

# HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

May 15, 2024

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2024-129  
**ADDRESS:** 1301 E ELMIRA ST  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 6792 BLK 4 LOT 39 & S 12.58 FT OF 38  
**ZONING:** C-3NA, RIO-2  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 1  
**APPLICANT:** Spencer Solomon/Oxbow Development Group, LLC  
**OWNER:** OXBOW REAL ESTATE LLC  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Construction of a 6-story multi-family residential structure  
**APPLICATION RECEIVED:** March 15, 2024  
**60-DAY REVIEW:** May 14, 2024 (Postponed to May 15, 2024, by applicant)  
**CASE MANAGER:** Edward Hall

## REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting conceptual approval to construct a 6-story, multi-family residential structure on the block bounded by E Elmira to the east, E Locust to the north, E Euclid to the west and E Myrtle to the south. The applicant has proposed structured, on-site parking and a total height of approximately 78'.

The Historic and Design Review Commission approved the construction of a 10-story, mixed-use structure on this site in August of 2021. Since that time, the parcels, owner, development team and design have changed.

## APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

Sec. 35-672. Neighborhood Wide Design Standards.

### *STATEMENT OF PURPOSE*

This section focuses on the urban design concepts that connect individual properties and help knit them together into the fabric of the community. These concepts include the basic arrangement of streets and lots, view corridors and circulation patterns. The standards apply to all development in the seven (7) river improvement overlay districts.

(a) **Pedestrian circulation.** Pedestrian access shall be provided among properties to integrate neighborhoods.

(1) Provide sidewalks that link with existing sidewalks on adjoining properties. If no sidewalk currently exists on an adjoining property, the applicant will have discretion in the placement of the sidewalk provided the following criteria are met:

- A. Provide a sidewalk connection from one (1) side of the applicant's property to the other, parallel to the public right-of-way, on the street sides of the property in all river improvement overlay districts
- B. Provide a connection from the street level sidewalk to the Riverwalk or creek at cross streets and bridges and other designated access points. This requirement may be waived if there is already a public connection from the street level to the Riverwalk or creek.
- C. In order to preserve the rural character of "RIO-6," the HPO, in coordination with the development services department, may waive the requirement of sidewalks.

- In "RIO-3," the width of the pathway along the river shall match those widths established in the historic Hugman drawings. If there are no sidewalks in the Hugman drawings, the path will not exceed eight (8) feet in width.

D. In RIO-7, two (2) distinct public paths, a High Bank Paseo and a Low Bank Paseo exist along the San Pedro Creek. Where a High Bank Paseo condition does not exist along the creekside of a property, a shared sidewalk and/or patio space is strongly encouraged to connect one (1) side of the applicant's property to the other along the top of the bank within the creekside setback established in this section.

(2) Link the various functions and spaces on a site with sidewalks in a coordinated system.

Provide pedestrian sidewalks between buildings, parking areas and built features such as outdoor plazas and courtyards.

(3) Paving materials. Paving materials for pedestrian pathways shall use visually and texturally different materials than those used for parking spaces and automobile traffic.

A. Paving materials for pedestrian pathways shall be either:

- i. Broom-finished, scored, sandblasted or dyed concrete;
- ii. Rough or honed finished stone;
- iii. Brick or concrete pavers; or
- iv. Other materials that meet the performance standards of the above materials.

B. Asphalt is permitted for pedestrian pathways that also are designated as multi-use paths by the City of San Antonio. The Transportation and Capital Improvements department will maintain the designated multi-use path locations.

(4) Street Connections to River or Creek. Retain the interesting and unique situations where streets dead-end at the river or creek, creating both visual and physical access to the river or creek for the public.

(5) Pedestrian Access Along the Public Pathways Shall Not Be Blocked.

A. Queuing is prohibited on the public pathway.

B. Hostess stations shall be located away from the public pathway so as to not inhibit pedestrian flow on the public pathway. That is, the hostess station shall not be located in such a manner to cause a patron who has stopped at the hostess stand to be standing on the public pathway. Pedestrian flow shall be considered "inhibited" if a pedestrian walking along the pathway has to swerve, dodge, change direction or come to a complete stop to avoid a patron engaged at the hostess stand.

C. Tables and chairs shall be located a sufficient distance from the public pathway so that normal dining and service shall not inhibit the flow of pedestrian traffic. See inhibited definition in subsection B. above.

(b) Automobile Access and Parking. Automobile circulation should be efficient, and conflicts with pedestrians minimized. Entry points for automobiles should be clearly defined and connections to auto circulation on adjoining properties are encouraged to facilitate access and reduce traffic on abutting public streets.

(1) Curb Cuts.

A. Limit curb cuts to two (2) on parking areas or structures facing only one (1) street, and one (1) for each additional street face. The prohibition of additional curb cuts may be waived by the HDRC where the intent of the standards are clearly met and specific site circulation patterns require an additional curb cut, such as on

long

parcels or at nodes.

B. Curb cuts may be no larger than twenty-five (25) feet zero (0) inches. Continuous curb cuts are prohibited.

C. Sharing curb cuts between adjacent properties, such as providing cross property access easements, is permitted.

(2) Location of Parking Areas. Automobile parking in new developments must be balanced with the requirements of

active environments. Large expanses of surface parking lots have a negative impact on street activity and the pedestrian experience. New commercial and residential structures can accommodate parking needs and contribute to a

pedestrian-friendly streetscape.

A. Locate parking areas, that is any off-street, ground level surface used to park cars or any parking structure, toward the interior of the site or to the side or rear of a building.

B. The extent of parking area that may be located along the street edge or riverside shall be limited to a percentage of the lot line as per Table 672-1 as measured in a lineal direction parallel to the lot line. All parking within a thirty-foot setback from the above mentioned lot line shall comply with the requirements of the table. Where parking is located on corner sites only one (1) lot line has to meet the requirements of the table.

C. Parking lots should be avoided as a primary land use. Parking lots as a primary use are prohibited in RIO-3 and for all properties that fall within one hundred (100) feet of the river right-of-way in all RIO districts.

(3) Screen or Buffer Parking Areas From View of Public Streets, the River or Adjacent Residential Uses. (see Figure

672-2). Parking lots shall be screened with a landscape buffer as per the illustrations of bufferyards and Table 510-2 if

the parking area meets one (1) of the following conditions:

A. Within a fifty-foot setback from the edge of the river ROW use, at a minimum, type E; or

B. Within a twenty-foot setback from a property line adjacent to a street use, at a minimum, type B; or

C. Within a twenty-foot setback of commercial or industrial property that abuts a residential property use, at a minimum, type C.

(4) Parking Structures Shall Be Compatible With Buildings in the Surrounding Area. Parking garages should have retail space on the ground floor of a parking structure provided the retail space has at least fifty (50) percent of its linear street frontage as display windows. Parking structures may be made visually appealing with a mural or public art component approved by the HDRC on the parking structure. A parking garage will be considered compatible if:

- A. It does not vary in height by more than thirty (30) percent from another building on the same block face; and
- B. It uses materials that can be found on other buildings within the block face, or in the block face across the street.

(5) Parking Structures Shall Provide Clearly Defined Pedestrian Access. Pedestrian entrances and exits shall be accentuated with directional signage, lighting or architectural features so that pedestrians can readily discern the appropriate path of travel to avoid pedestrian/auto conflicts.

(6) Parking lots, structures, and hardscape shall not drain directly into the river without installation of appropriate water quality best management practices (WQ BMPs). Acequias shall not be used for any type of drainage.

(c) Views. The river's course (both natural and manmade), and San Antonio's street pattern, creates unique views of certain properties from the public ROW. These properties often occur at prominent curves in the river or where a street changes direction and a property appears to be a terminus at the end of a street.

(1) Architectural Focal Point. When a property is situated in such a manner as to appear to be the terminus at the end of the street or at a prominent curve in the river, the building shall incorporate into its design an architectural feature that will provide a focal point at the end of the view. (see Figure 672-3) An architectural feature will be considered to be a focal point through any of the following methods, but not limited to:

- A. Additional height.
  - B. Creation of a tower.
  - C. Variation in roof shape.
  - D. Change of color or materials.
  - E. Addition of a design enhancement feature such as:
    - i. Embellished entrance areas.
    - ii. Articulated corners, especially when entrance is at corner, rounded or chamfered corners ease the transitions from one street facade to the adjoining facade.
    - iii. Recessed or projecting balconies and entrances.
- Billboards, advertising and signage are expressly prohibited as appropriate focal points.

### *Section 35-673. Site Design Standards*

(a) Solar Access. The intent of providing and maintaining solar access to the San Antonio River is to protect the river's specific ecoclimate. The river has a special microclimate of natural and planted vegetation that requires certain levels and

balanced amounts of sunlight, space and water. Development must be designed to respect and protect those natural requirements, keeping them in balance and not crowding or altering them so that vegetation does not receive more or less

space and water, but particularly sunlight, than is required for normal expected growth.

(1) Building Massing to Provide Solar Access to the River. Building massing shall be so designed as to provide direct

sunlight to vegetation in the river channel as defined:

- A. The area to be measured for solar access shall be a thirty-foot setback from the river's edge or from the river's edge to the building face, whichever is lesser, parallel to the river for the length of the property.
- B. The solar calculations shall be measured exclusive to the applicant's property; that is, shades and shadows of other buildings shall not be included in the calculations. The solar calculations shall only measure the impact of new construction and additions. The shading impact of historic buildings on the site may be excluded from the calculations.
- C. The defined area shall receive a minimum of 5.5 hours of direct sunlight, measured at the winter solstice, and 7.5 hours of direct sunlight, measured at the summer solstice.
- D. Those properties located on the south side of the river (whose north face is adjacent to the river) shall only be required to measure the sunlight in the 30-foot setback on the opposite bank of the river.
- E. Those properties within the river improvement overlay district not directly adjacent to the river are still subject to the provisions of this section. To determine the solar access effect of these buildings on the river the

applicant must measure the nearest point to the river of an area defined by a thirty-foot setback from the river's edge, parallel to the river for the length of their property that would be affected by their building. For those buildings on the south side of the river, the 30-foot setback shall be measured only on the opposite bank.

