



CITY OF  
**FORESTPARK**

# City Council Agenda Item

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**Subject:** Council Discussion to Approve Case VAR-2025-06 Variance Request to increase the allowed density within the *Traditional downtown core* from the required six to twelve (6-12) units to sixty (60) units, reduce the required parking from the 1.75 stalls/units to 1.6 stalls/unit, reduce the required minimum bedroom size by 150 square feet for each one, two and three bedroom type, reduce the front yard setback to 10 feet to accommodate on street parking, reduce the minimum floor-to-ceiling height on first floor from eighteen (18) feet to ten (10) feet and reduce the retail glazing to 50% of the length of the retail portion of the building to transparent glazing to 30-40% of the length of the building, for the construction of a new mixed-use development within the Downtown Mainstreet District (DM).

**Submitted By:** SaVaughn Irons-Kumassah, Principal Planner, Planning & Community Development

**Date Submitted:** April 28, 2025

**Work Session Date:** May 05, 2025

**Council Meeting Date:** May 05, 2025

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## **Background/History:**

Prestwick Land Holdings is requesting a series of variances to support the development of a proposed mixed-use project located on a 1.62 +/- acre parcel within the Traditional Downtown Core (TDC) of the Downtown Mainstreet District (DM). As required by zoning regulations, any variance request associated with a Conditional Use Permit must be reviewed and approved by the Mayor and City Council.

The proposed development seeks to increase the residential density from the permitted range of 6–12 units per acre to allow for a total of 60 units, reduce the parking requirement from 1.75 to 1.6 stalls per unit, decrease the front setback to 10 feet to accommodate on-street parking, reduce unit sizes by 150 square feet, lower the first-floor ceiling height from 18 feet to 10 feet, and reduce the required transparent glazing on the retail storefront from 50% to 30–40%.

The applicant has cited current construction challenges—including increased costs, supply chain delays, and materials shortages—as key factors necessitating these variances. Prestwick contends that the requested modifications are essential to ensuring the financial feasibility of the project while still aligning with new urbanism principles and the broader revitalization goals of the downtown district.

On April 17, 2025, the City of Forest Park reviewed and conditionally approved the variance request, subject to the following staff recommendations:

1. **Density:** Final approval from Mayor and Council is required to allow the proposed 60 units. If granted, the density variance will be approved.

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2. **Setback:** Approval of the 10-foot front setback is recommended, contingent upon construction of on-street parking as shown in the site plan.
  3. **Unit Size:** Staff recommends denial of the request to reduce unit sizes, in order to maintain the minimum square footage standards defined in Section 8-8-37.
  4. **Ceiling Height:** A reduced first-floor ceiling height of 14 feet (rather than the requested 10 feet) is recommended to balance cost considerations with functional and aesthetic needs.
  5. **Glazing:** Staff recommends maintaining the 50% transparency requirement for retail glazing to support visibility, safety, and pedestrian engagement.
  6. **Parking:** The parking ratio of 1.75 stalls per unit is to be maintained. If approved for 60 units, the applicant must provide a formal agreement with the adjacent lot owners to use their spaces, which must be submitted prior to issuance of the certificate of occupancy.
  7. **Design Integrity:** If the development is approved, the architectural design must remain consistent with the renderings previously submitted to staff.

Should the Mayor and Council approve the variance request with the conditions recommended by the Planning Commission and staff, the applicant will be able to move forward with a thoughtfully scaled development that supports increased residential density in the Downtown Core—further advancing the city’s goals of growth, walkability, and revitalization in this key district.

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**Cost:** N/A

**Budgeted for:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Yes** \_\_\_\_\_ **No**

**Financial Impact:** N/A

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**Action Requested from Council:** To Approve Case VAR-2025-06.