



Department of City Development
City Plan Commission
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

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Commissioner

Sam Leichtling
Deputy Commissioner

Ald. Chambers, Jr.
2nd Ald. District

CITY PLAN COMMISSION ZONING REPORT

File No: [252155](#)

Location: Part of 5825 W. Hope Avenue (northern parking lot of the former Walmart at Midtown Center); on the east side of N. 60th Street, north of W. Hope Avenue

Applicant/Owner: Gorman & Company (developer)

Current Zoning: Regional Business (RB2) and within the Midtown Center Development Incentive Zone (DIZ) Overlay

Proposal: The property at 5825 W. Hope Avenue consists of a currently vacant building previously occupied by Walmart on the south side of W. Hope Avenue and a surface parking lot to the north of W. Hope Avenue. This site is within the Midtown Center Development Incentive Zone (DIZ) Overlay, which regulates uses and establishes design standards for new construction and alterations within the boundary, and has been vacant since Walmart left in January 2016. AFS Milwaukee, LLC purchased the site in June of 2022 and previously requested a deviation from the DIZ Overlay allowable uses to permit self-service storage within the vacant Walmart building. That request was denied by the City Plan Commission because it was determined that the deviation criteria set forth by the Zoning Code were not met for reasons including that the only proposed non-speculative use proposed for the site at that time was for self-service storage. Since that time, the owner has partnered with several entities to compile a multi-component redevelopment plan for the entire site. This residential development that is the subject of this file is part of a multi-component redevelopment of the entire site, including the former Walmart building on the south side of W. Hope Avenue. Plans for the remainder of the site will be submitted for City Plan Commission consideration as part of a future file.

This file is in regards to the overall project approval of the multi-family residential development as it relates to the Midtown Center DIZ Overlay. Gorman & Company plans to construct a multi-family residential development known as Midtown Commons on the existing surface parking lot on the north side of W. Hope Avenue. A Certified Survey Map (CSM) is currently pending to divide the property into 4 lots, 3 of which will create the development site for Phases 1 and 2 of Midtown Commons.

Midtown Commons is a 200-unit multi-family residential development situated on the surface parking lot of the former Walmart building, and will be constructed in two phases. The residential units within Midtown Commons will be affordable, and each phase will be constructed in a 4-story, 100-unit building. Substantial on-site outdoor space will be available for residents both in the courtyards of the buildings as well as within the play space that will be constructed as part of Phase 2 development along W. Hope Avenue. Parking for residents will be provided within a surface parking lot between the two buildings, and loading and guest parking will be provided to the north of W. Hope Avenue. It is anticipated that construction of the Phase 2 building will begin immediately following completion of the Phase 1 building. The play space along W. Hope Av. will be developed as part of Phase 2; however, if Phase 2 is delayed, the area will begin construction within one year of the completion of Phase 1. This play space will be maintained and managed along with the multi-family buildings and is meant primarily for the residents of Midtown Commons, but will also be open to adjacent neighborhood children.

DIZ Review:

Midtown Commons Phases 1 and 2 are designed to meet the Midtown Center DIZ Overlay requirements. The applicant has submitted a detailed zoning review matrix evaluating how their proposal meets each of the DIZ standards. Staff have reviewed the matrix and zoning exhibits, and concluded that all applicable design standards are met. A portion of the zoning review matrix that includes the applicant's responses to the applicable DIZ Overlay design standards is at the end of this report. The more detailed version of the zoning review matrix, including evaluation of this proposal alongside the RB2 zoning standards, is available as part of the official exhibits for this file.

In summary, multi-family residential is an allowable use per the RB2 zoning and DIZ overlay, and the number of units within each building is also allowed per the zoning. The building's exterior design and façade materials were developed to complement the adjacent neighborhood and Midtown Center, and meet the requirements of the DIZ overlay. The building height does not exceed the DIZ-prescribed maximum height of 50'. Details relating to pedestrian and vehicle access, circulation, and parking, as well building placement, site improvements, and screening of dumpsters are all compliant with the DIZ standards. The development provides a new sidewalk along the north side of W. Hope Avenue and the walkways within the parking lot that are 7-8 feet wide. Landscaping requirements per the DIZ Overlay and zoning code are met for the parking lot as well as the perimeter of the site, and building signage will comply with the DIZ overlay standards with respect to quantity, size, and type; the DIZ overlay allows for staff approval of building signage.

