

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
CITY OF RAMSEY  
ANOKA COUNTY  
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey Planning Commission conducted a regular meeting on Thursday, June 26, 2025, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present:                   Chairperson Cheri Gengler  
  Commissioner Bruce Anderson  
  Commissioner Randy Bauer  
  Commissioner Jeffrey Lubarski  
  Commissioner Debra Musgrove (left at 9:07 p.m.)  
  Commissioner Nichole Rudack  
  Commissioner Gary VanScoy

Members Absent:                   None

Also Present:                       Planning Manager Todd Larson (left at 8:05 p.m.)  
  City Planner Adam Martin  
  City Council Liaison Eric Peters

**1.     CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Gengler called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2.     PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairperson Gengler led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3.     CITIZEN INPUT**

None.

**4.     APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion by Commissioner Lubarski, seconded by Commissioner Musgrove, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion Carried.   Voting Yes:   Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Lubarski, Musgrove, Anderson, Bauer, Rudack, and VanScoy.   Voting No:   None.   Absent:   None.

**5.     CONSENT AGENDA**

**5.01:   Approve the May 22, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Commissioner Musgrove, seconded by Commissioner Rudack, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Musgrove, Rudack, Anderson, Bauer, and Lubarski. Voting No: None. Abstaining: Commissioner VanScoy. Absent: None.

## **6. PUBLIC HEARINGS/COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **6.01: Public Hearing: Consider a Conditional Use Permit, Site Plan, and Variance for Drive-Through in the Front Yard in the COR-2b Zoning District for Chipotle at 14701 Armstrong Blvd NW**

#### **Public Hearing**

Chairperson Gengler called the public hearing to order at 7:02 p.m.

#### **Presentation**

City Planner Martin presented the staff report stating that staff recommend approval of the Conditional Use Permit, Site Plan, and Variance.

Commissioner VanScoy asked if there would be plans to extend the fence the length of the driveway along Sunwood.

City Planner Martin replied that staff had discussions with the applicant related to items that could be within the easement area. He stated that the location of the underground pipe would prevent the fence from going too much farther to the west.

Commissioner VanScoy asked if a variance is requested from the framework requirement.

City Planner Martin replied that a variance from the framework requirement was not requested.

Commissioner Lubarski referenced the crosswalk with two-way traffic and asked if there would be a mirror to provide safer crossing.

City Planner Martin replied that it is one-way traffic and there would be signs for the crosswalk to alert drivers.

Commissioner Bauer stated that it is his understanding that the fence was a safety barrier between the sidewalk and traffic, and therefore agreed with Commissioner VanScoy that the fencing should be extended.

Commissioner Anderson recognized that the City does not like bare walls and asked if there have been conversations to improve the aesthetic of that wall.

City Planner Martin commented that staff have worked with the applicant to elevate the design of the building and materials. He stated that it was preferred to have windows directly along the pedestrian network and patio.

Commissioner Anderson noted that Aldi used fake windows on the backside and asked if there have been conversations to incorporate something like that.

### **Citizen Input**

Allison Morgan, Capital Real Estate, spoke on behalf of the applicant and stated that their initial proposal had an EIFS façade and did not meet the COR standards. She explained that they worked with staff to come to this proposal. She stated that they could explore additional options with staff if the Commission desires to have additional changes to that elevation.

Commissioner Musgrove asked if the applicant had considered downward-facing decorating lighting. She commented that could help break up that façade and could improve the safety of pedestrians as well.

Ms. Morgan replied that they could consider decorative lighting. She commented that there would be downward-facing lighting on the building, but they could replace that with decorative lighting.

City Planner Martin noted that this building will be much smaller than Aldi and was unsure that additional windows would be needed, or fit. He commented that for a quick service restaurant, this building has many more windows than would be typical. He noted that the bathrooms and kitchen are along that back wall. He stated that staff have reviewed the lighting plan, and it meets the requirements of the City Code. He stated that adding additional lighting may cause problems in the review.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he wants to ensure they are consistent within the City, noting that they asked Aldi to do something with their back wall, and they did. He stated that this seems to be a similar situation, and everyone coming down Sunwood would see that side of the building. He asked how tall the fence would be that is proposed along that area.

Ms. Morgan stated that the proposed fence would be 36 inches high and would be decorative and ornamental, matching what was approved for the Taco Bell site. She commented that it is positioned in the proposed location to achieve a corner feature to anchor the development to Sunwood and Armstrong. She commented that the lot is wider than a standard lot in order to get to the roundabout, and therefore, continuing the fence would take away from creating that corner feeling.

