PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

July 16, 2025

PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address:	**3565 Tulane Avenue**
Application Type:	Planned Development for the Eastmorland Community Center and Housing **UDC is an Advisory Body**
Legistar File ID #:	87894
Prepared By:	Jessica Vaughn, AICP, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Sean Meyers, Threshold Buildings/Threshold Sacred Development

Project Description: The applicant is proposing to construct a mixed-use development comprised of two buildings; a community center with commercial space, and a 26-unit, three-story multi-family residential building. The project will be served by surface parking lot.

Project Schedule:

- The application is scheduled to be reviewed by the Plan Commission at their July 28, 2025, meeting.
- This application is scheduled to be reviewed by the Common Council at their August 5, 2025, meeting.
- UDC received an Informational Presentation on April 30, 2025.

Approval Standards: The UDC is an **advisory body** on this request. For Planned Developments the UDC is required to provide a recommendation to the Plan Commission with specific findings on the design objectives listed in Zoning Code sections 28.098(2), Standards for Approval (attached for reference), including, more specifically:

> PD Standard (e), which generally speaks to coordinating "...*architectural styles and building forms to achieve greater compatibility with surrounding land uses and create an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose of the PD District.*"

Staff recommend that as an advisory body, the UDC should structure a motion as a recommendation to the Plan Commission with or without specific conditions instead of using the Initial/Final framework the Commission uses when acting as an approving body. For example, such a motion may look like the following:

> "*The UDC finds, on balance, that the PD Standards, including PD Standard (e) have been met, and recommends that the Plan Commission approve the development subject to the following conditions…*"

Zoning Related Information: The project site is in the Transit Oriented Development Overlay (TOD) zone. New development within the TOD Overlay is subject to the requirements as outlined in MGO 28.104, including those that speak to:

- Maximum principal building setbacks – At least 30% of the primary street facing façade (Ogden Street) shall be setback no more than 20 feet,
- Entrance orientation – Principal building entrances shall be orientated towards the primary abutting street (Ogden Street) and be located within the maximum setback (20 feet),
- Minimum number of stories – A minimum of two stories is required for a minimum of 75% of the building footprint, and
- Site standards for automobile infrastructure.

Staff note that while ultimately the Zoning Administrator will determine compliance with the TOD Overlay requirements, the development proposal, on balance, **appears to be consistent** with the TOD Overlay requirements. However, in coordination with Zoning Staff, the Building B entry along Hargrove Street will need to be redesigned to be barrier free and accessible to meet the TOD Overlay requirements. Further Zoning review will be conducted as part of the Site Plan Review process.

Adopted Plans: The City's adopted Comprehensive Plan recommends the project site for Special Institutional (SI) land uses, a designation primarily used to identify current or recommended locations for schools and large places of assembly and worship. The Comprehensive Plan notes that SI uses, especially those on small sites, less than one acre, may be classified with surrounding land uses, as civic and institutional buildings are allowed in most land use categories. Further, plan amendments approved in 2023 provide additional guidance for redeveloping sites recommended for SI land uses acknowledging that sites may be developed for more intensive development and noting the appropriateness of "Low Medium Residential" development which includes up to three story buildings at densities up to 30 dwelling units an acre. More intensive residential development could be appropriate in certain cases.

Summary of Design Considerations

Staff recommend that the UDC provide feedback and make findings on the development proposal related to the Planned Development standards as noted above and as it relates to the following design considerations.

- **Building Design and Composition.** Aside from the large school across the street, the project site is situated in an area that is predominantly low-density residential buildings. As such, consideration should be given to ways that the proposed larger buildings can be designed with a sensitivity to the surrounding context, as well as incorporate design elements that help break down mass and scale and create an enhanced pedestrian environment.

  As noted on the Site Plan, the development proposal is comprised of two buildings; Building A, which is the multi-family residential building and Building B, which is the community center.

