



PREPARED FOR THE PLAN COMMISSION

Project Address: 3601 Cross Hill Drive (District 17 – Ald. Baldeh)
Application Type: Neighborhood Development Plan Amendment
Legistar File ID #: [47648](#)
Prepared By: Brian Grady, Planning Division
Reviewed By: Kevin Firchow, AICP, Principal Planner

Summary

Applicant & Property Owner: Jon Lancaster; Lancaster Investments, Inc.; 2906 Marketplace Drive, Ste. A; Madison, WI 53719
Contact: Justin Frahm; JSD Professional Services, Inc.; 7402 Stone Ridge Drive, Ste. 4; Weston, WI 54476

Requested Action: The applicant requests approval of an amendment to the *Nelson Neighborhood Development Plan* (Nelson NDP) changing an approximately 12.3-acre area from Office/Service to Residential to accommodate consideration of a 189-unit apartment development on a 6.9-acre site.

This plan amendment has been prepared for consideration concurrently with a proposed ordinance amendment to rezone a 6.9-acre parcel from A (Agricultural) District to TR-U1 (Traditional Residential - Urban 1) District.

The proposed residential use is not consistent with the Nelson NDP’s Office/Service land use recommendation for the property. If the rezoning is approved, a corresponding plan amendment would be required to maintain plan consistency. This memorandum provides additional information about the request.

Background Information

The Nelson NDP was adopted in 1992 and has been amended a total of five times. The most recent amendment occurred in 2008 and was also requested by Lancaster Properties Inc. The 2008 amendment changed the NDP land use recommendation for the High Crossing Road and Nelson Road frontages from Office/Service to Retail/Service. This change facilitated development of a Wilde Honda automobile dealership and service center.

The Nelson NDP recommended that this Office/Service area include office-type uses, but also uses that would support the nearby areas planned for residential. The Office/Service uses were also intended to serve as a transition between the existing highway-oriented retail uses to the west and the existing/planned residential uses to the east.

The remaining Lancaster holdings to the south of Wilde Honda amendment area are still vacant. It is likely that development of these sites has been hampered by their lack of visibility from the adjacent arterial streets, due to the Wilde Honda site occupying almost the entire High Crossing Boulevard and Nelson Road frontages. Conceptual plans have been discussed for these sites, but have not materialized. A 1.8-acre area along High Crossing Drive recommended for Retail/Service (since the 2008 NDP Amendment) has been considered for a convenience store/gasoline station. A 6.9-acre area planned for Office/Service has been considered for a variety of uses including office uses, a hotel and most recently multi-family residential.

Evaluation of the Proposed Amendment

The applicant requests that the recommended land use on the subject 6.9-acre site be changed to Residential uses to facilitate a 189-unit multi-family development. This proposal would locate residential adjacent to the automobile dealership and service center and potentially adjacent to a future convenience store/gasoline station. More detailed information on the development proposal is included in the accompanying staff report.

Staff feels that changing the land use recommendation for the 6.9-acre site would also necessitate changing the land use recommendation to Residential for an adjacent 5.4-acre area on the adjacent property (owned by Harry Field) that is also currently recommended for Office/Service. The 5.4-acre site lacks frontage on the arterial street network and may have limited viability as well. It is likely that the 5.4-acre site would receive interest from prospective multi-family developers. **See Amendment to the Nelson NDP and Figure 1**

When the Nelson NDP was adopted in 1992, the proposed street network was planned to serve larger office and employment uses. Residential uses were not previously anticipated in this area. As such, the Planning Division believes that modifications to the street network are necessary to improve connectivity and adequately serve possible residential development. Minimally, this includes the extension of Cross Hill Drive, east to Felland Road. This extension is proposed in this plan amendment and would not impact the subject site's design. As currently planned, Crossing Place is still recommended to be extended south across Nelson Road.

The Planning Division notes that the scope of this plan amendment is limited to facilitate the subject development. The Planning Division will likely undertake a full update of the Nelson NDP starting in the second half of 2018. Upon preparation of this analysis, staff notes that an extension of Congress Avenue through the subject site is an opportunity that would have been considered as part of a comprehensive update. **See Figure 2**

Residential uses benefit from a more fine-grained street network rather than the extremely large block that would result from the applicant's proposal to change this area from Office/Service to Residential absent additional streets. Approval of the proposed site plan and a similarly-sized residential project on the 5.4-acre site would result in a block (bounded by Nelson, Crossing, Cross Hill and High Crossing) that measures 1,250 feet by 950 feet. The block would be 25.3 acres in size. This is significantly larger than the Comprehensive Plan's recommendation that residential blocks in new neighborhoods generally be 600 feet in length.

An extension of Congress Avenue would result in a block that is approximately 700 feet by 415 feet. This extension would better integrate the Lancaster and Field sites, while still allowing them to develop independently based on the property owners' preferred timeframe. Additionally, this street layout would provide more development that fronts on streets, promote pedestrian activity and improve delivery of City services.

Conclusion

The Planning Division does not oppose this amendment but believes careful consideration must be given to impacts on both the subject development site and other surrounding properties that will likely be impacted by this use change. While the Planning Division believes there would have been benefits to a more holistic plan amendment, the Planning Division believes it is possible to find that the more limited-scope amendment could be recommended for approval by the Plan Commission. In making their recommendation, the Plan Commission should consider factors including the desirability and appropriateness for residential development at this site and how this proposed change impacts not only the subject property, but also the normal and orderly development on surrounding properties.