

## Lundmark, Sherie

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**From:** Anita Bostad  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 13, 2025 1:52 PM  
**Subject:** Proposed Tax Incentive Developments

July 13, 2025

My name is Anita Bostad

My address is Grand Forks, ND 58201

I have concerns about the following proposed tax incentive developments coming before the City Council, County Commission, and Public Schools in the next days, weeks, and months:

**4 projects in the pipeline:** (all 4 passed through the pre-application stage for tax incentives back in April)

1. **Northridge - The Reserve** at 4551 S. 175h St. by new Sanford Clinic & Edgewood Senior Living. *PropoSolely apartments with amenities, no leasable commercial space.*
2. **Dakota Commercial - The Domain (RTVMPS LLC)** Located on 47th Ave. S., just east of Marathon Gas Station. *Mixed use, apartments & leasable commercial space.*
3. **Dakota Commercial - Ray Richards - Greenview Living LLC** Located on S. 34th St. at Demers Ave. *Commercial & apartments, plus large, tall indoor-outdoor golf venue*
4. **Dakota Commercial - CK Commercial** At King's View Drive and S. 62 St.

### Concerns about these projects:

**1. The tax incentive is only free for the developer/owner.** It is not free to other tax payers like me, who must cover the costs associated with these developments for many years to come. For some projects, it could be 20 years of tax breaks for the owner that I will have to pay.

**2. If building a retail or apartment project is not economically feasible to build without the tax break, it should be considered a "risky" proposal.** Then ask, why is this even being considered?

**3. Giving tax breaks to these developments puts an unfair market advantage to the businesses and landlords,** because existing businesses and rental owners must compete against the artificially lower-taxed new development, while also paying a share of the competitor's discounted property taxes.

**4. The Mayor and City Council, and other officials, are elected, which means they are supposed to represent OUR best interests first,** not the interests of a select group of developers. Grand Forks' taxes are already among the highest in the state. We do not need to add a new development owner's share of taxes (millions of dollars) to our own for many years to come. ***The tax incentives were intended to bring primary sector growth to our community, create new jobs and new wealth for our city and our state. Apartment complexes and retail do not accomplish this, they simply redistribute jobs and wealth within our community.***

**5. The budgets of the public schools and county government are affected by these tax incentives. If they opt in to give up their share of the tax breaks, their budgets will need to be cut to cover the additional incurred expenses. Are you really ready to see more cuts in our public schools budgets?**

**6. Do you think that these proposals would pass a general election if citizens would vote on them?** If no, then why are you considering approving them now? Also, these incentives appear to be in violation of NDCC 40-57.1, from which the incentives are being derived. You need to follow NDCC, and you need to listen to your constituents.

**Sincerely,**

**Anita Bostad**

**Lundmark, Sherie**

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**From:** Barbara Sandvig  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 12, 2025 4:30 PM  
**Subject:** Tax Incentives for Apartment Complexes

**Follow Up Flag:** Flag for follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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July 12, 2025

Dear City Leaders:

My name is Barbara Sandvig

My address is  
Grand Forks, ND

I have concerns about the following proposed tax incentive developments coming before the City Council, County Commission, Public Schools in the next days, weeks and months:

- 4 projects in the pipeline: (all 4 passed through the pre-application stage for tax incentives back in April)
  - Northridge - The Reserve At 4551 S. 175h St. by new Sanford Clinic & Edgewood Senior Living. Solely apartments with amenities, no leasable commercial space.
  - Dakota Commercial - The Domain (RTVMPS LLC) Located on 47th Ave. S., just east of Marathon Gas Station. Mixed use, apartments & leasable commercial space.
  - Dakota Commercial - Ray Richards - Greenview Living LLC Located on S. 34th St. at Demers Ave. Commercial & apartments, plus large, tall indoor-outdoor golf venue
  - Dakota Commercial - CK Commercial At King's View Drive and S. 62 St.

