



Project Address: 345 W Main Street

Application Type: Major Amendment to an Approved Planned Development (PD) for the Construction of an Independent Living Facility for Capitol Lakes Retirement Community
UDC is an Advisory Body

Legistar File ID #: [86359](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Jason Erdahl, Ankrom Moisan Architects | Capitol Lakes

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the demolition of an existing assisted living facility (44 units) to allow for the construction of a new independent living facility comprised of four stories and 49 units in the Capitol Lake Retirement Community. The proposal will be served by underground parking (58 stalls) and includes a third-floor skybridge connecting the proposed development to the entire Capitol Lakes Community.

Project Schedule:

- At the December 18, 2024, meeting, the Urban Design Commission received an Informational Presentation.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **advisory body** on this request. For Planned Developments the Urban Design Commission is required to provide a recommendation to the Plan Commission with specific findings on the design objectives listed in Zoning Code sections 28.098(2), Standards for Approval (attached for reference), including, more specifically:

PD Standard (e), which generally speaks to coordinating “...*architectural styles and building forms to achieve greater compatibility with surrounding land uses and create an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose of the PD District.*”

Adopted Plans: The project site is located in the [Downtown Plan](#) planning area, in the Downtown Core Neighborhood. Generally, the recommendations included in the Downtown Plan for the Downtown Core Neighborhood speak to encouraging a mix of uses and housing opportunities at higher levels of intensity to retain the area’s vibrancy.

As noted in the Downtown Plan, the maximum building height for the project site is four stories. As proposed, the four-story building is consistent with the Downtown Plan height limitations.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff requests that the UDC review the proposed development, provide feedback and make findings based on the above-referenced standards for Planned Developments as it pertains to the design considerations noted below.

- Building Orientation.** Given that the project site has frontage on three streets, including S Broom Street, W Main Street and W Doty Street consideration should be given to maintaining a positive building orientation to each street. As shown on the plans, active unit entries are only provided along S Broom

Street elevations (north and south). Incorporating design elements that contribute to creating an enhanced pedestrian environment, including, for example, active unit and common building entries having direct connectivity to the street, limiting/screening blank walls, as well as minimizing setbacks and incorporating pedestrian scale design elements (i.e., stoops, canopies, landscape, building articulation and material transitions/detailing, etc.) along the W Main and W Doty Street elevations could result in a more positive building orientation and an enhanced pedestrian environment along those street frontages.

Staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings on the overall building orientation.

- **Building Design and Composition.** The project site is in an area that transitions from a predominantly higher level of intensity mixed-use development to an area that is predominantly comprised of multi-family residential development. In addition, the project site is subject to sloping grades, as well as multiple street frontages. As such, consideration should be given to the overall building design and composition as it relates to the appropriateness of mass and scale and providing adequate transitions, minimizing blank walls, including in the design of the third-floor skywalk and incorporating articulation/changes in plane where materials/details transition, as well as utilizing the same level of detail across all elevations.

Staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings on the overall building design and composition, as it relates to the PD standards that speak to *"...creating an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area."*

For reference, and in summary, the Commission's Informational Presentation comments are noted below, including:

- Consideration should be given to the building entry hierarchy and providing a more pronounced common building entry.
 - Minimize blank walls along the sidewalk, including by introducing natural light into the subgrade parking.
 - Encourage more walk-up unit entries along W Main and Doty Streets.
 - A higher degree of design should be used in the material application to reduce the flatness in the facades; incorporate articulation in materials transitions.
- **Louvers/Wall Packs.** While small louvers common to residential uses are indicated on the elevation drawings, larger louvers are commonly associated with structured parking are not. Staff notes that while it has been the Commission's current practice to not locate louvers on street-facing or highly visible facades, they have been approved in some cases when found to be well integrated into the façade's design, including the use of perforated metal panels to screen louvers or utilizing a louver system that is consistent with the window opening size.

Staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings on the location and potential design-related considerations for these larger-scale louvers.

- **Landscape.** As indicated on the Site and Landscape Plans, there are several areas of "yard" and significant areas of planters both internal to the site and along street frontages. As such, consideration should be given to the landscape in these areas, not only in terms of the planting environment relative to species, but also as it relates to providing year-round color and texture to minimize blank walls and create an enhanced pedestrian environment. Staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings on the proposed Landscape Plan.

