



**CITY OF COLUMBUS
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
(April 29, 2025 Meeting)**

STAFF REPORT

Docket No. / Project Title: CCU-2025-011 (Columbus Rental Homes)
Staff: Melissa Begley

Applicant: Columbus Rental Homes
Property Size: 13,503 square feet
Zoning: RE (Residential: Established)
Location: 737 & 735 California Street, in the City of Columbus

Background Summary:

The applicant has indicated that the proposed conditional use will allow the construction of two additional dwelling units, behind an existing home with two units (at 735 California Street). The lot will also be replatted to combine the properties at 735 and 737 California Street. The 737 California Street structure contains an existing dwelling with 3 units. This will result in a multifamily development with a total of 7 units.

Key Issue Summary:

The following key issue(s) should be resolved through the consideration of this application: None

Preliminary Staff Recommendation:

Approval, all criteria have been met, subject to the following condition: Parking shall be accessed from the alley and be provided generally behind the existing structures facing California Street, consistent with the applicant's submitted concept plan.

Zoning District Intent:

The intent of the RE (Residential: Established) zoning district is as follows: To ensure the continued viability of neighborhoods and developments in existence on the effective date of this ordinance. This district should be used to maintain traditional, contextually appropriate setbacks, uses, and other standards in a manner consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Current Property Information:	
Land Use:	Multi-family residential
Site Features:	1 structure with 2 dwelling units and 1 structure with 3 dwelling units (currently located on separate parcels)
Flood Hazards:	No flood hazards exist on the property

Vehicle Access:	California Street (Collector, Residential, Urban)
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Surrounding Zoning and Land Use:		
	Zoning:	Land Use:
North:	RE (Residential: Established)	Single Family Residential, Multi-Family Residential (homes converted to apartments)
South:	RE (Residential: Established)	Single Family Residential, Multi-Family Residential (homes converted to apartments)
East:	RE (Residential: Established) RM (Residential: Multi-family)	Single Family Residential, Multi-Family Residential (homes converted to apartments)
West:	RE (Residential: Established)	Single Family Residential, Multi-Family Residential (homes converted to apartments)

Interdepartmental Review:	
City Engineering:	No comments provided.
City Utilities:	No comments provided.
Fire Department:	I think the concept looks great for this location. I look forward to seeing how access is going to look.
Code Enforcement:	No comments provided.

Planning Consideration(s):

The following general site considerations, planning concepts, and other facts should be considered in the review of this application:

1. The project consists of 2 parcels. One parcel contains a structure with 3 dwelling units (737 California Street) and the second parcel contains a structure with 2 dwelling units (735 California Street). The applicant is proposing to construct a new structure with two additional dwelling units behind the existing structure at 735 California Street and combine both lots onto one property, for a total of 7 dwelling units on the single property. Parking spaces will be provided off of the alley to the east of the dwellings.
2. The applicant has indicated that the new units will be in a two story structure with approximately 920 square feet per unit. The minimum dwelling size for a multi-family use in the RE (Residential: Established) zoning district is 500 square feet.
3. The applicant's provided concept plans show a modern building design with varying siding materials and an off-set roof design adding architectural interest to the building.
4. The applicant has two other proposed development projects in this same block as this proposal. The applicant received approval for 2 – 4 unit quadplexes (8 total units) in September of 2024 (Case # CCU-2024-012) at 1017 8th Street. The other project is for a new tri-plex at 1031, 1033 8th Street, & 744 Union Street that is running concurrent to this application (Case # CCU-2025-010). This would add a total of 13 dwelling units to this block.

