



Advenir Azora Development

13830 58th St North
#410
Clearwater, FL 33760

AdvenirDevelopment.com

March 17, 2025 (Updated)
August 26, 2024 (Updated)
April 16, 2024 (Updated)
June 1, 2023

City of Venice
Planning & Zoning Department
401 West Venice Avenue
Venice, FL 34285

RE: Site Plan Application
For +/-73 acres at NEC of Knights Trail Road and Rustic Road intersection
Property ID No.: 036300100, 0365002000 & 0365002002
Project Narrative

Dear Review Staff:

On behalf of LEO@Venice, LLC (Owner), Advenir Azora Development LLC (AAD) is seeking review and approval of Design Alternatives as they relate to the LEO San Marco Cottages, aka LEO Venice BTR. As a part of previous submissions, a brief project overview is provided.

LEO@Venice, LLC purchased +/-73 acres at the NEC of Knights Trail Road and Rustic Road from Cows & Turkeys, LLC in December 2022. The subject development is located within the Knights Trail District and is surrounded by a mix of existing land uses. Currently zoned Knights Trail (KT) with a future land use designation of Mixed-Use Corridor (MU), what will be the LEO Development will consist of “missing middle-like” multifamily rental units. The remaining property will be developed as Single Family Residential (Ordinance 2025-11) and Commercial.

The proposed LEO Development, consisting of approximately 27.1ac, will be located in the northern portion of the Development Parcel and consist of 200 cottage and duplex-like units (or 7.4 dwelling units/acre) with on-grade parking, stand-alone parking garages, open space, a 1,456sf leasing office with a resort-style pool and deck, and a 1,456sf club level fitness center providing Class A resident amenities offering active and passive uses consistent with market competitive properties. The remaining acreage will be developed by others and under separate applications.

All the units and buildings within the LEO Development are intended to be designed with a highly attractive architectural style that respects the surrounding environment. Keeping with the City’s 2017-2027 Comprehensive Plan, AAD recognizes the City’s existing character. As such, the LEO Development layout is thoughtfully designed to promote a sustainable and walkable community, while preserving some of the rural landscape and sensitive natural resource areas found around the property. Key aspects of the design and how AAD advances the City’s community goals and complies with the Plan include walking and vehicle connections to current and future surrounding developments, the numerous community pocket parks with active and passive activities for the LEO Development.

Common Facilities

The common facilities such as active spaces consisting of clubhouses, pools, and fitness centers will be provided, managed, and permanently maintained by property management on behalf of ownership. Passive open space areas will be provided, managed, and permanently maintained by property management on behalf of development ownership.

Common Use Improvements

Common Use Improvements such as roadways, sidewalks and utilities will be privately maintained by property management and maintenance staff on behalf of the development owner. Furthermore, improvements that will be used



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by LEO, the Single Family development, and the Commercial development will be managed and maintained by a Property Owner's Association.

Comprehensive Plan Intent and Strategies:

The accompanying Site Development Plan application is consistent with the following City of Venice vision, intent and strategies listed in the City's Comprehensive Plan:

Vision LU 1 - The City of Venice envisions a development pattern that balances the economic, social, historical, and environmental needs of the community and that preserves the high quality-of-life for all residents.

Consistency: The proposed LEO Development is consistent with this Objective, Policy, and associated Action Items as it will consist of a heterogeneous collection of cottage style rental homes, in a location within the City that is primarily dominated by single family homes. According to the Missing Middle Housing concept, this product will address the need for housing choices at different price points for a variety of housing demographics. The design theme of the units within the LEO Development will include: detached cottage style, carriage style, fourplexes, duplexes, and townhouses. The applicant will propose a variety of architectural façades for each unit to differentiate each unit from the next and provide a sense of character to the internal neighborhood that is not typically seen in traditional single-family development.

