



February 9, 2026

Mr. Colin Punt
Planner
City of Madison Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Suite 017
Madison, WI 53703

Re: Letter of Intent- 5555 Odana Road & 5534 Medical Circle Land Use Application

Mr. Punt:

Odana Apartments, LLC c/o Bear Development, LLC ("Bear") is pleased to submit this Land Use Application for our proposed project at 5555 Odana Road and 5534 Medical Circle. This application package includes the required development plans, LND-A, LND-B, Demolition Permit Application / Landmarks Review, Urban Design Commission, and Subdivision/CSM applications (please note that the Subdivision/CSM application for this project was submitted by JSD on December 15, 2025 under separate cover, however it should be reviewed in tandem with balance of the applications listed above).

February 9, 2026 Plan Updates:

After several discussions with immediate neighbors of the project site, city staff, and the district alderperson, the project team made updates to the proposed plans to incorporate feedback. Most notably, after discussion with the neighboring Montessori School located at 5530 Medical Circle, the dog park area was relocated from the property line shared with the school to the area between the two proposed buildings. With the reconfiguration of this area, four loading parking stalls were also added near the dog park to help facilitate resident move ins and move outs as well as parcel delivery. Along the property line where the dog park was formerly located, additional landscaping has been provided to create additional screening and buffer with the school property.

Introduction:

Bear is proposing to acquire and redevelop 5555 Odana Road and 5534 Medical Circle into a mixed used development. The development will include two mixed-use buildings, one five-story and one six-story, containing a total of 227-dwelling units, and approximately 7,745 square feet of commercial space. The existing, commercial buildings and site improvements will be demolished as part of the project, and we anticipated starting construction in July 2026. 5555 Odana Road is approximately 1.80-acres, and 5534 Medical Circle is approximately 0.58 acres totaling 2.38 acres for the development site. The site has frontage on Odana Road and Medical Circle.

The proposed unit mix consists of 186 one-bedroom units and 41-two-bedroom units. On-site parking includes 75 surface stalls and 133-structured parking stalls. The building includes several resident amenities such as a co-working space, community room, fitness center, on-site management office, resident storage lockers and a dedicated bike storage area. The northern building along Odana Road will contain 1,300 SF of commercial space, and the southern building along Medical Circle will contain 6,445 SF of commercial space.

Project Team:

Applicant/Developer:
Odana Apartments, LLC
c/o Bear Development, LLC
4011 80th Street

Kenosha, WI 53142
Contact: Nick Orthmann
Phone: 262-308-2656
Email: northmann@beardevelopment.com

Civil Engineer/Landscape Architect/Surveyor:

JSD Professional Services, Inc.
161 Horizon Dr Suite 101
Verona, WI 53593
Contact: Kevin Yeska
Phone: 608-609-6794
Email: Kevin.Yeska@JSDinc.com

Architect:

JLA Architects
800 W Broadway, Suite 200
Monona, WI 53713
Contact: Patrick Terry
Phone: 608-442-3823
Email: Pterry@jla-ap.com

Project & Site Details:

- Parcel ID: 251/0709-303-0299-1 / 251/0709-303-0213-1 / 251/0709-303-0216-5 & 251/0709-303-0206-6 (the Odana Road parcel has multiple PINs due to existing condo plat which will be removed)
- Zoning: Commercial Corridor- Transitional (CC-T)
- Land Use: Community Mixed-Use (CMU) & Employment (E)
- Urban Design District: Urban Design District 3
- Aldermanic District: District 19
- Neighborhood: NA
- Business Association: NA
- Lot Area: 103,672 SF / 2.38 Acres
- Building Gross Square Footage: 273,643 SF
- Building Height: 5-stories and 6-stories
- Dwelling Units: 227 units
 - o 1 Bedrooms: 186 units
 - o 2 Bedrooms: 41 units
 - o Density: 95.4 units / acre
- Parking Stalls: 201 stalls (67 Surface / 134 structured)
 - o EV Ready: 42 stalls
 - o EV Installed: 7 stalls
- Bike Parking: 265 stalls
 - o Long-Term: 241 stalls
 - o Short-Term: 24 stalls

Requested Approvals:

Conditional Use Permit: the property is zoned CCT; per table 28D-2 of the Zoning Ordinance a Conditional Use Permit is required for mixed-use buildings with >60 units. Building A is six stories; per 28.067 3D of the Zoning Ordinance, a Conditional Use Permit is required for building heights >5 stories and approval to exceed 5-stories is being requested.

Demolition Permit: we are requesting approval of a Demolition Permit to raze the existing commercial buildings on site, which would be done as part of the overall construction of the newly proposed mixed-use buildings. The site was filed on the City's Demolition List Serv on December 5, 2025. The development team does not believe that the either of the buildings have historic relevance.

Urban Design Commission: the property is in Urban Design District 3 therefore we are requesting the Urban Design Commission review the plans as part of this Land Use Application. Prior to submission of the full Land Use Application, Bear made an informational presentation to the Urban Design Commission on September 17th, 2025.

Subdivision / CSM: the site is currently two single tax parcels and we are requesting the approval of a Certified Survey Map to combine the lots. The existing condominium plat on the 5555 Odana Road parcel will be terminated by the current owner prior to the start of the project.

Proposed Meeting Schedule:

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|---|-------------------|
| - Application Submittal | January 5, 2026 |
| - Landmarks Commission | February 9, 2026 |
| - Urban Design Commission (initial & final) | February 18, 2026 |
| - Planning Commission | March 2, 2026 |
| - Common Council | March 10, 2026 |

Project Phasing & Schedule:

Demolition of the existing buildings and construction of the proposed buildings will start at the same time with Building B along Medical Circle currently anticipated to be completed first and Building A along Odana Road to be completed second. Construction/demolition is expected to commence in July 2026 and is anticipated to be completed in the third quarter of 2028.

