

ZONING COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

1. **FILE NAME:** Site Plan for Lexington Station Apartments **FILE #** 20-102-273
 2. **APPLICANT:** Alatus Development LLC **HEARING DATE:** January 14, 2021
 3. **TYPE OF APPLICATION:** Site Plan Review
 4. **LOCATION:** 411 & 417 Lexington Pkwy N
 5. **PINS & LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** 342923410069 Hall And Brown'S Addition,To H Subj To Esmts Vac Ave Accruing & Fol, Ex The N 111.6 Ft And Ex The W 294.01 Ft; Lot 36. 342923410067 LEXINGTON & UNIVERSITY LOT 4 BLK 1
 6. **PLANNING DISTRICT:** 13 – Union Park **PRESENT ZONING:** T4
 7. **ZONING CODE REFERENCE:** §61.402(c)
 8. **STAFF REPORT DATE:** Jan. 7, 2021 **BY:** Ashley Skarda
 9. **DATE RECEIVED:** Dec. 18, 2020 **DEADLINE FOR ACTION:** Feb. 16, 2021
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A. **PURPOSE:** Site Plan Review for a 6-story mixed-use building on Lexington Pkwy N. at Fuller Ave.

As proposed, the Site Plan includes:

- 288 residential units
- 3,000 square feet of ground level commercial space
- 254 structured parking spaces

B. **PARCEL SIZE:** 89,298 SF

C. **EXISTING LAND USE:** Vacant

D. **SURROUNDING LAND USE:**

North: Commercial (T4)

West: Commercial and multifamily residential (T4)

South: Commercial and single family residential (T3)

East: Commercial and multifamily residential (T2, T3)

E. **ZONING CODE CITATION:**

- §61.402(c) - Findings for site plan review.

F. **HISTORY/DISCUSSION:**

During the 2019 planning phase, the project was awarded but then declined a Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Grant. The project is currently not receiving any public

funding.

The project team held a preliminary site plan review discussion December 1, 2020, with the Site Plan Review Committee and received preliminary feedback on December 7, 2020 (see attached Preliminary Staff Report). At the Planning Commission meeting on December 4, 2020 the Planning Commission voted to hold a public hearing for the site plan once an application was received. A complete Site Plan Application and plan set was received on December 22, 2020. Site Plan Review is a function delegated by the Saint Paul Planning Commission (PC) to City staff, however, a Site Plan may be referred to Planning Commission for public hearing and decision.

The land consists of two adjacent vacant lots in the south east corner of a 7-lot block. This large block has existing private drives that allow for circulation. One private drives runs along the north, and north west property lines.

The applicant is proposing a new 6-story, 331,300 sf mixed-use building with 288 residential units, 3,000 sf of commercial tenant space, and 254 structured parking spaces. Storm water management, landscaping, incorporation of existing private drives, and a bike path routed along the north of the property are also proposed. Based on the application, no variances or conditional use permits are required.

G. DISTRICT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION:

At the time of the staff report, the Union Park District Council (DC 13) has not provided a recommendation to approve or deny the Site Plan. The District Council hosted multiple community meetings regarding the future development.

H. FINDINGS: § 61.402(c) of the Zoning Code says that in “order to approve the site plan, the planning commission shall consider and find that the site plan is consistent with” the findings listed below:

1. *The city's adopted comprehensive plan and development or project plans for sub-areas of the city.*

The site plan meets this finding. The proposed mixed-use project is consistent with the 2040 Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan (2020), the Lexington Station Area Plan (2008), and Union Park Community Plan (2016). Generally, the comprehensive plan encourages transit supportive density and supports growth and development of new housing, particularly in areas identified as Mixed Use, Urban Neighborhoods and/or in areas with the highest existing or planned transit capacity, to meet market demand for living in walkable, transit-accessible, urban neighborhoods. The plan also supports increases in density on valuable urban land and calls for high-quality urban design that supports pedestrian friendliness and a healthy environment, and enhances the public realm.

For a detailed analysis, please see the Analysis Included in the SPR Committee Preliminary Review. “*Lexington Station Site Plan Review – Comprehensive Plan Summary*”

2. *Applicable ordinances of the City of Saint Paul.*

The site plan meets this finding. The site plan complies with the following key Zoning ordinances:

- §66.315 - Intent, T4 traditional neighborhood district.
- §66.331 - Traditional Neighborhood District Density and dimensional standards.
- §66.342 - Parking requirements in T3—T4 traditional neighborhood districts.
- §66.343 - Traditional neighborhood district design standards.
- §63.110 – Building design standards.

3. *Preservation of unique geologic, geographic or historically significant characteristics of the city and environmentally sensitive areas.*

The site plan meets this finding. The property is typical of the intent of a T4 neighborhood district, which provides for higher-density pedestrian- and transit-oriented mixed-use development. This vacant land is neither designated as having historical or environmental significance. It is also not located within a heritage preservation district.

4. *Protection of adjacent and neighboring properties through reasonable provision for such matters as surface water drainage, sound and sight buffers, preservation of views, light and air, and those aspects of design which may have substantial effects on neighboring land uses.*

The site plan meets this finding, the effect of this specific proposed building on neighboring properties is reasonable.

