

Threshold Builds
2020 Eastwood Drive, Suite 100
Madison, WI 53704

27 May 2025

Meagan Tuttle, AICP
Director, Planning Division
City of Madison Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd | Suite 017
PO Box 2985
Madison, WI 53701

RE Letter of Intent | Land Use Application and UDC
PROJECT Eastmorland Community Center + Housing
SITE 3565 Tulane Avenue
TB PROJECT NO. 24-0012

Dear Ms. Meagan Tuttle,

The following is submitted together with the plans and application for review by the Urban Design Commission, Plan Commission, and Common Council. We are requesting a lot combination via CSM, a zoning map amendment from TR-C2 to PD, and demolition permit.

PROJECT TEAM

Owner
Common Grace, LLC
3565 Tulane Avenue
Madison, WI 53714
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Architect and Builder
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INTRODUCTION

The subject property is currently zoned Traditional Residential-Consistent 2 District (TR-C2) and is within the Transit-Oriented Development Overlay District (TOD). The proposed project would require the site to be rezoned to a Planned Development District (PD) to accommodate the proposed uses of housing, retail, and a community center.

LOCATION

The subject property is 3565 Tulane Avenue. The triangular-shaped property is bounded north by Tulane Avenue, to the east by Ogden Street, and to the south by Hargrove Street. Existing improvements include a 1-story building serving primarily as a community center and place of worship. The subject property is in Aldermanic District 15 and located within the boundary of the Eastmorland Community Association.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Common Grace is planning to develop their property into a multi-use site known as the Eastmorland Community Center + Housing project. The development will include missing middle-scale workforce housing, a community center, and retail space. The community center will contain space for a myriad of community-based groups, organizations, and users, but is also meant to serve as a third space for general community gathering. The community center is estimated to be approximately 7,000 square feet.

The housing portion of the development will be developed as low-rise workforce housing. Commonly referred to as missing-middle housing, this style of housing proposed was once commonplace offering enough density to increase affordability but also being compatible in scale and form with single-family home neighborhoods. Common Grace intends on operating such housing as workforce housing, or close to 80% of the area-median income, from day one. The housing is estimated to include 26 multifamily homes with a mix of studios, 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, and 3-bedroom units.

DESIGN

The proposed site contains two main buildings: the community center and retail building to the west and the housing building to the east. The two buildings are pushed to the north and are separated as far apart as possible, while maintaining comfortable setbacks at the edges, to create and shape space for a shared commons or public courtyard / plaza between the two. Both the community center and housing will have direct access to the shared commons, which is envisioned as spill-out space for the community center, patio space for the retail user, outdoor space for the housing residents, and for outdoor events such as farmer's markets. The site also contains approximately 19 off-street surface parking spaces. Vehicular site access will be from Hargrove Street, which will also be the main entry for the community center.

Eastmorland Community Center and Retail Building Design

The community center building will offer a wide range of flexible and functional spaces, including a formal space with a balcony for larger gatherings and performances and an informal space designed for more everyday use and to serve as the “living room” or “third space” of the neighborhood. The two large spaces will be able to open up to one another for special occasions when a larger space is needed. Other spaces include a commercial kitchen, a food pantry, an art room, a music room, and some dedicated offices. A retail space is being proposed on the lower level (Ethical Trade Company).

Housing Building Design

The housing is imagined as a three-story walk-up style apartment fronting Ogden Street. The building is setback approximately 10’ towards the intersection of Ogden and Hargrove and it steps back to an 18’ setback at the intersection of Ogden and Tulane. We did this to soften the three-story façade along Ogden and also to create a larger vision triangle at Tulane. There are 8 flats on the ground level, each will have private exterior access with landscaped semi-private patio space and dedicated bike parking. The remaining homes are accessed via exterior stairs towards the center of the property with extra-wide exterior egress balconies which will serve an egress component, but also offer covered outdoor space large enough for patio furniture for each home. The housing building will also have a small community room on the ground level with space for lounging, bicycle storage, parcel and mail delivery, laundry, and co-working space. This common space will have direct access from Ogden and will flow through to the central commons / plaza.

