Restaurant/Lounge  
Public and Private Covered Parking

Project Narrative  
03/07/2022 Submission to Planning and Zoning Board (PZB)  
Updated 3/16/2022 for 4/12/2022 PZB Hearing  
Updated 5/3/2022 for 5/24/2022 PZB Hearing

## Project Overview

The new apartments proposed at 622 Graceland Avenue will be a transit-oriented (TOD), mixed-use building located in the Downtown Business and Mixed-Use District of Des Plaines. With its proximity to area businesses and local transit to Chicago, Des Plaines is an ideal location to create a contemporary, high-density residential community. The project addresses the changing aspirations of people who desire to live closer to services in an urban environment, which provides for a more convenient style of living while simultaneously decreasing one's environmental footprint.

The development team, Compasspoint Development, LLC, is an experienced developer, having developed over 2,000 residential apartments around the country, and over 300 apartments in downtown Des Plaines with projects The Ellison (113 units) while at Opus Development and 1425 Ellinwood Apartments (212 units) with Compasspoint Development. Compasspoint develops best-in-class residential apartment buildings that redefine the skyline of any town/city they develop in. Compasspoint believes deeply in the Des Plaines community and has committed over \$100,000,000 to develop projects in Des Plaines and is committing an additional \$35,000,000 investment in this dynamic community.

The applicant has modified the development plan to accommodate as many comments and concerns from area neighbors, and City officials. Therefore, the current plans show (i) zoning map amendment to rezone the subject property from C-3 General Commercial District to C-5 Central Business District; (ii) Tentative Plat of Subdivision to consolidate three existing lots lot of record into one; The applicant is withdrawing all variance requests previously submitted prior to the first 4/12/22 PZB hearing. The changes to the variation application is due to eliminating all the outdoor head-in parking spaces that was located on the applicants property. By eliminating these spaces, the application no longer is required to seek zoning relief for parking lot landscaping in a property side yard. All outdoor parking will be located on the City owned street (Webford).

The architectural plan changes are listed as follows:

1. Eliminate all 90-degree head in parking along Webford Avenue.
2. A total of 44 public/commercial parking spaces will be located inside the building and a few will be located on the street. This is a reduction of 11 total public spaces.
3. Provide a Public Park in lieu of parking adjacent to the building. This public park will be open to the public during normal City operating hours and will be permanently owned and maintained by the Developer. A beautiful landscape plan is forthcoming and will include grass areas, walking path, overhead lighting, and generous seating open for anyone to enjoy.
4. The plan calls for adding on the North drive aisle of Webford parallel parking and a permanent building loading zone along the south edge of the property line along Webford Avenue, within the proposed widening of Webford. The old loading zone will now become additional outdoor dining areas.
5. The design added 4-foot knee walls to all areas of the garage façade facing Webford to address concerns of vehicle lights shining on nearby neighbors.
6. To address the concerns of the residents immediately to the West, the design is set back 3 feet all the way up the building to allow windows on half of the West façade, eliminating a blank wall design. Additional setback of 5 feet on the West wall from the Webford property line back 30 feet North was created to allow additional setback relief from 1330 Webford Ave, and also to accommodate open air access for the West fire stairwell exit to the street.
7. An open cut out of 10 feet wide by 8 feet high on the West wall at grade was made to allow pedestrians from the local businesses (1330 Webford) to access the public parking areas of the garage. An access agreement will be drafted so the garage may be accessible.
8. The applicant is also granting a public easement for the sidewalk in perpetuity, despite it being located on private property.
9. The indoor structured parking garage and outdoor street parking will now include 47 public spaces and 137 privately reserved residential spaces. As part of the revised application, the City will allow all 47 spaces to be open to the general public.
10. A loading zone, although not required in C-5, is provided for residential move-ins as well as food and beverage delivery for the restaurant.

The development still consists of a 7-story mixed-use building containing 131 residential rental apartments, ground floor restaurant space and communal lounge. The applicant is providing 184 total parking spaces, 137 required residential spaces, 17 required commercial spaces and an additional 30 public spaces. The reallocation of the existing 38 public spaces will be partially replaced by 30 public spaces inside the parking garage in addition to the 17 required commercial spaces. The proposed development will meet and exceed the minimum parking requirements.

## Building Description:

The building will be 131 units and will consist of (17) Studios, (103) One Bedrooms and (11) Two Bedroom units.

