



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 310-322 E Washington Avenue
Application Type: Planned Development (PD) in Urban Design District (UDD) No. 4 Informational Presentation
Legistar File ID # [68154](#)
Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Mark Binkowski, MRB Holdings | St. John’s Lutheran Church

Project Description: The applicant is providing an Informational Presentation of a Planned Development (PD) for the redevelopment of the St. John’s Lutheran Church site with a 10-story mixed-use building. The ground floor would include worship and community space with 126 residential units located on the upper nine (9) levels.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC received an Informational Presentation on December 1, 2021.

Approval Standards: When before the UDC for Final Action, the UDC will be both an **approving and advisory body** on this request. As an **approving body**, the UDC is reviewing this as new development in Urban Design District 4 (“UDD 4”). This requires that the Urban Design Commission to review the proposed project using the design standards and guidelines for that district in MGO Section 33.24(11).

If the project proceeds under PD zoning, UDC is also an **advisory body** on the Planned Development 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\(1\)](#), Statement of Purpose, and (2), Standards for Approval (PD Standards Attached).

Additional Background Information. This item was originally scheduled for the November 9, 2022 meeting for Final Action. That request included a conditional use consideration for bonus stories within the current UMX (Urban Mixed-Use) zoning district. Prior to completion of this report, Zoning staff determined that the proposal did not comply with the design standards for UMX zoning, specifically the requirement that the average ground story floor elevation is not higher than eighteen (18) inches above the sidewalk elevation and the maximum first story height limit of 18 feet above the sidewalk elevation.

Due to concerns with being able to demonstrate that the PD Standards can be met, Planning and Zoning staff have first encouraged the applicant to explore design modifications to the current design concept to avoid the need for a PD Zoning Map Amendment. Recognizing the development team’s desire to continue with the current design concept, staff has provided a timeline to pursue a PD, noting that additional information will need to be provided to further justify the use of PD zoning. Whether such standards can be met will ultimately be determined by the Common Council. Procedurally, to initiate a PD rezoning request, an applicant is required to have a pre-application discussion with UDC. As such, the applicant will be providing this Informational Presentation in-lieu of the public hearing and Final Approval request, which is being referred to the December 14, 2022 meeting.

Adopted Plans. The project site is located in the [Downtown Plan](#) (the “Plan”) planning area within the Downtown Core neighborhood. Generally, the Plan notes that development in this area should be the highest intensity with

a mix of office, employment, retail, government, residential, cultural, entertainment, and other uses to retain the areas' vibrancy.

The Plan also includes the project site within "Additional Height Area H," which extends along the north side of East Washington Avenue, between Blair and Webster Streets. The Plan notes, in part, that while tall buildings are appropriate here, the area also functions as an area of transition to some extent. As noted in the Plan, up to two bonus stories may be considered *"In order to encourage taller buildings that provide continuity with the Capital Gateway Corridor and further enhance this important approach to Downtown, up to two bonus stories (beyond the base eight (8) stories) may be considered."* Consideration of "bonus" stories are evaluated by the Plan Commission against the following standards:

- a. *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.*
- b. *The excess height allows for a demonstrated higher quality building than could be achieved without the additional stories.*
- c. *The scale, massing and design of new buildings complement and positively contribute to the setting of any landmark buildings within or adjacent to the projects and create a pleasing visual relationship with them.*
- d. *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.*

Summary of Design Considerations and Recommendations

Staff requests that the UDC provides feedback on the development proposal regarding the aforementioned standards, including as it relates to the items noted below:

- **Ground Level Activation.** Among the primary design considerations is the adequacy of the ground level activation, which is made more challenging due to the grade changes across the site. The zoning code includes requirements intended to activate the street frontage, by setting the first-floor level near the sidewalk grade, across a site. Some solutions include lowering the high point of a site below the sidewalk grade or stepping the floor levels of the building down as grade drops across the site. Currently, the N Hancock Street side is activated through a lower-level exposure for the residential use, though that does not carry over to the East Washington facade. Staff requests that UDC provide feedback regarding the ground level activation along East Washington Avenue, near the North Hancock Street corner, especially as it relates to the presence of blank walls where code requirements encourage street-level activation.
- **Bonus Stories.** As proposed, two bonus stories are proposed. Staff requests the UDC provide feedback on the proposed bonus stories as it relates to the criteria noted above, including those that generally speak to maintaining compatibility/complementary to the surrounding context and scale, both planned and existing, maintaining an environment of aesthetic desirability, presenting a higher quality of design.
- **Longviews.** As noted in the Downtown Plan, the project site is located within a Capital Gateway Corridor. As such, consideration should be given to how the proposed development contributes to the overall cityscape within the gateway corridor, especially as it relates to other the recent new development. While longviews were not included in the submittal materials, consideration should be given to the composition

of the proposed building in terms of its visibility from vantage points within the corridor, including materials, glazing, and color; and how it fits in as part of the overall cityscape.

