

June 18, 2018

Sycamore Township Ohio  
Department of Planning and Zoning  
8540 Kenwood Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45236

**RE: PUD-II Request under the existing SPI Overlay**

The following narrative responds to Item 2 on the PUD Application Checklist

**A. General description of change in the premises**

The Proposed Gallery at Kenwood Development is a fulfillment of the vision for this site put forward in the Sycamore Township – 2008 Southern Sycamore Land Use Plan. The site is to be re-positioned from a collection of 22 1960's vintage four to six apartment buildings along the Kenwood Road commercial corridor, to a dynamic mixed-use enclave that will include a hotel, office building, restaurants and multi-family residential. The residents, guests and businesses that will occupy this development will enhance the profile of the Township and provide significant economic benefits to the Township.

**B. The size of the area involved**

The site is comprised of 7.2 acres – bounded by Kenwood Road to the east, Happiness Way to the north, the Kenwood Place shopping center to the south, and residential properties to the west and southwest.

**C. Description of proposed use (for land or building)**

The proposed Gallery at Kenwood Development will achieve many of the best synergies of mixed-use planning on a site designated for commercial mixed use development. This involves creating strong functional relationships between building occupancies, circulation, and parking while presenting active, pedestrian-friendly places that will capitalize on the walkability of the location.

The largest component of the development will be a multi-family offering of 266 upscale living units in a four and five story building that will wrap around a free standing parking facility. The apartment residences will incorporate all the features today's customer expects in their active life-style. Additionally, the residences will incorporate an amenity package that will include a large clubhouse, a coffee bar, a game room, personal work stations, a fitness center, a golf simulator and of course a pet spa. Residences will range in size from just under 600 square feet to over 1,300 square feet for a three bedroom suite. There are currently no residential options in the Kenwood area that will compare to this development and there is a significant pent-up demand for this product type.

The development will also feature three to four upscale restaurants and approximately 3,000 square feet of service type retail. The retail and restaurant tenants will fit a merchandising strategy appropriate for small sites, but complementary to the surrounding commercial development. The proposed restaurants will have a direct presence facing Kenwood Road; while the interior of the site will transition to a more passive environment more complementary to the residential units.

Two vertical component uses are employed over the retail, including an upscale hotel, and a professional office building. The office building will be positioned on Kenwood Road and in immediate proximity to the Jewish Hospital – Mercy Health, to promote a complementary offering of related uses. This building will offer medical and professional office space, in response to continued demand in this sub-market. The Hotel offering will represent the best in hospitality trends, from its commercial podium to its more urban positioning close to Kenwood Road, moving the dial towards a more pedestrian-friendly streetscape, and away from suburban parking fields with buildings remotely placed. The hotel location is ideally suited among Southern Sycamore Township’s shopping and medical destinations.

Another integral piece of this development will be two parking garages. The first will be a freestanding five level facility and will include approximately 350 parking spaces that will be owned by Jewish Hospital. This public/private partnership will provide replacement parking for the spaces at Kenwood Towne Center that Jewish will be losing and will have the added benefit of eliminating the pedestrian traffic across Kenwood Road at Galbraith. The remainder of both parking facilities will be public parking for the hotel, office building and residential.

#### **D. Character of development (architectural treatment, density, intensity)**

Much of today’s inspiration for residential, hotel, office, and shopping design comes from the hospitality and resort industries, in terms of a rich and welcoming customer experience, starting at the curb, working their way through the landscape, and throughout the lobbies and spaces of the buildings. Our design team will be developing contemporary buildings that apply timeless/ tactile materials, human-scaled details, outdoor dining zones, and a touch of romance in its landscape and lighting that helps people stay and enjoy their surroundings. Paramount in the design considerations will be to create a sense of place and walkability.

The proposed density is at an F.A.R. of the buildings of 33.4%. This density allows for a welcoming surface parking courtyard from Kenwood Road (to be utilized mostly by visitors to shops and restaurants.) The longer term parking needs of residents, hotel guests, and office workers, are supplied in parking structures largely concealed from the public. The result is a mid-rise urban district with a great sense of openness; while still accommodating its parking needs.

#### **E. Description of surrounding land uses**

One of the reasons this site was designated for Mixed-Use development by Sycamore Township is its relationship to surrounding uses on the Kenwood Road Corridor.

Directly across Kenwood Road is Kenwood Towne Center – a very dominant regional shopping mall that has been refreshed in several ways, including an outward facing collection of lifestyle tenants to the south, and other mixed use development within its vast parking field. Directly south of the development site is Kenwood Place, a shopping center that includes the Kenwood Theater, several retailers and restaurants, along with office space on its upper levels. These two centers along with others offer an abundant supply of fashion and specialty retail; making it more desirable to pursue other retail categories on this site (more tailored to the immediate community.)

