

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

December 2, 2024



PREPARED FOR THE PLAN COMMISSION

Project Address: 8102 Wellness Way and 8198 McKee Road
Application Type: Conditional Use Alteration
Legistar File ID # [85651](#)
Prepared By: Chris Wells, Planning Division
Report Includes Comments from other City Agencies, as noted
Reviewed By: Kevin Firchow, AICP, Principal Planner

Summary

Applicant & Contact: Kevin Yeska; JSD Professional Services, Inc.; 507 W Verona Avenue, Suite 500; Verona, WI 53593

Property Owner: Meriter Hospital, Inc.; Attention: Jenny Nelson; 202 S Park Street; Madison, WI 53715

Requested Actions: The applicant requests consideration of an alteration to an approved conditional use in a Campus-Institutional (CI) District without a campus master plan for the establishment, improvement, or modification of a primary use occurring outside of an enclosed building, to allow installation of various landscaping and gardening improvements and accessory structures associated with an existing hospital (UnityPoint Health-Meriter Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Facility) at 8102 Wellness Way and 8198 McKee Road.

Proposal Summary: The applicant, Meriter Hospital, Inc, is proposing expand their outdoor amenities for outpatient therapy by adding such elements as a labyrinth, walking paths, ten raised planter garden beds, various seating with shade elements, and bio-retention basins and other landscaping across a roughly two-acre area to the east of the existing facility.

Applicable Regulations & Standards: This proposal is subject to the standards for Conditional Uses [MGO §28.183], as §28.097(2)(d) of the Zoning Code states, "In a Campus-Institutional District without a Campus Master Plan, the establishment, improvement, or modification of any primary or secondary use occurring outside of an enclosed building shall require conditional use approval." Furthermore, MGO §28.097(7)(a)3 states that until an architectural review committee is established and approved by the Plan Commission, all building and site plans shall be reviewed and approved by the Urban Design Commission.

Review Required By: Urban Design Commission, Plan Commission

Summary Recommendation: The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission find the conditional use standards of approval met and **approve** the alteration to an approved conditional use in a Campus-Institutional (CI) District without a campus master plan for the establishment, improvement, or modification of a primary use occurring outside of an enclosed building, to allow installation of various landscaping and gardening improvements and accessory structures associated with an existing hospital (UnityPoint Health-Meriter Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Facility) at 8102 Wellness Way and 8198 McKee Road. This recommendation is subject to input at the public hearing and the comments and conditions recommended by reviewing agencies.

Background Information

Parcel Location: The 2,503-939-square-foot (57.5-acre) parcel extends from Raymond Road to McKee Road (CTH PD), approximately a quarter-mile west of High Point Road. It is located in Alder District 7 (Ald. Wehelie) and the Madison Metropolitan School District.

Existing Conditions and Land Use: The site is largely undeveloped/wooded except for a roughly 40,000-square-foot existing hospital (UnityPoint Health-Meriter Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Facility) located near the center. It is accessed from Raymond Road to the west via Wellness Way and from McKee Road to the south via Meriter Way. The site is zoned Campus Institutional (CI) District.

Surrounding Land Use and Zoning:

North: Meriter property, zoned Campus Institutional (CI) with a majority of the property located in a mapped environmental corridor. Beyond the property lies undeveloped land and Ice Age Trail corridor property located in the Town of Verona, with single-family and multi-family residences north of Raymond Road and Badger Mill Creek;

South: Meriter property, zoned CI with portions of the property abutting the property line located in a mapped environmental corridor, McKee Road with the Ice Age Trail corridor open space (Dane County Park System) beyond;

East: Dane County Ice Age Trail Corridor Property, with single-family residences in the Ice Age Falls subdivision, zoned TR-C1 and TR-C3 (Traditional Residential – Consistent 1 & 3) beyond; and

West: Undeveloped agricultural land and single-family residences on large tracts in the Town of Verona.

Adopted Land Use Plan: The [Comprehensive Plan](#) (2023) and the [High Point - Raymond Neighborhood Development Plan \(2017 Update\)](#) both recommend Employment (E) uses for the subject parcel. Additionally, the adopted neighborhood plan recommends the extension of Stratton Way across the Meriter property to provide additional access and street interconnectivity to serve future street interconnectivity and future development, both on the Meriter property and the undeveloped town parcels located to the west. Following these Plan recommendations, in 2007 the Plan Commission approved a Certified Survey Map (CSM) and rezoning request to allow for the construction of a medical office building/clinic at the southwest corner of the property adjacent to McKee Road. As a condition of approval, the applicant was required to dedicate a 66-foot street right-of way reserved for future public roadway from Stratton Way that could accommodate vehicle and bike lanes on the street.