F. However, in those cases where the above conditions cannot be met due to the natural configuration of the river, existing street patterns, or existing buildings, the HDRC may approve a buildings mass and height as allowed by table 674-2.

G. If there is a conflict with this section and another section of this chapter this section shall prevail.

(b) Building Orientation. Buildings should be sited to help define active spaces for area users, provide pedestrian connections between sites, help animate the street scene and define street edges. Consideration to both the street and riverside should be given. The placement of a building on a site should therefore be considered within the context of the block, as well as how the structure will support the broader design goals for the area.

(2) Primary and Secondary Entrances.

A. Orient a building's primary entrance toward the street with subordinate entrances located on the riverside and/or the interior of the property. On a major thoroughfare street it is acceptable to provide the primary entrance through a common courtyard and then to a street.

B. The primary entrance shall be distinguished by architectural features such as, but not limited to: an entry portal; change in material or color; change in scale of other openings; addition of columns, lintels or canopies.

C. Secondary entrances shall have architectural features that are subordinate to the primary entrance in scale and detail. For purposes of this division subordinate means that the entrance is smaller in height and width, and has fewer or simpler architectural elements.

(f) Plant Materials. A number of soil conditions converge in the San Antonio area to create unique vegetation ecosystems.

Along the route of the San Antonio River, the soil conditions vary greatly from the northern boundary near Hildebrand to

the city limits near Mission San Francisco de la Espada (Mission Espada) and therefore native and indigenous plants will

vary accordingly. Landscaping should reflect the unique soil characteristics of the specific site.

(3) Install Trees to Provide Shade and to Separate Pedestrians From Automobile Traffic. Install street trees along the

property line or in the ROW abutting all streets according to minimum requirement standards established in subsection 35-512(b), except where this conflicts with existing downtown Tri-Party improvements in "RIO-3." In "RIO-3" the owner has the option of placing trees at the property line, or along the street edge.

(g) Paving Materials. An important San Antonio landscape tradition is the use of decorative surfaces for paving and other

landscape structures. Paving materials and patterns should be carefully chosen to preserve and enhance the pedestrian experience.

(1) Vary Walkway, Patio and Courtyard Paving to Add Visual Interest on the Riverside of Properties Abutting the River. Pervious paving is encouraged where feasible and appropriate to the site.

(i) Street Furnishings. Street furnishings are exterior amenities, including but not limited to, tables, chairs, umbrellas, landscape pots, wait stations, valet stations, bicycle racks, planters, benches, bus shelters, kiosks, waste receptacles and similar items that help to define pedestrian use areas. Handcrafted street furnishings are particularly important in San Antonio, and therefore this tradition of craftsmanship and of providing street furniture is encouraged.

(2) Street Furnishing Materials.

A. Street furnishings shall be made of wood, metal, stone, terra cotta, cast stone, hand-sculpted concrete, or solid

surfacing material, such as Corian or Surell.

(4) Street furnishings, such as tables and chairs may not be stored (other than overnight storage) in such a way as to be visible from the river pathway.

(j) Lighting. Site lighting should be considered an integral element of the landscape design of a property. It should help define activity areas and provide interest at night. At the same time, lighting should facilitate safe and convenient circulation for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. Overspill of light and light pollution should be avoided.

(1) Site Lighting. Site lighting shall be shielded by permanent attachments to light fixtures so that the light sources are not visible from a public way and any offsite glare is prevented.

A. Site lighting shall include illumination of parking areas, buildings, pedestrian routes, dining areas, design features and public ways.

B. Outdoor spaces adjoining and visible from the river right-of-way shall have average ambient light levels of between one (1) and three (3) foot-candles with a minimum of 0.5-foot candles and a maximum of six (6) footcandles

at any point measured on the ground plane. Interior spaces visible from the river right-of-way on the river level and ground floor level shall use light sources with no more than the equivalent lumens of a one hundred-watt incandescent bulb. Exterior balconies, porches and canopies adjoining and visible from the river right-of-way shall use light sources with the equivalent lumens of a sixty-watt incandescent bulb with average ambient light levels no greater than the lumen out put of a one hundred-watt incandescent light bulb as long as average foot candle standards are not exceeded. Accent lighting of landscape or building features including specimen plants, gates, entries, water features, art work, stairs, and ramps may exceed these standards by a multiple of 2.5. Recreational fields and activity areas that require higher light levels shall be screened from the river hike and bike pathways with a landscape buffer.

C. Exterior light fixtures that use the equivalent of more than one hundred-watt incandescent bulbs shall not emit

a significant amount of the fixture's total output above a vertical cut-off angle of ninety (90) degrees. Any structural part of the fixture providing this cut-off angle must be permanently affixed.

D. Lighting spillover to the publicly owned areas of the river or across property lines shall not exceed one-half (½) of one (1) foot-candle measured at any point ten (10) feet beyond the property line.

(2) Provide Lighting for Pedestrian Ways That is Low Scaled for Walking. The position of a lamp in a pedestrian-way light shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet in height above the ground.

(3) Light Temperature and Color.

A. Light temperature and color shall be between 2500° K and 3500° K with a color rendition index (CRI) of eighty (80) or higher, respectively. This restriction is limited to all outdoor spaces adjoining and visible from the

river right-of-way and from the interior spaces adjoining the river right-of-way on the river level and ground floor level. Levels shall be determined by product specifications.

(4) Minimize the Visual Impacts of Exterior Building Lighting.

A. All security lighting shall be shielded so that the light sources are not visible from a public way.

B. Lighting (uplighting and downlighting) that is positioned to highlight a building or outdoor artwork shall be aimed at the object to be illuminated, not pointed into the sky.

C. Fixtures shall not distract from, or obscure important architectural features of the building. Lighting fixtures shall be a subordinate feature on the building unless they are incorporated into the over-all design scheme of the building.

(5) Prohibited Lighting on the Riverside of Properties Abutting the River.

A. Flashing lights.

B. Rotating lights.

C. Chaser lights.

D. Exposed neon.

E. Seasonal decorating lights such as festoon, string or rope lights, except between November 20 and January 10.

F. Flood lamps.

(6) Minimize the visual impacts of lighting in parking areas in order to enhance the perception of the nighttime sky and to prevent glare onto adjacent properties. Parking lot light poles are limited to thirty (30) feet in height, shall have a 90° cutoff angle so as to not emit light above the horizontal plane.

(l) Access to Public Pathway Along the River. These requirements are specifically for those properties adjacent to the river to provide a connection to the publicly owned pathway along the river. The connections are to stimulate and enhance

urban activity, provide path connections in an urban context, enliven street activity, and protect the ambiance and character of the river area.

(3) Clearly define a key pedestrian gateway into the site from the publicly owned pathway at the river with distinctive

architectural or landscape elements.

A. The primary gateway from a development to the publicly owned pathway at the river shall be defined by an architectural or landscape element made of stone, brick, tile, metal, rough hewn cedar or hand-formed concrete or through the use of distinctive plantings or planting beds.

(n) Service Areas and Mechanical Equipment. Service areas and mechanical equipment should be visually unobtrusive

and should be integrated with the design of the site and building. Noise generated from mechanical equipment shall not exceed city noise regulations.

(1) Locate service entrances, waste disposal areas and other similar uses adjacent to service lanes and away from major streets and the river..

C. Air intake and exhaust systems, or other mechanical equipment that generates noise, smoke or odors, shall not be located at the pedestrian level.

*Sec. 35-674. Building Design Principles*

(a) Architectural Character. A basic objective for architectural design in the river improvement overlay districts is to encourage the reuse of existing buildings and construction of new, innovative designs that enhance the area, and help to establish distinct identities for each of the zone districts. At the same time, these new buildings should reinforce established building traditions and respect the contexts of neighborhoods.

When a new building is constructed, it shall be designed in a manner that reinforces the basic character-defining features

of the area. Such features include the way in which a building is located on its site, the manner in which it faces the street

and its orientation to the river. When these design variables are arranged in a new building to be similar to those seen traditionally, visual compatibility results.

(b) Mass and Scale. A building shall appear to have a "human scale." In general, this scale can be accomplished by using

familiar forms and elements interpreted in human dimensions. Exterior wall designs shall help pedestrians establish a sense of scale with relation to each building. Articulating the number of floors in a building can help to establish a building's scale, for example, and prevent larger buildings from dwarfing the pedestrian.

(1) Express facade components in ways that will help to establish building scale.

A. Treatment of architectural facades shall contain a discernible pattern of mass to void, or windows and doors to solid mass. Openings shall appear in a regular pattern, or be clustered to form a cohesive design. Architectural elements such as columns, lintels, sills, canopies, windows and doors should align with other architectural features on the adjacent facades.

(2) Align horizontal building elements with others in the blockface to establish building scale.

A. Align at least one (1) horizontal building element with another horizontal building element on the same block face. It will be considered to be within alignment if it is within three (3) feet, measured vertically, of the existing architectural element.

(3) Express the distinction between upper and lower floors.

A. Develop the first floor as primarily transparent. The building facade facing a major street shall have at least fifty (50) percent of the street level facade area devoted to display windows and/or windows affording some view into the interior areas. Multi-family residential buildings with no retail or office space are exempt from this requirement.

