

**AGENDA REPORT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
June 11, 2026**

SUMMARY

A request by Crockett Engineering (agent), on behalf of James & Leah Beth Johnson, LTS-1 LLC, East Meets West LLC, Momentum Builders, LLC, and BVSHSSF Columbia, LLC, (owners) and Theory Sterling Mizzou (Developer), for approval to rezone approximately 2.91-acres from the R-MF (Multiple-family Dwelling) district to the PD (Planned Development) district, approval of a PD Development Plan to be known as "Theory Sterling University" that will also serve as a preliminary, and approval of an associated statement of intent. The development plan would permit development of the site with up to 320 dwelling units. The approximately 2.91-acre subject site is located directly northwest of the intersection of University and College Avenues and includes the address 1205 University Avenue.

DISCUSSION

The applicants are seeking approval of a rezoning of approximately 2.91 acres from R-MF to PD, and a development plan serving as a preliminary plat, and associated statement of intent (SOI). The development plan includes 305 dwelling units, and the statement of intent notes a maximum of 320 dwelling units. The statement of intent also notes that personal services may be permitted on the site up to a maximum floor area of 1,300 square feet to potentially accommodate the existing barbershop that operates within the subject site presently. The uses of multifamily dwellings and personal services, limited to maximum of 1,300 square feet, are the only uses proposed within the SOI. The development would be considered purpose-built student housing.

The PD Plan, serving as a preliminary plat, illustrates the site as being one lot 2.91 acres in size. The site is accessed from Matthews Street (to the west of the site) and College Avenue (to the east of the site). Access would be permitted on College Avenue as there are existing points of access for the site off College Avenue, but such points of ingress/egress are being reduced from four to one. Additional right-of-way dedications would be necessary for both Paquin Street (to the north of the site) and College Avenue upon final platting. The site is around one block away from M-DT zoned property, but is currently surrounded by only R-MF zoning.

A traffic study was performed for this proposal, and did not identify any necessary off-site improvements due to this development. The study considered the following four intersections: University and College, University and Matthews, Matthews and Paquin, and Paquin and College. The applicant utilized land use code 226, mid-rise off-campus student apartments, and modeled traffic generation for 970 beds. The weekday midday peak and weekday PM peak yielded 215 and 205 total trips, respectively. The majority of traffic is anticipated to head directly south or north on College Avenue from the private driveway accessing College Avenue. There were two drops in level of service (letter grade) during weekday midday peak hour, being northbound and southbound traffic on Matthews Street. These drops in level of service, however, result in fewer than 5 seconds of additional delay for both of these traffic movements; therefore, all approaches in a build scenario are believed to operate at acceptable levels of service at peak hours.

The structure will be separated into two buildings, with the "north" building being seven stories nearest Paquin and Matthews and the "south" building being eight stories along University Avenue. This one-story reduction, per the applicant, is intended to provide a more natural transition to the properties to the north of Paquin. The dwelling units of the site will be more along the perimeter of the structure, while the interior will be used to host parking and court yard amenities. The applicant has provided architectural renderings (attached) for the proposed development. If the PD plan is approved and development is pursued, future construction must be substantially conformance to the provided renderings.

The site is bounded by Matthews Street, Paquin Street, College Avenue and University Avenue to the west, north, east, and south, respectively. To the west and south, property is owned by the University of Missouri and

developed with a parking garage and institutional uses, respectively. The properties to the north are developed with dwelling units, a religious institution, and Paquin Tower. Paquin Tower is an approximately 162-foot-tall structure, which is of note for design exceptions related to height requested for this development. Properties to the east of the site are developed with dwelling units and a fraternity.

The PD plan encompasses 7 tax parcel IDs currently that would be consolidated into one lot. Demolition of the existing structures will need to occur should the development be pursued, but would not be necessary prior to final platting of the property in a single lot as existing nonconformities would not be exacerbated due to the consolidation. Setbacks, per note 12 of the PD plan, are to be 10 feet on all sides of the property. Density of the development would be around 111 units/acre when calculated using only the net developable acreage.

The portion of this site containing University Place Apartments was originally zoned R-4 prior to adoption of the Unified Developed Code (UDC), where it was then recoded to R-MF. The R-4 zoning district was designated for high density multiple-family dwellings and had a maximum height of 45-feet **unless** a passenger elevator were provided in which case the 45-foot height limit could be exceeded provided dwelling units contain a minimum of 350 square feet. Thus, the University Place apartments that have been developed on the site would now be considered a legal nonconforming structure, as it stands around 65 feet in height. Current UDC parking requirements for multi-family dwellings are consistent with the previous zoning code. The rest of the properties included in this request were zoned R-3.