Zoning Summary: The project site is zoned Campus Institutional (CI).

Requirements	Required	Proposed
Lot Area (sq. ft.)	6,000 sq. ft.	57.48 acres
Lot Width	50'	>50'
Front Yard Setback	0' or 5'	Adequate
Side Yard Setback: Street side yard	0' or 5'	Adequate
Rear Yard Setback	0'	Adequate
Maximum Lot Coverage	85%	<85%
Maximum Building Height	3 stories/68'	Accessory buildings

Site Design	Required	Proposed
Number Parking Stalls	Not required	96 existing parking stalls
Electric Vehicle Stalls	Not required	None

Accessible Stalls	Yes	Existing accessible stalls
Loading	Not required	Existing loading dock
Number Bike Parking Stalls	Not required	20 existing bike stalls
Landscaping and Screening	Yes	Yes <i>(See Comment #8)</i>
Lighting	Not required	None <i>(See Comment #10)</i>
Building Form and Design	Not required	Accessory buildings <i>(See Comment #9)</i>
Other Critical Zoning Items		
Yes:	Urban Design (CI District), Utility Easements; Barrier Free (ILHR 69)	
No:	Historic District; Floodplain, Adjacent to Park, Wetlands, Wellhead Protection; TOD Overlay	

Table Prepared by Jenny Kirchgatter, Assistant Zoning Administrator

Environmental Corridor Status: Portions of the subject property, including areas where improvements are proposed, appear to be located within a mapped environmental corridor. If necessary, such approvals are under the jurisdiction of the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission. Staff have added an advisory comment noting this in the recommendation section of this report.

Public Utilities and Services: This property is served by a range of urban services. However, the closest Madison Metro Transit routes is the E which travels on Muir Field Road, roughly 0.9 miles to the east.

Related Approvals and Site History

In 2003, under the 1966 Zoning Code, the subject property was rezoned from Temporary A (Agriculture District) to R4 (General Residence District) to allow construction of an 18-bed adolescent psychiatric hospital. At that time, it was determined that the proposed facility fell under the “hospital and sanitarium” definition as a permitted use in the R4 zoning district. The psychiatric hospital was also considered consistent with the general parameters of an “institutional use” for the purposes of conformance with the adopted neighborhood plan at that time.

In 2007, the Plan Commission approved a rezoning request and Certified Survey Map (CSM) to divide the then 63-acre property owned by Meriter Hospital to create two developable lots. Following this land division, a medical office/clinic was constructed in the southwest corner of the site at the intersection of McKee Road and Meriter Way. As a condition of approval, the applicant was required to provide an easement for the future extension of Stratton Way, located in the Ice Age Falls subdivision, across the Meriter property to connect with Meriter Way. In the 2007 staff report, the Planning Division anticipated that the ultimate access to the psychiatric hospital would be from the new street and not from Raymond Road. The connection of Stratton Way to Meriter Way was intended to create a network of streets to connect all existing and future development north of McKee Road. At the time of this approval, the general idea was that this proposed street extension would facilitate the eventual abandonment of the Raymond Road entrance to the site.

Under the 2013 Zoning Code rewrite, the 57-acre property was zoned Campus Institutional (CI) Zoning District. According to MGO §28.097, “The CI District is established to recognize the City’s major educational and medical institutions as important activity centers and traffic generators, accommodate the growth and development needs of these institutions, and coordinate the master plans of these institutions with the City’s plans, polices and zoning standards.” In 2007, the Planning Division indicated that the City had several discussions with the property owner about the need for a master plan for the remaining property that addresses how the property will be developed in the future. Staff requested that the applicant address access and circulation within the larger Meriter property in relation to the existing and planned future roadway network, including potential connections to existing and future developments on adjacent properties located to the east and west, and the ability to provide public services to any additional development, including multi-modal forms of transportation.

Furthermore, the 2007 staff report stated that, “the Planning Division does not feel that it can support any further development of the Meriter property in the absence of a comprehensive plan for the site.” Further discussion is included in the project analysis section of this report.

Lastly, Wellness Way was constructed from Raymond Road to existing Meriter Way near the southwest portion of the subject site, as part of the project to convert S Pleasant View Road/CTH M to a four-lane arterial.

