



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 437-445 W Johnson Street, 215-221 N Bassett Street, and 430-440 W Dayton Street

Application Type: New Residential Building in UMX Zoning
UDC is an Advisory Body

Legistar File ID # [75228](#)

Prepared By: Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Chad Matesi, Core Madison Bassett, LLC | Brian Munson, Vandewalle & Associates

Project Description: The applicant is proposing the construction of a student housing project comprised of two residential towers, one 12 stories, located along W Johnson Street and one six stories, located along W Dayton Street. The proposal includes 254 housing units ranging in size from studios to five bedroom apartments and including some first floor townhome units with individual entrances. As part of the development proposal, the applicant is proposing to rezone the property entirely to the Urban Mixed Use (UMX) district. Final approval is now requested.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC received two Informational Presentations: one on January 11, 2023, and one on March 1, 2023.
- The UDC made an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission on April 26, 2023.
- The Plan Commission referred this item to the May 22, 2023, Plan Commission meeting to allow the applicant time to coordinate review with the neighborhood. Based on the subsequent action of the Common Council, the Plan Commission is now scheduled to review this request at the June 12, 2023, meeting.
- City Council referred this item to the June 20, 2023, meeting.

Approval Standards: The Urban Design Commission (UDC) is an **advisory** body on this request. Section [28.076\(b\)](#) includes the related design review requirements which state that: *"All new buildings that are greater than twenty-thousand (20,000) square feet or that have more than four stories shall obtain Conditional Use approval. In addition, the UDC shall review such projects for conformity to the design standards in [Sec. 28.071\(3\)](#) and the [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#) and shall report its findings to the Plan Commission."*

Staff notes that while the Plan Commission has not taken a final action on the UDC's initial advisory recommendation. At their May 22 meeting, the Plan Commission referred this item, intended to provide time for additional neighborhood discussions. As part of that referral, the Plan Commission requested some additional details be provided:

- The applicant shall develop a fully-vetted plan set which includes the various draft design changes related to location change of the entries of the 6-story portion of the building before returning;
- The applicant shall address the design-related issues laid out on Page 11 of the May 8, 2023 Plan Commission staff report, such as:
 - The significant blank wall expanses along pedestrian pathways which are visible from the street.
 - The building elements on the rooftop which are not in compliance with the maximum height regulations (MGO Section 28.134(2)) of the Zoning Code.

- The applicant shall include the ADA, EV-ready and EV-installed automobile parking stalls on the plans.

The Zoning Code does not preclude the UDC from making a final recommendation to Plan Commission prior to this action. In fact, staff often notes that it is often preferable to have the UDC make their final recommendation when they are acting in an advisory capacity.

Prior to this item returning to the Plan Commission on June 12, the UDC is now being asked to provide a final approval recommendation. The applicant has indicated how they have addressed both the comments from the UDC, as well as those previously requested by the Plan Commission. Typically, final approval signifies that the final design details solidified and provided, including but not limited to the items requested by UDC as part of their Initial Approval (garage design details, including framing and lighting as noted below), but also those design details pertaining to the rooftop mechanical screening, annotated building elevations and details (treatment of vents/flues), lighting (i.e. night renderings, mounting details), new mural details, etc. While the applicant has responded with modifications to reflect most of the requested details, staff had been anticipating additional information on the garage details, screening, and lighting, which have not yet been provided.

Related Zoning Information: The property is currently zoned a combination of Urban Mixed-Use (UMX) and Planned Development (PD). With this proposal, the applicant would rezone the entire property to the UMX district, as noted above. The Planning Division understands that the proposed development is considered a conditional use under the Zoning Code. In addition, the Capital View Preservation Limit will also apply to the proposed development. As noted in the Zoning Code, the minimum ground story height is 12 feet, and from ground-story residential uses, landscaping, steps, porches, grade changes, and low ornamental fences or walls or similar treatments shall be located between the sidewalk and the front door to create a private yard area. As noted in the Downtown Height Map, the maximum recommended height is 12 stories along W Johnson Street and six along W Dayton.