City Planner Martin stated that staff measured the long wall of the building, which is 70 feet, compared to the 210 feet of the long wall for Aldi. He stated that the fence would be three feet, which was approved for Taco Bell and provides a hard edge for the site. He stated that the building will be about 20 feet tall. He stated that there is 90-degree angled parking along the north side of

the drive aisle and no parking along the stretch of Sunwood Drive. He commented that there is a ten-foot setback from the sidewalk to the curb, with vegetation planned between.

Commissioner Musgrove stated that she is fine with the fencing as proposed and trusts that staff and the applicant would develop a nice-looking area for this entrance into Sunwood. She recognized that the purpose of the fencing is decorative rather than safety. She commented that vehicles will be driving slowly through the drive aisle, and there is space between the roadway and sidewalk. She referenced the proposed placement of a pylon sign near the drive aisle, but recognized that there will not be ordering done in the drive aisle and asked for clarification on the purpose of that sign.

Ms. Morgan replied that the pylon sign is a 25-foot-tall Chipotle sign, which is located close to the building because of the stormwater easements adjacent to Armstrong. She stated that there would be a sign for the Chipotle pick-up lane, and there is a bypass lane for those who may have thought they could order in the pick-up lane.

Commissioner VanScoy referenced the COR framework related to screening of parking areas and believed the entire area should be screened.

Ms. Morgan stated that typically when they lay out site plans, they view parking adjacent to the road to be parking where headlights would shine onto the roadway, and would not view this to be that situation. She commented that there is landscaping planned along Sunwood.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that the intent of the COR framework is for aesthetics and not for screening headlights.

Councilmember Peters asked if the applicant would be open to entertaining a fence.

Ms. Morgan commented that she could discuss that with her team.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that the screening could be done with shrubs as well.

City Planner Martin stated that the landscaping plan was included in the packet, noting the trees that are planned in addition to the boulevard trees.

Ms. Morgan commented that they could continue the discussion with staff to perhaps add shrubs.

Planning Manager Larson stated that staff can work with the applicant to address that prior to the City Council meeting.

Commissioner Musgrove commented that it would seem landscaping would seem to be the better choice if the intent is to screen the parking.

City Planner Martin commented that staff have worked with the applicant to find the best solution, as this is a very long lot line from Armstrong past the roundabout, along with the location of the large easement. He noted that this is a hybrid district between the urban and suburban designs.

Commissioner Anderson asked about the type of shrubbery proposed.

City Planner Martin replied that a typical landscape plan, at this level of detail, requires large trees, small trees, and shrubs rather than getting into the detail of species. He noted that shrubs are planned along the wall.

Commissioner Anderson stated that his concern was not with the species but the height of the shrub. He noted that if the height of the shrubs were three feet tall, that would alleviate the concern with the appearance of the wall.

City Planner Martin noted that this design is consistent with the Taco Bell design that was unanimously approved last month, within the same development. He stated that the goal is to have consistency and cohesion between the three lots while also meeting the standard of the zoning district.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he just wants to ensure that each developer is held to the same standards as previous developers within the COR. He stated that if the shrubs are about three feet, he would be fine with the appearance of the wall.

Chairperson Gengler stated that this is a beautifully designed building and a great product for the COR.

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner Musgrove, to close the public hearing.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Bauer, Musgrove, Anderson, Lubarski, Rudack, and VanScoy. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

Chairperson Gengler closed the public hearing at 7:37 p.m.

### **Commission Business**

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner Musgrove, to adopt Resolution #25-149 Granting a Variance for a Drive-Through Lane in the Front Yard for Chipotle at 14701 Armstrong Boulevard NW.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Bauer, Musgrove, Anderson, Lubarski, Rudack, and VanScoy. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

Motion by Commissioner Lubarski, seconded by Commissioner Rudack, to recommend City Council adoption of Resolution #25-148 Approving a Conditional Use Permit for a Drive-Through Lane and a Site Plan Review for Chipotle at 14701 Armstrong Boulevard NW.

### **Further discussion**

Commissioners discussed whether additional screening should be required along the parking area, east of the fence, to maintain separation, and along the south wall of the building. An additional condition was added through friendly amendment to ask the City Council to consider proper screening of the parking and along the southern wall of the building. Additional discussion ensued as to whether the decorative fencing should be extended, but it was determined that an extension would not be needed as the fencing is decorative in nature and would not provide screening.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Lubarski, Rudack, Anderson, Bauer, and VanScoy. Voting No: Commissioner Musgrove. Absent: None.

