



**Date** .....January 13, 2025.....

**RESOLUTION SETTING HEARING ON REQUEST FROM FAITHFUL MOMENTS, LLC (OWNER), REPRESENTED BY ADAM SIEREN (OFFICER) TO AMEND PLANDSM TO REVISE THE FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION AND TO REZONE THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 5702 GRAND AVENUE**

**WHEREAS**, the City Plan and Zoning Commission has advised that at a public hearing held on December 19, 2024, its members voted 8-5 in support of a motion to recommend **DENIAL** of finding the requested rezoning for Property located at 5702 Grand Avenue is not in conformance with the existing PlanDSM future land use designation of Low Density Residential; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Plan and Zoning Commission has advised that at a public hearing held on December 19, 2024, its members voted 8-5 in support of a motion to recommend **DENIAL** of a request from Faithful Moments, LLC (Owner), represented by Adam Sieren (Officer), to amend the PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow future land use designation for Property located at 5702 Grand Avenue from Low Density Residential to Low-Medium Density Residential; to rezone the Property from “N3c” Neighborhood District to “NX2” Neighborhood Mix District, to allow the redevelopment of the property for rowhome buildings, and determined the requested rezoning is in conformance with the PlanDSM Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan:

**WHEREAS**, the Property is legally described as follows:

**LOT FIFTEEN (15) IN DIXON PLACE, AN OFFICIAL PLAT, NOW INCLUDED IN AND FORMING A PART OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, POLK COUNTY, IOWA.**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, as follows:

1. That the attached communication from the Plan and Zoning Commission is hereby received and filed.
2. That the meeting of the City Council at which the proposed amendments to PlanDSM Creating Our Tomorrow comprehensive Plan and proposed rezoning are to be considered, and at which time the City Council will hear both those who oppose and those who favor the proposals, shall be held at City Hall, 400 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines, Iowa, at 5:00 p.m. on January 27, 2025, at which time the City Council will hear both those who oppose and those who favor the proposals.
3. That the City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to cause notice of said proposal in the accompanying form to be given by publication once, not less than seven (7) days and not more than twenty (20) days before the date of hearing, all as specified in Section 362.3 and Section

 **Roll Call Number**

.....

**Agenda Item Number**

23

**Date** January 13, 2025

414.4 of the Iowa Code.

MOVED BY \_\_\_\_\_ TO ADOPT

SECOND BY \_\_\_\_\_.

FORM APPROVED:

/s/ Chas M. Cahill

Chas M. Cahill  
Assistant City Attorney

(ZONG-2024-000037) (COMP-2024-000023)

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CERTIFICATE</b></p> <p>I, LAURA BAUMGARTNER, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.</p> <p>IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.</p>
BOESEN					
SIMONSON					
VOSS					
COLEMAN					
WESTERGAARD					
MANDELBAUM					
GATTO					
TOTAL					
MOTION CARRIED		APPROVED			
<p style="text-align: center;">_____ Mayor</p>					
<p style="text-align: center;">_____ City Clerk</p>					

January 3, 2024

Communication from Faithful Moments, LLC (owner), represented by Adam Sieren (officer), for the following regarding property located at 5702 Grand Avenue:

- A) Determination as to whether the requested rezoning is in conformance with the PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan.
- B) Amend the PlanDSM Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan to revise the future land use classification of the property from Low Density Residential to Low-Medium Density Residential.
- C) Rezone property from “N3c” Neighborhood District to “NX2” Neighborhood Mix District, to allow the redevelopment of the property for rowhome buildings.

**COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION: 8-5**

After public hearing, the members voted as follows:

Commission Action:	Yes	Nays	Pass	Abstain	Absent
Francis Boggus	X				
Leah Rudolphi	X				
Kayla Berkson					X
Chris Draper		X			
Laura Kessel		X			
Todd Garner	X				
Johnny Alcivar		X			
Justyn Lewis					X
Carolyn Jenison	X				
William Page	X				
Andrew Lorentzen		X			
Emily Webb	X				
Katie Gillette	X				
Rick Trower	X				
Jane Rongerude		X			

**Denial** of the request to Amend the PlanDSM Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan to revise the future land use classification of the property from Low Density Residential to Low-Medium Density Residential and to rezone property from “N3c”

Neighborhood District to "NX2" Neighborhood Mix District, to allow the redevelopment of the property for rowhome buildings.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION TO THE P&Z COMMISSION**

Part A) Staff recommends that the requested "NX2" District be found not in conformance with the existing PlanDSM future land use designation of Low Density Residential.

Part B) Staff recommends approval of the request to Amend the PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan to revise the future land use designation from Low Density Residential to Low-Medium Density Residential.

Part C) Staff recommends approval of the request to rezone the property from "N3c" Neighborhood District to "NX2" Neighborhood Mix District subject to the following conditions of approval:

1. Any use of the subject property, which measures 0.893 acres, shall be limited to uses as permitted in common with and as limited by the 'N3c' District and a Household Living Use with up to 9 household units.
2. Any development on the property shall be in substantial compliance with the submitted development concept, including architectural character and materials, to the satisfaction of the Planning and Urban Design Administrator.
3. Heavy landscape buffering along the side and rear property lines shall be provided to the satisfaction of the Planning and Urban Design Administrator.

### **STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION**

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. **Purpose of Request:** The applicant is proposing to rezone the subject property to "NX2" District, which would allow redevelopment of the site with row homes. A site sketch submitted with the rezoning application indicated 3 buildings containing 5 units each (totaling 15 townhomes). The applicant has since updated the proposed concept which currently shows two row buildings designed as a house-style building with four (4) and five (5) units respectively with a total of 9 dwelling units. Any future construction or redevelopment of the subject properties must comply with all applicable site plan and design regulations contained in the Planning and Design Ordinance (Chapter 135 of City Code).

This item was previously rescheduled from the November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting to the November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting to avoid conflict with a scheduled neighborhood association meeting, and subsequently continued to the December 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Commission to allow the applicant additional time to work with staff on refining and updating the rowhome development concept and design details.

2. **Size of Site:** 0.893 acres (38,899.08 square feet).

3. **Existing Zoning (site):** "N3c" Neighborhood District.
4. **Existing Land Use (site):** The site is a large, heavily wooded property and contains an existing one-household dwelling unit. There is significant tree canopy through most of the site. Additionally, there is topographical variations in the site including a ravine that runs roughly northeast to southwest of the property.
5. **Adjacent Land Use and Zoning:**
  - North* – "N1b"; Uses are one-household residential.
  - South* – "N3c"; Uses are one-household residential.
  - East* – "N5"; Uses are one-household residential.
  - West* – "N3c"; Uses are one-household residential.
6. **General Neighborhood/Area Land Uses:** The subject property is located along Grand Avenue between 56<sup>th</sup> Street and 58<sup>th</sup> Street. The surrounding area is primarily low density residential and is within close proximity to commercial uses along Grand Avenue to the west. The site is also close to an elementary and middle school.
7. **Applicable Recognized Neighborhood(s):** The subject property is located within an area shared by the Waterbury and Westwood Neighborhood Associations. All neighborhood associations were notified of the November 7, 2024, public hearing, November 21, 2024, public hearing, and December 19, 2024, public hearing, by emailing of the Preliminary Agenda on October 18, 2024, and the final agenda on November 1, 2024, November 15, 2024, and December 13, 2024, respectively. Additionally, separate notifications of the hearing for this specific item were mailed on October 18, 2024, October 28, 2024, and November 11, 2024, to the primary titleholder on file with the Polk County Assessor for each property within 250 feet of the site.

All notices are mailed to the primary contact(s) designated by the recognized neighborhood association to the City of Des Moines Neighborhood Services Department on the date of the mailing.

The applicant will provide a summary of the neighborhood meeting at the public hearing.
8. **Relevant Zoning History:** None.
9. **PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow Plan Land Use Plan Designation:** Low Density Residential.
10. **Applicable Regulations:** Taking into consideration the criteria set forth in Chapter 18B of the Iowa Code, the Commission reviews all proposals to amend zoning boundaries or regulations within the City of Des Moines. Such amendments must be in conformance with the comprehensive plan for the City and designed to meet the criteria in 414.3 of the Iowa Code. The Commission may make recommendations to the City Council on conditions to be made in addition to the existing regulations so long as the subject property owner agrees to them in writing. The recommendation of the Commission will be forwarded to the City Council.

## II. ADDITIONAL APPLICABLE INFORMATION

1. **PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow:** The applicant is requesting that the future land use designation of the property be amended from "Low Density Residential" to "Low-Medium Density Residential". Plan DSM describes these designations as follows:

*Low Density Residential:* Areas developed with primarily single-family and two-family residential units with up to 6 dwelling units per net acre.

*Low-Medium Density Residential:* Areas developed with a mix of single family, duplex and small multi-family units up to 12 units per net acre.

The subject parcel is currently zoned "N3c" District. The Zoning Ordinance describes this district as, "intended to preserve the scale and character of residential neighborhoods developed predominantly during the 1950s through 1970s typically in the ranch, split-level, or cottage style pursuant to House B building type in section 135-2.14 of this code and House C in section 135-2.15 of this code."

The applicant is proposing to rezone the parcel to the "NX2" District. The Zoning Ordinance describes this district as, "intended for a mix of single household houses with appropriately scaled and detailed multiple-household building types in the same neighborhood."

Low-Medium Density Residential use is appropriate in this location as the proposed development is along a busy transportation corridor that connects to the Downtown and close to other non-residential amenities. The development will complement the surrounding uses so long as the design fits with the character of the neighborhood and complies with the proposed conditions of approval.

2. **Grading & Storm Water Management:** Any grading is subject to an approved grading permit and soil erosion control plan, as well as a Stormwater Pollution Protection Plan (SWPPP) approved by the Iowa DNR. Development must also comply with the City's storm water management regulations.
3. **Nature Features:** The subject property contains a number of mature trees and scrub trees. Any development of the site must comply with the Tree Removal and Mitigation Ordinance contained in Chapter 42, Article X, of the City Code. This will require identification of existing trees on the site plan prior to removal as well as plans to protect mature trees when feasible. Mitigation is required for mature trees of approved species 12 inches or larger in caliper size being removed.

Staff notes that there is topographical variation across the site as a ravine runs through the length of the subject property starting from the northeast to the southwest corner of the site. The property drops a few feet south of Grand Avenue and then rises towards the southern portion of the site. Staff also notes that the applicant conducted a tree survey and identified 11 mature Oak trees on the site. Much of the vegetation along the northern portion of the site includes scrubs while majority of trees are further south and along the property lines. Future development strategies should consider ways to

minimize and mitigate loss of mature trees and impacts to the vegetation and topography within and adjoining the site.

4. **Utilities:** Public storm sewer is available on Grand Avenue on the southern curb line. There is currently no gravity sanitary sewer located along Grand Avenue adjacent to this property. The City has no immediate plans to construct a gravity sanitary sewer in this area. The closest City owned gravity sanitary sewer is an existing 8-inch sanitary sewer located in the western portion of 58<sup>th</sup> Street. The applicant is responsible for providing appropriate sewer connections to the site.
5. **Urban Design:** The applicant is proposing to rezone the site from "N3c" Neighborhood District to "NX2" Neighborhood Mixed Use District to allow redevelopment of the site with rowhouses. The submitted site sketch has been updated since the initial submittal with the rezoning application. The most updated concept and elevations show two (2) buildings on the site with each building consisting of four (4) and five (5) units respectively. The applicable building types for this project are Row Building and Multiple-Unit House D (up to a maximum of 6-units per building) per Section 135-2. The applicant has proposed a house-scaled building to fit more seamlessly into the built form of this established neighborhood.

The concept plan shows the northern building consisting of four (4) dwelling units with frontage on the Grand Avenue corridor. The façade and materiality of the building is proposed to mirror the architectural and design aesthetics that are characteristic to this part of Des Moines. The southern building includes five (5) dwelling units which front the southern boundary of the property. Each unit is proposed to have a 2-car garage with a common center drive between the two buildings. Staff recommends that the southern building should be designed such that the front façade of the building, which faces the back side of the property, provide a patio or garden experience versus a more traditional front façade.

Staff believes that the subject site would be an appropriate location for the proposed development given the proximity to a major transportation corridor, amenities, and existing multiple-household uses. The proposed design may need additional refinement but should substantially match the submitted architectural character and material elevation concepts.

6. **Traffic/Street System:** The site sketch indicates 2 multiple-household buildings off a common drive with access to the property from Grand Avenue. The subject site is located on Grand Avenue, which is within a quarter mile of a DART bus line.

Traffic and Transportation staff has indicated that the proposed development will not necessitate improvements to the surrounding public street. A traffic study was not required with the rezoning application, as the proposal does not meet the threshold that necessitates a study.

7. **Planning and Design Ordinance:** Any development must comply with all applicable site plan and design regulations of the Planning and Design Ordinance. Should the rezoning be approved, the applicant would be required to prepare a Site Plan and building elevations for review before the property can be occupied by the proposed use.

## **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

Sreyoshi Chakraborty presented the staff report and recommendation.

Emily Webb asked if the request would require a supermajority vote by the City Council for it to be approved regardless of how the Commission votes.

Sreyoshi Chakraborty stated yes, it will require a supermajority vote based on the percentage of opposition within the notice area.

Johnny Alcivar asked if neighbors located within 250 feet of the property were sent notices for the public hearing meeting and also when it was postponed.

Sreyoshi Chakraborty stated that a 20-day early notice and 10-day notice were sent. The meeting was postponed and rescheduled during a public hearing, and it is not required to send further notifications when postponement occurs during public hearing.

Emily Webb stated that she had forwarded the applicant's presentation in advance of the meeting. She was advised by the legal staff to disclose this at the meeting.

Chris Draper inquired how many units are now in the proposed project that had started with 15 units.

Sreyoshi Chakraborty stated that the proposal has been modified to include 9 units in two rowhome buildings. Five units in a southern building and four units in a northern building.

Laura Kessler asked if there were any zoning or other regulations that would prohibit someone from building a single-family home on this lot and removing the trees today.

Sreyoshi Chakraborty confirmed that trees could be removed without review for the construction of a new single-family home.

Will Page asked for confirmation that there would be a storm water detention basin for the property.

Sreyoshi Chakraborty indicated that the applicant would have to address storm water management requirements. They are currently showing a detention basin. Underground detention may also be considered during the site plan review process.

## **CHAIRPERSON OPENED PUBLIC HEARING**

Adam Siren, Faithful Moments, LLC, 3350 Waco Court, discussed Des Moines' housing shortfall and his project's role in increasing the supply of housing. He noted that this type of housing is incentivized with a nine-year tax abatement. Siren compared efforts in other cities to increase overall density and pointed out that the project site is nearly an acre in size and is located at a major node with 25,000 daily vehicles passing by. The proposal exemplifies "missing middle" housing that the city needs. As an infill developer, it is my responsibility to identify such locations and work collaboratively with the community to introduce all-electric housing that aligns with the City's goals.



He addressed neighborhood concerns regarding stormwater runoff, explaining that the proposed development would be an improvement over current conditions. The project would comply with City engineering standards. Acknowledged tree mitigation efforts, noting that of the 11 mature trees on the site, five would be preserved. An arborist's evaluation revealed that three of the six trees slated for removal were affected by oak wilt. He emphasized their commitment to preserving as much of the existing tree canopy as possible and fostering conditions for future tree growth.

Concluded by referencing the PlanDSM goals, emphasizing how the proposal aligns with the City's vision for this type of housing. He provided comparative examples of similar townhome projects in the area and highlighted his efforts to maintain low-medium density while respecting the neighborhood context. Expressed his belief that this type of housing is essential to meet Des Moines' current and future needs.

Chris Draper asked if a traffic study had been conducted.

Adam Siren explained that adding 18-20 vehicle trips per day to the existing 25,000 daily vehicles on the street would have minimal impact and would not necessitate a traffic study. He noted that the development would maintain a single entrance and exit to the property.

Chris Draper wondered if Traffic and Transportation staff had made issue with any component of the proposed entrance, including the number of entrances or grade.

Jason Van Essen indicated that since the project has not yet reached the site plan stage, Traffic and Transportation staff have not conducted a full review. Indicated that the proposed nine units would not generate enough traffic to require a traffic study.

Will Page asked if the report of the units selling for \$500k was accurate.

Adam Siren explained with the changes of density and a higher quality product, the price would be north of \$500k.

Jane Rongerude asked if the change of units going from 15 down to 9 units had made an impact on the price point.

Adam Siren stated that it absolutely has impacted the price in trying to make the numbers work. He made comparison to Waterbury Commons Townhomes selling at \$630k and he anticipated being around the \$395 per square foot range.

Laura Kessel asked for the anticipated unit size.

Adam Siren stated they would be between 1,550-1,600 sq feet.

