

**COMMISSION ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: A REQUEST TO APPROVE MAJOR REVISIONS TO THE PREVIOUSLY APPROVED WESTWOOD VILLAGE MAJOR SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**BACKGROUND:**

Westwood Village is a Planned Residence Development with a variety of housing types located in west Ames between Lincoln Way, Marshall, Hickory and MacDonald Drive. (See Attachment A Location Map) This Planned Unit Development was first approved in 1975. At that time the land use plan designation was low density residential and the zoning was R-1 and R-2 allowing single-family and two-family dwellings. Planned Unit Developments were rezoned to Planned Residential Developments as part of the citywide zoning code update of 2000.

**Project Description.**

The property owner/applicant is requesting approval of modifications to the previously approved Westwood Village Major Site Development Plan (MSDP). (See Attachment F Existing Approved Layout and Attachment G Proposed Modified Layout) The overall changes involve changing an approved 16 unit building to a 24 unit building (to be addressed as 125 Marshall) and its associated parking and circulation. The proposed amendments to Westwood Village increase the overall density of the project, increase the building footprint and place the proposed building closer to its west lot line and to existing buildings. Modifications include the following:

- Building is moved north and further from the street
- Building is moved closer to existing buildings and creates a 15-foot setback from the rear property line of the lot on which it is located.
- Building foot print is increased in area from 6,500 square feet to 10,900 square feet
- Building height is increased from a two-story to a three-story building
- Dwelling units in the building is increased from 16 units to 24 units
- Bedrooms in the building are increased from 24 bedrooms to 72 bedrooms
- Dwelling units in the total project are increased from 97 units to 105 units
- Density of the total project is increased from 13.5 dwelling units per acre to 14.6 dwelling units per acre
- Total number of parking spaces on the site is increased from 196 spaces to 248 spaces (239 spaces are required for the proposed number of bedrooms)
- Parking area with 34 spaces is added south of the building.
- Where parking paving is proposed under the drip line of mature oak trees, pavers over crushed clean granite is proposed, to minimize impact of tree roots.
- Portion of the total site that is open space is decreased from 86% to 54.2%
- Central recreation space is reduced in area, swimming pool is removed, basketball court is reduced in area. Bocci ball court and picnic shelter is added south of building.

## **Land Use and Zoning.**

The existing land use designation of the site is Low Density Residential and the existing zoning designation is Planned Residence District (F-PRD). (See Attachment D Land Use Plan Map and Attachment E Zoning Map) No change to the existing zoning is requested.

Property developed according to the F-PRD (Planned Residence District) requirements is to allow for innovative housing types and create a development pattern that is more aesthetic in design and sensitive to the natural features of the site and to surrounding uses of land than would customarily result from the application of the requirements of other residential zoning districts. Development is to include a mix of housing types, integrated design, open space, site amenities, and landscaping that exceeds the requirements that exist in other residential zone development standards.

**Planned Residential Development (PRD) Development Principles.** To accomplish these goals property that is zoned F-PRD must adhere to the development principles in Ames *Municipal Code* Section 1203(2). When the Plan was approved, it was found to meet all of these principles. Attachment B reviews the Plan modifications listed with respect to these principles. The proposed modifications increase the number of units and bedrooms and thus increase density while rearranging the location of the building and parking to protect a significant grove of mature oak trees and allowing the oak trees to further screen the development from the neighborhood to the east. It does not detract from the overall site plan approach and design of the development that has already been built.

**Planned Residential Development (PRD) Supplemental Development Standards.** Generally, the Plan meets or exceeds the Development Standards. The proposed building height does not exceed the existing buildings and setbacks are similar to previously approved plans. Open Space is reduced and its emphasis is shifted from common recreation area to protection of an environmental feature. Approval of the proposed Plan will increase the maximum density allowed by 8% over the existing MSDP.

## **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council approve the proposed revisions to the Westwood Village Major Site Development Plan.
2. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council deny the proposed revisions to the Westwood Village Major Site Development Plan.

3. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council modify this request to the proposed revisions to the Westwood Village Major Site Development Plan.
4. Action on this request can be postponed and referred back to City staff and/or the applicants for additional information.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

In Planned Residence District, the Major Site Development Plan establishes zoning requirements, including maximum number of units, bedrooms and density. There is no other pre-established limit, which the owner has the right to develop. This Plan will increase the units, bedrooms and density in the development.

The Major Site Development Plan also establishes specific conditions that must be met to develop as permitted, including housing types and sizes, arrangement and location of buildings and parking, recreation and amenities and measures to protect the environment. When it approved the current plan, the City Council determined that it effectively applied those design measures to accommodate multiple-unit housing types and intensity in a low density neighborhood. Therefore, at this time it is only to be determined if the proposed modifications change that determination.

Previous concern expressed by neighbors about potential conflicts between vehicles from the number of residents here and children walking to and from the elementary school next door. The closing of that school will occur at the same time that the proposed apartment building will be occupied, thereby eliminating these concerns.

Under the current approved plan, the owner can proceed at any time to construct an apartment building partially within the oak grove. Although the proposed apartment building is larger, staff concludes that the change in position will help to reduce its visual impact from the east and that the change in position and alternative pavement design of parking will better protect the mature oak grove.

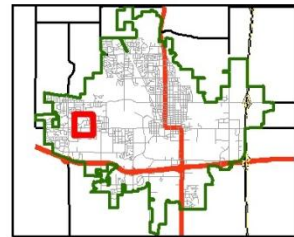
**Therefore, it is recommended that Alternative #1 be adopted.** Alternative #1 is a recommendation that the City Council approve the proposed revisions to the Westwood Village Major Site Development Plan.

## Attachment A: Location Map



**Location Map  
Westwood Village  
145 Marshall**

0 200 400 800 Feet





## **Attachment B**

### **Findings Regarding Planned Residential District Development Principles.**

The Plan modifications are reviewed below with respect to the following development principles in Ames *Municipal Code* Section 1203(2). (For an existing PRD, “underlying zoning” referred to in the criteria statements is not applicable.)

1. ***Provide for innovative and imaginative approaches to residential development that would not occur as a result of the underlying zoning regulations.***

The proposed amendments to Westwood Village increase the overall density of the project, increase the building footprint and place the proposed building closer to its west lot line and to existing buildings.

The proposed plan includes elements that are not required by conventional residential zoning. A grove of mature oak trees is located on the east portion of the site. The proposed modifications improve protection of these trees compared to the currently approved plan: Moving the building west outside of the drip line of these trees avoids cutting into the root systems for the building foundation and requires removal of three trees rather than four. (Note that five other trees will be removed regardless of the plan revisions due to disease, age and condition.) Where parking is proposed under the drip line, the proposed grading minimizes depth of cuts and an innovative paving system reduces impacts on root systems.

2. ***Result in a more efficient, aesthetic, desirable and economic use of land and other resources while maintaining density of use, as provided for in the Land Use Policy Plan and the underlying zoning.***

The land use type will not be changed by the proposed modifications, nor will number of buildings. Density of the project will be increased by the proposed modifications.

3. ***Promote innovative housing development that emphasizes efficient and affordable home ownership and occupancy.***

The built-out portion of the project includes a variety of housing types: twin homes, five apartment buildings of 10 units or less and two apartment buildings of more than 12 units. The proposed building includes more units and bedrooms than the current plan. All residences are rentals.

4. ***Provide for flexibility in the design, height, and placement of buildings that are compatible with and integrate with existing, developed neighborhoods and the natural environment.***

Relocating the proposed building further to the west separates and buffers it from the street and neighborhood to the east by the oak grove. This reduces the

impacts to the developed neighborhood of adding units and bedrooms to this building. The proposed building will have the same roof slope and clerestories as the existing 3-story apartment building. The materials and colors will be similar to other buildings in the development

5. ***Promote aesthetic building architecture, significant availability of open space, well designed and landscaped off-street parking facilities that meet or exceed the underlying zone development standards, more recreation facilities than would result from conventional development, and pedestrian and vehicular linkages within and adjacent to the property.***

The building architecture is similar to the existing buildings and previously approved plans. The Plan provides nine more parking spaces than required. The overall organization of the site is changing from buildings surrounding a center recreation space to buildings arranged to protect mature oak trees. A older swimming pool has been removed, a basketball court is being replaced with a smaller court in a different location and a bocci ball green and picnic shelter are being added. Existing and proposed pedestrian and vehicular linkages are not being changed.

