

February 11, 2025

Mark Konz
Community Development
City of Mankato
10 Civic Center Plaza
Mankato, MN 56001
mkonz@mankatomn.gov

RE: Land Use Amendment Application Narrative – Quarry View (8th Ave, Jefferson Quarry)

Dear Mr. Konz:

Enclosed is the Land Use Amendment Application and associated supporting documents for the proposed affordable single-family development located on 8th Ave in the Germania Park neighborhood between Harper and Cleveland streets. The subject property is approximately 188k sqft and located in Blocks 7-10, Columbia Park Add, City of Mankato and Blocks 23-24, Germania Park Add, City of Mankato. Below is a narrative describing the subject property and Land Use Amendment Request.

Project Description

The area comprising the proposed development is located within the City of Mankato and was platted as part of the Columbia Park Addition and Germania Park Addition. These parcels have not been developed or built upon. This area including these parcels was included in a 2023 Small Area Plan conducted by Stantec titled Jefferson Quarry Redevelopment Plan. The owner of these parcels is Pentagon Acquisition LLC who has given permission to submit the development application(s).

The Concept Plan included with this application shows two types of developments, each compatible with the land use amendment request. First is a proposed 140k sqft parcel along the full extent of the west side of 8th Ave. This parcel is targeted for attached single-family twin homes and will be included in a PUD to support density, spacing, and green space. Also, the plan includes several individual parcels on the east side of 8th Ave matching the original subdivision lot lines. These may be sold individually as conforming lots to include single family homes or may be part of a larger PUD lot with twin homes like the west side. Either way, the development will be marketed as affordable owner-occupied single-family homes with prices targeting buyers with income at or below 115% of the AMI or SMI. It is anticipated that the developer(s) will keep rental options open in the event home sales are not feasible.

The income limits for homebuyers (and renters, if necessary,) in the development are driven by a combination of the redevelopment plan, desire of land owner and developer(s), as well as potential funding source restrictions. It is anticipated that one such funding source will be the establishment of a Housing TIF district to offset the development costs to keep the homes affordable.

A Traffic Analysis is currently underway and will accompany the Land Use Amendment Application once completed. In addition, a Utility Analysis will be provided in detail by February 25th, 2025 to allow the coordination of project improvements with the planned Germania Park Phase 5 CIP.

Land Use Amendment Request

The lead developer is requesting a Land Use Amendment to change the guided land use from Light Industrial to Medium density Residential to allow for the medium density residential homes. The current market

conditions support a need for more affordable single-family housing options, thus the developer is pursuing this site for a medium density development. Therefore, the developer is requesting a change to the Land Use Map to Medium Density Residential to support their development request. Should this be approved, a Preliminary Plat, Rezoning (to R-2 zone), PUD (for design flexibility), Final Plat, and Site Plan applications will be filed. These subsequent applications will include a more detailed design for review and provide an opportunity for additional public input at the requisite public hearing.

The developer is following the land use recommendations presented in the Jefferson Quarry Development Plan completed by Stantec and delivered to the City of Mankato in February 2023. As part of developing the Small Area Plan, Stantec and the City of Mankato held three public meetings and an online engagement to gather community input from the Germania Park Neighborhood as well as the general public. The neighborhood meeting minutes summarizing the questions/comments from the residents that attended or participated online are included in the Stantec report. During the meetings, the future land use of the quarry and adjacent areas, like the 8th Ave corridor included in this application, were discussed in detail. The major concerns associated with this area were compatibility with existing homes and the neighborhood, the height of proposed structures, and the traffic impact of development. So, the developer is proposing a medium density single-family development as a buffer between the neighborhood and the quarry. In addition, the proposed development will be limited to single-family homes and single-family attached twin-homes with a two-story maximum height. Below are the Goals identified in the City's Land Use Plan. The Amendment request from Industrial to Residential is in alignment with the Goals as demonstrated below:

1. Retain and enhance the character and quality of established areas and revitalize, rehabilitate or redevelop areas where such improvement is required or requested.

Response: The area was never really established although included in two subdivisions. Instead, it was connected to the quarry by ownership and remained largely vacant and undeveloped.

