City of Columbus – Bartholomew County
Planning Department

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STAFF REPORT

CITY OF COLUMBUS PLAN COMMISSION
(March 11, 2026 Meeting)

Docket No. / Project Title:	PC-26-3 (Rezoning) / Volunteers of America
Staff:	Melissa Begley
Applicant:	Volunteers of America Ohio & Indiana
Property Size:	26,571 square feet
Current Zoning:	PUD (Arvin Meritor / United Way PUD)
Proposed Zoning:	RM (Residential: Multi-Family)
Location:	The southwest corner of 14th Street & Hutchins Avenue, in the City of Columbus

Background Summary:
The applicant has indicated that the proposed rezoning is for the purpose of building a 17 unit, two-story apartment building.

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

Preliminary Staff Recommendation:
Favorable recommendation to the City Council with the following commitments:

1. The future development of the property shall be of a traditional neighborhood site design, with the structure(s) adjacent to and with front facades oriented to Hutchins and/or 14th Street and with parking provided behind the structure(s) and no closer to either adjacent street than the nearest front wall of the structure(s).
2. Any development of the subject property shall include the improvement of the south side of 14th Street between the Central Park Place Apartments (1500 13th Street) and Hutchins Avenue to include a minimum 11 foot travel lane, curb, 5-foot tree lawn, and 6-foot sidewalk.

Plan Commission Options:
In reviewing a request for *rezoning* the Plan Commission may (1) forward a favorable recommendation to the City Council, (2) forward an unfavorable recommendation to the City Council, (3) forward the application to City Council with no recommendation, or (4) continue the review to the next Plan Commission meeting. The Plan Commission may recommend that conditions or commitments be attached to the rezoning request. The City Council makes all final decisions regarding *rezoning* applications.

Decision Criteria:
Indiana law and the Columbus Zoning Ordinance require that the Plan Commission and City Council pay reasonable regard to the following when considering a rezoning:

The Comprehensive Plan.

Preliminary Staff Comments: The Comprehensive Plan designates this area as residential, encourages infill development, and encourages diverse housing types in locations where services can be provided. The proposed rezoning represents all of these policies in the Comprehensive Plan.

The current conditions and the character of current structures and uses in each district.
Preliminary Staff Comments: The area is a mix of industrial uses, multi-family developments and the United Way Center, comprised of social service and non-profit organizations, with facilities currently on the same lot as the subject property, and on the south side of 13th Street.

The most desirable use for which the land in each district is adapted.
Preliminary Staff Comments: There are other residential areas nearby, including both single-family and multi-family. Multi-family residential is a desirable infill use for this area, as there are other residential areas, as well as services nearby. Appropriate access is provided by local streets that are connected to Central Avenue, an arterial street that is 2 blocks to the east.

The conservation of property values throughout the jurisdiction of the City of Columbus.
Preliminary Staff Comments: A multi-family residential use at this location, should not significantly impact property values throughout the City's jurisdiction.

Responsible growth and development.
Preliminary Staff Comments: The proposed rezoning represents responsible growth and development because it would provide an opportunity for infill development. The property is served by City utilities and transit, and is in close proximity to goods and services.

Current Property Information:	
Land Use:	Currently a part of the United Way / Sans Souci parking lot.
Site Features:	A portion of the United Way / Sans Souci parking lot
Flood Hazards:	No flood hazards exist on the property.
Special Circumstances: **(Airport Hazard Area, Wellfield Protection Area, etc.)**	No special circumstances exist on the property.
Vehicle Access:	14th Street (Local, Commercial, Urban) Hutchins Avenue (Local, Commercial, Urban)

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use:		
	Zoning:	**Land Use:**
North:	I2 (Industrial: General)	CleanPower, Hog Molly Brewery
South:	PUD (Arvin Meritor PUD)	United Way Offices
East:	RE (Residential: Established)	Single Family Residential
West:	PUD (Arvin Meritor PUD) RM (Residential: Multi-Family)	Sans Souci Central Park Place Apartments

Interdepartmental Review:	
City Engineering:	No concerns.
City Utilities:	No comments.
Code Enforcement:	No concerns.
Fire Department:	No comments.

History of this Location:

The relevant history of this property includes the following:

1. In 1989, the subject property was an industrial area and was part of a rezoning of the surrounding area to a PUD (Planned Unit Development). This PUD (18 acres) consolidated the corporate headquarters and manufacturing facilities of Arvin Industries (PUD-89-03).
2. In 2002, the PUD was modified to facilitate the former Arvin manufacturing facilities reuse as the United Way Center (PUD-02-05).
3. In 2010, the west 1.77 acres of the block that currently includes the subject property were rezoned to RMc (Residential: Multi-family with commitments) for a new senior apartment development (the Central Park Place Apartments) (RZ-10-06).

