

Attn: Mr. Ryan Krzos
City Planner
City of Hopkins
1010 1st Street S, Hopkins, MN 55343

Applicant: Alatus LLC
Sub-Applicants: Artesa/Lifestyle Communities, Ron Clark Construction & Design
Application: 325 Blake Road N Amendment to PUD / Re-Zoning / Planned-Community Re-Introduction

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The 325 Blake Road N project (the “Project”) is the redevelopment of 16.84 acres of infill suburban land located at the intersection of the Cedar Creek Regional Trail, as maintained by Three Rivers District, and Blake Road N, a recently enhanced major north-south arterial roadway in Hopkins, MN. Alatus LLC and its assigns (“Alatus”) are proposing a three-phased development proposal consisting of 823 housing units of different designations, 17,960 sqft of retail and commercial use pads, and public and private realm infrastructure tied into the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (“MCWD”) revitalization of the Minnehaha Creek, just to the northeast of what will be the parcels ultimately owned by Alatus. The project will serve as a tremendous complement to the Trilogy Real Estate Group project located at the intersection of Blake Road N and Excelsior Boulevard and will also seek to enhance the existing and pending infrastructure improvements already made by the City of Hopkins, Three Rivers District, and the Met Council as well as the pending infrastructure improvements that MCWD has committed to making in the regional stormwater facilities. Furthermore, the project has been designed in close compliance with numerous planning efforts made to date including: *East Hopkins Land Use & Market Study* (2003), *Blake Road Corridor Small Area Plan* (2009), *Blake Road Corridor Study* (2015) and the *Blake Road LRT Station Area Development Guidelines* (2015).

STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM

The development team has approached this site as a unique opportunity to create a water-centric development that capitalizes on the site’s adjacency to Minnehaha Creek, the Blake Road LRT station, and the Cedar Lake Regional Trail. The proposed 325 Blake Road N development project will transform the former cold storage site with a rich variety of green open spaces and streetscape design improvements. Proposed open spaces and streetscapes are designed to not only provide safe and convenient connections to the creek, regional trail, and LRT station, but to create a rich outdoor environment for future residents, visitors, and community members.

Gateway Plaza and Cascade

Central to the open space network are a series of plazas, water features, stormwater treatment features, and landscaped gathering areas, reaching from the project entry at Blake Road N to the Central Plaza located next to future restaurants and the Minnehaha Creek Greenway. The primary vehicular and pedestrian entry at Blake Road N features gateway plazas on either side of the entry road. These will include water features, special paving, lighting, and seating areas. The central water cascade feature, located adjacent to the entry road/parkway, provides a water channel designed to manage stormwater. Stormwater will be pumped from the future MCWD stormwater pond to the west-end of the water cascade feature, providing the ability to create a water feature that not only provides an amenity for the development, but also filters and delivers cleaner stormwater back into the pond. It is designed to provide places for people to gather and stroll along the waterway. Native plant materials, special paving and lighting, site furnishings, and native stone elements will be incorporated to create an environment that will reconnect people to local and regional landscape experiences.

Central Plaza and Greenway Commons

The plazas and restaurant deck spaces, located at the east-end of the water cascade, will provide outdoor gathering spaces and connect people to the future stormwater pond adjacent to Minnehaha Creek. The Central Plaza, located to the west of the future restaurants, will feature a large area for people to gather, outdoor seating, plantings, and a pergola. It is designed to provide places for people to interact with the restaurants and the water cascade. The pocket plaza between the future restaurants and deck spaces outside the restaurants will provide opportunities for outdoor dining, and the ability to engage with and view the pond and creek. The Central Plaza and Greenway Commons will feature special paving, native plantings, native stone elements, and site lighting to create an inviting outdoor environment.

