



DATE: August 4, 2021

TO: Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Jessica Jagoe, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Planning Case #21-017 – Public Hearing Required
Applicant: ISD #621: Mounds View Public Schools
Property Location: 1900 and 1901 Lake Valentine Road
Request: PUD Amendment

Requested Action

Mounds View Public Schools (“The Applicant”) the applicant is requesting a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Amendment for an extension for the timing of construction of road and safety improvements as it relates to the alignment of Lake Valentine Road at 1900 and 1901 Lake Valentine Road.

Background

1. Planned Unit Development

At their May 22, 2019 and subsequently amended on April 27, 2020, the City Council approved Planning Case 18-014 for a Planned Unit Development with Mounds View Public Schools for Mounds View High School. The amendment added 14 additional conditions to the existing Planned Unit Development to address existing traffic and pedestrian safety issues based on the findings contained within the study report, an evaluation of existing site conditions, and the Planned Unit Development Agreement. The terms of the PUD approval requires the School District to implement safety improvements on Lake Valentine Road to address traffic and increased pedestrian crossings between the school building and the north parking lot, including installation of turn lanes and other access improvements, trail and sidewalk improvements, pedestrian signal, signage and striping modifications, and drainage and utility improvements.

The Applicant originally proposed two separate phases of traffic and pedestrian safety improvements for Lake Valentine Road. Phase 1 safety improvements, installed in 2020, which included installation of a pedestrian traffic signal system, crosswalk markings, temporary painted center median, curb ramps and sidewalk pedestrian routes to the front of the school.

The Phase 2 traffic and pedestrian safety improvements were scheduled for construction in 2021 in order to allow the School District to acquire additional property from the State of Minnesota. This additional property would allow the relocation of the west entrance to the north parking lot to align with the drop-off/pick-up lot on the south side of Lake Valentine Road. Additional improvements include construction of a center median at the crosswalk, modifications to the south boundary of the north parking lot, and the construction of dedicated right turn lanes for westbound traffic accessing the east parking lot entrance and for the eastbound traffic accessing the drop-off/pick-up lot.

2. Overview of Request

The Applicant has been working with the State of Minnesota for nearly two years on purchasing property, but has been unsuccessful in obtaining an easement or acquisition of land. The State has indicated they are at least another year out in considering the sale of this land. The Applicant believes this option is no longer feasible and is preparing an alternate design. The City Council reviewed this issue at their May 17, 2021, workshop. The Council noted the use of the State property is preferred; however, they understand there is no guarantee the school district will be able to purchase that land. Safety is the most important factor. The applicant will submit an application for the revised improvements to the City later this year. The current schedule in the approved PUD does not allow the School District sufficient time for completion in 2021 due to design changes for realignment on school district land. The Applicant is requesting the Planning Commission consider an extension of the deadline to 2022.

The Applicant has provided the following as a proposed extended schedule:

- October 2021 – City Submittal
- January 2022 – Issue Construction Documents
- June 2022 – Begin Construction
- Mid-August 2022 – Substantial Completion

This extension will allow further review and examination of vehicle counts and flows to develop a more-refined plan for the safety improvements. In addition, the School District plans to take into account the feedback of the City Council with regards to the Mounds View High School pick-up and drop-off operations before and after school.

Application Review

1. 1355.04 Procedural Requirements for Specific Applications

A public hearing for a PUD Amendment request is required before the request can be brought before the City Council. The applicant or its representative shall be given the opportunity to appear before the Planning Commission to answer questions or give explanations regarding the proposal. Upon completion of the public hearing and its study and consideration of the application, the Planning Commission shall submit its written report, containing its findings, conclusions, and recommendations as to the application, to the City Council.

Under Section 1355.06 subd.4, an application for an amendment shall be administered in the same manner as required for a new application. Any structural alteration, enlargement or intensification change in site plan, or similar change not specially permitted, shall require City Council action and all procedures shall apply as if a new application were being requested; provided, however, that

when such changes are deemed to be insignificant by the Zoning Administrator, the requirements of a public hearing may be waived.

Findings of Fact

The Planning Commission must make a finding as to whether or not the proposed application would adversely affect the surrounding neighborhood or the community as a whole based on the aforementioned factors. Staff offers the following findings for consideration:

1. The properties located at 1900 and 1901 Lake Valentine Road are located in the R-1 Single Family Residential District.
2. The proposed conditions when implemented will create a safer environment for pedestrian movement across Lake Valentine Road.
3. The proposed roadway improvements will improve traffic flow through the road section adjacent to the school.
4. With the applied conditions, the application is not anticipated to create a negative impact on the immediate area or the community as a whole.
5. The traffic and pedestrian study was reviewed as part of the April 2020 Amended PUD application by City and School District staff.
6. The City and School District staff concur on the proposed conditions and recommended improvements.

Proposed Motion Language

Staff has provided the following options and motion language for this case.

1. **Recommend Approval with Conditions:** Motion to recommend *approval* of Planning Case 21-017 for an Amended PUD at 1900 and 1901 Lake Valentine Road, based on the findings of fact, as amended by the conditions in the August 4, 2021, Report to the Planning Commission:
 - a) Extension on timeline for construction and realignment of the west parking lot entrance to align with the west school site entrance on the south side of Lake Valentine Road (Pick-up / Drop-off Access) to be completed prior to the start of the 2022-2023 school year. The School District shall submit a revised design and layout for the road and safety improvements on existing school property Site Plan Review and approval no later than December 31, 2021.
 - b) All other conditions of the original Planned Unit Development and Amended Planned Unit Development shall remain in full force and effect.
2. **Recommend Approval without Conditions:** Motion to recommend *approval* of Planning Case 21-017 for an Amended PUD at 1900 and 1901 Lake Valentine Road, based on the findings of fact and recommendations based on the recommendations contained within the traffic study.
3. **Recommend Denial:** Motion to recommend *denial* of Planning Case 21-017 for an Amended PUD at 1900 and 1901 Lake Valentine Road, based on the following findings of fact: *findings to deny should specifically reference the reasons for denial and why those reasons cannot be mitigated.*

4. Table: Motion to *table* Planning Case 21-017 for an Amended PUD at 1900 and 1901 Lake Valentine Road for the following reasons: *a specific reason and/or information request should be included with a motion to table.*

Public Notice and Comments

Notice was published in the *Pioneer Press* on July 22, 2021. Notice and website was prepared by the City and mailed to property owners within 1,000 feet of the subject property.

Deadline for Agency Actions

The City of Arden Hills received the completed application for this request on July 13, 2021. Pursuant to Minnesota State Statute, the City must act on this request by September 11, 2021 (60 days), unless the City provides the petitioner with written reasons for an additional 60-day review period. With consent of the applicant, the City may extend the review period beyond the initial 120 days.

Attachments

- A. Land Use Application
- B. Location Map
- C. Narrative
- D. Minutes