

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division
Conditional Use Permit and two Street Vacations
BZZ-2502, Vac1464 and Vac1465

Date: August 15, 2005

Applicant: Augsburg College

Address of Property: 2424 and 2428 Butler Place and 2405, 2425 and 2431 Riverside Avenue

Project Name: Parking Lots L, M and N

Contact Person and Phone: Ken Grieshaber with SRF Consulting Group, Inc., (763) 249-6709

Planning Staff and Phone: Hilary Watson, (612) 673-2639

Date Application Deemed Complete: July 20, 2005

End of 60-Day Decision Period: September 18, 2005

End of 120-Day Decision Period: Not applicable for this application

Ward: 2 Neighborhood Organization: West Bank Community Coalition

Existing Zoning: OR3, High Density Office Residence District

Proposed Zoning: Not applicable for this application

Zoning Plate Number: 21

Legal Description: Not applicable for this application

Proposed Use: 333-space surface parking lot

Concurrent Review:

Conditional use permit: for an expansion of a college campus. The applicant is proposing to reconfigure and expand a surface parking lot located on the northwest corner of Butler Place and 25th Avenue South.

Vacation: of a portion of 8th Street South.

Vacation: of a portion 24th Avenue South.

Applicable zoning code provisions: Chapter 525, Article VII, Conditional Use Permits.

Background: The applicant is proposing to reconfigure three existing parking lots on the Augsburg College campus. The reconfiguration includes the demolition of five existing buildings and the vacation of two public streets; 8th Street South and 24th Avenue South. The existing parking lots (L,

M and N) are separated by the two previously mentioned streets. The reconfiguration of the parking lots will provide for a more efficient parking configuration and will increase the capacity within the parking area. The parking lot will be utilized by faculty and commuting students. As part of the reconfiguration the applicant is proposing to install a landscape buffer between the property lines and the parking lot, install a decorative fence along the perimeter of the parking lot and install two stormwater infiltration basins that will collect stormwater runoff.

Travel Demand Management Plan: Augsburg College voluntarily prepared a TDM Plan that evaluated the traffic and parking situation for the entire campus. The TDM plan takes into account all of the proposed projects that Augsburg College will be conducting in the next year. The TDM plan was originally written in December of 2003. It was recently revised in July of this year to reflect preliminary comments from the Public Works Department. Outcomes of the TDM plan include; enrolling in the TransitSchools Program, exploring the feasibility of participating in the Metropass Program, exploring the feasibility of a U-Pass Program, revising the colleges policies so that no subsidy for driving alone is greater than any subsidy for an alternative mode of transportation, supporting and promoting bicycling, walking and carpooling, providing information regarding transportation alternatives, participating with city and regional TDM organizations and working with Metro Transit to improve mass transit service. At this time, the TDM plan has not been signed by Public Works or Planning.

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT - for a 333-space surface parking lot

Findings as Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division has analyzed the application and from the findings above concludes that the establishment, maintenance, or operation of the proposed conditional use:

1. Will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort or general welfare.

The Planning Division does not believe that a surface parking lot will be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort or general welfare. In order to allow for a safe passage for pedestrians from the parking lot to the public sidewalks, the Planning Division is recommending that the applicant construct walkways that lead to both Riverside Avenue and Butler Place.

2. Will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the vicinity and will not impede the normal or orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.

The Planning Division does not believe that a surface parking lot would be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the area as the majority of the site is currently used as a surface parking lot. The proposed configuration of the parking lot is much enhanced in comparison to the existing parking lot as there would be landscaping located along the perimeter of the site and also

located throughout the interior of the lot. In addition, two bio-retention areas will be incorporated into the site which will capture stormwater runoff.

3. Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, necessary facilities or other measures, have been or will be provided.

The applicant will be working closely with the Public Works Department, the Plan Review Section of the Inspections Department and the various utility companies during the duration of the development to ensure that all procedures are followed in order to comply with city and other applicable requirements.

4. Adequate measures have been or will be provided to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.

As proposed, the entrance/exit to the parking lot along 25th Avenue South is located close to the where Riverside Avenue and 25th Avenue South intersect. To alleviate traffic congestion at this intersection, the Planning Division is recommending that the entrance/exit be relocated further south along the street. It can be located at the end of one of the two proposed drive aisles.

5. Is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan.

The site is designated as public facilities in the comprehensive plan. This site is located on Riverside Avenue which is a designated Community Corridor. According to the principles and polices outlined in *The Minneapolis Plan*, the following apply to this proposal:

- Work with private and other public sector partners to invest in new development that is attractive, functional and adds value to the physical environment (Policy 9.6).
- Promote design solutions for automobile parking facilities that reflect principles of traditional urban form (Policy 9.12).
- Require the landscaping of parking lots (Implementation step for policy 9.12).

The surface parking lot will be utilized by faculty and students of the college during the week and on nights and weekends the parking lot will also be utilized by visitors to the campus. The parking lot is needed in order to meet the parking demand of the college. The reconfigured surface parking lot contains landscaping along the perimeter of the site and also located throughout the interior of the lot. In addition, two bio-retention areas will be incorporated into the site which will capture stormwater runoff. There will also be a six-foot high decorative fence located along the perimeter of the parking lot.

6. And, does in all other respects conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located.

Landscaping, screening and curbing: Chapter 541, Off-Street Parking & Loading requires that parking lots of ten spaces or more be designed so as to be in conformance with the landscaping, screening and curbing requirements as specified in Chapter 530, Site Plan Review.

LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING:

- **Parking and loading facilities located along a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway shall comply with section 530.170 (b), including providing landscape yards along a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway and abutting or across an alley from a residence or office residence district, or any permitted or conditional residential use.**
- **The corners of parking lots where rows of parking spaces leave areas unavailable for parking or vehicular circulation shall be landscaped as specified for a required landscaped yard. Such spaces may include architectural features such as benches, kiosks or bicycle parking.**
- **In parking lots of ten (10) spaces or more, no parking space shall be located more than fifty (50) feet from the center of an on-site deciduous tree. Tree islands located within the interior of a parking lot shall have a minimum width of seven (7) feet in any direction.**

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RESPONSE:

- For parking lots containing over one hundred parking spaces the zoning code requires that a 9-foot wide landscape yard be provided along a public street, sidewalk or pathway. In this case, landscaped yards are required along Riverside Avenue, 25th Avenue South and Butler Place. The proposed landscaped yards along the three street frontages meet or exceed this requirement.
- To screen the parking lot from the public streets and sidewalks, the applicant is proposing to utilize a combination of a six-foot high decorative metal fence and landscaping. With these two combined, screening equal to 60 percent opaque should be achieved. There is no landscaping proposed to be located along Riverside Avenue between the west property line of the parking lot and the building immediately to the east. The Planning Division is recommending that additional landscaping be located in this area in order to screen the parking lot from Riverside Avenue.
- For each 25 linear feet along a public street, at least one tree needs to be provided. This requirement is being met. However, the Planning Division is recommending that the five trees located along Riverside Avenue, between the building on the northeast corner of the property and the one immediately to the west shall be planted on the applicant's property, not the right-of-way.
- In parking lots of 10 spaces or more, no parking space shall be located more than 50 feet from an on-site deciduous tree. In addition, tree islands located within the interior of a parking lot must have a minimum width of 7 feet in any direction. In the proposed parking lot there are a number of parking spaces that are not located within 50 feet of an on-site deciduous tree. See the landscaping plan that highlights such parking spaces. The Planning Division is recommending that the parking lot be designed so all of the parking spaces are located within 50 feet of an on-site deciduous tree. The tree islands located in the middle of the parking lot measure 7 feet in any direction. The Planning Division is recommending that when the parking lot is reconfigured to meet the landscaping, screening and curbing requirements as indicated above that all of the tree islands located within the interior of the parking lot measure 7 feet in any direction.

VACATION (Vac1464) – That part of 8th Street South lying westerly of the west line of 25th Avenue South and easterly of the west line of 24th Avenue, measuring 410.76 feet by 80 feet.

Development Plan: The site plan for the development is attached.

Responses from Utilities and Affected Property Owners: Of the utilities and/or affected property owners that have responded the City of Minneapolis, Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy have requested an easement.

Findings: The Public Works Department finds that the area proposed for vacation is needed for public purpose as there are existing sanitary sewer and water easements running underneath the right-of-way. The Public Works Department has recommended that this vacation be approved subject to the retention of easements on behalf of the City of Minneapolis. Policy 9.13 of *The Minneapolis Plan* says to “restore and maintain the traditional street grid”. In this case, the portion of 8th Street South, which is proposed to be vacated, is not a critical part of the established street grid. Because of this, the Planning Division believes that it would not be inconsistent with the comprehensive plan to vacate this street.

VACATION (Vac1465) – That part of 24th Avenue South lying north of Butler Place and south of 8th Street South, measuring 171.43 feet by 80 feet.

Development Plan: The site plan for the development is attached.

Responses from Utilities and Affected Property Owners: Of the utilities and/or affected property owners that have responded the City of Minneapolis and Xcel Energy have requested an easement.

Findings: The Public Works Department finds that the area proposed for vacation is needed for public purpose as there are existing sanitary sewer and water easements running underneath the right-of-way. The Public Works Department has recommended that this vacation be approved subject to the retention of easements on behalf of the City of Minneapolis. Policy 9.13 of *The Minneapolis Plan* says to “restore and maintain the traditional street grid”. In this case, the portion of 24th Avenue South, which is proposed to be vacated, is not a critical part of the established street grid. Because of this, the Planning Division believes that it would not be inconsistent with the comprehensive plan to vacate this street.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the conditional use permit:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the conditional use permit application for a 333-space surface parking lot located at 2424 and 2428 Butler Place and 2405, 2425 and 2431 Riverside Avenue subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall construct walkways that lead from the parking lot to both Riverside Avenue and Butler Place.
2. The entrance/exit along 25th Avenue South shall be relocated further south along the street. It

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can be located at the end of one of the two proposed drive aisles.

3. Additional landscaping shall be located along Riverside Avenue between the west property line of the parking lot and the building immediately to the east in order to screen the parking lot from Riverside Avenue.
4. The five trees located along Riverside Avenue, between the building on the northeast corner of the property and the one immediately to the west shall be planted on the applicant's property, not the right-of-way.
5. The parking lot shall be designed so all of the parking spaces are located within 50 feet of an on-site deciduous tree and all tree islands located within the interior of the parking lot shall measure 7 feet in any direction.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the vacation:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission and the City Council accept the above findings and **approve** the vacation application of that part of 8th Street South lying westerly of the west line of 25th Avenue South and easterly of the west line of 24th Avenue subject to the retention of an easement in favor of the City of Minneapolis, Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the vacation:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission and the City Council accept the above findings and **approve** the vacation application of that part of 24th Avenue South lying north of Butler Place and south of 8th Street South subject to the retention of an easement in favor of the City of Minneapolis and Xcel Energy.

Attachments:

1. Statement of proposed use and development information
2. Conditional use permit findings
3. Vac1464 information
4. Vac1465 information

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5. July 11, 2005, letter to Council Member Zerby and the West Bank Community Coalition
6. Preliminary Development Review comments
7. Zoning Map, location map, aerial photo
8. Civil plans, site plan and landscaping plan
9. Photographs of the site and surrounding area