Blake Road Plaza

The plaza area located to the west of Crescendo Apartments provides ideal opportunities to connect the proposed development to the Cedar Lake Regional Trail and the future Blake Road LRT station while also providing an outdoor gathering area and dining spaces adjacent to the ground-level restaurant in the building. The plaza design incorporates a significant public art opportunity at the corner of Blake Road N and the Cedar Lake Trail, a designated plaza space for bike parking adjacent to the regional trail, special paving, native plantings, seat walls, site lighting, and site furnishings. Building loading and utility areas are screened from the plaza with decorative fencing.

Woonerf

The drive located between Crescendo Apartments and Duet Apartments is designed to be a pedestrian-oriented woonerf while providing important vehicular access to Duet Apartments and fire access to both buildings. The driving surface will incorporate decorative permeable pavers. Parallel parking spaces are provided along the west side of the drive. While the entire woonerf is designed to be pedestrian-friendly, sidewalks are provided along the west-side of the driving/parking surface and on the eastside of the drive at the north end/entry to Duet Apartments. At the south-end of the woonerf, pedestrian and bike facilities will connect people to the Cedar Lake Trail. A pergola at this terminus provides a focal element drawing people to the trail. Materials will include permeable paving, native plantings, site lighting, pavement markings, wayfinding, and bollards.

North/South Pedestrian Spine

The site is designed to provide a pedestrian walkway between Chorus Apartments (Building A), Artessa (Building B), and Blake Road Townhomes (3-Story Townhomes). Artessa and the East Hopkins Townhomes will connect to a central walkway with front stoops/walks from individual residential units. The central walkway, running north/south, is designed to include permeable pavers and stormwater treatment planting areas to provide this area with stormwater infiltration. Native plantings include shade and ornamental trees, shrubs, and groundcovers. Pedestrian-scaled site lighting and wayfinding will provide a safe and convenient pedestrian environment.

East/West Pedestrian Spine and Courtyard

An east/west pedestrian walkway is located between Chorus Apartments and Artessa and the Blake Road Townhomes, connecting people from Blake Road N to the Minnehaha Creek Greenway. The corridor is anchored at the west-end with a small plaza and public art to invite people off Blake Road N. At the center of the corridor a courtyard is provided, featuring a small gathering area with a lawn area and patio with pergola. Chorus Apartments and Artessa, as well as the Blake Road Townhomes will connect to the central walkway with front stoops/walks from individual residential units. The walkway, running east/west, is designed to include permeable pavers and stormwater treatment planting areas to provide stormwater infiltration. Cutouts for site furnishings/seating are provided along the central walkway.

Native plantings include shade and ornamental trees, shrubs, and groundcovers. Pedestrian-scaled site lighting and wayfinding will provide a safe and convenient pedestrian environment.

Cedar Lake Trail Connections

Three opportunities to connect with the Cedar Lake Regional Trail are provided – at the Blake Road Plaza, the Woonerf, and promenade that connects the Central Plaza and Greenway Commons to the future trailhead designed by MCWD. The goal is to provide safe and convenient connections to the regional trail from the proposed development, encouraging people to walk, bicycle, and utilize public transit, and to invite trail users to visit the amenities provided within the development at 325 Blake Road N.

Streetscapes

The primary roadway through the site is designed as a tree-lined parkway, delivering people from Blake Road N through the site to development parcels, parking garages, open spaces, the Minnehaha Creek Greenway, and eventually connecting to Lake Street. The parkway will include turf boulevards, street tree plantings, pedestrian-scaled street lighting, site furnishings, and wayfinding signage. On-street parallel parking and detached sidewalks will provide a safe environment for pedestrians. Raised benches are designed to provide traffic calming measures and safe pedestrian crossings where pedestrian spines cross the parkway. ADA compliant concrete sidewalks will be provided for pedestrian movement throughout the site, providing connections to open spaces and trails for everyone.

BUILDING DESIGN

Blake Road creates an exciting, high density, mixed-use development oriented towards pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation. It offers not only its' residents, but the neighborhood and the regional network in its entirety, a place to live, work and play. Chorus Apartments and Artessa both offer one or two levels of mostly below grade podium parking and five stories of wood frame residential construction above those.

