

**2023 Development Services- Developer/Designer Process Discussions**

<b>Developer /Designer</b>	<b>Contact Name</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>
Sherman Associates	Jackie Nickolaus	14-Aug
Macerich	Scott McMurray	17-Aug
Hartman Trapp Architecture Studio	Brad Hartman	18-Aug
Eychaner Properties-	Rich Eychaner	24-Aug
Rypma Properties-	Tim Rypma	24-Aug
Hubbell Realty	Matt Weller, Joe Pietruszynski & Caleb Smith	25-Aug
Cutler Development-	Scott & Molly Cutler	25-Aug
Engineering Resource Group-	Doug Saltsgaver	28-Aug
Christensen Development-	Jake Christensen	28-Aug
Newbury Living-	Frank Levy	29-Aug
Sidekick Development-	Angie Pfannkuch	29-Aug
Ferguson Commercial Real Estate	Pat Schneider	29-Aug
Annex Group- Union at River's Edge	David Wesner & Margaret Blum	31-Aug
Slingshot Achitecture	Dan Drendel	31-Aug
Substance Architecture	Tim Hickman	1-Sep
Genus Landscape	Bret Douglas	12-Sep
Nelson Development-	Alexander Grgurich	15-Sep
Neumann Monson Architects	Khalid Khan	15-Sep
Heart of America Group-	Mike Whalen	25-Sep
Knapp Properties-	Tom Wittman	26-Sep
DEV Development	Danny Heggen	26-Sep
Conlin Properties-	JB Conlin	29-Sep
Simonson and Associates	Andy Lorentzen	5-Oct
RDG	Matt Coen	5-Oct
BNIM Architects	Kayla Berkson & Jeff Shaffer	6-Oct

## Development Services Developer Discussion Feedback, Outcomes & Recommendations

### Observations

- Extreme negative perspectives appeared to have come from a few of those interviewed.
- Meeting with individuals generated constructive conversations.
- Developers and designers appreciated the opportunity to have these discussions.

### Feedback Summary

- Staff are very helpful.
- Review times are good!
- Permitting software was a rough start but is working well now.
- Some desired a single point of contact for assistance with navigating (and influencing) City processes.
- UDRB
  - Most large cities have a design review board like UDRB.
  - Majority believed it was important for the financial aspects to be presented to the UDRB to maintain transparency, but the board should not vote on them.
  - Poor attendance of board members results in unpredictable and inconsistent feedback.
  - Many believe the board feels the need to identify improvements.
  - Majority indicated UDRB process adds value to development, but the unpredictability and subjectivity of recommendations can increase costs and time.
    - Some acknowledged taking the board's recommendations would have produced a higher value building.
    - Free consulting, but they get lost in small details.
  - More clear direction on UDRB's role.
    - Some would prefer more specific recommendations.
    - Others would prefer a more general discussion.
- Building Code & Site Plan Review
  - Des Moines building code review process is more thorough than in other communities which developers value.
  - Comfort and familiarity with Chapter 135 standards has increased substantially since adoption in 2019.
  - Interest in increasing administrative flexibility of Chapter 135 requirements.
  - Ability to pursue Type II design alternatives for big-ticket items (like surface parking where not allowed) earlier in the design process is desired.
  - They feel comfortable with administrative determinations and desire expansion of what is eligible for Type 1 design alternatives.
  - Preliminary Guidance
    - Pre-apps can be overwhelming to small businesses.
    - Virtual meetings must continue but option for in-person preapplication meetings is desired.
    - Preliminary meetings focused on design options are very beneficial.
  - Reuse of Existing Properties
    - Many small-scale proposals are deterred from proceeding in the early phases.
    - Site plan requirements can challenge reuse of existing sites and may result in prolonged vacancy and deferred maintenance.

## **Development Services Developer Discussion Feedback, Outcomes & Recommendations**

- Many are unaware of the flexibility that is available in Chapter 135.
- Desire to use total assessed property value instead of assessed building value for site plan compliance triggers.
- Out of state employers have concerns with state politics.

