



STAFF REPORT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
For the February 25, 2015 meeting

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission Members
FROM: Sheena Danzer, Planning Director
SUBJECT: Master Site Plan Review request for Midtown Center at 73rd St. and University Ave.

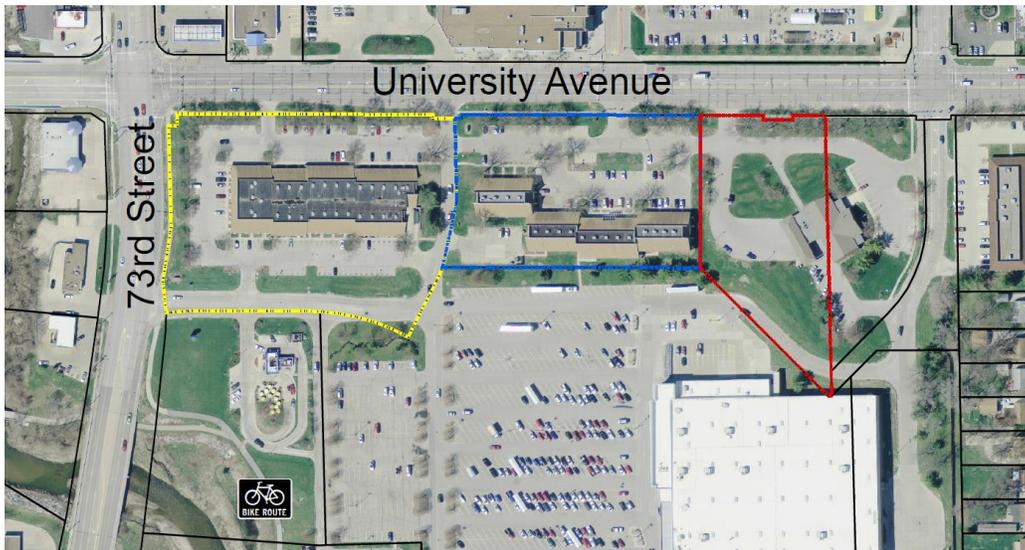
GENERAL INFORMATION

Applicant: Colby Management Company
6581 University Avenue
Windsor Heights, IA 50324
Civil Engineer: Raker Rhodes, LLC
Landscape Architect: Simonson and Associates Architects, LLC
Property Owner: Charles I Colby and Ruth Colby National Development Trust
Application Date: January 21, 2015
Location: 7240- 7000 University
Zoning: UC, University Commercial
Proposed use: 3- multi-tenant retail spaces
Proposed development: 11.94 acres (520,149 sq. ft.)
Proposed building area: West building: 17,825 sq. ft. 12, 600 sq. ft.
Middle building: 15,400 sq. ft.
East building: 10,500 sq. ft.

Requested Action: Review site plan application and provide a recommendation to the City Council

Quick Summary:

A Master Site Plan of the re-development of the Apple Valley Shopping Center has been submitted. The proposed development will be referred to as Midtown Center. Below is an aerial of the existing layout and parcels that make up the Apple Valley Shopping Center. Banker's Trust is also highlighted as an affected parcel as the intention is to add retail space into the parcel highlighted in red; shifting the drive thru service to the east.



DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REVIEW

The Development Committee met on February 12, 2015 with the applicant to discuss the project. The Development Committee is an advisory board to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. Recommendations are summarized below. The Development Committee was emailed a copy of the MPO’s recommendations **after** they met as the MPO’s recommendations had not been completed by February 12, 2015. Comments between the Development Committee and MPO have been found to be comparable.

1. Would like to see the design to be more user friendly for walking and biking.
2. Aesthetics – we want the development to be aesthetically pleasing and something that is classical and can stand the test of time; it has been shown time and again that the latest and greatest in design doesn’t always last the longest. Windsor Heights’ homes are high quality and well-built and we should seek to mimic that in commercial developments.

Mixed use- the goal should be to make certain the development is filled with tenants; want to make sure whatever is placed in the city is drawing people in to the community; although patios, apartments, and bike lanes may be nice, we should be practical as to what type of individuals are coming to Windsor Heights and for what purposes; want to also make sure that whatever development goes in- if future legislation allows for a local option sales tax- that there is the ability to capitalize on additional revenue; having apartments/commercial buildings will limit the revenue the city will see back.