Crescendo Apartments, comprises both a concrete 15-story residential structure and a 5-story wood frame residential building wrapping around a 6-level concrete parking structure. Of note, the concrete mid-rise will offer amenities for the whole development such as a 6,168 sqft gym, lounge, and remote work facilities on top of a publicly accessed roof deck bar with outstanding citywide views in three directions.

Duet Apartments is to be constructed as a wood-frame building, 5-story Type III podium top above a 3-story parking structure. The project seeks to minimize the externalities created by surface level parking and maximize the density and pedestrian configurations for an urban experience in an otherwise suburban location. The site plan has significant design characteristics that will make public transportation, multi-modal sharing, and access to the Green Line Blake Road LRT Station a comfortable and intuitive experience to encourage alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles and corresponding trips. This could only be done with the tremendous infrastructure improvements that the City of Hopkins, Three Rivers District, and Met Council have already invested in.

The proposed townhome neighborhood, Blake Road Townhomes, will have 32 three-story townhomes, the site will have access to walking trails along a newly constructed creek bed, wetland complex and nature areas being created by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. Each home will have a 2-car garage accessed off the rear alley and will have guest parking on the adjacent public street as well as in the adjacent Duet Apartments parking ramp. The project also proposes another set of amenities open to the public with restaurant retail pads open to the creek and to a newly developed pond and water cascade area via generous outdoor decks with direct access to the adjacent waterflows.

Architecturally, the project proposes a contemporary but timeless architecture. Designed for human scale and with the pedestrian at top of mind, the Project offers a distinct base on all buildings including ground

floor access to many of its units, and a clear top level with distinct materials and color palette. While all buildings follow this format, each one has its own character and individually unique characteristics. The design looks for individuality without sacrificing contextuality within the overall development project.

All dwelling units will support the latest in technology while striving to provide a sustainable living experience. Housing units, common areas, and amenities incorporate high-efficiency and Wi-Fi controlled appliances, low-flow water fixtures, low-VOC paints, building-wide recycling practices and solar panels for electricity generation. Acoustical performance between units will exceed Building Code requirements for resident comfort and privacy. Select buildings within the Project will also seek LEED Certification and commissioning.

Exterior materials used are a combination of brick, cast-stone, metal and glazing to ensure durability and quality for a generational development asset. Conceptually, lower levels use a combination of brick and cast stone as primary materials at the base, corners, building entries and garage entries. Metal, in various forms, is used mostly on upper levels and above the pedestrian scale that will be encountered. Intermediate levels are a combination of these two materials mentioned plus different cementitious panel solutions with multiple façade aesthetic options. An enhanced and energy efficient HVAC variable refrigerant flow (VRF) system ensures that building facades are uninterrupted, rather than the common solution that presents louvers into the façade design for a sometimes-unsightly exterior aesthetic.

TRANSPORTATION – Parking and Traffic Generation

A comprehensive traffic study has been completed for the project as an accompanying report for the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (“EAW”). It should be noted that the most substantial deviation from the current EAW report and is the total amount of parking spaces offered in the development. The current Site Plan proposes 1,314 total parking spaces allocated amongst residential, retail, and commercial uses. The EAW contemplates 1,143 with a majority of the additional parking spaces in the current Site Plan being realized in Duet Apartments for public retail uses and development visitors. While the total parking stall count has increased, the traffic analysis considered a larger unit count and intensity of up to 875 residential units for the entire Site Plan when Level of Service iterations were computed. For comparison, the current Site Plan has only 823 residential units across all proposed buildings. It should also be noted that the phasing described in the Proposed Site Trip Generation is slightly different than the material in this application, however it does not impact the trip generation for either the 2025 Horizon Year of the 2040 Horizon Year.

