

**SUBJECT:** A report and recommendation on a proposed Major Amendment to the Concept Plan and Development Program Statement for Planned Development #79, Uptown Gateway, in Avondale.

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Location: 3020-3090 Exploration Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45206

Petitioner: Terrex Uptown Investor, LLC on behalf of Uptown SEQ Holdings, LLC  
3200 Madison Road, Suite 2B  
Cincinnati, OH 45209

Request: A proposed Major Amendment to the Concept Plan and Development Program Statement for Planned Development #79 to update the permitted uses to include office, research and development, laboratory, hotel, multi-family, retail, restaurant, entertainment, colleges, schools, parking, and other uses specifically permitted under the Cincinnati Zoning Code for CC-A, RM-0.7, OG, ML, and IR zoning districts.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Provided in addition to this report are the following exhibits:

- Exhibit A – Location Map
- Exhibit B – Concept Plan
- Exhibit C – Amended Development Program Statement

**BACKGROUND:**

The Concept Plan and Development Program Statement for Planned Development #79, Uptown Gateway, was previously approved by City Council through Ordinance No. 280-2017 on October 5, 2017. The Planned Development includes an underground parking structure, one six-story building consisting of approximately 185,000 square feet that is leased to the University of Cincinnati (Digital Futures Building), one six-story building consisting of approximately 180,000 square feet, and a prepared building pad that is configured for a hotel concept. Three Final Development Plans have been approved for this Planned Development and include the parking garage (2019), two office buildings and site improvements (2020), and the signage plan (2021).

The applicant team, Terrex Uptown Investor, LLC, on behalf of the property owner, Uptown SEQ Holdings, LLC, is requesting a Major Amendment to the existing Concept Plan and Development Program Statement. The proposed Major Amendment requests to amend the existing Concept Plan and Development Program Statement to permit additional uses. All other aspects of the Planned Development will remain the same and will not affect any physical attributes of the site.

**ADJACENT LAND USE AND ZONING:**

The site is currently zoned as a Planned Development (PD-79). The adjacent zoning and land uses are as follows:

**North:**

Zoning: CC-P, RMX, and RMX-T  
Use: Vacant land and three single-family homes

**East:**

Zoning: ML-T  
Use: Interstate 71

**South:**

Zoning: CC-A-T and IR  
Use: Surface parking lots and 1819 Innovation Hub – University of Cincinnati

**West:**

Zoning: CC-P-T and CC-P  
Use: Wireless Connection cell phone store, Rally's fast-food restaurant, Avondale Beer Drive Thru and vacant land

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGES TO CONCEPT PLAN:**

The applicant is proposing to update the permitted uses to include office, research and development, laboratory, hotel, multi-family residential, retail, restaurant, entertainment, colleges, schools, parking, and other uses specifically permitted under the Cincinnati Zoning Code for CC-A, RM-0.7, OG, ML, and IR zoning districts. The request is considered a Major Amendment, which must be approved by Cincinnati Planning Commission, per Section 1429-12. – *Amendments to the Planned Development Concept Plan* of the Cincinnati Zoning Code.

**BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF A PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT:**

According to §1429-05 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code, *Basic Requirements*, PD districts and development within PD districts must comply with the following:

- a. ***Minimum Area*** – *The minimum area of a PD must be two contiguous acres.*

Planned Development #79 is 10.0668 acres total.

- b. ***Ownership*** – *Evidence that the petitioner has sufficient control over the tract of land to affect the proposed plan, including a list of all ownership and beneficial interests in the tract of land and the proposed development are required.*

The owners of the subject properties consist of Uptown Gateway Office 1, LLC, Uptown Gateway Access, LLC, and 3090 Exploration Avenue, LLC (Children's Hospital Medical Center).

- c. ***Multiple Buildings on a Lot*** – *More than one building is permitted on a lot.*

Currently, each of the two constructed buildings (two out of four) is on its own separate parcel. No changes are proposed.