6. ***Provide for the preservation of identified natural, geologic, historic and cultural resources, drainage ways, floodplains, water bodies, and other unique site features through the careful placement of buildings and site improvements.***

The proposed building is larger than the currently approved building and parking is being added. The building location provides better protection for the oak grove. The west end of the proposed parking area south of the building and the added parking on the north side of the loop drive is within the drip line of the oaks and thus may have a detrimental impact on the oak grove. The impact is being significantly reduced by minimizing topsoil stripping, avoiding earthwork excavation and using clean crushed granite and pavers for all pavements within the drip line. (See Attached Plans, Detail 2 on Sheet 6). Also, fencing will be placed at the drip line before construction begins, to protect compaction and disturbance on the root system and remain until the construction of the parking areas.

7. ***Provide for a development design that can be more efficiently served by existing and proposed infrastructure, including: street, water, sewer, and storm water infrastructure, than would be otherwise required as a result of conventional development.***

All utilities are in place and available. No changes to the street system are proposed. Signalized intersections exist at both Dotson/Lincoln Way and Marshall Avenue/Lincoln Way. Storm water management on site will take into account the capacity of the existing storm sewer system.

**Attachment C**  
**Planned Residential Development (PRD) Supplemental Development Standards.**

Property that is zoned F-PRD shall be developed in accordance with the Zone Development Standards listed in Table 29.1203(5). Each of those standards is addressed below. Refer to Table 29.1203(5) for the detailed standards.

1. ***Area Requirement. A minimum of two (2) acres shall be required for all areas developed as F-PRD.***

The subject site includes 7.18 acres.

2. ***Density. Densities shall comply with the densities provided for in the Land Use Policy Plan and the underlying base zone regulations. In the case of more than one base zone designation, each area of the PRD project shall comply with the density limitation that is established for the base zone of that area. Density transfer from one area of a PRD project to another area of the same project with a lower base zone density is not permitted.***

The proposed modifications will increase the density of the development. As an existing Planned Residence District the allowable density is established by the approved Plan. Not by the maximum of any particular zoning district. A decision about approving a change density is to be based on the Development Principles (See Attachment B).

3. ***Height Limitations. Structures proposed to be developed in areas zoned PRD shall be compatible with the predominant height of the structures in adjacent neighborhoods.***

The proposed building is three stories, the same number of stories as two existing apartment buildings to the south. All other buildings are lower in height.

4. ***Minimum Yard and Setback Requirements.***

In some locations the existing Plan has established smaller setback distances than in the other residential zones in the area. The proposed building will be 15 feet from its rear (west) property line. Rear setbacks in other residential districts are 20 to 25 feet. The existing building to the west is 20 to 30 feet from that property line.

5. ***Parking Requirements.***

The Plan provides 9 more than the number of required parking spaces.

**6. *Open Space Design Requirements.***

The Plan has been organized to protect the major feature of environmental significance, the oak grove. Additional recreation space is provided

**7. *Open Space Area Requirement.***

Forty percent of the property is required to be open space, in this case 125,000 square feet. Open Space is currently defined as “useable open space designed and intended for the use of all residents.” Common Open Space includes areas planned for active or passive recreation as well as areas of recreational activities such as swimming pools, tennis courts, shuffleboard courts, etc., but not including areas within required setbacks.

The current plan was approved without specific areas designated as open space, but with a note that the building footprints occupy 14% of the total site, leaving 86% of the site as open. From that current approved plan it has been estimated that with building footprints and parking areas deducted, 68% of the site is left open. The proposed plan leaves 54% without building footprints and parking areas.