(4) Where a building facade faces the street or river and exceeds the maximum facade length allowed in Table 674-1 divide the facade of building into modules that express traditional dimensions.

A. The maximum length of an individual wall plane that faces a street or the river shall be as shown in Table 674-1.

Table 674-1

Description	RIO-1	RIO-2	RIO-3	RIO-4	RIO-5	RIO-6
Maximum Facade Length	50 ft.	50 ft.	30 ft.	75 ft.	75 ft.	50 ft.

B. If a building wall plane facing the street or river and exceeds the length allowed in Table 674-1, employ at least two (2) of the following techniques to reduce the perceived mass:

- Change materials with each building module to reduce its perceived mass; or
- Change the height with each building module of a wall plane. The change in height shall be at least ten (10) percent of the vertical height; or
- Change the roof form of each building module to help express the different modules of the building mass; or

- Change the arrangement of windows and other facade articulation features, such as, columns, pilasters or strap work, which divides large planes into smaller components.

(5) Organize the Mass of a Building to Provide Solar Access to the River.

- A. One (1) method of doing so is to step the building down toward the river to meet the solar access requirements of subsection 35-673(a).
- B. Another method is to set the building back from the river a distance sufficient to meet the solar access requirements of subsection 35-673(a).

(c) Height. Building heights vary along the river corridor, from one-story houses to high-rise hotels and apartments. This

diversity of building heights is expected to continue. However, within each zone, a general similarity in building heights should be encouraged in order to help establish a sense of visual continuity. In addition, building heights shall be configured such that a comfortable human scale is established along the edges of properties and views to the river and other significant landmarks are provided while allowing the appropriate density for an area.

(1) The maximum building height shall be as defined in Table 674-2.

- A. Solar access standards subsection 35-673(a), and massing standards subsection 35-674(b) also will affect building heights.

Table 674-2

Description	RIO-1	RIO-2	RIO-3	RIO-4	RIO-5	RIO-6
Maximum # of Stories	5	10	None	7	5	4
Maximum Height in Feet	60 ft.	120 ft.	None	84 ft.	60 ft.	50 ft.

(3) On the street-side, the building facade shall appear similar in height to those of other buildings found traditionally in the area.

If fifty (50) percent of the building facades within a block face are predominantly lower than the maximum height allowed, the new building facade on the street-side shall align with the average height of those lower buildings within the block face, or with a particular building that falls within the fifty (50) percent range. However, the remainder of the building may obtain its maximum height by stepping back fifteen (15) feet from the building face.

(4) Designation of a development node provides for the ability to increase the building height by fifty (50) percent from the requirements set out in article VI.

(d) Materials and Finishes. Masonry materials are well established as primary features along the river corridor and their use should be continued. Stucco that is detailed to provide a texture and pattern, which conveys a human scale, is also part of the tradition. In general, materials and finishes that provide a sense of human scale, reduce the perceived mass of a building and appear to blend with the natural setting of the river shall be used, especially on major structures.

(1) Use indigenous materials and traditional building materials for primary wall surfaces. A minimum of seventy-five (75) percent of walls (excluding window fenestrations) shall be composed of the following:

- A. Modular masonry materials including brick, stone, and rusticated masonry block, tile, terra-cotta, structural clay tile and cast stone. Concrete masonry units (CMU) are not allowed.
- B. Other new materials that convey the texture, scale, and finish similar to traditional building materials.
- C. Stucco and painted concrete when detailed to express visual interest and convey a sense of scale.
- D. Painted or stained wood in a lap or shingle pattern.

(2) The following materials are not permitted as primary building materials and may be used as a secondary material only:

- A. Large expanses of high gloss or shiny metal panels.
- B. Mirror glass panels. Glass curtain wall buildings are allowed in RIO-3 as long as the river and street levels comply with 35-674(d)(1) above.

(3) Paint or Finish Colors.

- A. Use natural colors of indigenous building materials for properties that abut the River Walk area.
- B. Use matte finishes instead of high glossy finishes on wall surfaces. Wood trim and metal trim may be painted with gloss enamel.
- C. Bright colors may highlight entrances or architectural features.

(e) Facade Composition. Traditionally, many commercial and multi-family buildings in the core of San Antonio have had facade designs that are organized into three (3) distinct segments: First, a "base" exists, which establishes a scale at the street level; second a "mid-section," or shaft is used, which may include several floors. Finally a "cap" finishes the composition. The cap may take the form of an ornamental roof form or decorative molding and may also include the top

floors of the building. This organization helps to give a sense of scale to a building and its use should be encouraged. In order to maintain the sense of scale, buildings should have the same setback as surrounding buildings so as to maintain the street-wall pattern, if clearly established.

In contrast, the traditional treatment of facades along the riverside has been more modest. This treatment is largely a result of the fact that the riverside was a utilitarian edge and was not oriented to the public. Today, even though orienting buildings to the river is a high priority objective, it is appropriate that these river-oriented facades be simpler in character than those facing the street.

(1) Street Facade. Buildings that are taller than the street-wall (sixty (60) feet) shall be articulated at the stop of the street wall or stepped back in order to maintain the rhythm of the street wall. Buildings should be composed to include a base, a middle and a cap.

A. High rise buildings, more than one hundred (100) feet tall, shall terminate with a distinctive top or cap. This can be accomplished by:

- i. Reducing the bulk of the top twenty (20) percent of the building by ten (10) percent.
- ii. By stepping back the top twenty (20) percent of the building.
- iii. Changing the material of the cap.

B. Roof forms shall be used to conceal all mechanical equipment and to add architectural interest to the structure.

C. Roof surfaces should include strategies to reduce heat island effects such as use of green roofs, photo voltaic panels, and/or the use of roof materials with high solar reflectivity.

(2) Fenestration. Windows help provide a human scale and so shall be proportioned accordingly.

D. Curtain wall systems shall be designed with modulating features such as projecting horizontal and/or vertical mullions.

(3) Entrances. Entrances shall be easy to find, be a special feature of the building, and be appropriately scaled.

A. Entrances shall be the most prominent on the street side and less prominent on the river side.

B. Entrances shall be placed so as to be highly visible.

C. The scale of the entrance is determined by the prominence of the function and or the amount of use.

D. Entrances shall have a change in material and/or wall plane.

E. Entrances should not use excessive storefront systems.

(4) Riverside facade. The riverside facade of a building shall have simpler detailing and composition than the street facade.

A. Architectural details such as cornices, sills, lintels, door surrounds, water tables and other similar details should use simple curves and handcrafted detailing.

B. Stone detailing shall be rough hewn, and chiseled faced. Smooth faced stone is not permitted as the primary building material, but can be used as accent pieces.

C. Facades on the riverside shall be asymmetrical, pedestrian scale, and give the appearance of the back of a building. That is, in traditional building along the river, the backs of building were designed with simpler details,

and appear less formal than the street facades.

(g) Awnings, Canopies and Arcades. (See Figure 674-2) The tradition of sheltering sidewalks with awnings, canopies and arcades on commercial and multi-family buildings is well established in San Antonio and is a practice that should be continued. They offer shade from the hot summer sun and shelter from rainstorms, thereby facilitating pedestrian activity. They also establish a sense of scale for a building, especially at the ground level. Awnings and canopies are appropriate locations for signage. Awnings with signage shall comply with any master signage plan on file with the historic preservation officer for the property. Awnings and canopies installed at street level within the public right-of-way require licensing with the city's capital improvements management services (CIMS) department. Canopies, balconies and awnings

installed at river level within the public right-of-way require licensing with the city's downtown operations department.

(1) If awnings, arcades and canopies are to be used they should accentuate the character-defining features of a building.

A. The awning, arcade or canopy shall be located in relationship to the openings of a building. That is, if there are a series of awnings or canopies, they shall be located at the window or door openings. However awnings, canopies and arcades may extend the length of building to provide shade at the first floor for the pedestrian.

B. Awnings, arcades and canopies shall be mounted to highlight architectural features such as moldings that may be found above the storefront.

C. They should match the shape of the opening.

D. Simple shed shapes are appropriate for rectangular openings.

- E. Odd shapes and bubble awnings are prohibited except where the shape of an opening requires a bubble awning, or historic precedent shows they have been previously used on the building.
- F. Canopies, awnings and arcades shall not conflict with the building's proportions or with the shape of the openings that the awning or canopy covers.
- G. Historic canopies shall be repaired or replaced with in-kind materials.

(2) Materials and Color.

- A. Awnings and canopies may be constructed of metal, wood or fabric. Certain vinyl is allowed if it has the appearance of natural fiber as approved by the HDRC.
- B. Awning color shall coordinate with the building. Natural and earth tone colors are encouraged. Fluorescent colors are not allowed. When used for signage it is appropriate to choose a dark color for the canopy and use light lettering for signage.

(3) Incorporating lighting into the design of a canopy is appropriate.

- A. Lights that illuminate the pedestrian way beneath the awning are appropriate.
- B. Lights that illuminate the storefront are appropriate.
- C. Internally illuminated awnings that glow are prohibited.

*UDC Section. 35-675. Archaeology.*

When an HDRC application is submitted for commercial development projects within a river improvement overlay district the city archeologist shall review the project application to determine if there is potential of containing intact archaeological deposits utilizing the following documents/methods:

- (1)The Texas Sites Atlas for known/recorded sites, site data in the files of the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory and the Texas Historical Commission;
- (2)USGS maps;
- (3)Soil Survey maps;
- (4)Distance to water;
- (5)Topographical data;
- (6)Predictive settlement patterns;
- (7)Archival research and historic maps;
- (8)Data on file at the office of historic preservation.

If after review the city archeologist determines there is potential of containing intact archaeological deposits, an archaeological survey report shall be prepared and submitted. If, after review by the city archeologist, a determination is made that the site has little to no potential of containing intact archaeological deposits, the requirement for an archaeological survey report may be waived.

