



Project Address: 15-27 N Butler Street & 302-308 E Washington Avenue

Application Type: Informational Presentation for a Major Amendment to an Existing Planned Development for a New Mixed-Use Building in Urban Design District 4
UDC will be an Approving and Advisory Body

Legistar File ID #: [87895](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Eric Minton, Butler Plaza, LLC | Duane Johnson, Knothe & Bruce Architects

Project Description: The applicant is proposing an eleven-story mixed-use building containing 76 dwelling units, underground parking, and a ground floor commercial tenant space for Capitol Fitness.

Approval Standards: Upon formal submittal, the UDC will be both an **approving and advisory body** on this request. The site is located in Urban Design District 4 ("UDD 4"), which makes the Urban Design Commission an approving body related to the design standards and guidelines for that district in [MGO Section 33.24](#)(11).

In addition, the project site is zoned Planned Development. 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."

And PD Standard (h), which speaks to height in excess of that allows in the Downtown Height Map noting that "...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.

Zoning Related Information: As noted in the Downtown Height Map, pursuant to MGO 28.071, the maximum height for the project site is eight stories/116 feet with the potential for two additional stories, for a total of 10 stories/144 feet.

The proposed building is eleven stories, which exceeds the maximum height allowed in the Downtown Height Map in stories.

Staff notes that while the proposed building is more than the maximum building height in stories, additional stories may be requested either as part of a Planned Development or as part of a voluntary land use restriction agreement to provide income restricted dwelling units provided the overall building height in feet (144 feet) is not exceeded. It is staff's understanding that the applicant is proposing to pursue the land use restriction agreement. Staff notes and the applicant is advised, that while the proposed building's height in feet is not included on the elevation drawings, staff notes that the building shall not exceed 144 feet.

Adopted Plans: The project site is 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 Maximum Building Height Map, the maximum building height for the project site is eight stories (116 feet) with the potential for two additional stories, for a total of 10 stories (144 feet). As noted in the Downtown Plan, Additional Height Area H, while tall buildings are appropriate in this area, this area also functions a transition area both within the corridor, as well as to the surrounding context. The Downtown Plan also noted that when requests for additional height are being evaluated, careful consideration should be given to viewshed/corridor impacts, including long and short views, as well as building mass and scale and context and character.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommends the UDC provide feedback on the development proposal regarding the aforementioned standards as it relates to the design considerations noted below.

- **Building Design and Composition.** The project site is located at the intersection of N Butler Street and E Washington Avenue. Due to the site's topography, prominence, and surrounding context, it is believed all four facades will be highly visible. Staff notes that the Downtown Plan also identifies East Washington Avenue as a "Premier Corridor" as one of eight major streets that frame views to and from the Capitol.

UDD 4 "Building Design" guidelines and requirements generally speak to designing with a sensitivity to context, avoiding large unbroken facades, utilizing four-sided architecture, etc. The guidelines also speak to the architecture of new in-fill buildings being compatible with adjacent buildings. Staff refers the Commission to some of the recent projects in near proximity to the project site, including St. John's Lutheran Church (Legistar File ID [74526](#)), The Continental (Legistar File ID [62383](#)), and the recently approved 521 E Washington Avenue redevelopment at the corner of E Washington Avenue and S Blair Street (Legistar File ID [836068](#)).

Staff requests that the UDC provide feedback on the overall building design and composition, including as it relates utilizing four-sided architecture with the same level of detailing across all four elevations and all building components, minimizing blank walls (southwest and northwest elevations), incorporating a strong corner element, and utilizing a richer level of design details at the pedestrian level along both E Washington Avenue and N Butler Street.

- **Materials.** The exterior material palette is anticipated to primarily be comprised of masonry veneer, MCM panel, and corrugated metal panel.

UDD 4 Building Design guidelines and requirements state that exterior materials shall be low maintenance and harmonious with those used on other buildings in the area.

Of particular concern is the extent of the use of metal panels (MCM and corrugated metal panels), especially the corrugated metal panels; a material that is seemingly out of context, not only as it relates to the immediately surrounding development, but also the corridor. Additional information and material details are needed for staff to fully evaluate the material for consistency with the UDD 4 guidelines and requirements, as well as Planned Development standards.

Staff requests the Commission provide feedback related to the proposed material palette, especially as it relates to the surrounding context, use of corrugated metal panel, masonry veneer details and design cohesion with lighter accent materials, utilizing a consistent level of design detailing across all elevations, including those walls that are higher on the building, incorporating articulation in material transitions and detailing, utilizing a richer level of design and detailing at the pedestrian level, etc.

- **Wall Packs.** While not indicated on the elevations, wall pack units are commonly associated with residential units. It has been the current practice to locate wall packs and their associated louvers so that they are not located on street-facing or on highly visible facades, although they have been approved in some situations when found to be well integrated into the façade's design. Staff requests the Commission's comments on the potential use wall packs and the preferred location, as well as it relates to the design detailing and their overall integration with architecture.
- **Long Views.** Due to the prominence of this site near the Capitol Building, very careful consideration should be given to the building's overall design impact relative to the surrounding context and viewsheds, especially as to how the upper levels are viewed from longer distances, especially looking towards the Capitol from East Washington Avenue. This should be considered in concert with the aforementioned comments to create a strong corner element and minimizing the blank wall expanses.
- **Lighting.** As indicated on the elevation drawings, lighting is proposed high on the building. UDD 4 "Lighting" requirements and guidelines speak to the functions of exterior lighting, including to illuminate facades, especially those bearing signage, pedestrian spaces, and parking/service areas, light levels being adequate, but not excessive, that the fixture should relate to its function (decorative versus utilitarian), and that architectural lighting should be free from glare and of a type that complements the existing development in the district.

Staff requests the Commission's feedback related to the proposed lighting high on the building, including as it relates to the overall function of the lighting being necessary to accentuate an architectural feature or detail, the lighting being complementary to and integrated with the overall building design, and in terms of the fixture selection limiting glare, as well as producing appropriate light levels.

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