Carol Maher, a resident of downtown Des Moines, spoke in support of the project, expressing her belief that the unit count should have remained at 15. She highlighted the significant shortage of both affordable and high-end housing in the City, as well as the challenges posed by a stagnant property tax base. Maher noted that 40% of land in Des Moines is exempt from property taxes and emphasized that projects like this represent progress. She commended the plan for increasing housing units in a desirable area rich in

amenities, transit options, and some of the best schools in the city. She described the project as a win for the City, contributing to increased density and higher property tax revenue.

Trae Hall, 604 Locust, spoke in support of the proposed project, representing future residents who would appreciate living in such a beautiful neighborhood. He highlighted the substantial long-term increase in tax revenue and the improvements in infrastructure that the project would bring. Hall also addressed the housing shortfall relative to the City's goals, emphasizing that opposing developments like this one hinders progress for everyone. He urged the community not to let perfect become the enemy of good when it comes to overall progress.

Steve Cameron, President of the Westwood Neighborhood Association spoke in opposition to the project, stating that all members of the association were against it. Referenced an online petition that gathered over 600 signatures opposing the project's approval near their neighborhood.

Bill Ludwig, 303 52<sup>nd</sup> St., spoke in opposition to this project. He noted his experience in the planning and development fields. Expressed his belief that this sort of project is not appropriate in this area.

Holly Craiger, 9 SW 56<sup>th</sup> St., realtor in the neighbor spoke in opposition. Concerns of grading and tree mitigation, along with retraining wall and fencing impacts and possible impacts to property values.

John McManus, 333 58<sup>th</sup> St., spoke in opposition. Concerns with trees and erosion control. He believes the home standing on property is savable and it is not appropriate to add this sort of project when the entire neighborhood is in opposition.

Heather Cole, 5620 Grand Ave., spoke in opposition, expressing concerns about losing the current view of trees and raising safety issues related to children and increased traffic. She also stated her belief that the project would lower her property value and make it more difficult to sell her home in the future.

Amy Mackrell, 224 56<sup>th</sup> St., spoke in opposition to the rezoning, emphasizing that the area is an oak savannah and that a project like this would harm the ecosystem and wildlife. She expressed concerns about the irreversible loss of trees, which would not be restored within our lifetimes. Additionally, she raised issues with increased light and noise pollution, which she felt would disrupt the character of the wooded area dominated by single-family homes.

George Antoniou, 204 53<sup>rd</sup> St., spoke in opposition noting he is not anti-development, but this area is not appropriate for this type of project. Other options for single family or other low density projects could have been explored. He implored the commission to consider what precedent this sets.

Laura Olson, 330 56<sup>th</sup> St., spoke in opposition, citing the potential loss of surrounding trees in her yard and noting that the gentle slope in her backyard would be replaced with a large retaining wall and fence. She expressed safety concerns about children or deer potentially going over the six-foot fence, creating a hazard. Additionally, she raised questions about whether trash or emergency vehicles would have sufficient space to turn around and

whether there would be an adequate water source for firefighting. Lastly, she voiced concerns about parking availability in case of overflow needs, increased traffic and the safety of children walking in the neighborhood.

Greg Schwager, 5306 Grand Ave., spoke in opposition, emphasizing that he had made substantial investments in his property, drawn to the area by its tree cover and character. He expressed concern that approving a project like this would set a precedent, potentially discouraging other homeowners from investing in the neighborhood if similar developments could be built nearby.

Bill Hawkinson, 317 58<sup>th</sup> St., spoke in opposition, stating that this area has traditionally been dedicated to single-family homes. He argued that the existing home on the property could be preserved and expressed his belief that the developer is primarily motivated by financial gain rather than improving the neighborhood. A project of this nature is not appropriate for the community's character.

Kathy Bernreuter, 405 49<sup>th</sup> St, spoke in opposition to the project, sharing that she recently moved to the area from Chicago and specifically chose an old Tudor-style home because of the neighborhood's charm, characterized by its trees and wildlife. She emphasized that this is a unique area that attracts residents who appreciate its character, and she believes a project like this would cause long-term harm to the neighborhood's appeal.

Jim Synder, 20 SW 58<sup>th</sup> Dr., spoke in opposition, pointing out that none of the homes in the area are valued at \$500,000. He argued that this project, presented as "missing middle" housing, would increase property taxes on surrounding homes, potentially making them harder to sell with character change of the neighborhood.

Mark Timm, 340 56<sup>th</sup> St., spoke in opposition as an adjoining property owner, expressing concerns about the project as an invasion of privacy and a source of increased noise, light, and traffic. He described the development as creating a commercial island that benefits only the specific parcel while offering no advantages to the broader neighborhood. He viewed the development as purely profit-driven, lacking any altruistic intent, and stated that it would diminish the enjoyment and character of homes in the area.

McKenzie Glazebrook, 319 58<sup>th</sup> St., spoke in opposition noting that she has made the investment in an older home, just as many others have in the neighborhood, for the historic value and green space oasis they enjoy in their backyard. Concerns with light, noise, wildlife, and changes to the ecosystem.

Stephanie Masumura, 3 SW 56<sup>th</sup> St., spoke in opposition with concerns of traffic safety in the neighborhood with children walking to school.

Mike Glazebrook, 319 58<sup>th</sup> St., spoke in opposition to the project and noted how a traffic study needs to be done in this area. He also takes issue with the cost of the new homes and how this does not address the "missing middle".

Tony Gardner, 2118 Willowmere Dr., spoke in opposition, drawing a comparison to the Oaks on Fleur development, which he claimed devastated the area by removing an old home and displacing wildlife. He argued that a project of this type is unnecessary and cited examples of other row home developments facing long-term challenges, including

units not selling even after significant discounts. He noted that two of these developments were completed by Adam Siren, with one eventually being sold to a company for 100% rental use. He expressed skepticism about Siren's intentions, stating that he believes the developer is focused on financial gain rather than improving the community.

Channing Swanson, 304 52<sup>nd</sup> St., spoke in opposition to the rezoning. Suggested the proposal was spot zoning and would only benefit the property owner.

Lori Haakinson, 317 58<sup>th</sup> St., spoke in opposition noting that the project would remove mature trees, scrape the land, and remove a 100-year-old home. This is not affordable housing and is not to scale, cutting into the center of a residential area. This does not meet the definition of "missing middle" housing and no proponent of missing middle housing would expect that these would be located in the middle of vibrant single-family neighborhoods. The City has identified areas that need this housing and Waterbury and Westwood were not identified.

Michelle Swanson, 304 52<sup>nd</sup> St., spoke in opposition and noted no traffic study was done although this is a main corridor. This type of building project is not in scale or character to the neighborhood.

Kim Corbin, 329 58<sup>th</sup> St., spoke in opposition, noting the dangers of the hill on Grand Avenue when there is ice in the area. Adding more traffic will cause more dangers for children walking to school.

Dona Andrade, 328 58<sup>th</sup> St., spoke in opposition to the project. Expressed hope that the existing home could be preserved, along with the trees, as these were key factors in her decision to purchase her home.

Tyler Gartenberg, 523 Waterbury, spoke in opposition to the project, presenting several examples of properties developed by Adam Siren that have remained unsold for extended periods.

Dave Musgrove, 327 56<sup>th</sup> St., spoke in opposition to the project, citing personal experience with traffic issues, as his child was struck by a car five years ago. He expressed that he doesn't need a traffic study to know that adding more cars will exacerbate the problem. He emphasized that efforts have been made to improve child safety in the area, and questioned why the city would want to take a step backward by approving a project that could worsen the situation.

#### Rebuttal

Adam Siren stated that the zoning conditions would limit the density to nine units and that would not change. Clarified that the retaining wall would not be 11 feet tall as mentioned by others. It would be seven feet tall at its highest point and then would taper down.

### **CHAIRPERSON CLOSED PUBLIC HEARING**

## COMMISSION ACTION

Will Page noted that the developer had worked to lessen the unit count from 15 units to 9 units, but he hasn't heard enough about the site plan. He wondered if this could be given more time.

Johnny Alcivar stated that we are only looking at the rezoning of the property and the site plan would also have to go through review at a later time through the regular process.

Will Page cautioned that the way the recommendation reads that it could be approved to the satisfaction of the Planning Administrator and not allow for more community input.

Jason Van Essen stated the intent of the zoning conditions is to keep the concept as it has been presented. There is a formal site plan process that would be done, but only if the zoning is approved.

Jane Rongerude asked if this was why conditions were put on the project such as limiting unit count to only 9 units.

Jason Van Essen stated that was correct. The zoning conditions would provide an outline for the project as it would move forward; limiting unit count, materials and pavement; addressing context.

Jane Rongerude mentioned that there are duplexes to the west of the site on Grand Avenue.

Caroline Jenison stated that this reminds her of a project that was proposed in the River Bend Neighborhood to rezone one parcel. She advised she will vote no.

Chris Draper emphasized maintaining a constructive approach and avoiding assumptions of ill intent when discussing opinions on the project. He acknowledged potential challenges, but suggested opponents could explore purchasing the property to influence its outcome. Draper expressed support for the project from a zoning perspective, highlighting the positive impacts of increased density in his Drake neighborhood, such as enhanced city services, thriving businesses, and empowered communities. He advocated for collaboration with the developer to align the project with neighborhood needs and broader community benefits.

Rick Trower noted that while density is important, it is equally crucial to listen to the voices of the neighborhood. He questioned whether the proposal is appropriate for this particular neighborhood.

Jane Rongerude voiced support for the staff recommendation and expressed discomfort with discussions that suggest housing be built in areas other than their own or who would likely live in this housing. She emphasized the importance of this type of housing within the city, aligning with PlanDSM's goals to develop housing along major transit corridors.

Laura Kessel expressed support for the project, highlighted that increased density in existing areas is the most sustainable type of development. Pointed out that current zoning permits a developer to build a mansion on the property, potentially removing all trees.

Adding more homes near the school within walking distance could reduce traffic by decreasing the number of cars driving to the school.

Francis Boggus shared that while he initially intended to support the project due to the city's housing needs, after listening to the neighborhood's concerns, he is now inclined to vote for denial of the request.

Todd Garner mentioned that he was struggling with his decision only based on size and proportionality of the project.

Katie Gillette stated she was also struggling with a decision on this request. She does not believe that this specific project at this location makes sense.

Andrew Lorentzen shared his firsthand experience walking the corridor daily with a child to school and acknowledged neighbors' traffic concerns. He suggested the City of Des Moines consider converting the four-lane road into a two-lane road with a middle turn lane. While supportive of increased density to meet city needs, he proposes exploring alternative building designs. A single apartment building for example would not require as much grading as townhomes with garages do.

Johnny Alcivar acknowledged the validity of arguments on both sides of the discussion. Expressed support for the staff recommendation and the introduction of gentle density in this and other areas. Alcivar noted that the applicant has addressed concerns by modifying the project's design, including reducing the unit count.

Chris Draper made a motion for approval of the following:

Part A) The requested "NX2" District be found not in conformance with the existing PlanDSM future land use designation of Low Density Residential.

Part B) The request to Amend the PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan to revise the future land use designation from Low Density Residential to Low-Medium Density Residential.

Part C) The request to rezone the property from "N3c" Neighborhood District to "NX2" Neighborhood Mix District subject to the following conditions of approval:

1. Any use of the subject property, which measures 0.893 acres, shall be limited to uses as permitted in common with and as limited by the 'N3c' District and a Household Living Use with up to 9 household units.
2. Any development on the property shall be in substantial compliance with the submitted development concept, including architectural character and materials, to the satisfaction of the Planning and Urban Design Administrator.
3. Heavy landscape buffering along the side and rear property lines shall be provided to the satisfaction of the Planning and Urban Design Administrator.

**THE VOTE** 5-8 Motion Failed (Francis Boggus, Todd Garner, Katie Gillette, Carolyn Jenison, Will Page, Leah Rudolphi, Rick Trower and Emily Webb opposed)

2<sup>nd</sup> Motion

Leah Rudolphi made a motion for denial of the request.

**THE VOTE** 8-5 Motion carried (Johnny Alcivar, Chris Draper, Andrew Lorentzen, Laura Kessel and Jane Rongerude opposed)

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Van Essen".

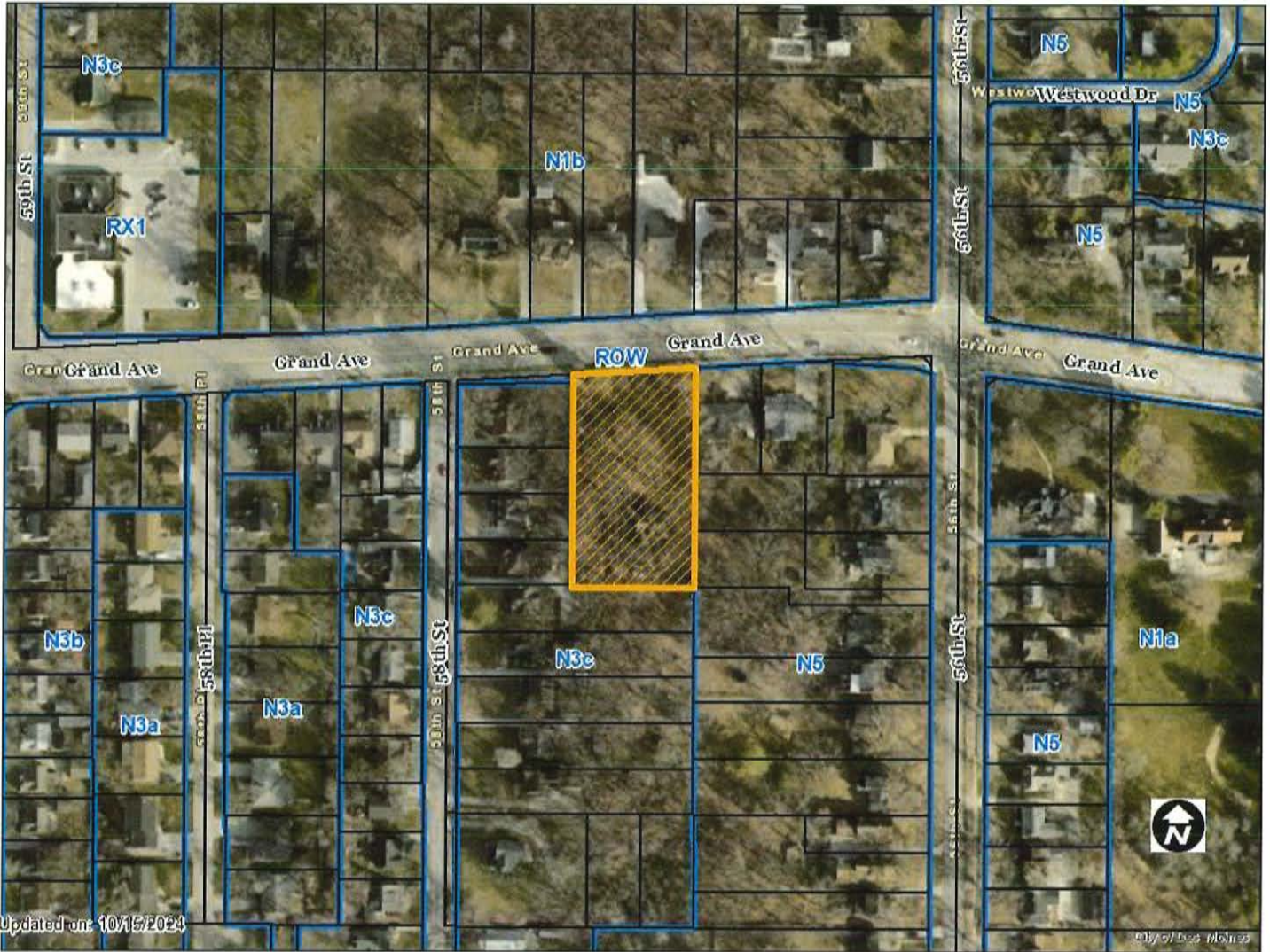
Jason Van Essen

Planning & Urban Design Administrator

JMV:mrw

Steven A Johnson 5702 Grand Avenue

ZONG-2024-000037





PRELIMINARY - NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

# 5702 GRAND AVE TOWN HOMES CONCEPT PLAN A

**ZONING:**  
 CURRENT ZONING: RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT  
 PROPOSED ZONING: AN MIXED USE DISTRICT

**SITE CHARACTERISTICS:**  
 TOTAL DEVELOPABLE AREA: 0.288 AC (12,511)  
 IMPROVED ADJACENT LOT AREA: 8,864 SF (0.20)  
 FRONT SETBACK: 30'  
 SIDE SETBACK: 7'-0" (20' TO ADJACENT)  
 REAR SETBACK: 14'-0" (10' TO ADJACENT)

**UNIT COUNT:**  
 16 UNITS (8 PAIR TOWNS PER UNIT)



5702 GRAND AVENUE  
 DES MOINES, IOWA 50312

PROJECT NAME	5702 GRAND AVENUE
DRAWN BY	CAC
REVISIONS	
PROJECT NUMBER	240375
DATE	CONCEPT PLAN A
SCALE	
DATE	
1 OF 2	

# 5702 Grand Ave – Zoning Amendment

**Neighborhood Meeting  
Tuesday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

The neighborhood meeting was held at Merrill Middle School at 6 pm. There were 38 letters sent out and approximately 20 residents attended the meeting. Both Carl Voss and Josh Mandelbaum were at the meeting as well.