DEVELOPMENT PHASING

Commencement of construction of the various phases is dependent upon market conditions now and into the future as well as other external factors relating to the various entities and stakeholders that will be working through the redevelopment effort for the site located at 325 Blake Road N. Subject to those conditions, the development team currently anticipates the following construction start dates for the various phases:

- Phase 1A: Chorus Apartments – Completed – December 2023
- Phase 1B: Q2 2024 – Spine Road, Public Infrastructure, Stormwater Treatment, Artessa, Duet Apartments, Blake Road Townhomes
- Phase II: Latest Q4 2024 – Crescendo Apartments

CITY APPLICATIONS/APPROVALS

- Amendment to PUD – 325 Blake Road N Development
- Site Plan Approval(s) for Artessa (Building B), Crescendo Apartments (Building C), and Duet Apartments (Building D)
- Amended Preliminary & Final Plat – Outlot C (Blake Road Townhomes)

PROPOSED DEVIATIONS FROM RX-TOD ZONING STANDARD

Please refer to the Applicant's Amendment to PUD / Re-Zoning Application – Exhibit A for detail surrounding deviations from the RX-TOD zoning standards.

SUPPORT FOR PROPOSED DEVIATIONS

The applicant believes the development, as proposed with deviations from zoning code ordinances, is a high-quality proposal for the City of Hopkins and aligns with overall Comprehensive Plan goals. To ensure a high-quality development, the applicant is proposing the following enhancements in support of the proposed deviations:

Site Access Improvements

A new network of publicly accessible streets and pedestrian corridors divides the site into pedestrian-scaled, walkable quadrants and connects the surrounding context to the Blake Road LRT station, Minnehaha Creek, and the Cedar Lake Regional Trail. The new tree-lined parkway becomes the crucial spine from which stems primary building entries, active uses, and a series of common open spaces. The East/West and North/South pedestrian spines further break down proposed development sites, improving pedestrian circulation and creating a tree-lined pedestrian ways and walk-up residential units.

As described under the 'Streetscape and Public Realm' section, the project vision includes extensive pedestrian improvements for the area, including sidewalk connections through the site that do not exist today. The street trees, parallel parking zones, and raised pedestrian crossings provided along the parkway will help to calm traffic and provide a safer environment for people, bikers, and drivers. The pedestrian zone along the proposed parkway supports public street amenities including benches, bike racks, street lighting and planting beds.

Building setbacks provide comfortable buffer zones between street right-of-way and the building edges. The proposed setbacks offer a balance of enough distance to create green zones without compromising the more urban goals of transit-oriented development. This balance of ample though not excessive setbacks prioritizes pedestrians and human activity in and around the site.

Exceeding Stormwater Standards

The applicant is exceeding the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District and City of Hopkins' minimum standards for stormwater treatment. Runoff from this site will be conveyed to the proposed 325 Blake Road N regional stormwater treatment facilities via a combination of proposed storm sewer, the Lake Street Diversion and recirculation of pumped stormwater through the Cascade. The previous Cold Storage facility had large impervious area of both rooftop and pavement that flowed untreated to Minnehaha Creek. The proposed project reduces the amount of impervious surface and provides rate control, treatment, and volume control through the use of permeable pavements, filtration, infiltration, underground storage and cycling of pumped stormwater through the Cascade to provide biofiltration, infiltration and storage. The pumped stormwater will flow through Cascade in a series of pools and riffles and end in a waterfall into the upper cell of the MCWD pond, then flow over a weir to the lower cell, where the water will be drawn up at the Pavilion, screened of floatables and pumped through a forcemain to the west-end of the Cascade to start the cycle over. The pump will have a base flow to keep water flowing through the Cascade continuously, then will be throttled up during stormwater events to engage the upper portions of the Cascade storage and overflow into the underground stormwater chambers under the skating plaza. This pumped system allows for water level control and continuous infiltration that is not feasible with a traditional gravity system.

