

Meeting Date: Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Prepared By: Melissa Houtsma, Community Development

Subject: Review of redevelopment plans for 424 Butler Ave. E.

Request

Review submitted plans for the redevelopment of the 424 Butler Avenue East property.

Background

In early 2025, the city’s economic development authority (EDA) purchased the 1.84 acre property. This decision was made after the city was contacted by multiple developers inquiring about the property and the potential for redevelopment. This area has been zoned and guided for multiple family residential housing for a number of decades. However, in an interest to ensure a more diverse housing stock within the city, the EDA voted to purchase the property with the intent to redevelop the site and build affordable townhomes.

Since that time, city staff has been working with a number of consultants to analyze the property and create the included plans. The proposal includes clearing the site, including the demolition of the existing single family home, to regrade the property and construct three buildings encompassing 13 townhomes. Additionally, as the area is currently zoned and guided for apartments, this project also includes a comprehensive plan amendment as well as rezoning several of the surrounding properties.

Landscaping

Removal

The submitted plans detail the removal of all trees on site, as the site will need to be re-graded to ensure sufficient drainage. Page C-1 of the submitted plans shows further details on the type and status of the existing trees, but a summary of the removals is included below.

Tree Removals	Quantity	Caliper Inches
Quality	78	1,198
Non-Quality	38	522
Total	116	1,720

Replacement

When trees are removed as a part of the site plan process, at least 30% of the quality trees (at least 2.5 cal. in.) must be replaced. Based on the submitted plans, the minimum replacement requirement calculates to 359 inches (roughly 144 trees if measuring at 2.5”).

The list below includes the initial proposal for new plantings on the site. Staff has crossed out the initially proposed plantings (shown by the ~~double strikethrough~~) and added alternative plantings in red text as well as recommended additional plantings.

Deciduous trees (57)	Size (in.)	Quantity
New Harmony Elm	2.5”	5
Northern Red Oak	2.5”	7
Bur Oak	2.5”	3
Swamp White Oak	2.5”	4
Red Rocket Maple	2.5”	7
Common Hackberry	2.5”	3
Honey Lotus	2.5”	4
Firefall Maple	2.5”	12
Black Cherry	2.5”	6
Little Leaf Linden	2.5”	6
River Birch	2.5”	10
Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry	2.5”	9
Red Cedar	2.5”	7
Initially proposed planting Recommended alternative Recommended additional planting		

Staff is also recommending that the size of trees be increased from 2.5 caliper inches up to 3 inches. This brings the number of proposed trees/caliper inches for the site to 57 trees and 171 caliper inches. As these numbers fall below the minimum requirement (144 trees/359 inches), staff is requesting feedback from the commission on where additional trees might be planted as well as recommended types.

Stormwater Management

The majority of the stormwater from the site will be filtered through the biofiltration basin in the southeast section of the site, with a small portion also draining to the southwest. Final site grading can be seen on page C-3 of the included plans.

Recommendations

In summary, staff has the following recommendations:

- All trees are to be increased in size from 2.5 caliper inches to 3 caliper inches.

- The seven Northern Red Oak trees are to be replaced with three Bur Oak and four Swamp White Oak trees.
- The seven Red Rocket Maple trees are to be replaced with three Common Hackberry and four Honey Lotus trees.
- The 12 Firefall maple trees are to be replaced with six Black cherry and six Little Leaf Linden trees.
- The plans shall include an additional seven Red Cedar trees.