5. There are some platting and surveying anomalies in this area related to the subject property, the alley configuration, and adjoining lot layouts. The applicant owns several of the adjacent properties and has indicated he is planning to replat several lots and realign the north/south alley.
6. The Zoning Ordinance requires 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family dwellings. Accounting for the 2 new dwelling units and existing 5 dwelling units, 11 parking spaces are required. The concept plan shows 11 parking spaces off of the alley. As with other site specifics, the applicant as indicated that this parking design may change as the site plan is developed in greater detail. The project will be reviewed for compliance as part of a Zoning Compliance Certificate (site plan review process).
7. The concept plan indicates that access to the parking lot will be from the north/south alley (off of 8th Street) and not from California Street. This is consistent with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance Section 7.3 (Part 1)(C)(3)(b).
8. The California Street frontage of this property has on-street parking available on the west side of the street. The east side of California Street is indicated as "No Parking".
9. This site is surrounded primarily by single family structures, however many of those adjacent structures have been converted into multi-family apartment homes. The home immediately to the south is a single story building and has 1 unit. The home immediately to the north is a two-story building and has only 1 unit.
10. This project represents infill development. Infill development is beneficial to the community because it makes use of vacant or underutilized lots within the city, strengthens the real estate market and property values in the area, and utilizes existing infrastructure.
11. The subject property is in close proximity to an abundance of goods and services. The site is about a half of a mile walking distance from downtown Columbus, which includes the public library, several restaurants, banking, employment and other retail services. The #2 bus route passes along California Street, which provides excellent transit access to the site. The closest public park is the 9th Street Park that is less than a quarter of a mile to the east; in addition, Mill Race Park is located three quarters of a mile to the west.
12. The subject property is located within an urban neighborhood that is characterized by higher density and smaller lot sizes. Urban areas reflect a stronger presence of pedestrian traffic.

Comprehensive Plan Consideration(s):

The Comprehensive Plan designates the future land use of properties in this area as residential.

The Comprehensive Plan includes this property in the Columbus Central Neighborhood character area. The following planning principles for that character area apply to this application:

1. Infill development that complements existing neighborhoods should be encouraged.
2. The traditional grid street pattern should be retained, along with the alley system that serves as secondary access to many properties.

The following Comprehensive Plan goal(s) and/or policy(ies) apply to this application:

1. **POLICY A-2-9:** Preserve and enhance the character of neighborhoods.
Older neighborhoods have distinctive characteristics which should be retained. These vary from one neighborhood to another, but they include such things as smaller lots, lesser setbacks, service alleys, and a distinctive architectural style.
2. **POLICY A-2-11:** Encourage all new development to be in scale (height, area, mass, setback, etc.) with its surroundings, determined on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis.
New development should be designed in a manner that is sensitive to the surroundings.
3. **POLICY A-4-2:** Encourage infill development, and/or use of vacant parcels for projects such as parks or other amenities which complement the neighborhoods in which they are located.
Vacant parcels represent lost opportunities, and they can become neighborhood nuisances. These parcels should be used, either for development, or for other neighborhood assets such as parks or community gardens. It is less expensive to develop these parcels than to create new subdivisions.
4. **GOAL D-1:** Develop new housing where adequate public services can be provided economically.
5. **GOAL D-2:** Encourage development of a sufficient supply of diverse housing types, sizes, and price ranges in the community.

6. **POLICY D-2-1:** Encourage housing which is affordable to those whose incomes are below the median, particularly those significantly below the median.
A thriving community needs socio-economic diversity which in turn requires a range of housing prices. The city should encourage the development of housing in a variety of price ranges so that all citizens will have decent, safe, and sanitary housing at prices they can afford.
7. **POLICY D-2-2:** Allow for various housing types.
A diverse population needs diverse housing. The city should encourage a variety of housing types, including single-family detached houses, townhouses, and apartments.
8. **POLICY D-2-4:** Explore options for providing incentives for development of affordable housing which is consistent with these policies and conforms to an overall plan for community growth.
The private market produces a housing supply sufficient for those in middle- and upper-income categories, but land and development costs make it difficult for private entrepreneurs to produce houses that can be purchased by those in the lower income brackets. These incentives might include tax abatements and low-interest loans. The incentives would not include lower standards for houses or neighborhoods.
9. **POLICY D-2-5:** Encourage neighborhoods which contain a diverse socioeconomic mix.
Socioeconomic diversity is beneficial to the community. The city should encourage developments which contain a variety of housing types and prices. The diversity of neighborhoods affects the diversity in public schools, particularly elementary schools. Traditional development, such as in the downtown area, contains a socioeconomic mix of housing types (apartments, single-family houses, duplexes, townhouses) in different price ranges.
10. **POLICY D-2-6:** Encourage development of a sufficient supply of housing in all price ranges so that all citizens of the community can enjoy decent, safe, and sanitary housing in desirable neighborhood settings.
A diversity of housing prices and types accommodates a diverse population and differing preferences.
11. **GOAL D-3:** Provide high-quality residential neighborhood environments.
12. **POLICY D-3-1:** Encourage projects which improve and revitalize neighborhoods.
Strong neighborhoods are the building blocks of strong communities. Projects which enhance neighborhood cohesiveness strengthen the community. Examples include neighborhood watch programs, neighborhood associations, clean-up projects, block parties, and recreation programs.
13. **POLICY D-3-2:** Encourage renovation or removal of deteriorating housing.
Housing which has deteriorated detracts from neighborhood quality, discourages investment, and is a nuisance, attracting vermin and vandalism. Such housing should be rehabilitated or removed.
14. **POLICY D-3-3:** Require proper construction standards for new and rehabilitated housing.
Houses which are properly constructed will need less maintenance and will retain their value better than those which do not comply with accepted construction practices. The city should ensure that standards are adopted and enforced.

