



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 502 Pflaum Road  
**Application Type:** Informational Presentation for a Public Building for MMSD Sennett Middle School  
**UDC will be an Approving Body**  
**Legistar File ID #:** [92523](#)  
**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Scott Chehak, Madison Metropolitan School District | Susan Bowersox, OPN Architects

**Project Description:** The applicant is proposing the construction of a new 155,000 square foot, two-story school on the unused (western) portion of the property while the existing school remains open. Upon completion of the new construction the existing building will be demolished and replaced with parking and green space.

**Approval Standards:** The UDC will be an **approving body** on this request. Pursuant to MGO Section 33.24(4)(d), *"The UDC shall approve plans for all buildings proposed to be built or expanded in the City by the State of Wisconsin, the University of Wisconsin, the City of Madison, Dane County, the Federal Government or any other local governmental entity which has the power to levy taxes on property located within the City."*

Staff note that the UDC's approving authority is limited to the buildings themselves; any comments related to landscaping would only be advisory in nature.

## Summary of Design Considerations

Staff request the UDC provide feedback as required for public buildings. Potential design considerations for the Commission's review and comment are identified below:

- **Building Design and Materials**, including as it relates to using durable, high-quality materials, as well as architectural design and detailing to maintain a pedestrian scale, clearly define building entrances and maintain a positive building orientation to the street, minimize/mitigate blank wall expanses, and maintain the same level of design and detailing across all elevations.

In addition, with regard to maintaining a positive building orientation to the street, consideration should also be given to the building's placement on the site and whether a building that is situated closer to the street could result in a more active external pedestrian experience along the street, as well as protected internal campus setting.

Staff note that the Zoning Code (MGO 28.097 and 28.173) outline specific requirements for setbacks and civic or institutional buildings, respectively, including a minimum setbacks, entrance orientation to public street, courtyard, lawn, or other common open space, and street-facing facade articulation requirements (vertically at a minimum interval of every 40 feet), as well as positioning street-facing facades to accentuate vistas or directed views. Staff note that a complete Zoning analysis will be conducted as part of the Site Plan Review process, but the applicant team is encouraged to work with Zoning Staff to confirm Zoning Code compliance early in the design process. Ultimately, the Zoning Administrator will determine compliance with all applicable Zoning requirements.

- **Signage.** Staff note and the applicant is advised that while signage is shown on the elevation drawings, signage is not part of this review. As shown, the proposed wall sign **does not** comply with the Sign Code and would require special approval. A separate review and approval are required for all signage. Staff encourage the applicant team to work with Zoning Staff early in the process to confirm that any proposed signage complies with the [Sign Code](#).