- d. ***Historic Landmarks and Districts*** – *Whenever a Planned Development application is filed for a property wholly or partially located within a historic landmark, historic district, or involving a historic structure, the Historic Conversation Board shall advise the City Planning Commission relating to approval of the Final Development Plan.*

No portion of the site is located within a historic district, nor does the site contain any historic landmark.

- e. ***Hillside Overlay Districts*** – *Whenever a Planned Development application is filed for a property wholly or partially located within a Hillside Overlay District, the City Planning Commission shall approve the Final Development Plan.*

No portion of the site is located within the Hillside Overlay District.

- f. ***Urban Design Overlay District*** – *Whenever a Planned Development application is filed for a property wholly or partially located within an Urban Design Overlay District, the City Planning Commission shall approve the Final Development Plan.*

No portion of the site is located within an Urban Design Overlay District.

### **CONCEPT PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STATEMENT:**

According to §1429-09 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code, *Concept Plan and Development Program Statement*, a petition to rezone a property to PD must include a Concept Plan and Development Program Statement. The purpose is to describe the proposed use or uses to be conducted in the PD District. The Concept Plan and Development Program Statement must include text or diagrams that specify:

- a. ***Plan Elements*** – A survey of the tract to be developed, providing a metes and bounds description of the property and the survey of property lines and total acreage. Additionally, the plan should include the location in general terms, of land areas to be developed, including: type and description of proposed land uses, buildings and structures; street rights-of-way and driveways; parcel boundaries and proposed lots, including set back lines; building heights; pedestrian circulation systems and open space or other facilities; and proposed topography, drainage, landscaping and buffer plantings.

The applicant team has submitted a proposed Major Amendment to the Concept Plan and Development Program Statement that includes sufficient information regarding the proposed uses.

- b. ***Ownership*** – Evidence that the petitioner has sufficient control over the tract of land to affect the proposed plan, including a list of all ownership and beneficial interests in the tract of land and the proposed development.

The applicant has provided evidence that the three aforementioned owners have sufficient control over the subject tract of land.

- c. ***Schedule*** – Time schedule of projected development, if the total site is to be developed in phases or if construction is to extend beyond a two-year time period.

The project has been constructed in multiple phases and previously has had three separate Final Development Plan approvals since the creation of the Planned Development.

- d. ***Preliminary Reviews*** – A preliminary review of geo-technical, sewage, water, drainage and refuse collection.

Not applicable to this application.

- e. ***Density and Open Space*** – Calculations of density and open space area.

The project will not change any of the open space provided in the original Concept Plan.

### **MAJOR AMENDMENT:**

The Cincinnati Zoning Code § 1429-12 allows for amendments to the Concept Plan and Development Program Statement. Major Amendments must be approved by the City Planning Commission and City Council. A Major Amendment to the Concept Plan and Development Program Statement has been requested as the petitioner wishes to change the permitted uses of the subject site.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT AND NOTIFICATION:**

A virtual public staff conference is scheduled for September 3, 2025. An update will be shared during the presentation to the City Planning Commission. Notices for the public staff conference and the City Planning Commission meeting were sent out to all property owners within 400-feet of the site and the Avondale Community Council.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH PLANS:**

*Plan Cincinnati (2012)*

The proposal is consistent with multiple goals and principles of *Plan Cincinnati*:

- Compete Goal 2: “Cultivate our position as the most vibrant and economically healthiest part of our region” through the strategies to “Target investment to geographic areas where there is already economic activity” and to “strategically select areas for new growth” (p. 115).
- Guiding Geographic Principle to “Focus revitalization on existing centers of activity” (p. 86).
- It is also consistent with the Guiding Policy Principles to “Increase our population” (p. 74) and to “Be aggressive and strategic in future growth and development” (p. 77).

#### *Avondale Quality of Life Plan (2020)*

The proposal is also consistent with multiple goals of the *Avondale Quality of Life Plan*:

- Goal 4: “Youth in Avondale are connected with education, employment, and career opportunities and resources that will lead to gainful employment and prepare the future generation for a competitive workforce” (p. 39).
- Goal 6: “Residents have access to quality jobs at good local and regional businesses. Barriers to employment are addressed/removed” (p. 41).

