



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 402-414 East Washington Avenue/8-12 N. Franklin Street/9 N. Hancock Street

**Application Type:** New Mixed-use Development (UMX Zoning) in UDD #4

Initial/Final Approval is Requested

**Legistar File ID #** [62383](#)

**Prepared By:** Janine Glaeser, UDC Secretary

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Randy Bruce, Duane Johnson, Knothe & Bruce Architects/John Leja, LZ Ventures

**Project Description:** The applicant proposes to construct a ten-story mixed-use building over lower level parking on a site in Urban Design District No. 4. The development team is requesting (2) bonus stories. The new development will include 148 (previously 156) apartments with underground parking stalls. There are two decisions before the Urban Design Commission for this development. The applicant first requests an advisory recommendation regarding bonus stories and new development in UMX Zoning. Second, the applicant requests approval of a development in Urban Design District (UDD) 4.

### Project Schedule:

- The UDC received informational presentations for a previous iteration of the design on January 29, 2020 and March 11, 2020, and granted final approval on July 1, 2020 (Legistar #[58980](#)). The Plan Commission placed the previous plans on file without prejudice on July 13, 2020.
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review this revised proposal on November 9, 2020.

**Design-Related Plan Recommendations:** The [Comprehensive Plan](#) recommends “Downtown Core” uses for the subject site, which is identified as the center of Downtown and should generally possess the highest intensity of development. The most specific recommendations for the subject site are contained within the [Downtown Plan](#). The recommended height in that plan, which was later codified in the Zoning Ordinance, is up to eight stories, with the possibility to achieve a maximum of two bonus stories consistent with the height maps in the Downtown Plan. Bonus stories are approved by the Plan Commission. Further information is found in the body of this report as it relates to the referenced standards.

### Approval Standards:

The UDC is both an advisory and approving body on this request.

The UDC is an **approving body** related to the site’s location within Urban Design District 4 (“UDD 4”), which requires that the Urban Design Commission review the proposed project using the design standards and guidelines for that district in MGO Section 33.24(11). The UDC is an **advisory body** to the Plan Commission regarding the conditional use aspects of the proposed development related to the approval of “bonus stories” and as a new building greater than twenty thousand (20,000) square feet or four (4) stories in UMX Zoning. UDC shall review such projects for conformity to the design standards in [Sec. 28.071](#)(3) and the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines and report its findings to the Plan Commission.

## Summary of Design Considerations and Recommendations

In review of the updated materials, Staff recommends that the UDC review and comment based on the specific Guidelines and Standards of [UDD 4](#), UMX Zoning Requirements-[Sec. 28.071\(3\)](#), [Madison's Downtown Plan](#), and [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#).

### A brief summary of some of the key design changes from the previously approved project:

- **Massing/height:** The building height has been reduced to 116' from the previously proposed 125' height. The north east corner element has been reduced to six stories at 54' height from the previously proposed seven stories at 66' height. (*see attached height diagram*) However, the building is still considered a ten-story building for zoning purposes due to the resident amenities on the level above the ninth floor (labeled as "Penthouse" (Sheet A-1.10)), which include a community room, exercise room, and pool.
- **Program:** First level commercial space has been reduced to one 1,225 square-foot space located at the southeasterly corner adjacent to N Franklin Street, with the rest of the lower levels consisting of the entry lobby and residential units. As noted above, the common space/pool/outdoor patio amenity has been moved from the lower level roof to the tenth floor. There are no residential units on the tenth floor in the current proposal.

### UDD 4 Requirements

The Urban Design Commission is an approving body based on the development's location within UDD 4. The development shall meet the requirements and conform as much as possible to the guidelines. Staff notes that the requirements for this district are generally broad and provide standards and guidelines for public rights-of-way, off-street parking and loading, signs, building design, lighting, and landscaping.

The building design standards in UDD 4 do not include specific standards regarding height, setbacks or stepbacks and state the following regarding Building Design:

#### Building Design. MGO 33.24(11)(d)4

##### *Requirements*

- i. Exterior building materials shall be low maintenance and harmonious with those used on other buildings in the area.
- ii. Mechanical elements mounted on the roof or on ground pads shall be screened from views from adjacent properties and roadways in a manner consistent with requirements of public utilities.
- iii. Along East Washington Avenue west of First Street, metal shall be used as an exterior building material only as an integral part of a design of exceptional merit.

##### *Guidelines*

- i. Structures should be designed to be compatible with the structures that are adjacent to them.
- ii. Large unbroken exterior facades should be avoided.
- iii. All building elevations are of importance and should be carefully designed. When visible from roadways or adjoining properties, roof surfaces should be considered as part of the overall design.
- iv. The architecture of new in-fill buildings, additions to existing buildings and major exterior remodelings should be compatible with that of existing adjacent buildings.