A lot of parking; however, not knowing the tenants who plan to go into the buildings- do not want to make a judgment as to if it is too many parking spaces.

A bike lane is not necessarily the best thing for this development at this time and widening sidewalks per staff’s recommendation is good.

3. Hard to develop an opinion without a clear vision of what it would look like without knowing who the anchor tenant will be. Any facelift to any of the buildings would be positive. Don’t see the need to give them a five year commitment if they won’t commit to do any more than the bear minimum.

4. Would not recommend approval at this time; the development would further exacerbate the disconnect between making University Avenue feel more like a “town center” or “main street” area and more like a suburban shopping center; affection for better quality of space focused on the individual (pedestrian/bike) versus the automobile; the development would further complicate our city’s desire to create a more walkable and approachable neighborhood for people; no concerns with the conceptual architecture but more with the urban planning concepts of how the buildings fit the site to best articulate the goals of the community; feel as if the building are only situated to potentially best serve the building and land owner; more strategic planning could result in equally or even greater benefit to the building or land owner by creating more dynamic and unique spaces, versus regurgitating suburban sprawl techniques; would like to see the redevelopment of the area to last for at least 50 years or more; more density would better serve this area of town and find it disappointing we’re not pushing for more of that and less parking given the

abundant amount of parking in the immediate area; hope we could visit relaxing any parking requirements be reviewing real needs versus perceived needs; the area should be revisited for including multi-family residential development or mixed-use development.

Specific recommendation as it relates to the proposed master plan, “push the main building (Phase 1) all the way to the western edge and have it wrap the corner and eliminate that first drive off of University. Study increasing the drive off of 73rd Street into the B-Bops area; have future phased buildings orient themselves adjacent to University Avenue; keep parking on the south side of the buildings so it is easily seen as approaching from the south on 73rd headed north.

5. Many members supported the above comments (#4)

6. Should we allow this to go through we’re going to be tied to something that, while functional, simply replaces what is currently there. Clearly a lack of vision.

DES MOINES METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION REVIEW

The Des Moines MPO completed a review of the master site plan to determine its conformance with the Tomorrow Plan. The complete review is a separate document, but to summarize, the following recommendations were listed in their report.

This is a key location for the City of Windsor Heights as it is the only location in the city that is identified as a node in the Tomorrow Plan. It is also one of the few commercial locations in Windsor Heights. Given the limited opportunity for additional development, the city should maximize available opportunities.

- Build buildings to the sidewalk/street;
- Provide a wide sidewalk with street trees;
- 1-story buildings should be built to accommodate the addition of upper stories in the future;
- Provide on-street parking with all remaining surface parking placed in the rear or lot; and
- Maximize valuable street frontage;

APPLICABLE SECTIONS

177.02 SITE PLAN REVIEW PROCEDURE.

1. Purpose. The Site Plan Review Procedure provides for special review in addition to plan review required by other sections of this Code of Ordinances of projects that have potentially significant effects on traffic circulation or a significant effect on land uses in adjacent neighborhoods. The procedure provides for review and evaluation of site development features and possible mitigation of unfavorable effects on surrounding property.

2. Administration. The Zoning Administrator shall review, evaluate, and act on all site plans submitted pursuant to this procedure. The Planning and Zoning Commission shall review site plans and shall transmit its recommendation to the City Council for approval.

Site Plan Review Procedure further states the following:

“The Zoning Administrator, or his/her designee, Planning and Zoning Commission, and City Council may require modification of a site plan as a prerequisite for approval. Required modifications may be more restrictive than base district regulations and may include, but not be limited to, additional landscaping or screening; installation of erosion control measures; improvement of access or circulation; rearrangement of structures on the site; or other modifications deemed necessary to protect the public health, safety, welfare, community character, property values, and/or aesthetics.”

