PC Case 22-11 - Site Plan, Rezoning, and Preliminary/Final Plat for a Townhome Development on the Former Thompson Oaks Golf Course - M/I Homes of Minneapolis/St. Paul, LLC

REQUEST:
M/I Homes has submitted multiple applications for the development of 58 townhomes on the eastern portion of the former Thompson Oaks Golf Course. The applications include,

- Site plan review for the development of the property,
- Rezoning the property from B6 – Town Center Mixed Use to PRD, Planned Residential Development with R3 – Townhome Residential as the underlying zoning, and
- Preliminary and final plat review for the division of property and creation of new property lines.

PROPOSAL:
The applicant is proposing to construct 58 townhomes on what will be located on a newly platted 5.9 acres of land, which will result in a density of 9.8 units per acre. As this use and lower density do not meet the existing zoning of B6 – Town Center Mixed-Use nor the Comprehensive Plan Land Use density (25-40 units per acre) for Mixed-Use, the property will be both rezoned (B6 to PRD with R3) and re-guided (Mixed-Use to Medium Density Residential).

The PRD will offer some flexibility in developing the site to accommodate varying from the required setbacks, lot width, and parking stall dimensions which are made necessary by the poor soils throughout the site. The proposed location of the townhomes requires the least amount of debris and soil removal and replacement, while still requiring a range of 2’ to 16’ of fill to be brought into the site (see attached soil excavation exhibit on page 3 for further detail). In addition to the rezoning, this development will also require an amendment to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan as the site is currently guided Mixed-Use which does not allow for densities lower than 25 units per acre.

Lastly, the site will be platted to divide the property and delineate property lines for the multiple owners of the properties, including the City’s wetland reclamation area, County trails, a shared holding pond, and the townhome properties.

Attachments:
Application, Narrative, and Public Notice
Various Memos, Environmental Committee, Dakota County Plat Commission, Engineering, and WSB 2040 Comprehensive Plan – (Proposed) Future Land Use Map
Staff Presentation
Submitted Plans
1. SITE PLAN ANALYSIS:

As a part of this project, the property will be platted into three major lots. Outlot A, which will be owned and maintained by the City, will be the area in the middle of the golf course and will be the location for the wetland reclamation project. Outlot B will be the area north of the townhomes and will include a stormwater pond that will largely serve the townhome area as well as the future Thompson/Oakdale roundabout. Outlot B will be owned and maintained by the townhome HOA. Lastly, the lot containing the townhomes, common lot 59, will contain the 58 lots for the townhomes. The breakdown will be as follows,

**Site Components**

Gross Area – 21.58 acres
- Outlot A – 15.42 acres
- Outlot B (stormwater pond) – .66 acres
- Common Lot 59 – 5.24 acres

Estimated Right-of-way (ROW) – .27 acres
Net Site Area (Lot 59 and Outlot B) – 5.899 acres
Units per Acre – 9.832

**Lot Dimensions**

Average Lot Size – 1,800 sq. ft.
- Lot Width – 30 ft.
- Lot Depth – 60 ft.
Zoning Development Standards

Although the site is being developed with the Planned Residential Development (PRD) tag due to the heavily required soil excavation and replacement, the performance standards for the development as well as the proposed zoning district (R3) are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot Area</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Lot Width</td>
<td>100 ft.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Yard Building Setback</td>
<td>30 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Yard Building Setback</td>
<td>10 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Yard Building Setback (adj. to a street)</td>
<td>30 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance between Structures</td>
<td>30 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Yard Building Setback</td>
<td>30 ft.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*As West St. Paul does not often see townhome development (R3), the requirements for this district need to be updated, as it has similar requirements as the single family (R1C) and the two family (R2) zones which offer a different type of housing product and density level.
Development Density
The density of the proposed development is 9.83 units per acre, which is typical for townhome style or medium density development that can range from which falls within the existing gap of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. As presently, the Comp. Plan calls for either Single Family (3-6 u/a), Multi-Family (20-40 u/a), or Mixed-Use (25-40 u/a). The gap between single and multi-family likely exists for two reasons, one, West St. Paul does not experience many new townhome developments, and two, a higher minimum number helps to ensure that the density requirements of the Met Council are more easily met. Therefore, a comprehensive plan amendment to create a medium density designation is necessary, not only to accommodate this development, but also to ensure that areas of the city that are currently townhomes are reflected as such (townhomes are currently shown as multi-family residential).