#### **CITY PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:**

According to Section §1429-11(a) of the Cincinnati Zoning Code, City Planning Commission may recommend approval or conditional approval, with restrictions on the establishment of a PD District on finding that all of the following circumstances apply:

1. *The PD concept plan and development program statement are consistent with applicable plans and policies and is compatible with surrounding development;*

The proposal is consistent with *Plan Cincinnati* and the *Avondale Quality of Life Plan*.

2. *The PD concept plan and development program statement enhance the potential for superior urban design in comparison with the development under the base district regulations that would apply if the plan were not approved;*

The proposal is an amendment to an already approved and established Planned Development district.

3. *Deviations from the base district regulations applicable to the property at the time of the PD application are justified by compensating benefits of the PD concept plan and development program statement;*

The proposal is an amendment to an already approved and established Planned Development and only requesting a change to the uses permitted.

4. *The PD Concept Plan and Development Program Statement includes adequate provisions for utility services, refuse collection, open space, landscaping and buffering, pedestrian circulation, traffic circulation, building design and building location.*

All applicable aspects are covered in the submitted Concept Plan and Development Program Statement.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

The proposed Major Amendment to the Concept Plan and Development Program Statement would only change the uses permitted within the Planned Development. The applicant has proposed to update the uses to include office, research and development, laboratory, hotel, multi-family residential, retail, restaurant, entertainment, colleges, schools, parking, and other uses specifically permitted under the Cincinnati Zoning Code for CC-A, RM-0.7, OG, ML, and IR zoning districts. Approving the Major Amendment will allow for easier business attraction to the buildings and help retain existing tenants.

Updating the permitted uses will not affect any physical attributes of the Planned Development. The building, landscaping, parking and other development associated with the subject building are all staying the same. The proposed permitted uses are compatible with the intent of the overall Planned Development, are consistent with the type of development envisioned by the community of Avondale and are consistent with the aforementioned plans.

**CONCURRENT APPROVAL WITH FINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN:**

According to §1429-16 *Concurrent Approval of Concept Plan, Development Program Statement and Final Development Plan* - The City Planning Commission may review and approve the Concept Plan, Development Program Statement and the Final Development Plan concurrently, provided that the applicant meets the submission requirements of both the Concept Plan and the Final Development Plan. The Planning Commission's approval of the Final Development Plan is contingent on the applicant obtaining City Council's approval of the Planned Development map amendment without changes.

**FINDINGS:**

It is the opinion of the staff of the Department of City Planning and Engagement that the Major Amendment to the Concept Plan and Development Program Statement follows §1429-05 and §1429-09 and satisfies the criteria outlined in §1429-11 (a) *City Planning Commission Action*. The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the Planned Development District Regulations.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The staff of the Department of City Planning and Engagement recommends the City Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. **ADOPT** the Department of City Planning and Engagement Findings as detailed in this report; and
2. **APPROVE** the proposed Major Amendment to the Concept Plan and Development Program Statement for Planned Development #79, Uptown Gateway, in Avondale.

Respectfully submitted:

Approved:

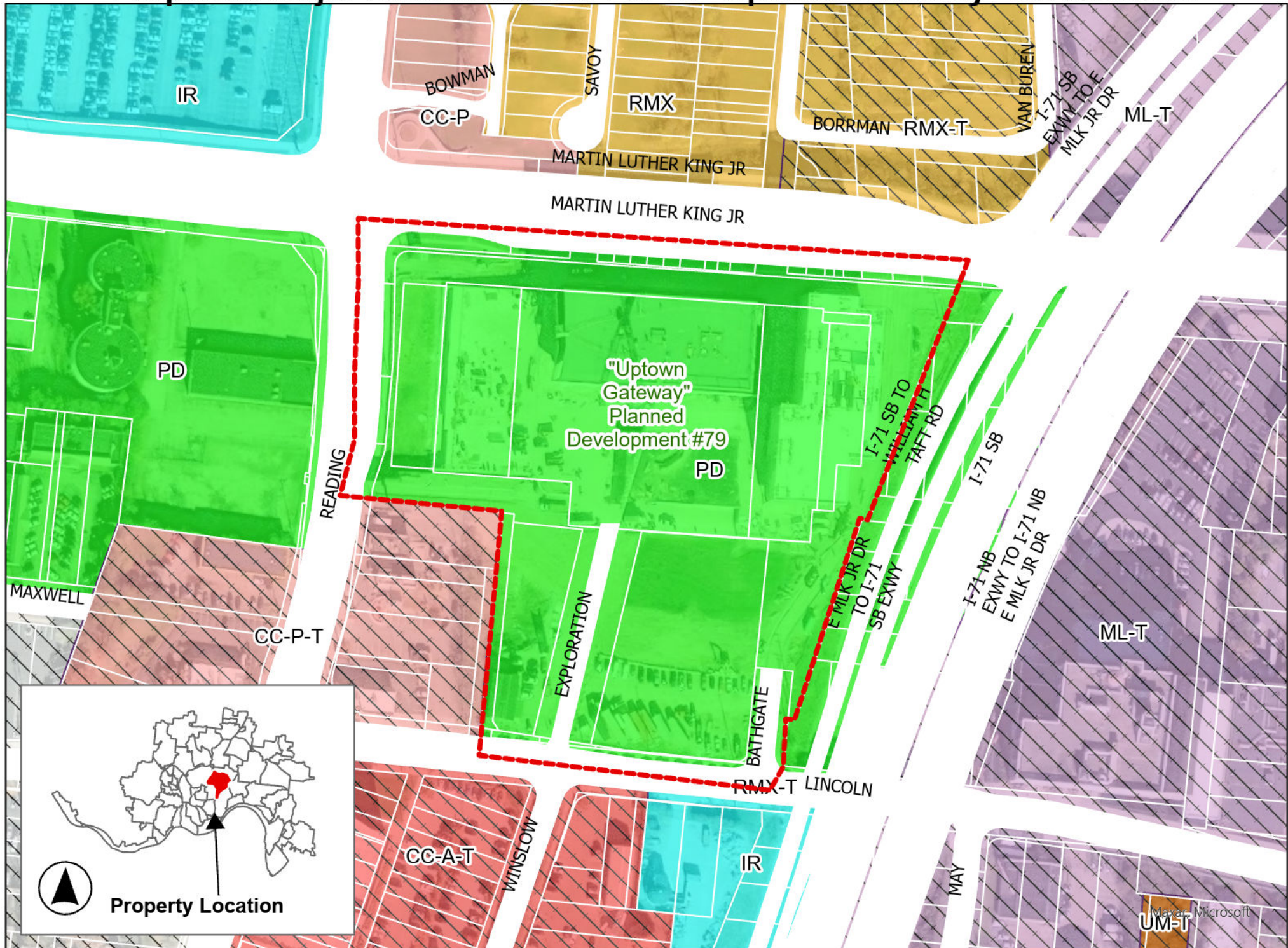


Jesse Urbancsik, Senior City Planner  
Department of City Planning and Engagement