Below are the neighborhood concerns:

## Traffic

- They were concerned with the additional traffic pulling onto the busy Grand Ave. The issue isn't the additional vehicle on Grand, it is the residents pulling out and "taking a chance" with the left turn and increasing the potential of accidents on that section of Grand Ave. There is no traffic study required for this site.

## Storm Water Detention

- There were concerns about the water run-off from the added impervious surface. I ensured that we would capture and detain all storm water and tie into the storm sewer on Grand Ave. This seemed to alleviate their concerns.

## Density

- Some of the immediate neighbors had concern with the amount of vehicles and people living on the site. I ensured that at this price point, it is unlikely they will experience nuisance behavior from these residents.

## Tree Mitigation

- I knew I would be met with this concern, so I printed out a handout with the City Ordinance on tree mitigation. They are concerned with losing the mature trees, and I have offered to plant a \$500 tree in their yard to help with the canopy.

The meeting wasn't as well attended as expected, so there wasn't quite as much feedback. These were the main concerns and I am working to address them as best as possible. Looking forward to coming up with a design that works for all parties, thank you.

Adam Sieren  
(515) 669-4905

**From:** [ALISSA MCKINNEY](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Avenue  
**Date:** Sunday, November 10, 2024 7:36:25 AM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Sreyoshi - I am writing as a concerned citizen that lives on Shriver in the neighborhood of 5702 Grand Avenue project that has been proposed. I am opposed to rezoning of 5702 Grand for an apartment complex.

What makes our neighborhood special is the old homes and beautiful old trees. I do not support the idea of either being torn down. There are so many other places to build. I am also concerned with the traffic congestion on Grand Avenue with two schools close and kids walking to school.

Please protect our neighborhood.

Thank you,

Alissa McKinney

**From:** [Amanda Duncan](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Proposed 5702 Grand rezoning  
**Date:** Thursday, November 7, 2024 8:11:22 AM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello.

I am emailing to voice my opposition to the proposed rezoning of 5702 Grand.

I'm all for mixed use housing, but it needs to be done in a thoughtful way. Rezoning an existing parcel smack in the middle of an established single family neighborhood is not this. Razing almost an acre of land with trees that are well over 100 years old to squeeze in 15 townhomes and 30 garages and leave no room for a blade of grass is not this. Destruction of habitat. Noise pollution. Stress on infrastructure that is already aged. Increased traffic. Water runoff on with all the hardscape. These are only some of the downsides.

Changing the rules in the middle of the game is fundamentally unfair. This would change the vibe and original intent of the entire neighborhood.

Increase property values? Only for the one being razed. This lines the pockets of the developer to the detriment of the surrounding properties. It will decrease their property values and change their quality of life. It would set a dangerous precedent for the character of the entire area. It's a slippery slope - if this is allowed, what's to stop developers from doing this to all the larger lots in Westwood and Waterbury?

Westwood is my neighborhood and I want to see it stay the beautiful single family gem that it is.

Opposed.

Amanda Duncan  
5408 Robertson Drive  
Des Moines, IA 50312

**From:** [Amy Lynch](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Ave.  
**Date:** Saturday, November 9, 2024 11:34:29 AM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

We are **opposed** to the rezoning of 5702 Grand Ave.

We feel the 15-unit project would be detrimental to the Westwood/Waterbury neighborhood because of the size of the project, traffic problems, run-off, and the destruction of numerous (11) beautiful white oak trees. And it will look horrendous.

This is an unacceptable project for the space.

Thank you  
David and Amy Lynch  
6063 N. Waterbury Road  
Des Moines 50312

**From:** [Amy MacKrell](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [Drost, Bert A.](#); [DZ Shared Mailbox](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]5702 Grand Proposed build  
**Date:** Friday, November 8, 2024 8:45:58 AM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear members of the Zoning Committee,

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the proposed 15 townhouse build at 5702 Grand. This build does not suit the intent nor the reputation of our neighborhood.

The name of our neighborhood is Westwood, though the neighborhood was developed under the name White Oaks in the 1920s. This neighborhood's intent was--and should remain-- to be surrounded by the woods --an urban forest--as illustrated by the large backyards which create acres of greenbelt. The character of our neighborhood is the single family houses surrounded by woods. In fact, if you do a search of the descriptions on realtor sites, they mention the wooded area as the main selling point of the area: "Bordered on three sides by woodlands, rivers and public parks, historic residential zones are cupped in a palm of nature, creating a sense of seclusion from the busier, more developed sections of Des Moines" -- that's how Homes.com describes our neighborhood. The picture they use to prove it? Two of the houses on 58<sup>th</sup> that will be towered over by townhomes if this project is approved. Instead of looking up at trees, neighbors will look up and see the windows of townhomes, losing all the privacy the currently enjoy.

There are 13 white oaks on the proposed property that are estimated to be up to 200 years old -- these are old growth trees with root systems that are important to the neighborhood ecology, to microbiomes, to heat absorption, to rain and water retention and to controlling erosion. Des Moines is identified as an oak savannah in the river basin- and there are moves by the city to preserve that. This should be considered part of that preservation. We have to balance the desire for development with the interest in preserving and restoring our ecosystem even for the most practical reasons. Removal of this urban forest means all rainfall and snowmelt will be sent down Grand into our already taxed, aging sewer system. There are concerns about the necessary plowing of snow, which will then melt downhill toward 58<sup>th</sup> and beyond, creating unnatural water patterns which threaten basements, foundations, and topsoil.

The ecological issues don't stop there. Our neighborhood is filled with deer, fox, opossum, raccoon, owls and even more recently coyotes. 5702 Grand sits upon a hill that offers the wildlife a clear view of the street and is a natural buffer to Grand, something that would be removed when the hillside become cement and rows of townhouses. Many of these nocturnal animals will then have the negative effects of parking lot, garage, and window lights from 15 homes. There is clear research on light pollution's effect on humans and wildlife. Nocturnal animals depend on the dark to hunt and artificial light disrupts predator-prey dynamics and reproduction cycles in animal. Plants rely on pollinators like moths who are active at night. Light pollution alters these rhythms, affecting behaviors like flowering in plants, bird migrations, and even seasonal adaptations.

Studies show that light pollution effects human's health as well – The proposed 6 foot privacy fences won't protect the neighbors from a 30 foot tall townhome above them nor from the light sources they bring. And I don't have time to address the noise that will come with the build. Where now there is the woods and quiet, there will be the buzz of 15 air conditioners in the summertime.

None of these issues fit with the spirit and intent of the Westwood neighborhood and what makes it special.

Traffic is another concern --There hasn't been a traffic study as one isn't required for this build, and turning out onto Grand can not only be tricky, it can be dangerous. This is a risk that becomes even more acute in winter, when cars need momentum to get up the Grand hill after a snow – traffic coming down the hill will now have issues with attempting to stop while driving down it if a car exits the proposed driveway. The project would create traffic issues and parking issues when both of those already exist on 58<sup>th</sup> and 56<sup>th</sup>.

There is no doubt that the neighborhood would suffer in several ways due to this construction; for example, what makes neighborhoods strong is knowing the people who live in it. Research shows that a large influx of people at once makes that less likely. Another neighbor has illustrated that our property values would fall using the property values on Ingersoll as an example.

We understand the limited power our voices have in higher government, but the place where our voices should be heard is in our neighborhoods. I hope you will stand with us and vote no on this build.

Sincerely,  
Amy MacKrell  
224 56th Street, DSM 50312

**From:** [Brian Rogers](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** The Rezoning of 5702 Grand Ave  
**Date:** Friday, November 8, 2024 8:05:28 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed rezoning of the property at 5702 Grand Ave.

The proposed plan by the Premier Construction Services is to take almost an acre of land (0.80 acres according to the Polk County Assessor site) and remove the mature trees and vegetation to fit in a multi-family housing project. The proposed multi-family property of 15 units - plus the needed parking for at least 30 cars - is simply too large for this lot and for the neighborhood. The increase in population density would put a strain on our already overburdened infrastructure, leading to increased traffic congestion, noise and light pollution, and safety concerns for children walking to the elementary and middle schools. Additionally, the construction of this project would result in significant environmental damage to the watershed, destroying natural habitats and putting wildlife at risk.

Furthermore, the type of housing being proposed is not in keeping with the character of our neighborhood. This is a well-established neighborhood with single homes surrounded by mature trees. What little has been shown of the plans and based off of other units that this company had done in other parts of the city, these are nothing like the feel of the neighborhood. It would also drastically alter the neighborhood, replacing the existing greenery needed for the watershed.

Grand Avenue is quite busy in this area with the recreational park down the street as well as the Willow On Grand event space, but the bigger concern is specifically during winter. Grand Avenue has a significant hill right in front of this property and is often a major backup because of the light at 56<sup>th</sup> Street and the road getting slick. It once took me 15 minutes from the Grand Avenue Bridge at 63rd to 58<sup>th</sup> Street (just before this property) during a snowstorm a few years ago.

Lastly, historically speaking, rental property units like the proposed project have a negative effect on property values to the surrounding properties and the rest of the neighborhood.

At the recent neighborhood association meeting this past Thursday night, there was probably double the normal attendance. Our council member, Josh Mandelbaum, and Mayor Connie Boesen were both in attendance along with Polk County Supervisor Matt McCoy, and a Parks and Recreation representative whose name I missed. All witnessed how fast hands went up when the board asked for a vote opposing the rezoning. It was unanimous immediately.



I strongly urge you to reconsider this proposed housing development. While I recognize the need for affordable housing, I believe that this project is simply not the right fit for our neighborhood and that the city of Des Moines has already pinpointed areas in the city for multi-family projects like this.

Thank you for your continued service and support of our communities.

Best regards,

Brian and Carma Rogers  
5615 Terrace Dr

**From:** [Cody Matula](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 grand Ave  
**Date:** Saturday, November 9, 2024 9:58:17 AM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello! Good morning to whom it may concern. Currently I and my family reside in Waterbury just across the street from Grand Ave behind Merrill middle school. I would first like to thank you for reading my email. Currently the traffic on Shriver Avenue has increased ten fold, because of the school and is becoming a major safety concern. Myself and neighbors have contacted city leaders and the school about issues that we are facing on Shriver Avenue in addition to very fast traffic along 56th St. I feel that approving this rezone for 5702 Grand Ave. Will increase safety concerns for Merrill middle school and the children that walk along grand Avenue and cross grand Avenue every day. In addition to this as a part of this community, I feel that we as neighbors have an obligation to protect our neighborhood and the beautiful homes and the beautiful trees that make our neighborhood what they are. Although in theory, these condos will bring more living. I highly doubt that they will bring more affordable living. In addition to this, I know there are rental homes that back up to the 5702 Grand Ave. property that the investor will more than likely bulldoze if given the opportunity to make access to his condos. The neighborhood, especially along grand Avenue we see tremendous increase in traffic and safety hazards for vehicles. This rezoning is not right for our neighborhood. I truly hope that the city can see that the schools along 56th St. and grand Ave. will be incredibly impacted if this rezoning goes through to allow for these condos.

I recognize that the current property at 5702 Grand Ave. may be in disrepair, but I feel to allow an investor into our neighborhood and request rezoning in an old historic neighborhood is incredibly inappropriate. Please listen to the people who live here. Oppose rezoning a 5702 grand Ave.

Sincerely,  
Cody Matula

**From:** [Dan Stevenson](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Rezoning of 5702 Grand Ave.  
**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2024 9:11:36 AM

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

[Sent from AOL on Android](#)

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** "Dan Stevenson" <danielbstevenson@aol.com>  
**To:** "schakraborty@dm.gov.org" <schakraborty@dm.gov.org>  
**Cc:** "dz@dmgov.oeg" <dz@dmgov.oeg>, "badrost@dmgov.org" <badrost@dmgov.org>  
**Sent:** Sun, Nov 10, 2024 at 11:37 PM  
**Subject:** Rezoning of 5702 Grand Ave.  
Ms. Chakraborty,

Building townhouse on the lot at 5702 Grand Ave. is the right project - in the wrong place.

Westwood, Waterbury - these neighborhoods make Des Moines unique in the metro, and they were never intended or developed for projects like this. Destroying nearly an acre in an Oak Savanna would permanently damage the character of Westwood, and would greatly diminish the value of nearby properties. It would lead to more such developments. It would contribute to problems with parking and traffic congestion, including Hanawalt and Merrill children crossing Grand Ave, It would create sight and noise pollution, drainage, and runoff problems. And with the track record of this developer, they will likely end up being rentals.

Please help preserve this neighborhood by denying this ill-considered rezoning request.

Sincerely,

Dan Stevenson  
5817 Walnut Hill Ave.

**From:** [David Dolan](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#); [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#); [mnglazebrook@gmail.com](mailto:mnglazebrook@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** I Oppose Rezoning of 5207 Grand Ave  
**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2024 2:59:33 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear All,

I oppose rezoning 5702 Grand Ave for the following reasons:

- 1) It is 1/2 block from Merrill Middle School and 1 Block from Hanawalt. Grade school. Having a 15 plus housing unit would jeopardize the SAFETY of our children going to and from school.
- 2) It's a residential neighborhood and should stay that way!!
- 3) Increase in density of cars at Grand and 56th, plus more people and an increase in noise..
- 4) Reduction of property values

Therefore I oppose the rezoning of 5702 Grand Ave.

Thank you

Concerned Des Moines Citizen

David P Dolan

5417 Shriver Ave

DSM 50312

**From:** [George Antoniou](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#); [Mandelbaum, Josh T.](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Avenue  
**Date:** Sunday, November 10, 2024 9:57:27 AM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Re: Rezoning of 5702 Grand Avenue

Hello Sreyoshi,

My name is George Antoniou. I have lived in the 50312 zip code since 1998 and currently reside at 204 53rd Street.

My general view is not anti-redevelopment and while I understand the need to continually improve and sometimes make changes to our community I do not feel rezoning of this property is appropriate. The City itself has recognized targeted redevelopment under all the master planning work it has done (e.g. PlanDSM) highlighting areas that make sense for more dense development while also appreciating that other areas should retain their historic look and feel.

I am going to focus on two points, given many others will likely be providing additional comments. Just last week I attended our Westwood Neighborhood meeting where over 125 people gathered to express their opposition to this proposed project; so, I feel confident when I say my comments will not be the only ones you receive.

#### Reasonable expectation

All the contiguous properties are zoned a neighborhood district. The adjoining neighbors invested in their homes in an area the City has designated as Zone N3c. Not just neighborhood, but further identifying this area as predominantly post war cottages. There are plenty of areas that are designated as mixed use or fringe areas of mixed use where this proposed development may make sense; however, this location is not one of them. The proposed development will change the character of this part of Des Moines and negatively impact the adjoining property owners.

#### The owner of 5702 has other redevelopment options

- A prime example exists right across the street at 5729 Grand where a new owner took down a house and is building a new, higher value, residential property.
- The City could also allow the new owner to split the lot. From what I can determine, the frontage along Grand is about 127 feet. Splitting the lot would still retain a minimum 60 feet frontage for two lots.

Both of these options would allow for the developer to make a profit, while replacing a potential nuisance property with one or two family homes and retaining the character of the neighborhood.

My request is that City staff make a recommendation to deny the rezoning of 5702 Grand.

Sincerely,

George Antoniou  
204 53rd Street, DSM, IA 50312  
515-988-8330

**From:** [Walter Gibson Overby](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#); [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** Rezoning of 5702 Grand Ave.  
**Date:** Friday, November 8, 2024 9:50:50 AM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

My family lives on SW 51st St and we oppose the rezoning of 5702 Grand Ave.

Thank you,

Gibson Overby family.  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Ginny Satterstrom](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Ave.  
**Date:** Saturday, November 9, 2024 7:32:07 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear City Officials,

I oppose the 15 unit project that is proposed for 5702 Grand Ave. in Des Moines. I oppose this property being rezoned that would allow for a multi-dwelling building to be placed there. We must protect the trees in this area and protect the existing homes that are adjacent to this property. We should be preserving older homes rather than tearing them down for new development.

Thank you,  
Ginny Satterstrom  
413 49th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50312



**From:** [Holly Craiger](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#); [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Cc:** [Fritz Craiger](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Avenue  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 12, 2024 8:26:45 AM  
**Importance:** High

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To the Zoning Board - I was at our neighborhood meeting last Thursday and it was voted OVERWHELMINGLY NO. As a Realtor and Growing up at 9 SW 56th ST, and now owning the property I am fully aware of the neighborhood norms in Waterbury and Westwood. The property in question is in both neighborhoods.

