

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
City Council Workshop
City Hall
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

AGENDA
Wednesday, April 8, 2026
6:00 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER:

B. ROLL CALL: GUSTAFSON___ MAY___
MIELKE___ MOGEN ___ WASSENBERG___

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN___

C. POLICY ITEMS:

1. Consideration of Fairway Commons Planned Unit Development Amendment Proposal (6:00)
2. Consideration of the City's Acquisition of 1407 Larpenteur Avenue West (6:40)

D. ADJOURNMENT:

DISCLAIMER: City Council Workshops are held monthly as an opportunity for Council Members to discuss policy topics in greater detail prior to a formal meeting where a public hearing may be held and/or action may be taken. Members of the public that would like to make a comment or ask questions about an item on the agenda for an upcoming workshop should send them to mail@falconheights.org prior to the meeting. Alternatively, time is regularly allotted for public comment during Regular City Council Meetings (typically 2nd and 4th Wednesdays) during the Community Forum.

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ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

Meeting Date	April 8, 2026
Agenda Item	C-1
Attachment	See below.
Submitted By	Hannah B. Myhren, Community Development Coordinator

Item	Consideration of Fairway Commons Planned Unit Development Amendment Proposal
Description	<p>In 2023, a Planned Unit Development was approved for a 100-unit affordable housing apartment building to be named Amber Flats, located in the parking lot just west of the existing Amber Union Apartments. In 2025, Velair Development Company (“VDC”) approached the City with interest to purchase the property and needing information on the process to amend the Planned Unit Development.</p> <p>When Amber Flats was approved, there were three main deviations from City Code:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The height of the proposed building was over the maximum allowed in the City (40’ or 4 stories, whichever is less) at 49’ in height. • The impervious surface coverage was over the maximum allowed in the City (75% of the lot) at around 76%. • The amount of parking that would have been required for the building (At the time, 2 spaces per unit; this has since been changed to 1 space per unit) was too low at 1.14 spaces per unit. <p><u>THE PROPOSAL</u></p> <p>Velair Development Company is an affordable housing developer that is currently under contract to buy the two lots previously approved for Amber Flats PUD from Buhl Larpenteur West LLC. Fairway Commons is the proposed name for the apartment building and it will be situated in the existing overflow parking lot next to Amber Union. It will be a 110-unit senior (55+) affordable apartment building at 1644 Larpenteur Avenue West. It will consist of a mix of studio, one-, and two-bedroom floorplans across four stories of residential and one underground level of parking. The gross square footage of the building is estimated at 126,329 square feet, which includes the underground parking area.</p>

CURRENT STATUS OF PROPERTY & CITY CODE REQUIREMENTS / EXISTING PUD REQUIREMENTS

Below are excerpts from City Code with the standard requirements for new developments in the zoning district this property is currently located in. Bolded next to each item is how the proposal does or does not currently meet those requirements and any additional staff notes.

This property is currently zoned Amber Flats Planned Unit Development with an underlying zoning of R5M, High Density Residential Mixed Use.

*Sec. 118-182 (b) Purpose and intent. The purpose of the mixed use high density residential district is to provide high density, primarily apartment style, rental and condominium housing with limited commercial uses within the same structure. The intent of the district is to meet or exceed the city’s comprehensive plan density goal of 28 residential units per acre. **Proposal meets this intent.***

Sec. 118-182 (c) Permitted uses.

*(1) Apartment buildings with a maximum of 40 dwelling units per acre. **Proposal meets this requirement @ just under 40 dwelling units per acre.***

Sec. 118-182 (g) Lot area, height, lot width, and yard requirements.

(1) The following minimum requirements shall be observed subject to additional requirements except as modified in this section and in section 113-241:

<i>Lot Area</i>	<i>Lot Width</i>	<i>Front Yard</i>	<i>Side Yard</i>	<i>Rear Yard</i>
2.5 acres N/A	200 feet N/A	30 feet Proposal meets this requirement @ 43.1’.	10 feet or ½ the height of the building, whichever is greater Proposal meets this requirement @ 24.5’.	30 feet Proposal meets this requirement @ 64.7’.

