



REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

ITEM NAME:	Marathon County Highway Garage Conditional Use Permit & Site Plan
MEETING DATE:	9/21/2026
PRESENTING COMMITTEE:	Plan Commission
COMMITTEE CONTACT:	Chair Dan Lesniak
STAFF CONTACT:	Nathan Sandwick
PREPARED BY:	Nathan Sandwick (updated since 9/10)

ISSUE: Request for a conditional use permit for the proposed Marathon County Highway Garage

ISSUE BACKGROUND/PREVIOUS ACTIONS:

The site consists of what is now one parcel zoned M2. The Conditional Use Permit Application (dated July 22) and Site Plan Application (dated July 24) were received.

Included with the application is a project narrative prepared by Excel. It includes a general overview and several arguments with respect to criteria for consideration of a conditional use permit. The Plan Commission initially reviewed and discussed the site plan on August 17th. The required public hearing was properly noticed and held on September 10, 2026.

I have invited input from Village Administrator Davel, Public Works Director Ulman, Police Chief McHugh, and Fire Chief O'Brien. All responded without any concerns raised.

As noted in the project narrative prepared by Excel, the proposed use is consistent with the Future Land Use indicated for this location (Industrial / Commercial) within the adopted comprehensive plan. The intention to comply with all applicable Village ordinances, regulations, and design standards is noted. Project performance with respect to stormwater management was noted in August. I would also encourage special consideration of compliance with general standards for vehicle parking.

FINDINGS:

Key findings regarding 520-121(G) Review criteria for conditional use permits:

- (1) The proposed highway facility is in harmony with the comprehensive plan, zoning and other ordinances and plans. Planned future land use for this parcel is industrial/commercial. That of adjacent parcels is industrial, industrial/commercial, government/institutional.
- (2) Adverse impacts of the proposed highway facility are not expected to be substantial or undue with respect to the range of existing, permissible and expected land uses in the vicinity including industrial uses. Engineering for adequate stormwater management has been an important part of the site design process.
- (3) The proposed highway facility would maintain reasonable consistency of land uses, land use intensities, and land use impacts with respect to other developed properties in the area.
- (4) The proposed located is adequately served by public utilities and services, and will not impose an undue burden on the public agencies providing those services. No such concerns have been raised by the Village's Public Works director when asked to review and comment on site plans.

- (5) The public benefits of the proposed highway facility are substantial and are expected to far outweigh potential adverse impacts. The Marathon County Highway Department operates the highway system under its jurisdiction to provide a safe and convenient means for the vehicular transportation of people and goods. The proposed facility will support its mission. The Marathon County Highway Department's service benefits Kronenwetter and other communities within the county. The county highway system is an integral part of the road network that supports Kronenwetter's existing residents and businesses as well as future development prospects.

Other findings:

Based on plans submitted and designs studied, I concur with the applicant that the design for the proposed highway facility incorporates appropriate setbacks, landscaping, stormwater management, parking, access control; and is reasonably arranged to reduce visual, noise and traffic impacts. Upon reviewing plans with respect to relevant general performance standards as part of the site plan approval process, I was satisfied once I gained clarity about the stormwater analysis and applicant's commitment to comply ordinances.

The applicant's plan to address the Village of Kronenwetter's landscaping requirements is thoroughly detailed in site plans submitted (notably sheet C1.4). Regarding established criteria for determining the practicality of requiring full compliance: not applicable here are preexisting limitations (1), infeasibility of redevelopment (3), or consideration as a relatively small addition (5). Applicable criteria that justify review for compliance to the extent most practical include stormwater management requirements that drive the design of limited areas (2), and likely interference of plants within limited area (4). In light of applicable limitations and the importance of stormwater management goals here, the Plan Commission may consider compliance with landscaping requirements to the extent that it determines practical. I find performance with respect to stormwater management is to be prioritized here. The applicant has estimated the point value of existing vegetation along the north part of the property and reasonably seeks flexibility to locate new vegetation near the main entrance, along adjacent roads, and where it won't interfere with snow storage.

Kronenwetter has established performance standards specifically for Highway Facilities. Corresponding findings:

- a.) There are no outdoor storage areas proposed within 500 feet of residentially zoned property.
- b.) For highway facilities, no buffer yard is strictly required where none of the property borders abut residentially zoned property.
- c.) Exteriors shall and are expected to meet standards for nonresidential structures in section 520-76.
- d.) Proposed off-street parking is intended, and expected, to meet village requirements of one space per employee on the largest work shift, plus one space per company vehicle normally stored or parked on the premises, plus one space per 500 square feet of gross square feet of office area. Parking is not expected to exceed the standard by much more than 50%.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Discuss and accept findings, and approve the conditional use permit.

Allow the applicant to upgrade fencing to an opaque fence, wall and/or berm at the applicant's discretion, provided that it does not interfere with access, utilities, or stormwater management nor vested rights to develop adjacent properties.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Corresponding site plans, application materials and prior staff reports were previously shared among materials for meetings on August 17th and September 10th, and can still be found on the Village website.
- Marathon County Memorandum (draft, 9/18/2026) re: conditional use permit and recommended language.