

METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

January 21, 2026

Case Number:	2025-ZON-130
Property Address:	1033, 1037, 1041, 1045, 1049, and 1053 Harlan Street,
Location:	Center Township, Council District #18
Petitioner:	Harbours at Harlan, LLC, by Michael Rabinowitch
Current Zoning:	D-5
Request:	Rezoning of 1.05 acres from the D-5 district to the D-P district to provide for a townhome development, consisting of 15 dwelling units.
Current Land Use:	Vacant
Staff Recommendations:	Denial.
Staff Reviewer:	Kathleen Blackham, Senior Planner

PETITION HISTORY

This is the first hearing on this petition.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Denial.

PETITION OVERVIEW

This 1.05-acre site, zoned D-5, is comprised of six undeveloped parcels. It is surrounded single-family dwellings to the north, east, and west across Harlan Street, all zoned D-5; and single-family dwellings to the south, zoned C-4.

REZONING

This request would rezone the site to the D-P District.

The established purpose of the D-P District follows:

1. To encourage a more creative approach in land and building site planning.
2. To encourage and efficient, aesthetic and desirable use of open space.
3. To encourage variety in physical development pattern.
4. To promote street layout and design that increases connectivity in a neighborhood and improves the directness of routes for vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and transit on an open street and multi-modal network providing multiple routes to and from destinations.

5. To achieve flexibility and incentives for residential, non-residential and mixed-use developments which will create a wider range of housing types as well as amenities to meet the ever-changing needs of the community.
6. To encourage renewal of older areas in the metropolitan region where new development and restoration are needed to revitalize areas.
7. To permit special consideration of property with outstanding features, including but not limited to historical significance, unusual topography, environmentally sensitive areas and landscape amenities.
8. To provide for a comprehensive review and processing of development proposals for developers and the Metropolitan Development Commission by providing for concurrent review of land use, subdivision, public improvements and siting considerations.
9. To accommodate new site treatments not contemplated in other kinds of districts.

Development plans should incorporate and promote environmental and aesthetic considerations, working within the constraints and advantages presented by existing site conditions, including vegetation, topography, drainage and wildlife.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends traditional neighborhood typology for this site.

Uses permitted in the Traditional Neighborhood typology include detached / attached housing; small- / large-scale multi-family housing; assisted living facilities / nursing homes; group homes; bed and breakfast; small-scale office, retailing, and personal or professional services; small- / large-scale schools, places of worship, community-serving institutions / infrastructure, and other places of assembly; small-scale parks; and community farms / gardens.

Development Plan (DP) Statement – November 17, 2025

The DP Statement identifies the uses as multi-family, specifically townhomes that would total 15, three story, three-bedroom units with outdoor patio / balcony space and a one-car garage.

The Statement also provides the setbacks that would be permitted, with a maximum building height of 33 feet.

Site access would be from the two alleys along the eastern and southern boundaries, with pedestrian access along the Harlan Street frontage.

The proposed amenity area located in the rear along the eastern boundary would include a pergola and a fenced dog park.

Utilities / drainage, landscaping and signage would also be integrated into the final design and documents.

Site Plan / Landscape Plan – November 17, 2025

As proposed, seven units would have frontage and pedestrian access along Harlan Street. Eight of the units would face internally without street frontage but would have a sidewalk along the front façade of these units that would connect to the Harlan Street public sidewalk.

The landscaping plan is conceptual and depicts green spaces with trees and shrubs, and a larger green space in the rear bounded by the units that would be available for the residents.

Infill Housing Guidelines

The Infill Housing Guidelines were updated and approved in May 2021, with a stated goal “to help preserve neighborhood pattern and character by providing guiding principles for new construction to coexist within the context of adjacent homes, blocks, and existing neighborhoods. These guidelines provide insight into basic design concepts that shape neighborhoods, including reasons why design elements are important, recommendations for best practices, and references to plans and ordinance regulations that reinforce the importance of these concepts.”