From a Real Estate perspective such a project of high density is not a part of the neighborhood fabric. I am very concerned about so many issues:

- Clear Cutting of the trees ( I was on the Tree Des Moines board when our board protested many times the clear cutting of trees to the City Council.
- Light pollution - this neighborhood does not have high intensity lighting
- Decrease in property value on 56<sup>th</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> Streets.
- Increased traffic - with potential of 30 or more cars each day flooding onto Grand - an already busy street.
- Hanawalt and Merrill school children walk down Grand to both streets and increase of traffic is a concern.
- Poor design and HIGH density which does NOT fit in our neighborhood.
- Concern that these properties would be probable rental properties

Many of the neighbors will be at the zoning Board but be clear the neighborhood has voted NO to this proposal.

Sincerely,

Holly and Fritz Craiger



Licensed to sell Real Estate in the State of Iowa  
Iowa Realty/Beaverdale Office  
Email [hollycraiger@iowarealty.com](mailto:hollycraiger@iowarealty.com)  
Mobile phone 5159881789

**NOTICE:** The health and safety of our customers and associates is of utmost importance to all of us at Iowa Realty, and especially now due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We are committed to doing our part to promote the health and safety of our team, visitors, and customers. In furtherance of this commitment, we also ask that, when possible, you only bring essential parties to appointments at our offices. We appreciate your partnership during this unusual time.

Please note: You are important to us, and so is your financial and electronic security. Email is not secure or confidential, and Iowa Realty will never request that you send funds or nonpublic personal information, such as social security numbers or credit card numbers or bank account and/or routing numbers, by email. If you receive an email message concerning any transaction involving Iowa Realty, and the email requests that you send funds or provide nonpublic personal information, do not respond to the email and immediately contact Iowa Realty. To notify Iowa Realty of suspected email fraud, contact: [Fraud@IowaRealty.com](mailto:Fraud@IowaRealty.com)

This communication, along with any attachments, is intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed and may contain information that is legally privileged, confidential and exempt from disclosure. If you are not the individual or entity to which this communication is addressed, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, or copying of this message, or any attachment, is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the original sender immediately by return email and delete this message, along with any attachments, from your computer. Thank you.

**From:** [Jim Snyder](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Ave  
**Date:** Sunday, November 10, 2024 5:10:06 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Please allow this email to express my concerns regarding the application for rezoning by Premier Building which includes the above referenced address. Despite the location of this project, which is just "over the hill" on Grand Avenue, there has been no evaluation of the effects this project will have on traffic flow or safety. This problem is further accentuated by the presence of numerous elementary and secondary school children who travel this route to and from Hanawalt and Merrill. Further, development of this property will significantly affect water flow to neighboring properties and Grand Avenue. The project will also require removal of numerous trees from an area designated as a urban oak savannah. Further, much like this developer's previous project on Hickman, the units will likely be sold to an investment entity that will convert the property to rentals.

Finally, I am concerned regarding the scope of the proposed rezoning area. The map which has been provided by the developer would rezone numerous parcels that are currently restricted to single family. This would encourage the developer to purchase additional properties to expand the scope of the proposed project.

Thank you for your time and attention to this email.

Jim Snyder

**From:** [Johnny McManus](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#); [McB McManus](#)  
**Subject:** Westwood Rezoning Proposal - 5702 Grand Ave - Des Moines - John McManus  
**Date:** Sunday, November 10, 2024 10:51:07 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

11/10/24

Hello Zoning Board Members,

I'm writing to you to express my opposition to the proposed zoning change to the property 5702 Grand Ave initiated by the previous owner Steve Johnson/Adam Sieren/Premier Construction Services.

I have lived in Westwood at 333 58th Street since 2004. This is a very quiet neighborhood that was originally planned and developed for single family homes nestled into an already established oak savanna. Very few homes have been demolished in the neighborhood. Those that have been demolished have been replaced with new single family dwellings. The developer intends to demolish the home and completely clear cut all the old growth trees except one to make room for his three five unit townhomes. Given the proposed building layout, Mr. Sieren clearly has zero respect for the land or the surrounding neighbors or maintaining the sought after charm and character of the neighborhood. This development is about one thing and one thing only - Adam Sieren and his financial backers pocketbooks. Although both the home and the land have been neglected due to financial hardship of Mr. Johnson, the land and the home are both worth saving. The Westwood Neighborhood Association voted unanimously to oppose this project and I hope you do too. It's not that I'm opposed to creating more housing in Des Moines, or the City of Des Moines getting more tax dollars. What I'm most upset about is the developers' complete lack of care and respect for the original intent of the land and the effect this would have on surrounding neighbors.

Here's my list of reasons you should not allow this zoning change:

1. Location - There's several things that make this a bad choice for the proposed development. This property is in the middle of Grand Ave on a steep hill which is very traffic heavy at times and can be treacherous in the winter - Adding the potential of 30 vehicles + visitor, delivery, trash mitigation, snow removal, etc. This would add to traffic congestion on grand, accidents, noise and light pollution to the surrounding neighbors. Plus, the added traffic will put children walking to school on the sidewalk on the south side of grand at greater risk.
2. Development (Buildings and layout) - These proposed buildings do not match the original intent of the neighborhood and were not designed with the neighborhood aesthetic and character in mind. Although we cannot prove the intentions of the developer, we know that a nearly identical development at 6501 Hickman Rd 50322 was developed by Premier Construction Services, then immediately sold to RSS Rentals. If zoning is approved and this project moves forward, the units will likely become rentals which turns that development into transient housing. Personally, if the developer was being thoughtful about the land, the neighbors, and was proposing a far less densely populated development, that would truly be owner occupied, we the neighbors might not be so utterly opposed.
3. Neighborhood Disruption - If approved, this would be an enormous disruption to the surrounding neighbors that back up to this property. Loss of the trees on this lot will result in

loss of natural beauty, privacy, shade and biodiversity and natural rain water mitigation. This will also add ongoing light and noise pollution from vehicles coming and going, exterior lighting, and the noise pollution from 15 HVAC units. There are residential properties on all three sides of this property and those homes will suffer the worst, but the homes across from Grand will also suffer.

4. Property Values - These units will lessen the property values of all surrounding homes making them even less desirable to live in. My Wife and I have been working on our home for 20 years hoping that one day we could sell it to someone who would be able to experience the same quiet and charm of the land as it was originally intended by the original developers.

5. Rainwater Mitigation - I believe a project of this scale will likely require some sort of water retention pond. The retention pond at Premier Construction Service 6501 Hickman project is basically a cesspool of garbage. I have extreme concerns about how carefully thought out their rain mitigation plans are. Currently, the earth on that property is securely held together by an expansive root system of the old growth trees.

6. Sewer & Water Pressure Concerns - Adam Sieren has already approached a few of us on 58th Street asking for an easement to bore new sewer lines because the original home is on a shared sewer with other 58th street residents and his proposed development must have a dedicated sewer line connecting to the sewer under 58th street. None have agreed to an easement. The other concern that hasn't been considered is that adding 15 homes to our neighborhood could potentially decrease the water pressure for the neighborhood or minimally the surrounding homes.

7. Parking - Any Visitors to this proposed property will be parking on 56th, or 58th Street. We do not have ample street parking to accommodate.

7. Sets a Bad Precedent: If this zoning change happens, that sets a bad precedent and will encourage more of this predatory style low value development projects in our neighborhood.

I can say that without a doubt, whether or not the zoning board is for or against this, should this project ultimately get approved by city council, we the neighbors are prepared to take legal action against the city to bring the project to a halt and will fight to prevent the development from moving forward. I do hope you all vote against this to send a loud and clear message of opposition to the City Council.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

John McManus  
333 58th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50312  
515-360-1673

**From:** [Jonathon Matula](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** No to rezoning Westwood  
**Date:** Saturday, November 9, 2024 10:29:23 AM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello! Good morning to whom it may concern.

Currently I and my family reside in Waterbury just across the street from Grand Ave behind Merrill middle school. I would first like to thank you for reading my email. Currently the traffic on Shriver Avenue has increased ten fold, because of the school and is becoming a major safety concern. Myself and neighbors have contacted city leaders and the school about issues that we are facing on Shriver Avenue in addition to very fast traffic along 56th St. I feel that approving this rezone for 5702 Grand Ave. Will increase safety concerns for Merrill middle school and the children that walk along grand Avenue and cross grand Avenue every day. In addition to this as a part of this community, I feel that we as neighbors have an obligation to protect our neighborhood and the beautiful homes and trees that make our neighborhoods what they are. Although in theory, these condos will bring more living, I don't believe they will bring more affordable living. In addition to this, I know there are rental homes that back up to the 5702 Grand Ave. property that the investor will more than likely bulldoze if given the opportunity to make access to his condos. The neighborhood, especially along grand Avenue we see tremendous increase in traffic and safety hazards for vehicles. This rezoning is not right for our neighborhood. I truly hope that the city can see that the schools along 56th St. and grand Ave. will be incredibly impacted if this rezoning goes through to allow for these condos.

I recognize that the current property at 5702 Grand Ave. may be in disrepair, but I feel to allow an investor into our neighborhood and request rezoning in an old historic neighborhood is incredibly inappropriate. Please listen to the people who live here. Oppose rezoning a 5702 grand Ave.

Sincerely,  
Jonathon Matula

**From:** [Laura Olson](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Ave  
**Date:** Friday, November 15, 2024 12:04:34 AM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good morning. Thank you for taking the time to read my objections about the rezoning of 5702 Grand Ave in Des Moines. My list of concerns is listed below:

\*traffic on Grand Avenue and 56th Street

--The intersection of 56th & Grand is already a trouble spot. Adding more traffic and especially turning traffic to this intersection will make it even more troublesome. The sun is like a laser beam down Grand, especially in the morning, making it difficult to see oncoming traffic as you try to turn onto 56th to get to the interstate.

--Having cars turn off Grand into the driveway of the proposed building site WILL create rear-end accidents from both directions.

--I would hope that anyone living in the proposed building site would understand how long it would take and how hard/dangerous it would be to turn heading West during rush hours.

--I would hope that anyone living in the proposed building site would already own a 4 wheel drive. If not, there will be some days in the winter in which they can not access their home due to hazardous winter driving conditions in which this section of Grand is notorious.

--56th Street is already busy, especially at school arrival/departure times. I don't think increasing traffic in an elementary school zone is a wise idea.

\*Deforestation

--This lot has many, many beautiful, mature trees on it that are a habitat to many kinds of animals and birds. Any trees that are replanted after construction will be small trees as there won't be enough room for the future of large/mature trees--that will take SEVERAL decades to come even slightly near the size of trees currently.

--This area is well known and desired due to the large, beautiful, mature trees. People want to live in this area for the trees and beauty they bring. They do not want to live in this area for cookie cutter townhomes with a view of a busy street.

\*Lowering of property values of the homes surrounding

--Not only will my view be destroyed, my property value will go down as well as all property values in the area.

\*City utilities

--I personally know this property and two others share a sewage line. I fully understand new sewage lines will be supplied for the property, but somewhere downhill there will be sewage problems and/or fixing these issues is costly.

\*The dishonest nature of Adam Sieren.

--Mr. Sieren was not at all honest with Mr. Johson or the neighbors in the area in which he spoke. He also has judgments against him for not paying contractors/subcontractors. No one doing business with him should expect that he will do what he says.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns. I appreciate any support in the opposition to the rezoning of the 5702 Grand property.

Laura L. Olson  
Certified Dyslexia Tutor-Barton Reading and Spelling

Parent Advocate  
LauraOlson5@hotmail.com  
(515) 633-0894



**From:** [Lori Haakinson](#)  
**To:** [Drost, Bert A.](#); [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [Lori Haakinson](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Ave  
**Date:** Friday, November 8, 2024 2:56:40 PM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Commission,

I am writing this letter for your board to consider opposing the (15) unit townhomes to be built at 5702 Grand Ave. Here are my reasons;

1. In Des Moines we need to keep similar land-uses together, i.e. single family homes to single family homes.
2. Multi-family homes should be built on multi-family plots.
3. This parcel of land is not suited (run-off) for the proposed construction.
4. This project will set a bad precedent in the neighborhood.
5. Current resident's property values will decline.

Thank you in advance,

Lori Haakinson  
317 58th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50312  
515-229-4258

**From:** [Lucy Haakinson](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Avenue  
**Date:** Friday, November 8, 2024 8:26:49 AM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good morning!

I am emailing you today in regards to the unfortunate development plans being talked about for 5702 Grand Avenue.

I have lived in this neighborhood for almost all my life. I used to walk these back yards with friends as a kid going to Hanawalt and then Merrill. The neighborhood has grown to know the tall trees that grow in the area that out date many of us. There are raspberry bushes shared by many that would be buried under these under these new structures. Most importantly, the amount of space this structure would take up is astonishing, and not in a positive way whatsoever. There are new generations of kids who spend their time running from one yard to the next neighbors and then down. This would no longer be a choice nor would it be as safe with how far the building would come back. The traffic and noise pollution in the area would be detrimental. With a wooded area like our neighborhood, comes nature. Deers, birds and many other animals take refuge in these parts and that would likely change largely if this were to go on and that is gut wrenching in itself.

I have spent time in the house they want to tear down and let me tell you, it also has some beautiful bones and it shouldn't be left out of this whole consideration either.

To get down to it, I urge you to please understand where my neighbors and I are all coming from and to say no to the rezone. Come and take a walk through our neighborhood and see for yourself, we would love to have you. This not only would be the eyesore of the century but it just isn't the area for what the guy wants.

Thank you,  
Lucy Haakinson

**From:** [Lynda Albaugh](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Ave  
**Date:** Sunday, November 10, 2024 8:54:26 PM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Ms. Chakraborty,

We are writing in opposition to the rezoning of 5702 Grand Avenue and ask you to oppose this misguided proposal.

Our family first moved to 240 56th Street in 1950. As its current owners and residents, we have invested in, been committed to, and loved the Westwood neighborhood. It is a beautiful, steady, and safe space for children to grow up, young adults to start their lives, and seniors to grow old. It's a safe space for animals who run through the woods, for Iowa's native trees and plants to grow, and for all of us to experience the best of Iowa's natural green spaces.

The proposal to demolish the property and wooded area at 5702 Grand Avenue would be detrimental to the health and longevity of our neighborhood, as well as the surrounding neighborhoods and the broader city of Des Moines.

When a development like this moves in, the neighborhood becomes less stable. Neighbors slowly leave, family members don't return, and new families move to the suburbs instead.

This development would also destroy a significant portion of the neighborhood's forested area – which is the heart and soul of Westwood and the experience of living here.

This is a slippery slope. When this is done to one property, it's easy to do it to others. Alongside our neighbors, we take pride in our homes, community, and green spaces. Don't let a development company take this space away from all of us.

Sincerely,  
Lynda and Stephen Albaugh  
240 56th Street, Des Moines, IA 50312

**From:** [Mallory Huff](#)  
**To:** [schakraborty@dmgov.com](mailto:schakraborty@dmgov.com)  
**Cc:** [Plan and Zoning Commission](#); [Planning](#); [westwoodneighborsdsm@gmail.com](mailto:westwoodneighborsdsm@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Opposition to Rezoning Request for 5702 Grand Avenue  
**Date:** Monday, November 4, 2024 12:48:45 PM  
**Attachments:** [image.png](#)

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

**Date:** 11/04/2024

Dear Sreyoshi and fellow Zoning Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the rezoning request submitted by Steven A. Johnson for the property located at 5702 Grand Avenue. The request seeks to:

- Determine conformance with PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan.
- Amend PlanDSM to revise future land use classification from Low Density Residential to Medium Density Residential.
- Rezone the property from N3C/N5 Neighborhood District to NX1/NX2 Neighborhood Mix District, allowing development of three (3) rowhome buildings.

My concerns regarding this rezoning request are as follows:

- **Impact on Neighborhood Character:** The proposed development of three rowhomes will significantly alter the current low-density character of the neighborhood. Increased density can lead to issues like traffic congestion, parking scarcity, and strain on public resources like schools.
- **Traffic and Safety:** The addition of three rowhomes and potential new residents will likely increase traffic on Grand Avenue. This could pose a safety hazard for pedestrians, cyclists, and children playing in the neighborhood. Additionally, the increased traffic near Hanawalt Elementary School at 225 56th Street (approximately 0.3 mile away), and Merrill Middle School at 5301 Grand Avenue (approximately 0.3 mile away), can create safety hazards for students walking or biking to these schools.

I urge the board to carefully consider the potential negative impacts of this rezoning on the surrounding community. The current zoning designation aligns well with the established neighborhood character and ensures a good quality of life for residents. The requested change for **medium density zoning is best placed as a buffer between commercial zoned areas/high traffic areas and single family - not directly in the middle of single family housing.**

Furthermore, **PlanDSM: Creating Our Tomorrow** emphasizes a balanced approach to growth and development that prioritizes the health, well-being, and sustainability of the Greater Des Moines region. The proposed rezoning seems contradictory to these goals for the following reasons:

- 

#### **Goal 1 - Promoting Economic Diversity and Prosperity:**

- 

**Attract a Diverse Workforce:** Low-density neighborhoods offer a desirable living environment for professionals in various sectors, contributing to a more diverse and resilient economy.

