

TO: St. Francis City Council

FROM: Beth Richmond, Planner

SUBJECT: Dalton River Villas

DATE: October 6, 2025

APPLICANT: Meadow Creek Construction (Mike Pomerleau)
Between Ambassador Blvd NW and the Rum River, north of 233rd Lane NW

LOCATION: (PIN 32-34-24-24-0069)

COMP PLAN: Low Density Residential (LDR), Open Space
R-1 Urban Low Density Detached Residential, Urban Rum River Management

ZONING: Overlay (uRRM)

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 irregularly-shaped, 16-acre site located between Ambassador Blvd NW and the Rum River, north of 233rd Lane NW. 16 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.

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

- Minimum lot area (6 lots)
- Minimum lot width (18 lots)
- Maximum impervious surface (6 lots)
- Minimum front setback from local road (16 lots)
- Minimum rear setback from a County road (3 lots)

PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW

The Planning Commission reviewed the preliminary plat, Conditional Use Permit (CUP), and variances at their meeting on September 17, 2025. Members of the public attended the meeting and spoke at the public hearing. A majority of public comments were related to the existing vegetation on site and its removal. A primary concern expressed was the potential future removal of existing vegetation by homeowners. During discussion, the Planning Commission directed Staff to review the enforcement process for unlawful vegetation removal and to clarify this for the Planning Commission, City Council, and members of the public.

Following the public hearing and Planning Commission discussion, the Commission recommended approval of the variances, CUP, and preliminary plat on votes of 4-1 each.

PLANNING MEETING FOLLOW-UP

Following the Planning Commission meeting, Staff reviewed the City Code and discussed the enforcement process for unlawful vegetation removal with representatives from the Anoka Conservation District and the MnDNR. The following is a summary of the information gathered.

Vegetation removal is allowed per the City Code. The following Code vegetation removal standards apply specifically to land within this development:

- Clear cutting, except for authorized public services such as roads and utilities, is prohibited within 150 feet of the OHW of the Rum River or within 30 feet landward of a bluff. Custom grading and removal of select vegetation over 4" in diameter is permitted in these areas provided that continuous tree cover is maintained.
- The removal of dead or diseased vegetation, understory vegetation, and trees less than 4" in diameter is permitted.
- The City does not currently have a "tree preservation" ordinance, and so there are no requirements for replacing trees removed as part of a development.
- Single-unit developments require two trees to be planted per lot, with one tree in the front yard.
- A permanent vegetative buffer that is at least 100 feet wide is required along the banks of the Rum River. This buffer should consist of predevelopment vegetation where possible. Permanent signage identifying the buffer and its boundary is required.

Relative to enforcement, the City is responsible for enforcement of its code provisions, including the vegetation removal standards that are specific to the Urban Rum River Management District. Following the Planning Commission meeting, Staff has been coordinating with the police department to establish a clear protocol for how complaints are handled if they are received outside of working hours. If Staff needs assistance in evaluating a specific situation along the Rum River, the MnDNR and the Anoka Conservation District are willing and able to assist.

CITY COUNCIL ACTION

Given Planning Commission and Staff recommendation for approval of the variances, CUP, and preliminary plat requests, draft approval materials approving the requests have been prepared for your consideration.

Suggested Motions:

- a. *Move to approve Resolution 2025-46 approving the lot area, lot width, front setback, rear setback, and impervious surface variances with conditions and findings of fact as presented by Staff.*

- b. Move to approve Resolution 2025-47 approving 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.*
- c. Move to approve Resolution 2025-48 approving the preliminary plat for the Dalton River Villas project with conditions and findings of fact as presented by Staff.*

ATTACHMENTS

- Draft Approval Documents
 - Resolution 2025-46 - Variances
 - Resolution 2025-47 – CUP
 - Resolution 2025-48 – Preliminary Plat
- Updated Plans dated September 29, 2025
 - Existing conditions survey
 - Preliminary plat
 - Net density exhibit
 - Lot size table
 - Impervious surface table
 - Preliminary grading plan
 - Bluff setback grading exhibit
 - Preliminary landscape plan
- Planning Report for September 17, 2025 Meeting