These guidelines apply to infill development in residential areas within the Compact Context Area and include the following features:

Site Configuration

- Front Setbacks
- Building Orientation
- Building Spacing
- Open Space
- Trees, Landscaping, and the Outdoors

Aesthetic Considerations

- Building Massing
- Building Height
- Building Elevations and Architectural Elements

Additional Topics

- Secondary Dwelling Units, Garages, and Accessory Structures
- Adapting to the Future

“As established neighborhoods experience new development, infill residential construction will provide housing options for new and existing residents. Increased population contributes positively to the local tax base, economic development, lively neighborhoods, and an interesting city. As infill construction occurs, it is important to guide development in a way that complements current neighborhoods. Each home in a neighborhood not only contributes to the existing context of adjoining houses and the block, but to the sense of place of the entire neighborhood.”

Planning Analysis

The proposed rezoning would be consistent the Comprehensive Plan recommendation of traditional neighborhood typology but has conflicts with the Pattern Book development recommendations and Infill Housing Guidelines.

The Pattern Book recommends that all housing types “be oriented towards the street with a pedestrian connection from the front door(s) to the sidewalk.” Eight of the 15 units are oriented internally without any public street frontage and direct access to the public street.

The Pattern Book recommends that “densities higher than 15 dwelling units per acres should have design character compatible with adjacent properties.” Compatibility with adjacent properties is also discussed in the Infill Housing Guidelines.

The Infill Housing Guidelines introduction states that “new development that is not coordinated with its surrounding context can diminish an area’s sense of place, but heavily dictating the design or type of development, including single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes, can potentially drive-up real estate prices when demand for housing is strong. Additionally, when smaller homes are torn down and replaced with significantly larger homes that do not match the surrounding context, this reduces the stock of affordable housing in a way that can limit long-term residents’ ability to stay within a neighborhood.”

The development would introduce a new housing type of attached single-family dwellings (townhomes) into a neighborhood character of single- and two-family dwellings. Staff believes the mass of the three proposed buildings would not be appropriate or compatible with the existing character of this neighborhood.

The Pattern Book recommends that “townhomes be organized around intersections of neighborhood collector streets, greenways, parks or public square, or neighborhood-serving retail.” This development would be located mid-block along a local street.

For these reasons staff does not support this proposed development as submitted but would certainly be willing to work with the developer to achieve a product that would result in additional housing units appropriate for this area.

Staff understands the need to provide housing and supports housing projects that are compatible and integrated into a neighborhood that would not negatively impact or disrupt that neighborhood’s sense of place.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Existing Zoning	D-5	
Existing Land Use	Vacant	
Comprehensive Plan	Traditional Neighborhood	
Surrounding Context		
North:	Zoning	Land Use
	D-5	Single-family dwelling
South:	C-4	Single-family dwelling
East:	D-5	Single-family dwellings
West:	D-5	Single-family dwelling
Thoroughfare Plan		
Harlan Street	Local Street	Existing 50-foot right-of-way and proposed 48-foot right-of-way.
Context Area	Compact	
Floodway / Floodway Fringe	No	
Overlay	No	
Wellfield Protection Area	No	
Site Plan	November 17, 2025	
Site Plan (Amended)	N/A	
Elevations	November 17, 2025	
Elevations (Amended)	N/A	
Landscape Plan	N/A	
Findings of Fact	N/A	
Findings of Fact (Amended)	N/A	
C-S/D-P Statement	November 17, 2025	

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ANALYSIS

Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan recommends Traditional Neighborhood typology. The Traditional Neighborhood typology includes a full spectrum of housing types, ranging from single family homes to large-scale multifamily housing. The development pattern of this typology should be compact and well-connected, with access to individual parcels by an alley when practical. Building form should promote the social connectivity of the neighborhood, with clearly defined public, semi-public, and private spaces. Infill development should continue the existing visual pattern, rhythm, or orientation of surrounding buildings when possible. A wide range of neighborhood-serving businesses, institutions, and amenities should be present. Ideally, most daily needs are within walking distance. This typology usually has a residential density of 5 to 15 dwelling units per acre, but a higher density is recommended if the development is within a quarter mile of a frequent transit line, greenway, or park.