This is a substantial improvement from the Cold Storage site condition that was primarily impervious surface with stormwater that ran off without any treatment or attenuation. A total existing (previous)

assumed impervious for the site was 10.57 acres, the proposed impervious is 9.75 acres, a reduction of 0.82 acres.

The required infiltration of the 1-inch event requires volume control of 0.8125 acre-ft. The infiltration systems as proposed provide 0.689 acre-ft of volume at a conservative 0.45 in/hr infiltration rate. The soil infiltration rates will be confirmed and adjusted to actual rates using Double Ring Infiltrometer testing. The remaining 0.124 acre-ft will come from the Cascade and the pumping system, the proposed design displaces approximately 12,000 cf of treatment volume = 0.275 acre-ft.

MCWD requires proposed runoff rates to be equal to or less than the existing condition. Total proposed site runoff rates will be reduced significantly, by approximately 25% in all rainfall events from the existing condition. The system also takes on offsite drainage from the Cedar Lake Trail that would otherwise go untreated.

The majority of the new/reconstructed site area will be dedicated to roof drainage, which is assumed cleaner than pavement runoff. This will further reduce pollutant loadings discharged from the site.

Enhanced Landscaping

The deviations in setbacks offer yards that are both deep enough for landscaping and green space and reasonable for creating a "street wall" for the pedestrian experience. The deviations also help to implement a comprehensive plan goal of creating a 'positive relationship to the street' by proposing appropriate setbacks for the residential density guided by the 2040 Comprehensive Plan (75-150 units per acre within ¼ mile of an LRT station platform).

High Quality Common Open Spaces

As previously mentioned under 'Streetscape and Public Realm,' the master plan includes a series of high quality common open spaces for residents, visitors, and community members to gather, recreate, and connect to nature. They also provide important opportunities to reduce urban heat island effect and stormwater runoff, while improving water and air quality.

Multi-Modal Opportunities

With immediate access to the Minnehaha Creek Greenway, Cedar Lake Trail, and Blake Road LRT station, proposed pedestrian and bike facilities will promote the use of multiple modes of transportation for residents and patrons to and from the project site. The proposed project includes additional bike facilities such as bike pump/repair stations, trail maps, seating for trail users and wayfinding signage.

Support of Comprehensive Plan Goals

The project supports and further advances a number of goals outlined in the City's 2040 Cultivate Hopkins Plan. See summary of these goals below within the PUD statement section.

AMENDED PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT

Per Hopkins, Minnesota, Code of Ordinances, Part III – Land Development, Chapter 102 – Planning and Zoning, Article XX. – Planned Unit Development, Sec. 102-680, (e), (6), the applicant is responding to the following:

- A written statement generally describing the proposed PUD and the market which it is intended to serve and its demand showing its relationship to the city's comprehensive plan and how the proposed PUD is to be designed, arranged, and operated in order to permit the development and use of neighboring property in accordance with the applicable regulations of the city.

Market

Project goals and public benefits envisioned for the development site at 325 Blake Road N are as follows:

- Environmentally and Fiscally Sustainable – the project will not create negative environmental externalities while also fiscally supporting itself due to dense, usable infrastructure with a significant tax base to benefit projects outside of the MCWD development project for years to come. The process of ensuring that the project makes the space better than it was before will culminate with a state-of-the-art regional stormwater infrastructure installment in and around a dense, vibrant housing development, that will add vitality to the already vulnerable Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.
- Spectrums of Housing & Affordability – Market-rate, mixed-income, and low-income rental opportunities partnered with townhome living arrangements in for-sale product mean that a diverse demographic and socioeconomic population can live here and enjoy the same quality of life. The concept of the “15 Minute City” will further enhance affordability for residents, nearby residents, and the public alike by reducing dependency via the tax that is vehicular ownership, maintenance, etc. thanks in no small part to multi-modal connections with the Green Line LRT and Cedar Lake Regional Trail bike and pedestrian corridor. The Alatus has also included a large fitness, wellness, and remote work facility to be shared by all residents of the community to facilitate the creation of a true neighborhood center.
- Progressive Sub-Urban Design Concepts – High quality housing, retail, and infrastructure improvements, along with a pedestrian and bicycle first infrastructure scope, that will be a baseline benchmark for future development projects in the city of Hopkins and in the larger Twin Cities region, at a minimum.
- Inclusivity of Natural and Man-Made Resources for All – Too often natural resources in urban corridors are only eligible to the privileged able to afford a “lake” or “waterfront” private parcel. By inviting residents of Hopkins to enjoy the substantial investment from the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District into this regional corridor, this natural resource will remain a public attraction and amenity for all to enjoy for years to come in a multitude of ways.