Comprehensive Plan Consideration(s):

The Future Land Use Map indicates the future use of this property as residential.

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

1. **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.
2. **GOAL D-1:** Develop new housing where adequate public services can be provided economically**.**
3. **POLICY D-1-1:** Promote orderly housing expansion in locations where the city's infrastructure and services have the capacity to accommodate the growth.
   New neighborhoods should have adequate infrastructure and services. Road networks should be safe, there should be adequate sewage disposal and a safe drinking water supply, there should be adequate police and fire protection and trash pick-up. The city should guide new development to areas where these services will be available at reasonable cost.
4. **POLICY D-1-3**: Encourage development adjacent to already developed areas.
   Compact development contiguous to already developed areas is the most economical and convenient urban form, and the city should encourage that type of development.
5. **GOAL D-2:** Encourage development of a sufficient supply of diverse housing types, sizes, and price ranges in the community.
6. **POLICY D-2-2**: 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.

This property is located in the Columbus Central Neighborhoods character area. The following Planning Principle(s) apply to this application:

1. Infill development that complements existing neighborhoods should be encouraged.
2. When conversion of single-family houses to multifamily is permitted, appropriate off-street parking should be required. Converting front yard areas to parking lots is not in the best interests of the area.

The Central Neighborhood Plan identifies this site as being in one of the focus areas, although no specific recommendations were made for this exact location. Some of the Central Neighborhood Plan goals include the following:

1. Promote mixed-use and mixed-income redevelopment, while minimizing land use conflicts.
2. Recommend infrastructure improvements that support the expected increase in pedestrian and bicycle traffic while sustaining appropriate routes for the truck traffic necessary for serving businesses.
3. Improve access to jobs, healthy foods, recreation, community services, education, and affordable housing.

Planning Consideration(s):

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

1. The applicant is proposing to rezone the subject property from PUD (Planned Unit Development) to RM (Residential: Multi-family). The property to be rezoned is currently part of the parking lot associated with the Sans Souci Thrift Store and the United Way Offices. The applicants intend to subdivide off a .61 acre parcel to construct a 17 unit housing development.
2. The property is currently located in the Arvin Meritor / United Way PUD zoning district. This district, created in the late 1980's, was established to provide more development flexibility than available through traditional zoning districts for the Arvin headquarters and manufacturing facilities. The PUD provides a set of specific uses for the area, sign standards, building heights and parking standards. In 2002, the PUD was modified to allow the western portion of the PUD to be used for the Community Human Service Complex for United Way. That change updated the permitted uses and landscaping standards.
3. The intent of the RM (Residential Multi-Family) zoning district is to provide areas for a variety of multi-family uses, such as two-family dwellings, apartment homes and complexes, and condominiums in areas with compatible infrastructure and services. Development in the RM district should be serviced by sewer and water utilities. This district should be used in limited locations with highly developed infrastructure, immediate access to Arterial or Collector Roads, and direct connections to public open space and convenience goods.
4. The subject property is located in an area characterized by a mix of uses. There are single-family homes to the east and multi-family (Central Park Place Apartments) residences to the west of the site. There are existing industrial operations to the north and the United Way Center, which provides a variety of public services is to the south. The property to the immediate west is Sans Souci, which is a thrift store that also provides employee development and no cost household essentials and clothing for emergency needs.
5. The surrounding area is contextually urban and is characterized by a more traditional neighborhood design that has higher density, smaller lot sizes and buildings placed closer to the street with parking interior to the property. Urban areas also reflect a stronger presence of pedestrian traffic. The applicants have not provided a site plan or concept for the proposed development.
6. There are several amenities nearby the subject property. The subject site is approximately 2 blocks west of Central Avenue where there are several commercial businesses. The area is served by the ColumBUS Transit System with a bus stop near the subject property, at 13th Street and Cottage Avenue (approximately 1 block away). The closest public park is the Ninth Street Park approximately .56 miles away. The nearest connection to the People Trail is approximately 4 blocks away; however crossing Central Avenue to get to the trail from the subject property is problematic because there are no traffic signals or crosswalks between 10th Street and 17th Street.
7. There are sidewalks on 13th Street and on Hutchins, Cottage, and Central Avenues. On 14th Street, there are some blocks with sidewalks, but also sections that do not have sidewalks.
8. There have been two other similar rezonings in the area; the sites of the Central Park Place Apartments (Case #RZ-10-06) and the Flats on 14th Apartments (Case #RZ-15-07), which is under construction. As part of the rezoning commitments associated with the Central Park Place Apartments site, that development was required to improve its half of Michigan Avenue as well as 13th and 14th Streets to the current City of Columbus standards, including right-of-way width, lane width, presence of curbs, sidewalks, street trees, etc. It was also required to construct the building with a