Most recently, on October 15, 2018, the Plan Commission found the standards met and approved a request for a conditional use conditional use in the CI (Campus-Institutional) zoning district to construct a 20,000 square-foot addition to an existing adolescent psychiatry facility (hospital) at 8001 Raymond Road. (Legistar File ID [52759](#))

Project Description

The applicant requests consideration of an alteration to an approved conditional use in a Campus-Institutional (CI) District without a campus master plan for the establishment, improvement, or modification of a primary use occurring outside of an enclosed building, to allow installation of various landscaping and gardening improvements and accessory structures associated with an existing hospital (UnityPoint Health-Meriter Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Facility) at 8102 Wellness Way and 8198 McKee Road.

According to submitted materials, the existing Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Facility (CAP) offers community-based inpatient and outpatient psychiatric programs for children and adolescents in South Central Wisconsin. As part of those services, several exterior elements for both inpatient and outpatient therapy are currently located on the north side of the side of the facility, in an enclosed/secure space. The list of elements includes gardens, basketball courts, a small running track/play field, shade structures, water features and inspiration for children and adolescents in recovery.

With the intent of greatly expanding the outdoor amenities for outpatient therapy, the applicant proposes to make a number of site changes across a roughly two-acre area to the east of the facility which currently contains a simple gazebo, basketball hoop, council ring, fire lane and garden shed. While they are proposing to keep the gazebo (now screened in), they also propose to add such elements as a labyrinth, walking paths, ten raised planter garden beds, various seating with shade elements, and bio-retention basins and other landscaping.

No exterior changes to the existing facility are proposed nor are changes proposed to how the site is accessed, where the automobile surface parking is located, etc.

Analysis and Conclusion

This proposal is subject to the standards for Conditional Uses [MGO §28.183], as §28.097(2)(d) of the Zoning Code states, “In a Campus-Institutional District without a Campus Master Plan, the establishment, improvement, or modification of any primary or secondary use occurring outside of an enclosed building shall require conditional use approval.” Furthermore, MGO §28.097(7)(a)3 states that until an architectural review committee is established and approved by the Plan Commission, all building and site plans shall be reviewed and approved by the Urban Design Commission. This analysis begins with a summary of the adopted plan recommendations.

Conformance with Adopted Plans

The [Comprehensive Plan](#) (2023) and the [High Point - Raymond Neighborhood Development Plan \(2017 Update\)](#) both recommend Employment (E) uses for the subject parcel. The Comprehensive Plan describes Employment areas as including “predominantly corporate and business offices, research facilities, laboratories hospitals, medical clinics, and other similar uses.” Additionally, the adopted neighborhood plan recommends the extension of Stratton Way across the Meriter property to provide additional access and street interconnectivity to serve future street interconnectivity and future development, both on the Meriter property and the undeveloped town parcels located to the west.

Existing Street Easement

Following the aforementioned Plan recommendations, the Plan Commission approved a Certified Survey Map (CSM) and rezoning request in 2007 to allow for the construction of a medical office building/clinic at the southwest corner of the property adjacent to McKee Road. As a condition of approval, the applicant was required to dedicate a 66-foot street right-of way reserved for future public roadway from Stratton Way that could accommodate vehicle and bike lanes on the street.

