

Memorandum

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Izaak Peterson , Senior Planner
DATE: July 28, 2026
SUBJECT: o Rice Street - Concept Stage Application- Praburamakrishna and Sri Manivannan
ITEM NUMBER: 7.B
SECTION: NEW BUSINESS

REQUESTED MOTION

No formal action is taken on Planned Unit Development - concept stage applications.

INTRODUCTION

The applicants, Praburamakrishna and Sri Manivannan, have submitted a Planned Unit Development Amendment (PUD)- concept stage application for the proposed development at the property located at o (unaddressed) Rice Street. The concept proposes development of an approximately 1,200 sf restaurant/ cafe on the existing undeveloped property. Due to site constraints, the applicant has chosen to solicit feedback of development proposal in advance of any required formal site plan, variance, or rezoning applications with a concept stage application to receive direction from the planning commission and city council.

The PUD Concept Stage is an informal review process that allows the public, planning commission, and city council an early opportunity to provide general feedback and identify issues and concerns to the applicant before more detailed plans are prepared for formal consideration. There is no formal action taken by either the planning commission or city council at this stage.

DISCUSSION

Background & Site Description

The parcel is triangular in shape, with 89 feet of frontage on Jerrold Street, 345 feet of frontage along Rice Street, and 357 feet along the railroad right-of-way. It has an area of approximately 15,350 square feet. The property is wooded, with trees located throughout the center of the property. The topography of the site is relatively flat but slopes southward.

The property is currently located in an OFC, Office zoning district. In this district, professional offices are permitted along with a variety of ancillary or supporting uses including restaurants, provided certain qualifications are met. The property to the north of this site, across Jerrold, is also zoned Office. To the west, across the railroad right- of-way is an RL, Detached Residential District that consists of an established residential neighborhood. To the east, across Rice Street in the City of Little Canada is a multi-tenant office development.

The property has been listed for sale for several years. The city has had past development

consideration regarding the property, including approvals to construct office facilities on the property in 1991 and consideration in 2002. Historically, the development of the property has not occurred due to challenges and the availability of utility connections. At the time, the property lacked adjacent water and sanitary sewer infrastructure available for connection. An easement agreement from the Canadian Pacific Railroad has been necessary to extend utilities. Currently, water is located adjacent to the property along Rice Street and on the north side of the Jerrold Ave right-of-way. Sanitary sewer is not present abutting the property, and the nearest city sanitary sewer connections are located within the existing railroad property to the north of Jerrold Ave, or alternatively between the 100 blocks of Jerrold Ave and Edgewater Ave.

Land Use Zoning & Comprehensive Plan Consistency

[Chapter Four](#) of the Comprehensive Plan designates this property for a Commercial land use within the future land use map. This designation is intended for property located adjacent to land planned for residential use but may also be located in areas surrounded by nonresidential uses. Professional offices, daycare centers, medical and dental clinics, and similar uses are intended for these locations. In addition, the site is located within Policy Development Area (PDA) 19 as outlined within the comprehensive plan. Language specific to the property includes notation that "Development of the vacant parcel south of Jerrold Street will require the extension of municipal sewer and water". The PDA generally guides properties within the area south of South Owasso as Office properties, with guidance to promote pedestrian connectivity. The PDA notes anticipation that the single-family home (3269 Rice Street) and vacant parcel (Subject Property) will transition to other uses. The City's long-term goal in this area is to improve land use efficiencies on underutilized parcels, improve the aesthetic character of the area, provide land use continuity, and resolve access issues.

The property is currently zoned within the Office District, consistent with the comprehensive plan future land use guidance. Per Sec 107-61 within the Office zoning district, restaurants are permitted provided the following criteria are met:

1. Qualify for the issuance of an intoxicating on-sale liquor license within the city;
2. Do not have drive-up order facilities;
3. Food sales constitute at least 60 percent of the establishment's gross sales;
4. Are able to accommodate, by reservation, gatherings of 20 or more people; and
5. Except for special occasions, do not accept orders for food after 11 pm.

Development Analysis

Generally, at the time of the concept stage, to determine the extent of flexibility that will be needed from the Development Code until detailed plans are developed, and direction is given for the viability of the proposed restaurant land use given site constraints. At this time, the applicant has submitted high-level plans proposing their anticipated building massing, site layout, and parking facilities. The proposed concept plan has been reviewed for consistency with Office zoning district regulations as outlined below:

Building Setbacks

Due to the constrained width, double frontage of the property, and its triangular shape, the proposed building location conflicts with several setback requirements. The concept proposes the location of the 1,200 square foot building to the north of the property at the lot's widest width adjacent to Jerrold Ave and Rice Street. The following table compares the proposed building setbacks with the Development Code Requirements for the Office District ([Sec 107-](#)

61):

	Office Zoning District	Proposed Building
Front (Rice Street; East)	50 feet	20 feet*
Front (Jerrold Ave; North)	30 feet	10 feet*
Side (Railroad; West)	50 feet	17 feet*

***Proposed code deviation**

Due to the existing lot dimensions and shapes, the underlying Office setback standards are physically impossible to meet on all three sides. In the event of any development of the property, review of deviation from existing setback requirements would be necessary to permit the development of the property. Generally, staff believes the lot dimensions create a practical difficulty for the reasonable development of the site within the guidance of the comprehensive plan and development code. Feedback regarding the proposed building massing location and degree of any setback encroachment is sought to inform the development plans. The applicant notes justification of variances within their narrative material; please note, no formal decision of setback variances is requested or appropriate at the time of concept plan review.

