



Gaslight Investors PUD FAQ #2

(updated July 11, 2025)

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is intended to address and summarize some of the common topics of feedback the City has received during the review of the Gaslight Investors PUD Concept Plan. This is a companion to the original FAQ posted to the City's website at <https://www.eastgrmi.gov/598/Community-Feedback-Responses>

Q: What is the history of the previous buildings on this site?

Prior to the PUD approval, the land was home to Jacobsons Department Store (with an attached parking deck built in 1992) and Ramona Medical Center. Jacobsons closed in 2002, while Ramona Medical Center was demolished in 2009. The original PUD plan for this site was approved in 2004, with Phase 1 along Wealthy Street constructed in 2006. No further development on the site has occurred. There was a PUD amendment that was approved in 2008 to modify a proposed building connected to the parking deck, but because it was never acted on, that amendment is no longer valid. The parking deck was demolished in early 2025.

Q: If a new concept plan is being considered now, why does the original PUD plan matter?

The approved 2004 PUD plan is still in effect and, if desired, could still be built as approved in 2004. The concept plan being considered now would represent an amendment to that original plan. Until or unless it is amended, the 2004 plan and its related findings and conditions still define what could be developed on this land.

Q: Why does the City Master Plan continue to be referenced in regard to this concept plan?

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requires that zoning be based on a plan, and one of the PUD standards of review relates to consistency with the Master Plan. The 2018 City Master Plan is the policy document that guides the decision making for new development and related policy decisions for the City. In discussing the recommendations for the Gaslight Village area, the 2018 City Master Plan showed having mid-rise building up to seven stories as the preferred development concept for the site. The image to the right shows the renderings from the Master Plan illustrating this recommendation. As a policy document,



Village Address Perspective



Village Address Perspective Land Use

any development proposed for this area needs to generally conform with the recommendations of the Master Plan.

Q: Is there a limit to how dense the proposed PUD can be?

Residential density for multi-family (MFR) districts is defined as follows: every new MFR dwelling unit requires 2,100 s.f. of lot area. This would equate to a gross density of 20.7 dwelling units/acre (43,560 ÷ 2,100 = 20.7). Taking this a step further, if the entire PUD site were to be zoned MFR, the maximum number of dwelling units that could be developed is approximately 178. As currently proposed, the total number of dwelling units would not exceed 151 for the entire site.

With regards to commercial density, including residential units in a C-1 zone, there is no finite limit. However, any development in a C-1 zone would be subject to the C-1 standards and site plan review standards for traffic, circulation, parking, screening, infrastructure, etc. These standards would impose practical limits of how much could be developed based on the characteristics of each lot.

Notwithstanding the above, the PUD review and approval process does allow the City to modify the final allowable density (and other standard zoning requirements) upon the recommendation of the Planning Commission. This is covered in Section 5.41C of the zoning ordinance as part of the intent of a PUD (permitting flexibility in the regulations for development.)

Q: How does this compare to the density of other multi-family developments in the City?

The table to the right shows the density of all other major multi-family developments in the City. All density calculations use the entire area of the lot as its basis. As shown here, the proposed density in this concept plan would be less than what would normally be allowed for the MFR District, and would be less than or in line with more recent multi-family developments such as Bagley Townhomes and Croswell Mews. With regards to the adjacent Lakewood Hills Apartments, it should be noted that the current residential density there is higher than the residential proposed for the 515 Lakeside parcel. Furthermore, the Lakewood Hills property has a consent agreement in place that would allow them to redevelop their property to include up to 65 dwelling units. This consent agreement remains valid today and in perpetuity. If/when these plans are ever constructed, the resulting development would have a higher density compared to the proposed PUD concept plan.

Multi-Family Development	Residential Density (d.u./acre)
Greenwood Park Townhomes	6.8
Lake Shore Club	12.8
Schoolhouse Condos	13.0
Lakewood Hills Apartments (as developed)	14.0
Gaslight Investors PUD (515 Lakeside parcel only)	13.1
Gaslight Investors PUD (full site)	17.5
Bagley Townhomes (original development)	17.5
Lakewood Hills Apartments (per consent agreement)	17.9
Croswell Mews	19.8
Maximum allowed by zoning ordinance in MFR District	20.7

Q: Some of the proposed buildings in this concept plan do not have any residential units. Why are they included in the residential density calculation?

Excluding the existing buildings on the site is not appropriate in considering the overall residential density as all of the buildings represent a single, integrated development regardless of the specific building usage. Moreover, the zoning ordinance does not support a density calculation that only considers a portion of the lot area. In particular:

- Section 5.8 (Definition of Gross Density) clearly states that density is based on the number of dwelling units per acre of land. (emphasis added)
- Section 5.30A(2) (Standards Applicable to Two-Family and Multiple Family Dwellings) – All calculations in Table 5.30 to determine the maximum number of dwelling units allowed are based on the entire lot size.

Q: What is the proposed height of the buildings in this concept plan?

The current concept plan includes a mixture of four and five-story buildings. The tallest building is proposed to be 70' to the top of the highest roof.

Q: How does this compare to the building height from the 2004 PUD approval?

The proposed buildings in this concept plan would be shorter than the tallest building in the originally approved concept plan. The 2004 PUD plan had a maximum building height of 79' to the midpoint of the roof, with a peak roof height of 94'.