- 

**Support Local Businesses:** Low-density areas often foster a strong sense of community, supporting local businesses and creating economic opportunities.

- 

**Enhance Quality of Life:** Low-density neighborhoods provide residents with lower noise pollution and a quieter living environment, which can improve overall well-being and productivity.

- 

**Protect Property Values:** Preserving the low-density character of a neighborhood can help maintain or increase property values, benefiting both homeowners and the local economy.

- 

#### **Goal 2 - Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment:**

- 

**Protecting Tree Canopy:** Low-density neighborhoods often have mature trees that provide shade, clean air, and help mitigate urban heat islands. In this case there would be destruction to nearly an acre of large forest preserve.

- 

**Reducing Stormwater Runoff:** Lower-density development patterns can help

reduce stormwater runoff and erosion, protecting water quality and preventing flooding.

- **Preserving Natural Habitats:** Low-density neighborhoods can provide habitat for wildlife and contribute to biodiversity conservation. The maturity of the forest preserve on this property is a safe haven for deer, foxes, raccoons, squirrels, groundhogs, and several other wildlife species.

- **Goal 3 - Improving the Quality of Life for All Residents:**

- **Promoting Mental Health:** Low-density neighborhoods often offer quieter, more peaceful environments that can contribute to better mental health and reduced stress.
- **Fostering Community Connections:** Low-density neighborhoods can foster a strong sense of community, providing opportunities for social interaction and support.
- **Preserving Historic Character:** Low-density neighborhoods often contain historic buildings and architectural features that contribute to a community's unique character and sense of place. In this case there is a beautiful 100+ year old home that would be destroyed.

- **Goal 4 - Strengthening Regional Collaboration:**

- **Protecting Local Character:** Low-density neighborhoods contribute to the unique character of each community, which is essential for preserving the diversity of the region.
- **Balancing Growth and Development:** Low-density areas can help balance regional growth by providing opportunities for sustainable development that respects local identity and environmental concerns.
- **Facilitating Efficient Resource Allocation:** By maintaining some low-density areas, communities can avoid the need for costly infrastructure expansions and resource allocations that may not be necessary.

**I strongly urge you to reject the rezoning request for 5702 Grand Avenue and maintain the current N3C/N5 zoning designation.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
*Mallory Huff*

340 58th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50312  
(515) 205-0150  
[mallory.a.huff@gmail.com](mailto:mallory.a.huff@gmail.com)



**From:** [Mark Timm](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#); [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Ave.  
**Date:** Sunday, November 10, 2024 6:44:08 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Mark Timm  
340 56<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines IA, 50312

Dear Board Members,

I'm writing in opposition of rezoning 5702 Grand Ave. This is an attempt to deceive, steal and cause indiscriminate harm. Faithful Moments is the title holder as of 11/07/2024 yet the legal description still lists Steve Johnson. Faithful Moments LLC was established 09/27/2024 by agent Aaron Bernard. Aaron Bernard law firm specializes in H2-A and H2-B visas, an industry rife with abuse. Mr. Bernard has dozens of LLC's seemingly to supply labor. The developer, Premier Construction, has been sued for not paying wages. The owner of Premier Construction is a convicted felon having spent time in prison for cocaine distribution among other indiscretions. The name Faithful Moments either mocks citizens and the board or assumes ignorance and apathy, probably both.

The developer submitted an image of Google earth with rectangles imposed on it, that's the plan. He composed flowery narrative purporting the greater good pretending to fill a need all the while lying about saving trees, storm sewer runoff and omitting a hill that's been there for millennia will either be leveled or backfilled. Empirical evidence demonstrates these multi-unit developments decrease property value contradicting his opinion. He says this will have little to no impact on traffic. In practice this would be 15 homes sharing a driveway onto a 4 lane heavily traveled Grand Ave. making it a parking lot when it snows. Anyone who commutes Grand, frequents Fareway, True Value, Valley Junction, anywhere can expect some kind of snarl 3 or 5 or 8 times a week. Countless frustrations, accidents and lost time before a single tax dollar would be collected.

This represents an intrusion of privacy, intrusion of noise, intrusion of traffic, intrusion of lights, headlights, garage lights, taillights and an intrusion of people. It greatly inhibits the ability of neighbors and myself to enjoy our property while imposing unnecessary hardship balanced against a social benefit that doesn't exist relative to this proposal. I enjoy my neighbors and people but it depresses me to think of what those potential residents would do to recreate? Where would children play, would it be dangerous?

Rather than granting a windfall to individuals at the public's expense the promising long term practice would be Des Moines is not a party to this kind of nonsense, it's obvious machinations to deceive and confuse therefore making Des Moines a better place to live. I implore you to examine the individuals involved, the nuances of the



property and reject if not condemn the proposal. The developer said it's "in pocket". Faithful Moments and in pocket aren't clever.

Very Truly Yours,  
Mark Timm

**From:** [McB McManus](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#); [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Cc:** [John McManus](#)  
**Subject:** Opposition to Rezoning of 5702 Grand Ave  
**Date:** Sunday, November 10, 2024 9:46:26 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To Whom It May Concern:

A zoning variance has been requested at 5702 Grand Avenue in Des Moines, to allow development of a 15-unit rowhouse project. I am writing in opposition to this rezoning request.

I live at 333 58th Street, the property immediately to the south of the property in question.

The variance requested - NX2 on a lot currently zoned for N5 - is inappropriate. NX2, according to the City of Des Moines's zoning ordinance, is "intended for a mix of single household houses with **appropriately scaled and detailed** multiple-household building types in the same neighborhood." The project presented by the developer is neither appropriately scaled, nor appropriately detailed, making it unsuitable from the outset. The proposed project is a design that was not developed for this location and has been built already on other lots in other neighborhoods, utterly lacking in the details and characteristics that would make it appropriate for the Westwood/Waterbury neighborhood. Furthermore, and more troubling, is that the proposed project is entirely out of scale for the lot. As presented, the structures extend from property line to property line in each direction. Absolutely no room is left on the lot for open space. There is no explanation for this other than maximizing profit for the developers without any consideration for neighbors or the neighborhood.

These arguments could be considered semantic, but I do believe they go beyond the academic into the practical:

- There is no way to regrade then pave/build on that much of the lot without a detrimental effect on the stormwater management. Runoff will undoubtedly negatively impact neighboring properties. Furthermore, with the proposed structures extending from property line to property line in each direction, there is no room left for snow removal.
- I am concerned about traffic entering and exiting the property during commuting times, when Grand Avenue already presents a challenge. Those turning into the eastbound lanes when the road surface is slippery will have a significant challenge. Those turning into the westbound lanes during peak traffic hours will have a considerable wait time to contend with.
- The added noise pollution of 15 HVAC units will be a nuisance to those of us who enjoy our outdoor areas that a single-family dwelling would not present.
- The addition of 15 homes in such a small area is likely to have a negative impact on water pressure in the neighborhood.
- The removal of so many trees cannot do otherwise than have a deleterious effect on the overall health of both the people and the place.

I have heard nothing to suggest that the developer seeks to be a good neighbor, or frankly do anything other than line their own pockets. I believe this is the type of project that is ill-

considered, poorly planned, and likely to be cheaply executed, if allowed to move forward.

There are many good arguments to be made in favor of improving the property at issue. The proposed rowhouse development IS NOT the solution.

Thank you for your consideration,  
McB McManus  
333 58th Street, Des Moines, IA 50312

**From:** [McKenzie Glazebrook](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Ave  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 6, 2024 7:46:43 PM

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

My name is McKenzie Glazebrook and I am a resident of the Westwood Neighborhood and live at 319 58th st. The back of my property backs up to the greenspace that connects to the single family property located at 5702 grand ave. which has been proposed to rezone into a townhouse complex.

Currently my family, including my 3 young kids, and our neighbors hold a lot of value in the privacy and peace of this greenspace thanks to the seclusion the nearly an acre of trees and single family home on this property provides. This is actually a huge factor of why we purchased this home 10 years ago and maintains a lot of the property value which will diminish when it is replaced with cement, metal and street lights. Even with a privacy fence, these 3 story townhomes will have a direct view into our backyard.

Outside of that, I am greatly concerned for the loss of many 100+ yr old trees. Trees that provide an ecosystem haven to many different types of animals. Trees that were the backbone of the original intent of the Westwood neighborhood. Trees that many residents put a lot of value in. Which to speak to the original intent of the neighborhood- was to build our homes around these trees, and to feature low density properties in order to maintain that peace. Replacing these trees will not replace the ecosystems and animals - specifically butterflies and moths that our environment relies on.

Additionally, I am greatly concerned about the lack of a traffic study required. This area of Grand is very busy leading up to 63rd street and two entrances to the interstate. This 15 unit complex will be crammed into less than an acre and has no plan for overflow parking. Currently many residents already deal with traffic and parking complaints on surrounding streets and many times I am blocked into my driveway with how many people are parking on the street. As the VP of the neighborhood board for 9 years- the top complaint we received was traffic on 56th street.

Many people have compared this project to others nearby, but this rezoning property is different because it's property lines immediately line many other properties on 56th and 58th street and is surrounded by only single family homes. This is also different because it requires the destruction of nearly an acre of trees.

On 11/21, please vote no to the rezoning of this property. Please encourage restoration, revitalization and protection of our environment. Please vote to protect the historic neighborhoods and maintain the value that they hold as greenspace havens within the city lines.

Thank you!

McKenzie Glazebrook

**From:** [Megan Ferin](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Subject:** 5625 Grand Avenue  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 20, 2024 12:57:44 PM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

I am writing this email to let you know that my husband and I very much oppose having the townhomes built and any rezoning at all. We live at 5625 grand Avenue. We have been in this house for 12 years. My husband's mother grew up in this house before we bought it. Part of the reasoning we bought it was because, even though it is on Grand it is actually a very peaceful and quiet neighborhood. We love being able to see all the trees right across the street from us when we sit on our front porch.

Building these townhomes would change everything. It would change the entire dynamic of our old, quiet neighborhood. Some of those trees have been there for a hundred years. The trees are the reason we love it here so much. We can go in our backyard and it almost feels like being in the country and I know that the neighbors on 56th and 58th feel the same way about being in their heavily wooded backyard. If the townhomes are built that is going to change that for them and their kids.

In the winter on snowy, icy days we constantly see people struggle getting up the hill on Grand Avenue. They get stuck right where the driveway (where the new entry way would be for the townhomes) is. My husband has personally gone out there to help pull many people up on that hill every winter. When I used to work at a dental office on grand Avenue there were many times getting off work where the traffic was so backed up with people stuck on that hill in the winter that I'd have to wait it out at Sully's way past rush hour time before being able to get home. It would literally be backed up to the stoplight on 63rd. I can't imagine adding even more traffic with people trying to get into their townhomes right exactly where everyone gets stuck and slides down.

These are only some of the reasons why we are very against these townhomes being built in this location and the rezoning. Please consider how the entire neighborhood feels about this. Thank you  
Megan Ferin

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Kleiber, Michele](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Cc:** [Kleiber, Michele](#); [Michele Kleiber](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Avenue Des Moines, IA 50312  
**Date:** Sunday, November 10, 2024 10:46:20 PM  
**Importance:** High

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To whom it may concern.

I am writing, regarding the rezoning of 5702 Grand Avenue.

I am genuinely concerned about the possibility of fifteen townhomes or should I say townhomes in any amount being built on that lot and all the negatives this project imposes.

**This project goes against the original intent of the neighborhood's establishment.**

**The negatives of it outweigh the positives.**

1. It will destroy the forest preserve that has been well established for hundreds of years. Among the many trees there are incredibly old oak trees that would be removed along with the rearranging of the hilly land causing flooding of those homes on 58<sup>th</sup> street. It would also destroy the canopy that is visible from the bottom of the Grand hill at 63<sup>rd</sup> street looking west and threaten the wildlife that lives in the area (deer, fox, owls, ground hogs, raccoons, etc.).
2. Rezoning 5702 Grand would open a Pandora's box for developers to proceed with developing more of these structures on down through the greenbelt that is comprised mostly of backyards (resembling Greenwood Park) of those living on the west side of 56<sup>th</sup> street. Giving the developers the go ahead for 5702 Grand would open this opportunity for them to build more multi-family structures. This would bring our property values down. No one will want to buy our houses, if there is potential, they will eventually be living next to a multi-family structure. **It would also be taking away the sanctuary for which this land and neighborhood was intended.** Eventually projects such as this would wipe out the houses of people that live in them.
3. There is the possibility that these townhomes would turn into rentals. The neighborhood would then become home to transient living, where you have the potential for more people to be living in the units than the units were intending to house, creating more cars that would not fit in the spaces designated for these units. This has happened to other developments such as this. There would be a need for additional parking. The only place for that is on 56<sup>th</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> streets. There are always many cars parked on 56<sup>th</sup> street and many have been hit over the years, as many cars race down 56<sup>th</sup> weaving in and out. I cannot speak for 58<sup>th</sup> street but I do know that 58<sup>th</sup> street is extremely narrow.
4. This area is a well sought out because of its beauty and privacy. This would all be ruined. It is a single-family low-density neighborhood and that is why people want to live in it. Townhomes or apartments do not fit in the neighborhood. There are other areas of town where this kind of development would be more suited.
5. The three-story townhomes would obstruct the view from all directions and create noise pollution from the fifteen air conditioners running in the summer and light pollution that those structures usually provide. Right now, you can go in your backyards and look up at the stars uninhibited by the city lights or those that a multi-family structure would impose.
6. 5702 Grand is a hilly piece of land. This project would need to change the landscape and would inevitably cause water run off that will flood out the houses downhill on 58<sup>th</sup> Street. They already have problems from time to time and this project would only make it worse. It could also have the potential of changing our water pressure on 56<sup>th</sup>, 58<sup>th</sup>, and

- possibly Grand as well.
7. Traffic congestion would be crazy. We have two schools on Grand in the immediate area (Merrill and Hanawalt). It is already dangerous enough for those kids to be walking to and from school. In addition, this development would be in the middle of one of the more difficult streets to get up, in the wintery weather. In wintery weather cars are always having a tough time getting up Grand. They need momentum to get up the hill from the bottom of 63<sup>rd</sup> street. They do not need to have a car pull out in the middle of the hill (which is where this development would be placed) to stop their progress. Those living on the middle of the hill would also have a tough time getting out causing wrecks. It will create chaos. That area is at the peak steepness of the hill. In wintery weather, you cannot stop, if you expect to get up the hill and you certainly cannot stop going down. It is also close to the stop light at 56th street, and congestion usually starts to form around 5702 Grand, while cars wait for the light to turn green.
  8. There would be a loss to property value. Any multi-family unit would create more noise especially when their air conditioning units are running all summer long. It would impose on everyone's privacy, especially those living right next to such a structure. In addition, there would be a lot of light that this kind of development brings and an UGLY large "privacy" fence or wall. Right now, it is so dark in the backyards between 56<sup>th</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> that you can look up at the stars at night uninhibited by city lights. Many people are looking for homes like what we have, to get away from mid to high density areas. People are wanting yards. Townhomes do not offer this.

Please consider all these factors before making your decision. I invite you to at least walk through the backyards that will be affected by this development, to get an understanding of what everyone is fighting for.

Michele Kleiber, 122 56<sup>th</sup> Street, Des Moines, IA 50312 (515-779-8182)

Classification: Personal

-----Message Disclaimer-----

This email is intended for the recipient specified in this message. It may contain information that is privileged, confidential and exempt from disclosure under applicable laws. If you are not the intended recipient, sharing or copying this communication is prohibited. If received in error, please send a note to [connect@principal.com](mailto:connect@principal.com) and delete the original message and any attachments. Principal Financial Group or any of its member companies may retain emails as required by law or regulation. This email is not an electronic signature, unless a specific statement to the contrary is included in this message.

To unsubscribe from marketing communications, go to [www.principal.com/do-not-contact-form](http://www.principal.com/do-not-contact-form).

**From:** [Mitchell](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#); [DZ Shared Mailbox](#)  
**Subject:** Application for Zoning Variance - 5702 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312  
**Date:** Sunday, November 10, 2024 4:31:56 PM

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you regarding an application for a variance for the parcel at 5702 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312. As a nearby property owner, lifetime resident of the City of Des Moines, and a holder of a future interest in the adjoining parcel located at 340 56<sup>th</sup> Street, Des Moines, IA 50312, I strongly oppose the granting of any variance for the first listed property.

The parcel is currently zoned for single-family housing. The parcel was recently acquired by an L.L.C. created on 09/27/2024. Aaron Bernard is listed as the sole owner of the L.L.C. with the Secretary of the State of Iowa. Based on information and belief, Mr. Bernard is a resident of the city of Ames and owns no personal property in the City of Des Moines.

