



MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 17, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
Dave Perrault, City Administrator

FROM: Jessica Jagoe, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Planning Case 22-019 – Concept Plan Review
Variance – 3588 Ridgewood Road

Budgeted Amount:	Actual Amount:	Funding Source:
N/A	N/A	N/A

Council Should Consider

Council should consider a request for a Concept Plan Review ahead of Planning Commission review for 3588 Ridgewood Road. Ahmed Ali (“Applicant”) is seeking feedback from the City Council on flexibility for parcel access from City right-of-way, front and rear setback distances, and nonconforming lot size due to lot depth.

The Concept Plan Review process is an opportunity for the City Council to provide comments and questions regarding proposed developments. A concept review is considered advisory and is nonbinding to the City and Applicant (Section 1320.14, Subd 4 of the Zoning Code). No formal action can be taken at a Work Session. A formal application will be subject to the full review process, including a public hearing with Planning Commission and City Council review. The Applicant would like Council feedback ahead of the Planning Commission meeting to allow for changes to the application if necessary.

Background

At the August 16, 2021 Work Session, the Arden Hills City Council first discussed selling the city-owned parcel at 3588 Ridgewood Road—now the Subject Property of this planning case. At the subsequent meeting, the Planning Commission reviewed the interest in selling the parcel for consistency with the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The City has verified that the parcel is not dedicated for a public purpose that would prohibit the sale (i.e. park land or public

improvements) or as a site for future development to meet the needs of city infrastructure or operational activities, and it was found that the sale of the Subject Property would be in compliance with the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

During the discussions, the City was evaluating the parcel size based off of Ramsey County Property Records and GIS mapping as there was no Certificate of Survey on record for the Subject Property. Ramsey County Property Records have the deeded acreage as 0.31 acres (approx. 13,500 square feet). The Subject Property came from the State through the County as part of the turnback of the old Snelling Avenue corridor ROW to the City. Based on the best information available from Ramsey County, city staff initially identified that the total lot area of the parcel would be nonconforming since the minimum lot area requirement in the R-1 District is 14,000 square feet. A preliminary analysis of lot dimensions was completed as part of the Planning Commission review utilized the County’s GIS mapping in order to garner the approximate lot width and lot depth. The parcel is an irregular shape and the following table was a preliminary analysis of the lot size as it compares to the minimum R-1 District Standards:

	Total Lot Area	Lot Width	Lot Depth
Zoning Code R-1 District	14,000 square feet	95 feet	130 feet
3588 Ridgewood Drive	Approx.13,500 square feet (0.31 acre)	Approx. 100 feet	Approx. 99 feet to 115 feet

Over the next year, city staff worked through the process to facilitate the sale of the Subject Property. On August 8, 2022, the City Council approved the purchase agreement for the Subject Property from Ahmed Ali and Nawal Hirsi. The purchase agreement included an acknowledgement of the Applicant’s responsibility for all costs associated with due diligence which includes the variance review due to the nonconforming lot size. As part of the due diligence via a survey, it was determined that the lot measured approximately 14,472 square feet, and would not require a variance for lot area but would require a variance for lot depth.

Discussion

The Subject Property is zoned R-1, Single Family Residential District. It is designated for Low Density Residential in the 2040 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. All surrounding parcels are also zoned R-1, Single Family Residential District and designated for Low Density Residential Uses in the Land Use Plan.

The Applicant is requesting feedback on three variance requests ahead of the Planning Commission meeting on November 9, 2022. The variances are requesting flexibility on the location of the driveway access point, the front and rear setbacks, and the nonconforming lot size due to lot depth.

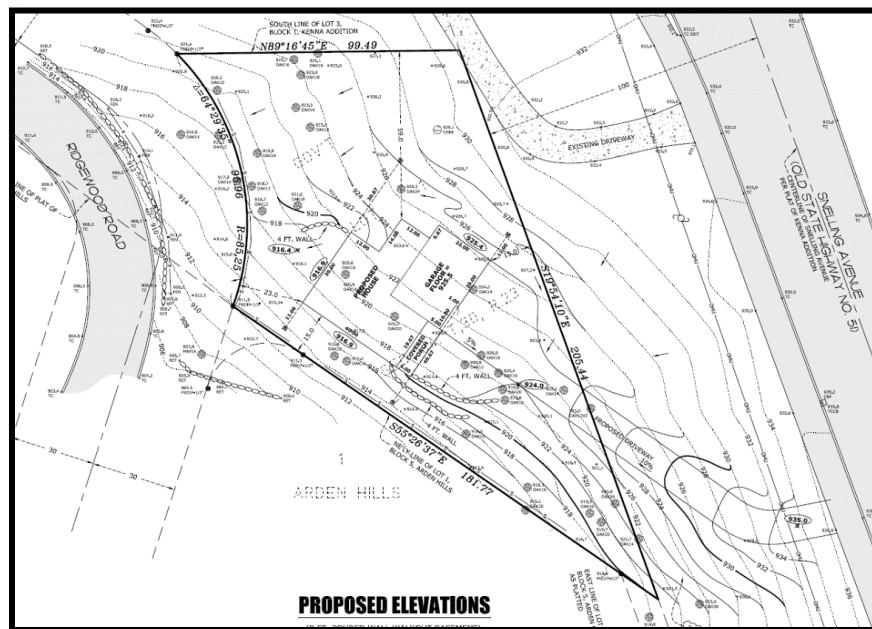
The listing agreement did specify that a variance would be necessary due to the nonconforming lot size. The real estate agent representing the City included in the listing language that the Future Buyer would need to provide documentation including, but not limited to, a Certificate of Survey, elevation renderings, and floor plans in order to verify compliance with applicable city code requirements such as setbacks, lot coverage, floor area ratio, and other design standards with the proposed development as part of the variance review process. Additionally, it was stated in the listing that a driveway would need to be established by the Future Owner and city code would require the property to be accessed via Ridgewood Road. City staff has had several conversations with Mr. Ali to assist him in preparing the variance application as well as restating the minimum city code requirements for future development of the Subject Property.