STAFF ANALYSIS

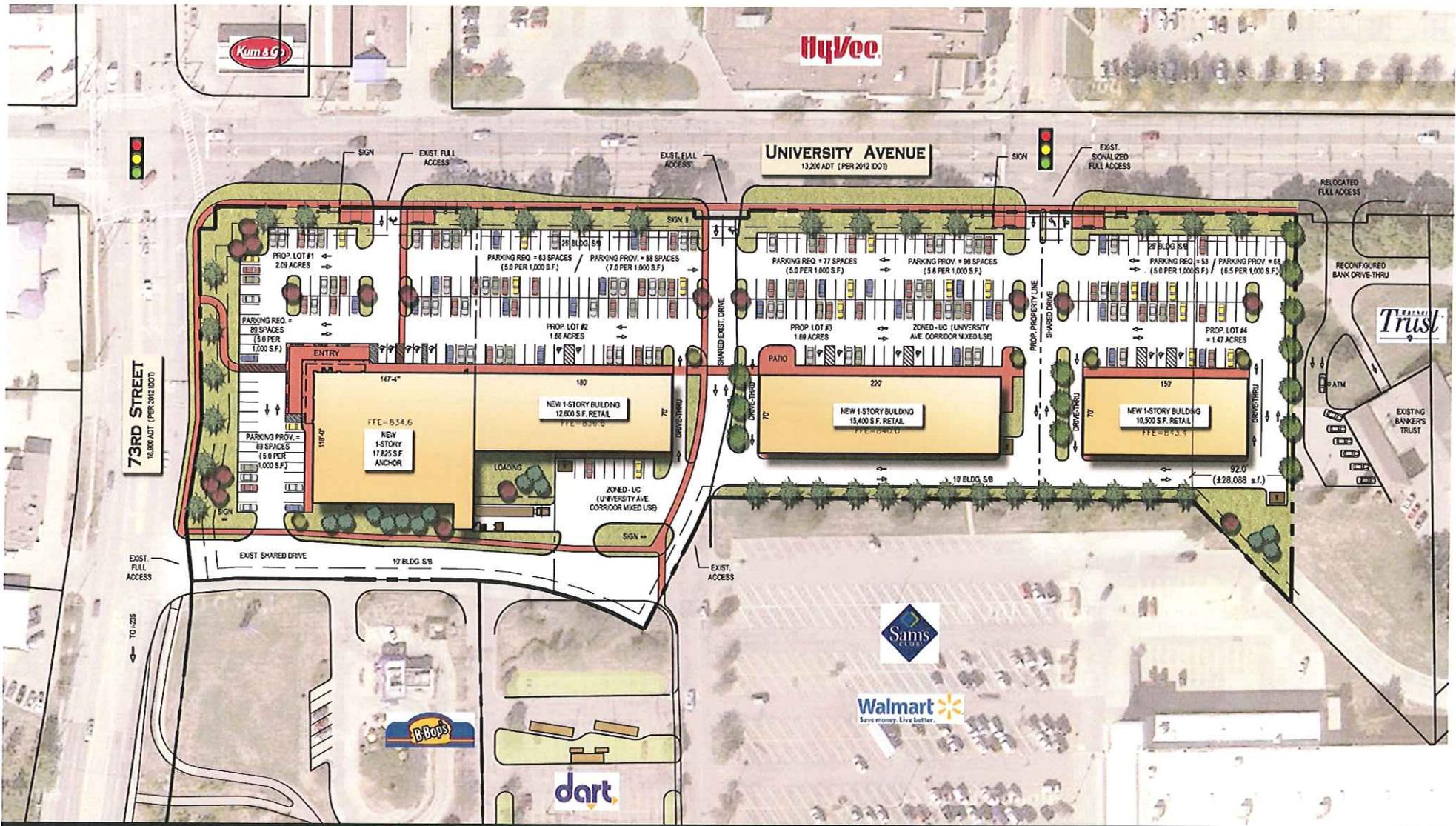
The following is the outline used in Chapter 177 to review site plans. A more extensive review can be found in the comments submitted to the applicant in a separate document. Follow-up comments have been made by the applicant as well. City staff will continue to work with the applicant on adjustments and items still needed in the site plan. As always, a building permit will not be issued until all conflicts are resolved.