*(2) The required setback from a lot line abutting property zoned R-1 is 50 feet. **Proposal meets this requirement @ 153.5’.***

*(4) Except as provided in section 113-243, the maximum height is four stories or 40 feet, whichever is less. **Proposal does not meet this requirement at 45’ 6”**, and may increase to around 49’ 6” if the ceiling heights are changed to 9’ ceilings. For reference, Falcon Heights Town Square is around 49’ in height at its tallest point, and the existing Amber Union building is over 52’ in height at its tallest point. This building would be stepping down from that, or roughly the same height as Town Square with 9’ ceilings throughout.*

Sec. 113-241 – Required yards and open spaces

(b) Permitted encroachments on required yards. The following shall be permitted encroachments into setback and height requirements except as restricted by other sections of this chapter:

*(4) In no event shall off-street parking, structures of any type, buildings, or any impervious surfaces cover more than 75 percent of the lot area. **The existing lot is a total of 2.6 acres. Existing impervious surface on lot is 1.9 acres which is around 73.3% impervious. The proposed impervious surface is 1.6 acres which is around 62.7% impervious. Proposal meets this requirement.***

DIVISION 2. – OFF-STREET PARKING AND LOADING

Sec. 113-310 – Residential districts

(3) The following provisions apply to the R-5M district: The requirements of the R-4 district shall apply except that at least 80 percent of the required parking spaces for apartment buildings shall be below grade and integrated into the apartment building.

(2) The following provisions shall apply to the R-3 and R-4 districts:

(e) Off-street parking spaces required (one space equals 350 square feet) shall be as follows for:

*Multiple-family dwellings. At least one parking spaces per dwelling unit. **By code, this property would require 110 parking spaces, with 80% of those being below grade (88 spaces). As proposed, there are to be 44 surface parking spaces and 72 sublevel parking spaces for a total of 116 parking spaces. This equals to 1.05 parking stalls per unit. Proposal meets this requirement for total parking stalls, not for the subsurface .***

THE PUD / CITY CODE AMENDMENT PROCESS

Notice Required

Planned unit developments may be permitted in the legislative discretion of the city council. The application and hearing process for a planned unit development is the same as is required for other zoning chapter amendments. The standard notice requirement for amendments to a section of the Zoning Chapter of City Code is mailing a notice to all property owners within 350' of the property. As a best practice however, the City mails to all property owners and residents within 500'. The notice was also posted at City Hall on March 10, 2026 and published in the Pioneer Press on March 12, 2026 and March 13, 2026.

Comprehensive Plan Consistency

A PUD must be consistent with the city comprehensive plan and the intent and purpose of the City Code provisions relative to land use, subdivision and development.

Several relevant goals have been provided below for reference, however a full copy of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan can be found online:

<https://www.falconheights.org/government/departments/community-development-planning-and-zoning/comprehensive-plan>

From Falcon Heights 2040 Comprehensive Plan:

Housing Goals:

3. Keep housing affordable, maintenance affordable, and accessible to all income levels.

General Land Use Goals

8. Encourage vertical development by minimizing impervious surfacing and maximizing space.

Larpenteur Corridor Policies

3. Allow flexibility in development standards on Larpenteur to recognize the challenge of redeveloping small properties on a scale similar to surrounding residential development.

Neighborhood Goals

5. To encourage the availability of a diverse housing stock.
6. To provide opportunities for affordable housing in proximity to public transportation, commercial services and recreational facilities.
11. On transit routes, allow the replacement of existing medium-density multi-family structures at equal or high density, incorporating best practices for conserving green space and promoting active living.

Commercial/Business Goals

3. To ensure access and safety for pedestrians and those using non-motorized transportation.
6. To provide convenient parking in sufficient amounts to meet parking demand.

NOTES AND ANALYSIS FROM STAFF

Planning Staff – While the prior version of this Planned Unit Development had three main deviations from City Code, the updated version only has two – the overall height and the number of underground parking stalls. As a reminder, this could be built currently by right if both of those parts of City Code were met, or if the requirements of the existing PUD were met. Staff believe the two deviations from City Code are reasonable and in line with the City’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Due to some ongoing discussions around the design of the building, such as potentially raising ceiling heights to 9’, a Planned Unit Development also seems reasonable rather than individual variances to provide the flexibility in design that is often needed in larger projects and that is characteristic of PUDs.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing at their March 24, 2026 meeting. Several residents were in attendance and spoke at the public hearing. Comments from residents included concerns about traffic along West Snelling Access Drive, traffic incidents along Hollywood Court, and resident access to management/maintenance/emergency services outside of normal office hours.