The ground floor and mezzanine levels will consist of approximately 2,841 net square feet of restaurant and lounge space designated for uses permitted in Section C-5 of the zoning code. The commercial space will have dedicated covered and outdoor parking for the public and ground floor commercial customers which meet or exceed the parking required for City code. Additionally, the restaurant will have outdoor seating along Webford Ave, creating a true indoor/outdoor dining experience. The applicant intends to own the restaurant and lounge space and has a third party restaurant management company that will manage the day to day operations of the commercial spaces. These spaces are designed to bring in people from the neighborhood to enjoy good food and beverages in an approachable and affordable dining experience. Currently, the food and beverage concept has not been established, but it is the intention of the applicant to bring to market a food and beverage concept that fits well with the downtown market and seeks to elevate the type of food that people who work and live in Des Plaines will experience.

622 Graceland Ave is located directly across the street from the Metra Northwest Train platform with express access to downtown Chicago creating an opportunity for residents to leave their car at home for travel outside of the neighborhood and to commute to work.

The building will feature indoor bicycle storage, service area for loading and trash pick-ups. First floor amenities will contain a residential lobby, leasing office, café, full-service restaurant and mezzanine lounge/bar area. The second floor will house a fitness center and coworking lounge for the residents. The third floor will consist of an outdoor pool and landscaped roof deck, indoor club room, business center, and a dedicated outdoor dog run with pet grooming lounge. On level seven there will be a resident Sky Lounge with an outdoor roof deck. The outdoor roofdeck on level 3 will have dedicated green roof space, designed to eliminate a significant amount of rainwater runoff.

The developer has hired OKW as the projects architect. OKW is a leading national architecture firm headquartered in Chicago with extensive residential apartment design experience not only across the United States but also the Chicago land area.

## Project Goals

The redevelopment will dramatically improve the current site conditions, replacing a single story news printer and underutilized commercial buildings and surface parking with a vibrant mixed-use project. The project will have two main boundaries, with its main street edge being Graceland Avenue and secondary site boundaries of Webford Avenue. Beyond the multiple uses, the building will have a modern exterior and site design that will provide a warm and welcoming pedestrian and retail experience.

The project will have a substantial financial benefit to the City and its local business and residents in the form of a significant increase in property and retail tax revenue. The project will infuse hundreds of new residents of varying ages and income levels that will ultimately improve the urban fabric and the financial stability of the Downtown Des Plaines market.

Adding residential dwelling units at this location naturally creates a more inviting streetscape, as more people will be walking, biking and driving to and from the site, which creates an energetic, safe and people-friendly hub in place of the existing commercial and surface lot that exists today. Sidewalk conditions will be improved, thus supporting nearby sites and encouraging area residents to walk to the site for their shopping and entertainment needs.

The developer has spent a considerable amount of time of assembling this development site. As Developers, we truly believe that our success in this project will be secondary to the greater benefit to the City of Des Plaines and its residents and businesses.

## Design guidelines

The building design consists of white, grey and a wood tone exterior that mixes fiber cement panels, full face norman brick, glass windows with first, second, third and seventh floor aluminum and floor to ceiling glass window panels and a concrete and wood frame structure. All units will feature punch windows and large sliding patio doors with inset balconies and juliet style metal railings. The developer plans on adding climbing green ivy landscaping to the south exterior parking wall facing Webford Avenue helping to partially screen the main parking structure. The parking structure will feature open segments filled with architectural metal screening to allow the natural ivy to climb and conceal the parking areas. Further, as part of the Developers agreement with the City's redevelopment agreement, we will add additional parking spaces to the exterior parking areas in front of the building on Webford Avenue, increasing the necessary public parking above what is required by zoning code. We will improve the streetscape along Graceland Ave to the corner of Webford and all of Webford Ave to the end of our building property line. Webford Avenue will also be widened by (8) eight feet, increasing the street area to a true two-way drive aisle at (28) twenty-eight feet. The developer will also create a new connection to the storm sewer system creating a separated storm connection all the way to Laurel Avenue at the City's request. Additionally, the developer will resurface Webford to the end of the new buildings property line at the City's request.



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# **PROJECT NARRATIVE (continued)**

## **Utility Relocation**

No utility relocation is necessary, other than placing overhead utilities underground. Full/Final civil engineering drawings will show any utility relocation necessary.

## **Property Assemblage**

The developer has assembled a 1-acre infill development site consisting of 3 parcels. The property addresses are 622 Graceland Ave, 1362 Webford Ave, and 1332 Webford Ave. The properties are currently either under contract or have City/Owner consent to pursue entitlements with firm title commitments. Please reference the parcel PIN map located within this package. The 1332 Webford parcel is owned by the City of Des Plaines. 622 Graceland Ave is owned by The Wessel Holding Company, an affiliate of The Journal Topics Newspaper Group.