The nature of the proposed development is concentrated on creating a spectrum of opportunities for community members of all different backgrounds. The proposed housing mix will include the creation of a 15-story mid-rise for views unlike any seen in the west-suburban market, interspersed with low-rise market-rate developments, a low-income housing tax credit property with 30, 50% and 60% AMI rental and income restrictions, and for-sale townhome / condominium offerings. The Site Plan estimates the following unit types and counts for housing options on the development site:

- **Chorus Apartments / Building A (COMPLETED):** Applicant – Alatus LLC; 5-story, 116-unit low-income housing tax credit development (30%, 50% and 60% AMI rental and income restricted units) with 75 underground parking stalls
- **Artessa / Building B (PROPOSED):** Applicant – Alatus LLC; Sub-Applicant – Artessa / Lifestyle Communities; 5-story, 65-unit for-sale senior co-op development with 96 underground parking stalls
- **Crescendo Apartments / Building C (PROPOSED):** Applicant – Alatus LLC; 15-story, 231-unit multi-family market-rate Type I development of which up to 15% of the units will be designated hotel units for shorter-term stays complete with elevated hotel and hospitality services; 5-story, 164-unit multi-family market-rate development; 8,960 sqft of retail; 602 above-ground parking stalls

- **Duet Apartments / Building D (PROPOSED):** Applicant – Alatus LLC; 8-story, 215-unit multi-family mixed-income development (43 of the units to be designated at 60% AMI) with 446 above-ground parking stalls; some stalls available for flexible commercial space parking
- **Blake Road Townhomes / Townhome (PROPOSED)s:** Applicant – Alatus LLC; Sub-Applicant – Ron Clark Construction & Design; 3-story, 32 townhome units with variable pricing; 64 attached garage parking stalls

The commercial space envisioned for the property, currently at approximately 17,960 sqft, is envisioned to be community oriented with an eye toward attracting the existing residents of Hopkins that enjoy the density of their Downtown Hopkins and also for the bike or pedestrian commuter stopping through on the public infrastructure tied into the backbone of the project. The impact of the Green Line Southwest LRT will be compounded with the proposed development improvements.

The Project is expected to have a mixture of locally sourced restaurateurs, brewery, and distillery opportunities with indoor and outdoor experiences for optimization of space in both the summer and winter, as well as more affordable commercial space leasing options for the relocation of existing Hopkins community retail locations that are having to make decisions about their upcoming leasehold interests.

Alatus will deliver an incredibly important development node along Blake Road N, as envisioned in numerous planning documents, including the East Hopkins Land Use & Market Study, Blake Road Corridor Study and the Blake Road LRT Station Area Development Guidelines. This project will be an important link between the LRT station and the Minnehaha Creek Greenway and continued momentum for development in the area. Many of the development recommendations outlined in the station area development guidelines are being realized within the proposed project. Here are just a few of the stated goals that will be supported by the project’s site and building design:

Site Design:

- Create a connected, walkable, mixed-use, sustainable neighborhood, with a pedestrian-oriented and human-scaled streetscape, and a vibrant public realm.
- Improve safety and security with strategies such as “eyes on the street”, improved lighting, and other practices such as CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).
- Support transit-oriented development by providing site design features that enhance multi-modal access, provide bicycle accommodations (racks, lockers, trail maps, signage, etc.) for businesses and residents, and improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to the future Blake Road LRT Station and the Cedar Lake Regional Trail.
- Provide high quality common open spaces that offer places for residents, visitors, and community members to gather, recreate, and connect with nature.
- Utilize landscaping and streetscape amenities to create a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Limit surface parking with new development by incorporating underground or structured parking.