Adjacent Land Use:

Sites to the north, east, and south are zoned RB2, consisting of a daycare, warehouse, food bank, grocery store, and other commercial establishments. Residential properties, zoned RT2, RS6, and RM1, are located to the west of the subject site.

Consistency with

Area Plan:

The subject site is located within the boundary of the West Side Area Plan, which was adopted by the Common Council in 2009. More specifically, the site is situated within the Midtown Center District. The West Side Area Plan encourages the integration of residential uses throughout Midtown Center and directly recommends including a mix of commercial, residential, institutional, and office uses. Additionally, the Plan supports extending Midtown Center’s “Town Square” approach by adding pedestrian connections and infill buildings where feasible. The proposed infill development meets this recommendation, achieved in part by situating parking lots at the rear or side of the building’s principal façade and improving on and adding to the pedestrian network. The Plan encourages minimizing parking areas based on need and discourages parking lots with large quantities of asphalt. The Plan also recommends increasing landscaping at Midtown Center for environmental and aesthetic improvement and to reduce the impact of impervious surfaces. The proposed landscape plan and parking lot design meet the intent of these recommendations. Additionally, the Plan encourages the incorporation of open space features and amenities in development projects, and the development achieves this through the proposed courtyard spaces and play area. Therefore, the proposed plans for the multifamily buildings and the associated play area are consistent with the West Side Area Plan.

Previous City Plan Action:

9/25/2023 – City Plan Commission heard a resolution approving changes to the site and existing building previously occupied by Walmart located at 5825 West Hope Avenue, on the east side of North 60th Street, north of West Capitol Drive, relative to the Midtown Center Development Incentive Zone (DIZ) overlay. The commission moved to place the resolution on file, based on criteria not being met. ([FN 221407](#)).

9/25/2023 – City Plan Commission heard a resolution approving the request for a deviation from the performance standards established by the Midtown Center Development Incentive Zone (DIZ) overlay to allow an indoor self-storage facility as a permitted use within a portion of the former Walmart building at 5825 West Hope Avenue. The commission moved to place the resolution on file. ([FN 221406](#)).

Previous Common Council Action:

None.

Recommendation:

Since the proposal for multi-family residential development on a surface parking lot is consistent with the DIZ Overlay with respect to use and design, and is strongly supported by the recommendations of the West Side Plan, staff recommends approval of the subject file.

