



# PLANNING STAFF REPORT

**MEMO DATE:** APRIL 8, 2021

**MTG. DATE:** APRIL 14, 2021

**TO:** Village of Cottage Grove Plan Commission

**CC:** Village of Cottage Grove Board of Trustees  
Matt Giese – Village Administrator  
Lisa Kalata – Village Clerk  
Larry Konopacki – Village Attorney  
Kevin Lord – Village Engineer

**FROM:** [Erin Ruth, AICP – Village Planning Director](#)

**RE:** Continental Properties – Authentix General Development Plan

## BACKGROUND

**Property Owner:** Horizon Development (under contract with Continental Properties)

**Location:** SE Corner of Highways N and BB (parcels #0711-091-9310-1, #0711-094-8501-0, and #0711-094-8100-4)

**Area:** 28.6 acres

**Agent:** Eric Thom – Continental Properties

**Existing Zoning:** PUD, Planned Unit Development

**Proposed Zoning:** PUD, Planned Unit Development

## OVERVIEW

The applicant, Continental Properties, is seeking approval of a General Development Plan (GDP) for their Authentix Cottage Grove project, a 288-unit multi-family residential development on 28.6 acres with approximately 11 acres dedicated for public park land. The GDP is the first of two approvals required for a Planned Unit Development. Approval of the second step, the Precise Implementation Plan (PIP) will be sought at a subsequent meeting.

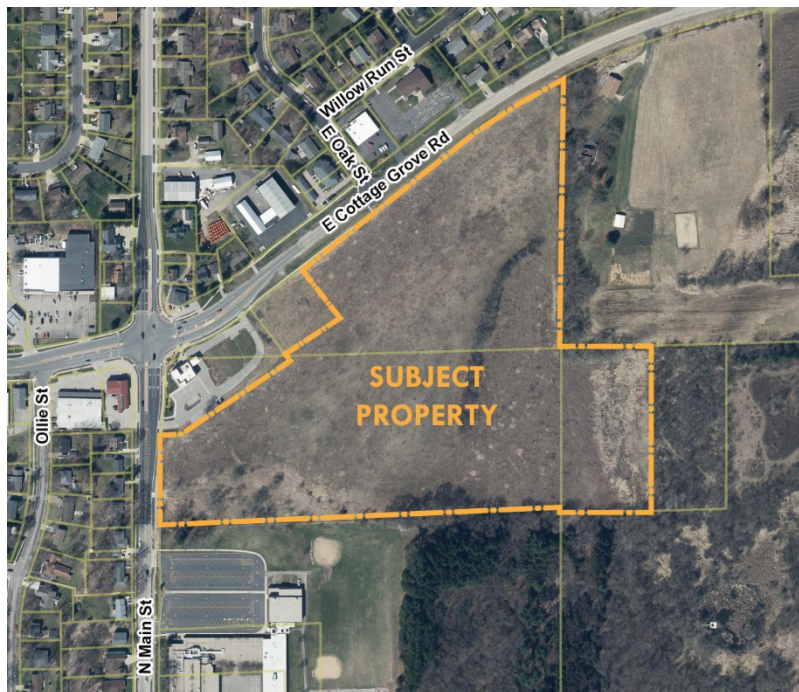
The proposed project includes 288 units in twelve two story 24-unit buildings. The project will include 32 studio units, 112 one-bedroom units, 112 two-bedroom units, and 32 three-bedroom units. Two entries will be provided into the development, one on N. Main Street and

one on E. Cottage Grove Road that is aligned with Oak Street. The interior street network will consist of private roads. A clubhouse including a leasing office, fitness center, and outdoor pool is proposed to be located along N. Main Street.

The subject property consists of three parcels (#0711-091-9310-1, #0711-094-8501-0, and #0711-094-8100-4). Parcel #0711-094-8100-4 is currently located in the Town of Cottage Grove. No development is proposed on this parcel and it is anticipated this parcel will be dedicated to the Village. The Village will likely seek to annex the parcel after it is dedicated.

