



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 1910 Roth Street & 1201 Huxley Street

Application Type: Residential Building Complex
UDC is an Advisory Body

Legistar File ID #: [92613](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Nick Storlie, DevCo Preservation, LLC | Melanie Davis, DevCo Preservation, LLC

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the construction of a Residential Building Complex comprised of two, 4-story, multi-family residential buildings with surface parking.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC referred this item at their May 20, 2026, meeting, requesting more information and plan revisions from the development team.
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review this proposal on July 13, 2026 (Legistar File ID [92590](#)).

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **advisory body** to the Plan Commission on this request. [Section 33.24\(4\)\(c\)](#), MGO states that:

*“The Urban Design Commission shall review the **exterior design and appearance of all principal buildings or structures and the landscape plans** of all proposed residential building complexes. It shall report its findings and recommendations to the Plan Commission.”*

As noted above, at the May 20, 2026, meeting, the UDC referred action on this item requesting additional information. Generally, and in summary the additional information included making revisions to the building design to maintain datum lines and decrease repetitive patterns, incorporate active unit entries for better street orientation, making revisions to the landscape plan, and making adjustments in the building placement on the site to create more intentional buffers between the project site and surrounding uses, as well as making adjustments to the locations of the amenity spaces so that they are more integrated into the site. The Commission’s continued review should focus on whether these elements have been adequately addressed.

As noted above, the UDC is an **advisory body** to the Plan Commission on this request. While the UDC has referred this request once to address comments and concerns, staff would encourage the UDC provide an advisory recommendation, even if it includes recommended changes beyond what is proposed.

Staff recommend that as an advisory body, the UDC should structure a motion as a recommendation to the Plan Commission with or without specific findings and conditions. For example, such a motion may look like one of the following:

“The UDC finds that the standards for Residential Building Complexes have been met with the following conditions being met...and recommends that the Plan Commission approve the proposed development.”

or

“The UDC finds that in order for the Plan Commission to find the standards for Residential Building Complexes have been met, the following design modifications should be made...”

Adopted Plan Recommendations: The [City of Madison Comprehensive Plan](#) (2023) recommends the project site for both High Residential (Roth Street parcel) and Medium Residential (Huxley Street parcel) development. As noted in the Comprehensive Plan, future development in Medium Residential areas may consist of larger scale multi-family residential buildings or complexes, but where smaller scale building may be interspersed and where building heights may range from two to five stories. In High Residential areas, buildings are anticipated to be primarily of a larger scale with heights ranging from four to 12 stories. The proposed development at four stories **appears to be** generally consistent with the adopted plan recommendations.

Zoning Related Information: The project site is proposed to be zoned TR-U2 (Traditional Residential – Urban 2 district) and is located in the Transit Oriented Development Overlay (TOD) zone. New development with the TOD Overlay is subject to the requirements as outlined in [MGO 28.104](#), including those that speak to:

- Maximum principal building setbacks – At least 30% of the primary street facing façade (Huxley Street) shall be setback no more than 20 feet,
- Entrance orientation – Principal building entrances shall be orientated towards the primary abutting street (Huxley Street) and be located within the maximum setback (20 feet),
- Minimum number of stories – A minimum of two stories is required for a minimum of 75% of the building footprint, and
- Site standards for automobile infrastructure.

While as proposed the development **appears to meet** these requirements, staff note that a complete Zoning analysis will be conducted as part of the land use application and review and Site Plan Review processes. Ultimately, the Zoning Administrator will determine compliance with all applicable Zoning requirements.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff request the UDC’s continued review of the development proposal regarding the aforementioned standards, as well as giving consideration to whether the revised plans adequately address the Commission’s previous comments as it relates to the design considerations noted below.

- **Street-Level Activation.** The Commission’s formal motion requested that more of a connection to Huxley Street was needed with individual walk-up units being incorporated along the first floor. The revised plans do reflect that some individual walk-up units have been incorporated along Huxley Street.

While the Commission’s initial review comments were more primarily focused on creating a different scale and level of interest along Huxley Street, as previously noted in the May 20 staff report, consideration should continue to be given to maintaining positive building orientation to the internal pedestrian pathways and amenities spaces, as well as Roth Street. Such considerations include emphasizing the design of common building entries so that they are clearly identifiable and incorporating individual walk-up unit entries that are connected to internal pedestrian pathways and Roth Street.

