THE CITY OF WATERTOWN
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BUILDING SAFETY & ZONING DIVISION

PLAN COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

TO: Plan Commission
DATE: October 26th, 2026
SUBJECT: 1911 Gateway Drive, Site Plan Review and Conditional Use Permit - CUP

A request by Hunter Lien, agent for River Crossing LLC, for a Site Plan Review and a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a 'Group Development'. Parcel PIN(s): 291-0815-1624-003

SITE DETAILS:
Acres: 33.32
Current Zoning: Multi-Family Residential-10 (MR-10)
Existing Land Use: Vacant Land
Future Land Use Designation: Multi-Family/Mixed Residential

BACKGROUND AND APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:
The applicant is seeking Site Plan Review and approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a 'Group Development'. This development proposal meets the definition of a 'Group Development' due to it including two or more structures containing principal land uses on the same lot. The applicant is proposing a 274-unit multi-family development consisting of eight (8)-8-unit buildings, four (4)-12-unit buildings, six (6)-15-unit buildings, four (4)-18-unit buildings, and a 3,200 square clubhouse building. All residential buildings will be 2-stories. Units within the development will consist of 72 one-bedroom units, 178 two-bedroom units, and 24 three-bedroom units. Exterior building materials consist of vinyl siding, brick and stone veneer, vinyl double hung windows, asphalt shingle roofs, and aluminum trim. Access to the development will consist of two driveways from Gateway Drive on the west and one from Air Park Drive on the north. Parking will consist of 256 spaces in garages and 338 surface spaces, for a total of 594 spaces including 12 ADA spaces.

STAFF EVALAUATION:

Site Plan Review Committee:
See Minutes of October 12th, 2026

Land Use and Zoning:

1. Site Plan Review: A Site Plan Review Committee recommendation and Plan Commission approval of the site plan is required pursuant to Sections 550-144 & 550-145 of the zoning code.

   Within the Multi-Family Residential-10 (MR-10) 'Apartment: 4,350 square feet per dwelling unit (five- to twenty-four-unit building)' is a principal land use permitted as a conditional use and includes land uses that consists of attached, multifamily residences of no more than 24 dwelling units per building [per § 550-49A(7)]

   Regulations for 'Apartment: 4,350 square feet per dwelling unit (five- to twenty-four-unit building)' include:
   - No more than 24 dwelling units, and no fewer than three, may be located in a building.
   - A Group Development CUP is required for any development with one or more buildings which contain four or more dwelling units

   Site Layout and Design:
   Within the Multi-Family Residential-10 (MR-10) the minimum paved surface setback is three feet from side or rear lot lines and ten feet from street lot lines [per § 550-27F(2)(f) and the minimum dwelling unit (building) separation is 20 feet [per § 550-27F(2)(g)]. Parking standards require 2.5 stalls per three-

bedroom; two stalls per two-bedroom, one-bedroom or efficiency. The proposed development meets the setback, building separation, and parking standards.

Vehicle Access and Circulation:
The proposed driveways and parking stalls meet aisle width and parking stall dimension requirements specified in the Off-Street Parking and Traffic Circulation Standards [per § 550-107F].

Landscaping:
The applicant has not provided a landscaping plan or landscaping point calculations for this development proposal.

Lighting:
The applicant has not submitted a lighting plan or photometric map for this development proposal.

2. Group Development: Any development proposal that meets the definition of a 'Group Development' per Section § 550-68 shall be subject to the 'Use Regulations' under § 550-69.

Under section § 550-68A(1) '*Two or more structures containing principal land uses on the same lot'* is defined as a 'Group Development'. Common examples of group developments include six-unit apartment buildings, apartment complexes, condominium complexes, strip centers, shopping centers, and office centers *[per § 550-68B].*

Under section § 550-69 there are no permitted by right uses and all uses shall be conditional uses. All land uses permitted under the applicable zoning district are allowed within the 'Group Development'.