Midtown Commons (part of 5825 W. Hope Avenue) DIZ Overlay Review Matrix

Standard	Midtown Center Area B (Standards Here)	Proposal
Uses	DIZ regulates uses (use list here)	Multi-family residential is an allowable use.
Building Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate buildings to define street edges and corners. Relate to the physical character and scale of the neighborhood. 	<p>Phase 1, Lot 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front setback (W Hope Ave): 39.8' Side street setback (N 60th Street): 91.1' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional setback is due to development utility easements running along N 60th Street N. 60th St. setback is in line with the existing (former Walmart) building to the south. Building fronts W. Hope Av. <p>Phase 2, Lot 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front setback (W Hope Ave) to play area fence: 31.5' Side setback (both sides) to play area fence: 31' <p>Phase 2, Lot 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front setback (W Hope Ave): 39.6' Side street setback (N 56th Street): 18.5' Building fronts W. Hope Av.
Building Design	<p>Massing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish hierarchy between building elements. For example, articulate entrances and building corners. Maximum height of buildings is 50 feet. Entry features and tower elements integrated with the building may exceed 50 ft in height. <p>Facades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety in each building design throughout Area B is encouraged. Front facades shall be oriented to North 56th St, extended to West Capitol Dr, North 60th St, and West Hope Ave extended, excluding outlots. Along N 56th St extended from a point 450 ft north of W Capitol Dr to W Hope St extended, building must have a storefront window system with vision glass at the first level. A sign band and/or canopies with signage must be provided. Along W Hope Ave extended, the front facade must be modulated with windows, articulated bays, and/or an arcade with columns. Building entrances shall be clearly identified and visible from streets and easily accessible and inviting to pedestrians. Blank, unarticulated walls facing streets are not permitted, except for service areas. Modulate facades visible from public with articulated bays, windows and openings, varying color and texture, and/or other architectural details that relate to the human scale. 	<p>Phase 1, Lot 2: 100 Unit, 4-story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Height: 41'-3" to Roof, 43'-4" to top of parapet. Architectural elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building corners established with 4-story brick facade Ground floor provides brick detailing above and below windows, datum line at 12'-4" Main entry and articulated bays/windows along W Hope Ave Articulated bays along N 60th St %Glazing along W Hope Ave: 34% %Glazing along N 60th St: 30% %Build-out along primary frontage (W Hope Ave): 60% <p>Phase 2, Lot 4: 100 Unit, 4-story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Height: 41'-3" to Roof, 43'-4" to top of parapet. Architectural elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building corners established with 4-story brick facade Ground floor provides brick detailing above and below windows, datum line at 12'-4" Main entry and articulated bays/windows along W Hope Ave Articulated bays along N 56th St %Glazing along W Hope Ave (Lot 4, Phase 2): 34% %Glazing along N 56th St (Lot 4, Phase 2): 30% %Build-out along primary frontage (W Hope Ave) (Lot 3, Phase 2): 60% %Build-out along primary frontage (W Hope Ave) (Lot 4, Phase 2): 75%
Building Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All storefronts visible from N 56th street extended, W Hope St extended, N 60th Street and W Capitol Dr must contain the most architecturally significant materials and fenestration. Significant building materials include decorative masonry or block, brick, cut stone, glass, architectural-finished metal cladding and architectural precast concrete panels. Exterior insulation and finish systems cannot be used on the base of the building up to 10 ft in height. Screen rooftop equipment that is visible at the pedestrian level and exceeds 8 cubic feet in area with materials and color that are compatible with the structure. Glazing on the first floor of commercial buildings and entrances must be transparent, vision glass. Low-E glass is permitted with no tinting. Opaque glazing cannot be substituted for vision glass where vision glass is required, but may be used in other areas as an architectural element if it is compatible with the overall design. Samples of building materials must be submitted for review, as requested. 	<p>Phase 1, Lot 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary materials along N 60th Street & W Hope Ave are brick with cast stone accented with fiber cement siding. The architectural bump-outs along N 60th St are ornamented with a decorative pattern of fiber cement board & trim. Storefront windows are utilized at the corner of N 60th St & W Hope Ave and at the main entrance, and windows will be clear vision glass except at rear bicycle storage rooms for security. <p>Phase 2, Lot 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary materials along N 56th Street & W Hope Ave are brick with cast stone accented with fiber cement siding. The architectural bump-outs along N 56th St are ornamented with a decorative pattern of fiber cement board & trim. Storefront windows are utilized at the corner of N 56th St & W Hope Ave and at the main entrance, and windows will be clear vision glass except at rear bicycle storage rooms for security.
Access, Parking and Circulation	<p>Driveways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize the number of curb cuts and widths of driveways. 	<p>Driveways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curb cuts to the resident parking lot along W Hope Ave have been reduced (from the existing/previous parking lot entries) to only 2