Lot Size and Dimensions

Section 1320 – District Provisions of the Zoning Code requires a minimum lot size of 14,000 square feet per single-family dwelling unit and a minimum depth of 130 feet. The Applicant did obtain a Certificate of Survey which verified that the total lot area of the Subject Property is 0.33 deeded acres (14, 472 square feet), but the lot depth has a mean depth of 97.4 feet. The Applicant is requesting a 32.6 foot lot depth variance to address this nonconformity in lot size.

The lot size from staff’s initial analysis would require a variance prior to future development as confirmed by the City Attorney. From the recent survey completed by the Applicant, the City identified that the total lot area of the parcel is slightly larger than the property information available on the County records. City staff contacted Ramsey County and it was their direction to use the boundary dimensions and lot area calculations as shown on the official survey as this document was prepared by a licensed surveyor. They indicated that the County’s GIS map is only an inventory of tax records based upon the best available information.

Certificate of Survey



Driveway Access

Section 1325.06, Subd. 1 (B) – Access of the Zoning Code requires “any residential lot, which has frontage on both a local street and a collector street or a major or minor arterial (as defined by the Comprehensive Plan of Arden Hills), [to] gain access only from the local street.” The Applicant is requesting a variance from this provision to construct a future driveway off Snelling Avenue—a collector street, instead of Ridgewood Road—a local street.

As proposed, the driveway off of Snelling Avenue would have a 10% slope. The Applicant has stated that from the street to the garage there is an elevation change of 20 feet which would make it a safety concern to have their driveway access off of Ridgewood Road.

Structure Setbacks

In the R-1 District, the minimum front and rear setback requirements are 40 feet and 30 feet, respectively. The minimum side yard setbacks on an interior lot are 10 feet on each side with a combined total side yard setback of 25 feet. The Applicant is requesting a 17 foot front-yard setback variance—abutting Ridgewood Road—to allow a future dwelling to be built 23 feet from the front property line. The Applicant is also requesting a 15 foot rear-yard setback variance—abutting Snelling Avenue—to allow a future dwelling to be built 15 feet from the rear property line. The Applicant is not requesting a side yard setback variance.

This parcel by definition is considered a through lot because it has “*A pair of opposite lot lines on two substantially parallel streets and is not a corner lot. On a through lot, the determination of whether the street frontage is to be considered a front yard or rear yard shall be as subject to the provisions of this Code.*” Section 1325.03, Exceptions to the Minimum Requirement for All Districts states for a through lot that “*The administrator may determine that one of the front yards may be deemed a rear yard and shall determine appropriate rear yard setback regulations. Factors to be considered shall include topography, location of structures on the lot, location of structures on adjacent lots, and the type of streets or thoroughfares abutting the lot.*”

Preliminary Analysis of factors:

- There are no existing structures on the lot to be used in evaluating orientation for determining the front or rear yard.
- The adjacent structure to the north faces east towards Snelling Avenue and the structure to the south faces west towards Ridgewood Road.
- Ridgewood Road is a local road and as required by city code this would be the designated roadway to obtain access to the Subject Property.
- In comparison to a corner lot, the city code states the shortest street lot line is the front lot line.

From the analysis of city code and factors to consider on a through lot, city staff has determined the front yard of this through lot to be Ridgewood Road because it is abutting the local roadway with the shortest street lot width, and Snelling Avenue to be the rear yard as the lot line most nearly parallel and most remote to the front lot line.

	Front Setback – 40’	Rear Setback – 30’	Side Setbacks - 10’/25’
3583 Snelling Ave.	42.5’ – Snelling Ave.	30.87’ - Ridgewood Rd.	10’ (north)/ 40’/Combined
3588 Ridgewood Rd. – Proposed	23’ – Ridgewood Rd.	15’ – Snelling Ave.	10’ (south)/60’ combined (approx.)
3570 Ridgewood Rd.	40’ – Ridgewood Rd.	70’ – Snelling Ave. (approx.)	16’ (north)/30’ combined

Other City Codes - Landscaped Area, Structure Coverage, and Floor Area Ratio

At this time, the Applicant has chosen not to include calculations for floor area ratio. Before finalizing the design of a future structure on the Subject Property, the Applicant is looking to receive City Council feedback on the current variance request. The Applicant will finish the design of a future structure depending on the outcome of the variance request. The Certificate of Survey identifies the proposed house footprint would equate to 15.4% structure coverage (max allowed 25%) and 23.2% impervious (max allowed 35%).

The table below provides the district standards for the R-1 District and the preliminary analysis for the proposed development:

	Required	Proposed
Lot Area	Minimum 14,000 SF	14,472 SF
Lot Width/Depth	95’/130’	95.96’/97.4’
Front Yard Setback	Minimum 40’	23’
Rear Yard Setback	Minimum 30’	15’
Side Yard Setback	10’ Minimum/ 25’ Combined	10’ (south)/ Approx. 60’ Combined
Driveway Access	Local Street – Ridgewood Road	Collector Street – Snelling Avenue
Landscaped Area	Greater than 65% (Minimum 9,407 SF)	76%
Structure Coverage	Less than 25% (Maximum 3,618 SF)	15.4%
Floor Area Ratio	Less than 0.3 (Maximum 4,341 SF)	N/A
Minimum Dwelling/Structure Width	20’	45’

Attachments

- A. Land Use Application
- B. Location Map
- C. Applicant Narrative
- D. Certificate of Survey
- E. Surveyor Supplemental Info
- F. Presentation