

Item 2: Qualifying Statement (Section D)

I. Narrative About the Proposal

A. Building History

The Mary A. Todd School was completed in 1934 as an elementary school to replace a former school facility – the Oak Street School - which burned in 1927 and was named for Mary A. Todd, a former Oak Street School principal. The school was designed by the Chicago architectural firm of Joseph C. Llewellyn & Co. which designed other Aurora public schools, including the nearby Lincoln School. The Mary A. Todd School has been determined eligible by the Illinois SHPO for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.

B. Building Chronology

1852 Oak Street School

Built in 1852 as an elementary school and burned in 1927.

1934 Mary A. Todd School

Completed in 1934 as an elementary school to replace a former school facility – the Oak Street School - which burned in 1927 and was named for Mary A. Todd, a former Oak Street School principal. The school was designed by the Chicago architectural firm of Joseph C. Llewellyn & Co. which designed other Aurora public schools, including the nearby Lincoln School.

C. Proposed Building Use

The former Mary A. Todd School – labeled as Lot 1 Residential subdivision will be repurposed to 11 work force housing units. Work force housing being defined as housing built to serve families that are sitting in the middle between true affordable housing and luxury housing. Incomes for many of these families are insufficient, and they are currently dropping ever lower in the housing marketplace. They don't make enough to qualify for luxury housing, and they make too much to qualify for true affordable housing, which is another term for government-subsidized affordable housing. This creates a widening gap between those two spaces. This is caused in part by the fact that rents and housing costs are going up for the most part in all major urban metro markets, but wages are stagnant for this group. In essence, these families are stuck in the middle. In the workforce housing space, this project is looking to create a product that serves, as the name suggests, working families. The spaces will also include a community room and library/computer lab.

Approximately 3,500 square feet of the former Todd School – labeled as Lot 2 Retail Space will be occupied by VNA Health Care. VNA Health Care is a patient-centered, not-for-profit healthcare provider serving over 72,000 patients a year. At this location they will be serving the health care needs of the students at West Aurora School District and their families. The VNA care team members will work closely with the students and their families to achieve their best health - a place they can call home for their health needs. The VNA welcomes patients with Medicaid, Medicare, private insurance, or no insurance at all.

D. Square Footage Breakdowns of each Building

EXISTING BUILDING INFORMATION:

BUILDING STORIES:

BELOW GRADE = 1 FLOOR

ABOVE GRADE = 2 FLOORS

BUILDING SQUARE FOOTAGE:

TOTAL GROSS = 24,293 SF

BUILDING GROSS SQUARE

RESIDENTIAL = 19,279 SF

RETAIL (VNA) = 3,522 SF

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT (VNA) = 1,492 SF

SITE INFORMATION:

- APPROXIMATE AREA = 0.908 ACRES

TOTAL UNIT COUNTS:

TOTAL – 11 UNITS

PARKING COUNTS:

STANDARD PARKING PROVIDED = 30 SPACES

HANDICAP PARKING PROVIDED = 3 SPACES

II. This project addresses the following concerns:

a) The public health, safety, morals, comfort, and general welfare:

The current site sits within walking distance to the city's downtown core. This subject property operated as a school for over 100 years. Since being vacated there have been a few proposals for the property, but there has been nothing concrete and the building has sat vacant. The site sits ready for re-development and the existing building has tremendous historic significance for the community. This coupled with the proposed use of the property ***(Work Force Housing that will include the management team working to provide a full array of***

services for the residents, including working with local and regional service providers to provide services on-site and access to services. These services may include but are not limited to: a. Develop a comprehensive service plan for the residents to transition from workforce housing to market rate housing; b. Move towards collaborative community relationships internally and externally; c. Help provide access for job training; d. Provide referrals and access for other services such as - case management and health services and e. monthly activities for the residents and children in the development) demonstrate that the proposed project will bring much needed services and residences to the area and significantly enhance the public health, safety, morals, comfort and general welfare of the neighborhood and community.

b) The use and enjoyment of other property already established or permitted in the general area:

