

**Project overview:**

- Please give a brief description of the project.
  - In the spirit of helping to alleviate the housing crisis with an environmentally savvy and community-focused approach, our team is proposing a new, 'missing middle' apartment building on a property that Jay (the Land Use applicant) currently owns at 2718 Grand Avenue. At the forefront to building:
    - With climate change's devastating effects being felt throughout the world, we believe those who are utilizing resources have an ethical responsibility to immediately mitigate, if not aggressively reverse greenhouse gas emissions and negative impacts of environmental degradation and social inequities.
    - This project, like so many others before it, is proposed on indigenous land that was developed amidst policies perpetuating human inequalities. While we cannot change past injustices that played a part in creating our contemporary built environment, we can build in a spirit of harmony to create a better world for current and future generations.

- How many units and what mix (studio, 1-bed, 2, bed, etc.)?
  - 8, 1 bedrooms
  - 4, 2 bedrooms
- Will there be any retail or other types of uses?
  - This area is not zoned for retail, but possible Community Amenities (pending City approval and neighborhood feedback) are listed under “Other Community Benefits”.
- What currently exists on the site?
  - A single family home currently exists on the lot. It is a split-level home that was built in the early 1980s with vinyl siding and very few windows.
- What other buildings do you own/have you built in Whittier? How long do you typically hold properties before you sell them?
  - We live in Minneapolis ( Jay is in Ward 11 and Jay’s partner, Adam, is in Ward 10,) and this is our first project. We are creating the project to own, not to sell.
- What variances, if any, will you be requesting?
 

Similar to other lots in the vicinity, the width is just shy of the 40 foot minimum lot width requirement. At a lot width of 38.6 feet wide, we are asking for a 1.4 foot variance. This variance is reasonable according to the Land Use Application required findings as:

  1. The existing width is a practical difficulty of existing circumstances unique to the property that was not created by our team and is not based on economic considerations alone.
  2. The property will be used in a reasonable manner, keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and Comprehensive Plan. The proposed building meets all other requirements for the Interior 3 District, including, but not limited to: height, setbacks, and floor area ratio.
  3. The building meets all other requirements for the Interior 3 District and the variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property. It will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or those nearby.
- What is your anticipated construction timeline?
  - The intent is to begin construction this summer and complete construction before the fall of 2023.
- Please attach any renderings or plans developed so far.
 

Drawings have been sent to the Whittier Alliance.

## Housing:

- How much do you anticipate charging, on average, for each unit type?
  - Due to the uncertainty of such impactful items as material costs, labor shortages, supply chain issues, inflation, and demand, we are still in the process of evaluating pricing. However, we expect some if not the majority of units to fall between 50% and 80% Area Mean Income (AMI).
- What steps have you taken to ensure greater affordability in your property? Would you consider emerging strategies, such as utilizing the 4d tax credit, to bring down rents on select units?
  - We've reached out to the City of Minneapolis Small Business Team Program Coordinator (Brigid Higgins) to learn more about affordability programs.
  - According to Kevin Knase of the City of Minneapolis Residential Real Estate Development, The Missing Middle Rental Pilot Program is not currently available, but we are actively working with their team for future feasibility.
  - We welcome any recommendations and/or resources to increase and / or diversify levels of affordability.
  - Holistically speaking, rent is only one part of the cost of living. Living costs also include day-to-day expenses such as food, transportation, and utilities. The project's walkability and proximity to mass transit and bike corridors foster convenient and affordable, multimodal transportation options that enable people to forgo the financial burden of car ownership. Vital resources such as clinics, pharmacies, and grocery stores are all within walking distance. Higher insulation, more efficient HVAC systems, higher quality windows, and space saving details help keep utility costs to a minimum.
- Who will your management company be?
  - The building will be self managed.
- What screening criteria will you use for residents?
  - We will follow Minneapolis' Inclusive Screening Criteria.
- If the building will replace any current housing units, how have you engaged with those residents? What plans have been made to enable them to stay in the new building or relocate?
  - The building will replace 1 dwelling unit. The current tenant will be informed as soon as city approvals are granted. They will have at least a 3 month notice and will have the opportunity to live in the new building.

## Transportation:

- How transit-connected is the site, and have you considered support for alternative methods of transportation (bike parking for residents and guests, ride share, etc.)?
  - Given the site's proximity to mass transit corridors and bike arterials, such as the Greenway, residents have access to multiple modes of pedestrian friendly transit. The project also promotes and supports these transit options by providing horizontal and vertical bike parking beyond City requirements, a bike fix-it station, and an electric cargo bike share - all within the building. Additional bike parking stalls are provided in the front for guests. We are working with the City to provide a public electric vehicle charging station near the street and a vehicle sharing program to serve the area - both seek to further reduce the reliance and cost burdens of car ownership for residents and the neighborhood.
- How many parking spots (total and per unit)?
  - No on-site automobile parking is provided - instead, pedestrian friendly transit means are promoted.
  - With significant and convenient bike parking, residents can literally roll right in and park inside the building. Similarly, guests can roll right up to the front - bike parking is conveniently located alongside the walk leading to the primary entry.
- What have you done to ensure a high-quality pedestrian experience?
  - The pedestrian experience is central to the design. Unattractive barriers to the community will be replaced with elements that better *bridge* to the neighborhood. The existing streetscape condition (erratic chain link fencing, garbage receptacles, and a dilapidated driveway set amidst a backdrop of vinyl siding) will be replaced with edible landscapes, green space and bicycle parking set amidst a well-lit backdrop of open balconies and windows.
- Have you done any studies on the impact of the additional traffic/parking?
  - No (none required by the city)
- How will you deal with traffic diversions during construction?
  - The project is not on a major thoroughfare and 'dead ends' into the Whittier School / Park. Given that Grand Ave is a one-way street, any partial street closures needed during construction will minimally impact traffic flow.

