

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

September 15, 2025

PREPARED FOR THE PLAN COMMISSION



Project Address: 5501 Schroeder Road (District 20 – Alder Harrington-McKinney)

Application Type: Conditional Use

Legistar File ID # [89235](#)

Prepared By: Colin Punt, Planning Division
Report includes comments from other City agencies, as noted.

Reviewed By: Kevin Firchow, AICP, Principal Planner

Summary

Applicant: Sarah Weitz; Vitense Golfland; 6414 Landfall Dr; Madison, WI 53705

Owner: Joel Weitz; Vitense Golfland; 6414 Landfall Dr; Madison, WI 53705

Requested Action: The applicant is seeking approval of a conditional use to allow amplified sound at an outdoor eating area associated with food and beverage establishment and to allow the outdoor eating to be open past 9 pm at a recreation facility in the PR district per §28.095(2), MGO.

Proposal Summary: The applicant is seeking approvals to operate three outdoor eating patios after 9:00 p.m. and to allow for amplified music in the patio areas.

Applicable Regulations & Standards: Standards for conditional use approval are found in §28.183(6) M.G.O.

Review Required By: Plan Commission

Summary Recommendations: The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission find that the conditional use standards are met and **approve** the request for a conditional use for outdoor eating areas associated with a food and beverage establishment with hours of operation open after 9:00 p.m. and amplified sound at 5501 Schroeder Road. This recommendation is subject to input at the public hearing and the conditions recommended by the Planning Division and other reviewing agencies beginning on page 4.

Background Information

Parcel Location: The subject site is 29.4 acres located at the southwesterly corner of Schroeder Road Whitney Way. The site is within Alder District 20 (Alder Harrington-McKinney) and the Madison Metropolitan School District.

Existing Conditions and Land Use: The site, zoned PR (Parks and Recreation district), is currently occupied by a golf course, driving range, and other outdoor recreational activities, as well as a clubhouse with indoor recreational activities, restaurant, and bar.

Surrounding Land Uses and Zoning:

North: Across Schroeder Road, a four-story mixed-use building and a four-story multifamily residential building, both zoned CC-T (Commercial Corridor–Transitional district);

South: Shops and a restaurant zoned CC-T; beyond the driving range and golf course, single-family residences zoned SR-C1 (Suburban Residential-Consistent 1); across Whitney Way, single-family residences zoned SR-C1;

West: Beyond the driving range and golf course, single-family residences zoned SR-C1;

East: Across Whitney Way, office buildings zoned CC-T and multibuilding apartment complexes zoned SR-V2 (Suburban Residential – Varied 2).

Adopted Land Use Plan: The [Comprehensive Plan](#) (2023) recommends CMU (Community Mixed Use) for the site. The [Southwest Neighborhood Plan](#) (2008) has no specific recommendations for the site. The site is also within the boundaries of the [Southwest Area Plan](#), which is currently in-process is expected to be completed and adopted in 2026.

Zoning Summary: The subject property is zoned PR (Parks and Recreation district):

Other Critical Zoning Items	Urban Design (UDD 2), Utility Easements, Wellhead Protection District
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Table Prepared by Jacob Moskowitz, Assistant Zoning Administrator

Environmental Corridor Status: The property is not located within a mapped environmental corridor.

Public Utilities and Services: The site is served by a full range of urban services.

Project Description

The applicant, representing Vitense Golfland, is seeking a conditional use to allow amplified sound at three outdoor eating areas and to allow the outdoor eating areas to remain open after 9 p.m. at a recreation facility in the PR district. The applicant intends to host live music at two patios and a beer garden generally from spring until fall. Two of the patios, located adjacent to the main building, are covered with a canvas roof and sides. The beer garden, approximately 150 feet to the northwest of the main building, is not covered. Each of the three patios is approximately 1,000 square feet and seats approximately 50 people. Typical hours of operation for the full Golfland facility are daily from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., but according to the letter of intent, music would be played only during special events, primarily in the early evenings, but sometimes in the afternoons as well. Regardless, all music will end by 9:30 p.m. according to the applicant. Further, according to the letter of intent, only one performance will ever be scheduled in a day, and five or six staff members will be present to manage the event.

Analysis & Conclusion

This request is subject to the standards for conditional uses. This section begins with a summary of adopted plan recommendations, conditional use standards, a very brief review of UDC action, and finally a conclusion.

Conformance with Adopted Plans

The [Comprehensive Plan](#) (2018) recommends CMU (Community Mixed Use) for the site. CMU areas consist of a relatively high-intensity mix of residential, retail, office, institutional, and civic uses, generally located adjacent to a major transportation corridor. The general development intensity range in CMU areas is residential densities of up to 130 dwelling units per acre and building heights between two and six stories. While the existing uses at Vitense Golfland are not intended nor required to change, the CMU land use recommendations sets out the intended uses and development types for potential future redevelopment. The [Southwest Neighborhood Plan](#)

(2008) has no specific recommendations for the site. The site is also within the boundaries of the [Southwest Area Plan](#), which is currently in-process is expected to be completed and adopted in 2026.

