

Brenda Broeske

Subject: Opposition to the Proposed Use of TID/TIF Financing for the Thrivent Development

From: Alisyn Cundiff <cundiffalisyn@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, July 27, 2026 7:52 AM

To: Amy E. Molitor <Amy.Molitor@AppletonWI.gov>

Subject: Opposition to the Proposed Use of TID/TIF Financing for the Thrivent Development

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Dear Mayor and Members of the Appleton Common Council,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the use of Tax Increment District (TID) financing for the proposed Thrivent community development in Appleton.

Tax Increment Financing was created to encourage development that would not otherwise occur without public assistance. It should not be used to subsidize projects that are financially viable on their own or that primarily benefit large, well-established organizations. Thrivent is a financially strong institution with substantial resources. It is difficult to justify asking Appleton taxpayers to subsidize a project that appears capable of moving forward without public incentives.

Using TIF in this case raises serious concerns about fairness and fiscal responsibility. Every dollar of new tax revenue captured within a TID is unavailable to support the general budgets of the City, schools, county, and technical college until the district closes. As these taxing jurisdictions continue to face rising costs for public safety, infrastructure, education, and essential services, taxpayers may ultimately bear a greater financial burden to make up the difference.

Appleton homeowners are already struggling with what many residents consider to be unacceptably high property tax bills. At a time when families are facing increased costs for housing, insurance, utilities, and everyday necessities, the City should be focused on limiting additional pressure on property taxpayers—not expanding the use of public subsidies for projects backed by financially capable organizations. While TIF does not directly increase property tax rates by itself, diverting future tax growth into a TID can reduce the revenue available to other taxing jurisdictions during the life of the district, potentially contributing to future budget pressures and making it more difficult to provide essential services without placing additional burdens on taxpayers.

I am also concerned about the precedent this sets. If large organizations receive public subsidies for developments that are likely to happen anyway, it becomes increasingly difficult to deny similar requests from other developers. This risks turning TIF from an economic development tool into a routine subsidy rather than an exception reserved for projects that truly meet Wisconsin's "but for" requirement.

Before approving any TID assistance, I urge the Council to require clear, independently verified evidence that:

- The project would not proceed "but for" the TIF assistance.
- The requested public investment provides a measurable and substantial public benefit.
- The projected increase in tax base justifies the public cost and financial risk.
- Alternative financing options have been fully explored.
- The long-term fiscal impacts on existing taxpayers have been thoroughly analyzed and made publicly available.

Appleton has many pressing needs competing for limited public resources, including maintaining infrastructure, supporting public safety, and keeping our community affordable for residents. Taxpayer-funded incentives should be reserved for projects that address genuine blight, stimulate redevelopment in areas that otherwise would remain underutilized, or provide extraordinary public benefits that cannot be achieved without assistance.

I respectfully ask the Council to reject any TID or TIF financing request for the proposed Thrivent community unless compelling, transparent evidence demonstrates that public assistance is absolutely necessary, complies with Wisconsin law, and clearly serves the long-term interests of Appleton residents rather than placing additional financial strain on local taxpayers.

Thank you for your time, your service to our community, and your careful consideration of this important decision.

Sincerely,

Alisyn Cundiff

Appleton Resident

***Please forward above statement to Outagamie County Joint Review Board members and all city Aldermen. Thank you. ***

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