Pattern Book / Land Use Plan

The Comprehensive Plan consists of two components that include The Marion County Land Use Pattern Book (2019) and the land use map. The Pattern Book provides a land use classification system that guides the orderly development of the county and protects the character of neighborhoods while also being flexible and adaptable to allow neighborhoods to grow and change over time.

The Pattern Book serves as a policy guide as development occurs. Below are the relevant policies related to this request:

Conditions for All Land Use Types – Traditional Neighborhood Typology

- All land use types except small-scale parks and community farms/gardens in this typology must have adequate municipal water and sanitary sewer.
- All development should include sidewalks along the street frontage.
- In master-planned developments, block lengths of less than 500 feet, or pedestrian cut-throughs for longer blocks, are encouraged.

Conditions for All Housing

- A mix of housing types is encouraged.
- Should be within a one-mile distance (using streets, sidewalks, and/or off-street paths) of a school, playground, library, public greenway, or similar publicly accessible recreational or cultural amenity that is available at no cost to the user.
- Primary structures should be no more than one and a half times the height of other adjacent primary structures.
- Should be oriented towards the street with a pedestrian connection from the front door(s) to the sidewalk. Driveways/parking areas do not qualify as a pedestrian connection.
- Developments with densities higher than 15 dwelling units per acre should have design character compatible with adjacent properties. Density intensification should be incremental with higher density housing types located closer to frequent transit lines, greenways, or parks.

Attached Housing (defined as duplexes, triplexes, quads, townhouses, row houses, stacked flats, and other, similar legally complete dwellings joined by common walls and typically with each unit on its own lot or part of a condominium.)

- Duplexes should be located on corner lots, with entrances located on different sides of the lot.
- It is preferred that townhomes should be organized around intersections of neighborhood collector streets, greenways, parks or public squares, or neighborhood-serving retail.
- If the above conditions are not met, individual buildings of attached housing (not part of a complex) may be interspersed with single-family homes but should not make up more than 25% of the primary residential structures on a block.

Red Line / Blue Line / Purple Line TOD Strategic Plan

Not Applicable to the Site.

Neighborhood / Area Specific Plan

Not Applicable to the Site.

Infill Housing Guidelines

Infill Housing Guidelines (2021).

Indy Moves

(Thoroughfare Plan, Pedestrian Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, Greenways Master Plan)

The Marion County Thoroughfare Plan (2019) "is a long-range plan that identifies the locations classifications and different infrastructure elements of roadways within a defined area."

The following listed items describe the purpose, policies and tools:

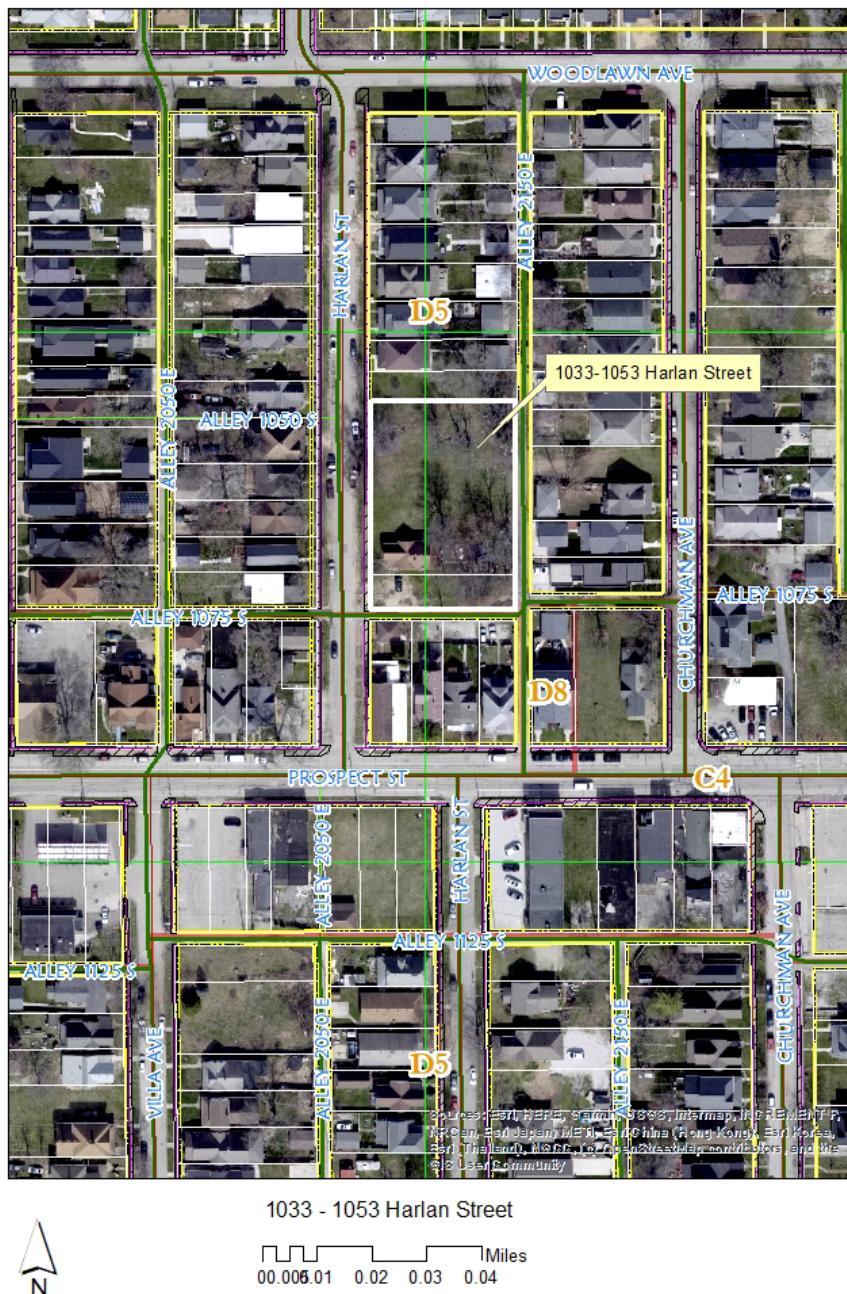
- Classify roadways based on their location, purpose in the overall network and what land use they serve.
- Provide design guidelines for accommodating all modes (automobile, transit, pedestrians, bicycles) within the roadway.
- Set requirements for preserving the right-of-way (ROW).
- Identify roadways for planned expansions or new terrain roadways.
- Coordinate modal plans into a single linear network through its GIS database.