Concerns about these projects:

1. The tax incentive is only free for the developer/owner. It is not free to other taxpayers like me, who must cover the costs associated with these developments, not paid for through their taxes, for many years to come. For some projects, it could be 20 years of tax breaks for the owner that I will have to pay.
2. If building a retail or apartment project is not economically

feasible to build without the tax break, it should be considered a "risky" proposal. In other words, is it only profitable with the tax incentive? If you research these tax break developments around the US, many of them failed before the tax break years expired, and the government never did collect the higher taxes. Google TADs in Georgia & tax incentive developments in California around 2008. Either way, regular property owners are the biggest losers during the tax incentive years.

3. Giving tax breaks to these developments results in an unfair market advantage to the businesses and landlords, because existing businesses and rental owners must compete against the artificially lower-taxed new development, while also paying a share of the competitor's discounted property taxes.

4. The Mayor and City Council, and other officials are elected, which means they are supposed to represent our best interests first, not the interests of a select group of developers. Grand Forks taxes are already among the highest in the state. We do not need to add a new development owner's share of taxes (millions of dollars) to our own for many years to come. The tax incentives were intended to bring primary sector growth to our community, create new jobs and new wealth for our city and our state. Apartment complexes and retail do not accomplish this.

5. Because the budgets of the public schools and county government are affected by these tax incentives, they must decide to opt in or out of the tax breaks. If they opt in to give up their share, their budgets will need to be cut to cover the additional incurred expenses. They should all opt out and choose to collect full property taxes from the developments' owners, if the projects progress.

Instead, such tax incentives should be given schools to fund educational and extracurricular activities, and to qualifying families, residing in and working in Grand Forks, to build single family dwellings (slab homes) of approximately 1,000-1,100 square feet so that all these children aren't being "warehoused" in apartments.

Sincerely,

Barbara Sandvig  
Grand Forks, ND

## Lundmark, Sherie

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**From:** Mary Koponen <  
**Sent:** Friday, July 18, 2025 1:59 PM  
**To:** Sande, Dana; Osowski, Rebecca; Vein, Ken; Berg, Tricia; Weigel, Daniel; Fridolfs, Mike; Lunski, Tricia; Lundmark, Sherie  
**Subject:** Northridge The Reserve

Dear City Council members,

I would like to address some of the arguments I have heard Mayor Bochinski, Mr. Feland, Mr. Gaustad and Dana Sande make in the past week at the School Board and County Commission meetings concerning their support of the Northridge The Reserve luxury apartment tax incentive.

- **Why not use the tax incentive PILOT for this project, after all, several post-'97-flood housing developments (Memorial I & II, others) have tax breaks?** *They might have tax breaks, and I am not aware if they are luxury apartments, but they were intended to relieve an acute housing shortage post-1997 flood. We are decades past that, so the current situation is quite a bit different with Northridge's proposal. Your claims of a 1-2% vacancy rate are from a limited 3 landlord survey of under 12% of the city's apartments. The rental housing agency indicates a higher % of vacancies (4), and it is poised to go to 5-6% when 800+ airmen return to SD this fall.*
- **It's not economically feasible to build without this much in tax breaks, and If nothing's built, revenues will stay where they are now, low.** *If this is true, then why did the developer initially ask for 100% break for 20 yrs, then agree to 90-80-60 for 15 ,if it's not feasible without the greater amount? Clearly he was not up front with you. I heard your Minneapolis lawyer at the School Board meeting explain the market indicates he needed something less, so the city offered 90-80-60%. That's too big a difference to be a simple compromise, and something doesn't add up. It makes me question the developer's honesty, at the very least it looks greedy to me, and because of that, I question other residential projects the City Council is proposing.*
- **Not accepting the tax break means County Commissioners & School Board are hurting the Council's attempt to spur city's growth.**
  - *1. First and foremost, the School Board owes the students a decent education with the facilities they need. I agree with the Board that overcrowding is a preferred problem over declining enrollment. I am NOT anti-growth. However, it is a lot to ask the School Board to give up a source of their income for such a long period for MULTIPLE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES, especially in light of the dings the Federal government is making to the Education Department funding right now. There's a lot of chaos and uncertainty for their budgets, as they pointed out on Monday. They have other sources of income, I am well aware, which brings me to the County.*
  - *The County Commission is elected by us citizens, first and foremost they are supposed to keep up their maintenance and support of the residents of GFks County, not cater to developers' needs for a tax handout. Their sole source of income are property taxes. As the Commissioners said, they can't make ends meet with funding right now, and with multiple developers coming before them, asking for handouts through the city, there is a*