Additionally, the development provides an alternative type of housing for the City's residents who choose to rent rather than buy a home. Missing Middle Housing, such as the cottages, townhomes and duplexes proposed within this development provide a range of attainability but also respond to the higher demand for housing. While no part of this Project is subsidized or "affordable" housing, the proposed Class A, market-rate development does support the extensive employment growth in the immediate vicinity such as the various warehouse/distribution and medical employers in the area by offering various unit types and sizes.

Furthermore, the proposed LEO Development is located along the Knights Trail Road corridor, and therefore, is directly in line with the growth patterns expected to occur as a result of the future Knights Trail Road expansion and connection to Lorraine Road and the Rustic Road connection to Honore Avenue. These County roads are intended to expand and increase the capacity of this area. Roadway improvements to Rustic Road are scheduled and underway. Roadway improvements to Knights Trail Road and in the planning stages.

Neighborhoods

Intent LU 1.1 - Neighborhoods.

The intent of the neighborhood planning approach is to link a variety of efforts to improve the City's neighborhoods in a broad-based way respecting and incorporating the different aspects of community life (residential, commercial, public, recreational) and to provide a method for addressing development issues within the City.

Strategy LU 1.2.7.a - Functional

May include community amenities, focal points comprised of publicly accessible outdoor gathering spaces (great lawn, shade structures/trellis, or similar as determined by the Planning and Zoning Director, golf courses, sports fields, playgrounds, public beaches, stormwater facilities as identified below). In addition, portions of existing and/or proposed parks may be utilized for City public safety uses.

Consistency: The applicant intends to design and incorporate numerous pocket parks throughout the LEO Development, that are interconnected by the extensive sidewalk network and accessible to the surrounding community. When thoroughly designed, the pocket parks will have seating area as well as ample space for active and passive activities.

Strategy LU 1.2.7.b - Conservation:

Identifies those areas, including, but not limited to, protected open spaces (wetland, wetland buffers, coastal and riverine habitats), preserves, native habitats including those of endangered or threatened species or species of special concern, wildlife corridors; natural lands owned and managed by the City, Sarasota County, State (i.e., FDEP, SWFWMD)



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or Federal Agency that do not qualify as Open Space (Functional) defined above; watercourses, other surface waters, aquifer recharge areas, or other areas as identified within the Open Space Element of this Plan.

Consistency: The LEO Development identifies (3) areas that will be protected open spaces: a historical flow way, Cow Pen Slough Canal, and an existing lake located along the eastern boundary. Existing vegetation will be preserved, invasive species will be removed as required by applicable codes. Where easements do not exist, they will be dedicated to Sarasota County. Easements that exist will be modified as needed to meet the current alignments of surface waters. One of these areas will be solely found with the LEO development boundaries and will be maintained as mandated within the existing and amended easement documents.

Intent LU 1.3 - Planning and Design Principles.

The City intends to guide future development and redevelopment through planning and design principles that foster successful urban communities. The City's Future Land Use designations are intended to establish the following planning and design principles to guide the growth, development and redevelopment efforts within the City. The following Strategies are designed to help guide the City's Land Development Code and review processes.

Strategy LU 1.3.1 - Mix of Uses

The City shall promote a mix of uses including a mixture of residential and non-residential uses (where desired by the Community) of varying densities, non-residential intensities, and uses designed to encourage multiple modes of travel such as pedestrian activities, bicycles, transit, low emission vehicles/golf carts and automobiles.

Consistency: With the existing zoning designation of Knights Trail District, the overall Development of the site promotes a mix of uses with missing middle rentals units, single family units, and commercial uses. The development is designed in such a way to encourage pedestrian activities with an extensive network of interconnected sidewalks and trails.

Strategy LU 1.3.2 - Functional Neighborhoods

The City shall promote functional neighborhoods defined at the Planning Level which include neighborhood centers, a variety of housing types, public/civic space designed for the context of the Neighborhood and a variety of open space amenities.

Consistency: The LEO Development is consistent with this strategy as it provides the design of a blended neighborhood, such as this with multiple types of homes, encourages a transition between uses, generally mitigating potential conflicts related to additional use of recreational and environmental resources by development.