**8. *Open Space Improvements and Amenities.***

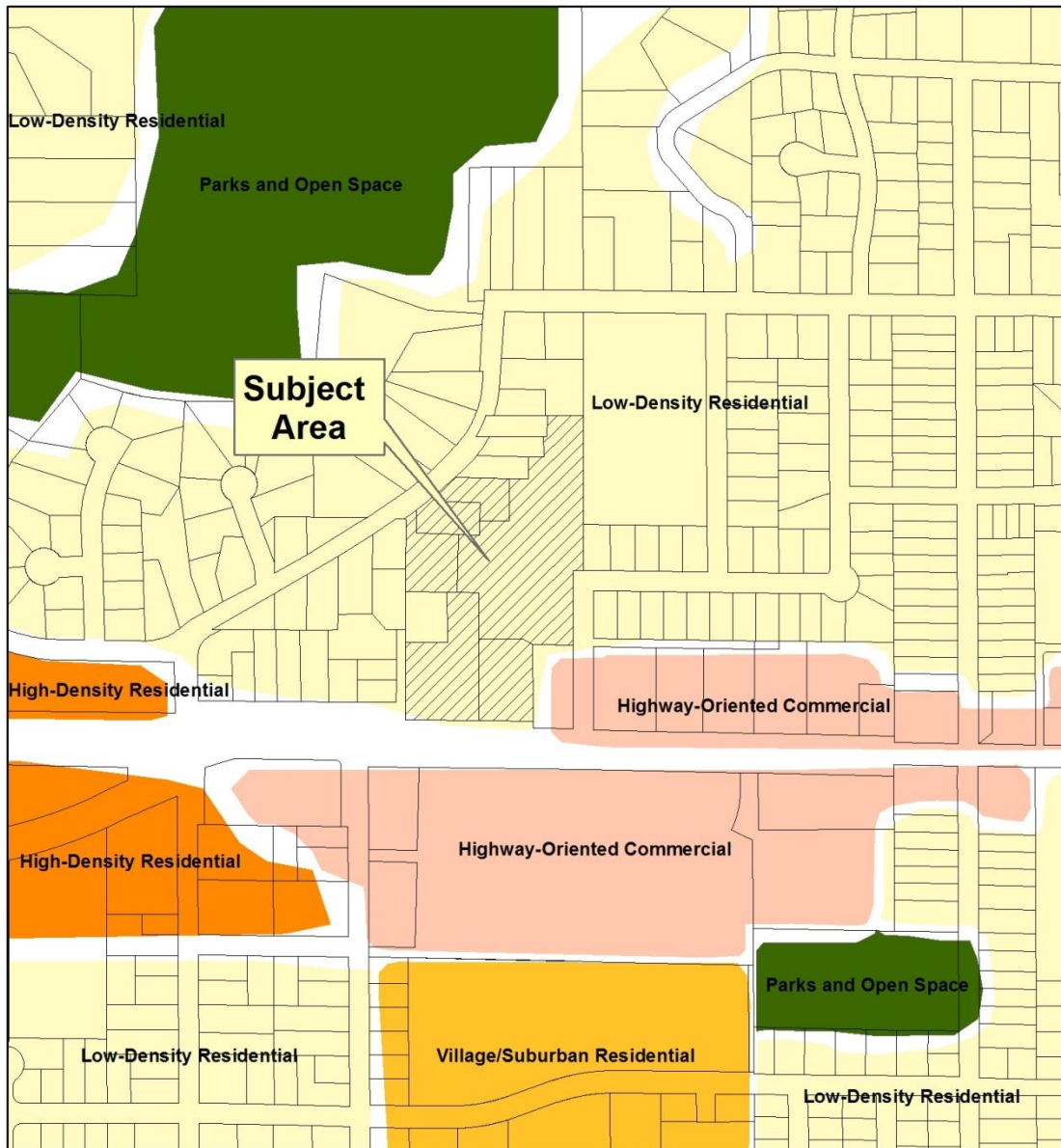
In addition to the oak grove, the Plan includes an internal pathway system, recreation facilities, a picnic shelter and landscaped space.

**9. *Maintenance of Open Space and Site Amenities.***

The development is an apartment complex and all open space and amenities are maintained by the property owner.

