



City of Aurora

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Legistar History Report

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Zoning
Commission

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File Name: Valley Honda / 4173 Ogden Avenue / Major Variance

Final Action: 01/22/2025

Title: A Major Variance granting a reduction to the side setback for property located at 4173 Ogden Avenue (Valley Honda - 25-0007 / NA28/2-24.537 - Fpn/V - EF - WARD 10) (PUBLIC HEARING)

Notes:

Sponsors:

Enactment Date:

Attachments: Final Plan, Landscape Plan, Building and Signage Elevations, Variance Findings of Fact Sheet, Land Use Petition and Supporting Documents, Parcel Maps

Enactment Number:

Planning Case #: NA28/2-24.537 - Fpn/V

Hearing Date:

Drafter: FieldE@aurora.il.us

Effective Date:

History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	Planning and Zoning Commission	01/22/2025	approved				Pass
	Action Text: A motion was made by Mrs. Martinez, seconded by Mr. Gonzales, that this agenda item be approved. The motion carried.						
	Notes: Mr. Sieben said good evening, Commissioners. Ed Sieben, Zoning and Planning Director. This is a petition by Valley Honda, long time Aurora car dealership at 4173 Ogden Avenue. They're asking for 2 requests today: one is a...really, the overall plan is approval of a Final Plan Revision. The details, which include adding 4 new additions to the existing building, and this Final Plan document, which is really the site plan, the areas that are dark, those are the 4 additions that I'm going to describe. They include a new car delivery addition, a new tunnel car wash, tool room, an addition to the service area, and also an addition to the service entry which is on the west side of the building. And the request for the Variance is for that west addition. What they're doing is adding a 3rd bay to that intake area for service, and what that does is they have to push the parking and drive aisle to the west. So, the Petitioner is requesting approval of a Major Variance to reduce the side yard setback from 20 feet to 3 foot 6 inches. That's along Longmeadow Drive there. This is because the dealership is adding multiple additions to the building and the addition on the west side of the building would overlap the fire access lane and parking spaces. By allowing the setback to be 3 foot 6 inches, the addition would be able to be added while also moving the parking spaces and drive aisle to the west. The addition to the west is to extend the entrance to the service area. Just a little bit more discussion, the proposed addition at the west side of the building will add a 3rd entrance door to the service area. The service area has a total of 41 service bays. As a result of the 4						

proposed additions, 8 existing parking spaces will be removed. Parking is still up to regulations even with this change, 21 service parking spaces will be moved farther west due to the proposed service area addition as described in the Major Variance request. Let me see if I can switch screens here to the Landscape Plan along that addition. So, I'll show an existing and proposed rendering too, but this is actually looking west is up, that's Longmeadow Drive. So, you can see everything is pushed to the west. There's a 3-foot 6 setback with a landscape hedge for the parking, and then trees will be planted in the parkway. Right now, those trees are in the setback area.

I'm going to go right to the existing condition. So, this is the existing dealership. This is looking south; this is the west end of the dealership. You can see on that west side are the 2 bay doors for the service entry. What they're essentially doing is adding a 3rd one to the right, or to the west. So, I will show you the 3 renderings of their additions.

So, this is looking into the site further west off Ogden Avenue. This shows some of the improvements. I'll go to the next one.

This is some of the improvements to the front of the facility. And then finally, I believe this'll show the 3rd.

So, this on the right there with the white top of the façade; that's where they're adding...would like to add the 3rd service bay which then pushes everything about 16, 17 feet to the west closer to Longmeadow Drive.

Are there any questions for Staff right now? Otherwise, I can turn it over to the Petitioner.

Chairman Pilmer said questions of Staff? If the Petitioner's here, I'll actually swear you in. Anyone else going to speak on behalf of the Petitioner? I'll just have each of you raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

All said I do.

Chairman Pilmer said thank you. And then, if you'll just state your name and address for the record, please.

Mr. Williams said good evening. Richard Williams, Griffin Williams McMahon and Walsh, 21 North 4th Street, Geneva, Illinois. I'm the attorney for the Petitioner. With us tonight are Sherman Jenkins, Casey Brindley from Valley Honda, Thomas Lybrook and Paul Konstant from Konstant Architecture, they're our consultants in this matter.