Specific to the findings:

- The stormwater system meets City standards for run-off rate control. The system will consist of pipes buried below grade located on the west side of the building in the landscaped setback area.
- The building's proposed setbacks meet or exceed the zoning code for the district. The building is set back 21'4" from the rear property line along the west. A shadow study was provided to demonstrate a reasonable impact to neighboring properties. A spatial buffer is provided by 17' alley right-of-way and 8.5' side setback from the single-family homes to the south.
- The setback areas will be landscaped or paved for vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. Existing boulevard trees will be protected where possible and new boulevard trees will be planted as required.
- The off-street parking will be provided for residential tenants with two levels of structured parking. A separate structured parking area will serve the commercial use. Trash and recycling will occur within the parking structure, tenant move in will have a dedicated move in garage access off the alley. There will be no alley access to the parking structures.
- The proposed site adheres to Traditional Neighborhood Design Standards as well as General Design Standards including minimum window and door openings, mechanical screening, building facade articulation, inclusion of

elements that relate to the human scale in the bottom 25' of the building, lighting etc.

5. *The arrangement of buildings, uses and facilities of the proposed development in order to assure abutting property and/or its occupants will not be unreasonably affected.*

The site plan meets this finding for the reasons listed in finding 4 above.

The effect of this specific proposed building on neighboring properties is reasonable:

- A stormwater management system that can manage runoff.
- The site meets or exceeds the minimum setbacks.
- Outdoor residential tenant areas will be protected by two separate three sided courtyards on the second story roof deck, one open towards Lexington Parkway, another open towards the west of the building.
- Structured parking access from the rear of the building off a private street to the rear of the site.
- No alley access to building or parking is proposed beyond a move-in bay.
- Deliveries will occur within the parking structure, the move-in garage, or in the port cochere to the north of the building along a private street reducing additional congestion in the public right-of-way.
- Trash and recycling haulers from the parking structure.
- The building will comply with all applicable design standards.

6. *Creation of energy-conserving design through landscaping and location, orientation and elevation of structures.*

The site plan meets this finding. Higher density development is inherently more energy conserving because it has fewer exterior walls per dwelling unit than low density housing minimizing heat loss. The building exceeds the minimum amount of glazing on all sides, allowing the building to gain solar heat. The project shall meet current building and energy codes. Stormwater will be managed onsite and discharged at a rate that complies with city standards.

The proposed development is in the Lexington Station Area and four blocks south of an enhanced bicycle route conducive to walking, biking, and using public transit rather than driving. Secure indoor bicycle parking and a maintenance area is conveniently located off Lexington Parkway for enhanced convenience.

7. *Safety and convenience of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic both within the site and in relation to access streets, including traffic circulation features, the locations and design of entrances and exits and parking areas within the site.*

The site plan meets this finding. Access to both the commercial (13 spaces) and residential (241 spaces) parking structures are off a private drive to the rear of the property. Existing private drives have been incorporated in their current position for the least impact to circulation on the site. A move-in garage is accessed off an existing

public alley, further reduce blockages in the Public Right of Way.

The building's first floor layout allows for convenient pedestrian entry at the south east, north east, north, and north west sides of the building. Other considerations include a primary pedestrian building entrance on Lexington Parkway for the commercial space, twelve-foot wide sidewalks enhance pedestrian friendliness and walkability along Lexington Parkway and the 15-foot wide landscaped boulevard between the sidewalk and roadway enhance pedestrian safety, friendliness, walkability. Pedestrian ramps have been added in line with Fuller Avenue's future crosswalks in mind.

Bike racks were added on the exterior near the commercial space and a large interior bicycle storage and maintenance room is proposed. The applicant met with Saint Paul Public Works Parks and Ramsey County prior to the submission of these plans to discuss site circulation. A bike lane will be accommodated to the north of the building in anticipation of future connection with the neighborhood.

8. *The satisfactory availability and capacity of storm and sanitary sewers, including solutions to any drainage problems in the area of the development.*

The site plan meets this finding. The utility connections are shown on Sheet C4-1. Water, and Sanitary are available in Lexington Parkway and stormwater from the building site will be piped to an underground detention system located on the south west of the property. The stormwater detention system will then connect to existing private stormwater pipes installed when The Wilder Foundation building was constructed. These private pipes connect to the public main at Lexington Parkway. Drainage maps and HydroCAD modeling to meet the City's stormwater run-off rate control standards were reviewed and approved by Public Works.

The project disturbs more than one acre of land and requires an Erosion and Sediment Control permit from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency as well as a permit from the Capitol Region Watershed District to meet water quality requirements.

9. *Sufficient landscaping, fences, walls and parking necessary to meet the above objectives.*

The site plan meets this finding. The setback areas around the building will be landscaped and the plan will be approved by the city forester. Existing boulevard trees will be protected where possible and new boulevard trees will be planted as required.

Parking is not required within ¼ mile of University Ave. The project is proposing 254 parking spaces, 13 for in the structured commercial lot and 241 for the residential lot.

10. *Site accessibility in accordance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including parking spaces, passenger loading zones and accessible routes.*

The site plan meets this requirement. Required ADA parking spaces will be provided. The floors of the commercial spaces and lobbies will match the sidewalk grades. The sidewalks have accessible crossings.

11. *Provision for erosion and sediment control as specified in the "Ramsey Erosion*

Sediment and Control Handbook."

The site plan meets this finding. The site plan includes an erosion and sediment control plan that meets this standard.

I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the findings above, the staff recommends approval of the site plan to allow a six-story mixed-use building at 411 and 417 Lexington Pkwy N. with the following conditions:

1. The final Landscape Plan shall be approved by the City Forester.
2. Sewer plans and technical details shall be approved by the Public Works Sewer Division.
3. The Traffic Impact Study shall be accepted, and the plans be approved by Public Works Traffic Engineering.
4. The final Utility Plan shall be approved by Saint Paul Regional Water Services
5. Lots shall be combined with Ramsey County Records and Mapping.