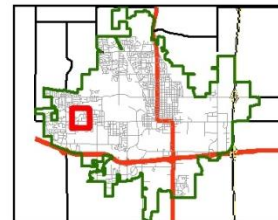


**Attachment D  
Land Use Plan Map**

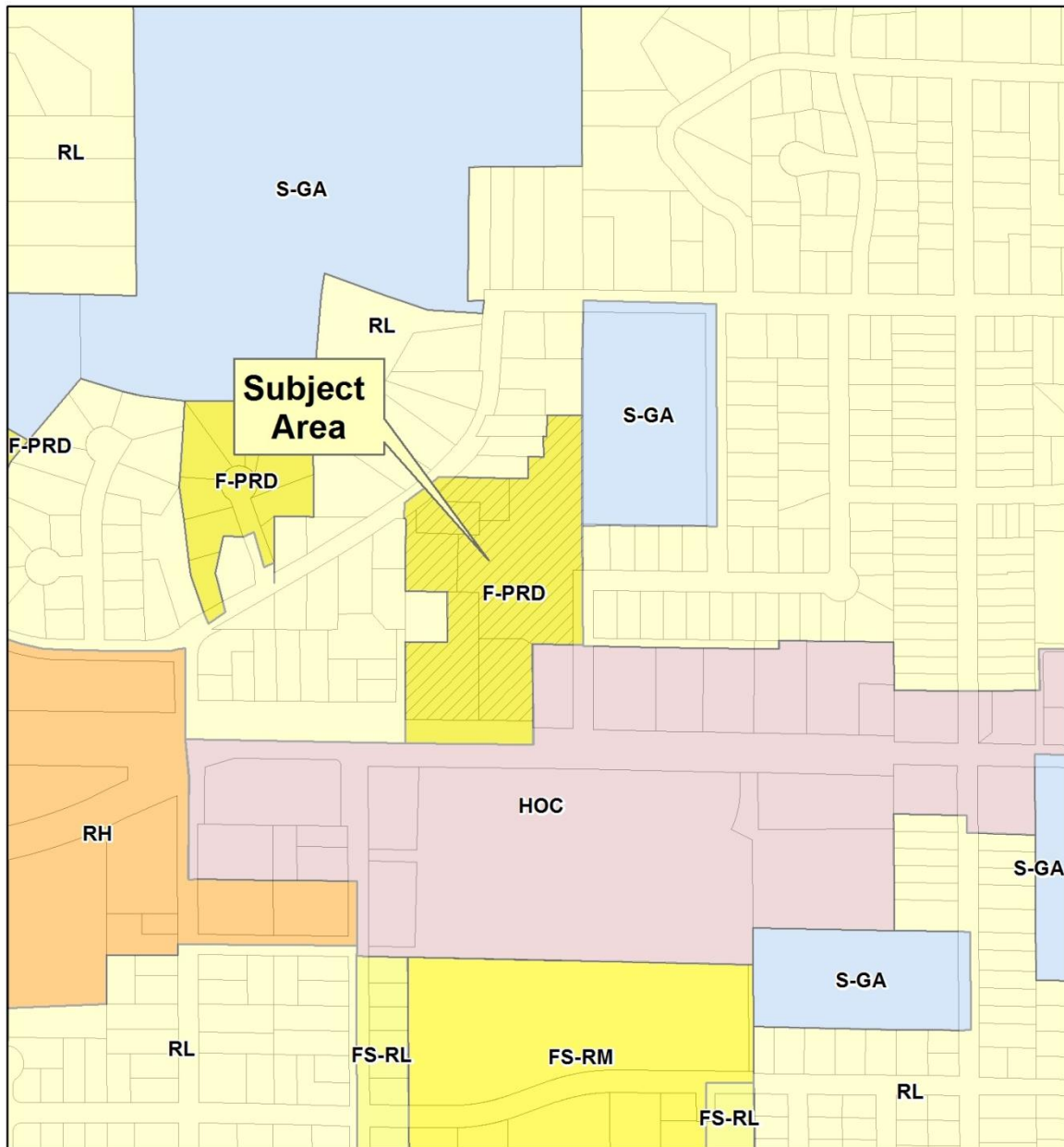


**Land Use Plan Map  
Westwood Village  
145 Marshall**

0 200 400 800 Feet

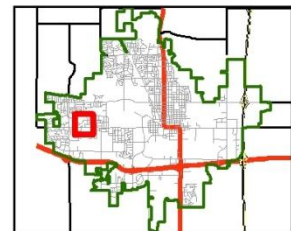