Parking Standards
According to §153.348 of the City Code, townhomes require at least two parking spaces per unit, plus at least one additional parking space be provided (in a common lot area) for every two units in excess of 1,000 sq. ft. of floor space to be used for visitor parking.

Minimum Parking:
- Code – 2 stalls/unit
  - 58 units = 116 stalls
- Visitor Parking - 1 stall/2 units in excess of 1,000 sq. ft.
  - 58 units/2 = 29 stalls

Generally, the site offers four parking stalls per unit, two enclosed, garage stalls, and two outdoor stalls in the driveway of each unit. The driveways measure 22 feet deep and 18 feet wide. This in total calculates to 232 parking stalls, which meets and exceeds the two stalls per unit requirement.

The submitted plans show 20 common lot visitor parking stalls; this does not include the two driveway stalls provided for each unit. Since parking for the site has already been expressed as a concern, city staff is recommending as a condition of approval that the applicant incorporate at least nine additional parking stalls to the common lot areas within the site to meet 29 parking stall code minimum. These additional stalls can likely be added in the center area of the southern triangle area and on the southwestern section of driveway 2 (as shown below).
The applicant has stated that part of the HOA requirements includes that residents are not to park/store their recreational vehicles (such as boats, campers, etc.) in either their own parking spaces or the common lot spaces. This will not only help to maintain a clean and orderly area, but also ensure that the common lot parking stalls are able to be used for visitors.

Parking Stall and Street Dimensions
The common lot, or visitor, parking stall dimensions are 18 feet deep by 9 feet wide. Our code requires parking stalls to be at least 20 feet deep. However, in some previous planned development (PD) projects the city has allowed stalls to be shorted to 18 feet in depth if the stall allows the vehicle to overhang and extend over the curb. As this is the case for the common lot parking stalls, city staff is comfortable approving the shorter stall depths. Additionally, this is help to slightly reduce the amount of impervious surface throughout the site.

The proposed streets are 24 feet wide, which is 2 feet wider than the minimum. Additionally, access and turn movements have been reviewed by the Fire Marshal and have been confirmed to allow for full turn movements for the largest fire engine (engine one).

Site Access and Circulation – Dakota County Review
The applicant was initially proposing two full access points (right and left turns in and out of the site) from Oakdale Avenue. Which, since this is a Dakota County road, the Dakota County Plat Commission reviewed the proposed project, largely to review access, traffic volumes, turn lanes, and possible consolidation of curb cuts.

Based on traffic counts and speeds of county roads, Dakota County recommends at least 1/8th mile (or 660 feet) between curb cuts. While the spacing between the two access points (driveway 1 and driveway 4) for this site meet that minimum, the distance between the proposed southern access for this site and the existing access to the single family home to the south (1575 Oakdale) does not. Therefore, Dakota County recommended either allowing emergency access only for the southern curb cut or to move the access further south to accommodate both the townhomes and the 1575 Oakdale Avenue site, in the event that the single family home were to ever redevelop. The applicant and the city agreed to remove the southern access entirely rather than altering the location of the access (move further south) or reducing the access to emergency vehicle access only.
Traffic and Trips Generated

The applicant had a traffic study completed in December of 2021 for a previous development in Maple Grove for 150 townhomes. This study referenced the methodology used was based on *Trip Generation, 11th Edition* manual from the Institute of Transportation Engineers. This methodology estimates the number of trips based largely on the type use. Which for townhomes, estimates 7.29 trips per unit per day. When applied to this development (58 townhomes), it estimates a total of 423 trips per day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Daily Trips</th>
<th>AM Peak Hours</th>
<th>PM Peak Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enter</td>
<td>Exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhomes (58) (Code 215)</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
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</tbody>
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According to MnDot the 2018 annual average daily traffic volumes (AADT) for this segment of Oakdale, south of Thompson and north of Wentworth, were 7,300 cars per day (estimated count of 7,343 in 2021), with 5,700 cars for the section of Oakdale north of Thompson and 9,000 on Oakdale south of Wentworth. In the Dakota County 2040 Transportation Plan, Oakdale was classified as operating “under capacity” in 2019 and is projected to continue as such through 2040 with the projected traffic being over 11,000 vehicles daily. Therefore, city staff is not concerned by the estimated 400 additional trips.

Turn Lanes

In order to ensure that this section of Oakdale remains functional and safe, the county did recommend that this development incorporate north-bound left turn lanes. The city will collect the townhome portion of the costs prior to the issuance of a building permit, which then allows the turn lanes to be constructed in conjunction with the County projects in 2023 (Thompson/Oakdale roundabout and the resurfacing of Oakdale). Designs for the turn lanes are not yet finalized, but are currently being worked on by Dakota County and their consultant at Kimley-Horn.