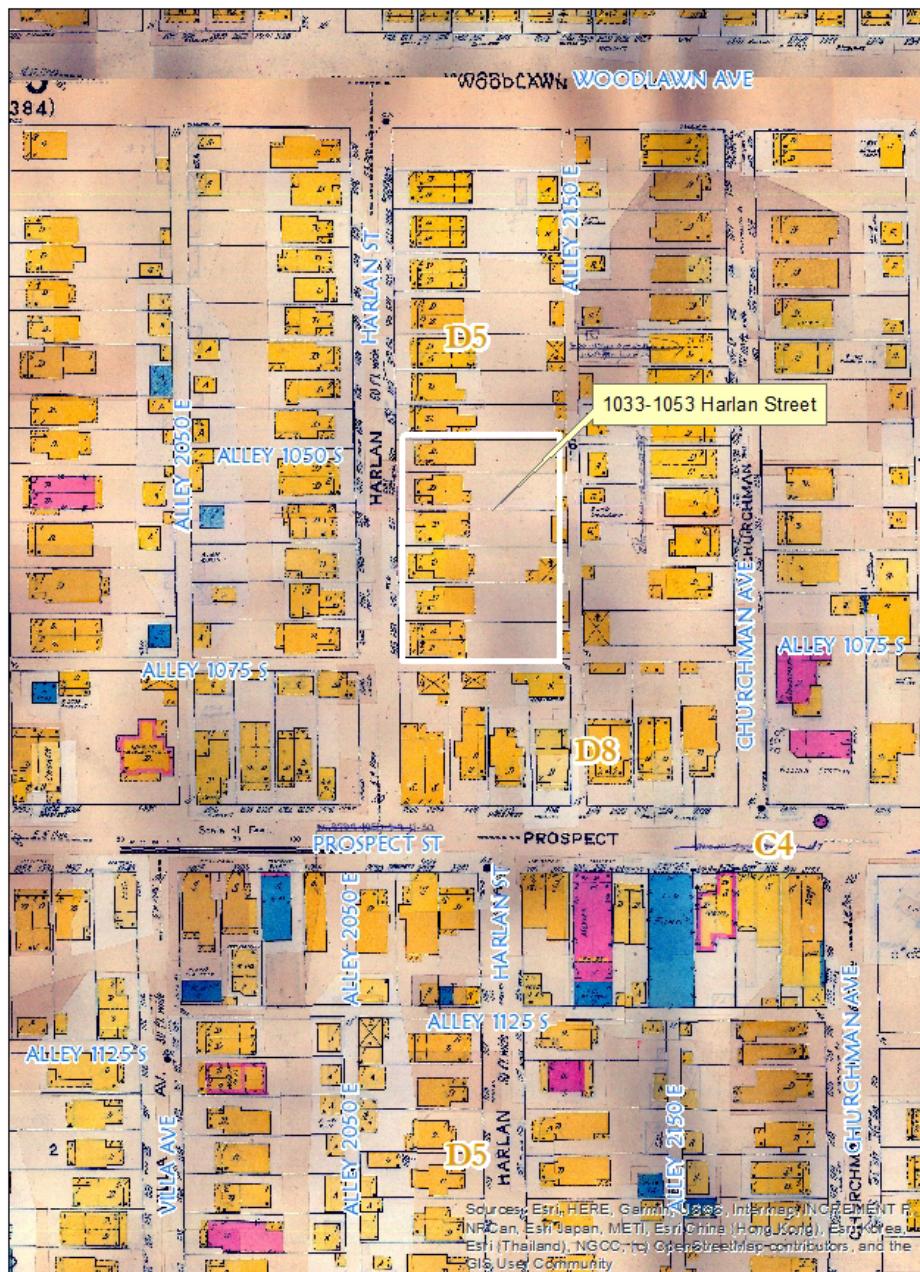
ZONING HISTORY

2020-CZN-825 / 2020-CPL-825; 2120 Prospect Street (south of site), requested rezoning of 0.13 acre from the C-4 district, to the D-8 district; and approval of a subdivision plat to be known as Alyssa's Prospect Street Addition, dividing 0.13 acre into two single-family attached lots, **approved.**

EXHIBITS



Sanborn Map 1915



1033 - 1053 Harlan Street



0.005 0.01 0.02 0.03 0.04 Miles

**HARBOURS AT HARLAN MULTIFAMILY
DP STATEMENT**

INTRODUCTION

Harbours at Harlan LLC (the “Petitioner”) proposes to redevelop the approximately .647 acre site known as 1033 – 1053 Harlan Avenue Street (the “Property”), located just north of Prospect Street at the northeast corner of the intersection of Harlan Street and an east/west public alley. The proposed development, a townhouse community, will offer 15, 3 bedroom, townhomes, each with its own dedicated garage.

The objective for site planning and architectural aesthetic is to revitalize the development site with the addition of a diverse housing type to the area. The site is currently zoned D5 and is predominantly surrounded by an established single-family community. The proposed development fits in the context of the surrounding neighborhood and encourages a variety of development in the area.

The Property is currently vacant. The Petitioner seeks to revive the Property and provide an efficient and desirable use for the space. Each new construction unit is planned to include an outdoor patio or balcony space and dedicated 1-car garage.