The UMX zone district also outlines design standards that are applicable to all new buildings. As a reference, the design related zoning standards outlined in the UMX zone district are included as an attachment to this report, including, but not limited to those related to building entrance orientation, façade articulation, height, fenestration, and materials.

Design-Related Plan Recommendations: The project site is located within the [Downtown Plan](#) (the “Plan”) planning area within the Johnson Bend district, which is an area recommended for higher intensity residential development. As noted in the Plan, this area is characterized by its high-density apartment building, however is *“...contains a variety of building types, styles and character that do not relate well to one another.”*

Summary of Design Considerations

As part of the UDC’s review and action on this item, UDC has two options. Based on the updated materials, UDC may find that the standards are met and recommend Final Approval to the Plan Commission, potentially with clearly stated conditions. If, on the other hand, the UDC does not believe there is adequate information to make a finding for Final Approval, the Commission could update their Initial Approval recommendation and specify additional items that should be revised or detailed prior to this item returning to UDC’s final review and approval. In either scenario, staff anticipates that this item will return to the Plan Commission on June 12, per the Common Council’s referral.

Staff recommends that the UDC review the updated development proposal and make findings regarding the aforementioned standards, as well as the Commission’s Initial Approval advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission related to the items noted below.

- **Townhome Unit Entries.** As noted in the applicant's Letter of Intent, the individual at-grade townhome unit entries have been removed from both the Johnson Street and Dayton Street towers and replaced with backdoor patio spaces, including landscape in raised planter beds. As a result the continuous pedestrian pathway around the building has been removed. Staff requests the Commission's review and recommendation related to the proposed patio spaces and landscape. Consideration should be given to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines which generally speak to providing year-round screening, color and texture, softening hardscape, and providing shade, as well as privacy, lighting, security, etc., especially as it relates the existing and future development of adjacent properties.
- **W Dayton Street Tower - Common Building Entrance.** As noted in the UDC's initial action, *the Commission recommended that a common building entrance be provided on Dayton Street.* While the plans have been updated to provide a common building entry on Dayton Street, staff does not believe that proposed design adequately reads as a common building entrance and requests the Commission's feedback and findings on the design and placement of the proposed entry, especially as it relates to the entryway "reading" as a public entrance versus a private unit entry. Consideration should be given to architectural detailing and treatment of the entryway, including canopies, awnings, central locations, glazing, color, etc. to signify that it is a common, public entry.
- **W Dayton Street Tower - Garage Door.** As part of the UDC's initial action, *the Commission recommended that the head height of the garage door facing Dayton street be lowered* as much as possible to decrease the size of the opening along the street. The UDC also noted that a *detailed elevation or perspective of that façade that shows how the door is detailed, lit, framed would be helpful in determining that this condition is met.* Staff notes that while the plans have been updated to reduce the garage door size and head height, however, additional details related to the design details, framing, lighting, etc., have not been provided. Staff requests the Commission's review and recommendation on this item.
- **W Dayton Street Tower – Mural.** As noted in the applicant's Letter of Intent, a mural will be added to the blank wall expanse on the southwest side of the building. The intent of the mural is to add interest to an otherwise blank wall. While exact details regarding the mural are not known at this time, the mural is anticipated to be *"...installed on backer board with a minimal frame..."* and mounted to the wall. Staff requests the Commission's review and recommendation related to the proposed mural as an adequate treatment for the blank wall expanse, noting that should the mural not occur the landscape treatment in this location does not appear to be adequate to screen the wall. Staff requests that the UDC address the future review/approval (administrative vs. returning to the UDC) of the mural as part of their recommendation to the Plan Commission.
- **Overall Site and Rooftop Lighting.** As proposed, the lighting plan continues to have inconsistencies with the MGO 29.36, including maximum permitted light levels and uniformity ratios for Medium Level Activity areas. In addition, staff continues to have concerns regarding the light levels being reported on the rooftop patio areas, which in some areas are in excess of 41 footcandles, as well as the architectural lighting proposed in the building reveals, for which additional information will be needed to fully evaluate, including but not limited to mounting details, night rendering, and light levels. As part of the Commission's initial action, *UDC recommended that the lighting plans be revised to be consistent with City staff requirements for lighting, which can be reviewed and approved administratively.*

