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**TO:** St. Francis Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Beth Richmond, Planner  
**SUBJECT:** Dalton River Villas  
**DATE:** 9-10-2025 for 9-17-2025 meeting  
**APPLICANT:** Meadow Creek Construction (Mike Pomerleau)  
**LOCATION:** Between Ambassador Blvd NW and the Rum River, north of 233<sup>rd</sup> Lane NW (PIN 32-34-24-24-0069)  
**COMP PLAN:** Low Density Residential (LDR), Open Space  
**ZONING:** R-1 Urban Low Density Detached Residential, Urban Rum River Management Overlay

### **OVERVIEW**

The City has received applications for a preliminary plat, Conditional Use Permit (CUP), and associated variances for the Dalton River Villas development. This development includes 19 single-unit residential lots on an irregular shaped 16-acre site located between Ambassador Blvd NW and the Rum River, north of 233<sup>rd</sup> Lane NW.

A concept plan for this site was reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council in June and July 2025. During the concept plan review process, the Planning Commission and City Council provided the following feedback:

- The layout and size of lots seem reasonable, especially in comparison to the adjacent neighborhood to the south.
- The outlot on the eastern side of the property along the river would not be used as public park land.

The land use and subdivision requests to be considered include a preliminary plat, CUP, and variances. The variances requested include:

- Minimum lot area (8 lots)
- Minimum lot width (18 lots)
- Maximum impervious surface (8 lots)
- Minimum front setback from local road
- Minimum rear setback from a County road (3 lots)

### **REVIEW PROCEDURE**

#### ***60-Day Land Use Application Review Process***

Pursuant to Minnesota State Statutes Section 15.99, local government agencies are required to approve or deny land use requests within 60 days. Within the 60-day period, an automatic extension of no more than 60 days can be obtained by providing the applicant written notice containing the reason

for the extension and specifying how much additional time is needed. The deadline for the variance requests is October 20, 2025.

### ***120-Day Subdivision Review Process***

Pursuant to Minnesota State Statutes Section 462.358, local government agencies are required to approve or deny subdivision requests, such as the preliminary plat, within 120 days. The 120-day timeline for the review of the preliminary plat expires on December 19, 2025.

### ***Public Hearing***

City Code requires that a public hearing for review of the land use and subdivision requests be held by the Planning Commission. The public hearing notice was published in the Anoka County Union Herald and posted on the City Hall bulletin board. The public hearing notice was mailed to all affected property owners located within 350 feet of the subject property.

## **ANALYSIS**

### ***Land Use***

The site is guided for Low Density Residential use by the Comprehensive Plan which requires a density of 2-3 units per net acre. The applicant is proposing 19 residential lots on 8.3 net acres, which is consistent with the Low Density Residential density requirement.

The site is zoned R-1 Urban Low Density Detached Residential. Single-unit detached dwellings are permitted in this district with the following standards:

- (A) Perimeter Foundation. Be constructed upon a continuous perimeter foundation that meets the requirements of the State Building Code.
- (B) Dimensional Requirements. No residential structure shall have a width of less than 22 feet on not less than 70 percent of the structure. Width measurements shall not be inclusive of overhangs or other projections beyond the principal exterior walls.
- (C) Roof.
  - a. Permitted roof materials include earth covered, shingles (asphalt, fiberglass, wood), tile, finished metal standing seam with concealed fasteners, or better.
  - b. Roofs for single unit dwellings may be flat or pitched. A flat roof must shed water having some degree of slope. If the single unit dwelling includes a pitched roof, the roof pitch shall be at least three/twelve (3/12) with a one (1) foot overhang.
- (D) The requirements of the State Building Code or the applicable manufactured housing code shall be met.

### ***Preliminary Plat***

The applicant is proposing 19 residential lots on the property. 16 of these lots will be served by an extension of Woodbine St NW from the south while three lots will have access directly onto Ambassador Blvd NW. An outlot is also proposed to be located along the river, so that all of the proposed lots are non-riparian. The applicant is proposing to own this outlot. Application materials have been submitted to Anoka County and the MnDNR for review.

