



El Cid Historic Neighborhood Association
PO BOX 414
West Palm Beach, Florida 33402

October 27, 2023

The Frisbie Group

Cc: Franny Frisbie, Josh Martin, Philip Trapani, Tina Thomson, John MacConnell, Alex Holliday
221 Royal Poinciana Way, Suite #1
Palm Beach, Florida 33480

Dear Franny, Josh and Frisbie Group Team,

Thank you for hosting the recent community outreach meetings (September 21, October 3, and October 17) for the El Cid neighborhood regarding your redevelopment of 319 Belvedere Plaza. We appreciated the opportunity to hear your plans and give feedback. As the meetings progressed, especially at the October 17th meeting, we sensed your willingness to incorporate our community's thoughts and concerns into your design and we are grateful for that collaborative attitude. We believe, based on that last meeting, that we are on the way towards agreeing on a plan that might satisfy both your needs and the neighborhood's, with one primary exception - height. But we also sense that there may be a potential compromise which could work.

The El Cid residents' concerns for the overall height and density of the project remain. At each meeting, residents of the El Cid neighborhood voiced concerns, in addition to others, that the height and density was too much for such a small parcel in the middle of our historic residential neighborhood.

What follows is a summary of suggestions regarding plans for 319 Belvedere which might optimally align the objectives of the Frisbie Group while addressing the neighbors' concerns:

- **Height:** The most recent "ABC" and revised "Paseo" plans, presented in the Oct 17th meeting, are at least 55ft in height. That height would tower over the surrounding historic residential neighborhood where most homes average less than 25 feet.
 - **Recommendation:** Reduce the average height to 40 feet. 40ft is still twice the height of most homes in El Cid. The Magnolia Court Development, which also directly borders El Cid and does not technically abut residential, has an average height of 36' 4".
 - **Recommendation:** We recommend flipping the current design concept. Place the 2-story building on South Olive and gradually increase the roofline as the building approaches Dixie Highway where the height, while still substantially taller than

existing commercial structures, will have less dramatic impact than on the one and two-story residents' homes on the narrow street of Pershing and those on South Olive.

- **Density/FAR:** Every version of the project you presented in these meetings hovers around 65,000 square feet. That much FAR maxes out what is allowed under a potential commercial planned development (CPD) zoning, a designation meant for a lot size of at least 5 acres. Additionally, your plans do **not** currently calculate the fully enclosed ground floor “hidden” garage space into the FAR. FAR, as defined in the General Commercial Code, is meant to include fully enclosed spaces while open-air parking is intended to be excluded from FAR.
 - **Recommendation:** Recalculate the FAR to include the fully enclosed “hidden” ground floor parking.
 - **Recommendation:** Reduce the overall FAR to align with an average height of 40ft or less.
- **Building to Code:** We strongly encourage you to design within the current General Commercial Zoning code.
- **Frontage:** Treat the South Olive side as a “Front” of the property. As mentioned above, Dixie Highway can handle the extra height and minimum setback. The South Olive end is surrounded by historic and residential properties so a smaller structure at that end of the property would lessen the impact on those neighboring homes. The same considerations should also be made for the frontage facing the residential lots on Pershing.
- **Loading:** We will wait until we see a new site plan to comment on the specifics, but we are overall concerned about the loading for this condominium building. The solution can't be on any of the surrounding streets but rather on the property. And the entrance and exit for loading should not be on the Pershing or South Olive sides.
- **Traffic Flow:** Additionally, residents on the “300 block” of Pershing are specifically concerned about the garage door to the condos being placed in front of their houses causing issues on an already narrow street. We would also like to see a study that incorporates the school dismissal and rush hour traffic that is backed up daily on Belvedere and down South Olive. We are less concerned about trips counts, as the current commercial plaza doesn't cause the traffic backup.
- **Parking:** Will wait to see the revised site plan for comment but parking is always a top concern of our neighborhood.
- **Sun study:** In the October 17th meeting residents asked for the sun shade study which Franny stated had been completed. We would like to review that if you could please send to board@elcidhistoric.org.

In conclusion, the El Cid Historic Neighborhood Association Board believes The Frisbie Group, the El Cid neighborhood and the City of West Palm Beach have an opportunity to work together to approve a profitable project which can enhance the neighborhood. During these exciting times of economic growth, we understand change is healthy and things cannot always stay as they once were. We believe it is reasonable to obtain a Commercial East land use designation as

it enables some residential to be built. However, we are concerned about your additional request for a Commercial Planned Development (CPD) zoning change if your intention remains to max out the FAR on such a small lot without consideration for our historic neighborhood.

Our objective is not to be obstructionist, we believe there is a solid middle ground. In fact, on May 20, 2022, at our first meeting about the 319 Belvedere project with Josh Martin, the Board was shown a rendering that included retail on Dixie and most of Belvedere “definitely keeping Sushi Jo, the nail salon (Vita E’ Bella Nail & Day Spa) and Kitchen” – beloved neighborhood serving amenities, three story townhouses facing Pershing to tie into the historic residential on that street, and potentially two small bungalow style cottages on the South Olive side. The Frisbie Team even mentioned they had “no desire to build over three stories”. Josh ensured beautiful landscaping, coquina sidewalks, etc. The members of the El Cid board in attendance were thrilled. All the ideas were thoughtful and considerate of our historic neighborhood and the challenges of the small and narrow lot size. The members of the EL Cid Board left that meeting with no concerns and were frankly excited for the Frisbie Group to develop the project.

Those plans have completely changed since that first meeting and while we recognize that economic circumstances sometimes influence change, we hope you consider our feedback as you redesign the project. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors, El Cid Historic Neighborhood Association