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align new driveways with driveways across street where possible. <p>Pedestrian Accommodations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide direct pedestrian connections between public sidewalks/bus tops and all building entrances. Provide secure areas for bicycle parking near entrances. <p>Parking Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located parking areas to the rear of a building where possible. Locate parking areas mid-block instead of at corners where possible. Provide shared parking where possible. Provide shared service areas where possible. Provide on-street parking on North 56th street extended. New public streets or private streets with public access easements must connect to the adjacent neighborhood. 	<p>driveways into residential parking, as encouraged by the DIZ. There are no driveways on the south side of W Hope Ave to align with proposed new parking lots.</p> <p>Pedestrian Accommodations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Pedestrian crossings across Hope Av. will be coordinated with the redevelopment of the existing building to the south. <p>Bicycle Parking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term bicycle parking per code requirements is provided at the main entrances of Phase 1 & 2 100-unit buildings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 space / 30 units = 100/30 = 4 short-term bicycle parking spaces Long-term bicycle parking per code requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 space per 4 units = 100/4 = 25 long-term bicycle parking spaces <p>Parking Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking located at rear of buildings & at mid-block. Parking for both phase 1 & 2 were designed to be contiguous so they may be shared. 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. 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. Shared parking is provided along W Hope Ave; Resident parking located in the lots.
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In interior parking lot areas, provide curbed islands with landscaping to visually divide the lot; at a minimum 1 tree per every 15 spaces must be provided. N. 60th St. is Type 3 frontage. W. Hope extended is considered Type 1 frontage. Type 1: All of the street frontage must be occupied with buildings except for drive openings. Type 2: All of the street frontage must be landscape with a masonry wall or decorative fencing with brick piers and a combination of trees and shrubs, at minimum. Type 3: All of the street frontage must meet the minimum landscape requirements per the general provisions of the Code. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See proposed landscape plan. Interior parking lot has curbed islands to divide the lot and (1) tree for every (4) stalls. N. 60th Street landscaping for street frontage meets the Type 3 frontage. This requires the street frontage to meet the general provisions of the code which only required plantings when parking is adjacent. W. Hope Avenue is required to meet Type 1 frontage which requires buildings or drives to occupy the frontage. Buildings and drives occupy the frontage for the most part. The playground area occupies a portion of the frontage and has landscaping and fencing along Hope Avenue.
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use lighting to enhance the architecture of the building as well as provide security and visual appeal. Lighting within parking areas must be designed and located to prevent glare onto adjoining properties. Lighting poles within parking areas may not exceed 25 ft in height. It is preferred that lighting poles along public right of ways are 12ft in height but may not exceed 18 ft in height. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building lighting is provided at the main and secondary entrance canopies and supplemented by site lighting for security. See attached site lighting plan. All poles are only 23' high, so within their 25' max. No new fixtures are provided along a public right-of-way; existing to remain when possible on W Hope Ave. See attached site lighting plan. See attached lighting plan for photometrics; no glare will shine into adjacent properties. See attached cut-sheets for fixture specifications / cut-offs.
Site Improvements	<p>Amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Along the east side of North 56th Street extended from a point 450 feet north of West Capitol Dr to West Hope Ave extended, provide pedestrian seating and trash receptacles. <p>Screening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate or screen dumpsters and service areas where they are not visible from the public street. Screen outdoor storage areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated trash enclosures are provided within the parking lots to conceal dumpsters from view behind matching utility brick and steel and composite slat gates.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen service and loading areas with wing walls or landscaping. • Enclose and screen dumpsters and recycling units with a board on board or masonry enclosure. 	
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billboards (off premise signs) are not permitted. • Pylon signs are not permitted. • Up to 2 monument signs in Area B are permitted — preferable at entrances to the project, but cannot exceed 10 feet in height. The height limit may be increased if signage is designed and integrated into a kiosk, building structure or bus shelter. Signage may also be integrated into masonry wall. • The overall area of each monument sign may not exceed 150 square feet in area on each side. • At least one monument sign in this area must provide an overall development name and each sign may include up to 3 tenant names. • Building Signage shall not exceed 3 feet in height or 100 square feet in area per business. • A single-use tenant larger than 10,000 square ft may have one front entrance, vestibule sign with individual letters that may not exceed 60 inches in height. • Internally illuminated box signs are not permitted unless they are recessed into the building and are an integral part of the building design. • Individual pin-set metal letters that are halo-lighted are the most desirable. Internally illuminated individual letters are acceptable if raceways are not visible. • Building signage may be approved administratively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) building sign is provided for Phase 1 and Phase 2 each. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ See attached building elevations ◦ Dimensions: Vertical Sign - 1'-0"w x 28'-9"h x 3"d (29 sf each) ◦ Individual halo-lit channel letters, black powder-coat finish