The building’s massing incorporates two step-backs, which breaks up the building along Ogden into 3 pieces. The housing building’s community room space is accessible from both the plaza and Ogden, creating connection through the building. A central idea of the owner is the concept of curves and arches. Curves are present in the unique shape of the site and we are adding subtle curves at select outside and inside corners to add visual interest as well as to soften the building’s corners. The exterior materials of the building incorporate corrugated metal, lap siding, and wood. Being that this is workforce housing, we are exploring a palette of humble materials and relying on patterns, scale, and shadow lines inherent in the materials to compose an exterior architecture that is interesting and relates to the whole.

Site Design

The focal point of the site design is the commons or plaza area towards the north (central to the site) that is shaped by the community center and housing buildings. The plaza is the main node connection all the activity at the site. The plaza will be multi-functional space with potential outdoor events such as farmer’s markets, weddings, or general community gathering and spill-out space for the community center and provides outdoor space for the housing occupants. To the south of the plaza is surface parking, which shall be screened from both Hargrove and Tulane. The surface parking is also located adjacent to the plaza to

allow for larger outdoor events for special occasions that require more space such as food truck hosting and block parties.

Other site design features include community garden plots to the south of the housing where residents or community members can grow vegetables together. We are imagining utilizing native plantings, rainwater gardens, and edible landscapes throughout the site. At the intersection of Hargrove and Tulane, we are imagining a small meditative garden with an art piece made from the repurposed copper spire on the existing building. The project provides abundant bicycle parking scattered across the site and at the interior of the housing building; We feel this is especially important considering the proximity to the Capital City Trail.

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT – STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVES

We believe our proposed project meets the standards and objectives of the PD district. We worked with city staff and ultimately concluded that with the varying uses we are proposing (community center, retail, housing), there was no underlying zoning district that would satisfy all of the requirements of our site located in the TOD. We understand that a PD is to be used rarely, but we feel our development alignment with the comprehensive plan (see below) make it a good candidate. We feel our development aligns with several specific objectives of the PD, as outlined below:

- (a) Sustainable Development
 - We are proposing the following:
 - Solar ready, or solar panels provided on the roof of either building;
 - EV chargers in excess of ordinance requirements;
 - Incorporation of native plantings, low-impact development stormwater management techniques;
 - While we are not targeting a specific building certification, our team of passive house experts are targeting strategies that will drastically improve our building's airtightness and energy consumption; and
 - incorporation energy-recovery ventilation with advanced MERV filtration and low-or-no-VOC materials and finishes for healthy interiors.
- (b) Integrated Land Uses
 - Our proposed project integrates many land uses in a neighborhood that offers amenities and access. We have a mixture of housing, community-based uses, and retail. The neighborhood has excellent linkages to schools, parks, transit, bicycle paths, and large employment centers—it make sense to add housing density here.
- (e) Suitably Located and Usable Public Facilities and Open Space
 - The main purpose of this development is to add a large community gathering space – it is meant to create space for people to interact. We are creating indoor and outdoor space for this interaction.
- (f) High-Quality Development Aligned with Comprehensive Plan

- We feel the community center, retail, and workforce housing components align immensely with the comprehensive plan.

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT – REZONING REQUEST JUSTIFICATION

The latest City of Madison Comprehensive Plan's Generalized Future Land Use Map labels the subject site as Special Institutional (SI), but further states that, *"Buildings that include places of worship, schools, and other institutions may be optimal for adaptive reuse or redevelopment with residential uses when the institutional use(s) relocate, cease to exist, or perhaps remain as part of a redevelopment. These sites are often embedded in residential areas, and are typically larger than most surrounding residential lots, making them good candidates for more intensive residential development. Redevelopment with Low-Medium Residential (LMR) uses is appropriate."* In our project's case, our user is remaining as part of the development, adding a community center, and building workforce housing. The comprehensive plan states that LMR housing uses should be 1-3 stories and under 31 units per acre of density, our proposed project meets both of these requirements (the project is 3 stories and is at 30 dwelling units per acre).