Upon completion of a survey, owners of property containing inventoried archaeological sites are encouraged to educate the public regarding archaeological components of the site and shall coordinate any efforts with the office of historic preservation.

## **FINDINGS:**

- a. The applicant is requesting conceptual approval to construct a 6-story, multi-family residential structure on the block bounded by E Elmira to the east, E Locust to the north, E Euclid to the west and E Myrtle to the south. The applicant has proposed structured, on-site parking and a total height of approximately 78'.
- b. **CONCEPTUAL APPROVAL** – Conceptual approval is the review of general design ideas and principles (such as scale and setback). Specific design details reviewed at this stage are not binding and may only be approved through a Certificate of Appropriateness for final approval.
- c. **PREVIOUS REVIEW** – The Historic and Design Review Commission approved the construction of a 10-story, mixed-use structure on this site in August of 2021. Since that time, the parcels, owner and applicant have all changed.
- d. **EXISTING SITE** – The existing site is void of structures with the exception of structures on the lots addressed as 1301 and 1311 E Elmira. Staff has found these structures to be eligible for demolition to be approved administratively.
- e. **DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE** – This request was reviewed by the Design Review Committee on March 26, 2024. At that meeting Committee members commented on the proposed design, including materials, architectural details, and massing as it relates to the adjacent, single-family residential uses. Committee members also discussed the façade cladding at the parking garage on the north façade and recommended

additional design elements be incorporated. This request was reviewed by the DRC a second time on May 7, 2024. At that meeting, Commissioners commented on revised design elements and offered suggestions for additional presentation documents.

- f. PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION – Per the UDC Section 35-672(a) in regards to pedestrian circulation, an applicant shall provide pedestrian access among properties to integrate neighborhoods. The applicant has proposed sidewalks to run parallel to each right of way on each side of the proposed new construction. Staff finds this to be appropriate and consistent with the UDC.
- g. CURB CUTS – The applicant has proposed a total of three (3) curb cuts; two on E Locust Street and one on E Elmira Street. Currently there are approximately 10 curb cuts on site and the proposed curb cut configuration would result in an overall reduction of curb cuts on site. The UDC Section 35-672(b)(1) notes that curb cuts should not exceed twenty-five (25) feet in width. Additionally, the UDC notes that curb cuts should be limited to two (2) per street. The applicant has proposed for curb cuts to vary in width. Generally, staff finds that no curb cut should exceed twenty-five (25) feet in width, and that each curb cut and approach should be installed in a manner that does not result in a grade change in the pedestrian path. Should a curb cut exceed twenty-five feet in width, staff finds that additional hardscaping elements should be incorporated into the design to promote safe pedestrian travel across cut cuts and aprons. One, uniform grade height across all curb cuts should also be considered.
- h. STRUCTURED PARKING – The applicant has proposed structured parking to feature entrances from street level. The applicant has proposed to wrap the structured parking on the east, west and south facades. The north façade will not be wrapped by residential units and will feature a perforated metal cladding system with street level painted concrete masonry units (CMU). The UDC Section 35-672(4) notes that parking structures shall be compatible with buildings in the surrounding area. The UDC continues to note that parking garages should have retail space or office space at the ground floor and that retail or office space should feature fifty (50) percent of its linear street frontage as windows or display windows. The UDC notes that parking garages parking garages will be considered compatible if they do not vary in height by more than thirty (30) percent from another building on the same block face and if they use materials that can be found on other buildings within the block faced or in the block face across the street. Generally, staff finds the parking structure to be appropriate; however, staff finds that the applicant should incorporate additional materials to serve as screening elements on the north façade. If traditional storefront or window elements are not to be incorporated, staff finds that the screening elements should further relate to the facades that feature traditional window openings and materials. Staff finds that brick should be incorporated in a manner that complements the brick proposed on other facades.
- i. LANDSCAPING – The applicant has noted various landscaping elements such as street trees, low scale elements in the planting strips separating the pedestrian sidewalk from the street, and plantings at a terrace level. Staff finds that all landscaping elements should be consistent with the UDC Section 35-672 and that a detailed landscaping plan should be developed and submitted for review when returning to the Commission for final approval.
- j. MECHANICAL & SERVICE EQUIPMENT – The UDC Section 35-673(n) addresses service areas and mechanical equipment and their impact on the public. Service areas and mechanical equipment should be visually unobtrusive and should be integrated with the design of the site and building. Noise generated from mechanical equipment shall not exceed city noise regulations. The applicant is responsible for complying with this section of the UDC.
- k. HUMAN SCALE – According to the UDC Section 35-674(b) a building shall appear to have a “human scale”. To comply with this, a building must (1) express façade components in ways that will help to establish building scale, (2) align horizontal building elements with others in the blockface to establish building scale, (3) express the distinction between upper and lower levels, (4) in this instance, divide the façade of the building into modules that express traditional and (5) organize the mass of a building to provide solar access to the river. The applicant has provided a human scale in multiple instances including the incorporation of street level porches, recessed and projecting balcony elements, human scaled façade openings and human scaled materials. Generally, staff finds that the applicant has expressed a human scale throughout the proposed new construction; however, as noted in finding h, staff finds that additional screening elements should be added to the north façade to screen the parking structure. These elements should be incorporated with a human scale in mind.
- l. FAÇADE SEPARATION – The UDC Section 35-674 (b)(4) notes that a façade in RIO-2 that features more than fifty (50) feet in length should be divided into modules that express traditional dimensions. The applicant has proposed to separate the façade with both vertical and horizontal banding elements, projecting and recessed façade elements, variations in façade materials and façade openings. Generally, staff finds this to be appropriate and consistent with the UDC.

- m. **BUILDING MASSING & HEIGHT** – The UDC regulates building height within the River Improvement Overlay Districts. The UDC Section 35-674 notes a height restriction for RIO-2 of ten stories and 120 feet in height. The applicant has proposed for the new construction to feature six (6) stories in height and an approximately height of seventy-eight (78) feet. The proposed height is appropriate and consistent with the UDC.
- n. **HEIGHT TRANSITIONS** – The UDC Section 35-674(c)(2) notes that applicants should organize the mass of a building to step back from established residential neighborhoods. Where a commercial, mixed-use residential, multi-family or industrial use abuts a single-family residential development, or is across the street from a single-family residential development, the following standards shall apply: The massing of the building shall not exceed twenty-five (25) feet in height at the setback line. The building mass can continue upward within a forty-five-degree building envelope for a distance of fifty (50) feet measured horizontally from the building face, at which point the building massing may continue vertically to the height established in subsection 35-674(c). Additionally, on the street-side, the building facade shall appear similar in height to those of other buildings found traditionally in the area. If fifty (50) percent of the building facades within a block face are predominantly lower than the maximum height allowed, the new building facade on the street-side shall align with the average height of those lower buildings within the block face, or with a particular building that falls within the fifty (50) percent range. However, the remainder of the building may obtain its maximum height by stepping back fifteen (15) feet from the building face. The applicant has proposed for the height of the proposed new construction at the west property line to feature approximately seventy-eight (78) feet in height. This property line is immediately across the street from an established residential neighborhood; specifically single family residential structures at E Myrtle. While staff finds the proposed new construction’s overall height to be appropriate, staff finds that a height transition should be incorporated into the design per the UDC’s standards, or that additional design elements should be incorporated at the street level at the southwest corner, on both the south and west facades, to respond to the single-family residential context. A reduced height corner element, featuring approximately thirty (30) feet in height, similar to what is proposed in the retail/fitness area would generally meet the intent of the code. Alternatively, staff finds that the incorporation of stoops and porches at the southwest corner, on both the south and west facades would be an appropriate alternative. Stoop and porch elements that match those proposed elsewhere in the design would suffice.
- o. **MATERIALS** – The applicant has proposed materials that include both tan and red modular brick, a three coat stucco system featuring four colors, horizontal fiber cement siding, architectural finish concrete and painted concrete masonry units at the location of the structure parking. Generally, staff finds the proposed materials to be appropriate; however, the UDC Section 35-674(d)(1)(A) notes that concrete masonry units (CMU’s) are not allowed. As the applicant has proposed to paint the CMU’s staff finds this to be an appropriate exterior finish; however, as noted in findings h and k, staff finds that additional façade materials should be added to the north elevation at the location of the exposed structured parking to better relate this portion of the façade to the other building facades. As noted in finding h, for the north façade, staff finds that brick should be incorporated in a manner that complements the brick proposed on other facades.
- p. **FAÇADE COMPOSITION** – The UDC Section 35-678(e) notes that traditionally, buildings have been organized into three distinct segments; a base, midsection and cap. This organization helps to give a sense of scale to a building and its use should be encouraged. Generally, staff finds that the applicant has divided the building into three distinct segments that are separated by changes in materials, massing, and through the use of a distinctive building cornice.
- q. **ARCHITECTURAL FOCAL POINT** – The UDC Section 35-672(c)(1), notes that an architectural focal point is to be incorporated into the design when a property is situated in such a manner as to appear as the terminus at the end of the street. An architectural feature will be considered to be a focal point through any of the following methods, but not limited to: additional height, creation of a tower, variation in roof shape, change of color or materials or the addition of a design enhancement feature. At the building corners, the applicant has proposed corner elements that feature increased or reduced massing, changes in materials, and variations in street level design. Staff finds this to be appropriate and consistent with the Guidelines.
- r. **WINDOWS** – The applicant has not specified window materials at this time. The UDC Section 35-674(e)(2) provides information in regards to proper window fenestration and installation. For window openings that are not included within a curtain wall system, an inset of at least two to three inches within each wall is required. Additionally, staff finds that if windows are to feature divided lites, that those divisions be true or applied on the exterior of glass and not be simulated on the interior of glass.
- s. **CANOPIES** – The applicant has proposed a series of canopies at the street level. Staff finds the proposed canopies to be appropriate and consistent with the UDC.

