Date: November 19, 2024

To: Chris Wells, City Planner

From: CRG team

Re: Per your request, additional information regarding bonus height standards – Mifflin Chapter Apartments (416-446 W Washington Avenue and 413-417 W Mifflin Street)

**Bonus Height Standards**:

There are four standards (a) through (d) that are reviewed in proposed bonus, height as enumerated in the City zoning code MGO Section 28.183(6)(a).13. This proposed project is not adjacent to any landmarks, and the Capitol view along West Washinton is not impacted by the proposed project, which meets the required setbacks and stepbacks of the Downtown Plan and Mifflandia Plan along West Washington, as well as the prescribed setback in MGO Section 28.071(2)(b)2. Thus, standard (c) is not applicable, and standard (d) is met. The first two bonus height standards (a) and (b) are summarized below, along with a discussion of how the proposed development meets those standards.

a. The excess height is compatible with the existing or planned character of the surrounding area:

At its November 6th, 2024 meeting, the Urban Design Commission, in an alder-referred advisory review, made specific findings that the proposed project is generally consistent with the recommendations in the Mifflandia Plan.

The project height is consistent with the planned height of the surrounding properties as provided in the City of Madison Downtown Plan and Section 28.071(2)(b), including subsection (2) which expressly identifies this block of West Washington Avenue as an area where building can be "allowed two (2) additional stories above the four- (4) story building height limit provided there is a thirty- (30) foot stepback." As noted, the proposed project meets the required stepbacks and includes the noted(30) foot stepback above the 4th story. The proposed additional stories also facilitate a number of other goals of the Plans, as discussed in the Letter of Intent and application materials, including:

- Enhancing the distinctive physical character of West Washington Avenue as a gateway to Downtown by creating an asymmetrical but rhythmic facade with additional semi-public outdoor space, while also providing new high-quality housing for the neighborhood.
- Emphasizes the incorporation of porches and wide terraces to bridge the new development with the existing surrounding buildings along the West Washington frontage.
- Consistency with the height, setback, and stepback guidelines in the Plans, specifically being setback 20' from West Washington Avenue, with upper level stepbacks of 30' on West Washington Avenue.
- In addition, the project height, mass, rhythm, scale and setbacks along Washington are also consistent with other recently-approved projects that front Washington Avenue (i.e., Avenir – completed, 519-547 West Washington – under construction).

b. <u>The excess height allows for a demonstrated higher quality building:</u>

The proposed design meets the intended goals of Additional Height Area C. With the additional two stories, the project can eliminate all existing driveways along West Washington and will provide additional public and a "sort of civic open space" not only within the wide West Washington Avenue terrace but within the project itself:

> *"Additional Building Height Area C (West Washington): These four blocks are located along a major gateway to Capitol Square that is twice as wide as most Downtown Streets. It has large terraces and consistent front yard setbacks that, in combination, provide a sort of civic open space. These blocks are also deeper than most Downtown blocks."*

As noted in the letter of intent and application materials, because of the additional two stories, the project is able to get creative with the modulation of the massing and stepbacks, which preserve the neighborhood character while also creating more welcoming semi-public spaces for the neighborhood not only within the large terrace but also within the project itself. For example, the project is able to provide a fully complete and connected, interblock path between West Mifflin and West Washington by creating a pedestrian and bicycle path through the building. Without the additional bonus stories, the interblock path and other public connectivity and spaces within and around the project would not be feasible or achievable.

Other aspects of the project design also achieve a higher quality because the additional height allows for an increase of density, which in turn allows for a high quality of finish throughout the building while bringing much needed housing to the block - a central goal of the Mifflandia Plan. The additional height also allows for more detailed articulation of the façade, creating both asymmetry and rhythm within and across the façade. And, at the upper two additional floors, the color and materiality shift to reduce the mass and scale of those floors, consistent with the intent of the Mifflandia Plan.

Finally, the additional stories allow for the density needed to support removal of all driveways along West Washington Avenue, and relocation of parking in a below grade parking deck with access off of Mifflin Street. The parking will be roughly the same number of parking stalls as exist within surface parking lots today. This relocation and consolidation of parking and removal of all West Washington Avenue driveways is a significant benefit to the project and the neighborhood and certainly elevates the quality of the design to the next level directly supporting the goals of Additional Height Area C in the Downtown Plan.

In summary, not only will the proposed development not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property and permitted uses, the project will facilitate, enhance and set the tone for high quality redevelopment and use of surrounding properties (including the significant City terrace space along West Washington). This project raises the bar on the high quality aesthetics that can be achieved through additional stories and density, including public spaces and connectivity, integrating the project with this important gateway corridor.