

PHILLIPS Architects & Contractors, Ltd.

Narrative for:
Informal DRC meeting

Walser Toyota

4401 American Boulevard West
Bloomington, MN
February 2, 2021

Contact Information

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Project Background

Walser Automotive Group was in the process of approval for a new Walser Toyota at 4401 American Blvd. West in March of 2020 when the arrival of the COVID-19 Coronavirus caused a shuttering of most business activities. Some of the most impacted businesses were traditional restaurants such as Senser's on the east side of the Walser Toyota property. Senser's has closed their business allowing Walser to purchase its property.

Walser Automotive Group proposes to construct a new three-story dealership facility with Walser's corporate offices on the third floor. The proposed size of the new dealership building is about 106,550 square feet. In addition, Walser is proposing to construct an open parking ramp which has three tiers (ground, second and third) and roof parking, each with about 81,500 square feet.

Zoning Requests

Walser is requesting approvals for this project including:

1. Comprehensive Plan amendment for Senser's property from CC to RC
2. Rezone Senser's property from CS 0.5 to C1
3. Plat Senser's site with the existing Toyota site.
4. Site plan approval

The required FAR will be met. I have included a current survey. The property has 174,171 square feet (SF) including the shared drive at American Blvd. The southern 150 feet of this lot are in the R-1 zone. This area also is a drainage easement for Wanda Miller Pond. I calculate that the R-1 and easement area is about 31,800 SF. This should be subtracted from the 174,171 SF leaving the added site of 142,371 SF. The required .4 FAR additional building size is about 57,000 SF. If you subtract 4,500 SF for the ROW the additional required SF would be about 55,475 SF. When added to the existing building size of about 50,000 SF this is a new building size requirement of about 105,500 SF slightly less than the proposed 106,550 square feet.

In our case we believe the parking structure should also count as new building at least in part. Perhaps 50% or 35% of the above grade square footage should count. Fortunately, we believe that we meet the building size before we have the parking structure discussion. Please note that the parking structure alone would be the second highest value dealership in Bloomington even without the new Toyota dealership building.

Scheduling

Please note that Walser has reserved July and August at Wells Concrete for production of the ramp precast. They plan to begin the piling and construct the ramp foundations in July and August. Wells Precast is scheduled to begin on site erection about September 1, 2021 with completion late in 2021. The piling and foundations for the new dealership building would begin about January 1, 2022, after the ramp is available to park the vehicles displaced by the new dealership construction.

Phased Construction

Walser Toyota is seeking a new dealership facility. The project will be constructed in three phases with the first being the new parking ramp. This will mitigate the loss of on grade parking during the construction of the new dealership building on the east side of the property allowing the existing facility to remain viable during construction. The ramp will be constructed of precast double tees with white precast spandrels around the perimeter and a glass curtain wall front. It will meet the building code definition of an open ramp with no fire sprinkler.

The second phase of the project is the new 106,550 square foot three story dealership building. This construction will begin about January 2022 after the first phase is completed. The building will have Toyota's signature lighted cube entry element in front of the showroom on the north side. The north exterior half of the dealership will be constructed substantially of glass curtain walls and ACM (aluminum composite panels.) These are the same materials used on Motorwerks BMW in Bloomington. The southern half of the building will be white tip up precast panels with a decorative smooth deep scoring pattern. This part of the exterior will have an aggregate finish on part of the panels accented with smooth sandblasted areas. Completion of the new dealership building is desired by December of 2022, allowing 12 months for construction.

The new dealership will have 45 service bays and a three drive through lanes in the service reception. The parts department is sized for the service business. The three-story showroom will accommodate up to 16 display vehicles and 50 sales stations. There will be a large customer lounge area with a variety of seating options. There is a car wash tunnel which will enter on the north and exit to the south. The main level will have approximately 71,500 square feet. There will be an 1,800 square foot trash and recycling building on the west side of the property. It will be constructed of white precast concrete.

The second floor will have about 18,700 square feet. This area will be used for meeting and training spaces, an employee breakroom and lounge, sales support areas, as well as employee lockers and restroom facilities. There will also be a second-floor parts storage area.

The third floor of the dealership facility will be constructed as Walser's corporate offices. It will have about 16,250 square feet.

A notable feature of the project will be the skyway over the driveway from the second floor of the dealership to the parking ramp. The clearance under the skyway will be at least 16' 0".

The third phase will begin with the demolition of the existing dealership facility after completion of the new dealership building. The site work and parking will be completed after the demolition.

Driveways and Parking

When complete the project is expected to have parking for up to about 1,461 vehicles plus about 65-80 vehicles inside the dealership building. This compares to about 680 vehicles on the current Toyota site.

The ramp may have only two tiers with roof parking initially, depending on project budgeting and costs. This would reduce the onsite parking to approximately 1214 which is still a substantial increase from the existing count. If three tiers are not initially constructed the foundations and structure will be designed to accept a future third tier.

The current Toyota driveway will be closed to the west of the existing Toyota Brand sign and enlarged to 30' wide to the east of the sign. There will be a second driveway to the east across the former Senser's property as shown on the site plan. The second easterly driveway will be constructed with phase one. It will be used for construction traffic only until the new dealership building is opened.

Walser plans on a full zoning submittal on February 17, 2021. Civil engineering will be submitted with our zoning application and also to the watershed.

Please direct replies to the applicant. Thank you.