With the addition of VNA or other services offered by the school district on this property and the points made in a) above, the use and enjoyment of other property already established in the general area will be impacted in a positive way in that these residences will have services that are greatly lacking in the area

c) Property values within the neighborhood:

It is difficult to accurately predict what will happen to property values with the addition of any one development (several factors come into play for property values – i.e., the local, state and US economy, property tax rates, etc.) it is fair to state that this project should have a positive impact on property values within the neighborhood. It will clean up what was once a vacant building and will bring housing to an area that is in need.

d) The normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses established or permitted within their respective existing zoning districts

The proposed uses of this project bring much needed residences to the Neighborhood. As such the proposed project affects the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses established or permitted within their respective existing zoning districts in a positive manner.

e) and f) “Utilities, access roads, and drainage and/or other necessary facilities” and “Ingress and egress as it relates to traffic congestion in the public streets”

Proposed underground utilities include storm sewer, water, gas, electric, and telecommunications. These facilities will be constructed and connected to the public infrastructure present within the City right-of-way. All existing overhead

utilities in the City right-of-way are to remain. Drainage requirements will be met per City of Aurora and Kane County ordinances.

Access points to the site along Grand Ave and Spruce Street are existing to remain.

g) and h) “The applicable regulations of the zoning district in which the subject property is proposed to be or is located” and “A bullet point list of any variances, modifications or exceptions that you are seeking from the City’s Codes and Ordinances”

It is proposed that we would rezone the property to R5 with a Special Use Planned Development and a Final Plan for the changes to the site layout.

II. Anticipated Variances:

The following variances are anticipated, however, a need for additional variances may arise due to further coordination with the City of Aurora as the rezoning process continues through the preliminary process to final platting:

Todd:

1. Rezone property to R5 with Special Use Planned Development.

The former Mary A. Todd School – labeled as Lot 1 Residential subdivision will be repurposed to 11 work force housing units. In addition to work force housing approximately 3,500 square feet of the former Todd School – labeled as Lot 2 Retail Space will be occupied by VNA Health Care with approximately 1,492 SF space left for future development.

2. Allow the parking ratio of 1.5 spaces per unit.

Proposed development is geared towards workforce housing. Families at this income level tend to either not have any vehicle or have only one vehicle per family. Motor Vehicle ownership rates tend to increase with income. Therefore, the state makes it so important that public transportation is convenient to these work force housing developments. We are asking for the variance because this lower ratio will more than cover the needs of the development.

3. Allow provision of common laundry space in lieu of in-unit laundry.

Provision of in-unit laundry adds to the construction cost that indirectly inflates the rent and this being work force housing development it is very important to keep the construction cost low for the same reason listed in item #2 above.

4. Due to adaptive reuse nature of the project allow to deviate from providing balcony/patios to units.
This building is existing historical building, and any alterations will disturb the historical fabric of the building. Such alterations could jeopardize the historic character of the building.
5. Allow reduced landscape to 50% of what is required per Aurora Zoning Code. Open space available for landscaping is approximately 22% of total site. Since this is the existing condition, we believe providing 100% of landscape as per the zoning ordinance could require unnecessary site disturbance creating a situation where the tree/shrub roots could be interfering with the adjacent tree/shrub root coverage and in turn affect the growth.
6. Allow for single gas meter for each subdivision on the property in lieu of independent meter per dwelling unit for residential development.
The only equipment that uses gas in each dwelling unit is the gas fired furnace. The water heater services are paid by the developer. Single water heater located in the mechanical room in each building will serve all the units as well as the common areas. In such circumstances providing an independent meter for each dwelling unit does not prove to be economical and practical approach.
7. Allow for single main domestic water meter for each subdivision on the property in lieu of independently and privately metered service per dwelling unit for residential development.
Water services are paid by developer. Single water heater will be centrally located in the mechanical room with the hot water line to each dwelling unit creating a loop. In such scenario, providing an individual water meter for each unit does not necessarily measure the water usage by individual unit but measures the water circulating through the hot water loop. Hence providing an independent metered service to each unit does not prove to serve the purpose.