Under Iowa law, an owner of a parcel may be granted a variance to a zoning ordinance “where literal enforcement would cause him undue hardship” *Vogelaar v. Polk Cnty. Zoning Bd. of Adjustment*, 188 N.W. 2d 860, 862 (Iowa 1971) (citing *Moody v. City of University Park*, 278 S.W. 2d 912, 919-920 (Tex. Civ. App. 1955)). While Bernard may argue that granting a variance would be beneficial to public interest, ostensibly based on matters such as a need for multi-family housing, Mr. Bernard can make no good faith argument that a granting of a variance would *alleviate him personally of any undue hardship*. This is because Mr. Bernard only recently acquired the property from the previous owner while taking care not to disclose his sole intention of selling the property to a developer for profit. Any claim of hardship from Mr. Bernard would have to be inherently self-created. Mr. Bernard appears to hold little to no personal connections to the area, has no legitimate claim of undue hardship, and can make no qualified assessment on any beneficial impact the zoning variance may have for the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.

The property surrounding the parcel at issue is zoned for single-family homes west to 60<sup>th</sup> street. Granting a variance so that Mr. Bernard could profit from the sale of a multi-family housing development for this single parcel would constitute “spot zoning”, or the “creation of a small island of property with restrictions on its use different from those imposed on surrounding property” *Lime Lounge, LLC v. City of Des Moines*, 991 N.W. 2d 797 (Iowa Ct. App. 2023) (quoting *Residential & Agric. Advisory Comm., LLC v. Dyersville City Council*, 888 N.W. 2d 24, 25 (Iowa 2016)). In *Lime Lounge LLC*, the court examined whether special use permits advancing singular commercial interests were illegal. *See id.* In considering whether spot zoning is illegal, courts have analyzed “(1) whether the new zoning is germane to an object within the police power; (2) whether there is a reasonable basis for making a distinction between the spot zoned land and the surrounding property; and (3) whether the rezoning is consistent with the comprehensive plan”. *Residential & Agric. Advisory Comm., LLC v. Dyersville City Council*, 888 N.W. 2d 24, 46 (Iowa 2016). The continuation of the area as being zoned solely for single-family homes is vital in terms of preserving historic foliage, traffic safety, noise pollution, and the overall enjoyment of surrounding land usage. Where any remedy to a social issue such as need for additional housing might be proposed as a reason for granting a variance, the Board should consider whether sufficient alternatives exist so as to not disrupt the current zoning plan. Furthermore,



the Board should consider whether the ultimate purpose of the variance would be to grant an individual or entity a distinct commercial advantage in the manner in which they are allowed to use their land.

An overwhelming majority of the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods oppose the granting of a variance for the parcel at 5702 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312. Granting a variance would be antithetical to good public policy and existing case law. Should the Board decide to grant a variance, we are prepared to litigate the issue.

Sincerely,

Mitchell Phillips Timm

**From:** [Nancy Lynch](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Subject:** RE: 5702 Grand Avenue  
**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2024 2:11:33 PM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am opposed to rezoning the proprietary at 5702 Grand Avenue for several reasons:  
The destruction of nearly an acre of a large grove of trees;  
Creating issues of storm management, drainage and water pressure;  
And issues with traffic congestion and overflow of parking issues.  
I live in the Waterbury neighborhood, across from this property and do not believe this would be beneficial to this area.  
I ask that you vote no to rezoning this property.  
Nancy Lynch  
522 Waterbury Circle

**From:** [Olivia Griffin](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Ave  
**Date:** Sunday, November 10, 2024 6:03:32 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

I am writing today regarding the rezoning of 5702 Grand Avenue.

I am concerned for three main reasons: loss of trees, the impact on the neighborhood, and the precedent it would set.

**Loss of trees:** Westwood and the surrounding area is known for the beautiful, old trees. Many of the trees are over 200 years old, and are a draw for home buyers and important to those established in the neighborhood. When buying homes in this area, people are looking to be close to nature and wildlife. While taking down the trees, the water runoff will change as the land is developed and flattened. Instead of being collected by the soil and running down towards Grand Ave at the bottom of the property's hill, it will run directly into neighboring home's basements to the left or right of the new property and the new concrete. Losing these trees and the acre of grass would negatively impact the wildlife in the area, and change the view for many home buyers who have lived in their homes connecting this property for many years, leading into my next concern.

**Impact on the neighborhood:** Homes are purchased in this area for the large backyards and the privacy they provide. They are also expecting a single-family, low density zone, with many potentially coming from middle or high density zones, looking for a change of pace and scenery. Rezoning this area and building the townhomes would change the look and feel of the neighborhood, and negatively impact the homes surrounding this property. Property values would decrease, due to the proximity of these 3-story townhomes towering over the neighboring homes and yards. Traffic would increase on streets that are already too busy and unsafe for the children in the neighborhood and the neighboring schools, due to speeding and the amount of cars parked along the street, making it difficult to see around corners and hills. The Grand Avenue hill is nearly impossible to make it up during the winter, requiring a non-stop drive up the hill, and adding a driveway shared by a minimum of 30 cars in the middle is a hazard.

When homeowners in this neighborhood step outside of their homes, they expect to hear birds, see racoon, fox, deer, and other wildlife feet from them. This development would instead replace these sounds and views with the hum of 15 air conditioning units and a 3-story building, ruining the feel for any neighboring home that was purchased with the intention to hear wildlife and enjoy the outside. This will change the feel for any potential home buyers too, lowering the value of the neighboring homes.

It is a concern that these townhomes will become rentals if not purchased. 6501 Hickman avenue is an example of this. These were originally townhomes set to be purchased. They are now listed as rentals on Apartments.com. If these townhomes become rentals, it will lead to more cars from units that may be rented by multiple roommates, and impact the families in the neighborhood, as it is a family oriented neighborhood due to the schools. As listed above, many of the homebuyers in this area may be moving away from zones and residences like this.

This leads into my third point, the precedent this would set.

If this area is rezoned, there are many other acre lots on the neighboring streets. Why would these not be eyed by developers and rezoned in the future? This would tear down many 100+-year old homes. Some of these homes may need to be restored to their former glory, but deserve to be restored instead of torn down.

I currently live in historic Sherman Hill and see the importance of restoring homes every day. While some of these homes in Westwood and surrounding areas, 5702 included, may not be on a historic registry, they contain history and features that will never be in a modern home. There is a market for this, and it is important to save the homes of the past, regardless of how much work is needed. In Sherman Hill, there were many homes that were torn down before the association was created, and their presence is missed and the feel of the neighborhood has forever been altered, as apartment building and other large structures were erected in their place. This is what I worry will happen in the Westwood neighborhood if we do not protect the area. The Westwood neighborhood is stable socioeconomically, so there is no need to introduce medium density housing with potential rentals, when there are other locations that are a better fit for the missing middle housing (that do not include the destruction of a safe location for wildlife, drastic changes to the neighborhood, and would not set a precedent).

Thank you,

Olivia Griffin

**From:** [Rayne Lilley](#)  
**To:** [schakraborty@dmgov.com](mailto:schakraborty@dmgov.com); [Plan and Zoning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Rezoning issue  
**Date:** Thursday, November 7, 2024 4:08:57 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Sreyoshi and zoning commission members,

We are writing in regards to the rezoning of 5702 Grand Ave from a N3C/N5 to a NX1/NX2 mixed property and allowing Premier Construction to build 15 townhome units directly behind our property.

Our concerns include:

-The loss of beautiful, majestic trees to be replaced by invasive 3 story townhomes. This would decrease the air quality and increase utility bills.

-A greater opportunity for flooding due to massive concrete replacing absorbent soil.

-Excessive noise due to additional vehicles, traffic congestion and more people in a small area with no trees to buffer the sound. We can't imagine being in our lanai with 15 A/C units running non-stop all summer.

-Decrease in property values due to the traffic, noise and transient neighbors. Investors who purchase the townhomes will rent them out, creating the same effect as living next to an apartment complex.

-Loss of wildlife - destruction of the deer path to the Raccoon River, fox, raccoon, squirrels, rabbits, woodchucks, and hundreds of bird species rely on these trees for their habitat.

-Loss of the neighborhood character and sense of community.

We strongly urge you to reject the rezoning request so we can maintain our quiet, safe and healthy quality of life.

Thank you for your consideration,

LaRayne Lilley and Rick Rask  
339 58th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50312

**From:** [Scott MacKrell](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [Drost, Bert A.](#); [DZ Shared Mailbox](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Avenue  
**Date:** Saturday, November 9, 2024 3:57:50 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Zoning Committee,

I'm writing to share my opposition about the proposed 15-townhouse project at 5702 Grand, which I believe is out of character for our Westwood neighborhood. Our area is meant to maintain its natural surroundings and wooded landscape, which contribute to its unique charm and privacy. This natural beauty will be disrupted if townhomes replace trees and make our neighborhood less desirable.

5702 Grand includes old-growth white oaks essential to our local ecosystem. Removing these trees could lead to increased stormwater runoff, straining our already aging sewer systems, and threatening nearby homes with water-related damage. Wildlife in the area—deer, foxes, raccoons, and owls—will also be affected by light pollution and habitat loss as the hillside is replaced by pavement and buildings.

Traffic and safety concerns are significant, too. The build has no traffic study required, but adding these units would increase the risk for drivers navigating the challenging slope on Grand, especially in winter. This development will also bring additional noise, decreased privacy for the residents of 58th Street and diminish the neighborhood's quiet, wooded character.

I hope you'll consider these impacts and vote against this build to preserve our neighborhood's identity and its original intent.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Scott MacKrell  
224 56th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50312

**From:** [Sharon Koele](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Ave.  
**Date:** Saturday, November 9, 2024 4:33:05 PM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

This rezoning proposal involves the destruction of a 1915 home and approximately 1 acre of forest for the building of 15 "single family" townhomes. A similar development by the same developer, Adam Sieren of Premier Construction, at 6501 Hickman did not lead to owner-occupied single family townhomes, but all rental properties.

I would like to provide you with my thoughts on why I believe you should vote "no" on this proposal.

I am sure you will hear reasons involving the unnecessary destruction of numerous old-growth oaks to make way for this townhome development, the accompanying noise and light pollution, the impact on traffic/parking, and the traffic dangers to children and wildlife. So, I will not elaborate on those, though I do whole-heartedly agree with all of them.

My pitch to you is this. This project comes at far too great of a cost and I do not believe the city will reap the benefits it is being promised. The members of the zoning commission need to be good stewards of the lands and resources of this city. A decision to allow this to move forward can not be undone and will set precedence for more of this.

It can be easily proven that surrounding homes do not see the promised increased property value from being near such a development and, in fact, fail to accrue value like comparable homes. This will ultimately be a tax revenue hit to the city, as the numerous properties in this neighborhood fail to gain anticipated value over the years. This will be particularly true if this development becomes a large rental complex as did the Hickman Rd. development.

The water and sewer systems in our neighborhood are antiquated and will soon need to be upgraded if this project goes through. That comes at a cost to all of the taxpayers.

Des Moines has invested significant money into beautification projects, such as on Ingersoll and Fleur, to name a couple. What you have in this neighborhood is natural beauty with the homes of a certain vintage and the majestic oaks. All you have to do is not mess that up and the city has no cost to re-beautify this area in the future.

The distinctive neighborhoods are what attract people to live in Des Moines proper. If they wanted cookie-cutter townhomes, they would live in Ankeny or Grimes. Des Moines needs to remain distinctive or you will have no recruitment advantage over the suburbs.

The downhill neighbors from this proposed project are numerous small single family homes. The 4 houses on Grand, on the next block west/downhill, have an average valuation of \$179,350, based on the Polk County Assessor's website. These are the home owners that will have some of the most catastrophic impact of storm runoff from nearly an acre of paved-over land up the hill from them.

Finally, I would argue that we do not have a "missing middle" problem in this neighborhood. We are already a mix, ranging from more affluent homes to small cottages. We are sufficiently diverse enough. You do not need to allow a developer to put the first gouge in this beautiful neighborhood for his own profit, and to the detriment of the neighbors and the city. He will destroy, build, profit, and move on, and we will be left to deal with the aftermath.

Please vote no.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely;

Sharon Koele  
5715 Grand Ave.



**From:** [Sharon Koele](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Subject:** the proposed project at 5702 Grand Ave.  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 23, 2024 5:18:34 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello –

I received your letter earlier today regarding the proposed rezoning of the area surrounding 5702 Grand Ave. That letter did not specify the area that is under rezoning consideration, but that area was pictured in today's Des Moines Register. According to that article, the proposed rezoning region includes not only my home at 5715 Grand Ave, but also the homes of numerous of my neighbors on the north side of Grand.

I will be out of the country next week and I am not sure that the postcard mentioned in your letter will arrive in a timely manner to permit me to register my opposition to this rezoning and this project, so I am doing so here.

Our block was named "Wanut Hill Place" and developed by Frick & Armour as twenty 1-acre plots, first offered for sale according to the Des Moines Register on 6/16/1907. Of those twenty 1-acre plots, only three of them remain intact as single residential properties. Mine and my neighbor directly to the west are two of those three, and our properties are both proposed for rezoning for the sake of this project. My house has been here since 1913, and the garage and horse barn have on my property since 1937. I have cared for this property for 20 years, more than a 1/6 of the time this house has stood on this ground. It has taken a lot of investment of time and money to help maintain the historic nature of this property.

I would argue that rezoning, would easily permit future numerous multi-family properties with easier paths to remove historic homes. That would also allow for deforestation of oaks that have been standing here since the Civil War (based on a ring count from an oak that recently died on our property and had to be cut down). I have no doubt that if my property is rezoned, when I go to sell it, my house will be demolished for the sake of some developer's financial benefit. They have not lovingly maintained a portion of Des Moines history, I have. That history will not be retrievable.

My other concerns about this project (even if the rezoning does not directly impact me):

1. This will increase traffic flow even more on this exceptionally busy street, quite close to school crossings. Elementary kids walk up and down that sidewalk every day.
2. The water run-off from that much hardscape will have significant impact on downhill neighbors, many of which live in less affluent houses than these townhomes proposed.
3. The 5702 lot IS very overgrown and has been for quite some time, but there are historic trees on that lot that will surely have to be cleared to accommodate the building of that

many units.

For all of these reasons, and likely more that escape me at the moment, I am very much opposed to the rezoning of this area.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sharon Koele

**From:** [Susan Barnes](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Ave  
**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2024 12:15:20 PM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing in opposition to the proposal to rezone 5702 Grand Avenue. The developer's proposed use is not consonant with the neighborhood, nor is the removal of majestic oak trees in the best interest of the city (or the planet). In addition, the multi story structure will only complicate traffic in the area, especially during times when children at nearby schools are arriving or departing. Please do NOT approve this developer's rezoning request.

Susan Barnes  
205 51st St.  
Des Moines

**From:** [Tyler Gartenberg](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [DZ Shared Mailbox](#); [Drost, Bert A.](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Rezoning of 5702 Grand Ave - Premier Construction  
**Date:** Friday, November 8, 2024 2:58:47 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Great - thank you Sreyoshi. If that's the case, the proposed building footprints are 110' x 46', and the total area of the 3 units is 15,180 sqft. The lot size is estimated 39,015 sqft, putting the total building coverage at 39.8%, which is above the maximum building coverage of 35% per chapter 135-2.12-B. Can you include that in the comment as well?

Thank you!!

On Nov 8, 2024, at 2:42 PM, Chakraborty, Sreyoshi <[schakraborty@dmgov.org](mailto:schakraborty@dmgov.org)> wrote:

Hello Tyler,

Your comment letter has been received by staff and will be included in the presentation to the Commission.

The maximum building coverage includes the sum of all building footprint. Let me know if you have further questions.