The Jewish Hospital – Mercy Health lies directly north of the site, across Happiness Way, and the hospital has been an active strategic partner in discussing synergistic relationships, including parking

supply and other unmet needs (i.e. walkable additional office, hotel, and food offerings.) Both the hospital and this site form a gateway to the residential neighborhood to the west. As such, our team is exploring a number of strategies with the residents and township to calm commercial traffic on Happiness Way, (so that it remains a convenient connector to the neighborhood without causing intrusions from others.)

To the west of the property are single family homes that were built in the 1960's. These homes are located on Frolic Drive. Most of the lots are 175 feet deep and have a backyard buffer from the proposed development of almost 90 feet. Additionally, to the southwest, there are four homes along Dunedin whose lots border on the proposed project's boundary.

**F. The specific changes in the character and conditions of the area which have occurred to make the property no longer suitable or appropriate for the existing zoning classification or to make the property appropriate for the proposed use**

The character and conditions of the Kenwood commercial corridor from I-71 to Galbraith Road have changed dramatically during the last 20 years. As Kenwood Towne Center has become the pre-eminent mall in the entire region, other commercial users have located in this sub-market. Today this corridor is a thriving mix of businesses, restaurants, offices and entertainment venues. Based on these changes, our proposed development is perfectly aligned with Sycamore Township's objective to reposition this site as a well-planned Mixed-Use Site. Additionally, the property currently is used as multi-family buildings that were constructed in the 50's and 60's. The buildings are showing their age, do not respond to the needs of today's residents, and do not complement the character of this commercial corridor.

**G. The effect on (1) community objectives and plans (2) character of the immediate area (3) adjacent property (4) public facilities and services**

With respect to community objectives and plans, this development aligns perfectly with the Township objectives. First, it provides a mixed use development which is called for in the comprehensive land use plan and the SPI overlay that was codified in 2004. Second, it will deliver a significant number of new employees to the area, thus increasing Township payroll revenue. Third, it will provide much needed luxury residential development, which currently doesn't exist in this submarket. Fourth and perhaps just as important, it provides a parking solution for Jewish Hospital as part of a true public/private partnership.

The effect on the character of the immediate area and adjacent property will generally be quite positive. On three sides of this site there are very intense existing commercial uses and this development will complement those existing uses. To the west of the site is a single family neighborhood that includes ranches and split levels built in the 50's and 60's. Studies show that values for housing adjacent to commercial developments increase at virtually the same rate as those in other locations, due in large part because of the additional dining, entertainment and shopping options that these developments provide. Obviously residents who currently live next to any proposed new development are generally opposed to any change. With this in mind, we have reached out to surrounding neighbors and will continue to work with them to mitigate any concerns.

This development will impact public facilities and services in several ways. First, our development will add new vehicular traffic to Kenwood Road and connecting streets. However, of the approximately

1,300+ vehicles projected to use the new development, 500 of those are already there. That includes 350+ vehicles that Jewish Hospital employees bring to the Mall parking lots and the approximately 150 vehicles that the existing apartments contribute. With respect to the school system, the residential portion of the development will not create a burden for the Deer Park school system, as the type of residential product we build does not attract families with school age children. With respect to public services, all of the improvements in the development will be fully sprinklered, thus making it less likely that fire services will be needed. Also, based on the quality and character of the proposed improvements to be built, it is reasonable to believe that burglary and drug arrests at this site will decrease from what is currently occurring. Another impact that this development will have relates to pedestrian traffic moving east-west at the intersection of Kenwood and Galbraith Road. Currently, approximately 350 Jewish Hospital employees park in the Kenwood Towne Center northwest lot. These employees then cross Kenwood Road at Galbraith to get to the hospital. While this intersection is signalized, the traffic turning right from Galbraith onto Kenwood has created a very unsafe pedestrian situation. Our development will relocate this parking to the west side of Kenwood Road, thus eliminating this concern.

#### **H. Other Information**

We are confident that this development can be transformational for the Kenwood area for several reasons. First, there continues to be a demand for first class office space and this development responds to that need, while at the same time providing an additional income stream for the township through increased employment taxes. Second, a hotel proximate to the hospital and the Towne Center respond to additional current demand and add to the vibrancy of the area. Most important, this development will create approximately 260 new residences in an area that has seen no new multi-family development in decades. This means more people shopping, dining, working and playing in the area, thus ensuring the long term success of both Kenwood and Sycamore Township. Rooftops are what make commercial establishments and businesses successful and the addition of these new residents to the market place will have a significant positive impact.