Staff requests the UDC review the proposed lighting plan for consistency with the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, including those that generally speak to limiting glare, maintaining light levels that are not excessive and limiting impacts on adjacent residential units. While the UDC, in their previous review, did not specifically comment on the proposed architectural lighting, staff requests that the UDC address

architectural lighting as part of their new recommendation to the Plan Commission, including any additional information needed for further review either by staff or the UDC.

Staff notes that as a potential code compliance issue, the applicant is advised that an updated photometric plan and fixture cutsheets, consistent with MGO Section 29.36, will be required to be submitted for review and approval prior to permitting.

Summary of UDC's Initial Approval Comments

As a reference, the Commission's comments from the April 26, 2023, Initial Approval are provided below:

- There is an extensive and comprehensive staff report to digest. There are a number of concerns and issues they would like us to address: building materials and composition, adequacy of the front façade detailing on Dayton and Johnson Streets, whether they are appropriately differentiated, is the Dayton façade under detailed, looking at entries, colors, balconies, compatible with the townhouse scale of that street, long views and transitions, unit entries, which staff has some objection to, and of course our landscaping and lighting issues as usual on projects of this size. Taking all that into consideration and given the presentation we just heard, questions or comments from the Commission?
- Most of my questions are related to the townhomes and that access corridor. Your only access point is through that side of the building, not internally at all? You had the detail with the fence, but the something taller, the pergola slats above it, where is that in relation to these sections? I think what we're all wrestling with is the funkiness of having to enter through that corridor, which could be dark and foreboding if not designed right. How does that detail of the upper part of the fence come into play, is there any lighting besides building-mounted lighting, lighting on some of those site features? If you could explain some of that and your design rationale.
 - There is lighting on the building and landscape lighting around all the townhome faces. There is not a pergola at the townhomes, it is setback from the portion above. There is a pergola over the primary entry into the building, the first floor is pushed back inside, there is lighting in that area and additional landscaping. There is adequate lighting all the way around the building, regardless of what door you enter through.
 - The entrances for the townhomes will each have an interior hallway entrance as well as a direct entry door. With the combination of setbacks where the fence is, the insets, the design is both the five foot setback and overhang of balconies, coupled with landscaping and building lighting to create an experience there that is welcoming. That's why it's not an eight-foot fence; this creates the sense of privacy and entry point.
- Those spaces I think could be very successful or not. I'm trying to picture spaces around the world, in other cities with that narrow corridor in the built environment, large buildings all around you. Sometimes it's cozy and lovely and intriguing to make your way back through those patios if it's designed right. It seems like you're acknowledging that and trying to provide those things, but I do think as an insurance policy, if it doesn't feel right for people to wander back to their unit that they always have the interior option. As far as the rest of the project, I've always really liked what you were doing on the street level with the first floor setbacks, creating a pedestrian realm along the street, I still think those are successful. Thank you for the information.
- On the subject of these units, the ground floor units on the tower are accessed internally, I don't see how the units from the six-story portion are accessed internally unless you go all the way around to the back and then go into the corridor. Can you establish a Dayton Street lobby to allow people to come in the building and access their units?
 - There is the entrance point to the left.

