



PREPARED FOR THE PLAN COMMISSION

Project Address: 6501 Watts Road
Application Type: Conditional Use Alteration
Legistar File ID # [67513](#)
Prepared By: Chris Wells, Planning Division
Report Includes Comments from other City Agencies, as noted
Reviewed By: Kevin Firchow, AICP, Principal Planner

On May 24, 2021, the Plan Commission approved a conditional use request in the Suburban Employment (SE) District to convert an office building into a private school (the Madinah Academy) at 6501 Watts Road. (Legistar File ID [64903](#)).

During the review of the initial proposal for the Madinah Academy at 6501 Watts Road (i.e. prior to the May 24 Plan Commission meeting), Traffic Engineering had recommended the installation of a pedestrian refuge island and crosswalk on Watts Road to assist in the safe crossing between the Madinah Academy and the Madinah Community Center, which is located directly on the other side of Watts Road, to the north. Traffic Engineering staff indicated that in their experience, sites with similar users results in an increase in pedestrian traffic between the two sites. However, it becomes problematic when sites are mid-block (such as is the case on Watts Road), thus necessitating the need for higher order pedestrian improvements. Therefore, at the time, Traffic Engineering believed it appropriate to add the following major condition on the application:

- 8. The applicant shall be responsible for the construction of a mid-block crosswalk on Watts Road including an island, curb ramps and a marked crosswalk according to plan approved by City Engineer. The applicant shall enter into a signed developer’s agreement through City of Madison Engineering prior to sign off.

However, on July 22, 2021, after the Plan Commission granted its approval with this condition, representatives from both the Madinah Academy and the Madinah Community Center along with the District Alderperson (Ald. Furman) met with Traffic Engineering, Engineering, and Planning staff to discuss the need for the mid-block crosswalk. During the meeting, it was made clear by the applicant that no crossing between the Academy and Community Center would occur and that the two sites are entirely independent. Based on that discussion, Traffic Engineering agrees that a mid-block crossing of Watts Road is not a necessary condition of approval at this time. In the future, if the Madinah Academy reevaluates their site operations and/or undergoes programmatic changes that necessitate pedestrian travel between the sites, Traffic Engineering would expect the applicant to be responsible for constructing an island and mid-block crossing. Engineering Staff have also indicated they are comfortable with removing the condition at this time.

In order to allow the applicant to begin the interior building renovations prior to the start of the school year, a Minor Alteration was granted to *“Provide a \$3,000.00 deposit in lieu of constructing a mid-block crosswalk on Watts Road at this time with understanding that the applicant will submit a new Conditional Use application to have the crosswalk condition removed.”* This was approved considering that, at the time of sign-off, neither use was operating and no pedestrian traffic was yet occurring.

Recommendation

Based on the recommendation of the Traffic Engineering Division, the Planning Division requests that the Plan Commission find the approval standards are met and recommend approval of this alteration to the approved conditional use, removing conditions related to the installation of mid-block crossing improvements.

This recommendation includes the REMOVAL of the three following conditions from the May 24, 2021 staff report. No other changes to the approval conditions are recommended at this time.

Traffic Engineering Division (Contact Sean Malloy, 266-5987)

8. The applicant shall be responsible for the construction of a mid-block crosswalk on Watts Road including an island, curb ramps and a marked crosswalk according to plan approved by City Engineer. The applicant shall enter into a signed developer’s agreement through City of Madison Engineering prior to sign off.

Engineering Division (Main Office) (Contact Timothy Troester, (608) 267-1995)

1. Enter into a City / Developer agreement for the required infrastructure improvements. Agreement to be executed prior to sign off. Allow 4-6 weeks to obtain agreement. Contact City Engineering to schedule the development and approval of the plans and the agreement. (MGO 16.23(9)c)
2. Construct Mid-block Crosswalk, Ramps & Island on Watts Road as required by City Traffic Engineer.

This recommendation is subject to input at the public hearing.