City & Neighborhood Input:

During the pre-submittal process the development team met with a variety of stakeholders whose input has helped shape the proposal:

- City of Madison Staff- Bear has consulted with City Staff several times during the pre-submittal process including a pre-development meeting, a Development Assistance Team Meeting, and several informal consultations.
- Urban Design Commission- The development team gave an informational presentation to the UDC on September 17, 2025.
- Aldermanic, Neighborhood, and Business Association Outreach- Bear has provided all necessary notice emails for the approvals requested in this application. The sites are not located in a Neighborhood Associate or Business Association. District 19 Alderman gave an all-district neighborhood meeting on October 21, 2025 which included a project overview for the development. Additionally, direct outreach has been made to the immediate neighbors of the project site, which are all commercial or multifamily uses.

Management / Operating Plan:

The project will be financed primarily with Tax-Exempt Bonds and 4% Low-Income Housing Tax Credits issued by WHEDA. All 227 dwelling units will be rent- and income-restricted with an average AMI not to exceed 60%, which will be evidenced by a Land Use Restriction Agreement. Bear, via Odana Apartments, LLC will be the long-term (minimum 15-years) owner. Bear will be responsible for asset management of the property and Bear Property Management, Inc. (part of the Bear Real Estate Group of Companies) will handle day-to-day property management activities. Construction of the project will be managed by Construction Management Associates, Inc. (also part of the Bear Real Estate Group of Companies).

A detailed management plan can be provided upon request.

Public Subsidy:

Bear has requested Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) assistance for the project. A new TID will be created specific to the project, and we have completed the City's "free look" process and have been working closely with staff on the approval process.

Reuse & Recycling Plan:

Bear acknowledges that approval of a Reuse & Recycling Plan will be required prior to the issuance of permits. We plan to complete this during the Site Plan Verification stage.

Transportation Demand Management Plan:

A Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan has been provided with this application.

Tree Report:

A Street Tree Report has been provided with this application.

Stormwater Report:

Bear acknowledges that a Stormwater Management Report will be required prior to the issuance of permits. We plan to complete this during the Site Plan Verification stage.

Urban Design District 3:

An informational presentation to Urban Design Commission took place on September 17, 2025. The building received favorable. Notable items that were discussed include:

Pedestrian Connectivity Enhancements

We have addressed the Commission's concerns regarding pedestrian connectivity between Odana Road and Medical Circle. A new ground-level sidewalk connection now links these two roads, significantly improving walkability. While grading remains a challenge due to the approximately 18-foot topographic drop from north to south, the proposed design carefully optimizes this terrain to ensure connectivity and safety.

Building Articulation and Material Transitions

We have incorporated the Commission's feedback to refine the building's architectural expression:

- **Accent Colors:** Excessive use of accent colors has been eliminated, while preserving the building's character and original design intent. The exterior architecture continues to reflect the interior spatial organization authentically.
- **Material Transitions:** Previous concerns about material changes occurring on the same plane have been resolved. All material transitions now include a minimum 4-foot depth variation, creating a more dynamic and visually engaging façade. Vertically, materials transition from masonry at the lower levels to cementitious panels above, highlighted by a distinctive concrete banding.
- **Ground-Level Transparency:** Street-facing edges have been designed to maximize transparency, enhancing pedestrian engagement. This creates a clear distinction between the active ground level and the residential levels above, which feature more traditional punched openings.

- Roofline Articulation: The roof level incorporates varied parapet heights to provide visual interest while maintaining the minimalist, contemporary design intent.

An explanation of how the proposal addresses each of the required design criteria is below:

- Public Right-of-Way: Public rights-of-way will include appropriate trees and shrubs and provide a degree of visual continuity per UDD 3.
- Off-Street parking is structured within the building footprint in the lower-level and ground level garages and compliant with UDD 3. Surface parking is situated throughout the site and screened by landscaping in most locations.
- Signs: Sign plans need to be developed but will conform to Madison Ordinances and be integrated with the architecture of the building per UDD 3 requirements.
- Building Design / Relationships: Design is consistent with UDD 3 requirements. Exterior building materials are low maintenance and harmonious with the neighborhood. Street facing building facades have been broken up or oriented to reduce the massing per UDD 3 requirements. A section of the building on the west side adjacent to the multi family has been distanced to further break up the façade and create separation. Balconies are included to further create variation in the building's façade. The development will be high-quality that creates and sustains long-term economic vitality.
- Lighting: A full lighting plan has not been developed but will comply with UDD 3 requirements.
- Landscaping: The landscape design is functional decorative, and is used to enhance the design of the site as well as to differentiate and create a buffer from neighboring properties.
- The site has been chosen and designed to provide increased mobility choices with access to public transit and location to amenities.
- Primary street-facing building facades utilize minimal front yard setbacks from the primary street (Odana Rd.) to promote an improved urban design and pedestrian experience. Ground level amenities and commercial space are included which activate the street and provide an enhanced pedestrian experience.
- The principal building entrance has been oriented with the lobby at the center of the building, on Odana Rd. The elevation articulation, including the corner, is designed to clearly establish and distinguish the building entrance on Odana Rd.
- The development includes activated street facing ground floor space with building amenities, building entrance lobbies.

Our team is excited about the prospect of providing much-needed quality workforce housing in a prominent location in the City. We look forward to working with City staff and elected officials to bring the project to fruition. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'NO', with a stylized flourish extending to the left.

Nick Orthmann
Project Manager
Bear Development, LLC