

E-mail Response to Jon Koehler email 2/11/23

City responses are in red 2/14/23

Good morning Nate (and Matt)

Thank you for your responses below however the responses do not address the concern voiced. For ease of review, I have noted below your responses as 'NR' below with my return response with 'JK'

(Matt – you can fast forward to item 8)

- 1) LDR to MDR Request: Devoid of community transitional use. The other town home developments in the area have clear transitional land use changes - Harpers Landing, Legacy Creek, Savannah Grove, etc – all have MDR use that transitions to single family LDR. This 'hopscotch' from three sided LDR to a to a pocketed MDR development isn't consistent with that of the community development in the surrounding area of Blaine.

Savanna Grove is guided MDR and LDR there is LDR in between this and Harpers Landing. Harpers Landing is MDR and LDR. Legacy Creek is MDR and LDR. All of these developments are zoned Development Flex and have a mix of single family and townhomes

The requested land use change is from LDR to LDR/MDR. LDR is low density residential and allows detached single-family homes with a density of 2.5 -6 units/acre. LDR/MDR is low density residential/medium density residential and allows for a mix of single-family housing types including detached and attached single family with a density of 2.5-12 units/acre

- 2) Uncontrolled right – right out entrance to 125th vs an extension to 126th to the east – Increased public safety hazard.
 - a. NR: 'This is the only access to the property. The development to the east originally had a R/W stubbed to serve this property, but was removed during the city review process.'
 - b. JK: I understand that in order to access a connection to 126th to the east that an easement agreement and to cross the north-south drainage easement/county ditch no. 59, Branch 4. would be required. I don't see how this development can move forward without this change in the development plan as the right in – right out condition will result in creating a traffic hazard for both residents of your development and that of the general public by the U turns that will occur when residents of this neighborhood will cross two lanes of traffic to make a U turn at the uncontrolled intersection of Xylite and in 125th in order to head eastbound on 125th. This is even more critical with the request to increase density on the parcels.

As mentioned, a connection to 126th Ave NE, to the East was discussed during the planning stages of Harpers Landing subdivision. At that time, the exact location of the proposed right-of-way was undetermined due to factors for all parties; the existing property owner and the developer. An additional factor for consideration was the potential location of wetlands on 2775 125th Ave NE; which had not been delineated at the time that Harpers Landing was being reviewed and developed. The property owners of 2741 and 2775 petitioned Anoka County for right-in/right-out access point for a public street to be granted at the location of the existing driveway. This was reviewed and approved by Anoka County.

At this time, a west-bound left turn-lane exists at the intersection of 125th Ave NE and Xylite St NE. However, this is currently stripped for "no use"; based on the stripping, we can discuss with the County what the intent of this turn lane is.

The increase in density changes the proposed daily traffic count from 180 trips per day to 244 trips per day. The 2021 traffic count for this section of 125th Ave NE is just under 14,000 trips per day. The

current road configuration has an approximate capacity of 18,300 trips per day. Therefore, the increase of trips from this proposed development will not affect the overall performance of 125th Ave NE.

3) Lack of pedestrian connectivity – Increased public safety hazard.

- a. NR: No trails/sidewalk to connect to...?
- b. JK: I don't see how a development can be approved that doesn't provide measures for its residents to safely access the sidewalk/bike paths/trail systems of the City of Blaine. It is unreasonable to expect your residents to traverse via the roadway – especially that of a County Road. A pedestrian management plan needs to be provided to ensure that accessible safe means are accounted as a part of this development. This is even more critical with the request to increase density on the parcels.

The proposed development is being required to provide public right-of-way to the north edge of the current development (not including the existing house lots that will remain). Additional connectivity is being planned for when these two remaining lots and the lot to the north (2798 128th Ave NE) of those lots develops. It is anticipated that, IF the three lots decide to develop further, a public road will connect the new stub road to the existing stub of 128th Ave NE. The road extension would be required to construct sidewalk on one side – providing pedestrian connectivity to the trail system at the north side of 2798 128th Ave NE.

4) Lack of exterior articulation to the structure design

- a. NR: Class A construction
- b. JK: 'Class A construction' is an undefined phrase and doesn't address the architectural deficiencies of your elevations. Whether the development is LDR or MDR, there is an obligation to uphold a design aesthetic that does not have an adverse effect upon the adjacent properties as the elevations submitted are void of articulation that meets or surpasses that of the adjacent properties. Additionally, with the single architectural floor plan and corresponding elevations submitted I have to assume that all seven buildings are planned to be the same in exterior architectural design. This too is inconsistent with the neighborhood design aesthetics of the adjacent LDR properties. **MDR and LDR do not have specific architecture requirements. MDR and LDR are land use categories in the City's Comprehensive Plan and determine what the land can be used for, does not provide design standards. The zoning code provides development standards. This property is zoned Development Flex, this district does not have a set of development standards listed in the code rather it is governed by a Conditional Use Permit.**

5) Lack of premium exterior materials

- a. NR: Class A construction
- b. JK: 'Class A construction' is an undefined phrase and doesn't address the architectural materials proposed for the exterior facades. City of Blaine standards require premium exterior cladding materials are to be used on the front elevations of all LDR homes. **The zoning code does not require premium materials for residential development (MDR is the land use designation not the zoning of a property). However, if a property is zoned Development Flex the city has in some cases required higher end finishes through the conditional use permit. For a MDR development, I would consider all elevations to be considered 'front' elevations. The zoning code does not require all elevations to be considered a front. I would expect that the class of the exterior materials meet or surpass that of the adjacent existing properties which the current elevations do not. The proposed**

townhomes will have varying roof styles. The front elevations exterior materials will include LP lap siding, panels and trim. The side and rear elevations will include some vinyl lap siding and trim. The materials meet that of adjacent existing properties as required through their respective CUP.