Staff request the Commission’s feedback and findings on the overall street-level activation.

- **Building Design and Composition.** Related to building design and composition, the Commission’s formal motion stated, *“Revise the building design to maintain datum lines and consistent materials on the base,*

middle, top, and decrease the repetitive patterns.” Generally, and in summary, the Commission’s building design and composition-related comments focused on:

- Creating a consistent, singular base course and datum line, including carrying the stone continuously across the base of the building,
- Limiting the use of stone on the upper levels, which would help in reducing building mass,
- Further studying the material applications to create a stronger design and further breakdown mass and scale,
- Reducing the repetitive materials patterns.

In addition, as noted in the May 20 staff report, continued consideration should be given to the overall building design and composition as it relates to breaking down the perceived building length. Such considerations may include, for example, locating prominent architectural features at building ends and/or site corners, incorporating variation in the height of the roofline, maintaining a consistent finish at the top of the building, or incorporating other design techniques that would further break up the building length.

Staff request the UDC’s feedback and findings on the overall building design and composition.

- **Architectural/HVAC Louvers.** As previously noted in the May 20 staff report, architectural or HVAC louvers appear to be shown on the elevation drawings, however, they are not clearly labeled or detailed. 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 recommend the UDC address the design and finish detailing of any architectural or HVAC louvers in their formal motion.

- **Landscape and Screening.** As part of the Commission’s initial review of the proposed development, landscape and site planning considerations were identified, including those aimed at creating more intentional buffers and adjusting the location of the amenity spaces so that they are better integrated into the site. The Commission’s comments/conditions included the following:
 - Revising the landscape plan to replace the eastern red cedar with another evergreen and the red maples located in the asphalt paving with a different species (i.e., swap white oaks or red oaks in those areas),
 - Updating the landscape plan to reflect natural shredded hardwood bark mulch,
 - Providing fencing details,
 - The northern-most building should be shifted south to create more of a buffer along the north property line,
 - Potentially removing select parking stalls adjacent to the amenity spaces,
 - Shifting the playground locations more internal to the site for better visibility, and
 - Provide more of a landscape buffer treatment along the railroad edge.

In addition, as previously noted in the May 20 staff report, consideration should continue to be given to using landscape to help break down the building and lot length and increase visual interest at the pedestrian level, and to providing effective year-round screening of the parking area and vehicle drives, as well as creating adequate transitions/buffers.

Lastly, utility meters appear to be located in small groupings in several locations on multiple elevations, including those along the street facing walls. Consideration should be given to ensuring that these elements are adequately screened. Staff also note and the applicant is encouraged to work with our utility partners early to confirm the desired gas/electric utility meter locations. Shifting later to a larger-scale bank of co-located meters, which is common, may also have an impact on the building design and aesthetic.

Staff request the UDC's feedback and findings on the proposed landscape plan and plant list, including as it relates to providing year-round screening, especially as it pertains to the proposed chain-link fence, as well as utility meter screening along the building base. In addition, while not clearly indicated on the landscape plan, previously rock mulch was used extensively. Staff recommend that the UDC address the use of rock mulch in their formal action.

Related to landscape and screening details, for reference staff note:

- The applicant has indicated that while the proposed wall color is indicated as "limestone", the final color will be determined at a future date.
 - The proposed chain-link fence, while it will be black vinyl-coated, a mesh screen material or slats typically used for screening/opacity is not proposed, and
 - While the site plan indicates that trash will be placed in an exterior trash area, the site plan does not reflect a location of the trash enclosure area, nor were design details were included in the submittal materials.
 - The applicant is advised that the landscape plan **does not** appear to meet the development frontage and foundation planting requirements pursuant to MGO 28.142. Compliance with the landscape requirements in the Zoning Code will be evaluated by the Zoning Administrator.
- **Signage.** As previously noted in the May 20 staff report, staff note, and the applicant is advised, that while a monument sign location is noted on the site plan, signage is not a part of this review, nor subsequent approvals. A separate review and approval are required for all new signage. The applicant is encouraged to work with Zoning staff to confirm [Sign Code](#) requirements for the project site.

