

**TO:** St. Francis City Council  
**FROM:** Beth Richmond, Planner  
**SUBJECT:** The Bluffs of Rum River  
**DATE:** August 4, 2025  
**APPLICANT:** The Bluffs of Rum River LLC (Todd Christenson)  
**LOCATION:** 23925 St Francis Blvd NW  
**COMP PLAN:** Commercial, Medium Density Residential (MDR), Open Space  
**ZONING:** B-3 General Business, R-3 High Density Residential

**OVERVIEW:**

The City has received applications for an amendment to an approved preliminary plat and an associated Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the creation of a public road in the Urban Rum River Management overlay district for “The Bluffs of Rum River” development. A preliminary plat, CUP, and the first reading of a PUD ordinance were approved for this site on October 3, 2022. The approved development includes a 3-acre commercial site and 302 total housing units, comprised of detached single-unit homes, detached townhouses/villas, attached rowhouses, and an apartment building.

The amended preliminary plat proposes a layout similar to that of the original preliminary plat. The development is proposed to be phased, beginning with the southernmost residential lots. The main differences between the original plat and the amended plat include:

- Lots with access to the western street (Public Street N-S) are proposed to be detached villas instead of attached rowhouses
- Additional detached villa lots are proposed along Public Street A and 241st Avenue NW, resulting in a smaller average lot size and reduced separation between buildings
- Western street (Public Street N-S) will now be public instead of private, resulting in the need for a CUP

The land use and subdivision requests to be considered on August 4, 2025 include the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of the Bluffs PUD ordinance (Ordinance 301), amended preliminary plat, and a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a public road within the Rum River Management Overlay District.

The changes to the preliminary plat due to the proposed amendment necessitate several updates to the PUD ordinance (Ordinance 301). The 1<sup>st</sup> reading of this ordinance was approved in 2022. A marked up copy of Ordinance 301 is attached to clearly show the changes proposed. A clean draft is also attached.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW**

The Planning Commission reviewed these requests and held a public hearing at the July 16, 2025 Planning Commission meeting. Several residents were in attendance at the meeting. Questions were raised and discussed by the Planning Commission regarding the following:

- **Traffic.** A traffic study for this development was completed with the original preliminary plat request in September 2022.
- **The involvement of MnDOT and MnDNR in application review.** MnDOT, MnDNR, and Anoka County all reviewed the application and provided comments during its first approval in 2022. These comments were included as conditions of approval of the plat. The project was conditionally approved by the MnDNR on November 22, 2022. The City sent the amended plans to these entities for review on July 10, 2025. So far, Staff has only received comments from Anoka County.
- **The alignment of 241<sup>st</sup> Ave NW at the 241<sup>st</sup> Ave NW/Hwy 47 intersection.** Staff confirmed that the planned realignment of 241<sup>st</sup> Ave was discussed during the 2022 review and that no additional changes are proposed with the preliminary plat amendment. The realignment of the western leg of the 241st Ave NW/Hwy 47 intersection would occur within existing right-of-way and is not anticipated to be constructed in the near future.

In addition to the above topics, the Planning Commission also recommended a change to the location of the proposed guest parking for rowhouses so that private parking stalls are not located within the public right-of-way. After discussion, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the preliminary plat amendment and CUP.

## **PLAN UPDATES**

The Planning Commission recommended conditional approval of the requests in July. Following that meeting, Staff reached out to the applicant to clarify a number of items related to the project, including:

- The overall unit count has been adjusted as follows to eliminate the need for an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the project. Staff will recalculate the need for an EAW with each phase of the project to ensure Statute is followed.

| Housing Type            | # of Units shown in Proposed Plan | # of Units Revised |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Single unit detached    | 40                                | 40                 |
| Detached townhome/villa | 115                               | 115                |
| Attached rowhouse       | 26                                | 26                 |
| Apartment               | 120                               | 110                |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>301</b>                        | <b>291</b>         |

- The separation between detached townhouses/villas was originally approved to be 15' between living areas and 10' between garages. With the revised layout, buildings are located closer together than previously and individual drives are proposed instead of shared drives. Therefore, the separation between buildings is proposed to decrease. Staff recommends reducing the separation requirement to 12', which matches the requirement for the attached rowhouses in the development and the City Code requirement for buildings within PUDs.
- As mentioned above, guest parking for attached rowhomes needs to be adjusted to eliminate private parking stalls within public right-of-way. Staff has requested an exhibit from the applicant demonstrating that at least 13 spaces (the minimum number required by Code based on a calculation of 0.5 guest spaces per attached unit) can be accommodated by on-street parking along 241<sup>st</sup> Ave NW near Blocks 8 and 9.

### **ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED:**

Given Planning Commission and Staff recommendation of approval for the land use and subdivision requests related to The Bluffs of Rum River development, draft approval documents have been prepared and are attached for your consideration. Council action is requested on these applications.

### **Suggested Motions**

1. Move to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of Ordinance 301 approving a rezoning request for 23925 St Francis Blvd NW from R-3 and B-2 to The Bluffs PUD with findings as presented by Staff.
2. Move to approve Resolution 2025-39 authorizing publication of Ordinance 301 by summary.
3. Move to approve Resolution 2025-40 approving the preliminary plat amendment for The Bluffs of Rum River development with conditions and findings as presented by Staff.
4. Move to approve Resolution 2025-41 approving a Conditional Use Permit for the construction of public roads associated with The Bluffs of Rum River development with conditions and findings as presented by Staff.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- Draft Approval Documents
  - Ordinance 301 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading – Marked Up
  - Ordinance 301 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading - Clean
  - Summary Resolution 2025-39
  - Resolution 2025-40 – Preliminary Plat Amendment
  - Resolution 2025-41 – CUP for Public Roads
- Applicant Submittals
  - Existing Conditions
  - Preliminary Plat
- City Engineering Memo dated July 8, 2025
- July 16, 2025 Planning Commission Memo