A glacial drumlin runs southwest to northeast across the center of the subject property. Generally, the area north and west of the drumlin top will be developed and the bulk of the remainder will be dedicated as park land, stormwater management, and wetland.

## LOCATION MAP



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENCY

The Comprehensive Plan shows this area as part of the Central Mixed-Use area. The preferred land uses on the subject property include:

- Urban Transition I: A small area along E. Cottage Grove Road and west of the entry aligned with Oak Street is designated as Urban Transition I. Building types deemed appropriate for this area include mixed-use, urban multi-family (min. two stories with

minimal setbacks and masonry preferred. This area generally aligns with Building #5 on the proposed GDP.

- Urban Transition II: A small area fronting E. Cottage Grove Road and east of the entry aligned with Oak Street is designated as Urban Transition II. Building types deemed appropriate for this area include those in Urban Transition I and rowhouse or townhouse buildings with minimal setbacks and no garage doors facing the street.
- Multi-Family Residential: Much of the interior of the subject property is designated as Multi-Family Residential which could include types allowed in Urban Transition Areas I and II or other multi-family residential which may have deeper setbacks.

In the opinion of staff, the proposed project is consistent with the requirements of the Central Mixed-Use Area in the areas designated as Urban Transition II and Multi-Family Residential. The applicant has indicated that the placement of the clubhouse/leasing office fronting N. Main Street is intended to provide a commercial style building along the frontage.

Staff has some reservations regarding the Urban Transition I area. Horizon Development, in their approved GDP, addressed this by using a flat-roofed building type along Cottage Grove Road and sloped roof buildings further up the hill. Continental has indicated they do not have an alternate building type that is feasible for the site. Instead they have upgraded the materials on the Cottage Grove Road elevations by incorporating a faux-stone material at various locations on the facades. While this represents an improvement beyond the standard elevations, staff believes the elevations could be further augmented by adding the stone material to the central bay of each building.

The project also meets objectives within the Housing chapter to diversify type, price, and ownership structure of housing in the Village, and the residents could help to support redevelopment in the area in the future.

## **ZONING CONSISTENCY**

The applicant is seeking approval of the project as a Planned Unit Development. Per 325-115(A)(2), Planned Unit Developments are intended “to accommodate forms of development that forward public and private objectives that are not possible within standard zoning districts.” Furthermore, “planned unit developments are designed to forward both the aesthetic and economic objectives of the Village by controlling the site design and appearance, density or intensity of development in terms of more flexible requirements for land uses, density, intensity, bulk, landscaping, and parking requirements.” Finally, “in exchange for such flexibility, the planned unit development shall provide a much higher level of site design, architectural control and other aspects of aesthetic and functional excellence that normally required for other developments.”

In the opinion of staff, the proposed project meets the Village’s objectives for the site. Therefore, staff recommends the requested variations be granted via the PUD process. Variations from base zoning regulations include the following:

- The residential zoning district with the highest permitted density is MR-12, Multi-Family Residential, which allows 12 units per acre. The proposed project has 18.9 units per acre excluding park land and stormwater facilities (or approximately 10 units per acre including the entire property).
- MR-12 zoning permits a max. of 8 units per building as a conditional use. The proposed project includes 12 24-unit buildings.
- The minimum landscape surface ratio in MR-12 is 50%, as opposed to 40% for the proposed project (excluding the park land and stormwater facilities).
- The minimum paved area setback in MR-12 is 10'. The proposed project uses a 5' paved area setback on the street sides.
- The maximum height for an accessory structure in MR-12 is 18'. The height of the accessory garage structures in the proposed project is 25'. It should be noted that the Village Ordinance measures building height to the midpoint of a sloped roof so this exception may not be required.
- The project provides a total of 526 parking spaces (458 outdoor and 68 in garages), while 576 would be required per the ordinance. The total of 526 spaces represents approximately 1.82 spaces per unit. The applicant states that in their experience with similar projects (they have 76 other multi-family projects) 1.82 is more than adequate and additional spaces tend to go unused while reducing greenspace and increasing impervious surface and runoff.
- The applicant has provided a signage concept that is more suitable for a project of this scale than would otherwise be allowed under MR-12 zoning.