traditional neighborhood design with the building adjacent to the street and parking behind, orient the building either toward 13th Street or the 13th Street / Michigan Avenue intersection, and design the building and site to form a walkable “campus” with the United Way Center. The rezoning commitments for the Flats on 14th site required the building be a traditional neighborhood design with the building’s oriented to the street and parking behind to promote a pedestrian oriented neighborhood, 14th and Michigan Streets be improved to include street width, curb and gutter, a tree lawn with street trees and sidewalks, and a 100% opaque, 6 foot tall fence between the development and the adjacent industry.

9. This development will remove parking that currently serves the United Way and San Souci, based on a preliminary analysis, the remaining parking appears to comply with what the zoning ordinance would require for these other uses.

Record No: PC-26-3

Annexation or Rezoning Application

Status: Active

Submitted On: 2/9/2026

Primary Location

1304 HUTCHINS AVE
COLUMBUS, IN 47201

Owner

UNITED WAY CENTER OF BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY INC
13TH ST 1531 COLUMBUS, IN 47201

Additional Application Information

What is your Company/Business/Institution Name?

Volunteers of America Ohio & Indiana

Are you the owner of the property?

No

Are you filing this application on behalf of someone else or a client?*

No

Application Information

Request Type*

Rezoning

Requested Zoning*

RM (Residential: Multi-Family)

Requested Zoning (if more than 1)

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Number of acres being rezoned?*

0.61

Are you also requesting annexation?

No

Please describe the purpose of the request*

To rezone and replat a portion of the United Way parcel to build and designate as 17 units of affordable multifamily housing.

Rezoning Criteria

The Comprehensive Plan?*

The proposed rezoning from PUD to Residential Multifamily is consistent with the Housing and Development Patterns elements found within the Plan. The Plan encourages infill development, efficient use of existing urban land, and the creation of diverse and affordable housing options. Policies specifically support development that provides housing for residents with incomes below the median and promotes a mix of housing types throughout the city. The proposed 17-unit, two-story affordable multifamily building aligns with these objectives by utilizing vacant land within an already developed area and expanding affordable housing opportunities for adults, consistent with Goals A-4, D-1, and D-2.

The City of Columbus Comprehensive Plan can be found at: https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/.

The Bartholomew County Comprehensive Plan can be found at: https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/comprehensive-county-plans/.

The current conditions and the character of current structures and uses in each district (both the existing & proposed zoning districts).*

The subject property currently contains a vacant portion of land utilized as parking. Under the current PUD zoning, the site allows for planned development but does not specifically emphasize residential infill or multifamily housing. Surrounding land uses are urban in character and supported by existing infrastructure and public services.
The proposed Residential Multifamily zoning is compatible with the existing neighborhood context, as there is existing residential housing (both low rise multifamily and single family residential). This is consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies that encourage development to be in scale with surrounding uses and preserve neighborhood character, while avoiding high-rise or incompatible structures. The proposed use reflects a residential character that aligns with nearby development patterns rather than introducing an incompatible or intensive use.