2. Promote adequate housing alternatives for all income levels and age groups.

Response: The proposed medium density residential development will provide below market affordable housing alternatives to the existing single-family adjacent to the site. The housing will be available for all age groups and demographics.

3. Encourage the orderly growth of the community.

Response: The development of this site creates a buffer of medium-density single-family homes to separate the neighborhood from Jefferson Quarry as identified in the Stantec development plan.

4. Promote infill development for the purpose of obtaining the maximum utilization of existing infrastructure.

Response: The request to develop the subject site would utilize existing and planned infrastructure as well as fill the development gap between the Germania Park Neighborhood and Jefferson Quarry.

5. Promote the preservation of ravines, bluff lines, wetlands, woodlands and other environmentally sensitive areas.

Response: The current bluff line created by previous mining in the quarry is currently overgrown and unsafe. The proposed development will delineate and beautify the bluff line while utilizing future common area maintenance funds to design, implement, and maintain a safety system.

6. Encourage landscaping and the attractive design of public and private developments.

Response: A detailed landscape plan will be provided with subsequent required applications to show compliance with the City's landscaping and buffer standards. The developer also recognizes the benefit to their residents and adjacent properties by providing a nicely designed site.

7. Promote complementary land uses and minimize incompatible land uses.

Response: The proposed change of land use from industrial to residential would support the proposed medium density development. It would also provide a more natural transition of uses from the largely single-family homes in Germania Park to the adjacent future development of Jefferson Quarry.

8. Promote efficient use of municipal services.

Response: City utilities are located adjacent to the proposed development and there is a planned Community Improvement Project (Germania Park Phase 5) for their extension through the site. Additionally, the proposed site is in a neighborhood already served by municipal bus, snow removal, and maintenance services, among others.

9. Designate adequate vacant land to allow for the growth of residential, commercial, and industrial areas.

Response: The development of this largely vacant land supports the growing demand for residential units, particularly affordable single-family homes.

10. Promote the orderly extension of streets and the development of pedestrian/bike corridors.

Response: 8th Ave is currently unimproved and unpaved. This development supports the Germania Phase 5 CIP which will improve and pave 8th Ave. Additionally, the development will promote a connection to the existing pedestrian/bike corridor adjacent to the quarry along the Minnesota River.

11. Stabilize property values by promoting the application of effective land use controls and development standards.

Response: New investment in the Germania Park Neighborhood will support and potentially improve existing property values. The proposed residential homes will align with existing neighborhood density and building standards.

12. Encourage and promote innovations in development techniques in order to obtain maximum livability and excellence in planning and design for all new developments.

Response: The proposed development has the opportunity to showcase excellence in planning and design to obtain maximum livability by promoting the following innovations in development techniques: coordinated planning of public/private improvements, in-fill of vacant areas in proximity to municipal park and trail amenities, financial support of projects to meet identified community needs, and leveraging existing neighborhood resources like Grace Baptist Church to support the needs of future area residents including after school programs, mentoring, education, and daycare.

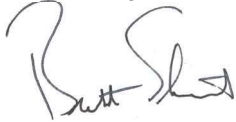
13. Promote, maintain, and preserve parks and open space.

Response: N/A - this site is not designated as a public park or open space. The site will provide open green space designated areas for its residents. It will also support the connection between the existing neighborhood park and the future amenities and connections included in the future development of the Jefferson Quarry.

Conclusion

The developer has thoughtfully considered the Mankato market, the site and the viability of the proposed medium density residential development to ensure the site is appropriate and the demand present to pursue this development opportunity. The medium density single family development aligns with the Stantec Jefferson Quarry Land Use Small Area Plan. In addition, the commitment to offering these homes at an affordable price supports the identified housing needs in the community. I ask that the City support the request to Amend the Land Use from Industrial to Residential to support the desired medium density residential project. Thank you for taking the time to review the enclosed application and supporting documents. I look forward to working with the City of Mankato on this project. Please contact me at 507-720-8842 or brettskilbred@gmail.com with any questions or if there is any additional information I can provide in support of this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brett Skilbred", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brett Skilbred