Conditional Use Standards

In regard to conditional use approval standards, the Plan Commission shall not approve a conditional use without due consideration of the City's adopted plan recommendations, design guidelines, supplemental regulations, and finding that all of the conditional use standards of §28.183(6) M.G.O. are met. Staff advises the Plan Commission that in evaluating the conditional use standards, State law requires that conditional use findings must be based on "substantial evidence" that directly pertains to each standard and not based on personal preference or speculation.

Specifically regarding such uses with live music, staff note standard 3, regarding impairment or diminishment of uses, values, and enjoyment of other property in the neighborhood.

To better understand the relationship of approved outdoor eating areas with their surroundings, Staff reviewed conditional use approvals for outdoor eating areas dating back to mid-2015. The estimated median distance between approved outdoor eating areas with outdoor amplified sound and the nearest residential units was approximately 145 feet. A conditional use for a similar request at 8216 Watts Road was approved on April 28, 2025, and is likely the closest analog in terms of geography and site situation. In that case, the nearest residential units were located across a parking lot, approximately 160 feet from the outdoor eating area. In the case of this request the nearest existing residential units to the closest of the three outdoor patios are approximately 180 feet away across Schroeder Road in the multifamily building at 5604 Schroeder Road. The other two patios are approximately 340 and 390 feet from the nearest residential units. The nearest single-family residence is over 800 feet away from any outdoor patio proposed for outdoor music.

In this case, because of the location of the use at the interchange of Whitney Way and the West Beltline Highway, the land use recommendation and current use of the larger development, and the geographic scale of the property which increases the distance to surrounding properties and uses, the Planning Division does not anticipate that the establishment of this use and live entertainment will have significant impacts on surrounding properties and Staff believes that all applicable standards of approval can be found met. Staff also notes that the Plan Commission retains continuing jurisdiction over conditional uses, meaning that should complaints be filed, the Plan Commission could take further action on a Conditional Use as allowed in MGO §28.183(9)(d).

Supplemental Regulations

According to Table 28G-1, outdoor eating areas associated with food and beverage establishments must adhere to the Supplemental Regulations also found in MGO §28.151:

- a) Primary access to the area shall be from within the establishment.
- b) Hours of operation shall end at 9:00 p.m. in all districts except for MXC, CC and RMX, unless extended as part of the conditional use approval.
- c) No amplified sound is permitted in all districts except MXC, CC and RMX, unless allowed as part of the conditional use approval.
- d) Where the use is conditional, an appropriate transition area between the use and adjacent property may be required, using landscaping, screening, and other site improvements consistent with the character of the neighborhood.

Staff believes that all the Supplemental Regulations can be found met for this request, including regulation d), specifically due to the size of the site and distance to adjacent uses.

Urban Design Commission

The site is within Urban Design District 2. However, there are no exterior changes proposed, so the proposal has not been reviewed by the Urban Design Commission. The proposal has been reviewed and approved by the Urban Design Commission Secretary.

Conclusion

Staff believes that given the adopted the plan recommendations, the proximity to major roadways, including the Beltline, and the size of the parcel, the Plan Commission can find the applicable conditional use standards of approval to be met and approve the conditional use request. Staff notes that as a conditional use, the Plan Commission retains continuing jurisdiction to review and resolve complaints that may arise regarding the operation of the conditional use.

At time of writing, Staff is unaware of written comment from the public.

Recommendation

Planning Division Recommendations (Contact Colin Punt 243-0455)

The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission find that the conditional use standards are met and **approve** the request for a conditional use for outdoor eating areas associated with a food and beverage establishment with hours of operation open after 9:00 p.m. and amplified sound at 5501 Schroeder Road. This recommendation is subject to input at the public hearing and the conditions recommended by the Planning Division and other reviewing agencies below.

Recommended Conditions of Approval: Major/Non-Standard Conditions are Shaded

Metro Transit (Contact Tim Sobota, 608-261-4289)

Note: Metro Transit operates daily all-day transit service along Schroeder Road adjacent this property - with trips at least every 60 minutes (every 30 minutes or less during the day on weekdays). Metro Transit operates additional daily all-day transit service along South Whitney Way near this property - with trips at least every 60 minutes (every 30 minutes or less during the day on weekdays).

Note: Metro Transit would initially estimate the following counts of potentially eligible trips towards US Green Building Council/LEED Quality Access to Transit points: 64 Weekday & 34 Weekend. Please contact Metro Transit if additional analysis would be of interest.

The Planning Division, Zoning Administrator, City Engineering Division, Engineering Division Mapping Section, Traffic Engineering Division, Fire Department, Parks Division, Forestry Section, Water Utility, City Assessor, and Parking Utility have reviewed this request and has recommended no conditions of approval.