### **Recommended Process Improvements**

- Allow bank payments of EPL fees.
- Establish additional incentives for sustainability requirements.
- Recruit OED Project Manager to guide small businesses proposals through City processes.
- Pre-Apps
  - Improve presentation of minutes - work with Communications team.
  - Offer more in-person meeting options.
  - Increase camera use in pre-app meetings.
  - Promote additional follow-up meetings with focus on design elements.
  - Make them less daunting for small businesses by increasing liaison efforts.
- UDRB
  - Eliminate recommendation on incentive package but keep financial information in staff report.
    - Utilize internal debt review committee for incentive package oversight.
  - Better definition of board's role.
    - What is reviewed by the board.
    - Criteria for review.
  - More specific board recommendations.
    - Identify the board's expectations in motions/vote
      - Conditions of recommendation
      - Design alterations for further review/support by staff
  - Offer single-meeting option.
    - Offer preliminary/subcommittee meeting.
    - Board will have the ability to recommend additional meetings and/or denial.

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### **Recommended Code Amendments**

- Allow Type 2 Design Alternative requests before full site plan submittal when appropriate.
- Utilize total assessed property value in place of assessed building value for Chapter 135 triggers.
- Allow exemption of Large-Scale Development Plan requirement for single site development.
- Eliminate limited side yard parking restrictions for Storefront and Commercial Cottage Building Types in MX3, CX, EX, I1 & I2 Districts.
- Align soil standards in Ch. 135 to better reflect direction provided by Forestry Division to applicants.
- Utilize averaging for minimum street side yard setback for corner lots in infill situations through pre-existing lot regulations, matching averaging allowance for front yard setbacks.
- Increase general Type 1 allowance from 30% to 50% for any numerical standard.
- Create specific Type 1 Design Alternatives for the following:
  - Waiver of 135-2 standards for additions that are larger than 50% of the size or value of the existing building where complying is determined not practical by staff due to the placement or size of the existing building
  - Adjustments to the Blank Wall Segments, Entryway Recess, Primary Frontage Entrance-Ground Story Elevation, Horizontal Façade Division & Vertical Façade Division standards
  - Reduction of the minimum required Principal Entrances to no less than 1
  - Adjustments to the light pole height standards in EX, I1 and I2 Districts
  - Reduction of 5-foot accessory building setback to no less than 2 feet from side or rear property line
  - Allowance for garage door to represent up to 50% of the front façade of a House A Building Type in the A, N1a and N1b Districts, and for the House B Building Type in any district
  - Clarify language in code (135-6.12.2.B.4) by creating specific Type 1 for driveway standards

### **Recommended Policy Changes**

- *Landscape Rock in Planter Beds* - Allow greater flexibility in the use of rock in place of mulch through the Type 1 process based on P&Z precedent.
- *Ornamental Fencing for Parking Lot Perimeter* - Staff to provide direction at pre-application meeting and in minutes when staff does not believe the fence is warranted instead of waiting for site plan review.
- *In-Person Meetings* - In-person pre-application meetings are currently offered on an as needed basis. Staff to offer in-person follow-up meetings to review pre-application minutes. Staff to use cameras during electronic meetings.
- *Alternative Trash Enclosure Design* - Staff to provide direction at pre-application meetings for existing sites when alternative design is warranted.
- *Pre-Application Minutes* - Work with PIO to improve the readability of the minutes given the large amount of information that needs to be provided.
- *Policy & Code Amendment Subscription List* - Work with IT to develop a subscription list that can be used to notify interested persons when amendments are made.

## **Development Services Developer Discussion Feedback, Outcomes & Recommendations**

### **Recently Implemented Policy Changes**

- *Phasing of Improvements* - Staff can approve phasing plans for any size of site. Previously, limited to larger sites of 2 acres or more or with 10 or more housing units. Phasing can be used to scale improvement to the size of the project.
- *Rooftop Mechanical Screening on Existing Buildings* - Staff to provide direction at pre-application meeting and in minutes when staff does not believe the fence is warranted instead of waiting for site plan review.

### **Recommendations Requiring Budget Support**

- Commit to annual Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization funding.
- Establish adaptive reuse matching grant program for site plan preparation.
- Establish budget for property acquisitions.
- Affordable housing budget commitment.
- Office to residential conversion incentives.

### **Next Steps**

- Gather City Council feedback.
- Amend Code.
- Request budgetary support through budgeting process.