Strategy LU 1.3.3 - Walkable Streets

The City shall promote walkable streets integrated within and between neighborhoods that designs a community based on reasonable walking distances, enhanced landscape design, the location of parking, and the design of streetlights, signs, and sidewalks.

Consistency: The LEO Development proposes an extensive network of sidewalks, not only providing internal connections between units and amenities, but also providing external connections to future sidewalks on Knights Trail Road. Along with an extensive network of sidewalks, the applicant proposed bike racks and fix-it stations, internal to the LEO Development, to promote the use of bicycles. The extensive sidewalk network promotes walking to surrounding services. Additionally, the applicant intends to propose sufficient parking spaces to meet needs of residents and guests. The proposed parking is designed in such a way that it does not appear to encompass the entire property.

Strategy LU 1.3.4 - Interconnected Circulation

The City shall promote interconnected circulation Network that prioritizes pedestrians and bicycles; linking individual neighborhoods to retail (shopping) areas, parks and other recreational features and civic spaces.



Consistency: The mixed-use nature of the overall development is consistent with this strategy as the design promotes and provides interconnected circulation between multiple uses encouraging pedestrian movements.

Strategy LU 1.3.5 - Natural Features

The City shall respect natural features through designs that recognize the natural and environmental features of the area and incorporates the protection, preservation and enhancement of these features as a resource to the Neighborhood as a whole.

Consistency: The development is consistent with this strategy as the design team has taken measures to work around existing natural features such as a historical flow way, canal, and existing lake that will be protected from development. These natural features are critical to the operation of drainage basins in the area. The LEO Development not only clearly define each feature found within its limits, but also provides necessary easements for ease of maintenance by Sarasota County.

Vision OS 1 - The City of Venice shall effectively preserve, protect, maintain, manage, and use open space.

Functional Open Spaces

Intent OS 1.1 - Functional Open Spaces:

The City shall use its Functional Open Spaces to provide parks and recreational opportunities for its residents and visitors.

Strategy OS 1.1.2 - Functional Open Space Level of Service

The City's adopted Level of Service (LOS) Standard is: 7 acres of functional open space for each 1,000-functional population. Functional population is defined to include both full-time resident and seasonal-resident population. The Functional Open Space LOS shall be met with facilities open to the public without admission fee and open during the same primary operating hours as City parks. All new residential development shall provide the required amount of functional open space to maintain the adopted LOS standard.

Consistency: Specifically, the LEO development intends to design and incorporate numerous pocket parks throughout the community, that are interconnected by the extensive sidewalk network and accessible to the surrounding community. When thoroughly designed, the pocket parks will have seating area as well as ample space for active and passive activities.

Conservation Open Spaces

Intent OS 1.2 - Conservation Open Spaces

The City shall use its Conservation Open Space to provide conserved open space for its residents and visitors.

Strategy OS 1.2.1 - Conservation Open Space - Defined

Conservation Open Space includes: protected open spaces (wetland, wetland buffers, coastal and riverine habitats), preserves, native habitats including those of endangered or threatened species or species of special concern, wildlife corridors, natural lands owned and managed by the City, Sarasota County, State (i.e., FDEP, SWFWMD) or a Federal Agency that do not qualify as Functional Open Space; rivers, lakes, and other surface waters, and aquifer recharge areas. Conservation Open Spaces are envisioned to enhance the quality of the environment by preserving native vegetation that helps to reduce greenhouse gas/carbon emissions, positively impacting climate change. It is important to acknowledge there may be open spaces that provide both functional and conservation activities (e.g., walking trails around water retention facilities).

Strategy OS 1.2.2 - Environmental Impact Mitigation

The City shall utilize the Land Development Code and review processes to ensure that development projects evaluate potential environmental impacts and provide mitigation for negative impacts. Development shall not adversely impact any threatened or endangered species or species of special concern without appropriate permitting and/or mitigation.

Wetlands



Intent OS 1.3 - Wetlands

The City shall implement strategies to protect its wetlands, wetland buffers, and aquifer recharge areas.