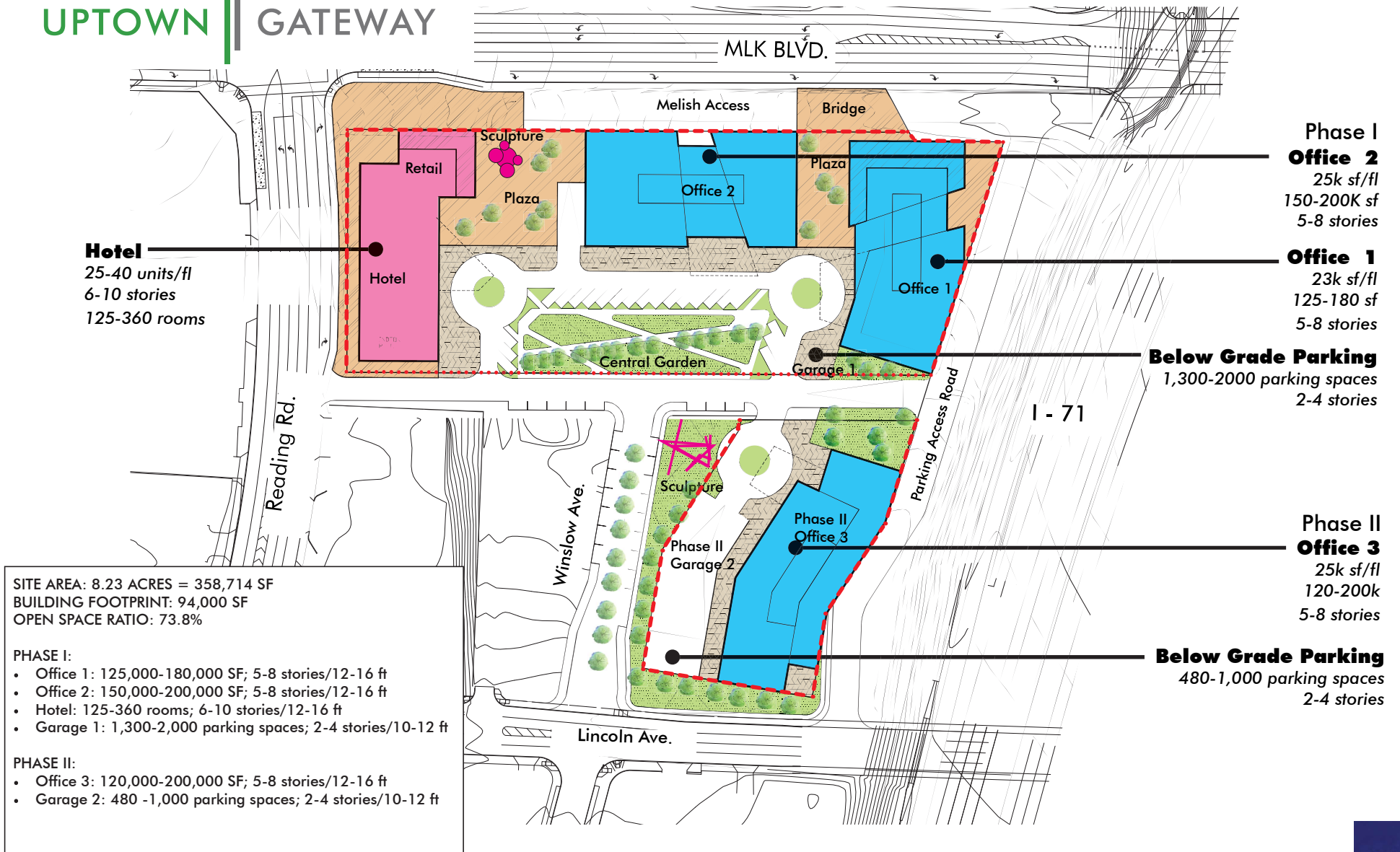
Stacey Hoffman, Division Manager  
Department of City Planning and Engagement







# UPTOWN | GATEWAY



**AMENDMENT #1**  
**CONCEPT PLAN & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STATEMENT**  
**PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT No. 79**  
**Located at**  
**SOUTHEAST CORNER OF READING RD & MLK BLVD**

**1. APPLICANT/PETITIONER:**

Uptown SEQ Holdings, LLC (via the developer, Terrex Uptown Investor, LLC "Developer")  
3200 Madison Road, Suite 2B  
Cincinnati, OH 45209

As may be subsequently assigned.

**2. SUMMARY OF REQUEST**

Applicant is requesting to amend the permitted uses within the approved City of Cincinnati Planned Development District No. 79 ("Development") that was previously approved by City of Cincinnati through Ordinance No. 280-2017 on or about October 5, 2017.