## Conditional Use Related Standards

In regards to the requested bonus stories, staff notes that the existing zoning allows for up to eight stories, with the possibility to achieve a maximum of two bonus stories consistent with the height maps in the Downtown Plan. Bonus stories are approved by the Plan Commission. **However, staff recommends that the UDC provide clear feedback to the Plan Commission regarding Conditional Use Standard 14 a, b, and d, listed below. (Standard c does not apply to this development as there are no approved landmark buildings within or adjacent to the site.) UDC should specify the factors used in reaching that decision.**

**Per MGO Ch. 28.183 – a conditional use application requesting bonus stories must meet the following criteria:** *When applying the above standards to an application for height in excess of that allowed by [Section 28.071\(2\)\(a\)](#) Downtown Height Map for a development located within the Additional Height Areas identified in [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:*

- 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. (this item does not apply here)*
- 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.*

In regards to Standard (a), staff notes that the Downtown Plan includes this area 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 a transition area to some extent. 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.” **While the properties to the north are predominantly two- and three-story structures today, the recommended and permitted zoning height of these surrounding blocks is up to six stories.**

In regards to Standard (b), the applicant’s letter of intent states that the bonus height allows for increased stepbacks compared to what could be allowed under the existing Urban Mixed Use (UMX) Zoning. Staff understands that this comparison is not based on removing the upper two stories of the current design, but rather, maintaining the current program and expanding the building mass to the maximum allowed by the underlying zoning, without bonus stories. The proposed building includes stepbacks at the second and seventh stories as it transitions to the shorter properties to the north. The applicant further clarifies that the bonus heights allow for the use of high-quality materials and extensive amenity packages for residents. **As discussed further below, members of UDC previously commented on the need for design cohesion between lower and any bonus stories, and staff believes that remains a very important consideration.**

**In regards to Standard (d), based on the setback and stepbacks, this building is not anticipated to block Capitol Views, though as previously urged, consideration should be given to the long-views of the building and how the composition reads at various points from East Washington Avenue.**

# PREVIOUS APPLICATION

11/4/20  
STAFF MEMO

# CURRENT APPLICATION



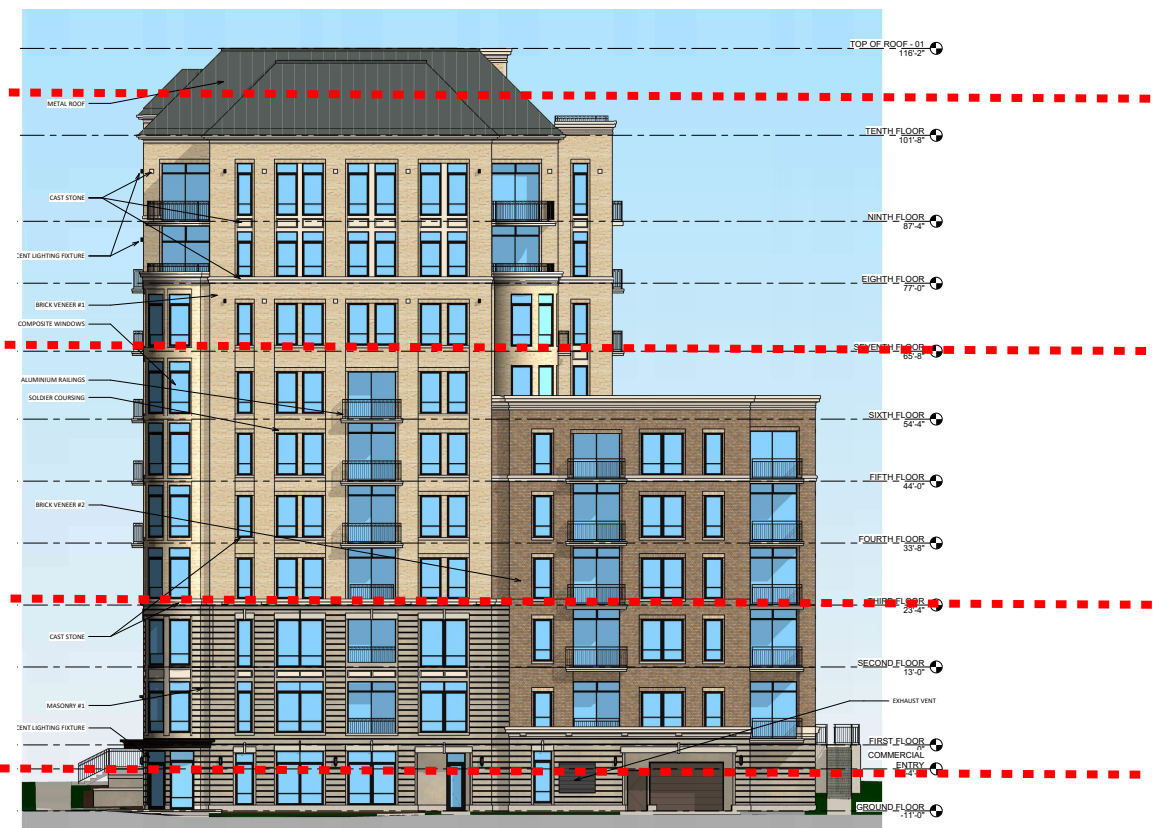
EAST WASHINGTON ELEVATION



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