Section § 550-69:

A. Permitted by right: not applicable.

B. Conditional use regulations. Any land use that is permitted as a permitted by right land use or as a conditional land use within the applicable zoning district(s) is permitted to locate within a group development. The detailed land use regulations of this section that pertain to individual land uses shall also apply to individual land uses within a group development, as will all other applicable provisions of this chapter. Therefore, land uses permitted by right in the zoning district shall be permitted by right within an approved group development (unless otherwise restricted by the conditions of approval imposed during the conditional use approval for the group development as a whole), and land uses permitted as a conditional use in the zoning district shall be permitted within the group development only with conditional use approval for the specific use. In all cases, the following conditional use conditions shall be applied to the group development as a whole and to individual uses within the group development:

(1) All required off-street parking spaces and access drives shall be located entirely within the boundaries of the group development. **Meets Standard.**

(2) The development shall contain a sufficient number of waste bins to accommodate all trash and waste generated by the land uses in a convenient manner. **Meets Standard.**

(3) No group development shall take access to a local residential street. **Meets Standard.**

(4) All development located within a group development shall be located so as to comply with the intent of this chapter regarding setbacks of structures and buildings from lot lines. As such,

individual principal and accessory structures and buildings located within group developments shall be situated within building envelopes that serve to demonstrate complete compliance with said intent. Said building envelopes shall be depicted on the site plan required for review of group developments. The use of this approach to designing group developments will also ensure the facilitation of subdividing group developments in the future (if such action is so desired). **Meets Standard.**

(5) The following standards shall apply to all group developments:

(a) Building exterior materials shall be of high quality on all sides of the structure, including glass, brick, decorative concrete block or stucco. Decorative architectural metal with concealed fasteners may be approved with special permission from the City. **Meets Standard.**

(b) Building exterior design shall be unified in design and materials throughout the structure and shall be complementary to other structures in the vicinity. However, the development shall employ varying building setbacks, height, roof, treatments, door and window openings, and other structural and decorative elements to reduce the apparent size and scale of the structure. A minimum of 20% of the combined facades of the structure shall employ actual facade protrusions or recesses. A minimum of 20% of the combined linear roof eave or parapet lines of the structure shall employ differences in height of eight feet or more. Roofs with particular slopes may be required by the City to complement existing buildings or otherwise establish a particular aesthetic objective. **Meets Standard.**

(c) Mechanical equipment, refuse containers and any permitted outdoor storage shall be fully concealed from on-site and off-site ground-level views with materials identical to those used on the building exterior. **Meets Standard.**

(d) Standard corporate trademark building designs, materials, architectural elements and colors all shall be acceptable, as determined by the City, only as subtly integrated into the more generic design of the building as a whole. Color schemes of all architectural elements shall be muted, neutral, nonreflective, and nonuse or non-tenant specific. **Meets Standard.**

(e) Public entryways shall be prominently indicated from the building's exterior design and shall be emphasized by on-site traffic flow patterns. All sides of the building that directly face or abut a public street shall have public entrances. **N/A.**

(f) Loading areas shall be completely screened from surrounding roads and residential, office and commercial properties. Said screening may be through internal loading areas, screening wall that will match the building exterior in materials and design, fully opaque landscaping at time of planting, or combinations of the above. Gates and fencing may be used for security purposes but not for screening and shall be of high aesthetic quality. **N/A.**

(g) Vehicle access from public streets shall be designed to accommodate peak traffic volumes without disrupting traffic on public streets from inadequate throat length, access drive width or design or inadequate driveway location. The impact of traffic generated by the proposed development shall be demonstrated by a traffic impact analysis performed by the applicant's traffic engineer so as to not adversely impact off-site public roads, intersections and interchanges during the traffic peak associated with a full parking lot. Where the project shall adversely impact off-site traffic, the City may deny the application, may require a size

reduction in the proposed development, or may require off-site improvements. **Meets Standard.**

(h) Parking lot design shall employ interior landscaped islands with a minimum of 400 square feet at all parking islands, and in addition shall provide a minimum of one landscaped island of a minimum of 400 square feet in each parking aisle for every 20 cars in that aisle. Aisle-end islands shall count toward meeting this requirement. Landscaped medians shall be used to break large parking areas into distinct pods, with a maximum of 100 spaces in any one pod. **Needs to be waived, requirement not applicable to the proposed development design.**

(i) A minimum of one cart-return area of 200 square feet shall be provided for every parking area pod. There shall be no exterior cart-return or cart-storage areas located within 25 feet of the building in areas located between the building and a public street. **N/A.**

(j) The applicant shall demonstrate full compliance with City standards for stormwater, utilities, erosion control and public safety. **Meets Standard.**

(k) On-site landscaping shall be provided per the landscaping requirements of this chapter, except that building foundation landscaping and paved area landscaping shall be provided at 1.5 times the required landscape points for development in the zoning district. **Needs to be waived, proposal does not meet 1.5 times landscaping points requirement.**