Ed touched upon Valley Honda being a long-term Aurora resident. They've been here in business in this town for 50 years. Since that time, they've grown to be the 6th largest Honda dealer in the United States, which is a very impressive accomplishment in my mind. And they have always appreciated the relationship that we've had with the City of Aurora, and we have a commitment here today to make a massive investment in this project so we can continue our long-term relationship for another 50 years. These requests that we have before you, the Variance and the Plan Revision, are part of a massive reimaging project program that we have in conjunction with Honda. A whole new fresh look to the project, to the development, and will really improve the customer experience. I'm going to turn it over to Casey for a few minutes to talk a little bit about Valley Honda, and then we're going to have Tom and Paul talk more about the technical side of the plan.

Mr. Brindley said good evening. My name's Casey Brindley and I'm the President, CEO, and Dealer Principal of Valley Honda. As many of you know, the history of our dealership in Aurora, our previous owner, Bob Navarre purchased the dealership in 2005 when we were a much smaller business. At the time, we had 67 employees, and we were the 257th largest volume Honda dealer in the United States. Since then, we've grown our business a great deal. We've also become a 100% employee-owned company. Bob now serves on our Board of Directors for our employee-owned company, and I serve as President, CEO, and Dealer Principal. We're now the 6th largest volume Honda dealer, and more importantly, we employee 244 employees who most of which live in the vibrant City of Aurora. Our business has been built since 2005 on the same core principles, and I intend to continue those core principles in leading the company forward. My vision for our company, being 100% employee-owned Valley Honda, is to continue to grow here in Aurora with the same great partnership that we've enjoyed with the City since 2005, and in years past. My history picks up with Bob as my mentor since 2005. I know that we've had a tremendous partnership with the City, and that's what we're here to speak with you to present a plan and hopefully gain your support. I greatly appreciate you hearing us out tonight. Thank you.

Chairman Pilmer said thank you.

Mr. Konstant said I'm Paul Konstant from Konstant Architecture. I've worked with Valley Honda from the beginning, from Bob Navarre's beginning with the company, and we've been involved in several

projects. This latest updating the facility to meet the Honda requirements and to meet the demands of the citizens of Aurora. It's an extensive remodeling, total facelift, additions to the service drive to handle the service drive. It is important to note the whole building does not go over the current setback. It's the driveway and the parking spaces that do. And the facility will stay in business while they're doing the work, and we've got a plan intact for that, and if you have any questions, I'm happy to answer them.

Chairman Pilmer said sure. Any questions?

Mr. Pickens said yes, I have a question. This new addition that we say we lost 8 spaces, but we're still within the parking limits of the site. However, you say you've got 244 employees now. There's...I'm sure they're not all there at once, there's probably a 2nd shift or whatever, so it probably reduces a little bit. You're only allowing 36 spaces for your employees to park on that site, and personally, I live in that area and today about 3 o'clock we were driving by and 2 of your employees...I assume they were employees because they were coming from the Honda dealership...running across Ogden Avenue and then going to their cars that were parked on Healthway Lane, and while they were crossing, of course the other traffic beside me, they were beeping their horn because they weren't crossing fast enough. My concern is your site does not have enough parking for your employees unless you reduce your stock. I even drove through your parking lot where the employees are supposed to park, the 36 spaces that you've allowed, and there's new cars, there's used cars it looked like they're for sale. Some of them looked like they could've been employees' cars, but I don't think they're using them either. So, do we have a situation where you have too much stock, and you're kicking your employees out and parking on the streets?

Mr. Konstant said there are 950 spaces across the street and...

Mr. Brindley said yes sir, Mr. Pickens, you're absolutely right. Parking for us is one of our greatest challenges in this location...

Mr. Pickens said and dangerous.

Mr. Brindley said yes sir, and we intend, you know, this project will help us alleviate some congestion. With that said, we have 2 offsite storage facilities with over 1,100 parking spaces and we use almost every one of them at any given time. We'll continue...

Mr. Pickens said so, why is the reason that people are crossing Ogden then to park there, to get to their personal cars? I guess that's my question.

Mr. Brindley said why is it? Is that what you asked?

Mr. Pickens said why don't they have parking spaces onsite?