The development will be constructed in substantial compliance with the approved Site Plan.

PERMITTED USES

Proposed Permitted uses include multi-family, specifically townhomes.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS/SETBACKS

Buildings constructed on the Property shall be located in substantial conformity with the approved Site Plan, including building locations and subject to the following development standards:

- i. Side yard Setback – 5 ft.
- ii. Rear yard setback (Alley) – 7.0 ft.
- iii. Front yard setback (Harlan Street) – 9 ft.
- iv. Max. Building height – 33 ft.

The site plan, elevations, and landscape plan shall be submitted to the Administrator for approval prior to issuance of an Improvement Location Permit.

UTILITIES/DRAINAGE

All utilities are available to the site. Storm drainage will be underground and professionally engineered to meet the intent of the City of Indianapolis requirements with respect to run-off rate, quantity, and water quality.

LANDSCAPING

Currently, there are little to no existing trees or other living vegetation on the Property. The proposed development will include landscaping and tree plantings around the structures. In addition, the site plan includes common area green space with a covered pergola as an amenity for owners in the development. Landscaping shall be located in substantial compliance with the approved landscape plan.

ACCESS AND PARKING

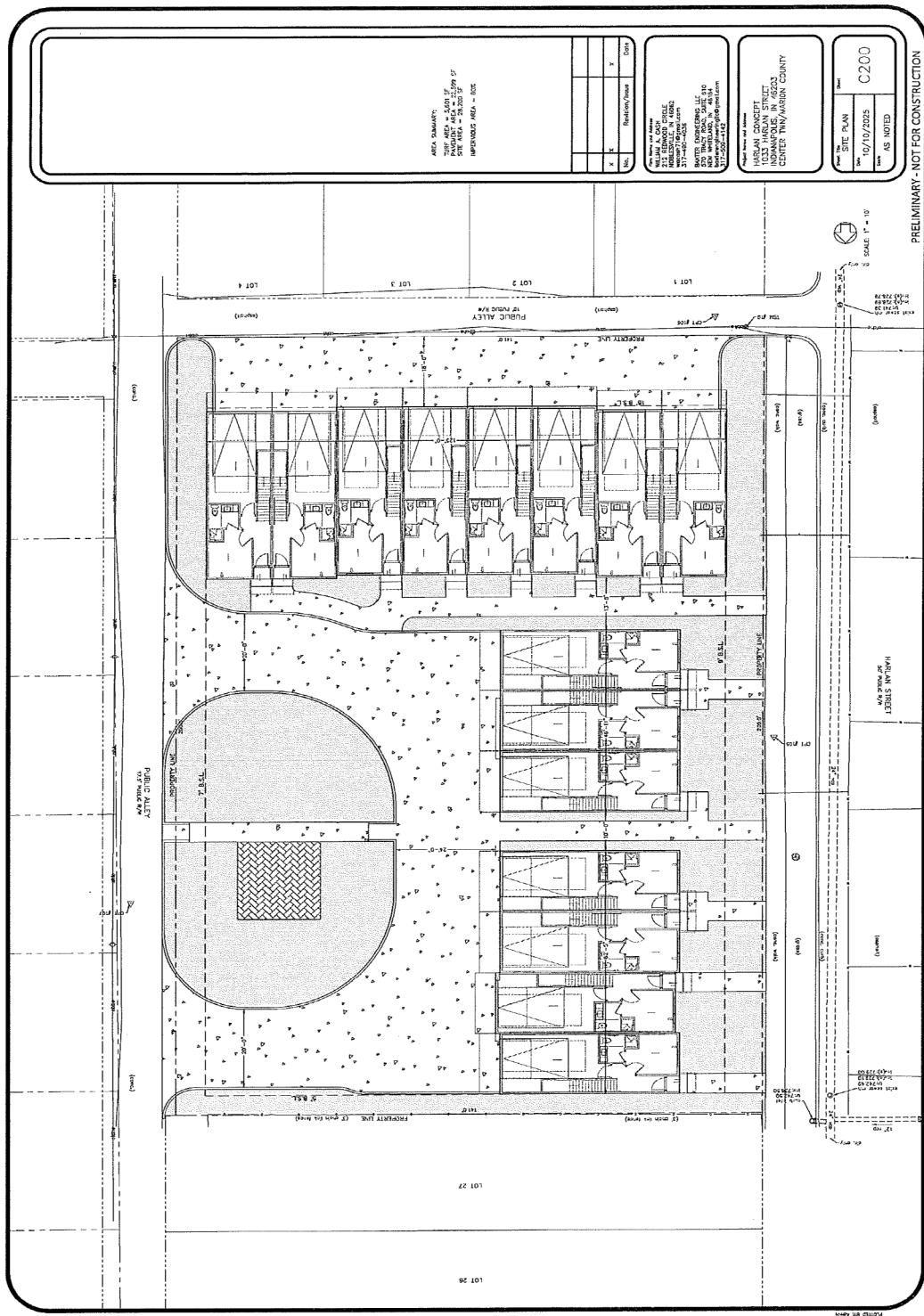
Vehicular access to the proposed development will be via the public alley to the east. Also, pedestrian access is provided from Harlan Street and the public alleys to the south and east.

