



Part of 5825 W. Hope Av. (parking lot of former Walmart)

Midtown Center DIZ Overlay

Project Narrative – Residential Development

3.18.2026

The property at 5825 W. Hope Av. consists of a currently vacant building previously occupied by Walmart on the south side of W. Hope Av. and a large surface parking lot on the north side of Hope. The site is zoned Regional Business (RB2) and within the Midtown Center Development Incentive Zone (DIZ) overlay. The DIZ overlay was established in 2000 and entails performance standards including a permitted and prohibited use list as well as design standards. Projects within the DIZ overlay are subject to the DIZ performance standards.

A Certified Survey Map (CSM) is pending to divide the property into 4 lots, 3 of which will create the development site for Phases 1 and 2 of the multi-family residential development known as Midtown Commons, which will replace the existing surface parking lot north of W. Hope Av. and is the subject of this file. The fourth lot will be for the existing building and adjacent land to the east and west and will be the subject of a future DIZ overlay file as it relates to the redevelopment of that portion of the site.

The proposed Midtown Commons residential development will reshape the Midtown Center, positively influencing the neighborhood while providing critical access to affordable housing in the city of Milwaukee. The phase 1 & 2 residential developments are designed to meet the Midtown Center DIZ Overlay requirements and seamlessly integrate into the overall site development, inclusive of the land south of W. Hope Av. The residential buildings' placement, scale, and use are complementary assets to the redesign of the Midtown Center's open space remaining from the closing of the Walmart store.

Occupying the former Walmart parking lot, Phase 1 will include a 4-story, 100-unit affordable housing apartment building on the west portion of the lot (Lot 2 of the pending CSM). Phase 2 will include a mirrored design of phase 1 (4-story, 100-unit affordable housing) on the east side of the site (Lot 4 of the pending CSM). Both buildings will be constructed in a C-shape, providing outdoor amenity space for residents within the courtyards. Both will have on-street shared guest parking along the north side of W. Hope Av. and off-street residential parking in the surface parking lot. Multi-family residential is an allowable use per the RB2 zoning and DIZ overlay. The number of units within each building is also allowed per the zoning. There will also be a fenced-in open/play space along W. Hope Ave (Lot 3 of the pending CSM), adjacent to the resident parking lot. This play space will support both multi-family buildings and will be open to adjacent neighborhood children to play. This space will be maintained/managed along with the multi-family buildings.

The northern 35-45' feet of the existing parking lot is part of the lot to the north under separate ownership. Gorman & Co. is working with the owner of that site to see if that portion of the paving can be replaced with sod.

See the Zoning Matrix for a more detailed analysis of this proposal as it relates specifically to the DIZ design standards. In general:

- **Building Design:** The building's exterior design and façade materials were developed to compliment and meet the requirements of the DIZ overlay.
 - Brick and cast stone façades provide architecturally significant monumental corners along N 60th St, W Hope Ave, and N 56th St. Fiber cement board will be utilized at other places...
 - Rhythm in windows and variation of exterior materials provide articulated facades of the 100-unit anchor buildings as required within the DIZ overlay
 - Storefront windows and a cast stone datum at 12'-4" along the first floor primary and secondary elevations correspond with the other retail businesses within the Midtown Center.
 - Architectural bump-outs/bays provide additional interest and articulation along N 60th St & N 56th St.

- **Access, Circulation & Parking:** W Hope Ave extended off of N. 60th Street provides the primary entrance to the proposed phase 1 & 2 developments and maintains access to the remainder of the Midtown Center development.
 - Curb cuts to the resident parking lot along W Hope Ave have been reduced (from the existing/previous parking lot entries) to only 2 driveways into residential parking, as encouraged by the DIZ.
 - Access for sanitation trucks and emergency vehicles, is provided through the parking lots.
 - The land just north of and adjacent to W Hope Ave was redesigned to provide shared angled street guest parking and loading zones for pick-up/drop-off and deliveries near the main entrances of the buildings. The overall width of W. Hope Av. has not changed.
 - An additional loading zone within the shared residential parking lot provides an off-street location for move-in vehicles.
 - A new sidewalk will be constructed to the north of Hope Av.
 - Pedestrian walkways to the building, parking lot, and open/play space along Hope Av. will be provided.
 - Bike parking (both long and short-term) will be provided in accordance with the zoning code.
 - Pedestrian crossings across Hope Av. will be coordinated with the redevelopment of the existing building to the south.

- **Site Improvements:** Coordinated trash enclosures are provided within the parking lots to conceal dumpsters from view behind matching utility brick and steel and composite slat gates.

- **Building Placement:** Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 buildings are placed to fill out the corners of the site. The setback from N 60th St required for phase 1 is a result of existing Midtown Center utility easements and aligns with the west setback of the existing building to the south. The required placement of the building due to the easements provides a grounding lawn to the 4-story apartment building and an activity space for tenants.

- **Landscaping** is provided along N. 60th St. and within the parking lot per the Midtown Center DIZ overlay and zoning code requirements, providing vegetation throughout the parking lots as well as landscaping the grounds around the proposed buildings. Landscaping will also be placed around the play area along Hope Av.



- Signage: Building signage will comply with the DIZ overlay standards with respect to quantity, size and type. The DIZ overlay allows staff approval of building signage.
- Other:
 - It is anticipated that the Phase 2 building will commence construction immediately following completion of the Phase 1 building. If this does not occur within 6 months of completion of Phase 1, the remainder of the land on the north side of Hope Av. will be de-paved and be sodded or hydro-seeded. There might also be a secondary parking lot access point constructed to provide adequate circulation in the interim for the Phase 1 portion of the parking lot.
 - The open/play space is planned to be developed as part of Phase 2. If Phase 2 is delayed, the play area will begin construction within 1 year of the completion of Phase 1.