Savanna Grove CUP states “all house exteriors to utilize maintenance-free materials to the extent possible” (approved in 2005).

Legacy Creek CUP requires a mix of brick and stone for townhomes. “All house exteriors to utilize maintenance free materials to the extent possible” (approved in 2007).

Harpers Landing CUP requires maintenance free for SF homes. Vinyl with a masonry element on the townhomes (approved 2021).

Meadow Land Estates – Vinyl on all sides, some LP on the fronts but not required as part of the CUP (approved 2021)

- 6) Lack of transitional buffer – enhanced landscaping, berm, fencing at the western property line due to change in land use
 - a. NR: We are boxed in on four sides, not much master planning to be done?
 - b. JK: Precisely. These parcels are boxed in on three sides by LDR housing and the fourth side by a County Road. Trying to incorporate a MDR development into these parcels doesn’t allow for a transitional buffer from alternate land uses to occur – or at least under the current design it does not allow for such a transition. The eastern portion of the subject site is comprised of a pond, wetlands and county ditch providing a natural buffer to the east and trees will be planted. No changes are proposed on the north side of the development the single family homes will remain in place. The existing pond will increase in size on lot 1 and addition trees planted on the other side of the pond. The western property line is adjacent to an outlot that has trees present and additional trees will be planted along the proposed street. The south side of the development acts as a large buffer with ponding and wetlands.
- 7) Additional scheduled tree removals from your previous concept
 - a. NR: Tree Removal went from 1.38 Ac to 1.45 Ac. Friendly reminder: Far less tree removal than development to the west.
 - b. JK: I am not sure what you are referencing regarding the development to the west. If you are referring to The Woods of Quail Creek to the west, that developer left a significant amount of existing trees to be incorporated into the development. From what I am seeing on your plans, you are only planning to preserve the trees that are outside of your designated construction limits. I would also argue that a tree study accounting for tree count and caliper size is a much more appropriate measure to evaluate impact to environmental conditions than a per acre assessment. Quail Creek 3rd plans show a disturbed area of 12.32 acres resulting in 86 replacement trees required. Harpers landing disturbed 27 acres including that and landscape requirements 464 trees were to be planted for the development overall. Meadowlands Estates disturbed 6.5 acres which requires 52 replacement trees, 102 trees planted to meet this requirement and landscape requirements.
- 8) Directed stormwater/wetland overflow via an off property open air ditch
 - a. NR: Watershed has reviewed and approved the storm water design as shown.
 - b. JK: Question for Matt: Did Carlson McCain submit an assessment study for the outflow ditches that this development will impact? Also due to the additional burden places on the public drain facilities, I would assume that the developer has an obligation to submit and adhere to a maintenance agreement to ensure the long term functionality of these facilities are maintained?

All development within the City of Blaine is required to address the quantity and quality of the additional storm water generated by the construction; this is accomplished by the storm water runoff from the new houses and roads being directed to the required storm water basins/ponds. These storm water features are designed to fluctuate levels with each storm event, and regulated the rate of discharge to the existing drainage channels. These calculations are reviewed by both the City and the Coon Creek Storm Water District to ensure that the subdivision is in compliance with the development regulations. The City engineering staff would be happy to review these calculations with anyone who would like to stop in and see the numbers.

9) Proposed photometric data not provided

- a. NR: Photometric plan not required. City will review and approve street light layout during the plan review process (typically show lights at CDS, intersections and sharp curves – this site will probably have 3 lights).
- b. JK: I would agree that photometric plans are not typically required when a proposed development is submitted that is consistent with the existing designated land use and that the lighting criteria that you outline above is consistent with that of a LDR development. Generally in a MDR there is a higher standard that the developer and City require for site lighting due to the request to increase the density. Additionally on this site, given the proposed location of Bataan Street NE to the neighboring parcels a review of a photometric plan would be prudent to ensure that there is not light bleed onto the adjacent parcels.

A photometric plan is not required to be submitted for subdivision construction. The City engineering staff reviews the proposed street layout and determines where the street lights will be located. It is anticipated that Bataan Street will have two (potentially three) street lights installed; with one in the cul-de-sac, one at the corner and potentially one near the intersection with 125th Ave NE.

10) Future northern expansion provisions indicated but no proof of concept provided.

- a. NR: We have done concept plans if you need to see...
- b. JK: Yes, I would like to see these concept plans. Frankly, I am surprised that if proof of concept plans exist that they were not submitted with this application Community review and engagement. The ghost plat is part of the Planning Commission presentation. It is attached in the email response. `