SIGNAGE

Any building identification signage shall comply with ordinance standards. No off-premises outdoor advertising signs shall be permitted.

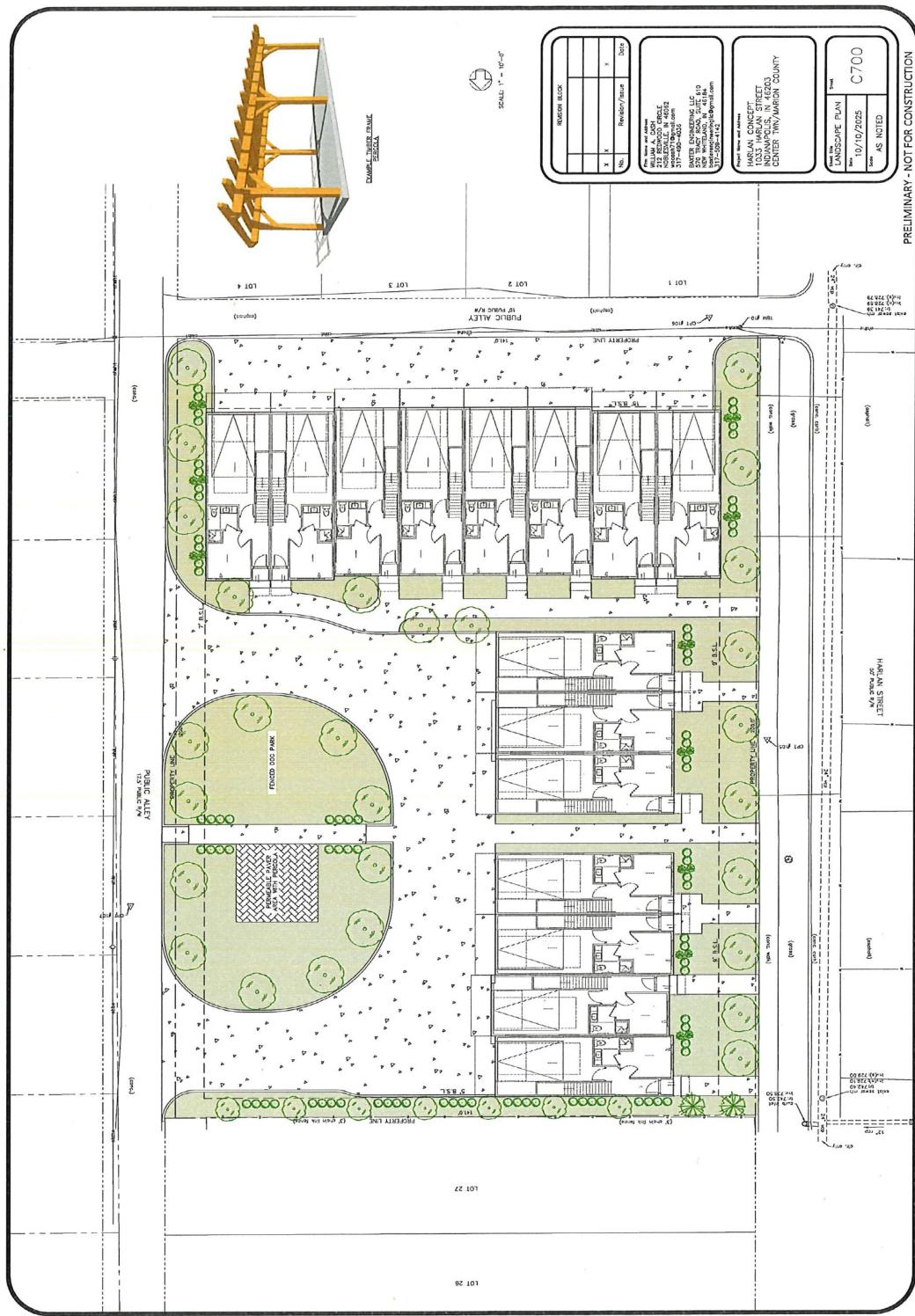


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View looking north along Harlan Street



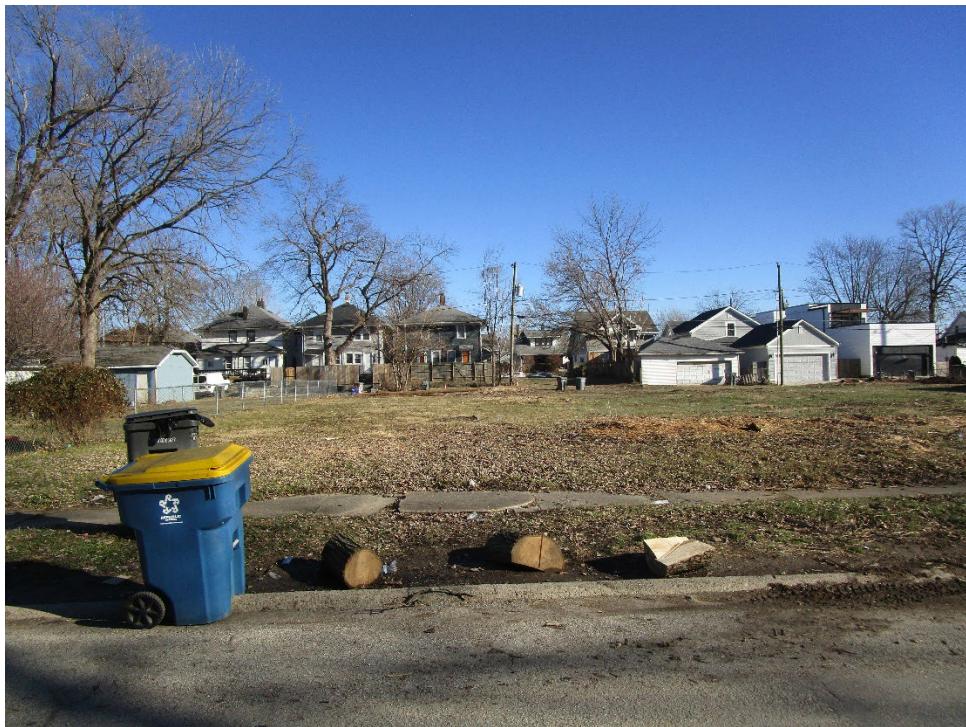
View looking south along Harlan Street



View of site looking southeast across Harlan Street



View of site looking southeast across Harlan Street



View of site looking east across Harlan Street



View of north end of site looking northeast across Harlan Street



View looking northwest



View of site from bordering north / south alley looking west



View of site from bordering north / south alley looking west



View of site from bordering north / south alley looking west



View of site from bordering north / south alley looking west