Street Identification

As a part of the HOA, the roads within this development will be privately owned and maintained, this includes curb and gutter, driveways, and any utilities underneath the roadways as well as the stormwater pond. It is not uncommon for private roads to be named differently than city/public streets. In an effort to clearly communicate which streets are private vs. public, the internal streets of this development will not align with the adjacent city streets; with the exception of Schletty Lane, which will not have any addresses attached to it for the brief section within the townhomes.
Sidewalks and Trails

While the development itself will not offer internal sidewalks, the site will be surrounded by pedestrian oriented infrastructure. With the full length of the driveways only being 22 feet deep, this does not allow enough distance to incorporate a sidewalk while still maintaining enough space for vehicles to park. The typical measurements for a front driveway including a sidewalk and boulevard are, 20 – 24 feet for the vehicle, 5 - 7 feet for the sidewalk or 8 – 10 feet for a trail, and 5 – 6 feet of boulevard. This is likely one reason why the front yard setback for single family homes is a minimum of 30 feet.

As mentioned, the site will have pedestrian infrastructure surrounding the site. The River-to-River regional trail and loop around the filtration pond will be to the west of the townhomes and the existing trail along Oakdale is to the east of the site. Staff is recommending as a condition of approval that the applicant pay the estimated construction costs to the city, which then allows the City and Dakota County to form a JPA to have the trail be re-constructed in conjunction with the 2023 road projects scheduled for both Oakdale and the Thompson/Oakdale roundabout. As is common for the Dakota County River-to-River Trail design standard, the sections of the trail that cross over other driveways/curb cuts, will be painted and identified as a crossing.

Landscaping

Presently the full site (both outlots and the development area) has over 200 trees. However, due to the large amount of soil needing to be removed and then replaced a large majority of the trees will need to be removed. Additionally, the site’ tree survey identified that 61 of the 62 green ash trees were found to be infected with Emerald Ash Borer.
The townhome portion of the site was surveyed to have 100 trees (1,484 cal. in), of which 24 (411 cal. in.) are able to be saved. For the 76 trees (1,073 cal. in.) being removed, the city code requires a 30% minimum replacement, which equates to 322 caliper inches (roughly 129 trees measuring 2.5 cal. in. each). In addition to saving 24 trees, the applicant is proposing to plant 84 new trees (203.5 cal. in.), including 33 over-story trees, 22 evergreens, and 29 ornamental trees. Further detail on type and quantity of trees can be found in both the attached plans and the staff memo addressed to the Environmental Committee. While the 84 new trees does not meet the 30% replacement minimum, staff is pleased with the trees proposed for the site and understands that meeting the 30% replacement requirement can be difficult when a large number of mature trees are removed and are then replaced with new, and much smaller (diameter) trees.

In addition to the 30% replacement requirement, the code also requires a minimum of one tree for every 40 lineal feet of property line. Since this property has 2,586 lineal feet, the minimum number of trees calculates to 65 trees. With the proposed site having 108 trees (84 new and 24 existing), staff is pleased to see that this minimum number is being met.

Environmental Committee Review
The Environmental Committee reviewed the landscape plan during their June 1 meeting. The committee discussed the items listed below (items that were made as formal recommendations are shown with an underline).

- Site connectivity and sidewalks to nearby amenities such as the Wentworth library,
  - Although there are no internal sidewalks within the townhome development there will be adjacent trails and sidewalks surrounding the site.
- The fewer trees along the western boarder of the townhomes, eastern loop of the trail, offers limited privacy for the trail users as well as increases cooling costs for the homes.
  - Recommended incorporating additional trees and/or landscaping along the western portion of the development.
- Curious about individual landscaping and plantings around the homes, as is commonly seen in new developments.
  - Recommended that all plantings be neonicotinoid free, including any individual plantings.
- Overall happy with the mixing and variety of chosen trees and landscaping,
  - Recommended to consider switching the Japanese tree lilac with Redbuds, Princess Kay, or another similar Minnesota native tree that is more hardy.

Staff agrees with the Environmental Committee recommendation in that there is opportunity to plant some additional trees along the west side of the townhomes to offer a slightly elevated degree of privacy for both the trail users and the home owners while also maintaining wider views of the surrounding areas for the townhome owners.

