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

Applicant: Alatus LLC
Application: 325 Blake Road N – Site Plan Review – Crescendo Apartments (Building C)

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Crescendo Apartments is a 15-story, 231-unit multi-family market-rate Type I development, of which 15% will of those units will be hotel units amenitized for shorter-term stays, with 8,960 sqft of retail, 602 above-ground parking stalls and a 5-story, 164-unit multi-family market-rate development. The project is located at the southeast corner of the Blake Road N and 2nd St NE intersection.

BUILDING DESIGN

Blake Road N 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.

Crescendo Apartments, comprises both a concrete 15-story residential structure and a 5 story wood frame residential building wrapping around a six-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.

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 WiFi 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. Additionally, the hotel units will provide a full range of elevated hospitality amenities and features including 24/7 management and concierge services as well as full access to the community's residential spaces and facilities. These hotel units will provide a much needed offering to the Hopkins and the immediate regional employment center.

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.

STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM

The development team has approached this site as a unique opportunity to create a water-centric development that capitalizes on its' 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. Crescendo Apartments overlooks the Cedar Lake Regional Trail to the south, incorporates a large plaza overlooking Blake Road N to the west, fronts the Spine Road and Cascade to the north and a woonerf to the east that provides access to Duet Apartments but also pedestrian access to the Trail and fire truck access.

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.

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 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 buildings C and D is designed to be pedestrian-oriented (woonerf) while providing important vehicular access to Building D 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 east side of the drive at the north end/entry to building D. 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.

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 Minnehaha Creek Watershed District ("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 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.

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 date for Crescendo Apartments: Q4 2024

CITY APPLICATIONS/APPROVALS

- Site Plan Approval – Crescendo Apartments (Building C)

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. Crescendo Apartments treatment is integrated into the overall 325 Blake Road N Development stormwater strategy. 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. The applicant will continue to work with the City of Hopkins and other stakeholders to ensure that bicycle infrastructure is dynamic, accessible and progressive. Additionally, applicant will target a minimum of 10% of all structured parking stalls with electric vehicle charging facilities installed on, in addition to conduit-readiness for at least 50% of structured parking stalls. This is to ensure the long-term electric infrastructure capacity over time as internal combustion engines make-way for electric vehicles.

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.