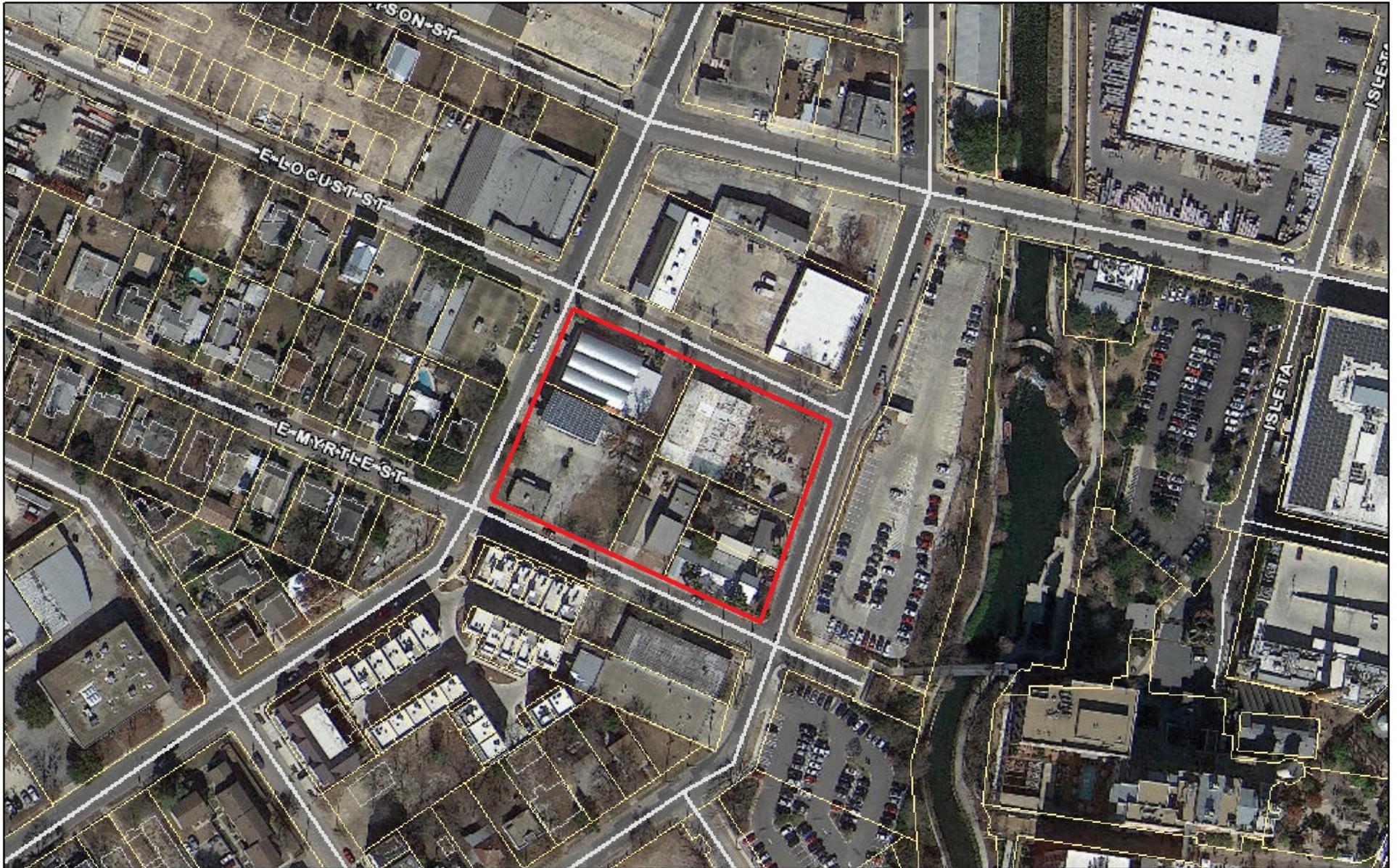
- t. LIGHTING – Lighting design for any project located in a RIO district is an important aspect of not only that particular project’s design, but also the adjacent buildings as well as the River Walk. According to the UDC Section 35-673(j), site lighting should be considered an integral element of the landscape design of a property. Staff finds that a detailed lighting plan should be submitted for review and approval when returning to the Commission for final approval.
- u. ARCHAEOLOGY – The project shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations regarding archaeology, as applicable.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

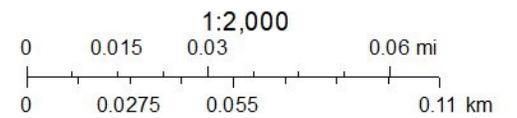
Staff recommends conceptual approval based on findings a through u with the following stipulations:

- i. Should a curb cut exceed twenty-five feet in width, staff recommends that additional hardscaping elements should be incorporated into the design to promote safe pedestrian travel across cut cuts and aprons. This should incorporate of pedestrian safety medians. One, uniform grade height across all curb cuts should also be considered.
- ii. That additional materials and façade elements be added to the north façade, as noted in findings h, k and o.
- iii. That a detailed landscaping plan should be developed and submitted for review when returning to the Commission for final approval, as noted in finding i.
- iv. That all mechanical equipment be screened from view with architectural building elements, as noted in finding j. This is to include roof level mechanical equipment.
- v. That a height transition at the southwest corner be incorporated into the design per the UDC’s standards. A reduced height corner element, featuring approximately thirty (30) feet in height, similar to what is proposed in the retail/fitness area would generally meet the intent of the code. Alternatively, the incorporation of stoops and porches at the southwest corner, on both the south and west facades would be an appropriate alternative to respond to the sing-family residential context. Stoop and porch elements that match those proposed elsewhere in the design would suffice. The applicant is responsible for incorporating one of the recommended solutions into the design.
- vi. That an inset of at least two to three inches within each wall is required. Additionally, staff recommends that if windows are to feature divided lites, that those divisions be true or applied on the exterior of glass and not be simulated on the interior of glass.
- vii. That a detailed lighting plan be submitted for review and approval when returning to the Commission for final approval.
- viii. ARCHAEOLOGY – The project shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations regarding archaeology, as applicable.

# City of San Antonio One Stop



March 27, 2024





CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
**OFFICE OF HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION**

**Historic and Design Review Commission**  
***Design Review Committee Report***

DATE: March 26, 2024

HDRC Case #: 2024-129

Address: 1301 E Elmira

Meeting Location: Webex

APPLICANT: Spencer Solomon/Oxbow

DRC Members present: Monica Savino, Roland Mazuca, Jason Vasquez

Staff Present: Edward Hall

Others present: Maggie Hatton/ Don B McDonald Architect, Omar Gonzalez/Oxbow

**REQUEST:**

Construction of a 6-story residential structure

**COMMENTS/CONCERNS:**

OG: Overview of proposed new construction, project information.

OG: The north façade (garage) will be screened. The screening is still under development.

MH: Overview of materials.

JV: Questions regarding stucco color. Finds that materials should be more traditional than modern.

MS: The composition of the southeast corner is nice. The program component placement has been thought out. The materials are satisfactory. Consider increasing dimensions of reveals, offsets, etc., that will create additional details and shadow lines. Apply detail on each façade (example of increased cornice cap, around windows, etc.).

MS: What is the distance between the face of the building and the back of the curb? Consider sidewalk width.

MS: The west elevation loses some detailing. Consider implementing design elements that add human scale to the facades.

MS: Questions regarding screening materials. (OG: Metal mesh with vegetation). Consider additional screening elements for the garage; how can it look better?

RM: Questions regarding materials. Is there commercial activation on the north façade where the parking garage is? (SS: Only at the corner). RM: Can brick be introduced to the west and north facades where only stucco and metal screening are?

MS: Brick could be added in minor applications.

MS: Questions about parking. (OG: 165 parking spaces; first 3 floors for public, top 3 floors for residential).

MS: Would be helpful if the applicant thoroughly identifies current uses of adjacent parcels.

**OVERALL COMMENTS:**



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
**OFFICE OF HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION**

**Historic and Design Review Commission**  
***Design Review Committee Report***

DATE: May 7, 2024

HDRC Case #: 2024-129

Address: 1301 E Elmira

Meeting Location: Webex

APPLICANT: Spencer Solomon, Omar Gonzalez / Oxbow Development Group

DRC Members present: Jay Gibbs, Monica Savino, Jimmy Cervantes

Staff Present: Edward Hall

Others present: Michael Gonos, Jeff Fetzer (observing only), Joshua Torrez, Maggie Hatton

**REQUEST:** Construction of a 6-story, multi-family residential structure

**COMMENTS/CONCERNS:**

OG: Overview of proposed new construction, information on neighborhood context.

OG: Overview of revisions to the proposed design; brick color has changed to a red brick. Brick has been broken up by various reveals.

JT: Elements have been added to relate to nearby Art Deco elements.

DM: Overview of design revisions and updates. Base has been raised; 1 to 1 ratio between building and cornice. Opening up units to the street to animate the street.

MS: Effective overview of how revisions have been made.

MS: Primary concern is at the pedestrian level, where setbacks are in place to enhance pedestrian experiences. What other elements can be incorporated at street level other than street trees?

DM: Has not been determined yet. Paving materials, trees, etc. will determine the spatial experience.

MS: What is the width of the right of way at the southeast/southern edge? OG: 50 feet.

OG: Will be planting inside of the property line; renderings are not fully accurate regarding tree and landscaping placement.

MS: Show pedestrian crossings on site plan/landscape plan.