Neighborhood Diversity:

- Provide for a range of housing types and price points to meet the needs of people in all stages of life, with the design flexibility to accommodate changing lifestyle needs.
- Utilize universal design principles that can respond to changing demographic needs and anticipate in innovative ways to address the dynamic and changing needs of residents.
- Strengthen the vitality of the area through increased density and a mix of retail/restaurant and residential uses.
- Promote high-quality design.
- Enhance a sustainable neighborhood by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy.

- Create opportunities to live, work, learn, play – the spectrum of elements for a healthy community.
- Engage with diverse communities to develop opportunities for public art, interpretation, and wayfinding.

Sustainable Design:

- Improve water and environmental quality.
- Incorporate sustainable development practices into new construction projects.
- Utilize native plantings to conserve water use and reduce maintenance needs.
- Incorporate best practices for stormwater management.

Neighborhood vitality and livability:

- Multi-family housing amenities that provide work-from-home opportunities and shared spaces for larger gatherings.
- Medium to high-density residential that preserve green space and enhance street-level amenities.
- Ground level uses that enhance the public realm.
- Enhanced connections to Minnehaha Creek.
- High quality open spaces that provide places for outdoor gathering, recreation, and healthy living.
- Increased opportunities for residents of all ages to live and work in the area.
- The potential for commercial uses that enhance rather than compete with downtown Hopkins Mainstreet vitality.
- Potential to support small cultural businesses that serve the community.
- Convenience services (e.g. pet maintenance areas, bike repair, etc.).
- Welcome developers and businesses that operate with equity principles of hiring and wages.

Comprehensive Plan

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update – Cultivate Hopkins – guides this property as Activity Center. Activity Centers surround and support the planned Blake Road and Shady Oak light rail stations along the Southwest LRT Green Line Extension. These areas will include moderate density to high-density mixed-use development designed to complement and enhance the existing development pattern in these areas and support the public investment in transit. The Activity Center areas are expected to experience significant reinvestment and redevelopment to absorb a substantial portion of the city’s anticipated future growth.

Development in the Activity Center areas is expected to be medium to larger scale neighborhood and regional uses with an approximate mix of 75% residential and 25% commercial. Densities in these areas will typically range from 20-60 units per acre, with 75-150 units per acre within ¼ mile of an LRT station platform.

The proposed project illustrates a residential density that is consistent with the Activity Center guidance, but it falls short of the 2040 guidance for commercial space percentage. Crescendo Apartments will provide 6,660 sqft of retail/restaurant space fronting Blake Road N, 6,168 sqft of health club space shared by the residents, 2,800 sqft of co-working space shared by the residents, and 2,300 sqft of roof top bar with public access. The free-standing restaurants located near the MCWD stormwater pond will provide 9,000 sq ft of retail/restaurant space open to the public. The applicant believes strongly that multi-family residential is highest and best use for this location. The constraints of the site are prohibitive to adding traditional retail space to the development.