### **Dimensional Standards**

The site is zoned R-1 Urban Low Density Detached Residential, and it is also within the Urban River Management Overlay (uRRM). The table below shows the required lot and site dimensions for the R-1 and uRRM alongside the standards proposed for the Dalton River Villas development. The most restrictive dimensional standard (bolded) applies. **Red text** indicates a standard where the

proposed standard is less than required, and therefore, a variance is requested. The attached lot table provides more specific information on the dimensional standards for each lot.

Standard	R-1 Requirement	uRRM Requirement	Proposed
Min. lot area	10,800 sq. ft.	<b>12,150 sq. ft.</b>	8,276 sq. ft. to 56,273 sq. ft. (8 lots undersized)
Min. lot width	80 ft.	<b>90 ft.</b>	56 ft. to 80 ft. (18 lots) 324 ft. (1 lot)
Min. front setback	25 ft.	<b>35 ft. local road</b> <b>50 ft. County highway</b>	25 ft. local road 50 ft. County highway
Min. interior side setback	<b>10 ft. living space</b> <b>5 ft. garage</b>	N/A	10 ft. living space 5 ft. garage
Min. corner side setback	<b>20 ft.</b>	N/A	25 ft.
Min. rear setback	<b>30 ft.</b>	(75 ft. from OHW) <b>50 ft. County highway</b>	30 ft. rear <b>35 ft. County highway</b> 30 ft. from bluff
Max. height	3 stories or 35 ft., whichever is less	<b>35 ft.</b>	35 ft.
Max. impervious surface	35%	<b>30%</b>	7.4% to 45.34% (8 lots)

**Minimum Lot Area:** The site is guided for Low Density Residential use by the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, which requires a density of 2-3 units per net acre. The net acreage of the site is 8.3 acres. In order to meet this density requirement, 16 to 24 lots are required on the site.

19 lots are proposed, meeting the Comprehensive Plan's density requirement. Due to the long, narrow shape of the lot and the location of the existing bluffline and floodplain, the lots are clustered in the southwest portion of the site. This clustering results in 8 lots which are smaller than the uRRM lot size requirement of 12,150 SF. 6 of those lots are also smaller than the R-1 lot size requirement of 10,800 SF. These undersized lots vary in size from 8,276 SF to 12,026 SF. Staff is supportive of this variance request to preserve the natural features on the site while meeting density requirements.

**Minimum Lot Width:** Lot widths within the Dalton River Villas are proposed as follows:

Number of Lots	Proposed Lot Width	Required Lot Width
3	56 to 57 ft.	R-1: 80 ft. uRRM: 90 ft.
14	65 to 68 ft.	
1	80 ft.	
1	Over 300 ft.	

18 of these are undersized for the uRRM District and 17 lots are undersized for the R-1 District. The proposed lot widths are reflective of the smaller lot sizes and clustering discussed above. Staff is supportive of this variance request.

**Maximum Impervious Surface:** The maximum impervious surface allowed for a lot in the uRRM District is 30%. 8 of the lots are proposed to exceed this impervious surface maximum. These lots are proposed to range from 30.95% to 45.34% impervious surface coverage. This request is another result of the smaller lot sizes and clustering proposed.

The total amount of impervious surface expected for the development as a whole, including lot improvements, the street, and the sidewalk, is 91,108 SF, or 13% of the total site area. This includes two outlots which make up roughly 50% of the site and which will be maintained as pervious surface. While 8 of the lots themselves will exceed the impervious surface limit due to their smaller size, the entire development will be well below the 30% maximum. Therefore, Staff supports this variance request.

**Minimum Front Setback from a Local Road:** The applicant is proposing a minimum 25-foot front setback from the Woodbine St NW right-of-way. This is consistent with the R-1 District, but undersized for the uRRM District which requires a 35-foot setback. For the lots on the eastern side of Woodbine St NW, would actually require homes to be built closer to the bluff and the Rum River. For lots on the western side of Woodbine St NW, this would require homes to be built closer to Ambassador Blvd NW, which is an arterial roadway. Staff is supportive of the reduced front setback variance in order to preserve the natural features in the area and move homes further off of Ambassador Blvd NW.