Strategy OS 1.3.2 - Wetland Encroachments

The City shall require development to identify and delineate wetland boundaries with final wetland delineations to be reviewed and approved by the applicable federal and state review agencies.

Wetlands of 20 acres or more shall require structures to be located outside of wetlands and wetland buffers except as provided below. Such exceptions are applicable only when the land use designation on the Property permits the development of a land use activity listed below; site characteristics are such that wetland impacts cannot be avoided; the impacts are limited to the minimum necessary to allow the permitted use of the Property; and the site development or use complies with federal and state review agencies for permitting and mitigation:

1. Residential lots of record existing on or before the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan which do not contain sufficient uplands to permit development of a residence without encroaching into wetlands may be developed with one residential dwelling.
2. Resource-based recreational facilities such as trails, boardwalks, piers, and boat ramps
3. Private water-related facilities, such as boathouses, docks and bulkheads
4. Essential public services, access roads and appurtenant structures

Consistency: The overall Development is consistent with this strategy as the design accommodated the existing canal, lake, and vegetated flow way. Through appropriate design of stormwater management facilities, the project development will mitigate flood hazards and ensure that water quantity and quality will not adversely affect the nearby wetlands, the public infrastructure or adjacent residents and properties.

Native Habitats, Conservation Lands, and Natural Resources

Intent OS 1.4 - Native Habitats, Conservation Lands, and Natural Resources

The City recognizes the importance of its native lands and habitats and shall implement preservation strategies that protect native habitats, conserve environmental lands and natural resources, minimize environmental pollution, and increase public awareness of the harmful effects of non-native species.

Strategy OS 1.4.1 - Native Habitats Inventory and Assessment

The City will coordinate with Sarasota County to inventory and assess significant native habitat remaining within the City limits. The City will also require development and redevelopment to determine the existence of any significant native habitats and such information will be added to the inventory.

Consistency: The proposed LEO Development is consistent with this strategy as the applicant has hired appropriate consultants to assess the site and document the existence of significant native habitats onsite. Based on the current assessment, an additional assessment will occur prior to construction activities commencing onsite to determine the presence of gopher tortoises.

Strategy OS 1.4.4 - Non-Native Invasive Species

The City should prevent the spread of non-native invasive vegetation, wildlife, insects, and other species and protect the health and well-being of the native environment through:

1. Removal of existing non-native invasive species in coordination with City initiated work projects and replacement with native Florida plant species.
2. Prohibition of the use of non-native invasive species
3. At the time of development, require the developer to remove non-native invasive species through conditions of approval for the project area subject to the site and development review; property owners shall continue to prevent the existence of non-native invasive species in perpetuity.
4. Public awareness about the harmful impacts of non-native species into the environment.
5. Regional, state, and federal partnerships on efforts to eradicate invasive species.

Consistency: The proposed LEO Development is consistent with this strategy as proper measures will be taken to clear the site of invasive vegetation species.



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Conclusion:

The proposed LEO Development request will soundly advance the City's visions, intent and strategies by offering a desperately needed alternative housing option to the existing single-family housing stock that dominates this portion of the City. Further, the proposed LEO Development is offering a mix of living options which are highly desirable to multigenerational residents. The specific location is based within a cohesive geographic and developed network that already offers extensive employment and commercial services.

To address perceived adverse impacts on the adjacent single-family uses to the north of the LEO Development, the applicant proposes an enhanced buffer placed at the property line and includes a native shrubs and tree plantings in a manner that exceeds the buffer requirements of the Land Development Code. Additionally, the site has been designed to locate the multifamily buildings south of Cow Pen Slough canal to provide greater separation between the existing homes to the north. The site design also locates active uses such as pool areas, gathering places, dog parks, maintenance shops and solid waste services internal to the development and away from the single-family homes. Furthermore, the proposed LEO Development helps to establish a more cohesive and synergistic land use pattern in this region by providing a highly desirable and complementary use to the established and expanding commercial and employment base in the area and does so in a manner that is sensitive to the existing single-family house stock.