The Applicant is responding to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan with an overall development project that supports the following stated goals:

- Encourage transit-oriented development (development that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and a broader mix of uses at densities that support transit) in areas with high quality transit service, especially within a quarter mile of light rail stations or high-frequency bus routes.
- Plan for appropriate amenities, high-quality design, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and open space in high growth areas, particularly in the Neighborhood Center, Activity Center, and Downtown Center future land use categories or other areas in close proximity to transit.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the community, particularly in the Centers future land use categories as defined and designated in the comprehensive plan or other areas in close proximity to transit.
- Engage the community to explore how to increase the mix of housing types near transit corridors, parks, and the Centers future land use categories as defined and designated in the comprehensive plan.
- Encourage all new projects to have a positive relationship to the street by orienting main entrances to the front of the property, connecting the front door to the sidewalk, and reducing parking between the building and the street as much as possible.
- Promote the development of high-density transit oriented mixed-use development around planned Green Line Extension light rail stations.
- Establish strong identities for emerging Centers and Districts as defined and designated in the comprehensive plan. Their identities should evolve from unique features of the area.
- Design streets, parks, and open spaces to encourage pedestrian activity, public gathering, and art in its various forms.
- Encourage creative placemaking throughout the city, particularly in the Neighborhood Center, Activity Center, and Downtown Center future land use categories as defined and designated in the comprehensive plan.
- Support community events hosted in public parks and facilities to help foster a sense of community and celebrate Hopkins' distinct character and diversity.
- Use urban design elements, building massing, land use strategies, and public realm improvements to provide appropriate transitions between developments – particularly those of different scale and intensity.
- Encourage pedestrian and bicycle continuity and connection between established and developing areas of the city.
- Carefully manage vehicular access and parking to minimize its impact on individual developments, the public realm, and the overall fabric of the community.
- Encourage all development projects to be durable and environmentally responsible.
- Encourage all developments to incorporate common spaces (interior or exterior) that help enhance the public realm and sense of community.
- Assist adults and kids in maintaining healthy, active lifestyles by providing a range of recreational facilities and programming that are accessible and convenient.
- Support development in areas that are or will be served by transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure to reduce dependency on automobiles for travel.
- Support greener development patterns through stormwater management and landscaping of sites.
- Encourage the use of drought-tolerant plantings, promote irrigation systems that utilize reclaimed water, and incentivize systems that collect rainwater for reuse.
- Implement and encourage the use of stormwater Best Management Practices to reduce the speed and impact of stormwater runoff.
- Incorporate permeable paving, bioretention cells, buffer strips, swales, and other strategies that address stormwater runoff, where applicable.

- Support a reduction in vehicle emissions by improving travel efficiency and promoting non-auto modes of transportation, including walking, biking, and public transportation alternatives.

Designed, Arranged, Operated

This project will not impede improvement of surrounding properties, and the amended PUD is designed and arranged to permit the orderly development and use of neighboring property in accordance with the applicable regulations of the City. The organization of the parcels within this development is specifically intended to create a walkable, bikeable, transit-oriented urban community in a suburban location. The height and associated density of the project will provide housing to help meet City goals for increasing housing options in Hopkins along transit corridors. The Project has intentionally focused density on the southwest portion of 325 Blake Road N closest to the Southwest Green Line LRT station at Blake Road N. The proposed housing density as one travels to the northeast tapers to better align with surrounding densities in existing neighborhoods and to minimize the visual impacts on the Minnehaha Creek Greenway. The proposed residential and retail uses are compatible with and will enhance the existing character of the Blake Road Station area. High-density, mixed-use redevelopment of this site is consistent with City goals and, by being responsive to the land use policies for this area, the project will promote the orderly development of the Blake Road Corridor.

The contemporary, high-quality building design will be an attractive addition to the built environment along Blake Road N and the Cedar Lake Regional Trail and the mix of uses will improve and activate the pedestrian realm along Blake Road N but also provide an improved experience for pedestrians wishing to access the Minnehaha Creek Greenway. The proposed development will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort or general welfare, and approving the PUD will allow a transit-oriented, mixed-use development that is consistent with the goals of City's comprehensive plan. Redevelopment of this once industrial site will have a positive effect on the health, safety and vitality of the area. The new construction will comply with all building, health, and site development codes.