- That doesn't necessarily satisfy the concern where it could be uncomfortable, I'm not sure it's unsafe or not, but having to walk all the way around, would it be more welcoming if there was a way from the main lobby, if not then a dedicated entrance off of Dayton Street to access the rear of those units? They could more quickly and directly go straight into their unit. More of an egress thing than anything. The ones facing the Lexington, it looks like you can go straight through the lobby to the back of the unit. That space is more of a place for accessing light and private terrace versus going all the way down an alley. My biggest concern would be the six-story building.
- The landscape concept sheet showing the green all the way around, how to get into those townhouses. What is the route from Johnson Street to get to that entry point? It's really pinched in there.
 - You can come across on plan north from a walkway under the overhang, with windows along half of that facade. From the Dayton side there is a walkway that comes around plan north.
- When you're coming through where #7 is on one side of the fence, you're coming right past all those other doors?
 - Correct.
- That seems problematic; students are coming home at 2 or 3:00 a.m., it seems kind of hidden, I'm not crazy about that idea for a main entrance to be facing an existing building and virtually an alley. Again, back to the architecture, the expression of the building, the rhythm of the materials, I really like it, the only concern I have is that entry for the six-story.
 - There would be key card access there.
- So it's controlled private access, there's no other access into that little alleyway? That makes me feel a little bit better.
- Going back to the Dayton Street rendering, on Dayton Street where they so skillfully disguised the garage door openings with trees, it looks like the door is now maybe nine-feet, which would be appropriate. I want to make sure we clarify and nail down what that is, because it doesn't need to be eighteen-feet. What is the head height of that garage door going to be?
 - We actually have the head height internal to the parking garage and not as a lower height of nine or ten-feet, but at the exterior that is higher to allow for taller vehicles to come into that location.
- I look at the floor plan and it looks like you have an extremely tight area, I don't see anything like a garbage truck going in there, it seems so out of scale to have that big huge gaping hole on a big portion of what's facing Dayton Street. When we see it in the renderings it doesn't look as imposing but I think as I can imagine it being that huge opening, and inside who knows what's in there; cars, Ubers, pizza drop-offs, what's going on in there before the second floor?
 - That would be a drop-off point to make sure there's not congestion on the street. We could look at lowering that exterior portion of the garage door.
- You've got seven parking stalls in there, loading and pick up. Given the fact you can't do anything but back up, I don't know why it needs to be any higher than an accessible van. We are being asked to comment on this buildings' appropriateness of scale on Dayton Street versus Johnson Street.
- The adequacy of detailing of materials on both main parts of the project, the Dayton and Johnson Street buildings. To be clear we have a metal panel on the tall structure and a cement panel on the shorter one?
 - Correct, metal panel on the tall tower and fiber cement on the shorter.
- The fiber cement will be probably more of a matte finish and help differentiate the two while still relating to each other. Those are the kinds of things Jess wants us to make a finding on.
- It does look like they are planning on beefing up ornamental trees on the blank walls on either side of the garage opening. Hopefully that will help the portion of the project that is not entrances to the townhouse apartments.
- (Secretary) We should provide feedback to the applicant team, but also think about the Plan Commission and their review of those individual unit entries. Planning staff has concerns with regard to

the design of those individual entries, the returns of the doors, safety, lighting, ultimately making it a place that has interest and is safe for pedestrian passage.

- Looking at the plan, except for those ground floor units along Dayton Street, all other tenants have a way to get to the fitness and other amenities without going outside of the building. It's obviously not a code violation but is kind of unique to those few units on the Dayton Street part of the project. I would think that a dedicated entrance, even if it didn't connect back to the Johnson Street side, could definitely improve that or address that concern staff has.
- I'm not hearing any major architectural concerns about building materials and composition; that one seems to be satisfied. The adequacy of the front façade detailing seems sufficient. Long views and sensitivity to context, I think is all agreeable. Unit entry orientation I believe is the big one here, otherwise landscape I think is agreeable. Staff makes some comments on lighting, which it appears like that one also would need to be revisited or at least a condition to meet ordinance requirements.
- Are we making a motion advisory to the Plan Commission?
- Yes, that the Plan Commission either approve the project with the following conditions or send it back to the UDC for the following items, or not. But that is an advisory recommendation. What we advise the Plan Commission to do and those elements, if any, we believe either need to be revised and/or brought back to the UDC.
- So, my motion would be to advise that the Plan Commission does send it back to the UDC for approval after the unit entries have been substantially revised and I would point back to our comments about internal access to the townhome unit entries from Dayton Street rather than the parking lot of the Lux.
 - In terms of the entry orientation, what if the entry orientation came out to Dayton Street?
Would that be amenable to UDC as a condition, to bring that interior hallway entrance, reorient so the hallway comes out toward Dayton Street? Would that address the concern on access?
- Isn't that what the motion says, for a common entrance to come out towards Dayton Street?
- Yes, that's what I intended to say.
 - I guess we'd be comfortable with that as a condition.
- So, that's an advisory recommendation for approval with that condition for a modification to the design.
- (Secretary) To confirm, I have one condition for a common building entry along Dayton Street, but also sounded like you were intending to include that lighting plans to meet requirements.
- Yes. I don't think we need to see that again necessarily, that could be a condition approved at staff level.
- (Secretary) Also to clarify, we are making an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission to grant Initial Approval with the project returning to UDC for Final Approval?
- Yes, if the Plan Commission can grant Initial Approval.
- Might you have intended to include the condition of lowering the head height of that initial vehicle entry portal?
- Yes, I did intend that.