- **Materials.** The building material palette is primarily comprised of masonry, including brick, stone and precast concrete, with glass, wood veneer, and fiber cement accents. Staff requests the Commission provide feedback on the overall building material palette, especially as it relates to the criteria noted above, including those that generally speak to maintaining an environment of aesthetic desirability, presenting a higher quality of design.
- **Landscape.** Staff requests the Commission provide feedback on the proposed landscape plan, especially with regard to providing year-round color and texture both along the street level and within rooftop open spaces, as well as screening blank walls.
- **Lighting.** The photometric plan appears to have inconsistencies with the City's Outdoor Lighting requirements (Section 29.36, MGO) for medium/low level activity areas, including light levels in excess of 2.5 footcandles in pedestrian areas. As a potential code compliance issue, the applicant is advised that an updated photometric plan and fixture cutsheets, consistent with MGO Section 29.36, will be required to be submitted for review and approval prior to permitting. In addition, building façade lighting is proposed, including at the top edge of the tower as well as under the concrete structures of each individual private terraces. Staff requests the Commission provide feedback with regard to the proposed architectural lighting at the top of the building, as well as mounting details of the proposed fixtures and night views of the building.

Summary of UDC Previous Informational Presentation

As a reference, the Commission's comments from the December 1, 2021, Informational Presentation are provided below:

- Low income housing, thank you for that. I really hope to see three-bedroom units in the future plans. The corner with vertical elements that look like folded Origami are quite lovely. How much glazing is there, the units are pretty small, might be worth reviewing for privacy and placement of furniture.
- I often wonder how I could stand having a bedroom with floor to ceiling glass in it.
- It is a concern of neighbors that you're always having vehicles come down that way. If there is an option and you could present it next time that would be appreciated. It is important to have plans that show traffic patterns and shade studies. Other than that it is a beautiful building. This is relatively within the expectations of the area plans.
- It's a very handsome building. Roughly 125 units, what is the expected number of parking spaces?
 - We are intending to build fewer parking stalls than we otherwise would, between 70-90 parking stalls. It's directly in front E. Washington Avenue and the future BRT, ½ a block from the bike path and a block to the Square. Hopefully that mitigates traffic issues on the neighborhood. We did look at the one-way configuration of N. Hancock Street, but because of grading on the side we have to put the access into the underground parking at the low point. If we put it on E. Washington Avenue we'd need fairly extensive ramping which would really negatively impact and take away a lot of the St. John's floor space and partnering space.
- It will be important for us to see where all the deliveries and ride-sharing vehicles will park.
 - I completely agree. We're engaging a traffic study, impact analysis and demand management plan.
- I struggled with the challenging mission to reflect the church's legacy. The stained glass incorporation is a really nice touch. How does the architecture of this building support low income housing?

- We want to emphasize the warmth and authenticity of the material, we're not using a lot of metal panel or blank façades. Providing access with the outdoor space on the second floor, as well as some of the balconies, and larger windows to bring that natural light and warmth.
- It's an unusual mix of programming functions. Being respectful of the church and its history, trying to create a project that is respectful of those who will live within the residences, welcoming and warm, trying to keep the materials at a level of quality fitting with St. John's and a project of this scale. It's a challenging project to weave this selection of materials for every component of the project.
- It was important for us to choose material that's durable and will stand the test of time. We want this to stay affordable, stay beautiful, choosing those materials that will really last.
- I really commend this project for that goal of the residents you hope to house, and also the architecture.
- Good you don't distinguish low income from higher rent units.
- I have been looking forward to the conversation around this project with the mix of program being so unique. Had a range of emotions and reactions looking at the proposal. You're on the right track, when you consider sustainability, resilience, how the use of the building could change over time, choosing those quality materials and emphasizing that is the right move. When I consider the function of the church and community space and think of it as a cultural project it seems a little safe. The stained glass is a bold move and I like where you're going with it but it feels more like the residential program of the project. The actual light and tactile experience is going to be really fantastic. Like the clean plinth with the garden spaces. Stone would be lovely carried through down to that pedestrian level at the forefront of the elements. Very interesting project.
 - Intending for that corner element beneath the church to be stone.
- Balconies, nice way of separating elements with slight recess on the Hancock Street rendering.

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 stepbacks required by Section 28.071(2)(c) Downtown Stepback Map, the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendations in adopted plans, including the downtown plan. No application to reduce or eliminate stepbacks 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.