

STAFF REPORT

2021-25P: Site Plan Approval

Community Development Department

Council Chambers, 7:30 PM, November 18, 2021

To: Paul Luke, Chairman, Skokie Plan Commission
From: Matt Brandmeyer, AICP, Community Development Director
Re: 2021-25P: Site Plan Approval – Revised
9801 Woods Drive
Related Case – 2021-24P: Zoning Chapter Amendment

General Information		
<i>Location</i>	9801 Woods Drive	
<i>Purpose</i>	To request site plan approval for a Carvana car dealership. The proposed building is <u>140 ft.</u> in height. The applicant is requesting relief from the sign code to allow signs on each side of the building.	
<i>Petitioner</i>	Carvana Co.	
<i>Size of Site</i>	Approximately 218,226 sf (5.010 acres) with frontage on Woods Drive.	
<i>Existing Zoning & Land Use</i>	OR Office Research – Existing Surface Parking Lot with 654 parking spaces.	
<i>Adjacent Zoning & Land Use</i>	North	OR Office Research – Vacant Buildings, Former Rand McNally campus
	South	OR Office Research – Optima Old Orchard Woods
	East	OR Office Research – Parking Garage for 5215 Old Orchard Office Building, Interstate 94
	West	OR Office Research – Harms Woods - Forest Preserve
<i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	The site is designated as retail/service employment.	

SITE INFORMATION

- The site is a surface parking lot, which is not regularly used since accompanying buildings are vacant.
- Village staff has reviewed several potential development plans for other buildings on the former Rand McNally campus, but to date an application for Plan Commission review has not been made.
- The Pace 208 Bus Route operates along Golf Road, and CTA 54A Bus Route operates along Old Orchard Road. Each has a stop at Woods Drive.
- The Skokie Valley Trail runs along the east side of the property.

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

This is Site Plan review for the construction of a new 140 ft. car dealership at 9801 Woods Drive on an existing surface parking lot, which previously served the Rand McNally campus.

The review will involve the creation of a new ordinance for the Site Plan and an amendment to the existing ordinance by removing the subject site from the property boundary. Several conditions of the existing ordinance will be carried forward to the new ordinance.

PETITIONER'S SUBMITTAL

Please find attached the petitioner's "Statement of Effects of the Proposed Use" and an "Evaluation Report" for information regarding the proposal. Also attached are engineered plans, floor plans, elevations, and various renderings, a trip generation review, and an economic analysis.

STAFF REVIEW

All pertinent departments and divisions were offered an opportunity to comment on this case. The following is a summary of principal aspects of the proposed development:

Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan identifies this area as Service Employment which includes wide range of office, retail, and industrial uses. Since the subject site is within the OR District, which is an industrial district, the proposed car dealership adheres to the Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use

The proposed land use is a car dealership which involves the retail sale of vehicles to customers. The inventory will be located within the proposed building and the parking lot. It's notable that the proposed use does not include a storage yard, service center, auto repair, or car wash services. Please note that a storage yard would allow cars to be parking closer together in spaces that do not meet the code's dimensional requirements, which is a common trait of car dealerships.

Zoning Requirements

The proposed building and improvements adhere to minimum OR zoning district requirements. Bulk requirements include the following:

The proposed building height is 140 ft. The maximum building height for buildings south of Old Orchard Road is 180 ft. The minimum height for a building with residences is 89 ft.

The required setbacks are 50 ft. on each side. The building is setback nearly 100 ft. from each property line. It should be noted that covered parking canopies are located on each side of the building. These are considered accessory structures

which are permitted 3 ft. from the property line and was addressed in the original ordinance for the site.

The proposed land covered by building is 3.6%. The maximum land coverage by buildings is 30%.

On Page 9 of the attached "Evaluation Report," the applicant aptly explores the building massing of a development that fully utilizes the zoning envelope. This is intended to show what could be built on the property if the Carvana proposal doesn't move forward. Please see the pictures in the bottom left of the page for a representation of potential development.

Building & Site Elements

The proposed building is Carvana's vending machine style of construction. The bottom floor of the proposed building includes an office area, building operations, customer area, restrooms, vehicle bays, and the tower area. Above the first floor are 14 decks for the storage of up to 55 vehicles. In the center of the decks is an elevator system that lowers cars to the first floor to the customer area.

The site primarily consists of parking spaces and drive aisles for circulation. Other features are the bio-retention area in the center of the parking lot and a sidewalk from Wood Drive to the Skokie Valley Trail located at the northern property line.

Building Design

The Appearance Commission will review the building design and proposed sign relief at one of its regularly scheduled meetings after the Plan Commission's review but prior to Village Board review.

