

The Triangle Development: Timeline and Public Concerns

Introduction

This document provides a factual summary of the events, decisions, and public concerns surrounding the proposed development of the Triangle property in the City of St. Francis. Its purpose is to present a clear timeline and outline key issues related to transparency, environmental safety, financial impact, and consistency with the City's long-term planning documents. Given the size and significance of this proposed development, residents deserve a full understanding of how the process has unfolded and how it aligns with the community's adopted vision.

Background

The Triangle is the parcel of land located between South Lake Drive, East Howard Avenue, and South Packard Avenue in the City of St. Francis.

The City of St. Francis purchased the Triangle on July 7, 2021 for \$3.5 million. Prior to the purchase, the property generated approximately \$45,000 per year in property tax revenue.

Early Planning Activity (May – July 2025)

During this period, the City—working through its engineering firm, MSA—appears to have funded the development of early plans for the Triangle, including concepts featuring a 12-story apartment building.

On June 17, 2025, the Common Council met in closed session and issued a Letter of Intent to work with KGI / Cream City Development. The Letter of Intent contemplated refinement and approval of a development plan, rezoning of the property as a Planned Unit Development, development of a development agreement, and a land transfer agreement.

During this period, the library component was removed from the initial development concept.

August 2025: Development Plan Moves Forward

On August 19, 2025, the Common Council discussed a development plan that had been generated in closed session.

The Initial Planned Unit Development (PUD) application was received on August 20, 2025 and forwarded to the Planning Commission for consideration at its August 27, 2025 meeting.

Residents were not provided an opportunity to review the application materials prior to the Planning Commission meeting.

Changes to the Development Plan (Fall 2025)

On October 1, 2025, the original site plan was revised. The revised plan was presented at the October 7, 2025 Common Council meeting without a prior public inspection period.

Key concerns during this period include significant changes to the site layout, including the swapping of apartment building locations, and limited notice to the public that a revised version of the plan was being considered.

Environmental and Soil Contamination Concerns

On October 31, 2025, the City and MSA submitted an application to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources seeking approval to proceed with development without first remediating known soil contamination.

The application relied on the revised site plan and was submitted without clear public authorization. On November 21, 2025, the DNR rejected the application and confirmed the presence of arsenic in the soil.

Lapse in Council Action

In January 2026, the decision period for the Initial PUD expired without the Common Council taking formal action.

The City Clerk later confirmed that no formal Council vote or extension had occurred. A subsequent response indicated that a previously issued Letter of Intent was being relied upon as evidence of action.

Conflict with City Planning Documents

Residents have raised concerns that the proposed development does not align with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan or the Future Strategic Development Plan.

These planning documents emphasize balanced, high-quality development consistent with long-term community goals, appropriate land use, and meaningful public engagement. The proposed scale, density, and primarily residential focus of the Triangle development raise questions about whether it reflects those guiding principles.

Additionally, the absence of clearly articulated procedures for modifying long-term planning documents has created uncertainty regarding how and when departures from those plans should occur.

What's Next

KGI / Cream City Development is expected to submit a Detailed Planned Unit Development application. That application will be reviewed by the Planning Commission and then the Common Council.

Requests have been made to ensure full public inspection and public hearings occur at both levels of review.

The proposed development is estimated to be approximately \$120 million in size. As of January 2026, the City of St. Francis carries approximately \$22 million in existing debt, based on publicly presented financial information by Ehlers on January 6, 2026.

Conclusion

The Triangle represents one of the most significant development decisions facing the City of St. Francis in decades. Given the financial magnitude of the project, the confirmed environmental concerns, and the questions surrounding process and alignment with the City's long-term planning documents, careful and transparent review is essential.

Residents are seeking a development approach that reflects the community's adopted vision, protects public health and safety, respects established planning goals, and ensures full transparency in decision-making. Moving forward, open communication and meaningful public participation will be critical to restoring confidence and ensuring that any development of the Triangle serves the long-term interests of the City and its residents.