  Regarding Building A, staff requests the Commission's feedback and findings on the overall building design and composition, including as it relates to:

  - Minimizing blank walls, including those that wrap the southwest corner of the building (staff note this area is labeled "Storage Room" on the floor plans),
  - Incorporating articulation/changes in plane where materials/colors transition, and
  - Maintaining a consistent level of design detailing as it relates to the window expressions, in particular those along the ground floor, as well as those at the northwest corner of the building.

  Regarding Building B, staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings on the overall building design and composition, including as it relates to:

  - Minimizing blank walls, including those on the north, south and west elevations along the ground level,
  - The design and detailing of the architectural element at the corner/apex of the site, and
  - Maintaining a consistent level of design and detailing across all elevations as it relates to door and window expressions. The primary entrance along Hargrove Street is recessed and accessed by stairs, and the secondary entrance along Tulane Avenue, appears to reflect more of a residential glass door than a secondary common building entrance. Neither of which reflect the design and

detailing that is consistent with the other building entrances across the development or building, which appear to have consistency in their design details. As noted above, the entry along Hargrove Street will need to be redesigned to be barrier free and accessible, which has been identified by Zoning Staff in their preliminary review.

In addition, there are a variety of window sizes, groupings, shapes and detailing across all elevations. Consideration should be given to minimizing the number of variations in the window expressions.

In addition, as it pertains to both buildings, the rounded building corners are a seemingly unique and defining component of the building design and composition across the development. As such, staff have concern related to the design impacts that would result should the rounded corners be removed from the design and whether the resulting design would meet the PD standards. Staff requests the Commission's feedback and findings.

Generally, and in summary, the UDC's Informational Presentation comments related to building design and composition are noted below:

- Specifically, regarding Building B, consideration should be given to simplifying the building design and detailing, as well as proportions to highlight the architectural elements that need to be more prominent versus those that do not (i.e. the corner/apex),
- Overall, Building A was noted as being more successful as a cohesive architectural expression, whereas refinements are necessary to Building B, including simplifying design details and providing a better connection to the open spaces,
- Given the site's multiple street frontage consideration should be given to how the buildings address each of the streets and opportunities for design and landscape features, and
- The Commission noted that the horizontal and vertical corrugated metal siding and curved corners were appreciated.

- **Materials.** As noted in the elevation drawings, the material palette for both buildings appear to be comprised of primarily corrugated metal panel, both vertical and horizontal applications with wood accents.

  Given the context in this case, staff continue to have some concerns about the extensive use of corrugated metal panel as a primary material in this context. Additionally, consideration should be given to incorporating articulation in material/color transitions, utilizing a richer level of design and detailing at the pedestrian level, etc.

  Staff requests the UDC's feedback and findings on the proposed material palette, especially as it relates to the PD Standard (e) which speaks to creating an enhanced design aesthetic and contextual appropriateness.

  Staff note that there appears to be a discrepancy in the materials noted on Building A. Sheet AA202, notes that the wood accent materials as "WD-01 Black Locust Siding or SDNG 01 ALT". Staff recommend that the intended material be confirmed and included the Commission's motion.

  Staff note that the UDC's Informational Presentation comments indicated general support for the horizontal and vertical metal siding. The UDC is recommended to provide specific feedback to the Plan Commission regarding the materials as it relates to the approval standards.

- **Murals.** As noted on the elevation drawings, murals are anticipated for both buildings, on the west elevation of Building A and on the East elevation of Building B. As noted on the elevation drawings, General Elevation Notes the mural will be a painted fabric that will be mounted to panel system that is mounted to the building wall.

  While staff recognize that there are design options that could include larger scale artwork as a tool for minimizing blank walls, consideration should also be given to the artwork being an integral part of the building design and composition, and materials, providing articulation, color, texture, etc. In addition, if the murals do not come to fruition, consideration should also be given to the design and detailing of the blank wall.

  Staff requests the UDC provide feedback and make findings related to the proposed murals, including as it relates to the proposed design parameters/details for the art installations, as well as their locations. For example, the mural on Building A could be more strategically located in the southwest corner of the building, where windows are absent.

