
TO: St. Francis Planning Commission
FROM: Beth Richmond, Planner
SUBJECT: Rum River Preserve PUD
DATE: 10-8-2024 for 10-16-2024 meeting
APPLICANT: Kinghorn Construction (Grady Kinghorn)
LOCATION: 3503 Bridge St NW
COMP PLAN: Commercial, HDR
ZONING: B-1 Central Business District

OVERVIEW:

The City has received an application to establish a Planned Unit Development (PUD) for the “Rum River Preserve” development at 3503 Bridge St NW. A concept plan for this area was reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council in July and August 2024.

“Rum River Preserve” is proposed to be a phased commercial and residential development which will eventually include commercial buildings along Bridge Street and apartment units to the north. The land use request to be considered includes a rezoning to Planned Unit Development (PUD).

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 review of the PUD request is November 18, 2024.

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 on October 4, 2024 and posted on the City Hall bulletin board on October 3, 2024. The public hearing notice was mailed to all affected property owners located within 350 feet of the subject property on October 3, 2024.

ANALYSIS***Comprehensive Plan***

The Comprehensive Plan designates this site as two future land use categories: Commercial use on the southern half of the site and High Density Residential use on the northern half. The current

application for the PUD includes commercial uses on the south half of the site and apartment units on the northern half which is consistent with these land use categories. Additional analysis related to site density will be required when more detailed plans are submitted for the apartment units.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

The applicant is requesting to rezone the entire 5.1-acre site from B-1 Central Business to a Planned Unit Development (PUD). PUDs are intended to allow for the mixing of uses and flexibility from the general standards of the Code in order to allow for more innovative and efficient design within neighborhoods or sites. By allowing flexibility from the strict provisions of the Zoning Code, the PUD process is intended to produce a clear and identified benefit to the City that would not have otherwise been achievable through the standard zoning process. As stated in City Code Section 10-51-01, this public benefit may include: innovations in development to meet new or growing demands for economic growth, higher standards of site and building design, a creative use of land and development which allows for a phased transition of land from one activity to another, and/or a more efficient use of land.

The following deviations are requested from the current code regulations as part of the PUD and will be discussed in greater detail below:

- Allowing a drive-through and standalone apartments along Bridge Street
- Deviations from the B-1 District standards related to setbacks and design standards

The applicant is proposing to construct this development in phases. The first phase of the project is proposed to be a commercial center building with a drive-through. The second phase would include the remaining commercial land on the site. Subsequent phases would include the development of apartment units on the northern half of the site.

The applicant has provided detailed plans for Phase 1 and conceptual plans for the future phases of the project. If the PUD is supported by the City Council, a PUD ordinance will be created which will be binding on all phases of the development. The applicant is advised that any changes or additional deviations requested for the PUD as a result of additional planning for future phases will require a PUD amendment and public review process.

Commercial Uses

The applicant is proposing two phases of commercial development within the Rum River Preserve PUD. The first phase includes a three-tenant commercial center building with a drive-through. The building is proposed to be approximately 5,300 square feet in size. Drive-throughs are not currently allowed in the B-1 District, however, during the concept planning process, the Planning Commission and City Council felt that a drive-through may be appropriate in this area with certain conditions such as additional landscaping and an emphasis on pedestrian circulation. Processing the application as a PUD allows for inclusion of a drive-through. The proposed food service uses within the building are permitted in the B-1 District.

The second phase shows a small commercial building (824 square feet) with a drive-through. A second drive-through was not contemplated during the concept planning process for this site and is not supported by Staff at this time because it creates further divergence from the broader pedestrian oriented policy direction for Bridge Street development as articulated in the Comprehensive Plan and St. Francis Forward Plan. Unless additional direction is provided by the Planning Commission and City Council, the second phase of the PUD should be developed consistent with the commercial uses permitted in the B-1 District. A site plan review from Planning Commission and City Council will be required at the time of development of this future phase to ensure all standards are met.