This property is located just outside of the study area included in Envision Columbus, the Comprehensive Plan's Downtown Strategic Development Plan Element. The residential neighborhood near downtown was found to have opportunities for "individual or developer-led investment in housing that could support greater vibrancy and meet demand for quality housing stock at all price points" and infill housing options.

This property is also adjacent to the study area for the Central Neighborhood Plan Comprehensive Plan Element, which also includes housing-related recommendations, as follows: Support a wider mix of residential types to meet demand and diversify the options. Currently, the Central Neighborhood's residential mix is largely single-family detached homes and apartment buildings. Consider townhouses (single-family attached homes), apartments above commercial, lofts in converted industrial/commercial space, and other similar designs to fill the gap of the "missing middle housing".

Provisional Findings of Fact/Decision Criteria:

Section 12.4(D) of the Zoning Ordinance permits the Board of Zoning Appeals to allow conditional uses that meet the criteria listed below. The Board may impose reasonable conditions as part of an approval.

1. **The proposal will not be injurious to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community.**

Provisional Findings: The new structure will not block sight visibility for traffic and the new structure will be required to meet all applicable building codes. This site alone will not generate significant traffic in the area, however the overall development on this block will increase traffic in the immediate vicinity. Overall, the increased traffic would not cause significant congestion or place additional vehicles on roads that cannot support the additional traffic (based on the Engineering Department's lack of comments / objections). The new parking spaces shown on the concept plan will account for additional parking requirements. Therefore, this proposal will not be injurious to the public health, safety and welfare of the community. *This criterion has been met.*

2. The development of the property will be consistent with the intent of the development standards established by the Zoning Ordinance for similar uses.

Provisional Findings: The property is located in an established downtown neighborhood. The applicant has provided a concept plan, and the project will be required to comply with the development standards of the zoning ordinance when the final design is complete. It, therefore, will be consistent with the intent of the development standards established by the zoning ordinance. *This criterion has been met.*

3. Granting the conditional use will not be contrary to the general purposes served by the Zoning Ordinance, and will not permanently injure other property or uses in the same zoning district and vicinity.

Provisional Findings: The proposed development is consistent with the development in the area which is a mix of single family and multi-family residential. This area is more urban in context with higher density living. The new parking spaces shown on the concept plan will account for additional off-street parking requirements. The proposed multi-family development will not impede the adjacent residential properties from continuing in residential use. *This criterion has been met.*

4. The proposed use will be consistent with the character of the zoning district in which it is located and the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Provisional Findings: The Comprehensive Plan encourages infill development, a mix of housing types, and neighborhoods which contain a diverse socioeconomic mix. Further, the current character of the RE zoning district, especially in this area, includes a mix of single-family, duplex, and multi-family uses both as apartment homes and apartment developments. *This criterion has been met.*

Board of Zoning Appeals Options:

In reviewing a request for conditional use the Board may (1) approve the petition as proposed, (2) approve the petition with conditions, (3) continue the petition to a future meeting of the Board, or (4) deny the petition (with or without prejudice). Failure to achieve a quorum or lack of a positive vote on a motion results in an automatic continuance to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

City of Columbus - Bartholomew County Planning Department

Conditional Use Application

Submit applications and materials by e-mail to planning@columbus.in.gov. If questions, please call: 812.376.2550.
Submittal instructions available at <https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/applications-forms/>.

To be Completed by the Planning Department

Pre-submittal Meeting on (date): _____ by (initials): _____

Application Received on (date): _____ by (initials): _____

Jurisdiction: ☐ Columbus ☐ Bartholomew County ☐ Joint District Procedure: ☐ Board of Zoning Appeals ☐ Hearing Officer

Case Reference No.: _____ Zoning District: _____

Property Owner Name (from GIS): _____

To be Completed by the Applicant

STOP! All applicants must meet with a Planning Department staff member before completing this application. Please contact the Department at 812.376.2550 at least 1 week prior to the Board of Zoning Appeals application deadline to schedule a meeting.

