

PHILLIPS Architects & Contractors, Ltd.

Narrative for:

Walser Toyota

4401 American Boulevard West

Bloomington, MN

February 28, 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 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 the opportunity 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 using the combined larger site. The proposed size of the new dealership building is about 121,959 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 81,000 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
5. Approval of exterior materials including the entry arch and stair height at ramp.

The required FAR will be exceeded. We have included current surveys. The former Senser's 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 significantly less than the proposed 121,959 square feet.

In our case we believe the parking structure should also count as new building at least in part. Fortunately, the proposed building size meet exceeds the zoning square footage requirement before we have the parking structure discussion. Please note that the proposed parking structure alone would be the second or third highest value dealership in Bloomington even without the new Toyota dealership building.

Comprehensive Plan Amendment

A comprehensive plan amendment is requested to change the former Senser's restaurant site from community commercial to regional commercial to match the current Walser Toyota site. These designations are already adjacent demonstrating compatibility. The public benefit of the change in the comprehensive plan will allow for Walser to relocate its corporate office to the site with the large structured parking allowed on the former Senser's site and the added third floor on the 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. There are about 150 current employees at Walser Toyota. This is expected to expand to about 175 in the new building. Most of the new employees will be in the enlarged service department.

The project will be constructed in three phases with the first being the construction of a new parking ramp. This will mitigate the loss of on grade parking during the construction of the new dealership building. The ramp will be constructed on the east side of the property allowing the existing dealership to remain open during construction. Each tier and the roof parking is about 81,000 square feet. The structured parking total about 243,500 square feet. 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. Snow removal from the roof of the ramp is over the south end at the two snow wall locations. Snow walls prevent the snow being blown back into the lower tiers of the ramp.

The second phase of the project is the new 121,959 square foot three story dealership building. This construction will begin in January - February 2022 after the first phase is completed. This

is also a deep piling site requiring special foundations. This building will have Toyota's signature lighted cube entry element at the main entry in front of the showroom. The north exterior half of the dealership will be constructed substantially of tall 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 deep scoring pattern and light sandblasted finish. Completion of the new dealership building is desired by February-March of 2022, allowing about 14 months for construction.

The new dealership will have about 45 service bays with 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 tunnel car wash. The ground floor dealership level will have approximately 77,901 square feet including a small mezzanine for tanks and compressors.

The second floor will have about 20,774 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. 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 14' 0".

The third floor of the dealership facility will be constructed as Walser's corporate offices. It will have about 23,284 square feet. Walser has about 170 corporate employees. To maintain social distancing about one-half are scheduled into the corporate offices on a given day, currently. The office level is sized to accommodate future needs.

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.

Hours of Operation

Walser Toyota sales hours are currently 8:30 AM to 9:00PM Monday through Thursday. The sales closes at 6:00PM on Fridays and Saturdays. The service employees arrive at 6:30AM and open at 7:00AM Mondays through Friday. The service second shift works until 10:00PM on weekdays. Service is open 7:00AM to 6:00PM on Saturdays.

Driveways and Parking and Shared 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. This driveway connects to the existing shared access to American Boulevard. The driveway connection to the shared driveway will be constructed with phase one. It will be used for construction traffic only until the new dealership building is opened.

There is an existing cross easement for shared parking for 10 parking stalls on the former Senser's property and 10 parking stalls on the hotel property. This area is shown in green on the Shared parking site plan. Full access to all of the shared parking is maintained. This same site plan shows 19 parking stalls on the east side of Walser's property in orange. These existing stalls will be retained and offered to the Denny's/hotel owners by lease or easement. Walser is not counting this parking in the totals.

Civil Engineering and Landscaping

Civil engineering plans along with a landscape plan has been submitted with this zoning application. Civil engineering has also been submitted to the watershed.

Site Lighting

Lighting plans have been submitted for the lot and top of the ramp. The project will have all new suite lighting using the latest LED technology. The fixtures will be dimmable and have motion sensors for night security. The computer-controlled lighting will be set to meet the city requirements. The site lighting will be dimmed at 10:30PM to just security lighting levels.

Building and Ramp Materials and Stair Height

The applicant is requesting specific approvals of the exterior materials to be used for construction as well as the height of the Ramp stair towers.

The ramp will be precast concrete. The structural double tees, beams and columns will be natural gray. The spandrel panels will have integral cast in white color on the exposed exterior side. Stair towers and snow walls will have scored precast wall panels with integral white cast in color. The north side of the ramp will have a glass curtain wall with an ACM (aluminum composite panel) fascia to match the dealership building. The stair towers are requested to be 52' tall at the rear to allow for a roofed enclosed emergency exit as opposed to an open stair.

The dealership building will have scored precast wall panels with integral white cast in color for the south portion of the three-story dealership as well as the service shop and carwash. The service write-up on the west side will have a gray ACM and glass exterior with glass overhead doors. The northern portion of the building will be glass curtain wall with ACM column covers and an ACM fascia. This will wrap partially around the east and west sides. A key element required of all Toyota dealerships is the signature Toyota lighted entry element. Approval of this special entry feature is specifically requested. Please refer to the renderings which have been submitted.

PHILLIPS Architects on behalf of Walser Automotive Group respectfully requests the City Council approval of these zoning applications.