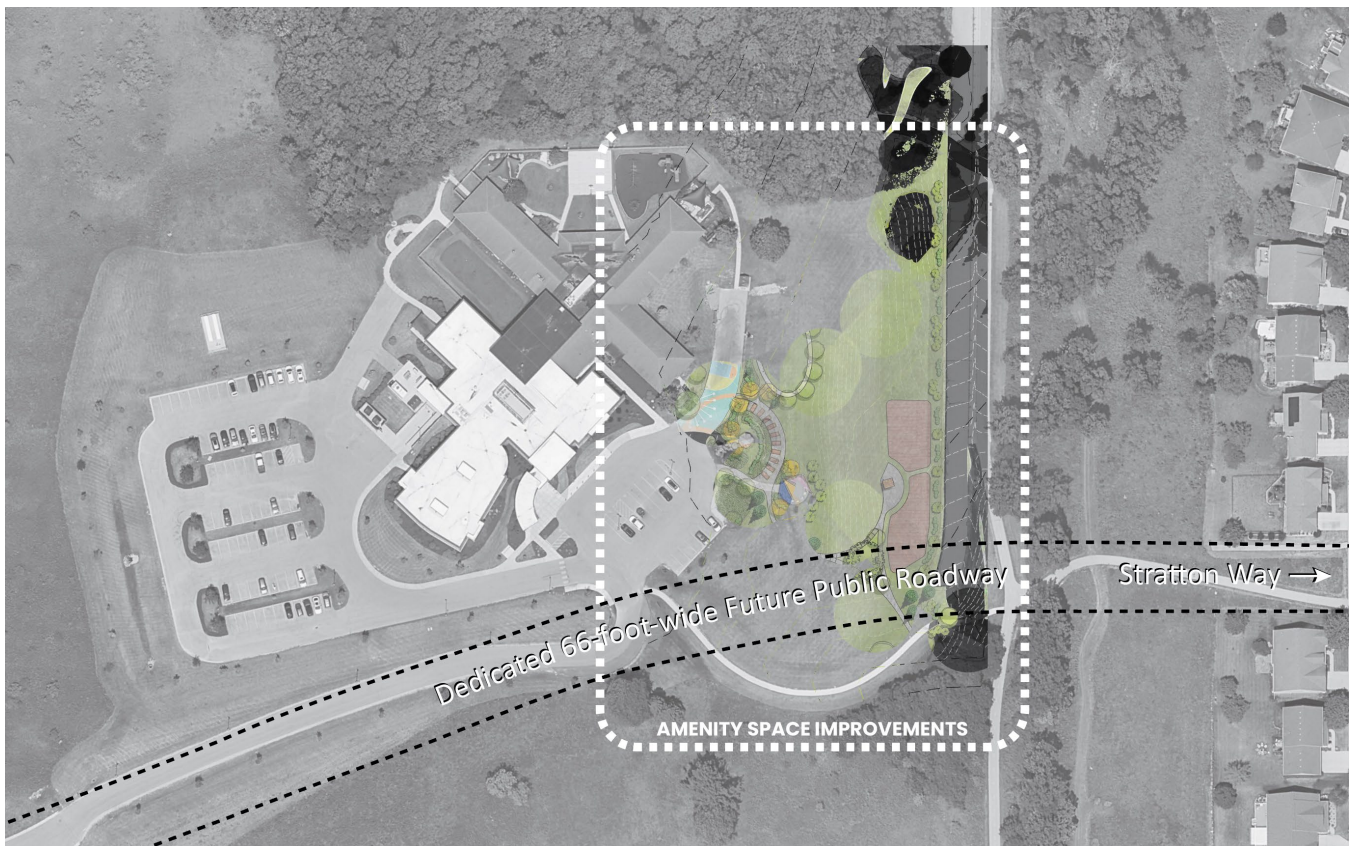


Image 1: Exhibit Showing the Dedicated Future Public Roadway (Stratton Way) Across the Subject Site.

In Image 1, above, the dedicated 66-foot street right-of way reserved for future public roadway (should Stratton Way, located just off the right side of the image above, be extended from the east) has been overlaid on the site plan showing the proposed site improvements. While Staff note that the dedicated road right-of-way extends across the southern end of the area where the site improvements are proposed, Staff do not believe that any of these improvements would prevent the road from being constructed in the future. Rather, Staff believe the

impacts would be negligible – mainly the loss of roughly a quarter of the pumpkin/watermelon patch as well as a number of the privacy plantings proposed just to the south of this garden patch, and the specimen oak tree.

As part of final approval, the applicant will be required to amend the underlying easement that goes with this road extension. With this amendment comes the consent that the City of Madison reserves the right to construct the public improvements in the future and is not responsible to repair, replace, or otherwise compensate the applicant for doing so.

Staff believe that the proposed use could be found compatible with both adopted plans.

Conditional Use Standards

The Conditional Use approval standards state that 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 MGO §28.183(6) are met. Please note, recent changes to 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. Staff provides additional discussion regarding Standard 8:

Standard 8 states, “When applying the above standards to any new construction of a building or an addition to an existing building the Plan Commission shall find that the project creates an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose for the zoning district. In order to find that this standard is met, the Plan Commission may require the applicant to submit plans to the Urban Design Commission for comment and recommendation.”

Staff note that the proposal was reviewed by the Urban Design Commission as MGO §28.097(7)(a)3 states that until an architectural review committee is established and approved by the Plan Commission, all building and site plans shall be reviewed and approved by the Urban Design Commission. At their meeting on November 20, 2024, the Urban Design Commission made an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission to **APPROVE** (Legistar File [85975](#)). The motion, which passed with a unanimous vote.