City staff is recommending as conditions of approval that the applicant,
- Consider the recommendations made by the Environmental Committee,
- Incorporate additional trees on site, particularly on the west side of the property, and
- Provide an irrigation plan upon the submittal of a building permit as these details were not specified in the submitted plans.
Building Exterior and Design

The submitted plans include two different architectural styles, the Summit and Park home series, both of which are the row-style townhomes. The Summit series homes will comprise the 16 units that will front Oakdale Avenue, while the remaining units will be the Park series, which have the garage fronting the internal roads and driveways.

The applicant has provided illustrations in the application narrative and drawings of the townhome units. The buildings will have a mix of exterior materials (including horizontal lap and board and batten siding and stone veneer) and other architectural articulation components to break up the three-story design (~35’ at the roof mid-line), all of which comply with the city code’s exterior material standards. All units would have two-car garages as well as offer two driveway parking stalls.

To ensure these units are maintained, all of M/I’s developments are part of a Home Owner’s Association (HOA) which will detail multiple maintenance expectations and criteria throughout the development, including landscaping, snow removal, parking, outdoor storage, etc.

Summit Home Series

The summit series will include 16 units that front Oakdale Avenue, garages will be to the rear and accessed through the private roads within the development. Due to the elevated visibility of these units, they have a slightly enhanced streetscape. These units will range from 1,750 to 2,085 square feet in size and are anticipated to have a starting sale price of $390,000.
Park Home Series
The park series will comprise the remaining 42 units located along the south and western areas of the development. These units will have the garage fronting the private road as well as a raised and covered stoop to create visual interest. Additionally, these units will offer a deck as well as a lower level patio door in the rear. These units will range from 1,942 to 2,405 square feet in size and are anticipated to have a starting sale price of $400,000.

To ensure that all of the units are equally attractive and appealing, staff is recommending as a condition of approval that the Park home series be revised to include additional brick and/or stone components to offer enhanced visual appeal.

Grading
In order to accommodate the stormwater pond for this development (Outlot B) as well as the filtration pond to the west (Outlot A), there are areas with significant grade changes that will require retaining walls, largely the southwestern two buildings. While detailing is not included in the submitted plan, fencing will be required for any retaining walls taller than four feet in height. City staff is recommending as a condition of approval that the fencing be maintenance free and complement the adjacent buildings and surrounding environment.

Drainage and Stormwater/Engineering Review
The proposed site plan was by the City’s Engineering Technician III and the consultant at WSB. These memos detailed items requiring further information or correction, such as appropriate permitting, connection points, modeling requirements, etc. City Staff is recommending as a condition of approval, that the applicant comply with all items outlined in the WSB Engineering memo dated April 6, 2022.
2. REZONING REVIEW

CURRENT USES AND ZONING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Property</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Zoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vacant (Green Space)</td>
<td>B6 – Town Center Mixed Use (Proposed PRD R3 – Townhome)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties to North</td>
<td>Residential (Single Family Homes &amp; Asst. Living)</td>
<td>R1 – Single Family Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties to East</td>
<td>Residential (Single Family Homes)</td>
<td>R1 – Single Family Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties to South</td>
<td>Residential (Single Family Homes &amp; Townhomes)</td>
<td>R1 – Single Family Residential &amp; R3 - Townhome Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties to West</td>
<td>Mixed Use (Apartments)</td>
<td>B6 – Town Center Mixed Use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Justification for PRD

Similar to the Oppidan apartment project, this project will also require a Planned Development (PD) tag, specifically a Planned Residential Development (PRD). According to code, generally planned developments are used for, “a more flexible regulatory process as compared to rather rigid development regulations common to traditional zoning districts” as well as, “an opportunity to protect and preserve valuable natural resources and amenities, and to assure a higher quality environment.”

As previously mentioned, the site as a whole has construction debris and other pollutants requiring extensive soil removal and replacement prior to any form of construction. As complete removal and replacement of soils for the entire golf course site is not financially feasible, the development is being permitted to deviate from code on a few items, which include setbacks, lot width, and parking stall dimensions. Additionally, the deviation from these items allows the larger majority of the golf course site to be utilized as public amenity with trails and walkways around the water filtration pond and general green and open space.