M-DT zoning is not available for the subject property because the site is not located along streets included within the adopted M-DT regulating plan. Extending the regulating plan to include the site would require amendments affecting properties and streets beyond the boundaries of the application, which cannot be initiated solely by the applicant. Zoning map amendment regulatory procedures note that no entity may file an application to change the boundaries of the regulating plan for property not owned by that entity, therefore M-DT zoning could not be pursued.

There are four design exceptions being requested with this planned development. This report will discuss these design exceptions as outlined in the following ordered list. They are related to the following sections of the UDC:

1. 29-4.1(a) – Building setbacks
2. 29-4.1(a) – Building height
3. 29-4.3(b) – Parking requirements
4. 29-4.4 – Landscape requirements

Design Exceptions – Building Setbacks

Note 12 of the PD Plan states that setbacks from the perimeter of the property shall be established at 10 feet. If the property were developed under its current R-MF zoning, it would be required to provide a 25-foot front yard setback, a 25-foot rear yard setback, and 15-foot side yard setbacks, as the property has street frontage along all sides. These setbacks are generally consistent with the former R-4 district standards under the pre-UDC zoning code. Therefore, the requested 10-foot setback represents a deviation from the dimensional standards of the R-MF zoning district.

Even without comparison to the R-MF district, lots with frontage on multiple streets are generally required to maintain a minimum 15-foot setback along street frontages unless approval of optional design standards is granted by the Board of Adjustment in the M-N or M-C zoning districts.

The requested setbacks are more comparable to those found in the M-DT district than in other zoning districts. However, M-DT generally requires buildings to be constructed at the required building line, which is located at or near the property line. The proposed 10-foot setbacks allow for the dedication of standard 10-foot utility easements along all street frontages, which is generally required in most zoning districts but not always

necessary in M-DT. Compared to M-DT standards, the proposed setbacks also provide space for landscaping buffers, although the site would still not achieve full compliance with the typical 15 percent landscaping requirement applicable to redevelopment.

While the property is not zoned M-DT, a reduction in setbacks relative to those found in conventional zoning districts is reasonable given its proximity to the downtown area. The site is not located within the downtown core, but exhibits a more urban development pattern than is typical of multifamily development in the City. The R-MF district does not distinguish between more urban or suburban development contexts. Reduced setbacks, in this scenario, may help create a more pedestrian-oriented development pattern by bringing buildings closer to the street, reinforcing an urban form that is more consistent with areas transitioning toward the downtown core, despite not being zoned in the M-DT district.

A 10-foot setback allows for greater residential density while still accommodating required utility easements. In addition, the reduced setback provides greater flexibility for site design, including parking and open-space configuration, and may marginally reduce the extent of utility infrastructure needed to serve the development.

Design Exceptions – Building Height

The applicant notes the maximum height of their structure would be 85-feet, per the PD plan and the SOI. A structure height of 85-feet would only be permissible in M-DT district if it were also in the CH-O (Core Max Height Overlay, permits 10 stories), or in the IG zoning district, but multi-family dwellings are not a permissible use in IG. So, a design exception must be sought for a structure of this height.

As referenced before, in the R-4 zoning district, which is how this site was zoned prior to UDC adoption, there was no height restriction provided minimum dimensional requirements for dwellings were met and a passenger elevator was provided. Now maximum height is 45 feet in R-MF, only if side yard setbacks are increased to 15-feet for side yards (in scenario where lot has standard 10-foot side yard setbacks). An 85-foot structure would be approximately 20 feet taller than the existing University Place Apartments, but not taller than Paquin Towers, which neighbors this property on the north side of Paquin Street. Paquin Towers stands around 162-feet tall.

The applicant provided a shade study (attached) to illustrate how this height of structure would affect neighboring properties during summer and winter periods, at noon, 2 PM, and 4 PM. During the winter months, the north side of Paquin would be in the shadows of this development during these time periods, and structure on the east side of College Avenue would be in the shadows during the later portions of the day. Elevations around this site slope down as one heads more downtown, and rise as you cross college, albeit slightly (by around 10-feet).

