



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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TO: Transportation Commission

FROM: Sean Malloy, Traffic Engineering Division
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DATE: October 5, 2023, Revised October 9, 2023

SUBJECT: ID [80278](#) – Public Works Transportation Projects Review and Feedback – Starkweather Plat

The applicant, Starkweather, LLC, is requesting zoning and preliminary plat approvals to allow five parcels at 3420-3614 Milwaukee Street to be developed with a variety of mixed-use and multi-family buildings. The approximately 67 acres of land are generally located on north side of Milwaukee Street between Starkweather Creek and Walter Street.

The *Starkweather Plat* proposes 13 lots and a total of 10 outlots. Three of the proposed lots will be zoned CC-T (Commercial Corridor–Transitional District), six will be zoned TR-U2 (Traditional Residential–Urban 2 District), and four lots will be zoned TR-V2 (Traditional Residential–Varied 2 District). The letter of intent suggests that the 13 lots could support the future construction of up to 1,100 dwelling units, including townhouses and “flats” (multi-family dwelling units); the amount of future non-residential (commercial, service, etc.) space is unknown. The *Starkweather Plat* also proposes ten outlots, including five that will be dedicated to the City (three for stormwater management and two for parkland) and five outlots that will be reserved for private use, including for private open spaces and community gardens. Separate land use approvals will be required for the future development on Lots 1-13 following approval and recording of a final plat of the subdivision. More information on the proposed preliminary plat may be found in the Legislative Information Center under ID [78642](#).

Access to the proposed subdivision will be provided by three streets that will extend north from Milwaukee Street opposite three streets that serve the Eastmorland neighborhood to the south. From west to east, the applicant proposes the northward extension of Leon Street as a 76-foot wide right of way, which they indicate is intended to be a “Community Main Street” under the Complete Green Streets typology adopted by the Common Council earlier this year. Near the center of the development frontage along Milwaukee Street, the plat includes the extension of Harding Street as a 60-foot wide “Neighborhood Yield Street” right of way, while Walter Street will be extended north from its existing signalized intersection with Milwaukee Street as a 66-foot wide “Neighborhood Street” right of way. All three streets will terminate at the eastward extension of Chicago Avenue, which is proposed as a 66-foot wide “Neighborhood Street” right of way to be located approximately 900 feet north of Milwaukee Street. Chicago Avenue is planned to extend in the future from its current terminus at N Fair Oaks Avenue west of Starkweather Creek across the site before continuing east to West Corporate Drive. Both Walter Street and Chicago Avenue are officially mapped across the subject property.

In addition to the streets described above, the plat also proposes two east-west streets to be located between Chicago Avenue and Milwaukee Street. Starkweather Street is planned as a 72-foot wide

“Neighborhood Shared Street” that will extend between Leon and Walter, while Voit Avenue (shown on Sheet C6.2 of the ‘Development Plans’ attachment to the preliminary plat (ID [78642](#)) file as “Slow Street”) is planned as a 60-foot wide “Civic Space” street right of way that will extend from Leon Street to the eastern plat limits.

Subdivision Design

The proposed subdivision was submitted prior to the repeal and recreation of Section 16.23 of Madison General Ordinances by the Common Council on July 25, 2023 (Ordinance 23-00075 (ID [78130](#))). However, an applicant may elect to be reviewed under the new ordinance if they request, and in this case, the applicants are proposing street types from the [Complete Green Streets Guide](#) adopted earlier this year, which was codified in the amended Subdivision Regulations and would not be possible under the former Subdivision Regulations. Therefore, the *Starkweather Plat* will be reviewed using the amended regulations, including for consistency with the Complete Green Streets Guide. This preliminary plat is the first subdivision reviewed using the new Subdivision Regulations.

The 11 street types in the adopted Complete Green Streets Guide were incorporated into the amended Subdivision Regulations, which otherwise defer to the Guide for the implementation of those streets when proposed in a new subdivision or land division.

As noted above, the applicants have identified the street types they propose to serve their development and have provided proposed cross-sections, which inform the right of way widths shown on the preliminary plat. Those cross-sections show 26-foot wide drive lanes (13 feet per direction, exclusive of parking) on Chicago Avenue, Leon Street, Starkweather Street, and Voit Avenue/Slow Street. The drive lane width on those streets is intended to accommodate the aerial apparatus lanes/roads required by MGO Section 34.503 and International Fire Code (IFC) Appendix D105 (adopted by reference) for buildings planned to be taller than 30 feet in height. In those cases, the MGO and IFC generally require a minimum unobstructed aerial apparatus lane/road that is 26 feet wide and located not less than 15 feet and not more than 30 feet from two sides or the equivalent of 25% of the exterior walls of the building. Any buildings unable to provide the required aerial apparatus lane would be required to obtain variances from the City’s Board of Building Code, Fire Code, Conveyance Code and Licensing Appeals prior to the issuance of building permits.