Mr. Brindley said unfortunately, with the number of parking spaces that we have onsite, with the amount of business that we do with vehicles coming in for service, we don't have the number of parking spaces to have all of our 244 employees, you know, have a parking space plus be able to serve our clients. When the cars come in through the service drive, we're...the whole intention here is to, you know, add a 3rd service drive lane so that we can check clients in quicker, because if you're familiar, you know, with the area, I'm sure you've seen where we get backed up sometimes just getting clients into that service drive, and that line backs up onto Longmeadow. Sometimes even on that ADA. And so, our intention with this 3rd service lane...we've also increased staff here over the last year...we've increased our staff by 30% and we actually just, you know, made a decision in the last 2 months to increase the staff another 20% so that we can help our clients as quickly and efficiently as possible, because we know that we're just, you know, we can't go any further out. You know, we don't have any other place to put them. When the cars come in, we get them checked in and they get parked until they go in to see a technician. And so, all of those cars come in and they need parking spaces, and then we have a small sample of parking where we put our new and used car inventory parking. By the time all of those cars, you know, take up those parking spaces we don't have very many spaces for our employees to park.

Chairman Pilmer said yeah, I think either...I might either ask Ed or Mr. Williams, I think in previous...prior, we had an agreement as this expanded to allow for additional parking across Ogden Avenue because there's certainly not enough, even just for their inventory, let alone all their employees. So, I think...I don't know, I can't remember if that was 2005 or if was 2010, but I know we did...the City did allow for additional offsite parking for employees and additional inventory as well.

Mr. Jenkins said (off mic, from audience) it was 2010.

Mr. Lybrook said I would also say there are porters that are going over to bring new cars over to the lot, which may be something that you saw too because there are employees parked on the site and then they're bringing new cars over. I mean there's...

Mr. Brindley said it could've been either of the two. At any given time, it could've been either of the two.

Mr. Williams said and if I could just jump in here. That's one of the reasons for the Variance is along Longmeadow is so we can maximize parking, because if we didn't have the Variance, we would lose a number of parking spots. So, one of the reasons that we need this Variance is so we can maximize parking and stay in this location.

Mr. Brindley said that really is the key is that we want to stay right where we're at...

Mr. Pickens said yeah, well, the package of plans we got didn't show what the existing conditions were versus what you're planning to do. So, was there parking along that west side of the building originally? Or was there just a fire lane going around?

Mr. Brindley said no, that parking...that parking...

Mr. Pickens said and that's shifting and that's where we lost the 8 spaces? Okay.

Mr. Lybrook said the 8 lost are where the tool room and the car wash are added on the...

Mr. Brindley said the 8 are actually on the south side of the facility.

Mr. Pickens said okay.

Mr. Brindley said the 2 dark grey areas...

Mr. Pickens said okay.

Mr. Brindley said the one on the west is the additional space for the tool room addition for just storage of equipment and tools. We're losing 4...or 2 spaces there, and then the tunnel car was we're going to lose 6 spaces there.

Chairman Pilmer said any other questions of the Petitioner from the Commission? Anything else you would like to add?

Mr. Williams said I just, I think it would be a great improvement to the dealership. It's time. It needs that freshened up look, so thank you for your consideration.

Mr. Pickens said is this...this is just about the Variance though, right? Not about the Final Plan?

Chairman Pilmer said so, we'll vote on these separately so...

Mr. Pickens said yeah, okay. So, we'll talk about the Final Plan later?

Chairman Pilmer said you can go ahead and address questions about the Final Plan as well.

Mr. Pickens said okay, well, yeah, I'm a little confused on the...your lot lines don't reflect what you show here as far as parking. You're actually hanging over the pond and that appears to be at a different site...

Mr. Lybrook said no, we built the structure over the pond. That retention that was required...was that 2010 or...

Chairman Pilmer said yeah, I think 2011 it shows in here.

Mr. Lybrook said it's all precast...

Mr. Pickens said so, retention is your property as well?

Mr. Lybrook said yeah. It's structured though.

Mr. Pickens said okay, well, I was looking at the other plans where it showed the green line like that was the property that we're talking about.