Residential Uses

The applicant is proposing two apartment buildings on the north side of the site. This portion of the project is anticipated to be a future phase(s) of the project, so no specific designs have been provided

or reviewed at this time. Standalone apartments are not currently allowed in the B-1 District. However, it was determined during the concept planning process that standalone apartments combined with the earlier phases of commercial uses would allow a desirable mix of commercial and residential uses on the site, meeting the intention of the B-1 District and the future land use guidance of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, standalone apartments are proposed to be allowed within the Rum River Preserve PUD.

As it stands today, the apartment building will be limited to the standards for apartment buildings provided in the City's R-3 High Density Residential District. If flexibility from these standards is needed, a PUD amendment would be required. When the applicant brings this phase forward, a site plan review and approval by Planning Commission and City Council will be required prior to development. All apartment details, including density, architectural design, parking, and landscaping, will be reviewed with the site plan.

Phase 1 Analysis

Use-Specific Standards

The following standards exist for drive-through uses within City Code Section 10-68-09 Drive-Thru Establishments:

- A. All drive-thru lanes shall be clearly identified using striping, landscaping, and/or signs.
- B. Queuing spaces or areas shall not interfere with parking spaces, aisles, loading areas, through traffic, vehicle or pedestrian circulation, or driveway access.
- C. Curb-cut entrances for queuing driveways and exit driveways shall be consolidated with any other driveway entrances or exits on the site.
- D. Drive-thru windows, drop boxes, menu boards, and associated or similar structures shall be located to the rear or side of the principal building, and must incorporate landscape screening, decorative fences, walls, or a combination of these elements to minimize their view from the street.
- E. Drive-thru lanes should be located away from building entrances and (unless screened) should not be located between a principal building and the street, or if a corner site, all adjacent roadways.
- F. Drive-up window lanes: The minimum drive width for drive-up window lanes shall be 14 feet.
- G. Drive-thru lanes shall be designed in a manner that allows drivers not using the drive-thru, or wishing to exit the drive-thru area, to bypass the drive-thru lane(s).
- H. All new lighting must be LED, fully shielded, be no brighter than needed for the task, and shine only where it is needed. Lights should have a correlated color temperature (CCT) of 3,000 Kelvin (K) or lower, and dim or turn off at 11:00 p.m. or one (1) hour after close of business, whichever is later. Existing lighting should be retrofitted or replaced to meet these standards.
- I. Menu boards must be no brighter than needed for the task, be lit with LED lights of a correlated color temperature (CCT) no higher than 5,000 Kelvin (K) (ideally 4,000K or lower), and be turned off when the drive-thru closes.
- J. Only one lane with a minimum of 50 feet leading to the drive-up window shall be provided for queuing.
- K. If the drive-thru facility is adjacent to residential properties:
 - 1. The facility shall establish sound barriers and be screened from vehicle lights in stacking areas.
 - 2. Systems for placing of orders shall be located and designed so that noise is not perceptible on adjacent residential properties.
 - 3. The hours of operation are limited to 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. unless extended by the City Council as part of an interim use permit.

The applicant has not indicated that flexibility is needed from these standards. Therefore, these standards will apply to the proposed drive-through use. The applicant will be responsible for demonstrating that the drive-through use will be appropriately screened as described above from the future residential uses to the north.

Access

The subject site is located adjacent to Bridge St NW. The applicant is proposing to improve the existing access onto Bridge Street so that it will function as the sole entry point for all phases of the development. Staff is supportive of this approach. Since Bridge Street is a County Road, the plans have been sent to Anoka County for their review and comment. The County has provided comment that construction of a right turn lane from Bridge Street into the site will be required with the development of Phase 1.

Parking

The amount of parking required within the City varies by use of the property. A commercial center such as the one proposed to be developed in Phase 1 requires 1 parking space for every 250 square feet of floor area. The building is proposed to be 5,343 square feet, therefore, 21 parking spaces are required. 38 parking spaces are proposed, which is more than required. This PUD is proposed to be located within the Bridge Street corridor, an area planned for pedestrian walkability and connectivity in the Comprehensive Plan and the St. Francis Forward Plan. In accordance with those plans, Staff recommends that the applicant reduce the number of proposed parking spaces on the site to provide room for additional landscaping and pedestrian connections along Bridge Street and throughout the site, and to reduce the amount of impervious surface. A reduction in impervious surface will result in a reduced need for stormwater management facilities.