Attachment E  
Zoning Map

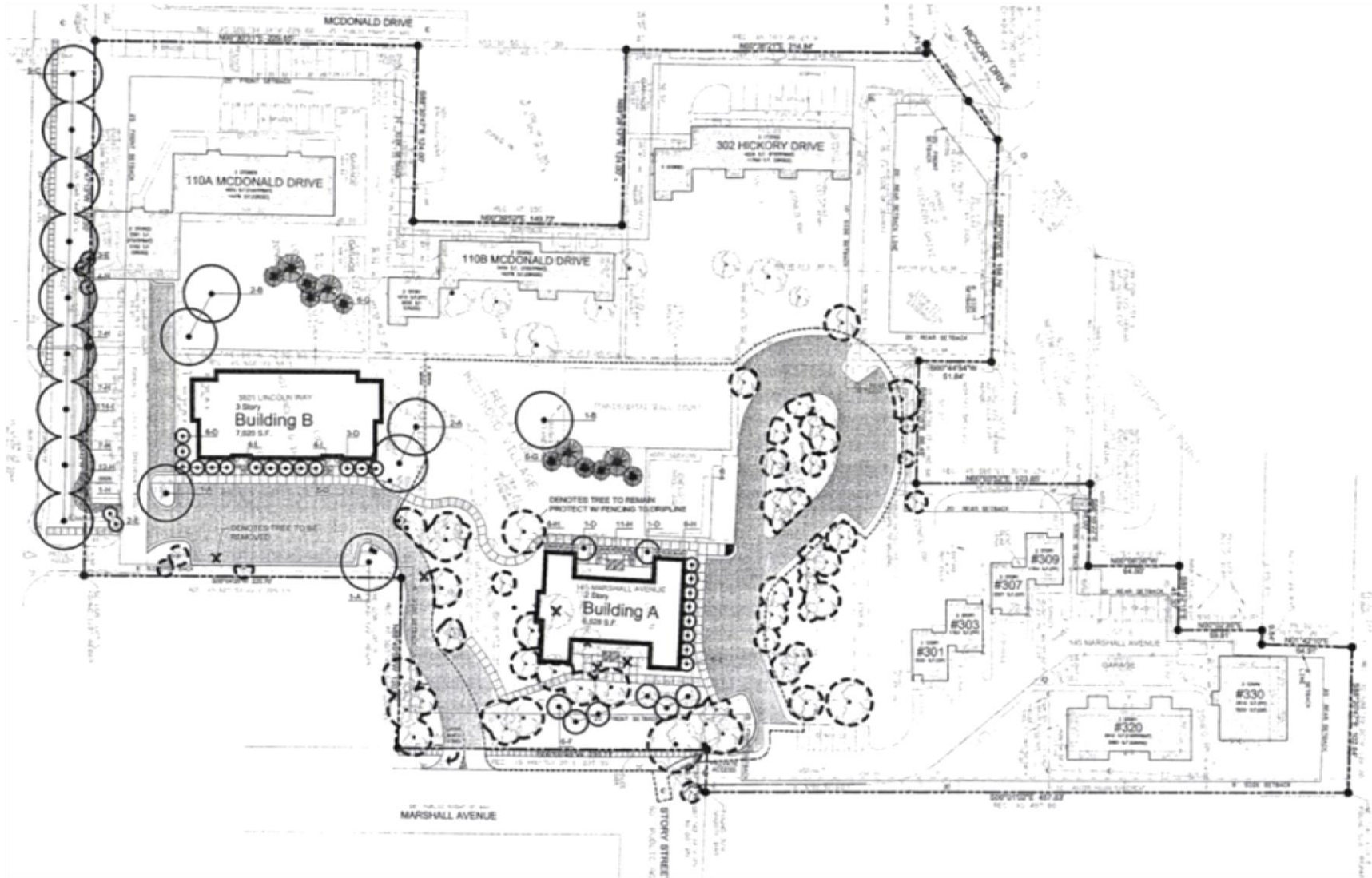


**Zoning Map  
Westwood Village  
145 Marshall**

0 200 400 800 Feet



Attachment F  
Existing Approved Layout





# Attachment G Proposed Modified Layout