Representative Information (if other than the applicant):

Complete this section if a contractor, surveyor, attorney, or other person will act on behalf of the applicant and all correspondence regarding the application should be directed to them (if not, please indicate "none" for the Representative Person's Name below).

Representative Person's Name: _____

Representative's Company Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____
(number) (street) (city) (state) (zip)

Phone No.: _____ E-mail Address: _____

All correspondence will be by e-mail unless another method has been agreed upon by the Planning Department.

Applicant Information:

Please identify the property owner, business, institution, or other entity that is making the request. Do NOT list here a contractor, surveyor, attorney, or other representative (see Representative Information section above).

Applicant Name: Columbus Rental Homes LLC

Applicant Type: ☐ Individual(s) ☐ Partnership ☐ Corporation ☒ LLC ☐ Estate ☐ Trust ☐ Other

Applicant Contact Person Name: Christopher Bartels

Please include a contact person name if the applicant is a land development company, institution, business, or other type of entity.

Mailing Address: 708 7th ST Columbus IN 47201
(number) (street) (city) (state) (zip)

Phone No.: 812-340-3485 E-mail Address: cleebartels@gmail.com

All correspondence will be by e-mail unless another method has been agreed upon by the Planning Department.

Conditional Use Requested:

I am requesting a conditional use per Section 3.12 B of the Zoning Ordinance to allow the property to be used for the following:

Building of a Multi-family dwelling 2 units to be added to the South Eastern section that is being replated. This will be a new duplex structure.

Representative or Applicant Signature / Acknowledgement:

If a representative has been designated on page 1, that representative must sign below. If no representative is designated, the applicant, as indicated on page 1, must sign below. Acceptable signatures include traditional "wet" by hand signatures, electronically verified signatures, or digital signatures using a script font or signature stamp.

The undersigned acknowledges that the information included in and with this application is completely true and correct to the best of his/her knowledge and belief.



(Representative or Applicant Signature)

3/25/2025

(Date)

(Representative or Applicant Printed Name)

(Title / Position, if Applicable)

Property Owner Signature(s):

Applications submitted without all property owner(s) or their legally authorized representative(s) signatures will NOT be processed. Acceptable signatures include traditional "wet" by hand signatures, electronically verified signatures, or digital signatures using a script font or signature stamp. The property owner does NOT include a tenant or contract buyer.

The Planning Department is NOT responsible for verifying the authenticity of signatures, confirming the signer's authority, or for any misrepresentation by those signing.

Those who have signed below acknowledge that the information included in and with this application is completely true and correct to the best of his/her knowledge and belief. The undersigned authorize(s) the filing of this application and allows the Planning Department staff to enter this property to analyze this request. Further, the undersigned understand that a public notice sign may be placed and remain on the property until the processing of the request is complete.

For Property Owned by an Individual or Individuals:

If the property is titled/owned individually or jointly held by multiple individuals (such as a married couple, tenants-in-common, or jointly with rights of survivorship, for example), each living individual must sign below. Those signing below due to power of attorney for an owner must attach documentation of that power of attorney.



(Property Owner #1 Signature)

Christopher Bartels

(Printed Name)

3/25/2025

(Date)

(Property Owner #2 Signature)

(Printed Name)

(Date)

(Property Owner #3 Signature)

(Printed Name)

(Date)

(Property Owner #4 Signature)

(Printed Name)

(Date)

For Property Owned by a Partnership, Corporation, LLC, Estate, Trust, or other Entity:

If the property is titled/owned by a trust, corporation, estate, institution, business, or other entity, an appropriate representative of that entity must sign below and indicate his/her title, position, role, or other legally authorized capacity in which they are signing on behalf of that entity.