As noted by the UDC's Informational Presentation comments, for reference, and in summary:

- The Commission advocated for any potential to reintroduce living things back into the central core area, and
 - Particular attention should be paid to the blank walls and pedestrian experience; giving consideration to a planter wall (2-4 feet in height), and softscape to bring down the scale of the blank base – creating an edge along the street.
- **Materials.** As noted in the application materials, the building material palette is primarily comprised of masonry and fiber cement siding and panels. As noted by the Commission in their Informational Presentation comments, a higher degree of design and detailing in the materials should be considered, including as it relates to incorporating articulation where materials transition, as well as providing a better balance between the building components at the top and base of the building.

Staff requests the Commission's feedback and findings on the overall material palette and application as it relates to the PD Standard (e), *"...creating an environment of aesthetic desirability."*

- **Lighting.** Staff notes, and the applicant is advised, that there appear to be discrepancies between the proposed lighting and the outdoor lighting requirements pursuant to [MGO 29.36](#), including as it relates to the proposed fixtures and light levels. Revisions and additional information will be required to confirm compliance with fixture cutoff requirements and light levels. Please refer to MGO 29.36 and continue to coordination with staff for additional information.

Summary of UDC Informational Presentation Comments and Discussion

As a reference, a summary of the Commission's discussion and comments from the December 18, 2024, Informational Presentation are provided below:

The Commission confirmed that the development proposal is intended to serve independent living. The applicant confirmed, the development will be set-up much like a multi-family dwelling unit.

The Commission commented on the proposed four-story building height and questioned why it isn't taller. The applicant responded that this part of the block is in a four-story zone; as you move up Doty Street, it increases to a maximum of eight (8) stories. The Commission discussed bonus stories, with the Secretary explaining how additional height could be achieved through the major amendment to the Planned Development.

The Commission discussed the unit entries versus a main building entry, noting it is difficult to tell the front of the building without any signified entry. The hierarchy of the building and its entries should be addressed. The applicant noted that this project does not have a public entry, only residential entries. The main lobby is part of the main campus and is located along W Main Street.

The Commission discussed mechanical equipment and screening, as well as possible louvers. The applicant noted there will be parapets with screening for mechanicals on the roof, and that the elevator may not actually go that tall. The applicant noted that these details are still be worked out, but the intent is to centrally locate the mechanicals and screen with the parapet.

The Commission discussed the material palette, and how it fits in contextually. The applicant responded that the masonry base is contextual with the campus, without replicating one of the many styles on the campus. Other materials include fiber cement siding, horizontal lap/residential, smoother on the top in fiber cement panel or composite panel, with some transition bands to articulate those materials. The Commission commented that certain types of affordable housing shouldn't be pointed out by the materials they use. With a higher degree of design in how those materials are used, they can look just as good as market rate housing. Flat facades look

cheap and dated. There needs to be push and pull so it's not just the banding that makes the base, middle and top.

The Commission inquired about the mature healthy trees in the terrace. The applicant noted they are working to preserve and protect the existing trees. There is possible sidewalk rework in the future that may affect some trees.

The Commission discussed the landscaping on the interior side of the building. The applicant noted that the existing outdoor area for assisted living will go away as part of this development. The Commission advocated for any potential to reintroduce living things back into that core.

The Commission asked about the parking going under another existing building; the applicant noted it is under the courtyard area. The Commission suggested opportunities to introduce natural light into the subgrade parking.

The Commission asked about the amount of glazing that could lead to cooler/hotter spaces, and to think about an appropriate amount of glazing that is comfortable for the occupants.

The Commission commented that this is a badly needed housing type in this city and that additional height is encouraged. The Commission noted that additional height could still result in a successful transition if designed right.

Encouragement was given to consider how the entrances could be more pronounced both along W Main and individual unit entries. Addressing the blank walls along the sidewalk/ways to break up the solid walls at the pedestrian level and how those are treated. The raised parking creates some voids in the architecture and design; consideration should be given to the locations and design of necessary louvers for ventilation. Overall, the base does not support the top, those are in conflict with each other.

The Commission noted that they will pay particular attention to those blank walls and pedestrian experience when this item returns for approvals. Consideration could be given to a planter wall (2-4 feet in height), a structured softscape to bring down the scale of the blank base – something to create an edge but also hold landscape. This is a vibrant downtown location, try to retain those moments where you can see into the inner campus.

In regard to the building materials and design language, the Commission inquired about how this development ties into the rest of the campus. The applicant noted that there are a variety of architectural styles present on the campus. Overall, the desire is to have it fit in really well with brick and masonry materials, a similar tone, but not match style-wise.

The Commission noted that the rooftop amenity space is supported and encouraged noting that the design challenge is that it is up high and it is flat; there is no other structure to serve as your "back". The Commission noted that the design of this space should have elements/features that define the space and hold it, including landscape and some element of structure to anchor it.

The Commission stated support for more height in the project.