Business Operations

According to the applicant, all Carvana vehicle sales are by appointment-only. Essentially, the customer can choose a car to buy and conduct most of the transaction online and only needs to visit the site to pick-up the vehicle. This is different than a regular car dealership where customers visit the site to view available cars while making a decision to buy. As a result, the number of people who visit a Carvana is much lower than a regular car dealership. Per the traffic generation report, a regular dealership will generate nearly 600 vehicle trips a day, while the Carvana appointment-only business will see 130 trips per day (see Traffic Generation below). Since this is an important aspect of the proposed use, staff has included a recommended condition that requires the appointment-only aspect of the building operation.

The hours of operation are 7 am to 10 pm Monday through Saturday and closed on Sunday. The actual business hours are proposed to be 8 am to 10 pm, but staff is onsite to open and close the dealership each day. The hours of operation are also a recommended condition.

Building Signage & Lighting

The applicant proposes to install building signs at the top of each side of the building, which is emblematic of the Carvana brand. The Sign Code only allows one building sign along a street frontage. The applicant is requesting relief from the sign code to allow signs at roofline on each of 4 sides of the building and 4 smaller logo signs inset to each corner of the building. Another significant item is the interior building lighting which is proposed to remain "on" overnight. This is in addition to the proposed building signs which would typically remain on overnight.

In its review, staff has considered the change to the viewshed for occupants of the Optima Old Orchard building. A notable difference between the proposed Carvana dealership and other anticipated development of the property, including office, hotel, or residential buildings, is overnight lighting. The applicant maintains that the light levels will remain low enough that it will not have a measurable impact on neighboring properties. Staff agrees that the light levels are low and will not create glare; however, the lighting is a large enough change and is beyond reasonable expectation of nearby development. In addition, light emanating from building signs would normally only affect street frontages since building signs are only permitted facing street frontage. If relief is provided to allow additional signs, several signs will face the Optima building.

Since special approval is requested for both the chapter amendment and sign relief, staff is recommending a condition that requires the interior building lighting and building signs facing south and west be dimmed overnight, except for first floor lighting (as needed) and building interior lighting and building signs facing north and east.

Parking, Access, & Circulation

The parking required for a car dealership mainly accounts for staff. The requirement is 3 spaces for the first 1,000 sf of floor area and 1.2 spaces per 1,000 sf thereafter. A total of 12 spaces are required for staff. The parking lot will accommodate a total of 348 spaces. Subtracting the 12 required spaces, there will be around 332 spaces for inventory.

Vehicles will access the site at two existing curb cuts on Wood Drive. The curb cuts lead directly into the drive aisles with full access around the building.

Traffic Generation

In the traffic generation letter produced by Kimley-Horn, one of the applicant's consultants, the business will produce 128 trips on the weekday, including 20 trips during the morning and evening peak hours. Trips on Saturday are expected to be 130 total per day with 32 cars during the peak hour. As a comparison, 590 trips are estimated for a regular car dealership. According to the report, 3 to 4 vehicle carriers will visit the site each day. The carriers will likely originate from I-94 turning onto Old Orchard Road and onto Woods Drive. Woods Drive and the parking lot have ample space for turning movements into and out of the site.

Complete Streets

The following table provides information regarding walkability and transit opportunities:

Complete Streets Summary		
<i>Walking, Accessibility</i>		A public sidewalk is available along Woods Drive which connect to sidewalks on Old Orchard and Golf Roads. Skokie Valley Trail is located along the eastern edge of the subject site. The applicant is proposing to install a connection between the public sidewalk and the trail. The subject site is also adjacent to Harms Woods which has walking trails
<i>Biking</i>		Bicycle accommodations are provided on Skokie Valley Trail. 2 bicycle parking spaces are shown on the site plan.
<i>Transit</i>		The Pace 208 Bus Route operates along Golf Road, and CTA 54A Bus Route operates along Old Orchard Road. Each has a stop at Woods Drive.
<i>Elderly, Youth</i>		The subject site is nearly a mile walking distance from services, shopping, and schools.
<i>Emergency, Commercial</i>		Emergency and business delivery access is available via Woods Drive from Old Orchard or Golf Roads.

Stormwater Management

The applicant will be required to store surface runoff onsite as part of the Village’s and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) requirements for the site permit. The applicant is proposing to install a bio-retention area in the center of the parking lot which will capture water and allow it to recharge into the ground before any excess water is sent into the drainage system.

Water Conservation

The building is required to adhere to the Illinois Plumbing code. This includes the incorporation of lower flow fixtures – faucets and toilets. This item will be reviewed at the time of permit.