The requested increase in height is consistent with the site's urban context and proximity to downtown, and with its pre-UDC zoning designation. An increase in height allows increased residential density in a walkable part of town, in proximity to the University of Missouri, a major generator of pedestrian activity. While there are concerns regarding the height of the structure casting shadows on the north side of Paquin, it appears to be minimally invasive, only affecting around seven structures in total, and only for portions of the day. Ultimately, allowing increased height at this site concentrates additional housing in an area already served by public infrastructure and municipal services, thereby reducing pressure for outward expansion of development, especially for students who desire proximity to the University for housing.

Design Exceptions – Parking Requirements

The applicant is providing 570 parking spaces. If the proposed development were subject to typical multifamily parking standards, the applicant would be required to provide 718 parking spaces when accounting for the reduction in required parking due to provision of required bicycle parking. If the 1,300 square feet for personal services are pursued, the required parking would be 719 spaces, per the applicant's provided alternative

scenario. Therefore, the site is short 148 parking spaces (or around 20 percent) from typical multifamily requirements. The development has a parking ratio of around 0.60 spaces/bedroom.

However, if the site were located within the M-DT zoning district it would be required provide parking at a ratio of 0.50 parking spaces per bedroom. If 957 bedrooms are provided, this would result in 479 parking spaces being required. So, if this proposed development were developed to M-DT standards, there be no need for a design exception and it would be considered overparked by 92 spaces, or around 20 percent in excess of M-DT requirements.

To justify the desired parking reductions, staff can request a parking study be performed by the applicant. Since this application has been in review as students have left town, the applicant was not able to perform a study during typical conditions. In lieu of this, parking utilization and ratios for purpose-built student housing developments have been provided for justification for this requested reduction. Attached to this report is a table that illustrates parking utilization and ratios for comparable properties within Columbia. Notably, parking structures are 100% occupied for the analyzed developments providing fewer than 0.50 parking spaces per bed. The U Center on Turner, which has a parking ratio of 0.76 spaces/bed, is only 63% utilized, with around 200 unsold parking spaces despite having 100% of units pre-leased for fall 2026, according to the documentation provided to the City. For this development, the provided parking would be in excess of the realized occupied parking ratio for U Centre on Turner, which is around 63%, or 0.48 occupied spaces/bed.

The applicant also provided parking counts for their developments in other cities and towns with universities. Some of these comparisons (e.g. Atlanta, Raleigh, Seattle) are likely not comparable to Columbia as these cities have more robust public transit facilities. However, some comparisons are relevant, notably Syracuse, NY and Gainesville, FL, both of which have comparable populations to the City of Columbia, and are relatively distanced from major metros. In Gainesville, the applicant yielded a 0.65 space/bed ratio. The utilization rate of the parking is around 85%. In Syracuse, the applicant yielded a 0.43 space/bed ratio. The utilization rate of the parking is around 95%.

For this development, a ratio of around 0.60 spaces/bed is being provided. This is slightly less than Gainesville, and slightly more than Syracuse. Therefore, if this development is to act similarly to comparable developments provided by the applicant (i.e Gainesville and Syracuse), staff would expect comparable utilization rates for provided parking.

While there is still concern of overflow parking being redirected to the east campus area particularly, the provided comparisons for developments in the City and developments in comparable cities indicate parking at a 0.60 space/bed ratio will accommodate the needs of tenants. Staff also believes that the site's proximity to the University of Missouri campus and downtown commercial services reduces the necessity for vehicle ownership among residents relative to typical multifamily developments elsewhere in the city. As a result, application of standard multifamily parking ratios may overestimate actual parking demand at this location resulting in underutilization.

Design Exceptions – Landscape requirements

Landscaping for the development is proposed at 10% of the total site. Typically, 15% landscaping is required. The requested reduction in landscaping is reasonable given the site's more 'urban' context, proximity to downtown, and redevelopment characteristics. While the proposal does not achieve the landscaping levels typically required of conventional multifamily development, the property is located in an area containing higher-intensity development, inclusive of reduced setbacks, more structured parking, and greater pedestrian activity than is typical elsewhere in the city.

Strict compliance with landscaping requirements would reduce the developable area of the site and potentially limit the ability to provide additional housing in close proximity to the University of Missouri and downtown without increasing height more than what is already being requested. While landscaping remains an important

site-design element, the requested reduction is not out of character with surrounding development on the periphery of the M-DT and would support the applicant's desired density in a university-adjacent environment without further increasing height.

DISCUSSION – Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan has identified this area within the “neighborhood” district per the Future Land Use Map. The neighborhood district is intended to accommodate a broad mix of residential uses and a limited number of nonresidential uses that provide services to neighborhood residents. The proposed development is believed to be consistent with this classification. The site lies within a tier I infill area, the urban service area, and is aligned with policy 3 of the comprehensive plan, prioritizing infill development.