## **7. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **7.01: “Brookside Terrace” Sketch Plan – Six Lot Subdivision at 15156 Nowthen Boulevard NW (Brookside Construction Inc.)**

#### **Presentation**

Planning Manager Larson presented the Staff Report stating that the Commission is asked to provide comments and direction for the applicant so that the detailed preliminary plat plans can be prepared for an upcoming application date. He noted that three letters had been submitted by residents that have been provided to the Commission tonight.

Jason Rud, land surveyor, spoke on behalf of the applicant and stated that he was present to address any questions.

Commissioner Bauer asked and received confirmation that this property is zoned for 80-foot lots. He stated that the sketch plan shows all six lots meeting and/or exceeding that lot width with fewer lots than would be recommended for that size parcel.

Planning Manager Larson commented that it would be difficult to deny something that meets all Code requirements. He stated that the discussion would focus on whether there should be an additional connection to Armstrong.

Mr. Rud commented that the lot depth is what creates the issue with the density being lower. He stated that if a lot could front on Nowthen Boulevard, they could have a seventh lot, but recognized that the County would not provide permission for a lot to front onto their roadway.

Planning Manager Larson stated that the cities are allocated a certain number of units, and density can be allocated across the land. He stated that the City sets the range, and, in the end, the average density needs to be met in accordance with the requirements of the Metropolitan Council.

Commissioner Rudack asked if the developer could be asked to reduce lots to five to meet the density.

Planning Manager Larson replied that two more lots would actually be needed to meet the density. He stated that this could be rezoned to allow smaller lot sizes, but that would be inconsistent with the neighborhood. He noted that other projects in the community will balance out the density.

Commissioner Rudack asked if traffic has been factored into the review.

Planning Manager Larson commented that these additional lots are a drop in the bucket for traffic on Nowthen Boulevard.

Commissioner Lubarski asked if the grading for lots one and two would impact the existing neighbor.

Mr. Rud explained that there is a dedicated drainage easement on the westerly side of the parcel, which was platted prior to the street reconstruction in 1995. He stated that storm sewer and curb and gutter were added during that road project, and the drainage easement is no longer needed in that location. He stated that they will be held to strict drainage requirements and will provide onsite ponding to handle the stormwater. He stated that the goal would be to preserve trees, as this is a custom home builder.

Commissioner Musgrove asked if the developer has tried other layout patterns that would not have as many entrances onto 151<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Rud stated that when the construction plan was created for the road in 1995, it included similar lot lines. He stated that a portion of the sewer and water services were stubbed consistent with that, and they are following that pattern. He stated that they did not consider creating additional streets as they would need to clear-cut the site, and that is not the desired intent.

Commissioner Bauer asked if the homes planned would be consistent with the neighborhood.

Mr. Rud replied that building elevations have not yet been created. He estimated that these would be midrange homes with nice homes.

Chairperson Gengler recognized that this is not a public hearing but welcomed input from the residents in attendance.

Steve Croteau, 5939 151<sup>st</sup> Lane, stated that he and his wife purchased their 2.5-acre parcel in 1990 to have some space. He commented that since that time, sewer and water were added, which allowed further subdivision. He stated that there are currently 39 single-family homes with only one point of ingress and egress to Nowthen Boulevard. He believed that adding six additional homes would create a safety concern. He commented that this area is just north of the elementary school, and during events, they often experience people parking on both sides of 151<sup>st</sup>, which adds to his concerns for safety. He commented that the lots appear to be 80 feet in width with a five-foot setback and asked if that means homes could be ten feet apart.

City Planner Martin commented that he has not been working on this project, but will take over as Planning Manager Larson had to leave the meeting. He stated that the zoning for this property is the same designation as the entire neighborhood; therefore, the homes all have the same setback.

Mr. Croteau stated that there are more than ten feet between homes that exist in the neighborhood.

City Planner Martin commented that setbacks change over time with zoning code updates. He stated that the setback would allow existing residents to build an addition onto their homes as long as the setbacks are met.

Mr. Croteau stated that with a five-foot setback on each side that would allow for a 60-foot-wide footprint. He asked about the type of home that would be constructed, as this neighborhood does not have cookie-cutter homes like those in Riverstone and some of the other developments.

City Planner Martin provided information on the lot sizes in Riverstone and the Preserve at Northfork. He stated that it would be a challenge to fit lots that would meet both the minimum lot width and density.

Chairperson Gengler noted that the developments mentioned by the resident contain 80-foot lots as well as smaller lots, whereas these lots would all have a minimum lot width of 80 feet.

Mr. Croteau stated that this would be inconsistent with what exists in the neighborhood. He asked what residents and neighbors could do to oppose this development, such as a petition.

Commissioner Bauer commented that the proposal meets the zoning requirements and therefore the City would have a hard time denying the right for the applicant to develop in a manner that meets City Code. He stated that review is done by various departments related to access, but the role of the Commission is to verify that the plat meets the proper requirements.