Discussion on the motion:

- I'm stuck on the Dayton Street entryway garage door, I definitely want to make sure we, it's kind of a blank space and we have not seen in the plans how it relates to the sidewalk and street, it's kind of a big wall. I'd like to see more attention to that but I'm not quite sure what to ask for, but it strikes me and resonates with the comments that were made earlier.
- With that requirement we could just ask for more detail, maybe a detailed elevation or perspective of that showing us what it will look like inside, how it might be lit, framed and landscaped.

Action

On a motion by Bernau, seconded by Braun-Oddo, the Urban Design Commission made an **ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION** to the Plan Commission to grant Initial Approval, with the project returning to the UDC for Final Approval. The motion was passed on a unanimous vote of (6-0). The motion passed with the following conditions:

- Provide a common building entrance from Dayton Street.
- Lower the head height of the vehicle entry portal on the W Dayton Street elevation. The UDC noted that a detailed elevation or perspective of that façade that shows how the door is detailed, lit, framed would be helpful in determining that this condition is met.
- The lighting plans shall be revised to be consistent with City staff requirements for lighting, which can be reviewed and approved administratively.

ATTACHMENT:
28.071 (3) DESIGN STANDARDS FROM ZONING CODE

(3) Design Standards.

The following standards are applicable to all new buildings and additions, within any ten- (10) year period, exceeding fifty percent (50%) of existing building's floor area for non-residential buildings, mixed-use buildings, lodging houses, and residential buildings with 8 or more dwelling units.

(a) Parking.

1. Parking shall be located in parking structures, underground, or in surface parking lots behind principal buildings. Parking structures shall be designed with liner buildings or with ground floor office or retail uses along all street-facing facades.
2. For corner lots or through lots, rear yard surface parking areas abutting any street frontage are limited to fifty percent (50%) of that frontage, and shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the street property line.
3. Parking garage openings visible from the sidewalk shall have a clear maximum height of sixteen (16) feet and a maximum width of twenty-two (22) feet. Garage doors or gates shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet from the front property line. Doors to freight loading bays are exempt from this requirement.
4. No doors or building openings providing motor vehicle access to structured parking or loading facilities shall face State Street, King Street, or the Capitol Square.

(b) Entrance Orientation.

1. Primary building entrances on all new buildings shall be oriented to the primary abutting public street and have a functional door.
2. Additional secondary entrances may be oriented to a secondary street or parking area.
3. Entries shall be clearly visible and identifiable from the street, and delineated with elements such as roof overhangs, recessed entries, landscaping, or similar design features.
4. Within ten (10) feet of a block corner, the facade may be set back to form a corner entry.

(c) Facade Articulation.

1. The facades of new buildings more than forty (40) feet in width shall be divided into smaller vertical intervals through techniques including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Facade modulation, step backs, or extending forward of a portion of the facade.
 - b. Vertical divisions using different textures, materials, or colors of materials.
 - c. Division into multiple storefronts, with separate display windows and entrances.
 - d. Variation in roof lines to reinforce the modulation or vertical intervals.
 - e. Arcades, awnings, window bays, arched windows, and balconies to reinforce the vertical intervals.