Land Use Compatibility		Staff Comments
Height and Bulk	Development should minimize differences in height and building size from surrounding structures. Differences should be justified by urban design considerations.	No issues.
Setbacks	Development should respect pre-existing setbacks in surrounding area. Variations should be justified by site or operating characteristics.	Setback requirements have been met. Setback requirements are as follows: Front- 25 feet, Street side yard-25, and interior side yard- 0, rear yard- 10 feet. The proposed buildings are approximately setback over 140 feet from the right-of-way.
Building Coverage	Building coverage should be similar to that of surrounding development if possible. Higher coverage should be mitigated by landscaping or site amenities.	No issues.
Frontage	Project frontage along a street should meet minimum frontage requirements and provide reasonable exposure for the development.	No issues. The proposed street frontage is approximately 691 feet. (Linear ft.)
Parking and Internal Circulation	Parking should serve all structures with minimal conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.	This will be better determined once a traffic study is reviewed. Parking is being proposed in front of the buildings; parking is preferred to be at the rear and/or sides of the building as stated in Town Center guidelines.
Parking and Internal Circulation	All structures must be accessible to public safety vehicles.	No issues.
Parking and Internal Circulation	Development must have access to adjacent public streets and ways. Internal circulation should minimize conflicts and congestion at public access points.	Will be better determined once a traffic study is completed.
Landscaping	Landscaping should be integral to the development, providing street landscaping, breaks in uninterrupted paved areas, and buffering where required by surrounding land uses. Parts of site with sensitive environmental features or natural drainage ways should be preserved.	A complete landscape review is still being completed; however no major issues have been found in the landscaping plan submitted. An updated landscape plan has been submitted as to what was originally submitted- which now includes landscaping for the anchor tenant. There are a total of 54 canopy trees, 8 evergreens, 286 shrubs, and 294 perennials being proposed as part of the landscaping. A detailed landscaping plan is available to view.
Building Design	Architectural design and building materials should be compatible with surrounding areas or highly visible locations	There are no issues in the underlying zoning district requirements as elevations have currently been submitted. As stated in the Town Center guidelines it is recommended that monotonous, uninterrupted expanses of wall is prohibited. Blank walls should not exceed 10 feet of lineal frontage along University Avenue. Recesses, projections, columns, openings, ornamentation, materials, and color should be used to add texture and detail. It appears the far west building (anchor) to show blank wall space exceeding 10 feet; however, there is a differentiating use of brick color adding a bit of detail.
Traffic Capacity	Project should not reduce the existing level of traffic service on adjacent streets. Compensating improvements will be required to mitigate impact on	A traffic study has not been submitted. The applicant is currently working towards completing one.

	street system operations.	
External Traffic Effects	Project design should direct nonresidential traffic away from residential areas.	Not applicable at this time.
Operating Hours	Projects with long operating hours must minimize effects on surrounding residential areas.	Not applicable at this time.
Outside Storage	Outside storage areas must be screened from surrounding streets and less intensive land uses.	There will be no outside storage as trash will be shared with the other buildings in Sherwood Forest. Trash receptacles are currently located behind existing buildings.
Stormwater Management	Development should handle storm water adequately to prevent overloading of public storm water management system. Development should not inhibit development of other properties. Development should not increase probability of erosion, flooding, landslides, or other run-off related effects.	Stormwater management for the site is still being reviewed. The applicant is proposing a stormtech chamber system under the parking lot.
Utilities	Project must be served by utilities.	All utilities are private.
Comprehensive Plan	Projects should be consistent with the City Comprehensive Development Plan	<p>Highlighted below are areas in the Comprehensive Plan that could be examined while reviewing the proposed plans.</p> <p>“As areas throughout the city develop or re-develop, existing sidewalks or areas without sidewalks should be installed to the current most widely accepted construction standards.”</p> <p>“Promote green mobility. Attention should be paid to evaluating the walk-ability by reviewing pedestrian connectivity throughout the community and whether or not impediments to pedestrian- friendliness have been eliminated. Walk Score is one option that enables measurement of how walk-able a neighborhood is which can be found online and calculates a score of 0 to 100 with 0 being completely unfriendly and 100 being extremely friendly.”</p>

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the variety of comments, staff is not prepared to make a recommendation. Please remember you can recommend approval to the Council or recommend denial to the Council. The Commission may also want to consider requesting revisions and have the revised version with the outstanding elements from staff review and your requested revisions brought back before the Commission at a meeting in March.



This drawing has been prepared by the Architect, or under the Architect's direct supervision. This drawing is provided as an instrument of service by the Designer. It is not to be used for any other project, or for any other purpose, without the prior written consent of the Designer. It is the responsibility of the user to verify the accuracy of the information contained herein. © Copyright 2014 by Simonson Associates Architects, L.L.C.