Chairperson Gengler stated that the residents voicing their concerns is helpful with the continued review and discussions on the project.

Mr. Croteau stated that if the number of lots were reduced to three or four, it would be better supported by the residents and more consistent with the neighborhood.

City Planner Martin commented that most of the lots in this development are 80 feet wide, which is also the minimum requirement of the City Code for the zoning district. He noted that this zoning district has the lowest density within the MUSA. He stated that this is the lowest level of development that could be proposed.

Chairperson Gengler asked for more information on the property on the Quicksilver cul-de-sac. It was noted to be a bike trail.

Chris Weiss, 5907 151<sup>st</sup> Lane, stated that they have struggled for a number of years with drainage on his property. He stated that if this area is developed, they would need to do something significant to ensure that his property does not endure the drainage from that area.

City Planner Martin stated that there are a few points of review for stormwater throughout this process, noting that stormwater ponding will be required on this site.

Commissioner Bauer asked if parking is allowed on both sides of 151<sup>st</sup> with room for vehicles to travel.

City Planner Martin confirmed that the street is 66 feet wide, which is typical.

Commissioner Bauer referenced the comment from the resident related to overflow parking occurring on the roadway and asked if one side should be posted as no parking.

City Planner Martin commented that the Police Department would handle those comments and could address parking complaints if they arise.

Commissioner Musgrove commented that if people are parking on both sides of the road, that causes people to walk in the road, which can cause concerns for safety. She stated that she is not concerned with the lower density as proposed, as that can be offset by the density of other developments. She referenced lot six, which is wider than the other lots, noting that the four lots in the middle seem to be narrower. She asked if lots one and two could be combined, which would help to preserve trees, reduce the amount of fill needed, and assist with drainage. She noted that she is trying to find a balance between property rights and the concerns of the neighbors.

City Planner Martin stated that the density with six lots is as low as this site could develop and stated that additional lots could not be eliminated. He stated that the applicant and staff have worked diligently to find a development proposal that would meet the spirit and intent of the Code and same standard of the neighborhood.

Councilmember Peters agreed with staff's comments. He noted that lot six is wider because of the setback from Nowthen Boulevard.

Ben Tronson, 5954 151<sup>st</sup> Lane, echoed the concerns with safety. He referenced a new home that was built on the corner, which often has vehicles parked on the road, which limits visibility. He commented on the difficulty of turning onto Nowthen Boulevard. He commented that building homes that will be consistent with the neighborhood on those lots would not leave much room for parking, which would cause additional vehicles to be parked on the road. He stated that there is a lot of bicycle and pedestrian traffic in the neighborhood, with the bike trail, and when vehicles are parked on the road, the pedestrians are forced to walk or bike further into the road. He stated that any time there is rain, there is a giant puddle on the exit lane at the entrance to the development. He stated that the road is in poor condition and construction traffic will only cause further deterioration.

Jason Kawecki, 15200 Nowthen Boulevard, commented that he purchased his property in 2016, and he did not anticipate that his life would change when his neighbor placed his property for sale, as he did not anticipate that the property would be subdivided. He stated that because of grading changes, even with a ten-foot fence, they would still see from their backyard into all the new

backyards. He referenced the 52-foot-wide strip of property within the applicant's narrative that states it could be sold to the neighbor for future development, but stated that he has not heard anything about that. He stated that there are plans for his property showing cul-de-sacs, of which he was not aware.

Chairperson Gengler commented that can be intentional thought into preserving a buffer of trees between properties in development.

Commissioner Anderson asked if there would be a possibility that they could restrict the parking to one side of the road, as that could potentially ease some of the safety concerns of the neighbors.

City Planner Martin referenced the comments related to the condition of the road, which are valid concerns that can be brought to the attention of the Engineering and Public Works Departments.

Tom Sparrow, 5900 151<sup>st</sup> Lane NW, stated that a great majority of their traffic occurs during the school year. He stated that every morning and afternoon, their street is filled with cars and kids. He believed that adding six additional homes would increase the problem with safety. He commented that there are issues with sight as people come in and out of the neighborhood because of the grades. He was unsure that it would be feasible to restrict parking to one side and noted that building an additional six homes would take up space for the parents and children using the road during the school year.

Commissioner Bauer asked to see a map showing the neighborhood in relation to the school and asked about the location of the nearest stoplight.

City Planner Martin displayed the map, noting the nearest signalized intersection is at Alpine to the north. He stated that the school is just to the south, and most likely, people are parking on the street and walking along the trail to get to the school. He stated that if there are concerns with overflow parking from the school, staff could bring that up to the School District during the review process. He noted that the school property would have room to add additional parking if needed.