The parking spaces that are proposed to serve the Phase 1 commercial building are shorter than currently allowed by City Code by one foot. The site plan should be revised to show parking stalls that are 9' x 19' in dimension.

Pedestrian Connectivity

Within the Bridge Street corridor, there is an emphasis on walkability and pedestrian connections. The City's expectation is that sites developed within this corridor will continue to enhance the existing trail network to facilitate the safe movement of pedestrians between community destinations such as the high school, the Rum River, Rum River North County Park, residential neighborhoods, and retail destinations. This is particularly true for PUDs, as these developments are expected to produce a higher level of site design than a typical development.

The PUD plans as submitted do not contemplate pedestrian connections within the development. A sidewalk extending from the existing Bridge Street sidewalk is proposed, but dead-ends before it reaches the commercial building. This design is not consistent with the City's planning efforts for the area and is not supported by Staff.

Staff recommends that the applicant revise the plans and provide additional pedestrian connections within Phase 1 as well as throughout the development, considering the natural tendencies of future visitors to the site. This includes planning for visitors to the site from the high school to the east as well as from the businesses to the west across the Rum River, taking into account that pedestrians often prefer to take the shortest and simplest routes to their destinations. Additional sidewalk extensions and/or crosswalks may be appropriate in order to enhance safety and connectivity.

Landscaping

The applicant has provided a landscaping plan for the site. However, the landscaping plan as submitted is not consistent with the discussions that occurred during the Planning Commission's and Council's review of the concept plan.

Buildings within the Bridge Street corridor are typically required to be placed within 5 feet of the front property line, along Bridge Street. While reviewing the concept plan, the City Council was willing to support a drive-through on the site with parking in the front, in exchange for a greater degree of landscaping between the parking area and the front property line than what would typically be required by Code. This exchange would support the pedestrian atmosphere along Bridge Street while allowing the necessary circulation for the drive-through use. Currently, the applicant is proposing to plant seven trees along the front property line, six of which are to be located in the County ROW and not on the subject site. Staff does not consider the proposed plantings to be adequate to meet the City's intentions for the area.

Staff recommends that the applicant revise the landscaping plan to show a greater degree of landscaping between the front parking area and Bridge Street, with all plantings located on the subject site. Staff's expectation is that this landscaping would include a mix of vegetation such as trees, shrubs, and perennials. In order to accommodate the additional plantings, it may be appropriate to shift the site improvements to the north. As the future northern residential area is large and has not been fully designed yet, this shift would not be anticipated to detrimentally affect future phases of the PUD. Reducing the amount of parking on site as recommended above would also result in additional area for landscaping.

Additional plantings along Bridge Street are particularly important, as the Phase 1 parking lot is proposed to be raised 2-4 feet above the current grade of the existing sidewalk, with a short retaining wall between the parking area and the sidewalk. This change of grade will result in the headlights of vehicles parking in the parking lot to be located roughly at head-height for pedestrians along Bridge Street. Additional plantings in this area will help to reduce this impact to the pedestrian atmosphere.

Screening

At times, the City requires screening between uses in order to provide necessary separation and/or to mitigate the visual impacts of mechanical or other building equipment on neighboring properties. In Phase 1, screening is expected for the proposed dumpster enclosure and to provide separation between the commercial/drive-through use and the future residential units to the north.

The applicant is proposing to place the dumpster for Phase 1 in front of the commercial building along Bridge Street. The dumpster should be moved within the commercial building itself if possible. If not possible to house the dumpster within the building, it should be moved to the rear of the building, away from Bridge Street and the main entryway of the building.

Screening is also required between the commercial building and the future residential area to the north to mitigate the impacts from noise and headlights resulting from the proposed drive-through use. The applicant is not currently proposing any landscaping or screening on the north side of the building.