Description of Signer's Ownership Role or Representation: member



(Signature)

Christopher Bartels

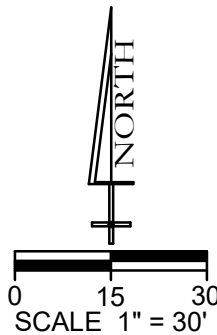
(Printed Name)

8/19/2024

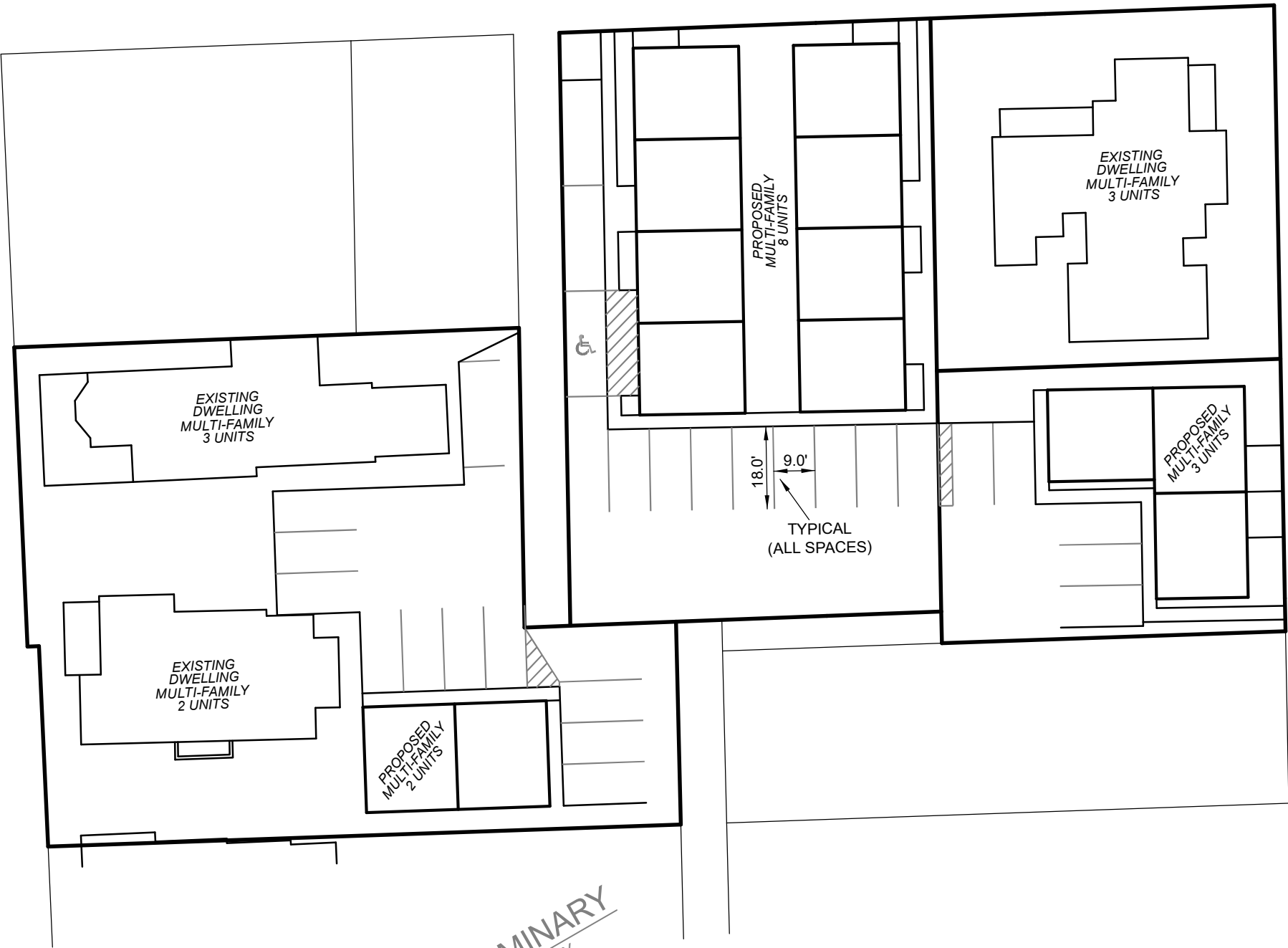
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PROPOSED FEATURES EXHIBIT



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PRELIMINARY
DRAFT COPY



PROFESSIONAL SURVEYING

ERIC L. MEEKS, PLS - PRES.
P.O. BOX 54 / 1004 16th STREET
COLUMBUS, IN 47201
(812) 657-3082

DRAWN: ELM	CHECKED: ELM
DATE: OCT. 11, 2024	SCALE: AS SHOWN
JOB#: 0241611-2	PAGE 2 of 2