*lot of pressure to grant them an effective 77% discount over 15 years. Outrageous! Especially since the Commissioners agreed this would have to involve a tax increase for the rest of us! TAX INCREASE was not mentioned in the paper's article about the County Commission position yesterday. I wrote to Mr. Wenzel yesterday about biased reporting for omitting that part of the discussion. The comment came up "When will the City stop?" I am concerned about that too. You are giving this tax break away at will, it seems. When will the conditions change enough for you to stop? I have not heard that, in fact, the opposite. If high interest rates is the reason, what happens if the interest rates drop to 2-3% in 3-5 years? The developer is not going to agree to have you end the discount in taxes. I think you are misusing the intended purpose of the tax incentive, switching from Agristo and other primary sector businesses and applying to housing. The wordage indicates it is for revenue-generating use. Luxury apartments don't generate revenue except to the landlord. They don't create hundreds of jobs. I say, let the rental markets sort themselves out. If luxury apartments are needed, let a builder build them without the tax incentive. Don't make us taxpayers pay for the extra expenses that come from having a lot of 5-6 story luxury apartments.*

- **Luxury apartments are needed.** *This is surprising. Seems like low-rent apartments are the most needed with increasing numbers of people using public assistance. Only one of the 5 projects coming up soon include low rent apartments, as far as I know. Also, I had suggested to mix low rent with middle sized and middle priced options to the Mayor a few months ago. I mean next door to each other, not in separate buildings or developments. I am not aware of any such proposals coming up. They seem to be mostly luxury. You might find less opposition if you address the most acute crisis, low rent units, which the Housing Authority might confirm. There's not enough of the lowest price rentals. By mixing with middle price units, the grounds become more self-policing, in other words, people in the middle priced units will call the police if they see drugs being sold, other crimes in progress. This keeps the whole development safer and catering to those poorest people we all want to help, the families and the ones who are not criminals. These developments were being hailed in Georgia when I moved away a long time ago. Criminals didn't want to live there because the police would be called if they did something illegal.*
- **It's a win-win for the City. They will continue to collect a portion of the taxes from the property, and that amount will only go up every 5 years. It's money the City would never collect if it is not built. It doesn't cost anyone anything.** *The fact that it competes directly with current rentals has not been addressed by you. Also, who pays for taller ladder fire trucks if they are needed? More fire hydrants? Street improvements? Infrastructure? Overcrowding at public schools? I am aware these are infill but there will certainly be costs. Us tax payers will pay, but not the developer. Even worse, we pay our share, plus 90% of the apartment owners' for the first 5 years when all of these needs will arise!!*
- **Using the tax break for this PILOT project is legal because it generates revenue, it doesn't matter that it is solely residential.** *I am not qualified to give a legal opinion, but I do know you are not going the route of traditional purpose and use of the tax incentive. Agristo brings revenue, jobs, industry, and benefits multiple business sectors. This is the purpose of tax incentives. Most people are not opposed to this. But what is fair about favoring one landlord when those of us who have rentals don't get a break. What revenue does this apartment complex bring, other than dollars for the landlord? I had a mortgage free rental until last year. What similar tax breaks would you offer existing rental owners? Renovation breaks*

*are not the same thing. You can't renovate a rental when the tenant is in it, and you just did it 5 years ago.*

Mary Koponen

Grand Forks 58201

City Council Members,

I attended the Planning and Zoning Commission Public Hearing on July 9 and voiced my concerns regarding the proposed rezoning of the parcel east of the Marathon gas station on the corner of South Washington and 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue South to accommodate the building of The Domain. I would like to reiterate those concerns in opposition to the rezoning.

When a developer requests three major changes to the current zoning (while it is quite adequate), that is a good indication that it is not appropriate for the neighborhood. A basic premise of planning and location theory is that you BUILD TO ENHANCE THE LANDSCAPE OF A COMMUNITY. When that is accomplished, existing property values increase and attractivity is heightened.