Electrical Conservation

The building is required to adhere to the Energy Conservation Code. This includes meeting minimum standards for R-values for windows and insulation. The code requires a minimum requirement for materials and wall thickness (in relation to insulation) that meets energy efficiency standards. In addition, the HVAC systems are required to meet minimum efficiency standards, and systems are required to be affixed with UL tags. The applicant will be required to submit a “com check” at the time of permit application to show adherence to the energy conservation code.

Noise

No excessive noise is expected to be produced from the site. Staff noted that the elevator system is electrically powered and does not produce excessive noise. There

will be no outdoor intercom or speakers, which is a characteristic of many car dealerships. Staff recommends prohibiting an outdoor intercom or speaker system as a condition of approval.

Tree Preservation & Landscaping

There are 15 existing trees within the parking lot. The applicant is proposing to remove 10 and preserve 5 trees. The applicant is proposing to install 21 trees to replace the removed trees in adherence with Village requirements.

Local Economic Impact

According to the attached "Economic and Revenue Impacts" report, the proposed project could generate up to \$195,317 in local sales tax in Year 1 and increase to \$1.76 million by Year 10. The aggregate over the 10 years could be \$8.9 million in tax revenue to the Village.

Building Demolition

Staff has discussed the potential reuse of the building should Carvana go out of business or shutter the site. Since the building is a specialty building for the Carvana brand and the parking decks can't be used for occupied space, staff is recommending a condition that requires a plan to reuse or demolition of the building if it is vacant for 1 year.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the petitioner's request for site plan approval be **APPROVED** based upon the Proposed Findings of Fact and subject to the recommended site plan approval conditions listed below.

Staff further recommends relief from the following sections of the Skokie Village Code:

§82-28(b)(1)(a) to allow 8 wall signs as shown on the building elevations.

RECOMMENDED SITE PLAN APPROVAL CONDITIONS

1. Relief from §82-28(b)(1)(a) to allow 8 wall signs as shown on the building elevations is granted.
2. Interior building lights and building signs facing the south and west shall be dimmed at 11:00 pm each night, except for first floor interior lighting (as needed) and the interior building lights and building signs facing the north and east.
3. An outdoor intercom or speaker system is prohibited.
4. Customer visits shall be primarily prearranged through appointments with exceptions for customers dropping-off or returning vehicles.
5. The Hours of Operation shall be restricted to 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Monday through Saturday.
6. Prior to the release of building permits, the Petitioner shall provide a bond in the amount of \$200,000.00, to cover the cost of demolition and removal of materials for a period of ten years, should demolition or removal be necessary if Carvana files for Bankruptcy under Chapter 7 or 11 of the Bankruptcy Code and abandons the building for two years (the building shall not be considered abandoned so long as real estate taxes and utilities are being paid, insurance is being carried, and periodic inspections are being performed).
7. The petitioner agrees to agree to participate in Condition #3 of Village Ordinance #15-3-Z-4128 which requires the following: the dedication right-of-way for a northbound right turn lane on Woods Drive at Old Orchard Road and construction of this right turn lane and adjacent required sidewalks, as approved by the Village, should there be any increase in building area or intensity of use, which results in increased traffic generation beyond the current design capacity. Any such increase shall be determined by the Village, pursuant to an appropriate traffic study.
8. The petitioner shall develop the Subject Property in substantial conformance with the final Village approved site and landscaping plan dated <insert date of final approved plan>, floor plans dated <insert date of final approved plan>, and building elevations dated <insert date of final approved plan>. (Standard)
9. Prior to the issuance of building permits, the petitioner shall submit a temporary pedestrian and bicycle circulation plan, including routing, signage, and barriers, to be in place prior to the commencement of construction, subject to the approval of the Engineering Division. (Standard)
10. No restriction of use may be placed on the commercial space that is more restrictive than is allowed in the Skokie Village Code. (Standard)
11. Prior to the issuance of building permits, the petitioner shall submit for approval a lighting photometrics plan, fully developed civil engineering plans that comply with the county WMO requirements and Village's stormwater control provisions, and redevelopment engineering plans to address all aspects of private and public utility services. Any reconfigurations within state ROW will require an IDOT highway/utility permit. (Standard)

