

LOCATION: 3800 Lexington Avenue

Presentation by City Planner Kathleen Nordine

Target is seeking a Comprehensive Sign Plan amendment to remove existing wall signs in order to put in two new wall signs. The existing monument sign would be refaced. The new signage will be consistent with Target's new brand logo.

A Comprehensive Sign Plan Amendment was approved in 2000, when Target was converted to a SuperTarget. The store is now being remodeled and upgraded. Signage consistent with the new SuperTarget brand logo is requested. The sign height, width and area will remain the same. The change will be in the font for lettering.

Wall signs are limited to 5% of the wall area on which a sign is placed. On the west wall the maximum area permitted is 846 square feet; the existing sign is 747 square feet. The application request is 1,171 square feet. The new sign would be in addition to the existing Grocery and Pharmacy signs. On the north wall, the maximum area permitted is 486 square feet; existing signage is 478 square feet. The application request is for 902 square feet. Only the SuperTarget sign would be on the north wall. The requested increases that exceed permitted area requires a sign plan amendment.

Staff believes the proposal is not excessive because of the size and mass of the building. There is no increase to the height or area of the monument sign. Property owners within 350 feet were notified. One response of support was received. Staff is recommending the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council that the changes be approved.

Commissioner Ferrington asked if the building setback is considered in setting the size standard of wall signage. Ms. Nordine answered, no.

Chair Solomonson noted the new letters on the north wall will be 9 feet in height and asked the height of the old letters. Ms. Nordine responded that the current letters are 5 feet in height.

Mr. Pat Laurence, Signcrafters, was present to answer questions.

Commissioner McCool asked if the existing signs on the side of the building are being eliminated. **Mr. Lawrence** answered, yes. There is one change. The current sign is neon but will be changed to LED. It will not be brighter but will be consistent in the winter when temperatures are cold.

Chair Solomonson questioned the dimensions of the wall presented. **Mr. Lawrence** assured the Commission that the sign does fit the north wall.

MOTION: by Commissioner Schumer, seconded by Commissioner Proud to recommend that the City Council approve the Comprehensive Sign Plan for Target at 3800 Lexington Avenue North. The proposed signage is consistent with the rebranding of Target and will not appear to be out of scale due to the mass of the building and

Chair Solomonson asked if access to the play area is sufficiently distant from the service drive to assure safety of the children. Ms. Nordine stated that there is a sidewalk that leads from the school building to the play area.

Commissioner Thompson added that while the service drive runs next to the play area, it is not at all heavily traveled. She believes the location is appropriate.

Mr. Schumer also noted that there would be supervision for preschool age children.

MOTION: by Commissioner Thompson, seconded by Commissioner Ferrington to recommend the City Council approve the Site and Building Plan review application for St. Odilia 3495 Victoria Street North, to construct a playground on the property for the preschool program, subject to the following conditions:

1. The project must be completed in accordance with the submitted site and building plans. Any significant changes to these plans, as determined by the City Planner, will require review and approval by the Planning Commission and the City Council.
2. The approval will expire after one year if the required permits have not been issued and work has not begun on the project.
3. The applicant shall obtain a grading permit and a fence permit for the playground and fence that will be installed around the perimeter of the playground area.

This approval is based on the following findings:

1. The proposed improvement is consistent with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan, including the Land Use and Housing Chapters.
2. The proposed improvements will not conflict with or impede the use of adjoining property.