The applicant has provided an example of typical landscaping around a proposed building. The level of landscaping appears to be generally acceptable, but staff will need to see the full landscaping plan at the PIP submittal to judge compliance with the ordinance.

## REFERENCES

Continental Properties completed a similar project in Sun Prairie in 2017. Staff reached out to Scott Kugler, the City of Sun Prairie's Community Development Director. Mr. Kugler shared the following information and observations about the Sun Prairie Springs project:

*"I think Continental performed as they represented they would here in Sun Prairie. It is an attractive project that I think has been well leased since early on. I am not aware of any compliance issues that we have had, nor any complaints about the project. One concern that was raised during the zoning process was the potential impact that the development would have on school enrollment – an issue we have been dealing with here in Sun Prairie. However, a recent study completed by the District indicates that there are relatively few school aged kids living in the development."*

Staff also reached out to Sun Prairie Mayor Paul Esser who added the he has not received any complaints or negative input following completion of the project.

## IMPACT ON SCHOOLS

The Village worked with the Monona Grove School District to provide input on the district's 2017 – 2037 enrollment projection. The Continental site was designated as a growth area in that study.

More recently the Village shared updated growth projections that included specific data from recently approved and currently proposed projects, including the Continental Project. MGSD Superintendent Dan Olson confirmed that those newer projections remained consistent with the district's expectations from the enrollment study. Mr. Olson added, "with the addition of Granite Ridge, we have plenty of space for growth at all schools in Cottage Grove. The high school is the only school that would be nearing capacity, but we can control their enrollment by reducing open enrollment seats."

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- A. Staff recommends that the requested General Development Plan be **APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS**, with the conditions as follows:
1. Sign permits are granted via a separate review process. Signage must comply with 3' setback and must be clear of vision triangle at driveways.
  2. The Village agrees to the following variations to the requirements of the most comparable zoning district (MR-12) via the Planned Unit Development process:
    - a) The residential zoning district with the highest permitted density is MR-12, Multi-Family Residential, which allows 12 units per acre. The proposed project has 18.9 units per acre excluding park land and stormwater facilities (or approximately 10 units per acre including the entire property).
    - b) MR-12 zoning permits a max. of 8 units per building as a conditional use. The proposed project includes 12 24-unit buildings.
    - c) The minimum landscape surface ratio in MR-12 is 50%, as opposed to 40% for the proposed project (excluding the park land and stormwater facilities).
    - d) The minimum paved area setback in MR-12 is 10'. The proposed project uses a 5' paved area setback on the street sides.
    - e) The maximum height for an accessory structure in MR-12 is 18'. The height of the accessory garage structures in the proposed project is 25'. It should be noted that the Village Ordinance measures building height to the midpoint of a sloped roof so this exception may not be required.
    - f) The project provides a total of 526 parking spaces, while 576 would be required per the ordinance. The total of 526 spaces represents approximately 1.82 spaces per unit.

- g) The applicant has provided a signage concept that is more suitable for a project of this scale than would otherwise be allowed under MR-12 zoning.
3. The concept landscaping plan appears to indicate an appropriate level of landscaping adjacent to the buildings. A final version of the landscaping plan shall be provided with the PIP to verify compliance with the zoning ordinance.
  4. Provide a photometric and exterior lighting details with the PIP.
  5. Provide details of the trash enclosure with the PIP.
  6. The applicant shall be required to pay park fees as described in Village Ordinances or as negotiated with the Village Board via the PUD process. The applicant shall continue to work with the Parks Department regarding the use and design of the park land.
  7. The applicant shall provide an amended record copy of the GDP submittal document that incorporates the revised site plan, elevations, parking information and any other changes resulting from any GDP approval conditions.
  8. Approval of the GDP is subject to review of the applicant's traffic study by the Village Engineer's traffic specialists.