

**FINDINGS OF FACT AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST**

July 9, 2026

RE: Application # 26-0009, Application for Planned Development

PETITIONER: Five Thirty One Partners, LLC

APPLICATION: Application for Planned Development to Construct a Mixed-Use Development of a 72-Unit Residential Building with Approx. 3200 Sq. Ft. of Ground-Floor Commercial Space at 7612-7620 Madison Street, 11 Ashland Avenue, and 10 Lathrop Avenue ("Property")

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION: On June 24, 2026, the Petitioner submitted an application to the Village of River Forest to construct a mixed-use residential building on the Property, (the "Application"). The Application requests permission to construct a mixed-use development of a 72-unit residential building with approximately 3200 square feet of ground-floor commercial space at the site. The Application was received and processed by Village staff in accordance with the Village of River Forest Village Code.

BACKGROUND: Applicant was selected by the Village through a competitive evaluation process to develop this Village owned parcel.

The Property is located within the C2 Commercial district as well as the R2 Residential district. The Property is surrounded by commercial uses on the east and west sides, as well as residential uses to the north.

APPLICATION: The Applicant seeks the following eleven (11) site development allowances under the Village of River Forest Zoning Ordinance ("Zoning Ordinance"):

	Zoning Ordinance	Proposed	SDA Requested
Lane Area per unit (Minimum)	2,800 sq ft / unit	539.96 sq ft / unit	2,260 sq ft / unit
Floor Area Ratio (FAR) (Maximum)	2.75	4.6	1.85 FAR
Height (Maximum)	30 ft	87 ft	57 ft
Parking (Residential & Commercial)	204	87	117 spaces
Rear Yard (Alley)	26 ft 8 in	6 ft	20 ft 8 in
Side Yard (North)	5 ft	0	5 ft
Screening Width (side – north)	7 ft	4 ft 6 in	2 ft 6 in
Lot Coverage (Maximum)	30%	79.1%	49.1%
Floor Area Ratio (FAR) (Maximum)	.4	.79	.39
Rear Yard (Alley)	27 ft 1 in	1 ft 6 in	25 ft 7 in
Side Yard (North)	5 ft	0	5 ft

PUBLIC HEARING: At the public hearing before the Development Review Board ("DRB") held on July 9, 2026 ("Hearing"), representatives of Petitioner presented the Application. At the duly and properly noticed Hearing, testimony was taken and heard by the DRB on the Application. All persons testifying during the Hearing were sworn prior to giving testimony. All persons wishing to

be heard were allowed to engage in cross-examination of the witnesses and provide testimony on their own behalf.

Following a presentation by Petitioner, reports by various Village staff, and public comment from all who wished to speak, if any, the Development Review Board (“DRB”) voted, 7 to 0, to recommend approval of the Application to the Village President and Board of Trustees, with the conditions set forth below (together the “Conditions”).

FINDINGS: The DRB, based upon the evidence presented at the Hearing, and pursuant to Section 10-19-3 of the Village Code, makes the following Findings regarding the Application:

A. The proposed use or combination of uses is consistent with the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan.

The Property is located in the C2 Commercial district as well as the R2 Residential district. Overall, the Project is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the DRB finds that the construction of the Project will meet the Comprehensive Plan’s identification of the Property as a Primary Redevelopment Opportunity, as well as the Comprehensive Plan’s goal of improving the existing housing stock in the Village. The Project is also appropriate under the Comprehensive Plan because it is anticipated that it will not have a negative impact on the residential neighborhood in which the Property is located. The DRB finds that this standard has been met.

B. The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the use or combination of uses will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or general welfare of the residents of the Village.

Testimony at the Hearing from the Petitioner and Village staff, including representatives from the Village’s Public Works Department, demonstrated that the Project would not result in any condition that would be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or general welfare of residents in the Village, so long as the Conditions are met. The DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

C. The proposed use or combination of uses will not diminish the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity for those uses or combination of uses which are permitted by this zoning title.

The testimony showed that the Project will not diminish the use or enjoyment of properties in its vicinity, as the Project is designed to minimize light and other impacts to neighboring properties. Testimony established that the Project had been redesigned in order to reduce impacts on neighboring properties in response to concerns raised. For these reasons, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

D. The establishment of the proposed use or combination of uses will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding properties for uses or combination of uses otherwise permitted in the zoning district.