VOTE: **Ayes - 6** **Nays - 0**

PUBLIC HEARING - PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT – DEVELOPMENT STAGE

FILE NO: **2449-12-12**
APPLICANT: **TCF Bank – Dave Kroona**
LOCATION: **3836 Lexington Avenue**

Presentation by City Planner Kathleen Nordine

This application request is to amend the PUD for the Sinclair gas station property at 3836 Lexington Avenue in order for redevelopment to occur with a bank facility. The property owner is also seeking tax increment financing (TIF) assistance to cover costs of demolition, tank removal and environmental cleanup. Benefits to the City for providing TIF assistance will be

redevelopment that serves a resident need, agreement to joint signage for the retail businesses in that area and granting needed right-of-way for road improvements of Red Fox Road and Lexington Avenue. The City Council will consider the TIF request at the June 18th City Council meeting. In order to use the TIF funds available, demolition must begin by July 1, 2012. The PUD amendment being reviewed by the Planning Commission at this meeting will be considered by the City Council at the June 2, 2012 meeting.

In 1989, this property was included in the PUD for Target to address access issues. The property is 34,168 square feet with a width of 167 feet along Lexington Avenue. Access is currently off Lexington, Red Fox Road and the private Target drive.

The redevelopment with a bank facility would be a one-story building of 2,200 square feet with three drive-through lanes and off-street parking. Right turn only access is proposed off Lexington and Red Fox Road. Full access would be from the Target private drive where an existing easement permits full access. Drive-through traffic is separated from on-site parking and pedestrian traffic entering the bank building.

The parking lot setback required from Red Fox Road is 20 feet; the proposal is for 11.4 feet. The drive-through lanes are required to have six spaces per lane; the proposal is for 4 and/or 5 spaces per lane.

On May 21, 2012, the City Council authorized a feasibility study for reconstruction of Red Fox Road. It is likely that a right turn lane from Lexington to the Target private drive will be recommended in the design. If additional right-of-way is needed to widen Red Fox Road, that would impact the parking lot setback.

Lexington Avenue is under the jurisdiction of Ramsey County. The County has submitted a memo to the City indicating that additional right-of-way will be needed from this site for a right turn lane onto Red Fox Road, which will impact parking setbacks from Lexington. Also, the access off Lexington may conflict with the right turn lane. Staff is continuing discussions with Ramsey County on these issues. Currently, there is a 20-foot utility easement for sewer and water lines along the southern boundary of the site. These lines will need to be relocated south of the proposed drive-through lanes. It may be possible to move the development back into the 20-foot easement area.

Notices were sent to property owners within 350 feet of the development site. One response was received in support of the proposal.

Staff finds that this redevelopment does support City commercial land use goals and provides a community need. The outstanding issues pertaining to road improvements may impact the site design, but staff believes these issues will be resolved prior to the Final Stage PUD. Staff recommends that the Commission recommend approval to the City Council, subject to the conditions listed.

Commissioner Schumer noted that the memo from Ramsey County states that the right turn access off Lexington would not be allowed. Ms. Nordine responded that there is room for

discussion, as the County will need additional right-of-way for that right turn lane. The site can be designed, if that access point must be closed.

Commissioner Proud asked if tests have been done on soil and ground water on the site.

Commissioner McCool asked if the access off Red Fox Road could become a full access. Ms. Nordine answered, no.

Chair Solomonson stated that even though the access is right only off Red Fox, it looks like it could be confusing, so that traffic would also try to exit onto Red Fox Road. He asked if traffic studies have been done. Ms. Nordine stated no traffic study has been done for Red Fox Road, and Ramsey County has not done modeling for Lexington. With signage and curb design, only a right turn access would be possible off Red Fox Road. The site possibly could function with only the full access off the Target drive.

Commissioner Ferrington stated that she is uncomfortable with how this project is being rushed without enough study information. Ms. Nordine responded that the site is commercial and the proposed use does fit within the PUD. While the issues regarding road improvements have not been resolved, they will be decided by the Final PUD. There is sufficient space to move the site plan to the east and south to maintain acceptable setbacks. The main issue is the access points. The Public Works Director is open to allowing the access point off Red Fox Road because it is a right only from a right turn lane. He does not see conflicts arising from that design.