MS: A site section (to scale) would be helpful to determine the context of the site.

JG: Agrees with MS; additional photos of site and surrounding context would be helpful.

***OVERALL COMMENTS:***

# oxbow

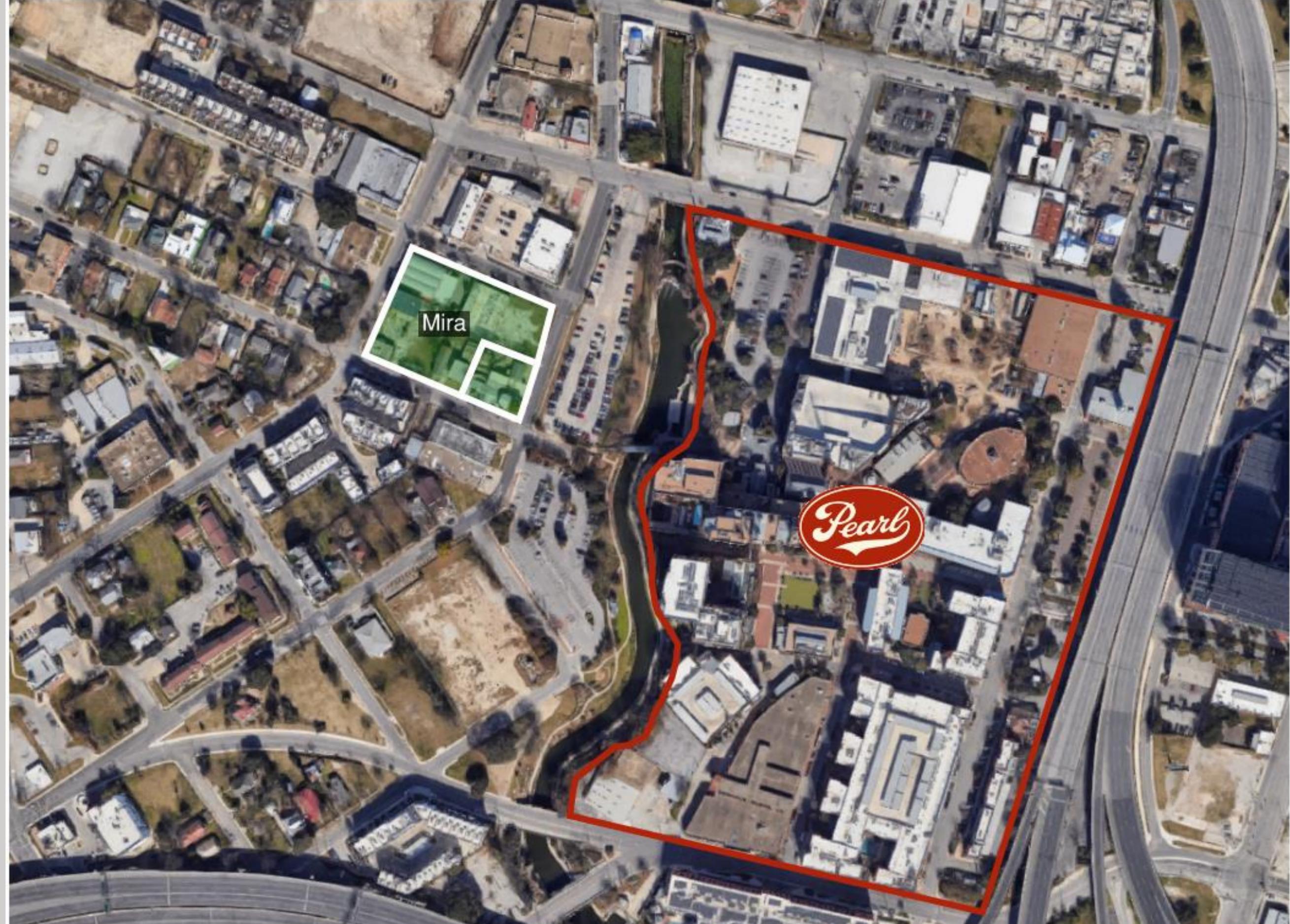
Mira – DRC Meeting

Neighborhood Context

oxbow

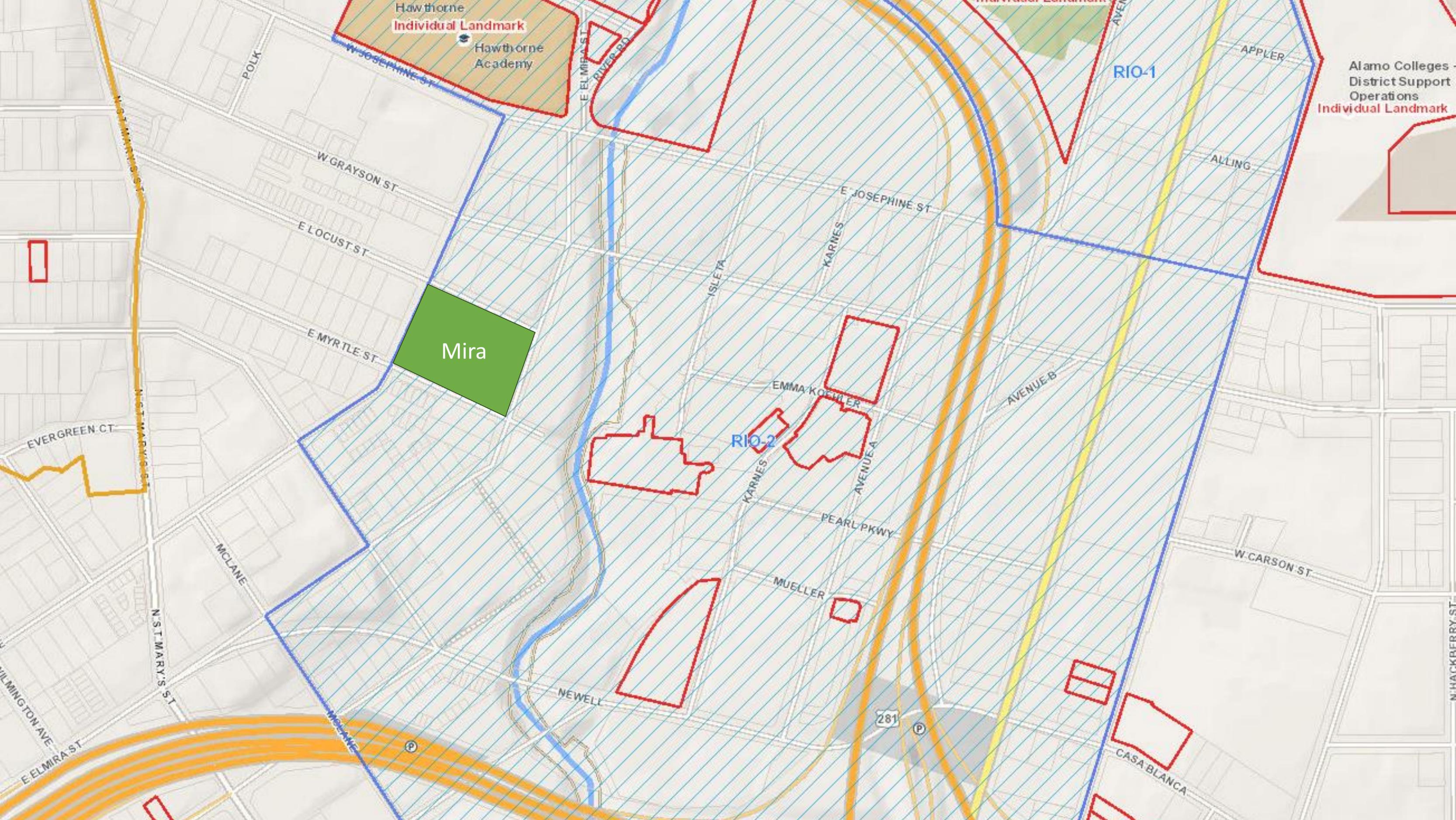
# The context around Mira has evolved and requires a variance from the UDC

- The area around Pearl has significantly changed since the UDC was last modified twenty years ago
- Many properties in this area have been rezoned to accommodate higher density despite current uses or structures (MF-33, IDZ, C2, etc.)
- There are several examples throughout the neighborhood (both inside and outside of the RIO-2) where buildings over 25' tall are adjacent to or across the street from single-family residential
- The one single-family structure across the street from Mira has a large tree canopy on the side yard