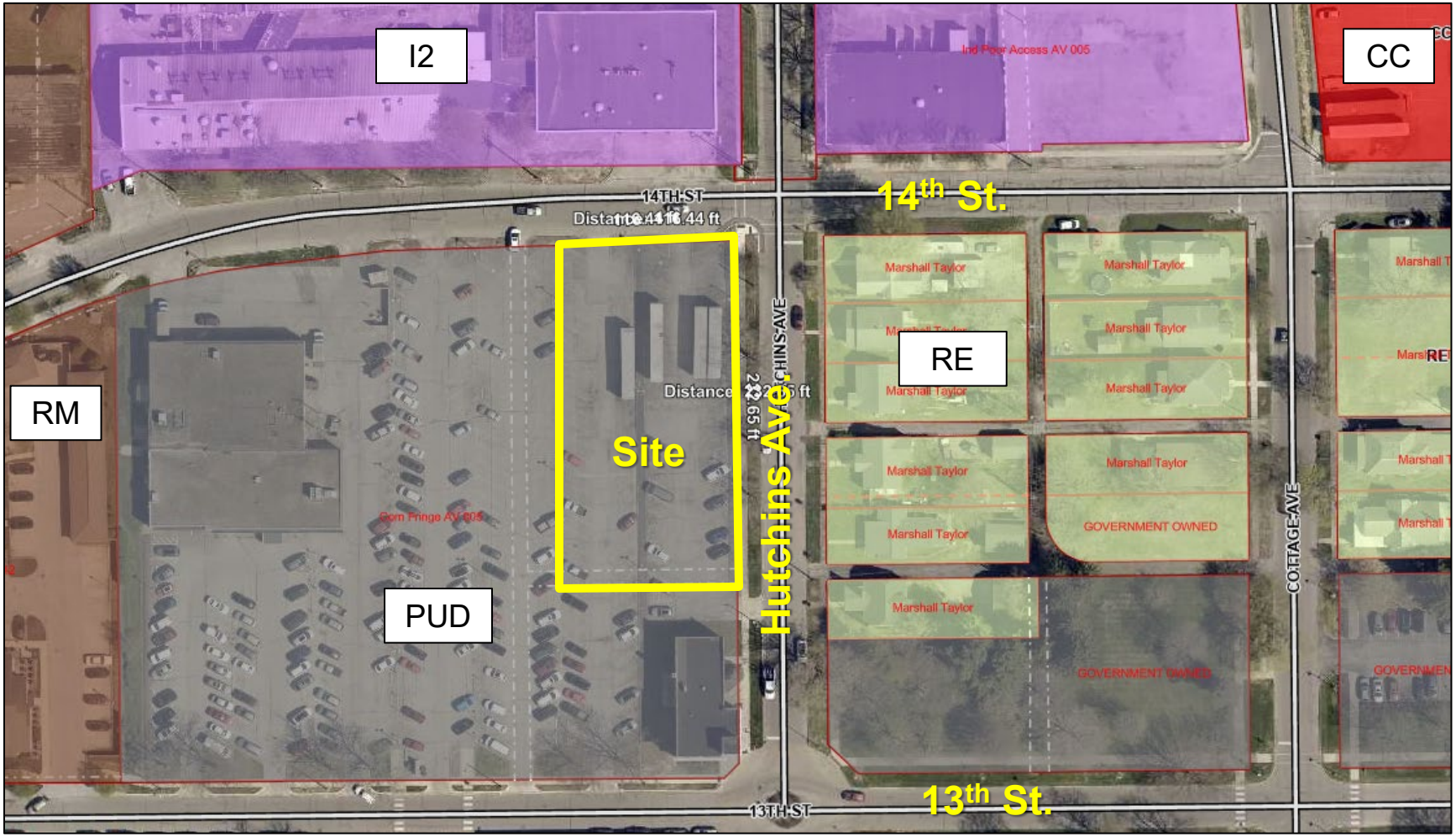
The most desirable use(s) for which the land in each district is adapted.*

Given its location within the city and availability of existing utilities, streets, and public services, the land is well suited for residential development, particularly multifamily housing. The Comprehensive Plan identifies infill residential development as a desirable use for vacant urban parcels, especially where it can be served economically by existing infrastructure. The proposed project supports housing diversity and addresses community needs without expanding development outward into undeveloped or agricultural land, consistent with Goals A-4 and D-1.

The conservation of property values throughout the jurisdiction.*

The proposed development supports the conservation and stabilization of property values by activating a vacant parcel with a well-maintained residential use. The Comprehensive Plan emphasizes that proper construction, good design, and ongoing maintenance contribute positively to neighborhood stability and property values. Affordable housing developed to quality standards is specifically supported as a means of fostering socio-economic diversity without negatively impacting surrounding properties. By converting underutilized land into productive residential use, the proposal aligns with Plan policies that seek to eliminate vacant or underperforming properties that can otherwise detract from neighborhood value.

Responsible growth and development.*

The rezoning request represents responsible and orderly growth as envisioned by the Comprehensive Plan. The project is an example of compact, infill development, making efficient use of land and existing public infrastructure while avoiding urban sprawl. The Plan strongly supports directing growth to areas where services already exist and discourages scattered or inefficient development patterns. The proposed development meets these goals by accommodating housing needs within the existing urban fabric, supporting affordability, and promoting efficient use of land and public resources.

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