CONCEPT #30

APPLE VALLEY CENTER
73RD STREET & UNIVERSITY AVENUE
WINDSOR HEIGHTS, IOWA

NOVEMBER 05, 2014

NORTH



1" = 80'-0" @ 11", 17" Sheet
 SAA# 12043
 DRAWN BY: AVC



simonson

simonson & associates architects llc
 1717 Ingersoll Avenue Suite 117 Des Moines IA 50309
 816 515 440 5825 www.simonsonassoc.com





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Fax: 515-279-3664

February 9, 2015

Ms. Theresa Greenfield
Colby Interests
6581 University Avenue
Windsor Heights, IA 50324

Re: Master Site Plan application review comments for Midtown Center

Dear Ms. Greenfield,

City staff have completed an initial review of the Midtown Center Master Site Plan submittal. As discussed previously with you, the Conditional Use request application will not be needed at this time until the use of the building has been determined. The submittal included the following: site plan, stormwater management, traffic, lighting and preliminary elevations. Architectural and structural drawings were not submitted at this time. The following comments are organized by each elements of what was submitted.

General Site Plan comments:

1. The middle drive should not be labeled as 72nd Street as this is not a public street.
2. Truck turning movements must be submitted to ensure turning movements thru the site and backing into the overhead doors is feasible without over tracking onto curbs.
3. The walks along University Avenue should be replaced and widened to 8 feet to match the City's plan for a trail/walk on the south side of University Avenue.
4. There is a considerable amount of grading and grade changes on the site. Is the site in balance? Borrow? Excess? (The hauling of materials and defined ingress and egress points and maintaining streets will be critical and needs to be identified).
5. What are the improvements being made for the Banker's Trust site? A separate site plan may be needed for that. The drive that runs east-west just south of University now has an embankment of 10 feet to its west.

Traffic:

The October 21, 2014, memo from Snyder and Associates is an initial look into trip generation. Some assumptions were made that are not consistent with the site plan. Items such as pedestrian conflicts and crash history will also need to be addressed. Specific concerns over the traffic information are as follows:

1. Pass by trip reduction should be accounted for in the existing development as well.

2. The trips will not be equally distributed. The supermarket is likely to focus on the western two drives (one to University and the other onto Apple Valley Drive).
3. Both of these will increase the trip both daily and hourly.

Given the above, **a complete and revised traffic study will be needed.**

Lighting:

1. Areas where minimum lighting levels are not met must be identified on the photometrics.
2. An area with overly high lighting levels at the east of the western most building must be corrected.
3. A site uniformity ratio must be supplied along with maximum and minimum levels identified.

Demolition:

1. All franchise utility providers need to be contacted prior to the start of demolition.
2. Notes should be added relative to debris removal and grading and tracking materials off site is prohibited.

Layout Plan:

1. ADA ramps need to be identified near all handicapped stalls and other drive crossings.
2. The western drive onto University may need an added lane for separate right turns or lefts restricted. (This drive with the new traffic needs to be studied as a part of the complete traffic study).
3. The drive up lane at the eastern edge of the eastern most building needs an island to separate the drive up lane from the two way traffic lane.
4. The drive that enters onto University for the bank site that is being separated from the remainder of the site should be a right-in right-out only drive. Full access movements should go to the signal at 70th Street.

Utility Plan:

1. All work should conform to the latest SUDAS standards.
2. Fire department connections will be required per the Windsor Heights Fire Chief.

Grading Plan:

1. Fill will need to meet minimum efforts per geotechnical reports.
2. Cross slopes on all walks need to be less than 2%; 1.5% is preferred.
3. West end walks need redesigned due to excessive cross slopes.
4. The middle access road has cross slopes exceeding 6% and will need to be redesigned.
5. More grading information is needed at all buildings; information on whether the development is tracking in needed fill or taking out excess will need to be identified.

Storm Sewer Plan: *still under review*

Landscaping Plan: *still under review*

1. The very most western building does not include any landscaping and will need to be shown before approved.

Elevations:

There seems to be an error in the elevations submitted. There are overhead doors facing University as shown in the elevation which contradicts what is shown on the Layout Plan.

Site and Building Design:

As the elevations that have been submitted are preliminary; other comments may be made to building and site design as they are received.

1. The preferred location of parking lots is at the rear and/or side of buildings.
2. Monotonous, uninterrupted expanses of the brick wall is prohibited. Blank walls should not exceed 10 feet of lineal frontage along University Avenue. Recesses, projections columns, openings, ornamentation, materials and color should be used to add texture and detail.
3. Colorful landscaping is encouraged to frame doorways or accent windows. It appears no landscaping in front of the buildings is being proposed unless they are being submitted with other elevations plans.
4. Are there any colored renderings for the monuments signs proposed, streetscaping along University and retaining walls? Renderings for these should be submitted as part of the site plan approval request. The retaining walls appear to be sitting in a pretty steep grade.