Mira

Pearl



Individual Landmark

Hawthorne Academy

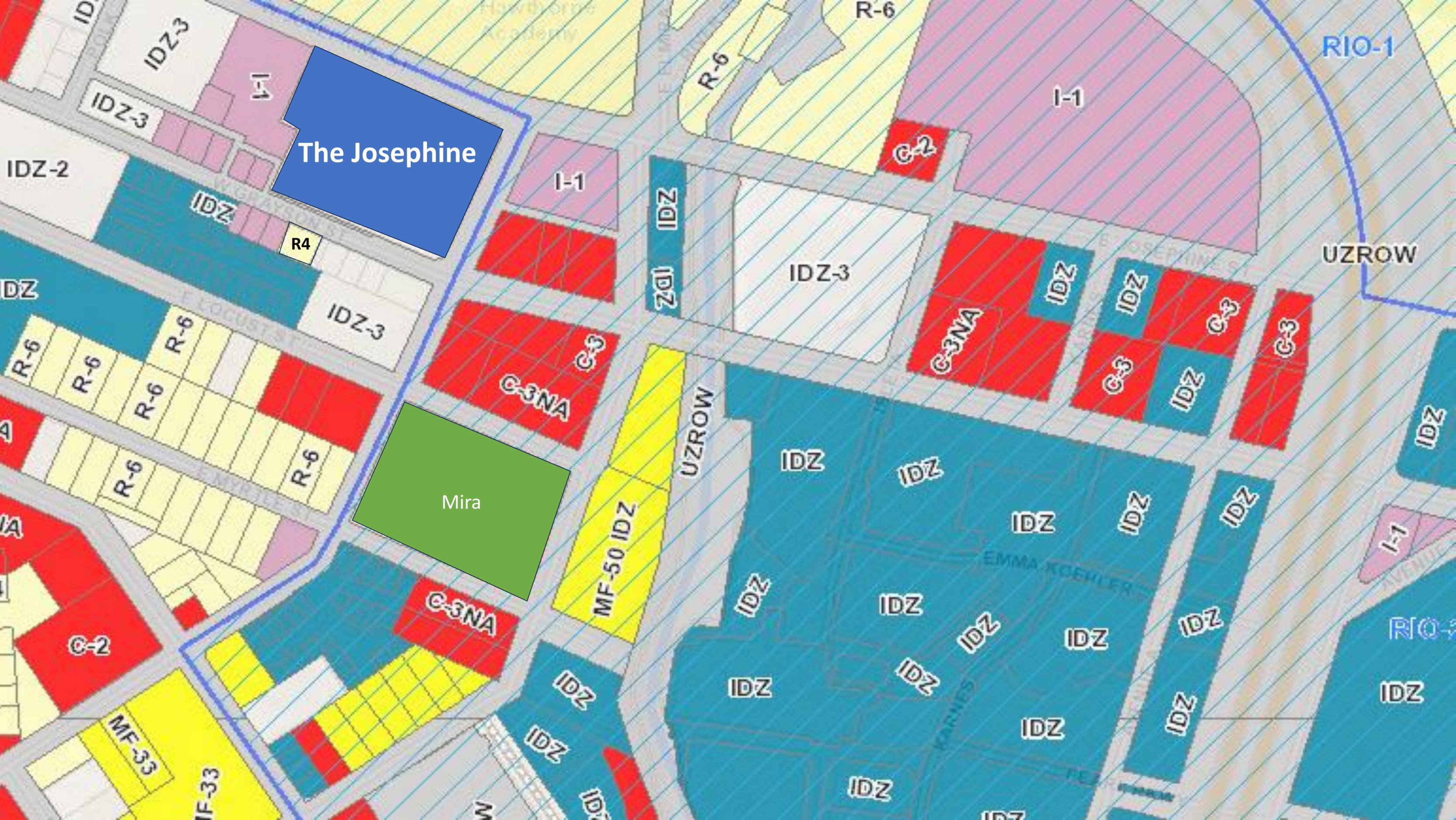
RIO-1

Alamo Colleges - District Support Operations Individual Landmark

Mira

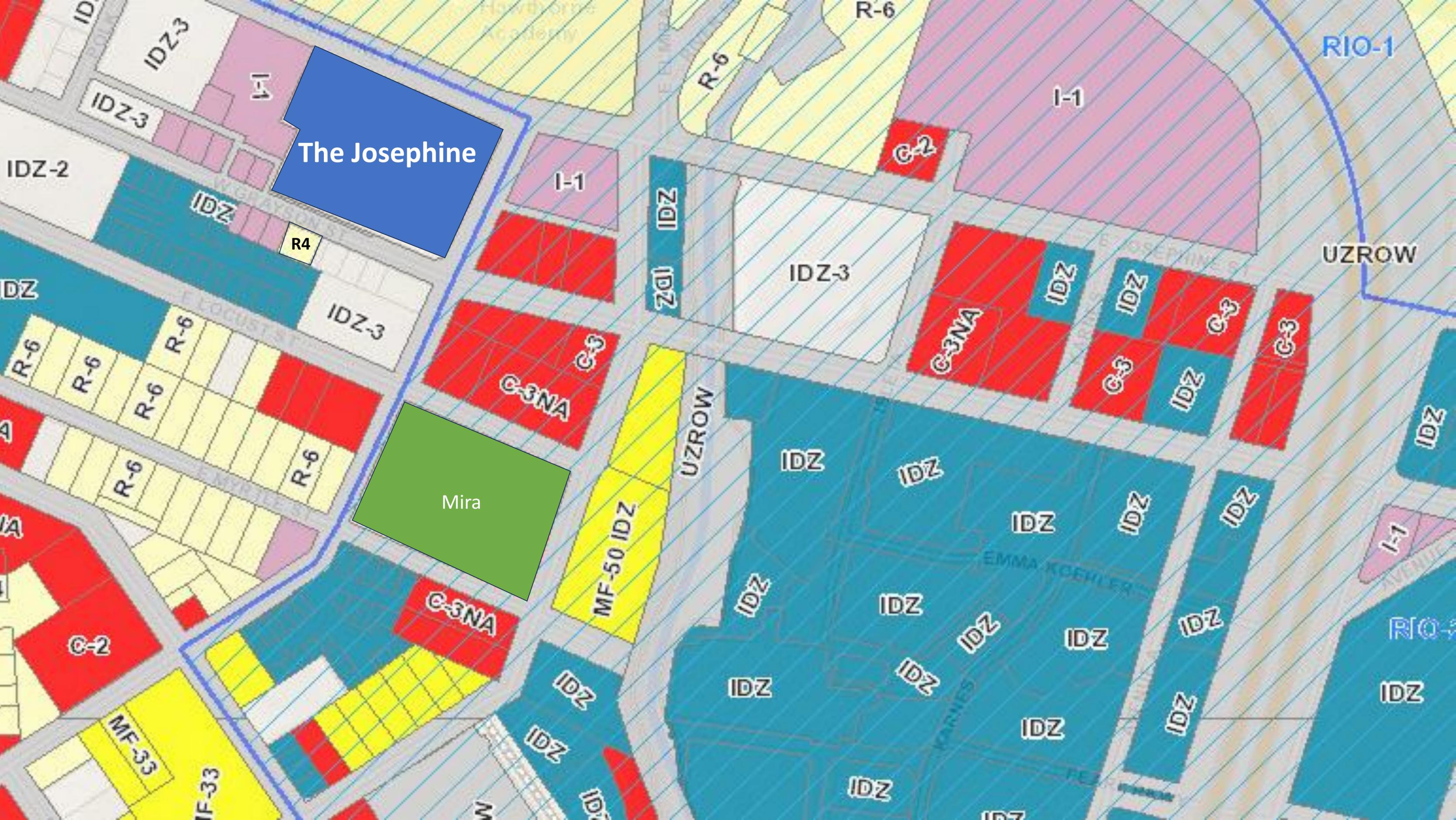
RIO-2

281



The Josephine

Mira









IDZ

R-6

R-6

R-6

R-6

IDZ-3

C-3NA

C-3

IDZ

IDZ-3

C-3NA

IDZ

C-3

IDZ

IDZ

C-3

Mira

R6

Sojo  
Townhomes

C-3NA

MF-50 IDZ

UZROW

IDZ

IDZ

IDZ

IDZ

IDZ

EMMA K CENTER

IDZ

IDZ

IDZ

IDZ

IDZ

C-2

MF-33

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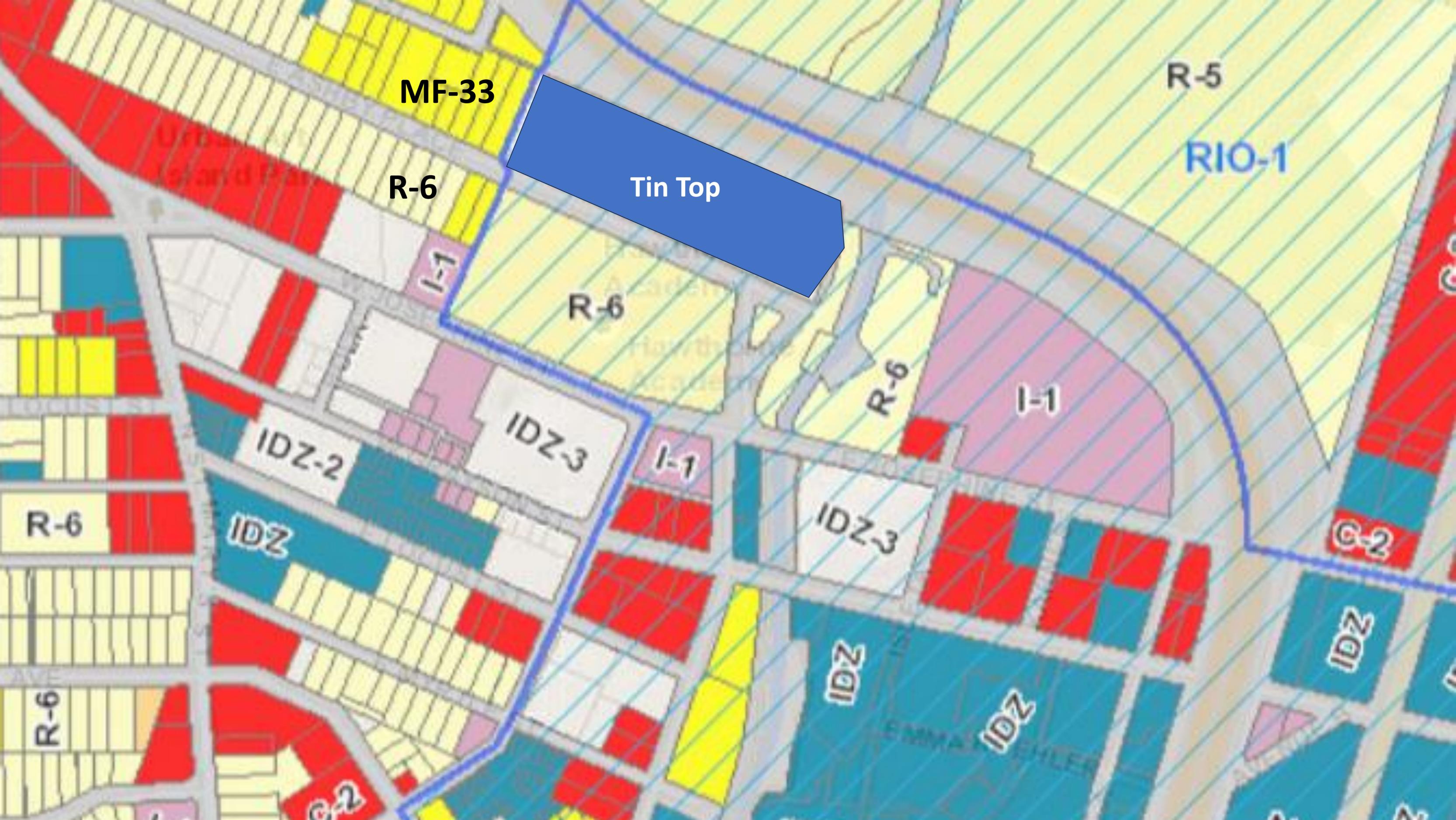
MUELLE

