



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 619 W Mifflin Street  
**Application Type:** New Multi-Family Residential Building in UMX Zoning  
**Informational Presentation**  
**Legistar File ID #:** [84855](#)  
**Prepared By:** Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

## Background Information

**Applicant | Contact:** Linda Irving, Trinitas | Neil Reardon, ESG Architecture & Design

**Project Description:** The applicant is proposing the construction of a 10-story multi-family residential building.

### Project Schedule:

- The Landmarks Commission received an informational presentation at their July 1, 2024, meeting (Legistar File ID #[84154](#) and [84153](#)).

**Approval Standards:** The subject site is zoned Urban Mixed Use (UMX). Per MGO Section 28.076(4)(c), "All new buildings and additions greater than 20,000 square feet or that have more than four stories in UMX zoning shall obtain conditional use approval from the Plan Commission following review by the Urban Design Commission for conformity to the design standards in Section 28.071(3) of the Zoning Code and the [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#) and report its findings to the Plan Commission."

**Adopted Plans:** The project site is located within the [Downtown Plan](#) planning area, within the West Rail Corridor neighborhood. As such, development on the project site is subject to the [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#). The Plan recommendations for development in this area generally speak to encouraging and supporting multi-modal transportation and connectivity, preservation and rehabilitation of landmarks and older building stock, as well as allowing and encouraging mixed-use development. The Plan includes this site within Additional Height Area D, which states that recognizing this large, irregularly shaped block and its proximity to planned taller buildings, heights up to 10 stories may be appropriate where buildings are set back from surrounding through streets. The plan states that heights are to be used as a tool to encourage buildings of exceptional design that respond to the specific context of their location.

**Related Zoning Information:** The project site is zoned Urban Mixed Use (UMX). The Zoning Code outlines design standards that are applicable to all new buildings in both the UMX and DC zoning districts ([MGO 28.071](#)), including, but not limited to those related to building entrance orientation, façade articulation, height, fenestration, and materials. Staff notes that while the UDC is tasked with evaluating the development proposal for general consistency with the design-related standards in the Zoning Code, ultimately, the Zoning Administrator will determine compliance.

As noted in the Downtown Height Map, the maximum height allowed for the project site is eight stories/116 feet. However, the project site is located within an area where additional height of up to two stories (10 stories/144 feet), may be allowed as part of a conditional use. As noted in the Zoning Code, buildings must meet both the maximum number of stories and the maximum height. As proposed, the development **appears to be consistent** with the maximum height limitations.

Staff notes that the Plan Commission is the approving authority for requests for additional height. In this case, the Plan Commission's evaluation of such a request is based in Conditional Use Standard No. 13, which states:

- a) The excess height is compatible with the existing or planned (if the recommendations in the Downtown Plan call for changes) character of the surrounding area, including but not limited to the scale, mass, rhythm, and setbacks of buildings and relationships to street frontages and public spaces.
- b) The excess height allows for a demonstrated higher quality building than could be achieved without the additional stories.
- c) The scale, massing and design of new buildings complement and positively contribute to the setting of any landmark buildings within or adjacent to the projects and create a pleasing visual relationship with them.
- d) For projects proposed in priority viewsheds and other views and vistas identified on the Views and Vistas Map in the City of Madison Downtown Plan, there are no negative impacts on the viewshed as demonstrated by viewshed studies prepared by the applicant.

**Historic Preservation Related Information:** The project site is currently a landmark site that includes the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin Warehouse Building. It is staff's understanding that the project site will be subdivided to create two parcels; a site for the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin Warehouse building, and a site for the proposed new 10-story building. This process will be paired with an amendment to the existing landmark designation that shifts the landmark boundary to just include the landmark structure.

In addition, the project site is adjacent to Milwaukee Road Depot at 640 W Washington Avenue. The proposed development will trigger compliance with [MGO 28.144](#) for development adjacent to a landmark or landmark site. While the Plan Commission will be the approving agency on this request, the Landmarks Commission will make an advisory recommendation as to *"...whether the proposed development is so large or visually intrusive as to adversely affect the historic character or integrity of the adjoining landmark or landmark site."*

As noted above, the Landmarks Commission reviewed an Informational Presentation at their July 1, 2024, meeting. The Landmarks Commission's comments noted that the 2-3-story base treatment adjacent to the landmarked Wiedenbeck-Dobelin Warehouse (619 W Mifflin) was appropriate. They expressed concern for how the proposed 10-story building related to both the landmarked Milwaukee Road Depot (640 W Washington) and the Wiedenbeck. The Commission noted that building setbacks away from the depot and increased setbacks from the Wiedenbeck should be considered. Some of which have already been incorporated into the design.

## Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommends that the UDC provide feedback on the development proposal regarding the aforementioned standards as it relates to the design considerations noted below.

- **Building Orientation.** The project site located at the end of W Mifflin Street, off a cul-de-sac, with limited street frontage. The building's main entry is significantly setback from W Mifflin Street, and it is further detached from the street as it is recessed and served by a vehicular drop-off. While the site has limited street frontage adversely impacting the ability of the proposed building to have a strong street orientation, consideration should be given to maintaining as much of a positive building orientation towards the street as possible, by incorporating entrance defining architectural elements (i.e., porte-cochere, canopies, etc.) into the building design, locating active uses/common entries as close to the street as possible, utilizing a higher level of design at the pedestrian level, and integrating landscape architecture and site amenities (i.e., signage, lighting, etc.).

As noted in the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, *"...how a building faces a public way (street and sidewalks) is a primary factor in what it contributes to the urban character of an areas by reinforcing a consistent street wall and enhancing the pedestrian realm."*

Staff requests the UDC's feedback on general building orientation.

- **Building Design and Composition.** Staff requests the Commission provide feedback on the overall building design and composition as it relates to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, including those related to the overall massing and proportions of architectural components (top, middle, base), the appropriateness of the use of setback/setbacks, balancing vertical/horizontal lines and datum, size and rhythm of windows and doors, simplifying roof forms/transitions, creating positive termination at the top of the building, etc.

Staff notes that the applicant has indicated that VTAC/PTAC units will not be used.

- **Building Materials.** As noted in the applicant's Letter of Intent, the proposed material palette is primarily comprised of masonry, metal panel, and EIFS. Consideration should be given to the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, which generally speak to utilizing a high quality, durable materials to enrich the pedestrian environment through the use of scale, color, texture and detailing.

Staff notes and the applicant is advised that pursuant to MGO 28.071, metal panels reflective metal panel is not permitted in the UMX zone district. It is not clear to staff the extent of where EIFS will be used, though staff notes initial concerns as that there have historically been questions regarding the desirability, durability, and quality of this material in various applications and note that Zoning Code limits the use of EIFS as an accent material or at the top of the building.

Staff requests the UDC provide feedback related to the proposed building materials.

- **Long Views.** Given the project site location and the proposed building height, the development will be highly visible as it sits amongst primarily 1-5 story buildings. The proposed building will be visible from the intersections of W Washington Avenue and Regent/Proudfit Street, as well as W Washington Avenue and Bedford Street, and long the Southwest Commuter Path. As such, consideration should be given to the composition of upper floors and maintaining positive termination at the top of the building. The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines speak to providing a higher degree of architectural strength and design in areas of prominent viewsheds.

Staff requests the UDC provide feedback related to the design of these highly visible facades.