



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 6003, 6019, 6035, 6015 Gemini Drive  
**Application Type:** New Mixed Use Development, Planned Development – Initial/Final Approval is Requested  
**Legistar File ID #** [60544](#)  
**Prepared By:** Janine Glaeser, UDC Secretary

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Brian Munson, Vandewalle & Associates/Dan Brinkman, DSI Real Estate, Inc.

**Project Description:** The applicant is seeking initial/final approval for a Planned Development for a six-story mixed-use development with 153 residential units and approximately 5,800 s.f. of commercial space to complete unbuilt portion of the B Block in Grandview Commons.

### Project Schedule:

- The UDC received an informational presentation on May 27, 2020.
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review this proposal on August 10, 2020.
- The Common Council is scheduled to review this proposal on September 1, 2020.

### Approval Standards:

The UDC is an **advisory body** on this request. As with any **Planned Development**, 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.

## Summary of Design Considerations and Recommendations

Planning staff requests that the UDC provide feedback on the exterior design, height, scale and appearance of the building and site layout, including pedestrian circulation, parking, and landscape concept, and comment based on the **PD Standards**.

The [Comprehensive Plan](#) (2018) recommends Neighborhood Mixed Use – NMU development. NMU areas are recommended as nodes or corridors containing housing, shopping, and services that generally serve the surrounding neighborhoods. The recommended height is 2-4 stories and density is up to 70 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). Similarly, the [Sprecher Neighborhood Development Plan](#) recommends mixed-use development for the site. Staff notes that the proposal generally exceeds the recommended height in adopted plans and staff requests UDC feedback on the size and massing of the development along with its orientation and long views from surrounding streets.

Staff request that the UDC provides feedback on the building's orientation towards Cottage Grove Road, and whether the design composition adequately addresses the very prominent views, especially from the south and west. Staff further request that comments are provided on the material pallet and the organization and number of materials. Feedback is also requested on whether a different organization of the materials is desirable to better break-up the long facades vertically in order to potentially break down the scale of the large building.

Finally, Planning staff refers the UDC to their comments from the informational presentation on May 27<sup>th</sup>:

- Good layout of buildings and parking onto an odd shaped parcel.
- The plaza space on the west side of the site looks good in plan, but with the building overhead, that space is uninviting.
- Due to the long façade and bulk of this building, the site design does not seem particularly pedestrian friendly.
- This scale and height of building has more of the urban feel expected of a “town center.” Now, unfortunately, the two 1-story buildings on this block will look out of scale.
- Nice looking buildings, good rhythm and views from many angles. I like the color scheme.
- The wide band/ledge at mid-height is curious, seems forced and results in poor proportions. First floor apartments along Sharpsburg don’t address the street very well (at least from renderings). The design would benefit if the south wing of the apartment building was shorter as the site plan implies.
- That is one long elevation – can this be broken into separate buildings? The underpass seems long and low. Would this space be used regularly? Will it be a wind tunnel?
- The quantity of different materials and colors might be one too many – would prefer simplification. Generally like the use of “framing,” but here it seems somewhat random, not clear how it elucidates the architecture. Might be used more effectively to break up the long Sharpsburg façade.
- Don’t skimp on the plantings in the various beds around this project – there’s a lot of hard stone and masonry that warrants softening.
- The greenspace provided is sloped for the most part – is there a way to break the long footprint and provide open flat space for kids along the west side instead of a covered walkway?
- Like the plaza/greenspace on the Cottage Grove Road side. Hope to see some nice utilitarian lighting as well as landscape/architectural detail lighting. This looks like a building that has the potential to be quite striking at night.
- Question the angled parking off of Sharpsburg if that street is two-way. Won’t the majority of traffic approach right off of North Star and want to head in? Don’t understand the cant of angle.
- The diagonal parking seems like the way to go given the street configuration, but we saw problems with this behind the Carben building. Do I pull in, do I back in?
- Two driveway entrances seems confusing and perhaps more impervious surface than necessary.
- The ADA access to all commercial entrances from parking is a little unclear and looks like a long path to some of them.
- Seems like a good finishing project in this area. I’ve heard complaints about this type of new development in Madison, that it all looks “too planned (!)” but I think overall this neighborhood has progressed nicely and this is a nice addition to it.