Summary of Referral Comments & Discussion

As a reference, the Commission's comments and discussions from the May 20, 2026, Referral motion are provided below.

The Commission inquired about the playground spaces and whether there were areas for different age groups. The applicant indicated that there were two different playgrounds, one for tots and one for older kids.

The Commission inquired about the tree removal. The applicant indicated that they were trying to save as many trees as they could.

The Commission inquired about whether individual entries were considered along Huxley to give a different scale and level of interest along that street. The applicant indicated that there are not individual unit entries, but that they were considering adding them, but are not showing them. There are common entrances on the Huxley side, but for site security reasons they decided not to have individual unit entrances off the road. In addition, with all of the parking on the backside of the building the applicant indicated that the building would be primarily accessed from that side of the building. The applicant indicated that they would consider incorporating individual unit entries.

The Commission inquired about why the stone was not carried across the base of the building to create a continuous datum line. The stone is a heavier material and keeping it at the base versus up the upper levels would keep the building lighter. The applicant replied they are trying to create a unique corner, but could look at that.

The Commission asked about material applications and usages noting that the materials could be studied further to create a stronger design. A stronger application of materials might help to break down the buildings' mass and scale. The buildings together, the whole panoramic longer view, looking at how the materials are applied and where they are applied should be studied – it may enhance the concept, massing and design. There is very repetitive massing.

The Commission talked about the location of the playgrounds and opportunities to relocate them so that kids could play while having eyes on the playground. This arrangement puts parents at a disadvantage of that, particularly the lower left. The Commission inquired if consideration was given to locating the playgrounds near the main entrance, away from the railroad tracks, or reconfiguring parking to get more eyes on those playgrounds? The applicant noted that the feedback was good and that they can look into that for sure. Want to make it as safe and convenient as possible for parents.

The Commission commented on the amount of vehicular spaces on the site, with everything else being pinched into tight corners.

The Commission asked for explanation of the context. What is that view now and what will it potentially be in the future? What is the zoning and use for the land to the north? The applicant noted that to the east is industrial across the tracks, to the north is also industrial, across Aberg is single-family, across Huxley is a series of new multi-family buildings. The Commission noted that there seems like there should be more of a buffer zone between the project site some of the surrounding uses.

The Commission asked about removal of the bus shelter. The applicant noted that the bus shelter will be removed for this project. It's a vacant bus transfer location that is not being used.

The Commission noted that the amenities need more landscaping. There are unique opportunities for some of the hardscapes to be more dynamic, the site development to be better than a long parking lot and some grass.

The Commission noted improvements that could be made that would create more space around the playground and dog run. Selective removal of some parking stalls would give back more space to the amenities, as well as shifting the northernmost building south. Changes to the site plan will then lead to more landscaping.

The Commission commented on the plant schedule, noting that the eastern red cedar is a native but an aggressive weed-type plant and recommend replacement with another evergreen. Several red maples located in a lot of asphalt paving won't necessarily like that environment, something like swamp white oaks or hybrid oaks or other species might be better. The mulch should be natural shredded bark mulch rather than anything dyed and more information on the fence materiality was needed.

Overall the Commission noted that they liked the number of 3-bedroom units, the permeable pavers, but everything is dominated by the vehicular design. The first-floor balconies could be connected to the street, seems like a potential for a nice interaction rather than being a closed off little space.

Action

On a motion by Klehr, seconded by Mayer, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this item, with the following conditions and comments:

- Revise the building design to maintain the datum lines and consistent materials on the base, middle, top, and decreasing repetitive patterns;
- Incorporate individual walk-up units along the first floor to create more of a connection to Huxley Street;
- The landscape plan shall be revised to replace the eastern red cedar with another evergreen and the red maples located in the asphalt paving with a different species (i.e., swap white oaks or red oaks in those areas), and reflect natural shredded hardwood bark mulch;
- Provide fencing details;
- Revise the site plan to shift the northern-most building south to create more of a buffer along the north property line, different locations for the playgrounds, and providing more of a landscape buffer treatment along the railroad edge.