When originally approved, the Development was described as a "mixed-use" project and listed specific assets that were to be developed. This Amendment is intended to clarify the permitted uses within the Development to allow for the original vision to be successfully executed. The permitted uses for which Applicant seeks approval include office, research and development, laboratory, hotel, multifamily, retail, restaurant, entertainment, colleges, schools, parking and those uses specifically permitted under current City of Cincinnati zoning regulations for CC-A zoning districts as outlined in Section 1409-07, RM-0.7 zoning districts as outlined in Section 1405-05, Office General zoning districts as outlined in Section 1407-05, ML zoning districts as outlined in Section 1413-05 and IR zoning districts as outlined in Section 1417-03.

**3. PROJECT SUMMARY & PHASING**

When completed, the Proposed Development will include multiple buildings and below grade structured parking. Today, these buildings include an underground parking garage, one six-story building consisting of approximately 185,000 sft that is leased to UC (Digital Futures Building), one six-story building consisting of approximately 180,000 sft and a prepared building pad that is configured for a hotel concept, but this area could include or be utilized for other uses when developed. Future buildings within the Development will need to be approved through the Final Development Plan process with the City of Cincinnati.

**4. TIMING**

The major improvements in Phase I of the Development have been completed, as outlined above. Construction and development of future buildings and/or phases will continue as tenants/purchasers are identified for the remainder of the developable property within the Development.

**5. SITE PLAN & SUMMARY**

The Development is the initial project intended to be a large-scale, catalytic redevelopment of the area surrounding the new Martin Luther King Blvd. interchange with I-71 and has already resulted in large private and public investment. Generally, this area, including the Development, is currently being developed as the "Cincinnati Innovation District" ("CID") and will spur additional private and public investment in surrounding areas throughout the CID and Uptown neighborhoods.

The Development has and will continue to create a mixed-use, walkable environment where a mix of uses, a mix of types of users/industries and the other improvements in the CID are intended to create a place where research and innovation



is fostered among a diverse group of companies, people and institutions. Cincinnati is working to continue its work to be a place where companies come to spur innovation and to garner access to top-level talent and this Development is part of that effort.

The catalysts for this innovation ecosystem in Uptown include the existing institutions in the area that count Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, TriHealth, University of Cincinnati and UC Health among its constituents. This synergy between the Development's users, CID users/occupants and the neighborhood anchor institutions will catalyze both development and job growth in the Uptown area.

The site plan for the Development was previously approved and subsequent improvements will all be required to go through the Final Development Plan process with the City of Cincinnati.

#### 6. ACCESS

The Proposed Development will enjoy three (3) points of access from public rights-of-way. The primary access and main entrance will be from Lincoln Ave. via an extension of the Winslow Ave. alignment into the Proposed Development. Further, there will be another point of access to/from Lincoln Ave. via the Bathgate curb-cut. The final point of access will be from/to Reading Road.

#### 7. UTILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Applicant has installed the utility infrastructure needed for the Development and it is currently serving the Development.

#### 8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Applicant has worked with various community groups, including the Avondale Community Council, Avondale Development Corporation and Uptown Consortium, Inc., to inform its planning for the Development.

City of Cincinnati owns property that is currently planned as "PHASE III" of the Development and by approving this Amendment #1 to the Concept Plan & Development Program Statement for Planned Development District No. 79, City of Cincinnati is consenting to this amendment.

APPLICANT:

UPTOWN SEQ HOLDINGS, LLC

BY: Thomas B. Rowe

Thomas B. Rowe

ITS: Authorized Representative

CONSENTING OWNERS:

UPTOWN GATEWAY OFFICE 1, LLC

BY: Thomas B. Rowe

Thomas B. Rowe

ITS: Authorized Representative

UPTOWN GATEWAY ACCESS, LLC

BY: Thomas B. Rowe

Thomas B. Rowe

ITS: Authorized Representative

3090 EXPLORATION AVE, LLC

BY: Children's Hospital Medical Center

By: Maura Moran-Berry  
Maura Moran-Berry

ITS: Asst. VP, Real Estate