The proposed improvements in the Application are consistent with other improvements and uses in the C2 Commercial District/R2 Residential District. Testimony established that the Project is being developed in a consistent and harmonious manner as a development across the street which the Petitioner also undertook. The Project would not impede the adjacent residential uses and would enhance housing stock available for Village residents. The surrounding neighborhood

has been fully developed for a number of years. Based on this evidence, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

E. The proposed use or combination of uses will not diminish property values in the vicinity.

Evidence presented by the Petitioner suggested that there would be no diminishment of property values in the vicinity of the Project, and no testimony or evidence to the contrary was presented to the DRB. For this reason, and for the additional reasons stated above in Standard C., the DRB finds that this standard has been met.

F. Adequate utilities, road access, drainage, police and fire service and other necessary facilities already exist or will be provided to serve the proposed use or combination of uses.

There are adequate utilities, road access, drainage, police and fire services, and other Village services, to serve the improvements set forth in the Application. No evidence was presented suggesting or establishing that the Project would be hampered by a lack of utilities, road access, drainage, police or fire services. The DRB finds that this standard has been met.

G. Adequate measures already exist or will be taken to provide ingress and egress to the proposed use or combination of uses in a manner that minimizes traffic congestion in the public streets.

Given the nature of the proposed use, no material traffic impacts are expected due to the Project. The Application included not only an extensive traffic study, but a second opinion by an independent Engineer, and each found, as established by testimony, that the Project would be adequately served by the designed ingress and egress routes and surrounding streets. The DRB finds that this standard has been met.

H. The proposed use or combination of uses will be consistent with the character of the Village.

The Project is consistent with the character of the Village, the Village's desire for improvements and investment in mixed-use developments. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

I. Development of the proposed use or combination of uses will not materially affect a known historical or cultural resource.

There are no historic or cultural resources affected by the Project. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met.

J. The design of the proposed use or combination of uses considers the relationship of the proposed use or combination of uses to the surrounding area and minimizes adverse effects, including visual impacts of the proposed use or combination of uses on adjacent property.

The Project is a use that is compatible with surrounding uses in this C2 Commercial/R2 Residential Area. The Project combines properties on the borderline of commercial and residential zoning districts into a mixed-use multi-function development. The design of the Project is complementary to the surrounding area as a whole, so long as the Conditions are met. There

was no evidence or testimony presented suggesting that adverse effects would result if the Project was built and put into use. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

K. The design of the proposed use or combination of uses promotes a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment and individuals with disabilities.

The pedestrian environment would be enhanced by the addition of the Project. No testimony was presented at the Hearing demonstrating that there was any risk to pedestrians based upon the improvements requested for approval in the Application. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

L. The applicant has the financial and technical capacity to complete the proposed use or combination of uses and has made adequate provisions to guarantee the development of any buffers, landscaping, public open space, and other improvements associated with the proposed use or combination of uses.

Evidence presented in the Application demonstrates Petitioner's financial and technical ability to complete the Project. There are no apparent adverse impacts on buffers, landscaping, public open space, and other improvements associated with the Application. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met.

M. The proposed use or combination of uses is economically viable and does not pose a current or potential burden upon the services, tax base, or other economic factors that affect the financial operations of the Village, except to the extent that such burden is balanced by the benefit derived by the Village from the proposed use.

Petitioner has produced evidence that the construction and operation of the Project is economically viable. The DRB finds that there is no evidence the proposed use would increase the burden on Village services, the Village's tax base, or other economic factors that affect the financial operations of the Village. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met.

N. The proposed use or combination of uses will meet the objectives and other requirements set forth in this chapter.

The evidence presented demonstrates that the Project advances the objectives of the planned development provisions by providing for the coordinated redevelopment of an assembled, underutilized site with a combination of residential and ground-floor commercial uses. The Project will add housing within the Village, establish active commercial space along Madison Street, and coordinate the placement and design of the building, parking areas, access points, landscaping, screening, and stormwater improvements through a comprehensive site plan.

The evidence further demonstrates that the Applicant revised the Project in response to comments from Village staff and neighboring residents. Those revisions include widening the alley to improve circulation and service access, incorporating permeable paving and stormwater-management improvements, adding garages and screening along portions of the northern property boundary, relocating the rooftop gathering area away from neighboring residences, and providing additional landscaping and buffering. The Conditions further require the surface parking spaces along the northwest edge of the Property to be relocated to provide the greatest feasible buffer for neighboring residents while maintaining adequate traffic flow.

The requested Site Development Allowances were specifically identified in the Application, and the DRB considered testimony and reports addressing their compatibility with surrounding development and their relationship to the objectives of Chapter 19. Based on the evidence presented, and subject to approval of the requested Site Development Allowances and compliance with the Conditions, the DRB finds that the Project constitutes a creative and coordinated use of the Property, is compatible with surrounding development, and promotes the public health, safety, comfort, and general welfare of Village residents. Accordingly, the DRB finds that this standard has been met.