Our project aligns with many additional stated goals of the latest City of Madison Comprehensive Plan. Some of those strategies in the neighborhood and housing category include the following:

- Complete neighborhoods offer a range of housing types, well-connected streets, public spaces, connected parks, paths, greenways, schools, worship, transit and bicycle access: Our proposed project provides housing in an area that offers these amenities.
- Wider mix of housing types and sizes: Our project proposes missing-middle, or low-rise high-density housing in a walkable neighborhood with nearby amenities.
- Increase the amount of housing: Our proposed project increases housing density, but in a comfortable manner.
- Lower priced housing: Our project is targeting workforce housing from day one.
- Food access that is both nutritious and affordable: The community center will be adding a food pantry and the overall development is encouraging community gardening and planning for farmer's market events. Our project site is also near existing groceries such as Woodman's.

CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

The project team has notified the alder and neighborhood association of our intent to file a land use application for a rezoning and demolition of the existing building. The project team has been working with various community stakeholders and city staff for several years on this project. We gave a formal presentation to the Eastmorland Community Association on November 19, 2024 and an updated presentation on April 8, 2025. Those in

attendance at the first meeting were largely in support and inspired by the project's aims. We also met with the city's Development Assistance Team on March 13, 2025.

DEMOLITION STANDARDS

The existing building no longer meets the needs of the owner. The spaces are not large enough and are too fragmented. More importantly there is deferred maintenance issues that would be too costly to address as well as issues with basement water management. Every spring the roof leaks, and there are cracks in the basement foundation wall system. We intend on re-using as much of the existing materials as is feasible. The project team will submit a re-use and recycling plan to the city. The building was built circa 1953; the architect was Siberz, Purcell, Cuthbert & Newcomb. An addition was completed circa 1954 by Siberz, Purcell, Cuthbert. Another addition was completed circa 1958 by Edward Tough. The building is not a landmark and is not in a landmark district nor does the building have any historical significance. We believe the demolition standards can be met for this proposed demolition.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DATA

Site Areas

Lot Area:	37,520 sf (0.86 acres)
Dwelling Units:	26
Lot Area/Dwelling Unit:	1,443 sf
Density:	30.19 dwelling units/acre
Usable Open Space:	21,982 sf
Open Space/Dwelling Unit:	845 sf
Building Footprints, Aggregate	10,297 sf
Vehicular Impervious	5,241 sf
Lot Coverage:	15,538 sf

Building Height

Height:	3 stories / 37'-4 1/2"
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Building Areas

Building A - Housing:	18,588 gsf (6,196 gsf per level)
Building B - ECC:	7,236 gsf (6,628 net sf)

Dwelling Unit Mix

Studios:	18
1-Bedroom:	3
2-Bedroom:	4
3-Bedroom:	1
Total:	26

Parking – Vehicular

Surface parking provided:	19 spaces
Parking required:	0 spaces (TOD)
Structured parking:	-

Parking – Bicycle

Housing:	24 spaces (14 vertical, 10 horizontal)
Exterior	38 spaces (horizontal)
Total bicycle spaces:	62 spaces

EV Charing Spaces

EV Ready Spaces (20%):	4 spaces required / 4 spaces provided
EV Installed Spaces (4%):	1 space required / 2 spaces provided

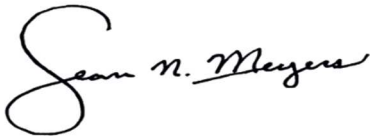
PROJECT SCHEDULE

The proposed schedule is to commence construction in September 2025.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for your time and consideration reviewing our proposed project. We look forward to your support and feedback.

Sincerely,



Sean Meyers, RA, NCARB, CPHC

Principal