(l) A conceptual plan for exterior signage shall be provided at time of detailed site plan or GDP that provides for coordinated and complementary exterior sign location, configurations and colors throughout the planned development. All freestanding signage within the development shall complement the on-building signage. Freestanding sign materials and design shall complement the building exterior and may not exceed the maximum height requirement of this chapter and the Building Code. **Meets Standard.**

(m) The entire development shall provide for full and safe pedestrian and bicycle access within the development and shall provide appropriate connections to the existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the community and in surrounding neighborhoods, including sidewalk connections to all building entrances from all public streets. The development shall provide secure bicycle parking and pedestrian furniture in appropriate quantities and location. A central pedestrian gathering area shall be provided. **Meets Standard.**

(n) Where such developments are proposed to provide a new location for a business already located within the community, a required condition of approval for the new development shall be a prohibition on conditions of sale, lease or use of the previously occupied building or site which provide limits beyond the range of applicable local, state or federal regulations. If such limits are required, the applicant may seek City approval to demolish the previously occupied structure and prepare the site for some future development. **N/A.**

(o) The applicant shall provide adequate evidence that the proposed development and uses cannot be adequately sited within or on existing developed properties or buildings within the community. **Meets Standard.**

(p) The Plan Commission may waive any of the above standards by a three-fourths' vote of members in attendance, but only if supplemental design elements or improvements are incorporated into the project that compensate for the waiver of the particular standard. **Two standards will need to be waived to approve this proposal.**

WISCONSIN STATUES:

All Conditional Use Permits are subject to the requirements of Wisconsin Act 67.

Under 2017 Wisconsin Act 67: Section 16. 62.23 (7) (de) Conditional Use Permits.

1. *62.23 (7) (de)(1) In this paragraph:*
   a. *"Conditional use" means a use allowed under a conditional use permit, special exception, or other special zoning permission issued by a city, but does not include a variance.*
   b. *"Substantial evidence" means facts and information, other than merely personal preferences or speculation, directly pertaining to the requirements and conditions an applicant must meet to obtain a conditional use permit and that reasonable persons would accept in support of a conclusion.*
2. *62.23 (7) (de)(2)*
   a. *If an applicant for a conditional use permit meets or agrees to meet all of the requirements and conditions specified in the city ordinance or those imposed by the city zoning board, the city shall grant the conditional use permit. Any condition imposed must be related to the purpose of the ordinance and be based on substantial evidence.*
   b. *The requirements and conditions described under subd. 2. a. must be reasonable and, to the extent practicable, measurable and may include conditions such as the permit's duration, transfer, or renewal. The applicant must demonstrate that the application and all requirements and conditions established by the city relating to the conditional use are or shall be satisfied, both of which must be supported by substantial evidence. The city's decision to approve or deny the permit must be supported by substantial evidence.*
3. *62.23 (7) (de)(3)*
   Upon receipt of a conditional use permit application and following publication in the city of a class 2 notice under ch. 985, the city shall hold a public hearing on the application.
4. *62.23 (7) (de)(4)*
   Once granted, a conditional use permit shall remain in effect as long as the conditions upon which the permit was issued are followed, but the city may impose conditions such as the permit's duration, transfer, or renewal, in addition to any other conditions specified in the zoning ordinance or by the city zoning board.
   62.23 (7) (de)(5)
   If a city denies a person's conditional use permit application, the person may appeal the decision to the circuit court under the procedures contained in par. (e) 10.

PLAN COMMISSION DECISION:

Group Development Criteria	Applicant Provided Substantial Evidence		Opponent Provided Substantial Evidence		PC Finds Standards Met	
Review § 550-69B	**Yes**	No	Yes	**No**	**Yes**	No

If Plan Commission answers "no" to any of the questions, above, the CUP must be denied. Otherwise, proceed to the conditions of approval.

PLAN COMMISSION OPTIONS:

The following are possible options for the Plan Commission:

1. Deny the Conditional Use Permit, based on failure to provide substantial evidence to meet one or more of the regulatory standards.
2. Approve the Conditional Use Permit without conditions, based on successfully providing substantial evidence of regulatory compliance.
3. Approve the Conditional Use Permit with conditions as identified by the Plan Commission:
   a. Waive Sections § 550-69B(5)(h) & 550-69B(5)(k).
   b. Provide a code compliant landscaping plan with calculated landscaping points.
   c. Provide a code compliant lighting plan with a photometric map.
   d. Obtain required Stormwater and Erosion Control Permits.

STAFF RECOMMEDATION:

- Staff recommends approval of the Site Plan and Conditional Use permit with conditions.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Application materials