ATTACHMENT
PD Zoning Statement of Purpose and Standards

28.098 (1) Statement of Purpose.

The Planned Development (PD) District is established to provide a voluntary regulatory framework as a means to facilitate the unique development of land in an integrated and innovative fashion, to allow for flexibility in site design, and to encourage development that is sensitive to environmental, cultural, and economic considerations, and that features high-quality architecture and building materials. In addition, the Planned Development District is intended to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

- (a) Promotion of green building technologies, low-impact development techniques for stormwater management, and other innovative measures that encourage sustainable development.
- (b) Promotion of integrated land uses allowing for a mixture of residential, commercial, and public facilities along corridors and in transitional areas, with enhanced pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections and amenities.
- (c) Preservation and enhancement of important environmental features through careful and sensitive placement of buildings and facilities.
- (d) Preservation of historic buildings, structures, or landscape features through adaptive reuse of public or private preservation of land.
- (e) Provision of more adequate, usable, and suitably located open space, recreational amenities, and other public facilities than would otherwise be provided under conventional land development techniques.
- (f) Facilitation of high-quality development that is consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.

28.098(2) Approval Standards for Project

The standards for approval of a zoning map amendment to the PD District, or any major alteration to an approved General Development Plan, are as follows:

- (a) The applicant shall demonstrate that no other base zoning district can be used to achieve a substantially similar pattern of development. Planned developments shall not be allowed simply for the purpose of increasing overall density or allowing development that otherwise could not be approved unless the development also meets one or more of the objectives of (1) above. Conditions under which planned development may be appropriate include:
 - 1. Site conditions such as steep topography or other unusual physical features; or
 - 2. Redevelopment of an existing area or use of an infill site that could not be reasonably developed under base zoning district requirements.
- (b) The PD District plan shall facilitate the development or redevelopment goals of the Comprehensive Plan and of adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.
- (c) The PD District plan shall not adversely affect the economic health of the City or the area of the City where the development is proposed. The City shall be able to provide municipal services to the property where the planned development is proposed without a significant increase of the cost of providing those services or economic impact on municipal utilities serving that area.

- (d) The PD District plan shall not create traffic or parking demands disproportionate to the facilities and improvements designed to meet those demands. A traffic demand management plan may be required as a way to resolve traffic and parking concerns. The Plan shall include measurable goals, strategies, and actions to encourage travelers to use alternatives to driving alone, especially at congested times of day. Strategies and actions may include, but are not limited to, carpools and vanpools; public and private transit; promotion of bicycling, walking and other non-motorized travel; flexible work schedules and parking management programs to substantially reduce automobile trips.
- (e) The PD District plan shall coordinate architectural styles and building forms to achieve greater compatibility with surrounding land uses and create an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose of the PD District.
- (f) The PD District plan shall include open space suitable to the type and character of development proposed, including for projects with residential components, a mix of structured and natural spaces for use by residents and visitors. Areas for stormwater management, parking, or in the public right of way shall not be used to satisfy this requirement.
- (g) The PD district shall include suitable assurances that each phase could be completed in a manner that would not result in an adverse effect upon the community as a result of termination at that point.
- (h) When applying the above standards to an application for height in excess of that allowed in Section 28.071(2)(a) Downtown Height Map, except as provided for in Section 28.071(2)(a)1. and Section 28.071(2)(b), the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendations in adopted plans and no application for excess height shall be granted by the Plan Commission unless it finds that all of the following conditions are present:
 - 1. The excess height is compatible with the existing or planned (if the recommendations in the Downtown Plan call for changes) character of the surrounding area, including but not limited to the scale, mass, rhythm, and setbacks of buildings and relationships to street frontages and public spaces.
 - 2. The excess height allows for a demonstrated higher quality building than could be achieved without the additional stories.
 - 3. The scale, massing and design of new buildings complement and positively contribute to the setting of any landmark buildings within or adjacent to the project and create a pleasing visual relationship with them.
 - 4. For projects proposed in priority viewsheds and other views and vistas identified on the Views and Vistas Map in the City of Madison Downtown Plan, there are no negative impacts on the viewshed as demonstrated by viewshed studies prepared by the applicant.
- (i) When applying the above standards to an application to reduce or eliminate setbacks required by Section 28.071(2)(c) Downtown Setback Map, the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendations in adopted plans, including the downtown plan. No application to reduce or eliminate setbacks may be granted unless it finds that all of the following conditions are present:
 - 1. The lot is a corner parcel.
 - 2. The lot is not part of a larger assemblage of properties.
 - 3. The entire lot is vacant or improved with only a surface parking lot.
 - 4. No principal buildings on the lot have been demolished or removed since the effective date of this ordinance