This development is also believed to be aligned with goal 3 of Land Use and Growth Management, encouraging density in the city's core. While incentives aren't being provided by the City for this development, it is promoting living near downtown, notably for students, who can utilize commercial services downtown without needing to drive/ride in a vehicle or take a shuttle or transit, and are in close proximity to the University of Missouri. Utilizing PD zoning to allow for flexibility of multifamily development in an area where density is identified as necessary helps accomplish this goal in a greater capacity than it could in R-MF.

Typically, adequacy of infrastructure is a criterion by which rezoning requests are analyzed. While sewer utility upgrades will be necessary to support this level of density, such improvements must be approved prior to approval of a final plat, and building permits would not be issued until infrastructure improvements are made. Since this property would need to be final platted if this PD plan is approved prior to issuance of building permits, staff has assurances that infrastructure improvements will be made, even if existing infrastructure is inadequate. This is a different scenario from a legal lot requesting open zoning, where there is less oversight and fewer procedural steps involving the public before permits could be issued.

CONCLUSION

The requested rezoning from R-MF to PD is supported by the Comprehensive Plan, and the site has access to utilities, although sewer infrastructure improvements will be necessary. The proposed development could not be accommodated in any base zoning districts except for M-DT in the CH-O, which is not a possible request for the applicant. The proposed development also comports with the 2024 Housing Study goals for provision of multifamily dwelling units for rent in the City, although staff acknowledges it conflicts with the idea that purpose-built housing “should be avoided in downtown areas” to the degree possible. The majority of bedrooms on the subject site are marketed to students, so it would not be a substantial loss of existing housing stock for non-students.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the rezoning of the site from R-MF to PD, the proposed PD Plan, inclusive of design exceptions, serving as a preliminary plat, and associated statement of intent, subject to the following conditions:

1. Technical corrections
2. Adherence to the attached architectural renderings

ATTACHMENTS

1. Locator Maps
2. PD Development Plan
3. Statement of Intent Worksheet
4. Traffic Impact Study
5. Parking Analysis
6. Shadow Study
7. Tree Preservation Plan
8. Architectural Rendering

HISTORY

Annexation date	1845, 1906
Zoning District	R-MF (Multiple Family Dwelling)
Land Use Plan designation	Neighborhood
Previous Subdivision/Legal Lot Status	Multiple legal lots, in part and whole, created by Matthews Subdivision

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Area (acres)	2.91 acres
Topography	Generally flat, sloping down to NW
Vegetation/Landscaping	Limited, site is developed
Watershed/Drainage	Flat Branch
Existing structures	7 multifamily structures

UTILITIES & SERVICES

All utilities provided by City of Columbia

ACCESS

College Ave

Location	Traverses north/south, east of site
Major Roadway Plan	Major Arterial
CIP projects	MoDOT maintained
Sidewalk	Installed

University Ave

Location	Traverses east/west, south of site
Major Roadway Plan	Local residential
CIP projects	NA
Sidewalk	Installed

Matthews St

Location	Traverses north/south, west of site
Major Roadway Plan	Local residential
CIP projects	NA
Sidewalk	Installed

Paquin St

Location	Traverses east/west, north of site, one way westbound
Major Roadway Plan	Local residential
CIP projects	NA
Sidewalk	Installed

PARKS & RECREATION

Neighborhood Parks	Clyde Wilson Memorial Park, Paquin Park, Lions-Stephens Park, Flat Branch Park, Parks and Recreation General Offices, North Village Park
Trails Plan	Clyde Wilson Memorial Park Trail, MU Recreation Trail, Lions-Stephens Park Fitness Trail, Hinkson Creek Trail Connector - Rollins Street,
Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan	None

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Public Notification Responses	One email – concerns about relocation plan, questions if units would be designated as affordable. No position stated
Notified neighborhood association(s)	East Campus, Tenth Hitt Elm Locust, E. Campus Trad
Correspondence received	NA

301 “public hearing” letters were mailed to property owners and tenants within 185-feet of the subject property. One letter was provided to the Council Ward representative. Three letters were sent to neighborhood associations and homeowners associations within 1,000 feet of the subject site. All “public hearing” letters were distributed on May 25, 2026. The public hearing ad for this matter was placed in the Tribune on May 26, 2026.

Report prepared by: David Kunz

Approved by: Patrick Zenner