(d) Story Heights and Treatment.

1. For all buildings, the maximum ground story height is eighteen (18) feet, measured from the sidewalk to the second story floor. An atrium that exceeds eighteen (18) feet will be considered more than one (1) story.
2. Upper stories shall not exceed fourteen (14) feet floor to floor.
3. For all buildings, the minimum ground story height is twelve (12) feet, measured from the sidewalk to the second story floor.

4. For non-residential uses, the average ground story floor elevation shall not be lower than the front sidewalk elevation nor higher than eighteen (18) inches above the sidewalk elevation.
5. For ground-story residential uses, landscaping, steps, porches, grade changes, and low ornamental fences or walls or similar treatments shall be located between the sidewalk and the front door to create a private yard area.

(e) Door and Window Openings.

1. For street-facing facades with ground story non-residential uses, the ground story door and window openings shall comprise a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the facade area.
2. For street-facing facades with ground story residential uses, ground story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area.
3. For all buildings, upper story openings shall comprise a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the facade area per story.
4. Garage doors and opaque service doors shall not count toward the above requirements.
5. Glass on all windows and doors shall be clear or slightly tinted, allowing views into and out of the interior. Spandrel glass may be used on service areas on the building.

(f) Building Materials.

1. Buildings shall be constructed of durable, high-quality materials. Table 28 E-1 below lists allowable building materials.
2. All building facades visible from a public street or public walkway shall use materials and design features similar to or complementary to those of the front facade.

Table 28E-1: Building Materials in Downtown and Urban Districts.

Building Materials	Trim/Accent Material	Top of Building	Middle of Building	Base/Bottom of Building	Standards (see footnotes)
Brick (Face/Veneer)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Smooth-Face/Split-Face Block	✓	✓	✓	✓	A
Wood/Wood Composite	✓	✓	✓	✓	B
Fiber-Cement Siding/Panels	✓	✓	✓	✓	B
Concrete Panels (Tilt-up or Precast)	✓	✓	✓	✓	C
EIFS/Synthetic Stucco	✓	✓			D
Stone/Stone Veneer	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Metal Panels	✓	✓	✓	✓	E
Hand-Laid Stucco	✓	✓			D
Reflective Glass/Spandrel	✓				F
Glass (Transparent)	✓	✓	✓	✓	

A - Shall be used in conjunction with a palette of materials and shall not comprise more than thirty-three percent (33%) of any building.

B - Wood and fiber cement panels shall not be used on the ground story except between the sidewalk and the bottom of storefront windows or as an accent material.

C - Shall incorporate horizontal and vertical articulation and modulation, including but not limited to changes in color and texture, or as part of a palette of materials.

D - Shall not be within three feet of the ground or used on building facades facing State Street, King Street, or the Capitol Square.

E - Shall be used in conjunction with a palette of materials; shall be a heavy gauge, non-reflective metal

F - Shall be used in limited quantities as an accent material.

(g) Equipment and Service Area Screening.

1. Outdoor loading areas or mechanical equipment are not permitted in the front yard. When visible from an abutting public street or walkway, they shall be screened by a decorative fence, wall, or screen of plant material.
2. No doors or openings providing access to parking or loading facilities shall about the Capitol Square, State Street or King Street.
3. Fences and walls shall be architecturally compatible with the principal structure.

(h) Screening of Rooftop Equipment.

1. All rooftop equipment, with the exception of solar and wind equipment, shall be screened from view from adjacent streets and public rights-of-way. Rooftop equipment shall be screened from view from adjacent buildings to the extent possible.
2. The equipment shall be within an enclosure. This structure shall be set back a distance of one and one-half (1½) times its height from any primary facade fronting a public street. Screens shall be of durable, permanent materials (not including wood) that are compatible with the primary building materials. (Am. by ORD-15-00104, 10-15-15)