On balance, Staff believe the impact on the surroundings will be negligible due to several factors: 1) the limited scope of the site changes; 2) the large buffer from nearby residential (the nearest residential units are located roughly 400 feet to the east); and 3) the fact that these new site elements will be used almost exclusively during normal business hours, being for outpatient therapy. Due to these factors, coupled with the final approval granted by the Urban Design Commission at their meeting on November 20, Staff believe that the Conditional Use Standards can be found met subject to input at the public hearing and comments from reviewing agencies.

Public Input

At time of writing, no public comments have been received regarding this proposal.

Conclusion

Staff believe the conditional use standards can be found met and recommends the request be approved by the Plan Commission.

Recommendation

Planning Division Recommendation (Contact Chris Wells, (608) 261-9135)

The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission find the conditional use standards of approval met and **approve** the alteration to an approved conditional use in a Campus-Institutional (CI) District without a campus master plan for the establishment, improvement, or modification of a primary use occurring outside of an enclosed building, to allow installation of various landscaping and gardening improvements and accessory structures associated with an existing hospital (UnityPoint Health-Meriter Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Facility) at 8102 Wellness Way and 8198 McKee Road. This recommendation is subject to input at the public hearing and the comments and conditions recommended by reviewing agencies.

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

Planning Division (Contact Chris Wells, (608) 261-9135)

1. The applicant shall enter into all necessary agreements and/or amendment(s) to the existing Street Easement as required by City Engineering Mapping. The applicant may revise plans, for City Staff approval, to remove/relocate the improvements proposed outside of the easement area.
2. Advisory Note. This project may require approvals from the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission as portions of the subject property appear to be within a mapped environmental corridor.

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

3. An Erosion Control Permit is required for this project. See Storm comments for permit specific details and requirements.
4. This project will disturb 4,000 sf or more of land area and require an Erosion Control Permit. Submit the Erosion Control Permit Application (with USLE calculations and associated fee) to Megan Eberhardt (west) at meberhardt@cityofmadison.com, or Daniel Olivares (east) at daolivares@cityofmadison.com, for approval. The permit application can be found on City Engineering's website at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/Permits.cfm>.

Demonstrate compliance with Section 37.07 and 37.08 of the Madison General Ordinances regarding permissible soil loss rates. Include Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE) computations for the construction period with the erosion control plan. Measures shall be implemented in order to maintain a soil loss rate below 5.0 tons per acre per year. The WDNR provided workbook to compute USLE rates can be found online at <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/stormwater/publications.html>

City Engineering – Mapping (Contact Jeffrey Quamme, (608) 266-4097)

5. Another Amendment to the Street Easement is required to permit the proposed walkway, trees and storm pipe improvements to be placed within the easement area. Applicant shall be aware that these additional permitted improvements, as part of this required amendment, shall be subject to all of the terms of the existing easement. This includes that if the City of Madison should exercise its rights regarding the construction any public improvement amendment to it in the future, the City is not responsible to repair, replace, or otherwise compensate the applicant for the permitted improvements removed or disturbed. Coordinate with Jeff Quamme (jrquamme@cityofmadison.com) for the Real Estate project that will be required to accomplish the amendment.
6. Show accurately and label on all applicable sheets the Public Easement for Road Purposes per CSM No. 12283 and the Amendment per Document No. 5474794. The proposed improvements within this easement area need to be clearly seen.

Traffic Engineering (Contact Luke Peters, (608) 266-6543)

7. Note: The applicant shall maintain the existing public easement for road purposes.

Zoning Administrator (Contact Jenny Kirchgatter, (608) 266-4429)

8. Submit the landscape plan and landscape worksheet stamped by the registered landscape architect. Per Section 28.142(3) Landscape Plan and Design Standards, landscape plans for zoning lots greater than ten thousand (10,000) square feet in size must be prepared by a registered landscape architect.
9. Provide details for the existing gazebo and proposed garden shed and enclosed pavilion.
10. Verify whether new exterior site lighting is provided. Site lighting must comply with MGO Section 29.36 Outdoor Lighting Standards. If new exterior site lighting is provided, submit an exterior lighting plan and fixture cut sheets with the final plan submittal.
11. Per Section 28.186(4)(b), the property owner or operator is required to bring the property into compliance with all elements of the approved site plans by the date established by the Zoning Administrator as part of the site and building plan approval. Work with Zoning staff to establish a final site compliance date.

The following agencies have reviewed the requests and have recommended no conditions of approval:

Fire Department; Parks Division; Forestry; Water Utility; Parking; Metro