**Minimum Rear Setback from a County Road:** For lots 7, 8, and 9, the applicant is requesting a 35-foot setback from the Ambassador Blvd NW right-of-way. The 50-foot setback requirement comes from the uRRM District. In this instance, that setback requirement would lead homes to be constructed closer to the bluff and the Rum River.

For all other lots in the R-1 district, the rear yard setback is 30 feet, regardless of if the lot abuts a County road, local road, or an adjacent lot. Therefore, Staff is supportive of the proposed 35-foot setback requirement.

### Access

The applicant is proposing to extend Woodbine St NW to the north to serve 16 of the proposed lots. A sidewalk is proposed along the west side of the Woodbine Street extension which would connect to the existing sidewalk to the south. This roadway would terminate in a cul-de-sac. The remaining three lots are proposed to access Ambassador Blvd NW directly. Anoka County reviewed the plat and the proposed access points and stated that the preferred location for access points onto Ambassador Blvd NW is within 30 feet of the shared lot line for Lots 1 and 2 and within 30 feet of the south lot line for Lot 11. The applicant has adjusted the proposed driveway locations accordingly. Anoka County's full review letter is attached.

The creation of a public road within the Urban Rum River Management District requires a CUP. Notice for this CUP was not sent out in time for the Planning Commission meeting. Therefore, the public hearing for the CUP request will be held at the same City Council meeting where the preliminary plat, CUP, and variance requests will be considered (expected October 6, 2025) as a housekeeping item. Public notice following state statute requirements will be sent out for this meeting.

### Landscaping

The site is heavily wooded today. According to Minnesota Rules 6105.0150, clear cutting within the Urban Rum River Management Overlay District is not permitted within 150 feet of the normal high water mark of the Rum River and within 30 feet landward of any bluffline. Grading for building pads and houses within this area will need to be custom and should preserve trees of significance to the largest extent possible. This standard does not apply to authorized public services, such as streets.

The Code requires a minimum of two deciduous trees to be planted on each single-unit residential lot, one of which is in the front yard. The applicant is proposing to meet this requirement by planting a mix of birch, coffee, locust, linden, and maple trees.

## Utilities

All lots within the development are proposed to be served by City utilities. An infiltration basin is proposed on the southeast side of the development in Outlot B. A rain garden is proposed on Lot 11. Once constructed, the rain garden will be privately owned and maintained.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### ***Action to be Considered:***

The Planning Commission is requested to hold the public hearing for the preliminary plat and variance requests. Following the public hearing, Commissioners are requested to take action on the requests and provide a recommendation to Council. The Planning Commission could take one of the following actions:

1. Recommend approval with the conditions and findings of fact as presented by Staff.
2. Recommend denial with findings of fact as established by Commissioners.
3. Table the request to the next Planning Commission meeting and provide direction to Staff and the applicant as to the additional information needed.

Staff recommends approval of the variance, CUP, and preliminary plat requests with the following conditions of approval and findings of fact:

### **Suggested Motions:**

1. Move to recommend approval of the lot area, lot width, front setback, and impervious surface variances with conditions and findings as presented by Staff.
2. Move to recommend approval of the CUP for the construction of a public road within the Urban Rum River Management District with conditions and findings of fact as presented by Staff.
3. Move to recommend approval of the preliminary plat for the Dalton River Villas project with conditions and findings of fact as presented by Staff.

### ***Findings of Fact – Variances***

1. The requested variances are in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Zoning Ordinance.
2. The requested variances are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The reduced lot sizes proposed make it possible for the development to meet the density requirements of the Low Density Residential land use category.
3. Practical difficulties have been established for the site:
  - a. The applicant is proposing to develop this property for single-unit residential. This use is consistent with both the Zoning Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan's land use guidance for this site.
  - b. The variances requested are due to exceptional circumstances unique to the property and not created by the landowner. This property is a long and narrow shape which makes it difficult to access and develop. Natural features on the site including bluff and floodplain reduce the developable area of the site and dictate the location of the lots.
  - c. Granting of the variance requests will not alter the essential character of the locality. Smaller lot residential uses exist directly to the south of the proposed development.
4. Strict enforcement of the Rum River Management rules will result in unnecessary hardship. The lot size and lot width requirements of the River District and the density requirements of the Comprehensive Plan conflict when considered in conjunction with the natural features on the site.
5. Granting the variance requests is not contrary to the purpose and intent of the Rum River Management rules. The clustered design of the site with preservation of a large open space and

waterfront is consistent with the purpose and intent of the scenic designation of the Rum River and its surroundings.