Building	Appx. Height
Blodgett Hospital (2008 addition)	72'
Blodgett Hospital (other wings)	42'-90'
EGR High School (Fine Arts wing)	88'
EGR Middle School (adjacent to Reeds Lake)	47'
Gaslight Investors PUD (estimate based on previous submissions)	70'
Lakewood Hills Apartments (per consent agreement)	48' to midpoint, 58' to roof peak
Wealthy Elementary School	53'

Q: How does this compare to the building heights from other buildings in the City?

The table to the right shows the approximate tallest high of other prominent buildings in the City. As shown here, the tallest proposed building with this concept plan would generally be in line with other major buildings in the City. With regards to the adjacent Lakewood Hills Apartments, that property has a consent agreement in place that would allow them to build new building up to 5-stories in height. This consent agreement remains valid today and in perpetuity. Based on the plans in that agreement, the height of those buildings would be up to 48' to the roof midpoint and 58' to the top of the roof. If/when these plans are ever constructed, the resulting buildings would be comparable in height to the buildings proposed with this PUD concept plan.

Q: The zoning ordinance says that the maximum building height for commercial buildings is 40' and 3-stories. Why are buildings taller than this acceptable here?

Section 5.41C of the zoning ordinance specifically allows PUDs "variation of the specific bulk" of buildings. This would include building height as part of this standard. To further minimize the bulk of the proposed buildings, one of the conditions of the concept plan approval is to require a stepback for any stories above the third floor, reducing or eliminating their visual impact from the street.

Q: What would this proposed plan do to traffic in the area?

Preliminary traffic studies performed by Fleis & Vandebrink have concluded that if fully developed as proposed, the overall traffic generated would be comparable or less than the traffic levels when Jacobson's and Ramona Medical Center were in operation. Additionally, the study showed that in most cases, the traffic generated would be less than the approved 2004 PUD plan if fully developed. Additional analysis from the City's Traffic Engineers at Progressive Companies have concurred with these findings. As part of the conditions of approval, more detailed traffic studies will be required and must not show any detrimental impacts before a Final Plan is approved.

Q: Will the PUD have a negative impact on City Infrastructure?

Previous studies on this topic concluded that the current infrastructure would be able to accommodate denser development than what is currently proposed in this concept plan. Studies that are available demonstrate that the currently proposed concept plan aligns with existing infrastructure capacities. With regards to stormwater, the City does maintain stormwater infrastructure in this vicinity that filters out any debris and contaminants before entering into Reeds Lake. One of the proposed conditions of approval is that if the concept plan is found to require additional infrastructure capacity beyond what is currently present, then changes to the plan will be necessary to eliminate this need.

Q: What are the standards of review for a PUD?

The Standards of Review for approving a PUD are in Section 5.49 of the City's Zoning Ordinance. All of the standards would need to be met for a PUD to be approved and, by state law, if all the standards are met the request must be approved. These standards are:

- A. The proposed PUD complies with the intent and all qualifying conditions of §§ [5.41](#) and [5.42](#) of this article, respectively;
- B. The uses conducted within the proposed PUD, the PUD's impact on the community and other aspects of the PUD are consistent with the city's master plan;
- C. The proposed PUD shall be designed, constructed, operated and maintained in a manner harmonious with the character of adjacent property, the surrounding uses of land, the natural environment and the capacity of public services and facilities affected by the development;
- D. The PUD shall not change the essential character of the surrounding area;
- E. The PUD shall not be hazardous to adjacent property or involve uses, activities, materials or equipment which will be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of persons or property through the excessive production of traffic, noise, smoke, fumes or glare; and

- F. The PUD shall not place demands on public services and facilities in excess of current or anticipated future capacity.

Q: Doesn't the City Commission have their own discretion in whether to approve or deny the concept plan?

Yes, the City has discretion on deciding whether a PUD can be approved and may also attach reasonable conditions to any approval. However, Section 503 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act clearly states that any decision requiring Planning and/or City Commission approval be based on a defined set of standards. This ensures that all PUDs, not just the current one under consideration, are judged consistently by the same criteria. The memo from City Planning Consultant Paul LeBlanc discusses this in more detail. In short, the required standards of review listed above do allow room for discretion and interpretation, but any decision to approve or deny must be factually based and clearly related to these standards.

Q: What, then, is the purpose of having public comment or input?

Public comment is intended to allow for any member of the public the opportunity to submit fact-based evidence regarding the request that may not have been previously known. The City has gathered public input on this concept plan throughout the entire review process dating back to Summer 2024. The public input received through this process has led to additional data being gathered and several changes to the originally presented concept. Examples include:

- Reduction in the amount of residential units and commercial space.
- Reduction in the heights of several buildings.
- Additional studies related to traffic, parking, infrastructure, etc. that are not normally required or expected at the concept plan phase.

Q: If the proposed development exceeds what the zoning ordinance would otherwise allow, would that constitute a basis for denial?

No. PUDs are specifically allowed to provide development flexibility, including "variation of the specific bulk, area, and in some situations, the density requirements of this chapter on the basis of the total PUD plan." This is no different from the originally approved PUD plan in 2004, which deviated from the height, density, and parking requirements at the time. In these cases, the City Commission determined that allowing these and any other deviations were acceptable based on the benefits provided by the plan as a whole.

Q: What happens if the concept plan is approved?

If a concept plan and PUD Amendment is approved, the project would then enter the Final Plan Phase. The applicant would need to submit a request for Final Plan approval, with more detailed drawings and plans, within two years of the concept plan approval. Otherwise, the concept plan approval would automatically be nullified. All conditions made by the City and Planning Commission would need to be satisfied prior to consideration of the Final Plan. No new construction can occur until a Final PUD Plan is approved.