- **Landscape.** Staff request the Commission's feedback and findings on the proposed landscape plan and plant list in terms of providing adequate transitions and clear delineation between the public/private spaces, as well as in terms of providing year-round screening and texture along street frontages, softening blank walls and the surface parking area.

  Generally, and in summary, the UDC's Informational Presentation comments noted that consideration should be given to incorporating additional landscape in the parking area and adjacent to Building A to soften the parking area, as well as giving consideration to opportunities to tie the parking area and plaza space together, including alternative paving, landscape, materials, colors, connectivity, etc.

- **Lighting.** Staff notes, and the applicant is advised, that there appear to be discrepancies between the proposed lighting and the outdoor lighting requirements pursuant to MGO 29.36, including as it relates to the proposed fixtures (specifically Fixture OS1, which is an up/down fixture, Fixture OB, which is a bollard, and the T Series fixtures, which are LED light strips) and light levels shown on the lighting plan.

  While staff believe the proposed lighting to be generally consistent with the PD standards, revisions and additional information will be required to confirm compliance with the fixture cutoff requirements and light levels pursuant to MGO 29.36, "Outdoor Lighting" which will occur as part of the Site Plan Review process. Staff encourage the applicant to work with Building Inspection staff prior to making a formal submittal.

Summary of Informational Presentation Comments and Discussion

As a reference, a summary of the Commission's discussion and comments from the April 30, 2025, Informational Presentation are provided below:

The Commission asked about the style of design as a composition. The applicant cited mission style, and budget restraints.

The Commission noted that if there are budget constraints the design should be reflect that. Less is more; there is too much going on, which are adding to the budget. If there is a specific element that needs to be highlighted do that – everything is fighting/competing for the front space. Look at the proportions and details. Think about which one of these elements you want to focus on and work from there to come up with a composition that

works financially and aesthetically. Creating a sense of place – all of the different elements are taking away from that intent.

The Commission noted interesting organizational and landscape elements in the site plan; while also suggesting finding relationships so they relate to each other more both in material and in form. There is a gateway element that is darker gray, but then the reused salvaged brick wall of the storage structure and the community center and mural – all three things are significantly different from each other. What would it look like if they connected and spoke to each other more, were more similar in materiality, colors, connectivity.

The Commission commented on the parking needs of the housing versus the community center, suggesting the accessible stall move to protect the plaza as an open space, as well as a reduction in stalls. The applicant noted the parking is solely for the housing portion. The plaza appears to be an organizing element that should not be interrupted by vehicles.

The Commission commented on the siting of housing along Ogden and community center along Hargrove as a good choice, with the need to refine how the building faces all the corners. There are opportunities for landscape features and design features.

The Commission noted that the play of vertical with horizontal corrugated metal siding and curved corners was appreciated, as well as the use of color (green).

The Commission noted that the housing is more successful than the community center in terms of a cohesive look. There is a lot going on with the hall, refinements need to be made. The pilasters, if they were more integrated could work; connecting them to the roof. The ends of that building should be better connected to the open spaces/public spaces. This building should be a better transitional building between the residential building and the plaza space.

The Commission noted that the parking lot may not need to be minimized but maybe the materials need to change – tie the parking area to the plaza space. How the plaza circle finds its way through the parking area might be able to tie things together with materials like pavers. The parking area is a barren area between the two entities, something needs to happen to tie the spaces together.

The Commission commented that additional trees should be located adjacent to the residential building, like the hall, to soften the parking area.

The Commission noted that the raised egress balcony on the residential building is an exciting feature, but that consideration should be given to how the semi-public/private space is ultimately shared as well as screening of the parking lot.

The Commission expressed excitement for this type of project, the housing, and the egress balconies/stairway.

ATTACHMENT
PD Zoning Statement of Purpose and Standards

28.098 (1) Statement of Purpose.