### ***Conditions – Variances***

1. Approval of this request is subject to the concurrent approval of the related land use and subdivision requests pertaining to the Dalton River Villas project.
2. Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 14, and 18 may have a lot area less than 12,150 square feet as listed in the Lot Tab exhibit provided by the applicant.
3. Lots 1-10 and 12-19 may have a lot width less than 90 feet as listed in the Lot Tab exhibit provided by the applicant.
4. Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 14, and 18 may have a maximum impervious surface coverage exceeding 30% as specified in the Impervious Area exhibit provided by the applicant.
5. The entire impervious surface coverage of the site shall not exceed 30%.
6. A minimum front setback from Woodbine St NW of 25 feet is required.
7. A minimum rear setback from Ambassador Blvd NW of 35 feet is required for Lots 7, 8, and 9.
8. Approvals granted by the City Council for this project are conditioned upon the MnDNR's full approval of the project.

### ***Findings of Fact – Conditional Use Permit***

1. The proposed public road meets the environmental criteria for a CUP as established in Minnesota Rules 6105.0200.
2. The proposed public road has been designed to minimize the street's impact on the surrounding area, including avoiding steep slopes and soils with high erosion potential to the maximum extent possible.

### ***Conditions – Conditional Use Permit***

1. Approval of this request is subject to the concurrent approval of the related subdivision and land use requests pertaining to the Dalton River Villas project.
2. Applicant shall adhere to all vegetative requirements listed in the City's Urban Rum River Management District and MN State Rules Chapter 6105.
3. Applicant shall adhere to the road construction methods listed in MN State Rules 6105.0200 subp. 4.
4. All fees and financial obligations shall be received by the City prior to the releasing of the approval document for recording.
5. Other conditions identified during the review process by Staff, the Planning Commission, or the City Council.

### ***Findings of Fact – Preliminary Plat Amendment***

1. The proposed preliminary plat is consistent with the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan and is compatible with present and future land uses of the area.
2. Excluding the variances granted, the development is consistent with the City's Zoning Ordinance with noted conditions.
3. The development is designed to preserve existing natural features on the site including the bluff and floodplain.
4. City services have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development.

### ***Conditions – Preliminary Plat Amendment***

1. Approval of this request is subject to the concurrent approval of the related land use requests pertaining to the Dalton River Villas project.

2. The applicant shall address the comments included in the Engineering Review Memo dated September 9, 2025 to the City Engineer's satisfaction.
3. The applicant shall address the comments included in Anoka County's Review Memo dated September 4, 2025. The access points for Lots 1, 2, and 11 shall be provided as requested in this letter.
4. The applicant shall dedicate land below the OHW of the Rum River as public.
5. Ground cover materials shall be identified on the landscaping plan.
6. The applicant shall adjust the net density exhibit to show total site area, developable area, and undevelopable area (bluff and floodplain area).
7. The applicant shall update the grading exhibit to include land 150' from the OHW and 30' landward of the bluffline. Land within this area must be custom graded, and to the greatest extent possible, trees of significance be preserved.
8. The Lot Tab table shall be updated to include gross and net area for each lot and outlot. Land area not included in the net area total should be broken down into floodplain and bluff area for each lot.
9. Park dedication shall be satisfied at the time of final plat.
10. Applicant shall be responsible for all fees associated with the subdivision application. All fees and financial obligations shall be received by the City prior to the releasing of the approval documents related to this project for recording.
11. Other conditions identified during the review process by Staff, the Planning Commission, or the City Council.

***Attachments:***

1. Applicant Submittals
  - Existing Conditions Survey
  - Preliminary Plat
  - Net Density Exhibit
  - Lot Tab Table
  - Impervious Surface Table
2. City Engineer's Memo dated September 9, 2025
3. Anoka County review letter dated September 4, 2025