Thanks,

**SREYOSHI CHAKRABORTY, AICP** (She/Her) | CITY OF DES MOINES

Senior City Planner | Development Services

Office: 515-283-4749 Cell: 515-975-6820

[dsm.city](https://dsm.city) | 602 Robert D. Ray Drive | Des Moines, Iowa 50309

<image001.png>

*The City of Des Moines has launched a new online platform to make the Zoning and Planning and Design Ordinances (Chapter 134 and Chapter 135) more accessible. Users will also find direct access to multiple GIS maps, a signage calculator, and a tool that generates Regulations by District reports. The new platform is available online at <https://online.encodeplus.com/regs/desmoines-ia/index.aspx>*

**From:** Tyler Gartenberg <tyler\_gartenberg@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 8, 2024 10:43 AM  
**To:** Chakraborty, Sreyoshi <schakraborty@dmgov.org>  
**Cc:** DZ Shared Mailbox <dz@dmgov.org>; Drost, Bert A. <badrost@dmgov.org>  
**Subject:** Rezoning of 5702 Grand Ave - Premier Construction

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

my name is tyler gartenberg and i live at 523 waterbury circle and i was writing to voice my opposition on the rezoning of 5702 grand ave by premier construction.

in addition to the great points i'm sure others have mentioned, i'd like to point out the planning and zoning code 134.2.2.7(a). this language states that NX1 neighborhoods need to preserve the scale and character of the existing neighborhood.....which is the exact opposite these townhomes will do. cheap, cookie cutter rows of townhomes will destroy the character the neighborhood, which fails to meet that requirement of rezoning. councilmen josh mandelbaum mentioned that the board already recommended the developer to improve the plan to help with the character, but that is physically impossible to match 100+ year old homes.

the precedent has already been set by the board when you voted to deny the rezoning application of premier construction services back in january of 2022 for their project at the corner of Fleur and Willowmere drive. from the minutes of january 20, 2022 item 120 chairperson Francis Boggus stated he is in favor of denying rezoning as it would affect the overall appearance of the neighborhood and value. the vote was 14-0 to deny it. that is the precedence, and following that precedence, the board should deny the application as it not only fails to preserve the character of the surrounding neighborhood, but it will destroy the character that has taken over a century to develop. making this area look like waukee with cookie cutter townhomes will ruin the character of this neighborhood, and that is against chapter 134.2.2.7(A).

one question i have regarding figure 135-2.12-B : maximum building coverage 35%. is that per structure, or is that the total footprint of all structures?

i appreciate your time, and look forward to the board following the zoning and planning rules and denying this application.

thank you,  
tyler gartenberg  
9136457804  
<image002.png>

**From:** [Westwood Neighborhood DSM WNA](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Subject:** 5702 Grand Ave. Rezoning  
**Date:** Friday, November 8, 2024 8:55:47 AM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Sreyoshi

Thank you for taking the time to consider our request. Last night we had our annual meeting for the Westwood Neighborhood Association which includes this project/address. We had a very large turnout and a passionate debate about the current rezoning plans. There was an almost unanimous vote against this project. There has also been over 400 people who have signed an online petition against this project. Westwood has never been a multi family community. That was never it's initial intention and it's been preserved that way for 100 years. The area is full of large single family homes and mature trees. This project takes away from both of those aspects of the area and opens up the floodgates for future developments. That doesn't even get into the logistical nightmares of traffic on an already busy Grand Ave, sewer lines that are extremely old and grading/topography issues on this specific plot of land.

As a board we stand against this project and implore you to deny these rezoning requests for this area. The project is not best suited for this piece of property. I believe there will be a large contingency of people from the neighborhood but wanted you to know this ahead of time.

Thank you for your time  
Steve Camerona, WNA President

--

**Your Westwood Neighborhood Association**  
[www.westwoodneighborsdsm.com](http://www.westwoodneighborsdsm.com)  
[www.facebook.com/westwoodneighborsdsm](https://www.facebook.com/westwoodneighborsdsm)  
[westwoodneighborsdsm@gmail.com](mailto:westwoodneighborsdsm@gmail.com)

**From:** [Cole M](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Cc:** [Boesen, Connie S.](#); [Voss, Carl B.](#); [Simonson, Mike W.](#); [Coleman, Chris J.](#); [Westergaard, Linda C.](#); [Mandelbaum, Josh T.](#); [Gatto, Joe P.](#); [westwoodneighborsdsm@gmail.com](mailto:westwoodneighborsdsm@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Re Zone Request for 5702 Grand Avenue  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 10:42:13 PM

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

We, the undersigned residents and stakeholders of the surrounding community, respectfully submit this petition in opposition to the rezoning request submitted by Steven Johnson for the property located at 5702 Grand Avenue. Our concerns center around the following key points:

- 1. Inconsistency with Comprehensive Plan:** The proposed rezoning from Low Density Residential to Medium Density Residential contradicts the established goals of the PlanDSM Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan. This plan prioritizes maintaining the character of our neighborhoods and promoting low-density housing options that support family living and community togetherness. The subject development, which is NX2 Mix Medium Density, is better suited as buffers between commercial corridors and single-family. An isolated infill lot is not the appropriate location for this type of housing product. The undersigned residents are in favor of housing options, but the type of housing product must make sense for the location and its surrounds.
- 2. Impact on Community Character:** The introduction of three rowhome buildings in an area currently designated for low-density residential use threatens to alter the character of our neighborhood. We value the existing community environment, which is defined by single-family homes and open spaces. We believe this development will create a density imbalance that could lead to overcrowding and diminished quality of life for residents.
- 3. Increased Traffic and Congestion:** The proposed development will likely increase traffic flow in our neighborhood, leading to safety concerns for pedestrians, especially children, and further strain on our already limited parking resources. The added density will only worsen these issues and could lead to a decline in overall safety and accessibility in our community.
- 4. Environmental Concerns:** The change in land use and increased development could have detrimental effects on local wildlife and green spaces. Preserving our current zoning is essential for maintaining the environmental integrity and natural habitats of the area.
- 5. Community Engagement:** There has been a lack of adequate community consultation regarding this rezoning request. We believe that significant changes to our neighborhood should involve open dialogue and consideration of residents' opinions and concerns.

For these reasons, we urge the decision-makers to deny the request to amend the PlanDSM Creating Our Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan and the proposed rezoning from N5 Neighborhood District to NX2 Neighborhood Mix District. We request that the integrity of our



community be preserved, reflecting the desires and needs of those who live here.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We hope you will consider our concerns seriously and act in the best interests of our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Cole McClelland – 5729 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312

**From:** [Liam McHugh](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Subject:** Townhouse development  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 8:37:39 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I wish to convey my concern regarding this development and the strain this will put on the existing sewer system which is already under pressure from the existing property's .sincerely  
Liam mchugh property owner 5612 grand ave

**From:** [Matt Merfeld](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Zoning 5625  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 10:10:04 PM

---

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Sreyoshi,

I am the property owner of 322 58th street. I did not receive the card to vote on the zoning vote regarding the property at 5702 Grand Avenue.

I would like to record my vote as opposed to the rezoning.

Thanks,  
Matthew Merfeld

**From:** [TERRI GOFORTH](#)  
**To:** [Chakraborty, Sreyoshi](#)  
**Subject:** Re: 5702 Grand rezoning  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 7, 2025 4:59:34 PM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

We did not receive a card regarding the rezoning. a gal came by and ask us to email you with what we wanted. We are against the rezoning.

Donald Smith 5802 Grand Ave DM 50313.

Sent from my iPhone

Item: ZONG-2024-000037 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request

Staff Use Only

**RECEIVED**  
 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
 NOV 20 2024

Titleholder Signature: *Mark [Signature]*

Name/Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Impacted Address: 34054th ST / LOT 2 DIXON PL.

Comments: COMPLETE OPPOSITION  
YOU MUST FIRST AMEND PLAN DSM

THE TITLE HOLDER'S DEVELOPER WILL BE  
DEPOSED ON THEIR PRACTICES

Item: ZONG-2024-000037

Date: 11/16/24

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request

Staff Use Only  
RECEIVED  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
NOV 20 2024

Titleholder Signature: William E. Haakinson

Name/Business: William E. Haakinson

Impacted Address: 317-5th St.

Comments: The lot size is not suited for town or row houses. Developing it for one or two single family homes would be suitable, anything larger would impact the area adversely. Traffic, environmentally, safety and the impact lowering value. It's just not a good idea.

Item: ZONG-2024-000037

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request

Staff Use Only  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
NOV 20 2024

Titleholder Signature: 

Name/Business: Abbie Mounsdon

Impacted Address: 5709 Grand Ave

Comments: Rezoning to allow multi-family development  
is unnecessary re development of this lot and  
Contrary to several Plan DSM Goals.

Item: ZONG-2024-000037

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request

Staff Use Only  
**RECENT**  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
NOV 20 2024

Titleholder Signature: 

Name/Business: ANDREW MIEGNER

Impacted Address: 324 56<sup>TH</sup> STREET

Comments: The proposed driveway and number of parking spots will almost certainly create a dangerous situation. The proximity to the Grand & 56<sup>TH</sup> intersection will exacerbate westbound traffic issues in the afternoons and exceptional danger in the winter due to the hill on Grand eastbound. I find the developer's light and sound pollution mitigation plan to be suboptimal/non-existent.



Item: ZONG-2024-000037

Date: 11-18-24

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request

Staff Use Only  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
NOV 20 2024

Titleholder Signature: Zach McDaniel

Name/Business: Zach McDaniel

Impacted Address: 5702 Grand Ave / 346 56<sup>th</sup> St. (mine)

Comments: This is illegal Spot Zoning which would create an island, creates traffic/parking overflow and safety issues on Grand Ave, and hurts downhill water drainage. Infringes on privacy of neighbors and disrupts community environment.

Item: ZONG-2024-000037

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request

Staff-Use Only  
REC...  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
NOV 20 2024

Titleholder Signature: McB McManus

Name/Business: John & Elizabeth McManus

Impacted Address: 333 58th St. DSM IA 50312

Comments: Please see our emailed comments.  
We strongly oppose this rezoning request.

Item: ZONG-2024-000037

Date: 11-14-24

Please mark one of the following:

I support the request

I am undecided

I oppose the request

Staff Use Only

RECEIVED  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

NOV 19 2024

Titleholder Signature: Rick Rask + Larayne Lilley

Name/Business: RICK RASK & LARAYNE LILLEY

Impacted Address: 339 58th ST, DSM, 50312

Comments: AS DETAILED IN OUR LETTER  
EMAILED TO THE COMMISSION ON 11-7-24  
WE STRONGLY OPPOSE THE REZONING  
REQUEST DUE TO NOISE, TRAFFIC, SAFETY,  
FLOODING AND THE LOSS OF QUALITY LIVING.

Item: ZONG-2024-000037

Date: 11-16-24

Please mark one of the following:

I support the request

I am undecided

I oppose the request

Staff Use Only

RECEIVED  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

NOV 19 2024

Titleholder Signature: Laurel Olson

Name/Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Impacted Address: 330 56th St DM, La 50312

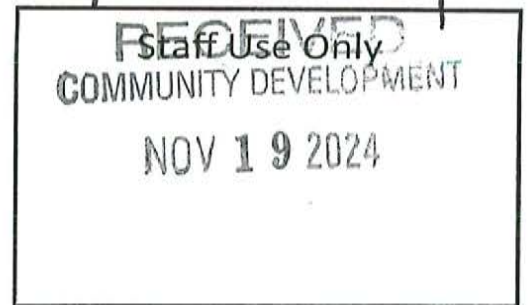
Comments: People choose this area for the mature trees - this would destroy a staple part of our neighborhood. Traffic safety is also a big concern.

Item: ZONG-2024-000037

Date: 11/15/2024

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request



Titleholder Signature: 

Name/Business: SHARON KOELE

Impacted Address: 5715 GRAND AVE, OSM, IA  
S0312

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Item: ZONG-2024-000037

Date: 11-15-24

Please mark one of the following:

- I support the request
- I am undecided
- I oppose the request

Staff Use Only  
RECEIVED  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
NOV 19 2024

Titleholder Signature: Martha A. Chiovaro

Name/Business: Retired

Impacted Address: 320 - 56th St. - D.M. 50312

Big change to value of properties nearby!!!  
Comments: ① loss of too many trees.  
② One driveway - too much traffic trying to come out onto Grand - esp. rush hour traffic!  
③ Noise pollution from congested area - we are a quiet neighborhood! Don't want 15 units near my property!  
④ too many units (???)

Item: ZONG-2024-000037

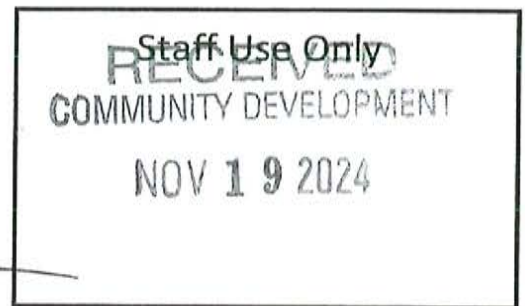
Date: 11/16/2024

Please mark one of the following:

I support the request

I am undecided

I oppose the request



Titleholder Signature: 

Name/Business: MIKE THOMAS

Impacted Address: 410 56<sup>TH</sup> Street

Comments: Totally opposed to this.

Bad for this area.

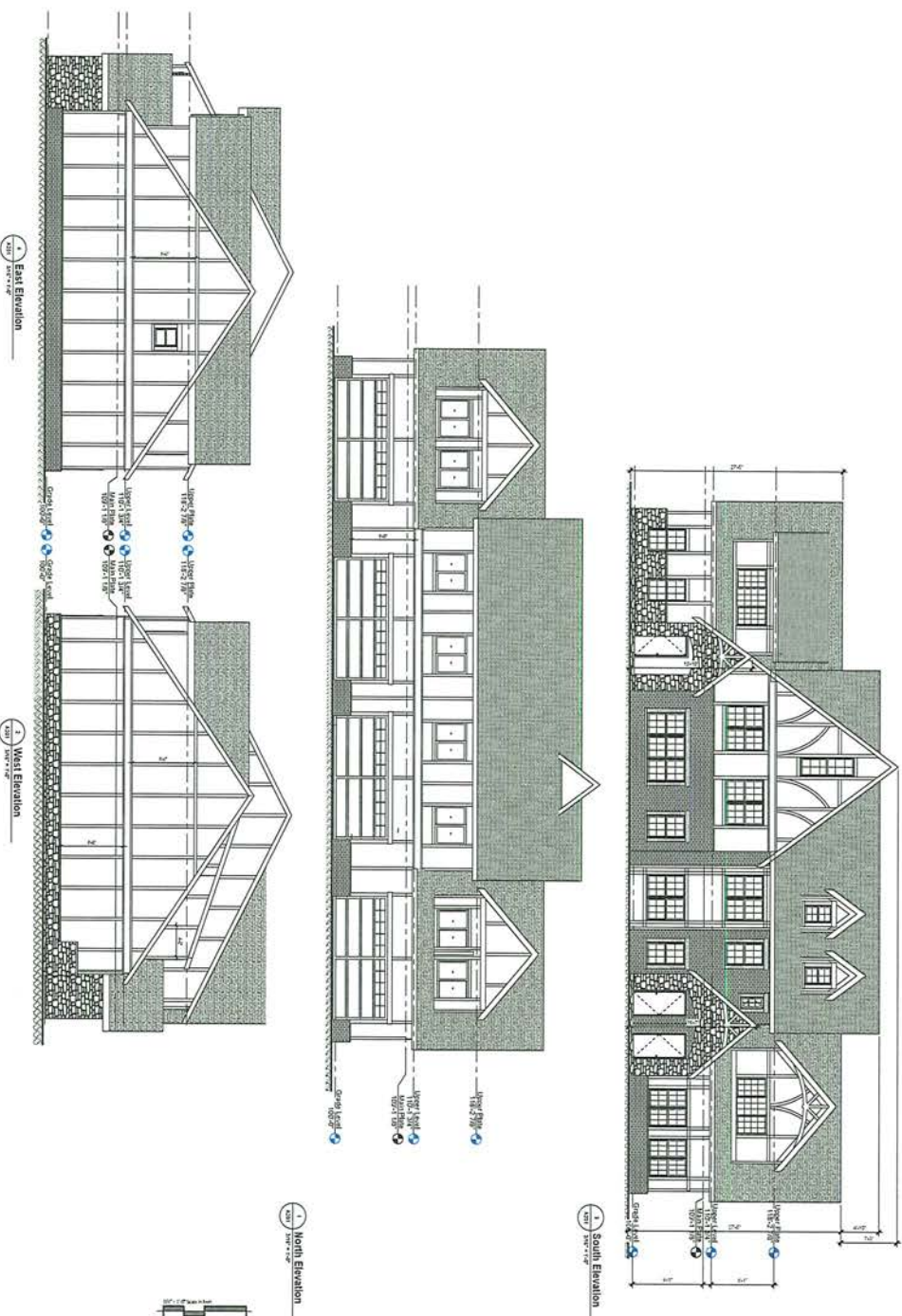
Card arrived 11/15 - back by 21<sup>st</sup>? 'short'!  
Time!

I, Megan Fern, oppose of the decision to  
rezone. I live at 5695 Grand Avenue Des Moines  
50312. Please mark my house as red showing I'm  
against it.

Megan Fern







Date	Description
03/25/24	For Construction

A201

The Grand Townhomes  
Premier Construction - 4 Unit Building

5702 Grand Avenue | Des Moines, Iowa 50312

Creative Concepts  
Architecture, PLC  
5402 NE 55th Avenue | Cambridge, Iowa, 52504  
562.550.8786  
www.creativeconceptsarchitecture.com



**ZONING  
AMENDMENT**

**Thursday, December 19th, 2024**  
Current Zoning "N3c"  
Zoning Request "NX-2"



How does Des Moines' housing numbers compare to surrounding communities?