Mr. Williams said it's 2 parcels. The retention parcel...but they're in co-ownership. And the existing parking is non-conforming along Ogden and along Longmeadow already. When the initial plan...whether the setbacks changed at some time, but it's all encroaching from what the code minimum is...the zoning ordinance is.

Chairman Pilmer said any additional questions? Anything additional from the Petitioner at this time?

Mr. Williams said not at this time. Thank you.

Chairman Pilmer said alright, thank you. This is a Public Hearing. If anyone in the audience would like to address the Commission about this item, please come forward. And I will note that no one has come forward. I will close the Public Hearing portion of this item and turn it over to Staff.

Mr. Sieben said thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, I'll discuss the Variance first, and as was just discussed, the City's been working with Valley Honda over many, many years, working with Mr. Jenkins when he was with Economic Development, and then as an Alderman. This site really is maxed out. One of the expansions to the south included an expensive retrofit where the parking was built over the detention area to maximize parking. We also worked with them; I believe it was in 2010. The areas north of Ogden Avenue there were some underutilized vacant commercial properties there that we worked with them to be allowed to park excess inventory. So, it's really a cohesive development with this site as the main dealership, and then offsite areas just to the north, so the City has worked very well with Valley.

So, I just want to touch on...there's 4 Findings of Fact for the Setback Variance and if I could just read those into the record. The Staff has determined the following:

1. Is the requested variance based on the particular physical surroundings, shape or topographical conditions of the property which result in a particular hardship to the owner, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, if a strict letter of regulations were carried out?

The requested variance is based on the location and size of the existing building as it relates to the property setback along Longmeadow Drive. The Valley Honda Car Dealership needs to expand their car service reception area to not only work in a more efficient way, but more importantly to alleviate the traffic impact on Longmeadow Drive. The expansion on the car service reception will eliminate the need for cars to lineup in the parking lot and flow onto Longmeadow Drive. Because of the necessary addition, the required fire lane shifts to the west and impacts the existing parking. The requested setback will allow for traffic relief, provide adequate fire access, and maintain adequate parking.

2. Is the request variance based on conditions unique to the property and for which are generally not applicable to other property within the same zoning classifications?

The request is based on conditions unique to the property. Because of the surrounding features of the property being Ogden Avenue, Longmeadow Drive, and a water retention pond, the property is uniquely restricted and in need of the requested variance to maintain operability.

3. Is the requested variance based on an alleged difficulty or hardship that is cause by the ordinance and has not been created by any person presently having an interest in the property?

The requested variance is based on a difficulty to maximize productivity for the owner of the property while relieving traffic on the adjacent Longmeadow Drive right of way as a result to the existing site conditions and the property setback.

4. Is the requested variance in all other respects in conformance to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may in each instance be modified by the city pursuant to the recommendations of the Commission?

The requested variance is in conformance to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located in, in all other respects except the regulations of the current west property setback.

Chairman Pilmer said thanks. You've heard the Findings of Fact. Is there a motion?

Mr. Roberts said move to accept.

Mrs. Martinez said second.

Chairman Pilmer said so, let's first consider the Variance, and then we'll do the Findings of Fact. So, is there a motion on the Variance?

Mrs. Martinez said motion to approve the Variance.

Mr. Gonzales said second.

MOTION OF APPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Mrs. Martinez

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mr. Gonzales

AYES: Chairman Pilmer, Mr. Gonzales, Mr. Lee, Mrs. Martinez, Mrs. Owusu-Safo, Mr. Pickens, and Mr. Roberts.

NAYS:

Motion carried.

Chairman Pilmer said motion carries. And then, now we'll do the Findings of Fact. Staff read into the record 4 Findings of Fact. Are there any additions or corrections? Is there a motion to accept as written?

MOTION OF APPROVAL OF FINDINGS OF FACTS WAS MADE BY: Mr. Roberts

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mr. Lee

AYES: Chairman Pilmer, Mr. Gonzales, Mr. Lee, Mrs. Martinez, Mrs. Owusu-Safo, Mr. Pickens, and Mr. Roberts.

NAYS: 0

Chairman Pilmer said motion carries. The Variance will be approved.

Aye: 7 Chairperson Pilmer, At Large Lee, At Large Gonzales, At Large Owusu-Safo, At Large Pickens, At Large Roberts and At Large Martinez

Text of Legislative File 25-0007