Of the three proposed changes, I would like to address two that are most important to my sense of neighborhood community, increasing both the density and height limits.

**The allowable density is currently 14 units/acre and the request is to raise that to 30 units/acre, more than double.** This will have an impact on several issues.

- With approximately 150 units proposed for the apartment complex, it can be expected that approximately 250 to 300 vehicles will be added to the area's traffic.
- 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue South is already a busy street as many residents from the southeast section of the city use this as their main route to cross over South Washington for work and other needs.
- The ingress/egress for the gas station, 11<sup>th</sup> Street South (off 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue) and 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue South (off South Washington) are the two to be used for residents of The Domain. Added to this, are vehicles that frequent Choice Wellness, ICON, and Starbucks. With the proposed retail on the first floor of The Domain, the traffic count is increased again.
- If the Hugo's grocery store, catering, and event venue comes to fruition, that added traffic only compounds the traffic situation. Just look at the Phase 3 plan for the parcel. Those parking spaces represent vehicles, and most often filled when something is planned at the event venue.
- With 11<sup>th</sup> Street South and 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue South being so close to the lights on South Washington and 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue, it is highly unlikely for placement of a traffic light. Even if there was an added traffic light, congestion would be worse.
- The increased number of vehicles entering and exiting on 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 11<sup>th</sup> Street South will create an increased safety hazard for the children that ride their bikes or walk to South Middle School. And, even if residents chose the other ingress/egress on 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue, South Washington crossings would be a safety concern.
- Is there actually a need for more apartment units in the city? The data used by the Mayor, City Administrator and others is suspect and does not align with the Greater Grand Forks Apartment Association's quarterly data, which at this point, while not perfect, is the best data set we have – and, it is the data set the city and EDC have claimed to use. As a researcher, having reliable and

representative data is essential in making decisions. We want integrity in all the decisions made for our community.

- In addition, more residents in a compressed area adds to the noise factor.

**It is requested to increase the allowable height of the building from its current four stories, height of 50 feet, to up to five stories, height of 65 feet.** This, too, raises many concerns.

- A building of that height so close to residential impacts the quality of life for those homeowners. If living in the northern townhomes, The Domain would be in their backyard. If living on Pines Circle, total view would be lost. On 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue, northwest view would be lost. Loss of view is not just an aesthetic concern, but the sun is obscured, which means no sunlight from midafternoon and on.
- Another loss incurred is that of privacy because of the proximity. The upper floors of The Domain would have a good aerial view of residents' backyards. Residents have fences for privacy but six feet is irrelevant to keeping out the eyes of aerial onlookers. Swimming pools, hot tubs, sunbathing, and many other activities would no longer be private.
- Linked to privacy is security. Unfortunately, in our world today security for women and children has become more difficult. Though we tend to think of our Grand Forks community as relatively safe, we cannot control who is peering into our backyards, looking through our windows, or watching children play. Because of the short distance, a cheap set of binoculars can even provide a close-up view.

Bottom line, when the privacy, safety, and security of residents are negatively impacted, the quality of life is no longer a desirable in our neighborhoods. Subsequently, property values go down. Who wants to live next to a 65-foot building? This is not a dense metropolitan city.

With a tax incentive requested by the developer and resulting lower property values for current surrounding homeowners, how is this effectively building the tax base of the city? I believe that the City Council should make decisions that increase existing property values. And, as mentioned, community should be considered, not just the vision of a possible higher tax base 15 or 20 years in the future, after a tax incentive dries up.

I wish you could take a few minutes to walk the neighborhoods that would be impacted by this development and imagine a structure 65 feet high. Would you want this near your house? Do you think you would have multiple offers for your home when it was time to sell? No, in this case, the buyer is having the advantage. Just ask Mayor Bochenski about his experience fighting a very similar battle after he bought his home on the southend of town.

**BUILD TO ENHANCE THE LANDSCAPE OF A COMMUNITY.**

Regards,

Dr. Mary K. Askim-Lovseth

Grand Forks, ND