Compliance with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Currently, the property is guided as Mixed-Use in the 2040 Comp. Plan, so the proposed townhome development does not align with the density of the Mixed-Use land use designation. However, an application to amend the Comp. Plan is being completed by the city in tandem with this project (more in the Comp. Plan Amendment memo). This area was also identified in the plan as an area that was likely to redevelop by 2030, as it was anticipated that the former golf course would redevelop.
3. PRELIMINARY AND FINAL PLAT REVIEW

Plat Requirement
With the first phase of the redevelopment of the golf course, Oppidan platted the full property, one lot for the apartments and the rest of the property was designated as an outlot until it was further developed. The proposed plat for this project will establish separate property lines for each section. This includes the large water filtration pond (Outlot A), the smaller storm water pond, (Outlot B), and then lots one through 59 for the townhome section (one lot for each townhome pad and then one common lot maintained by the HOA that encompasses all of the townhome lots).

No additional right-of-way will need to be dedicated along Oakdale, during this plat as all that was necessary was done so with Oppidan apartment project.

As mentioned above, since the existing parcel is unplatted, Staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring that the applicant submit a preliminary/final plat application for the property prior to the issuance of a building permit for the project.

Park Land Dedication
Park dedication will be paid in lieu of land dedication, which per the 2022 fee schedule, R3 - Residential development is the lesser amount between 8% of market value ($49,733.89) or $2,250 per unit ($130,500.00). Fees are collected prior to the issuance of a building permit.

PROJECT TIMELINE:
Planning Commission: June 21, 2022
- Site plan, rezoning, preliminary/final plat, and comprehensive plan amendment
City Council: June 27, 2022
- First reading of the rezoning
City Council: July 11, 2022
- Site plan, rezoning (final reading), preliminary/final plat, and comprehensive plan amendment
Begin Soil Removals: Summer/Fall of 2022

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:
Staff recommends APPROVAL of the SITE PLAN for the construction of 58 townhomes on the eastern portion of the previous Thompson Oaks Golf Course, subject to the submitted plans and the following conditions:

1. The site plan approval shall be contingent upon City Council approval of the corresponding rezoning and platting applications, the Metropolitan Council’s approval of the Land Use Amendment for the creation and designation of the property from “Mixed-Use” to “Medium Density Residential”, as well as the development of the property,

2. The applicant shall apply for an obtain all necessary permits, including those from the City of West St. Paul as well as those from the Dakota County right-of-way permitting office,

3. The applicant shall update the plans to incorporate a minimum of nine additional stalls in the common lot areas within the site to be used as visitor parking,
4. The applicant shall consider the recommendations made by the Environmental Committee as stated in the memo dated June 15, 2022,

5. The applicant shall revise the landscape plans to include additional trees as approved by city staff,

6. The applicant shall provide the city with an irrigation plan upon the submittal of a building permit,

7. All fencing shall be maintenance free and complement the adjacent buildings and surrounding environment,

8. The applicant shall revise the elevations for the Park Home series buildings to include additional brick and/or stone components to offer enhanced visual appeal,

9. The applicant shall pay the City fees for the following items, prior to the issuance of a building permit,
   a. Park Land Dedication Fee - $49,733.89,
   b. Construction costs for their portion of the added left turn lanes on Oakdale and the re-construction of the trail along the west side of Oakdale Avenue,

10. The applicant shall adhere to the recommendations as outlined in the attached memos provided by the West St. Paul Engineering Technician, WSB Engineering, and the Dakota County Plat Commission.

Staff recommends APPROVAL of the REZONING of the eastern portion of the previous Thompson Oaks Golf Course from B6 – Mixed Use to Planned Residential Development (PRD) with R3 – Townhome underlying zoning, subject to the submitted plans and the following conditions:

1. The rezoning approval shall be contingent upon City Council approval of the corresponding site plan, platting applications, the Metropolitan Council’s approval of the Land Use Amendment for the creation and designation of the property from “Mixed-Use” to “Medium Density Residential”, as well as the development of the property,

2. The rezoning approval shall be contingent upon the Metropolitan Council’s approval of the requested 2040 Comprehensive Plan Amendments, both text and map.

Staff recommends APPROVAL of the PRELIMINARY/FINAL PLAT for the former Thompson Oaks Golf Course property, subject to the submitted plans and the following conditions:

1. The preliminary and final plat approval shall be contingent upon City Council approval of the corresponding site plan and rezoning applications, the Metropolitan Council’s approval of the Land Use Amendment for the creation and designation of the property from “Mixed-Use” to “Medium Density Residential”, as well as the development of the property,

2. The applicant shall comply with all items outlined in the memos provided by the Dakota County Plat Commission and the West St. Paul Engineering Department, which are dated June 13, 2022 and June 15, 2022 respectively,

3. The final plat shall be recorded within one year of approval and prior to the application of a building permit.