IDZ

C-3NA

C-2





MF-33

R-6

Tin Top

R-5

RIO-1

R-6

R-6

I-1

IDZ-2

IDZ-3

I-1

IDZ-3

R-6

IDZ

C-2

R-6

IDZ1

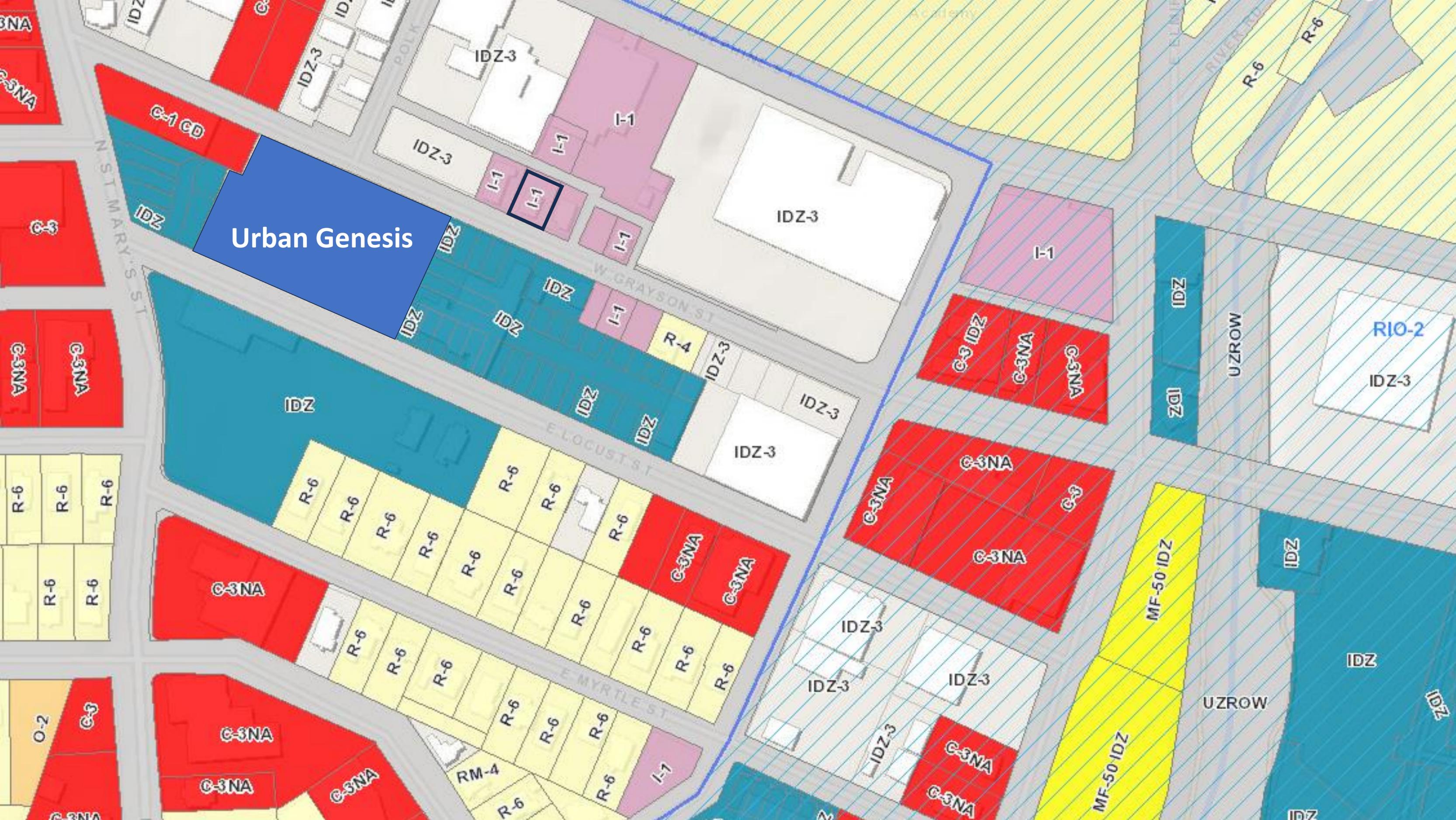
IDZ

IDZ1

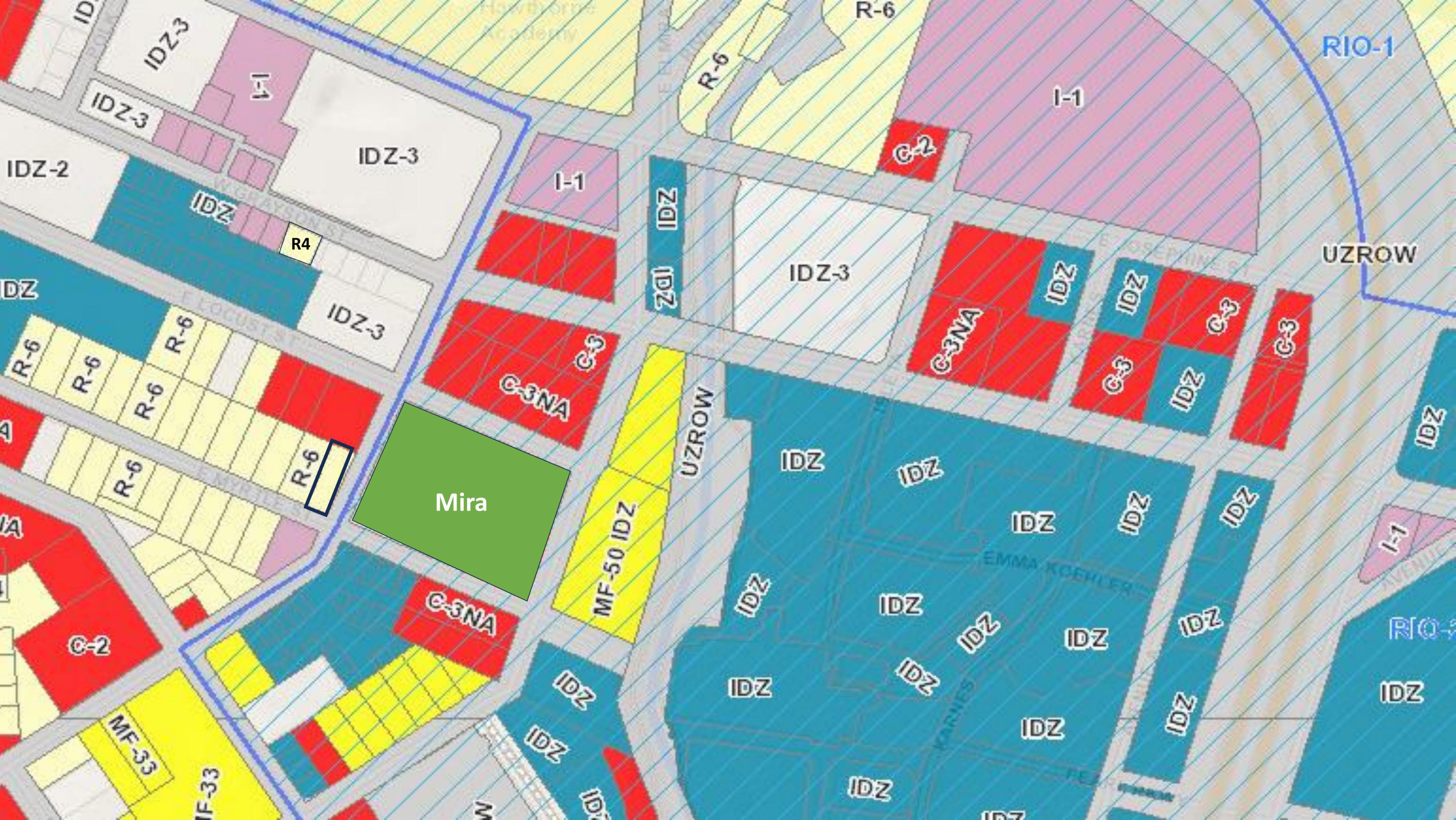
C-2



Urban Genesis







# Summary

- Oxbow and its design team redesigned the southwest corner of the site to respond to DRC comments and create a more cohesive neighborhood plan
- The setback, as required by the UDC, would not allow for the parking garage and further reduce the multifamily residential units
- The neighborhood reception thus far has been positive and Oxbow will continue to coordinate and communicate with neighbors

**oxbow**



# Site Plan

\*5 Levels Type III-A Construction over 1 Level Type