O. Except as provided in subsection 10-19-4B of this chapter, no planned development containing multi-family housing shall be approved unless the following standards are met:

1. At least 2.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit are provided for. This requirement may be met by a contract, easement, or other device providing permanent rights to off site parking; and
2. No less than two thousand eight hundred square feet of land area shall be provided for each residential unit. A parking area which meets the requirements of subsection O1 of this section may be used in meeting this requirement; and
3. One of the following criteria is met:
 - a. If the underlying zoning district is C1, C2, or C3, the proposed development provides for space devoted exclusively to retail sales;
 - b. The total number of parking spaces on the site is increased from that existing at the time of the application.
4. The requirements of this subsection O may be met using more than one site within the Village and as part of a master plan submitted by the applicant with the application.

Section 10-19-4(B) authorizes a waiver of one or more of the requirements of Standard O when a planned development containing multifamily housing is submitted. The record demonstrates that the Project qualifies for consideration of such a waiver because of its compliance with the Comprehensive Plan.

The DRB therefore makes the following findings concerning the individual requirements of Standard O:

1. Parking. Standard O requires 2.5 parking spaces for each dwelling unit, which would result in a requirement of 180 residential parking spaces for the proposed 72 dwelling units. The Application proposes 87 total on-site parking spaces and therefore does not satisfy the numerical requirement of subsection O1 without a waiver.

The DRB considered the Applicant's traffic and parking analysis, the independent peer review, testimony concerning the proposed ingress and egress, the configuration of the on-site parking areas, and the anticipated traffic and parking demand generated by the Project. The DRB also imposed a Condition requiring the surface parking spaces along the northwest edge of the Property to be relocated to provide the greatest feasible buffer for neighboring residents while maintaining adequate traffic flow. Based on this evidence, the DRB finds that the proposed parking supply and design are adequate to serve the Project and will not cause an unacceptable impact on surrounding streets or properties. The DRB therefore recommends that the Village Board grant a waiver from the numerical parking requirement of subsection O1 pursuant to Section 10-19-4(B).

2. Land Area. Standard O requires at least 2,800 square feet of land area for each residential unit. The Application provides approximately 539.96 square feet of land area per dwelling unit and therefore does not satisfy the numerical requirement of subsection O2 without a waiver.

The DRB finds that the requested reduction is appropriate in light of the mixed-use character of the Project, the location of the Property along the Madison Street commercial corridor, the coordinated redevelopment of the assembled parcels, the proposed landscaping and buffering, and the Project's consistency with the Comprehensive Plan's identification of the Property as a redevelopment opportunity. The DRB further finds that the proposed density can be accommodated without creating unacceptable impacts on public services or surrounding properties, subject to compliance with the approved plans and Conditions. The DRB therefore recommends that the Village Board grant a waiver from the land-area requirement of subsection O2 pursuant to Section 10-19-4(B).

The DRB does not rely upon subsection O3(a) because the Application describes a portion of the ground-floor space as commercial space that may accommodate retail or service uses. Since the submitted application include the space be devoted exclusively to retail sales, subsection O3(a) would also be satisfied.

3. Additional Criterion. The Property was vacant and contained no recognized off-street parking spaces at the time of the Application. Because the Application proposes 87 on-site parking spaces, the total number of parking spaces on the Property will be increased from the number existing at the time of the Application. The DRB therefore finds that the Project satisfies subsection O3(b).

Based upon the foregoing findings, the DRB recommends that the Village Board grant the requested waivers from subsections O1 and O2 pursuant to Section 10-19-4(B). With those waivers, and because the Project satisfies subsection O3(b), the DRB finds that the requirements applicable to the Project under Standard O have been satisfied or properly waived.

CONDITIONS: The DRB's recommendation that the Application be approved is subject to the following Conditions:

1. The Project shall be built in substantial conformity with the Application and approved plans, including the following:
 - a. The nine (9) surface parking spaces along the northwest edge of the property shall be moved as far south as possible to provide residents with the greatest possible buffer while maintaining adequate traffic flow.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION: Based upon the foregoing Findings, the DRB, by a vote of 7 to 0, recommends to the President and Board of Trustees that the Board approve the Application, including the Site Development Allowances, so long as the Conditions are met.

Signed: David Crosby Dated: August 12, 2026
David Crosby, Chairman
Development Review Board
Village of River Forest