Screening must be a minimum of 6' in height and may consist of vegetation, fencing, berming, or a combination of these elements in accordance with the requirements of City Code Section 10-73-05. The applicant should revise the plans to demonstrate how Phase 1 will adequately screen the elements described here from surrounding residential uses and the Bridge Street right-of-way.

Utilities/Stormwater

The applicant is proposing to address stormwater separately as part of each individual phase. In order to be most efficient with spacing and resources, the applicant may wish to design and install a stormwater management facility or facilities during Phase 1 which will be sized to serve all current and future phases of development. Staff is supportive of this practice as it tends to allow a more efficient use of land rather than addressing stormwater for each individual phase.

Currently, the infiltration basin for Phase 1 is proposed to be located west of the access road. Best practice in the City, and particularly along Bridge Street, is to place stormwater facilities behind buildings to allow buildings to be placed closer to Bridge Street. The City Engineer has reviewed the proposed infiltration basin and provided comment.

Recommendations

Action to be Considered:

The Planning Commission is requested to hold the public hearing for the rezoning to PUD. Following the public hearing, if Planning Commission feels comfortable moving the project forward, Commissioners are requested to take action on the request and provide a recommendation to Council. The Planning Commission may also choose to table the application and direct the applicant to provide additional information needed.

If the Planning Commission chooses to recommend approval, the following findings of fact and conditions are suggested by Staff:

Findings – PUD

1. The proposed rezoning is consistent with the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan and is compatible with present and future land uses of the area.

Conditions – PUD

1. Any expansion of this PUD or change to the requirements of this PUD shall require a PUD amendment as specified by Code Section 10-37-05 Amendment of a PUD.
2. Uses permitted on site:
 - a. One drive-through
 - b. Standalone apartments
 - c. Principal and accessory uses allowed in the B-1 District
3. Dimensional Standards
 - a. Commercial buildings shall be set back no more than 80 feet from the front property line. All other dimensional standards of the B-1 District shall apply.
 - b. Apartments shall follow the site dimensional standards established for the R-3 District.
4. A maximum of four principal buildings may be allowed on the lot.
5. Each subsequent phase of the Rum River Preserve PUD shall include a site plan which will be reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council.
6. Design Standards
 - a. A parking area may be located between the Phase 1 commercial building and Bridge Street.
 - b. All other design standards for the B-1 District shall apply to the commercial buildings within the PUD.
 - c. The parking lot and parking spaces shall be designed to meet the standards in City Code Section 10-72-04 Performance Standards.
7. The drive-through use shall meet all use-specific standards established for this use type in City Code Section 10-68-09 Drive-Thru Establishment.
8. Applicant shall address all comments from Anoka County to the County's satisfaction.
9. Applicant shall address all comments from the City Engineer to the Engineer's satisfaction.
10. Applicant shall revise plans to provide pedestrian connections throughout the Phase 1 site, to future phases of the Rum River Preserve development, and to existing infrastructure along Bridge Street.
11. Applicant shall revise the landscaping plan to show a greater degree of landscaping between the front parking area and Bridge Street, with all plantings located on the subject site.
12. Applicant shall place the dumpster proposed in Phase 1 within the commercial building, or, if not possible, to the rear of the building away from Bridge Street and the main entryway of the building.
13. The dumpster shall be screened in accordance with City Code Section 10-71-03 Waste, Refuse, and Recyclable Material.

14. Applicant shall revise plans to show screening between the Phase 1 commercial building and the future residential building(s) to the north in accordance with City Code Section 10-73-05 Required Screening.
15. Applicant shall be responsible for all fees associated with this land use application.
16. Other conditions identified during the review process by Staff, the Planning Commission, or the City Council.

Attachments:

1. City Engineer's Memo dated October 9, 2024
2. Applicant Submittals
 - Existing Conditions
 - Building Elevations
 - Site Plan
 - Preliminary Grading Plan
 - Preliminary Landscape Plan