#### West Des Moines Totals 2023

- 263 total housing permits issued
- 112 Single Family Homes & 251 Townhomes
- 31% Single Family & 69% Townhomes

#### Waukee Totals 2023

- 818 total housing permits issued
- 411 Single Family Homes & 407 Townhomes
- 51% Single Family & 49% Townhomes

#### Ankeny Totals 2023

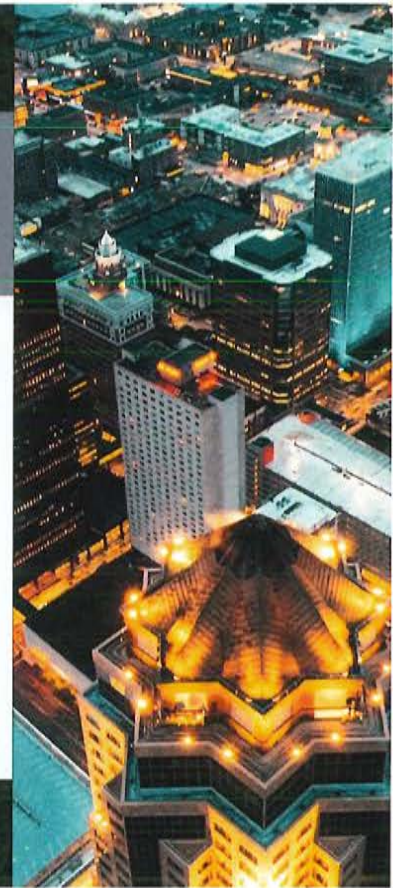
- 613 total housing permits issued
- 401 Single Family Homes & 212 Townhomes
- 65% Single Family & 35% Townhomes


#### Des Moines Totals 2023

- 248 total housing permits issued
- 166 Single Family Homes & 82 Townhomes
- 67% Single Family & 33% Townhomes


## Downtown Workforce Housing Study

- Polk County is expected to be 57,000 housing units short over the next 20 years. Des Moines is 47% of that number. This is 1,343 housing units per year, and 248 permits were issued in 2023.
- Although this project is not considered workforce housing, 12% of this number is for housing units over \$350k. This equals 3,223 homes needed over \$350k over the next 20 years – or 161 units per year.
- This is why the City of Des Moines has incentivized this medium density, in-fill, row home housing with a 9 year tax abatement.





## Fourth Restated Urban Revitalization Plan

- The 9 year tax abatement with energy code requirements was put into effect on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022
  - This medium density rowhome type of housing has been recognized by the city leaders as an important part of the long term housing goals for the City of Des Moines.
  - Denying this zoning amendment would be in direct conflict with the housing shortage data and would be detrimental to promoting this type of in-fill housing in Des Moines.
- 

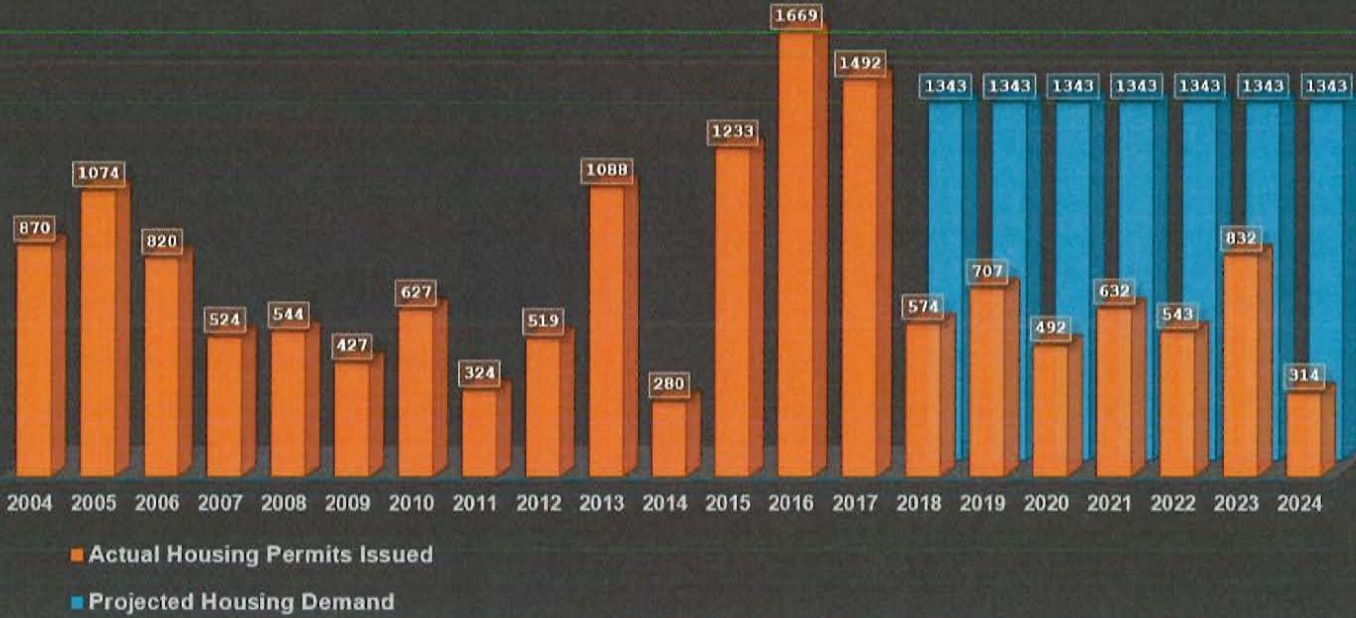
## Missing Middle Housing

- This concept was launched in 2012 by Daniel Parolek, an architect from San Francisco. The below lines are quoted from his book, *Missing Middle Housing*
- The term "middle" has two meanings
  - First, and most importantly, it represents the middle scale of buildings between single family homes and large apartment or condo buildings
  - The second definition of middle relates to the affordability or attainability level. These types have historically delivered attainable housing choices to middle income families without subsidies and continue to play a role in providing homes to the "middle income" market segment.
  - That being said, it is important to note that Missing Middle Housing is not exclusively targeting a middle income market. There is a large, pent-up demand for these housing types at the upper end of the market as well as from downsizing baby boomers, single person households, and millennials who want walkable living.






# HOUSING PERMITS ISSUED/PROJECTED





## Market Demand & Economic Impact

- The Westwood/Waterbury is not only one of the more prominent neighborhoods in Des Moines, there is also an aging population. These residents want to stay in the community they have raised their children and lived for many years. They do not want to move to West Des Moines or Waukee.
  - Adding medium density in-fill housing means more residents staying in Des Moines and spending money in Des Moines and supporting local businesses, limiting urban sprawl.
  - The Plan DSM Vision Statement says the following: *“Housing that offers a diversity of choices in **housing styles** and affordability that meets the needs of residents throughout their lives.”*
- 

## Neighborhood Concerns

### Storm Run-off

- The storm water for this project will tie into the storm sewer on Grand Ave. Starting in 2022, the engineering department has enforced much more strict rules and regulations pertaining to storm retention. There is no option for any Type 1 or Type 2 design alternatives.
- The storm run-off will be much more effective and efficient on this site than the current state

### Tree Mitigation

- We have listened to the neighbors and re-designed the site plan to preserve more trees. We have modified the site plan to preserve 5 mature oak trees on the site. All other trees that are removed over 8" in diameter will be replaced per the current tree mitigation guidelines of the city.

## Neighborhood Concerns

### Additional Traffic

- Adding 18-20 vehicles per day to a 25,000 VPD traffic count has minimal to no impact and does not require a traffic study.

### Look and Feel of Neighborhood

- We worked closely with planning staff and the architect to re-design these units to fit the true character of the neighborhood. This re-design comes at a cost, and has driven up the price per unit, but will fit well with the look and feel of the neighborhood.
- Density of the site was a concern. 15 units were originally proposed. After working with city staff and listening to the neighbors, we have reduced the density to 9 units and now are under a Low/Medium designation.

### Increase in taxes (and decrease in home values)

- In talking with the Polk County Assessor, it was his position that since these are not a comparable housing unit, he would argue that they would have little to no impact on the surrounding single family homes.

## Neighborhood Concerns

### City Staff Support

- Staff is in support of this project and density. See staff report

### Zoning Reform

- There is a nationwide housing shortage and there are many cities across the nation being proactive with their zoning ordinances to create solutions to this issue. Minneapolis, Houston, Salt Lake City, all of these cities allow 2-4 unit dwellings on ANY residential single family lot.
- In May of 2022, Des Moines passed an ordinance on AHU dwellings. Below is an excerpt from the press release:

*"Accessory housing provides opportunities to add available housing throughout Des Moines neighborhoods. AHUs also provide homeowners opportunities to downsize and remain in their neighborhood, share living costs with others, or provide private housing accommodations to family members or in-home care workers."*

## GOAL 2

**Direct new growth and redevelopment to areas with existing infrastructure and nodes and corridors based on proximity to transit, shopping, services, and public amenities.**

LU12: Prepare small area Transit Oriented Development (TOD) plans for the nodes located on high capacity transit corridors. Plans should include incentives to encourage high density, mixed use, market rate and affordable housing, and walkable development.

LU13: Encourage high-density housing in identified nodes and along corridors that provide convenient access to public transit, public amenities and services, schools and open space, and are in close proximity to job centers.

## GOAL 4

**Continue to embrace the distinct character of Des Moines' neighborhoods while allowing for new development and redevelopment.**

LU23: Create opportunities for a mixture of land uses within neighborhoods including mixed use centers, diverse housing products, recreational opportunities, public spaces, and schools

## GOAL 5

**Continue to support the development of Downtown as the economic, cultural, and residential core of Des Moines.**

LU27: Refine Downtown Zoning Districts to ensure consistency with the goals and policies of PlanDSM.

LU30: Promote development of additional housing and amenities for all age groups and families.

## GOAL 1

**Provide a diversity of housing options to accommodate residents of all ages, income levels, household sizes, and cultural backgrounds.**

H1: Ensure an adequate supply of housing through a mix of new development, infill development, and redevelopment of existing properties.

## GOAL 3

**Promote sustainable housing development that utilizes existing resources and supports compact, walkable, and bikeable neighborhoods.**

H17: Encourage the use of existing public infrastructure by focusing housing development on infill, vacant, and under-developed land.

H18: Develop a program to assemble infill and redevelopment properties for residential development.

H19: Encourage mixed use development that incorporates affordable and market rate housing along transit corridors and in neighborhood nodes.

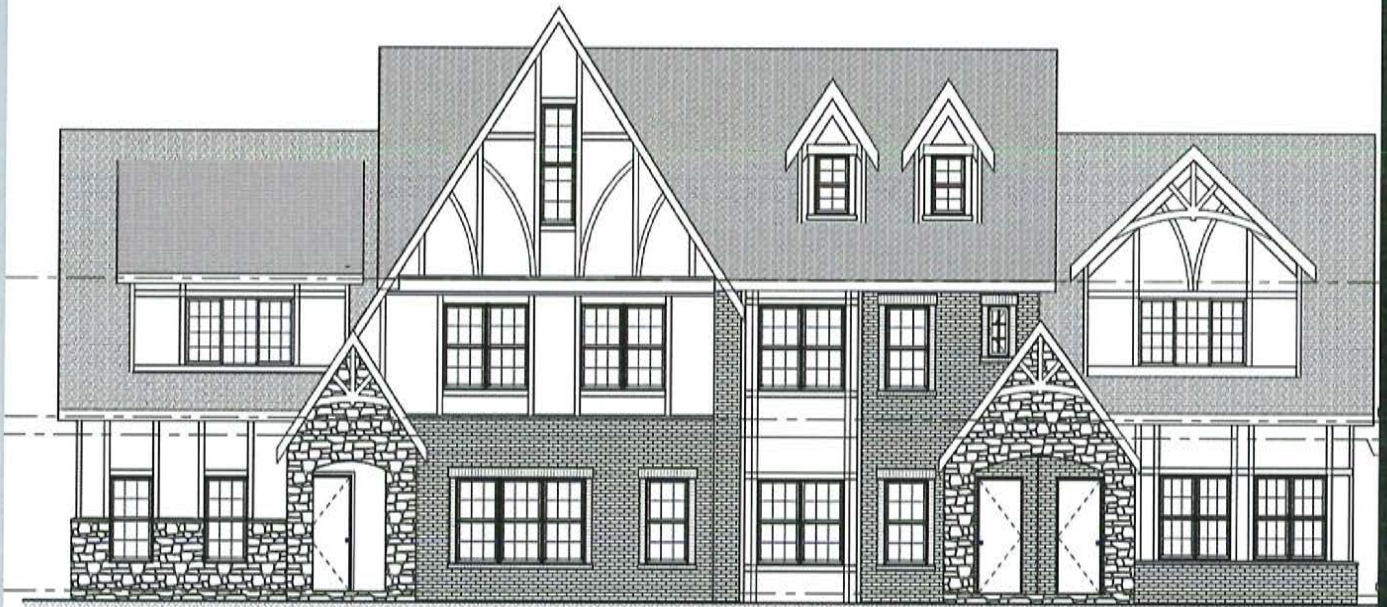
H20: Prioritize housing development at an increased density in locations that are close to public transit, shopping, public amenities, schools, and open spaces.

## Key Note

Housing has followed distinct trends over time and needs to continue to evolve to meet the housing challenges of the 21st century. Des Moines has the oldest homes in the metro area – almost 50% of the homes are over 50 years old. Promoting and maintaining this built residential environment is a goal of the City's 25-year old Neighborhood Revitalization Program. In newly annexed portions of the city, new developments have offered for a more suburban style housing plus higher density townhomes with numerous amenities. Downtown conversions of industrial and office buildings to residential use and an increase in multi-family developments have grown over the last decade introducing more young professionals and lower income households to the residential mix. Neighborhoods remain basic building blocks in the make-up of the City as well. Many residents express a desire to remain in the neighborhood in which they reside in and look for a diversity of housing types so they have a choice when they must change domiciles. Comments received during PlanDSM public outreach events emphasized that the "form" of multifamily residential is more critical than numerical density.

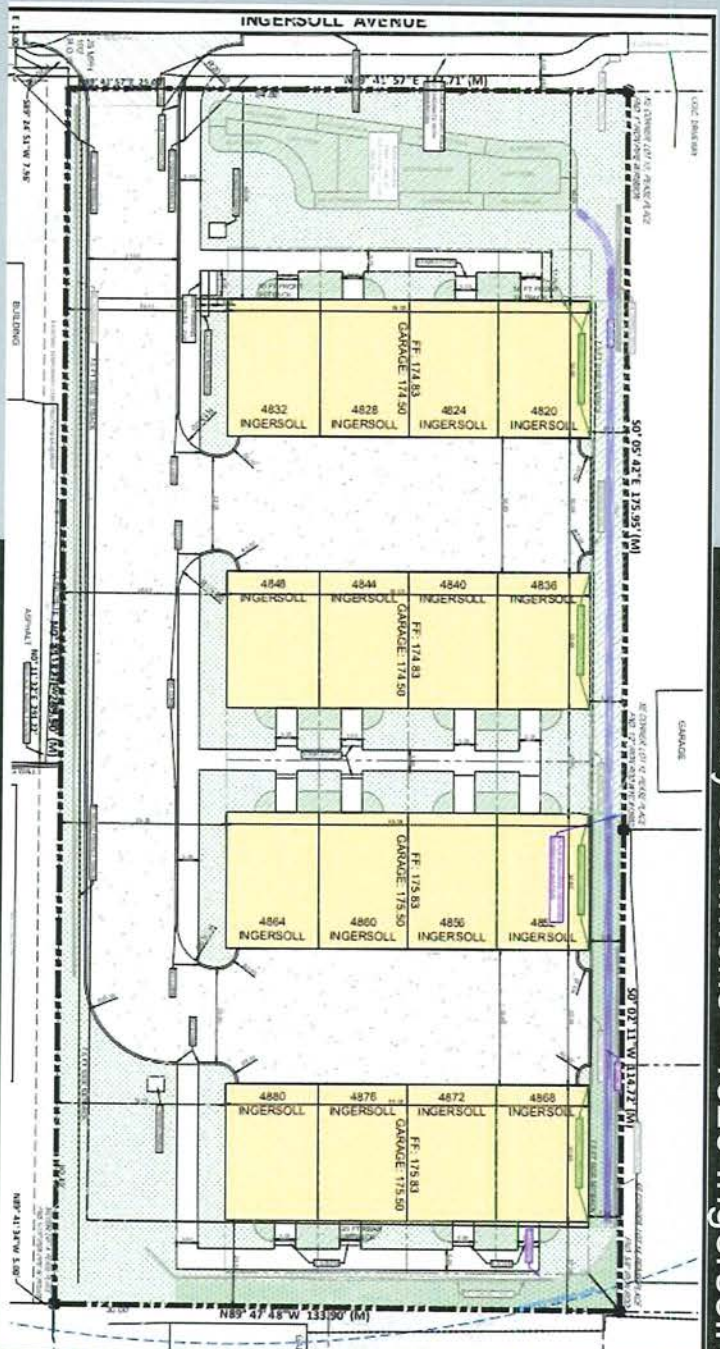
**These are all from the City of Des Moines - Comprehensive Plan. Plan DSM Creating Our Tomorrow**

**The word "housing" comes up 94 times in this document, and supports zoning reform and ensures a diverse mix of housing in the Des Moines metro.**



.88 acre or 18.3 units/acre

Waterbury Commons - 4820 Ingersoll Ave



.89 acres or 10.1 units/acre

The Grand Townhomes - 5702 Grand Ave