Final compliance with fire access requirements is determined at the time that final zoning approvals are granted prior to building permitting. However, the ability for the streets in the subdivision to provide at least some of the fire access required for the planned buildings is a consideration during review of preliminary plats following the adoption of the Complete Green Streets Guide and codification of it in Section 16.23. Whereas previously under the former Subdivision Regulations (circa 1960), the minimum standard street widths required to accommodate buildings that would typically require aerial apparatus lanes were wider by default, the more nuanced street typology in the Complete Green Streets Guide generally limits the width of maximum travel way (drive lanes), particularly for lower-order streets with fewer than 3,000 average daily trips (ADT) anticipated.

Staff from the Traffic Engineering Division, City Engineering Division, and Planning Division have reviewed the proposed street types for the *Starkweather Plat* and determined that some of the streets do not conform to the design parameters in the current Complete Green Streets Guide based on anticipated ADT. Staff believes that streets internal to the development will all generate fewer than 3,000 ADT. As a result,

staff recommends the following consistent with the Complete Green Streets Guide:

- Chicago Avenue and Walter Street be classified as Neighborhood Streets with a 64-foot wide typical right of way;
- Starkweather Street, Voit Avenue/Slow Street, and Harding Street be classified as Neighborhood Yield Streets with a 62-foot wide typical right of way; and
- Leon Street be classified as a Mixed-Use Neighborhood Street with a 78-foot wide typical right of way.

The maximum travel way width for Neighborhood Yield Streets is 16 feet, while it is 22 feet for Neighborhood Streets and Mixed-Use Neighborhood Streets. The applicants' plan for 26-foot wide travel ways to accommodate on-street aerial apparatus access lanes for development on abutting lots conflicts with the Complete Green Streets Guide.

Preliminary plats are approved by the Common Council following a recommendation by the Plan Commission per the process, standards and criteria in MGO Section 16.23. Per Wis. Stats. Ch. 236, the City has 90 days to approve, conditionally approve, or deny a preliminary plat unless extended by the applicant. If a preliminary plat is approved, the final plat shall be in substantial conformance with the approved plat and be approved by the City within 60 days.

In order for the proposed preliminary plat to be approved, the proposed streets are required to conform to the requirements in the Complete Green Streets Guide. Section 16.23(6)(a)2. of the amended ordinance states (***emphasis added***):

*“The most current Complete Green Streets Guide shall be used to develop street type, width, and allocation of space between transportation modes. The tables Guide shall be used to develop typical sections, travel way width, and total right of way width. **For any subdivision or land division that proposes to deviate from the design standards in the guide, the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendation of the Transportation Commission before taking action on such subdivision or land division.**”*

Further, Section 16.23(8) of the amended Subdivision Regulations states (***emphasis added***):

*“**Variances.** When in the judgment of the Plan Commission it would be inappropriate to apply literally provisions of Subsection (6) of this Ordinance because the subdivision or land division is located outside the corporate limits or because extraordinary hardship would result, it may waive or vary such provisions associated with development form, density, and standards so that substantial justice may be done and the public interest secured. **For any request to waive or vary the requirements for transportation facilities shown in a subdivision or land division, the Plan Commission may consider the recommendation of the Transportation Commission; consideration shall be given to whether the transportation facility required can be accommodated in another way.**”*

Consistent with the language from the Subdivision Regulations included above, staff requests that the Transportation Commission provide the Plan Commission with a recommendation on the width of the proposed travel ways and rights of way in the proposed *Starkweather Plat* given due consideration of the recommendations of the Complete Green Streets Guide for the streets in the plat and the project's need

to provide aerial apparatus access as required by MGO Section 34.503 and the IFC for many of the lots in the proposed development. In the event that the streets are not the width required to provide aerial apparatus access on-street, the required aerial apparatus access will need to be provided through other means than in on-street lanes, as determined at the time of permitting.

Beyond the proposed subdivision's conformance with the Complete Green Streets Guide, City staff is also working with the applicant to revise the alignment of Chicago Avenue and the Chicago Avenue-Leon Street intersection to better reflect the alignment proposed in the Milwaukee Street Special Area Plan. The alignment in the special area plan calls for Chicago Avenue to be a continuous east-west street intersected by north-south streets such as Leon Street. The alignment in the special area plan was officially mapped in 2021. As the details of the dedications to the public are finalized following the approval of the preliminary plat, staff feels that there is an opportunity to refine the design of the Chicago-Leon intersection to implement the east-west movement shown in the plan.

Note: The parcel at 3614 Milwaukee Street is owned by the City and is part of future Starkweather Park. The project team is in discussions with the City to acquire the property to add to the development, as shown on the attached plat. However, a decision on the disposition of the property is pending.