Chairperson Gengler stated that people might park on that street during drop-off/pick-up times and have their child walk to avoid the school traffic. She commented that they could discourage that activity at the school.

Commissioner Bauer asked if the County would consider a temporary stoplight at the intersection during busy times.

City Planner Martin replied that the Anoka County Highway Department will be part of the review process. He noted a traffic study that has recently been completed for Nowthen Boulevard, for a 400-unit development, compared to six lots.

Sara Narr, 6100 151<sup>st</sup> Lane, stated that in 2020, their home burned down, and there is only one access for the development. She stated that another home had burned down as well, and prevented access into and out of the neighborhood for several hours. She stated that when they rebuilt their home, the cul-de-sac was basically shut down with dumpsters and other equipment, which

impacted the ability of buses to turn around. She stated that this is an amazing street that is very picturesque, but does not have great visibility and safety. She also disagreed with restricting parking to one side, as the neighborhood also uses the road for parking. She stated that she would prefer two or three homes rather than six. She commented that when she leaves for work in the morning, it can take ten minutes to get onto Nowthen Boulevard because of traffic. She asked that the City consider aesthetics for their neighborhood the same way it does for Chipotle and development within the COR. She commented on the placement of the bike trails and asked that the Commission consider the issue of safety.

Jean Pierre Ngo, 6000 151<sup>st</sup> Lane NW, commented that he has lived at his property for over 30 years and considers it to be a quiet area. He expressed concerns about safety if six more lots were added.

City Planner Martin commented that they have received sufficient feedback for this stage of the development process. He recognized that change can be difficult and thanked the residents for attending and providing their input tonight.

Commissioner Musgrove stated that perhaps shared driveways could be used to minimize the connection points onto 151<sup>st</sup>.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that the main issue seems to be with safety, and the primary concern behind that seems to be the single access point onto a busy roadway. He did not see a way to improve that situation with this proposed development. He asked what the City could do to ensure at some point that could be addressed.

City Planner Martin noted a second potential access that would go to Alpine, as mentioned in the earlier presentation, and advised that would be dependent upon development of the properties to the north.

Commissioner Bauer commented that it would seem difficult to connect a road from Alpine to 151<sup>st</sup> because of the wetland.

City Planner Martin identified the path a connecting roadway could take and noted that if that connection is desired, this would be the time to plan for it.

Chairperson Gengler acknowledged that planning for the connection would include a cul-de-sac or stub on the developing property and would not have any impact on the properties to the north.

City Planner Martin confirmed that would provide the right-of-way within the plat to get a street through, but there would be a possibility that it would never be built if the properties to the north chose not to develop in the future.

Commissioner Musgrove asked if the plan for the street would change the number of lots.

City Planner Martin commented that could rearrange the placement of the lots, but six lots would remain the minimum number of lots for this development.

Commissioner Anderson thanked all the residents who attended and provided input tonight, noting that this information will be helpful at this stage of the development process. He stated that the developer will now spend a lot of money to develop a preliminary plat, which will include a public hearing. He stated that the residents can also provide their written comments to the City staff. He commented that some things cannot be changed because the proposal meets the requirements of the City Code.

Commissioner Bauer commented that he would like to see an option for a second access be part of the discussion moving forward.

Commissioner Musgrove stated that the location of the second entrance may not be meaningful in that location. She stated that perhaps there could be another option for an access where the trail is located.

Commissioner Bauer commented that it would appear that the wetlands would prevent anything further west from being constructed.

Councilmember Peters commented that to the west, there is another neighborhood with one access. He stated that there should not be neighborhoods with just one access and lack of sidewalks. He stated that he lives in a neighborhood with 80-foot lots, and he has 20 feet on one side and ten feet on the other side. He believed that this was a poorly developed neighborhood long ago.

Chairperson Gengler thanked everyone who attended and provided input tonight.

Commissioner Musgrove left the meeting at 9:07 p.m.

## **8. COMMISSION / STAFF INPUT**

The Staff Update was noted.

Chairperson Gengler noted that there will not be a July meeting.

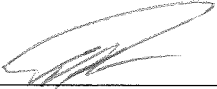
## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Bauer, Anderson, Lubarski, Rudack, and VanScoy. Voting No: None. Absent: Musgrove.

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

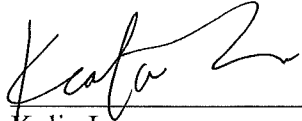
Respectfully submitted,



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Todd Larson  
Planning Manager

ATTEST:



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Kalia Lor  
Planning Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*