Commissioner Ferrington stated that the right in only traffic from Red Fox Road will have to pass through the parking area where pedestrians will be parking and walking to access the lobby in order to reach the drive-through lanes. The issues surrounding the road improvements that are not resolved will impact this site development. Ms. Nordine noted that condition No. 2 addresses the fact that the issues identified in the memos from Ramsey County and the City Engineer must be addressed before the Final Stage PUD.

Commissioner Proud stated that he will offer an amendment to condition No. 2 to include traffic flow conditions on the site.

Commissioner McCool asked if the last drive-through lane is wide enough for cars to drive around that lane to exit. Ms. Nordine stated that the lane is wide enough at 18 feet.

Chair Solomonson asked if traffic will mistake the right turn only into the bank site for an entrance to the Target site. Ms. Nordine stated that issue will be addressed with signage.

Commissioner Thompson noted that traffic on the Target drive turning left onto Red Fox Road is already somewhat difficult. She asked how this additional traffic will be handled from this proposed development and the other development occurring in the area. Ms. Nordine stated that the Target drive aligns with the driveway across Red Fox Road. The City Engineer is aware of the issue and will address it in the road design.

Commissioner McCool asked if the exit from the bank site aligns with an entrance to the Target site on the other side of the Target private drive.

City Attorney Filla stated that the public hearing was properly noticed.

Chair Solomonson opened the public hearing.

Mr. Don Greenhank, 3333 Owasso Heights Road, stated that the intersection of Red Fox Road and Lexington is very congested. Cars turning right onto Red Fox then have to turn left across exit lanes going west to access the Exxon station. It is a big bottleneck. Traffic will increase with the commercial development that is taking place. The reason he does not buy gas at the Sinclair station is because of the difficulty of getting in and out of the site.

Mr. Robert Foster, Attorney for Luther Properties, Owner of the site. He introduced Mr. Mike Kraft from TCF Bank and Dave Kroona, owner of Luther Properties. Regarding environmental issues, an environmental consulting firm has been hired for an assessment of the site. Mr. Kroona is responsible site cleanup. There has never been a leak on the site. Soil borings were done this week. By the time of the this is presented to the City Council, it will be known what remediation is necessary. Secondly, the purchase agreement is contingent on the owner cleaning up the site and receiving TIF assistance for those costs. The legislature did not pass an extension of the TIF that would be available to this site. After July 1st, TIF assistance will be lost. The necessity of TIF assistance drives the tight time line.

Mr. Mike Kraft, HGT Architects, 9300 Hennepin Town Road, Eden Prairie, introduced Mr. Dave Nelson from TCF to answer any questions regarding bank operations. Due to the nature of banking over the last 10 years, the volume of traffic at bank sites has decreased. The majority of the parking for customers entering the bank building is alongside the building. Customers will be able to go into the building without crossing traffic going to the drive-through lanes. There have been a number of discussions regarding access off Lexington and Red Fox Road. TCF would not be pursuing development of this site, if there was no confidence that the access issues could not be worked out. A right turn into the site from Lexington would be from a right turn lane and would be much safer than turning right from a traffic lane. The same is true on Red Fox Road. These issues are a priority for TCF to resolve.

Commissioner Ferrington asked if the parking on the west side for employees would be lost with the required right-of-way needed for the right turn lane to be put in on Lexington. **Mr. Kraft** stated that there is enough space for the utility easement to be moved and the design shifted to keep a good traffic flow. The access on Red Fox has been pulled further east, and the one on Lexington further south to keep site traffic away from the intersection.

Chair Solomonson asked if the site can function with the full access off the Target private drive. **Mr. Kraft** responded that not having a public access puts the development in a difficult position. The site would not function well, and he does not believe TCF would pursue development without public access.

In response to Commissioner McCool's question, Mr. Kraft stated that the exit onto the Target drive does not align with a Target entrance; there is a median. There will not be traffic coming from Target or TCF wondering who has right of way. He added that there is room for cars to get around the drive aisles. If the design can be shifted south, there will be more opportunity to make that last drive aisle wider than 18 feet to assure plenty of room to drive around the drive-through lanes.