The Planned Development (PD) District is established to provide a voluntary regulatory framework as a means to facilitate the unique development of land in an integrated and innovative fashion, to allow for flexibility in site design, and to encourage development that is sensitive to environmental, cultural, and economic considerations, and that features high-quality architecture and building materials. In addition, the Planned Development District is intended to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

(a) Promotion of green building technologies, low-impact development techniques for stormwater management, and other innovative measures that encourage sustainable development.

(b) Promotion of integrated land uses allowing for a mixture of residential, commercial, and public facilities along corridors and in transitional areas, with enhanced pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections and amenities.

(c) Preservation and enhancement of important environmental features through careful and sensitive placement of buildings and facilities.

(d) Preservation of historic buildings, structures, or landscape features through adaptive reuse of public or private preservation of land.

(e) Provision of more adequate, usable, and suitably located open space, recreational amenities, and other public facilities than would otherwise be provided under conventional land development techniques.

(f) Facilitation of high-quality development that is consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.

28.098(2) Approval Standards for Project

The standards for approval of a zoning map amendment to the PD District, or any major alteration to an approved General Development Plan, are as follows:

(a) The applicant shall demonstrate that no other base zoning district can be used to achieve a substantially similar pattern of development. Planned developments shall not be allowed simply for the purpose of increasing overall density or allowing development that otherwise could not be approved unless the development also meets one or more of the objectives of (1) above. Conditions under which planned development may be appropriate include:
   1. Site conditions such as steep topography or other unusual physical features; or
   2. Redevelopment of an existing area or use of an infill site that could not be reasonably developed under base zoning district requirements.

(b) The PD District plan shall facilitate the development or redevelopment goals of the Comprehensive Plan and of adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.

(c) The PD District plan shall not adversely affect the economic health of the City or the area of the City where the development is proposed. The City shall be able to provide municipal services to the property where the planned development is proposed without a significant increase of the cost of providing those services or economic impact on municipal utilities serving that area.

(d) The PD District plan shall not create traffic or parking demands disproportionate to the facilities and improvements designed to meet those demands. A traffic demand management plan may be required as a way

to resolve traffic and parking concerns. The Plan shall include measurable goals, strategies, and actions to encourage travelers to use alternatives to driving alone, especially at congested times of day. Strategies and actions may include, but are not limited to, carpools and vanpools; public and private transit; promotion of bicycling, walking and other non-motorized travel; flexible work schedules and parking management programs to substantially reduce automobile trips.

(e) The PD District plan shall coordinate architectural styles and building forms to achieve greater compatibility with surrounding land uses and create an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose of the PD District.

(f) The PD District plan shall include open space suitable to the type and character of development proposed, including for projects with residential components, a mix of structured and natural spaces for use by residents and visitors. Areas for stormwater management, parking, or in the public right of way shall not be used to satisfy this requirement.

(g) The PD district shall include suitable assurances that each phase could be completed in a manner that would not result in an adverse effect upon the community as a result of termination at that point.

(h) When applying the above standards to an application for height in excess of that allowed in Section 28.071(2)(a) Downtown Height Map, except as provided for in Section 28.071(2)(a)1. and Section 28.071(2)(b), the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendations in adopted plans and no application for excess height shall be granted by the Plan Commission unless it finds that all of the following conditions are present:

1. 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.
2. The excess height allows for a demonstrated higher quality building than could be achieved without the additional stories.
3. The scale, massing and design of new buildings complement and positively contribute to the setting of any landmark buildings within or adjacent to the project and create a pleasing visual relationship with them.
4. 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.

(i) When applying the above standards to an application to reduce or eliminate stepbacks required by Section 28.071(2)(c) Downtown Stepback Map, the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendations in adopted plans, including the downtown plan. No application to reduce or eliminate stepbacks may be granted unless it finds that all of the following conditions are present:

1. The lot is a corner parcel.
2. The lot is not part of a larger assemblage of properties.
3. The entire lot is vacant or improved with only a surface parking lot.
4. No principal buildings on the lot have been demolished or removed since the effective date of this ordinance