City staff will be made available to discuss any comments. The required changes will not need to be made for the Development Committee meeting to be held on Thursday, February 12, 2015 but will need to be revised before the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to be held on Wednesday, February 25, 2015. Agenda packets are sent to the Planning and Zoning Commission members a week prior to the meeting date. Revisions will need to be made by Monday, February 16, 2015, so staff has a chance to review again. If there are certain revisions that cannot be made before the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, it will be recommended at the meeting that revisions will need to be submitted and in compliance before the City Council meeting.

Sincerely,



Sheena Danzer
Planning Director

cc: Brett Klein, City Administrator
Greg Roth, Engineer – Veenstra and Kimm
Christopher Cross, Fire Chief
Jason VanAusdall, Public Works Director

Apple Valley Center

Site Plan Review and Recommendations

The Des Moines Area MPO has conducted a review of the Apple Valley development proposal to determine its conformance with The Tomorrow Plan.

This is a key location for the City of Windsor Heights as it is the only location in the city that is identified as a node in The Tomorrow Plan. It is also one of the few commercial locations in Windsor Heights. Given the limited opportunity for additional development, the city should maximize available opportunities.

Recommendations:

- Build buildings to the sidewalk/street;
- Provide a wide sidewalk with street trees;
- 1-story buildings should be built to accommodate the addition of upper stories in the future;
- Provide on street parking with all remaining surface parking placed in the rear of lot; and,
- Maximize valuable commercial street frontage;

Build Buildings to the Street

This is probably the most critical change recommended to the proposed Apple Valley Development. The current proposal has a building setback of approximately 80-100 feet. This fails to establish a strong street frontage. Since this area was identified by Windsor Heights in The Tomorrow Plan as a node/corridor location, staff would recommend that the building setback be changed to zero feet. This will create a strong street frontage and satisfy the criteria of a node development. Building the buildings to the street will begin to create spatial enclosure and provide pedestrians with direct access to store fronts.

Wide Sidewalks and Street Trees

The recommended sidewalk width for this development should be 20 feet. The wide sidewalk will provide adequate space for street trees and accommodate outdoor seating potential for business. It will also provide pedestrians with direct access to the building frontages. The recommendation for street tree placement is at approximately 30 foot increments. Landscaping budget should focus on University Avenue and 73rd Street frontages.

Future Vertical Development

Ideally the development proposal would include 2-4 story buildings with shops on the first floor and office/residential space on the upper stories. This should be discussed with the current developer to see if this is something they are willing to consider. It is likely that this won't be possible at this time. However, the city should consider the future of this site and make sure that 1-story development have the ability to accommodate the addition of upper stories in the future. Since Windsor Heights is land lock and with future multifamily development being limited, it is in the cities best interest to make sure that these buildings can support future modifications.

Parking

All parking should be in the rear of the lot with the exception of the on-street parking that should be included as part of the project. On-street parking space could be metered as a potential revenue source. This parking revenue could be used to pay for additional streetscape improvements adjacent to the development.

Maximize Street Frontage

Windsor Heights has a very limited amount of commercial street frontage. It is in the best interest of the city to maximize the development potential of the University Avenue corridor. The current proposal does not achieve what it could if the building were arrange differently on the site. Maximizing the available street frontage will not only allow the developer to have more rent earning potential but will also maximize the city's revenue through increase tax base.

Alternative Design

The MPO staff has provide an alternative design that meets the design elements discussed in the Nodes and Corridors section of The Tomorrow Plan. The alternative design is attached to this memo and below is a comparison of the site plans.

Site Plan Comparisons:

Site Plan Element	Current Site Plan	MPO Recommendation
Commercial Space (square ft)	56,325	76,363
Street Frontage (linear ft)	691	1,072
On-street Parking	0	~38
Parking Spaces	~280	~400
Sidewalk Width (ft)	~5	20

Conclusion

The City of Windsor Heights has limited development opportunities. This site provides the city with the opportunity to be one of the first communities in the region to begin developing a node. How this site is develop, specifically where the buildings are place on the site will have a significant impact and influence on future development along the corridor.