## **Parking Garage**

Of the newly constructed 184 parking spaces 47 spaces are open to the general public or commercial users. The residential parking will have 137 spaces and will be located on a half sublevel below grade with 12 spaces, and 41 spaces on the first level and 84 spaces on level 2. There are 47 public/commercial parking spaces within the development, 42 public/commercial spaces on level 1 and sub-level 1, and 5 spaces located on Webford Avenue in front of the building. The building management will manage loading and unloading for both Retail Deliveries, Retail and Residential Trash and the Move-in and Move-out of the building residents. The residential elevator bank will have cargo/service elevators that can be used for moving and for emergency services. There is one loading zone located just outside the garage along Webford Avenue. Please see the architectural plan for this location.

The parking garage will include "panic button" devices that are directly connected to a POTS line allowing for an alert signal to be transferred to the City's 911 dispatch center. Other safety measures for the garage will include security cameras capable of monitoring the entirety of the public accessible areas. All private stairwells will be locked with access controls and panic bars and will include 24/7 video surveillance. These areas will only be accessible by residents and building and maintenance personnel. Audio visual vehicle alarm systems will be located at the garage entrances on Webford Ave to ensure the safety of all pedestrians. The developer will work with the City to create a parking signage plan to conform to the downtown public parking plan and will provide color coordinated stall and wall coverings to ensure clarity between the Public and Private parking areas. The developer will provide easy to read wayfinding signage for all access areas, public and private walkways and ingress and egress points. The parking structure will be well lit to meet or exceed building codes with Safety being paramount.

## **Construction Time Line**

We anticipate closing on all parcels of the land development in February/March of 2023. Construction starting in March/April 2023 and concluding 16 months later as per the preliminary construction timeline.

## **Redevelopment Agreement**

The City of Des Plaines and the development team have worked alongside each other to ensure the conformity of the recently adopted city's comprehensive and strategic plans.

The developer will construct streetscape improvements bordering the development property including without limitation the installation of new granite or brick pavers, conventional sidewalks, curbs, gutters, irrigation system, underdrains, parkway trees, bench seating, bike racks, as well as sidewalk lighting. The streetscape plan will include new streetscape improvements for Webford Ave and Graceland Ave. A new storm sewer from the development to Laurel Ave will create a new separate system for water runoff.



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# APPLICATION FOR ZONING AMENDMENT FOR 622 GRACELAND

The applicant is seeking a zoning map amendment for the property noted above to rezone the property from the C3 District to the C5 Zoning District in order to allow for the Property to be developed with 132 dwelling units, commercial space on the first and second floors and 195 parking spaces including 38 Public parking spaces.

The Standards for a Zoning Map Amendment are set forth in 12-3-7 and are as follows:

1. Whether the proposed amendment is consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the comprehensive plan, as adopted and amended from time to time by the city council.

a. The Comprehensive Plan contains two principles that the amendment addresses:

1. Provide a range of Housing Options: The Project will establish 131 multi-family dwelling units of various sizes. It specifically provides for dwelling units in a building with a great range of amenities. This type of dwelling will attract both younger residents and empty nesters to the downtown area of the City.

ii. Expand Mixed Use Development: The Project will provide for a restaurant and lounge use. The restaurant and lounge will provide an amenity to the residents and will draw patron from the surrounding neighborhood. They will also draw people into the near downtown area.

2. Whether the proposed amendment is compatible with current conditions and the overall character of existing development in the immediate vicinity of the subject property.

The Project is located near and serves as a viable expansion of the Central Downtown Area. The design of the Project and its access provisions will maintain the character of the residential neighborhood nearby.

3. Whether the proposed amendment is appropriate considering the adequacy of public facilities and services available to this subject property.

There are sufficient utilities to serve the Project. The Developer will construct such additional utilities to address existing drainage needs. The traffic study shows that the road network can easily handle the traffic from the Project. In addition the Developer will widen Webford to enhance access, parking and streetscape.

4. Whether the proposed amendment will have an adverse effect on the value of properties throughout the jurisdiction.

The property is located near the C5 Downtown district so the rezoning to C5 will have no negative effect on surrounding property values. The proposed development will replace an underutilized and blighted property of downtown Des Plaines and will create more value for the property and the surrounding property values

5. Whether the proposed amendment reflects responsible standards for development and growth.

The Amendment is in accordance with the City's Comprehensive Plan. Development of higher residential densities near the Metra Line is an important for the viability of the City's downtown area which was developed adjacent to the Metra Lines. The mixed use Project acts to expand the downtown area which is a goal of the City. Finally the Project complies with all parking requirements and includes Public Parking that will continue to address the needs of commuters to and from the City.



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