Mr. Kraft supported Commissioner Proud's amendment to condition No. 2 to resolve traffic flow conditions. He believes traffic studies will show that traffic flow will be improved.

MOTION: by Commissioner Proud, seconded by Commissioner Schumer to close the public hearing.

ROLL CALL: Ayes - 6 Nays - 0

Commissioner Ferrington expressed concern that with the development by Stonehenge, TCF Bank and increased visibility of Target, she would like to be sure that public works staff will prioritize the design of that intersection and Red Fox Road improvements.

Chair Solomonson stated that there are many unknowns about traffic, access, and site design that make it difficult to make a decision on this project. He would like to see the questions raised by the Planning Commission addressed for the City Council. The Commission will not have another opportunity to review this application. His preference would be to see no access from Lexington or Red Fox Road to get traffic away from the intersection.

Commissioner Proud stated that he does support an access off Lexington. With all of the engineering expertise of staff and the developers, he is confident that the issues will be resolved. The common goal is for good traffic flow.

Commissioner McCool expressed support for the proposal. He has traffic concerns, but he is confident that Ramsey County will not allow access off Lexington without an adequate construction design. He would like to see more space on the south side of the building for a circular movement around the site. Access from Red Fox Road should only be right in.

Commissioner Schumer agreed with Commissioner Proud and will support the project. With all the development occurring in the area, he believes all parties will work to come to the best resolution of the issues.

MOTION: by Commissioner Proud, seconded by Commissioner Schumer to recommend the City Council approve the PUD amendment permitting the redevelopment of the Sinclair property 3836 Lexington Avenue with a retail bank facility, subject to the following conditions with a modification to condition No. 2 that reads, "The applicant shall continue to work with the City staff and Ramsey County representatives to resolve issues regarding road right-of-way, planned access points, future road improvements and on-site traffic flow issues. The applicant shall also

cooperate and assist nearby property owners to improve traffic flow issues. These issues shall be addressed prior to the City's approval of the Final Stage PUD.

Planned Unit Development – Development Stage

1. The property shall be developed in accordance with the plans submitted as part of this application. Revisions to the submitted plans may be permitted to respond to comments received from the City Engineer and Ramsey County representative. Said revisions shall be submitted as part of the Final Stage PUD application.
2. The applicant shall continue to work with the City Engineer and Ramsey County representatives to resolve issues regarding road right-of-way, planned access points and future road improvements. These issues shall be addressed prior to the City's approval of the Final Stage PUD.
3. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall address the items stated in the memo from the Fire Marshal.
4. The applicant shall enter into a site development agreement and an erosion control agreement with the City prior to the issuance of a building permit for the project.
5. The existing public sewer and water utilities shall be relocated south of the proposed drive through facility and pavement area. The existing utility easement shall be vacated and a new easement established along the south property line.
6. A permit is required from Ramsey County for any work in the Lexington Avenue right-of-way.
7. The landscape plan shall be revised to provide a diversity of trees with a ratio of 30-20-10.
8. The applicant shall work with the City to develop a commercial gateway sign for the Red Fox Road retail area.
9. A Comprehensive Sign Plan is required prior to the installation of any signage on the property.
10. Authorize the Building Official to issue proper building permits after Final Stage approval of the PUD and execution of the development agreement.

This approval is based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed land use is consistent with the designated commercial land use in the Comprehensive Plan and PUD.
2. The redevelopment supports the City's commercial land use goals regarding the reinvestment in commercial areas and providing services which support resident needs and employment opportunities.
3. Redevelopment of this site provides the City with an opportunity to address roadway improvements and infrastructure needs in this commercial area.

Discussion:

Commissioner McCool stated that he agrees with condition No. 2 but expressed concern about the last sentence because it suggests a duty to grant easements to nearby property owners. Implicit in the continued study, traffic is a regional issue. He requested the last sentence be stricken.