Site Access

The concept plan proposes access from Rice Street, 100 feet south of the intersection of Rice Street and Jerrold Ave. Alternate access to serve the site from Jerrold Ave is restricted by the presence of a quiet zone railroad crossing median located at the railroad crossing intersection with Jerrold Ave. Ultimately, as a county road, proposed access would require the full review of engineered plans, traffic study, and approval by Ramsey County Public Works.

Parking

The site proposes 12 onsite parking spaces to serve the use immediately south of the proposed building location. Within the Office district, for a restaurant land use, [Sec 109-93\(2\)\(f\)](#) requires parking at a rate of one parking space per three seats based on maximum design capacity. The application outlines a proposed seating capacity of 36 seats, requiring 12 spaces. As the code-required parking depends largely on the internal layout and seating capacity, the parking space requirement would be subject to review of building plans.

Generally, staff is concerned with the proposed orientation and layout of the proposed parking facilities. The constrained nature of the lot poses turning movement conflicts between spaces adjacent to the proposed building location and those abutting the western (railroad) property line. Additionally, due to the nature of restaurant land uses, peak parking demands (morning and evenings) typically challenge parking capacity. In that event, the property lacks proximity to appropriate or viable on-street parking to address the event of parking demand in excess of the minimum parking proposed. Staff believes submittal and evaluation of a parking study regarding the proposed site and facilities would be necessary to evaluate the proposed parking capacity.

The proposed parking areas and driveways are subject to the setback requirements of Development Code [Sec 109-92](#). From any street right-of-way, front property line, and for property planned for residential use a 20-foot setback is required. The applicant proposes reduced setbacks of 5 feet along the western property line and Rice Street. Variance consideration would be required to permit the proposed parking setbacks. The review of landscaping plans, stormwater plans, availability of snow storage, and driving sight lines

would be required to consider the feasibility of reduced parking setbacks.

Architectural Design & Building Massing

The applicant has provided generative images of the desired architectural quality and style of the proposed building. The applicant has expressed interest in the use of wood, brick, or stone facade materials, which would meet development code design standards. The building height in the concept proposes a one-story building height. Staff believes the proposed height and size of the building at 1,200 sf is reasonable given the size and scale of the property.

Utilities

The availability of utility connections has historically been a challenge for prospective development of the property. As previously noted, water utility infrastructure is present along Rice Street and north of Jerrold Ave; however, engineered plans and evaluation of a proposed water connection to the infrastructure are still necessary to evaluate the connection.

Sanitary sewer infrastructure is not present adjacent to the property. Connection to the nearest available city sewer is located approximately 200 feet to the northeast within the railroad property would require the applicant to negotiate an easement agreement with the railroad. Alternatively, Little Canada does have sanitary facilities located across Rice Street serving the neighboring office building. Sanitary sewer may be provided to the site through agreement with Shoreview and Little Canada. City staff has had preliminary discussion with the City of Little Canada regarding the proposed concept and feasibility of connection to their sewer system. Preliminary feedback from Little Canada indicates that their nearest sewer is located on private property, which would require a private easement from the underlying property owner. This alternative poses the same or similar access and cost challenges to connection to Shoreview sewer to the north.

Any associated cost of connection, including any required easement agreement(s), and construction of sewer infrastructure would be the responsibility of the applicant. Staff has alerted the applicant of the challenge of the utility connection, and noted the feasibility analysis of connection would require the evaluation of a licensed engineer. The cost of providing utilities to the site, and the negotiation of any required easements would be the responsibility and obligation of the applicant.

Stormwater

The concept plan does not provide detailed drawings of stormwater infrastructure. The property is located within the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District, and subject to the requirements of the City's Surface Water Management Plan. Submittal of engineered stormwater management plans would be required with any subsequent development application for review with all applicable city and watershed district stormwater management requirements.

Public Comments

Public notice was distributed to property owners within 350' of the subject property. At the time of this report, staff has received one comment from a member of the public regarding the concept plan, which is attached to this report. The comment notes opposition to the proposed development of the property.

Agency Comments

Notice of the proposed concept plan has been distributed to partner agencies for initial review

and comment. The Ramsey Washington Metro District has provided feedback anticipating that a Watershed District permit would not be required if land disturbance is under one acre. Ramsey County has provided initial comments regarding the development of the property.

RECOMMENDATION

The PUD Concept Stage is the first step in the City's review process. While optional to the developer, the concept level provides an early opportunity for the public and City to review, identify issues and concerns, and provide guidance to the applicant on possible plan revisions and additional analysis that may be required. Formal applications and approvals would be needed from the City, including any proposed site plan, variance(s), or rezoning applications.

The planning commission is being asked to review the concept plans, provide general feedback, and identify any issues or concerns regarding the proposed uses and the site and building design that should be considered by the developer as they move forward with preliminary plat, site plan, and rezoning applications. Items of note that warrant direction and discussion include:

1. Compatibility of the proposed restaurant land use.
2. Feedback regarding building massing, parking, and site orientation.
3. The appropriateness of proposed setback deviations on the site.
4. Challenge of utility connection and feasibility.

Comments from the public should also be taken during the review, although formal public notices would be required at the time of any subsequent site plan, variance, or rezoning applications. No formal action is taken on concept application.

ATTACHMENTS

[Location Map](#)

[Applicant Narrative](#)

[Concept Plan](#)

[Ramsey County Comment](#)

[Watershed District Comment](#)

[Public Comment- Blossom](#)