## Design:

- From a design perspective, how does this project mesh with the surrounding neighborhood? (e.g., scale, style, color, materials)
  - The scale is consistent with the City of Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive plan and nearby 3 story multifamily buildings.
  - A simple palette of durable materials maintains a calmly composed facade, while the primary material - galvanized steel - subtly reflects softened hues of the surrounding sky and vegetation. These hues dynamically change with the weather and the seasons - brighter on sunny days to more muted on cloudy days, light green in spring to deeper red in fall - softly reflective on a clear, moonlit night to a slight shimmer of landscape lighting at the turning of a new moon.
- How have the Whittier Design Guidelines influenced the project?
  - While the project is not within the Application Area of the Whittier Neighborhood Commercial Area Design Standards, the building and landscaping are thoughtfully designed to promote an active, pedestrian friendly, facade and streetscape as described above.
- What materials are you using in the building? (Please include estimated façade percentages.)
  - East (Street Facing):
    - Corrugated galvanized steel (with concrete base): 63%
    - LP Wood Siding (or similar durable sheet product): 8%
    - Fenestration (Glass Windows / Doors): 29%
  - North
    - Corrugated galvanized steel (with concrete base): 97%
    - LP Wood Siding (or similar durable sheet product): 0%
    - Fenestration (Glass Windows / Doors): 3%
  - South
    - Corrugated galvanized steel (with concrete base): 73%
    - LP Wood Siding (or similar durable sheet product): 3%
    - Fenestration (Glass Windows / Doors): 24%
  - West (Backyard Facing):
    - Corrugated galvanized steel (with concrete base): 63%
    - LP Wood Siding (or similar durable sheet product): 8%
    - Fenestration (Glass Windows / Doors): 29%
- Will public art be featured on the site?
  - We intend to offer neighborhood-wide programming for community events. We are open to including public art as part of the project. We would like to hear about Whittier Alliance's desires for public art as well as funding and talent resources.
- How will you accommodate ADA accessibility?
  - Accessibility is provided per the building code; an accessible route runs from the sidewalk to the front entry and throughout the ground floor to access 2, Type A units and 2, Type B units.

## Environment:

- What are the environmental features of your project (e.g., porous surfaces, green roofs, resident compost access, solar energy)?
  - The building is designed around cold-climate passive solar principles: all dwelling units face south with minimal exposure to the north. South facing glazing is maximized to let in winter sun, while northern windows are reduced to minimize heat loss.
  - Precipitation is collected from the green roof and directed to storage tanks and a series of gardens. The gardens slowly absorb water to negate storm runoff from sheeting into streets and are planted with native species to help restore pollinator habitat.
  - Espalier apple trees along the south wall and rooftop planter trays extend this habitat to an area beyond what the current condition offers.
  - Solar panels on the roof provide electricity for the building and help reduce the heat island effect in the city.
  - Garbage, recycling, and compost will all be collected.
  - In addition, we will host a service such as Ridwell, which recycles plastic film (such as bags), batteries, lightbulbs, and threads (like shoes and clothes).
  - We will also host donations of lightly used household items and clothing for those in need.
  - “Smart Building” integration will manage demand on the electric grid, which enables the local utility to manage growing demand without building new power generation.
  - Awareness of consumption is an important step to understanding *how* resources are consumed. ‘Smart metering,’ also known as, ‘gamification’ tracks energy and water use for all residents. Savings from insulation, triple pane windows, passive solar heating and cooling principles, high efficiency appliances, dual flush toilets, low flow water fixtures, and LED lights all contribute to ‘winning the game’ of reducing resource use.
- What green space (total and public access) does your project have?
  - Green space on the lot is approximately 2,100 sf, or 41% of the lot area. However, the green roof may add up to 1,900 sf for a total potential of approximately 75% of the lot area.
- Will your project include resident composting?
  - Yes, composting will be picked up regularly and/or utilized onsite for improving soil quality.

### Other community benefits:

- What community amenities will you offer for non-residents?
  - Amenities that benefit both residents and non-residents include: hubs for resource sharing, green space, pollinator habitat, and edible landscapes.
  - Together these amenities offer visual interest, habitat restoration, and an enhanced street front that promote public safety while providing opportunities for neighbors to casually meet one another.
  - We liken such amenities to critical community infrastructure that bridges between public and private space, but also bridges between strangers through serendipitous encounters. These encounters help neighbors to get to know one another; knowing our neighbors empowers our community to better support one another in times of joy and well as in times of trouble.
  - Community Bridges:
    - Perennial plants, native prairie grasses, and raised garden beds form a 'soft' yet defined boundary between the sidewalk and the front yard. The plant diversity yields a multitude of intrigue throughout the year and possibilities for gardeners to share their bounty with others.
    - Fruit bearing trees frame the walkway leading to the front entry - as the trees mature they will provide not only a pastoral promenade to the building, but they will create opportunities for community celebrations - especially at harvest time (apple picking, pressing for juice, etcetera)
    - We are also evaluating bike sharing, delivery locker sharing, electric vehicle charging, dog waste receptacles, outdoor bike tool sharing and hosting a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) drop off, and planned community events.
- As a property owner, developer, property manager, how will you interact with the Whittier community?
  - As nearby Minneapolis residents dedicated to improving livability in the City, we look forward to fostering a neighborly relationship with the Whittier community. As members of the broader community, we will be present, hands-on, and open to dialogue both as the building takes shape and long after people have made it their home.