12. All existing damaged public sidewalks or public sidewalks damaged due to the implementation of this plan shall be replaced. (Standard)
13. No objects are allowed within a 15' sight distance triangle between 30" and 84" from grade except traffic control devices listed in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. (Standard)
14. Prior to the issuance of building permits, the petitioner shall submit a temporary pedestrian and bicycle circulation plan, including routing, signage, and barriers, to be in place prior to the commencement of construction, subject to the approval of the Engineering Division. (Standard)
15. All fencing, walls, sidewalks, driveways, curbs, wheel stops, parking areas, signage, landscaping, structures, and any other facilities or infrastructure on the Subject Property shall be maintained in a good state of repair, and when needed, be repaired or replaced in a timely manner. (Standard)
16. All private and public sidewalks shall be maintained free of snow, ice, sleet, or other objects that may impede travel. (Standard)
17. All off-street parking spaces shall be legibly striped and maintained. (Standard)
18. Any plan to modify parking lot striping must be approved by the Director of Engineering. (Standard)
19. Vehicles shall not be allowed to be parked in or otherwise block common driveways, sidewalks, aisles, or other points of access at any time, shall only be parked in designated parking spaces, and shall not overlap the striped lines of designated parking spaces. (Standard)
20. All utilities on the Subject Property shall be placed or relocated underground. The petitioner shall bear the full cost of any utility relocation and/or conflicts. (Standard)
21. All new construction, alterations, and remodeling shall meet current International Building and NFPA Life Safety Codes as amended. (Standard)
22. The petitioner shall obtain all required permits and approvals for improvements to County, State, or Federal rights-of-way from the governing jurisdiction. (Standard)
23. The Subject Property must conform to the Village's storm water control requirements as contained in the Skokie Village Code, including the disconnection of any downspouts. (Standard)
24. All signage shall conform to the Skokie Village Code<, except as provided in this ordinance>. Any sign on the Subject Property that is in violation of that Code must be removed or modified to conform with the Village Code prior to the issuance of an occupancy permit. (Standard)
25. All modifications to building elevations, signage, and landscaping shall be subject to the review and approval of the Skokie Appearance Commission. (Standard)
26. The petitioner shall submit to the Planning Division electronic files of the plat of survey, site plan, and landscape plan in their approved and finalized form. The files shall be scaled 2-dimensional drawing files on non-compressed, non-read only CD-ROM *.dwg AutoCAD format. (Standard)
27. Prior to the issuance of building permits, the petitioner shall submit to the Planning Division of the Community Development Department the name, property address, email address, and telephone number of the company and contact person responsible for site maintenance in compliance with this site plan approval. (Standard)
28. If work is to be performed on public property or if public property is utilized or impacted during construction and/or development, the owner shall provide, or shall cause the developer and/or contractor to provide, the Village of Skokie with a certificate of insurance naming the Village of Skokie as additionally insured for any and all claims related to any and all work. The owner shall hold and shall cause the developer and/or contractor to hold, the Village of Skokie harmless and indemnify the Village for any and

all claims for property damage or personal injury related to work on or use of public property. (Standard)

29. The petitioner shall comply with all Federal and State statutes, laws, rules and regulations and all Village codes, ordinances, rules, and regulations. (Standard)
30. Failure to abide by any and all terms of this Ordinance shall be cause for the Village to initiate hearings to determine whether the subject Ordinance, as well as any applicable business licenses, should be revised or revoked. The petitioner shall pay all costs related to any hearings conducted as a result of non-compliance with any of the provisions of the enabling ordinance. The costs shall include but not be limited to court reporter fees, attorney fees, and staff time required researching and conducting said hearing. (Standard)

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Findings of Fact
2. Engineered Site Plan and Landscape Plan
3. Floor Plans, Building Elevations, and Various Renderings
4. Statement of Proposed Effects
5. Evaluation Report
6. Trip Generation Review
7. Economic and Revenue Impacts

PROPOSED FINDINGS OF FACT

2021-25P: Site Plan Approval

Community Development Department

Council Chambers, 7:30 PM, November 18, 2021

<i>Consideration</i>	<i>Finding</i>
The request is harmonious with and does not adversely affect adjacent properties.	The proposal is within the range of expected development proposals for the OR district, provided the recommended conditions carried forward through adoption of the ordinance.
The request can demonstrate that adequate public facilities, including roads, drainage, utilities, and police and fire protection exist or will exist to serve the requested use at the time such facilities are needed.	The development will not have any adverse effect on public utilities. Electrical, gas, sewer and water utilities are all adequate to serve the development without adversely impacting neighboring property. Adequate public facilities exist or will exist to serve the subject site.
The request demonstrates adequate provision for maintenance of the associated structures.	The request will have adequate provision for maintenance of the associated structures.
The request has considered and, to the degree possible, addressed the adverse effects on the natural environment.	No adverse effects on the natural environment are anticipated.
The request will not create undue traffic congestion.	The request will not create undue traffic congestion.
The request will not adversely affect public health, safety, and welfare.	The request will not adversely affect public health, safety, and welfare.
The request conforms to all applicable provisions of this code, except where relief is granted with the request.	The request will conform to all applicable provisions of this code, except where relief is granted with the request.