The Planning Commission held discussion and voted 7-0 to recommend approval of the amended Planned Unit Development to City Council.

As an outcome of the Planning Commission's vote, findings of facts affirming this decision have been drafted for Council's review and potential adoption. Should Council vote to deny the request for the PUD amendment, new findings will need to be drafted and adopted stating the reasoning behind that decision, and the PUD will remain Amber Flats PUD, as currently shown in City Code. Any potential future plans for the site would likely need to come through the PUD amendment process again.

If approved, the amended PUD (Fairway Commons) will override the previous version (Amber Flats), but no decision that City Council makes at this time will reverse the existing PUD (Amber Flats), which would require a zoning district change.

Comments from Engineering, the Fire Marshal, the Building Inspector, and Ramsey County have been requested and any received have been attached. These are informational only and the applicant will be required to follow any requirements from these entities, but these are not part of the Planning Commission's review of the application.

Engineering – Comments attached.

Fire Marshal – Comments TBD

Building Inspector – None currently – will wait for full plan set at permitting.

Ramsey County – Comments from Senior Transportation Planner attached.

Below are conditions to the PUD amendment, as recommended by the Planning Commission, and possible additional or revised conditions. The City Council will be discussing these in the workshop which is held at 6 PM, prior to the regular City Council meeting at 7 PM on Wednesday, April 8, 2026.

PROPOSED CONDITIONS FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

1. Trees shall be planted and/or maintained along throughout site as shown in plans submitted by Civil Site Group, Inc., dated March 2, 2026.
2. Snow storage may not be stored in any parking area for more than 48 hours.

3. Open space as shown on plans submitted by Civil Site Group, Inc., dated, March 2, 2026, must be maintained as open space and not converted to another use.
4. Charging stations for not less than four electric vehicles must be provided on site.
5. The building may not exceed four stories, or 50' in height.

POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL/REVISED CONDITIONS (Bolded are added or updated):

1. Trees shall be planted and/or maintained throughout the site as shown in plans submitted by Civil Site Group, Inc., dated March 2, 2026.
2. **Any trees removed due to moving the Larpenteur Avenue curb cut must be replaced by the developer within one year of curb cut completion.**
3. Snow storage may not be stored in any parking area for more than 48 hours.
4. Open space as shown on plans submitted by Civil Site Group, Inc., dated March 2, 2026, must be maintained as open space and not converted to another use.
5. **Charging stations for not less than four electric vehicles must be provided on site, at a distance of at least 50' from the building's main entrance.**
6. **The building may not exceed four stories, with a maximum height of 50'.**
7. **Parcels described as Ramsey County Tax Parcel IDs 212923110029 and 212923110028 must be recombined with Ramsey County prior to the start of construction.**
8. **A parking lot maintenance agreement must be signed between Velair Development Company and Buhl Larpenteur West, LLC for the maintenance of the parking easement, which dedicates 54 surface parking stalls for Amber Union use. A copy must be provided to the City of Falcon Heights and recorded with Ramsey County.**
9. **A property management staff person must be maintained on-site.**
10. **Developer shall comply with all recommendations from Ramsey County, City Engineer, and Fire Marshal.**

FUTURE STEPS

The Planning Commission has voted to recommend approval of the amended Planned Unit Development. At this time, City Council may act upon the proposed amendment. Pursuant to Minn. Stats. §15.99, the amendment must be approved or denied within 60 days from the date a properly completed application is received by the city.

Budget Impact	None.
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Attachment(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRAFT Ordinance 26-03 Amending Chapter 113 of the Falcon Heights City Code Concerning Amber Flats Planned Unit Development - Planning Commission Version • DRAFT Ordinance 26-03 Amending Chapter 113 of the Falcon Heights City Code Concerning Amber Flats Planned Unit Development - With Additional Conditions
Action(s) Requested	Staff request City Council discuss conditions to the PUD amendment.

ORDINANCE NO. 26-03

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
RAMSEY COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 113 OF THE FALCON HEIGHTS CITY
CODE CONCERNING AMBER FLATS PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT**

THE CITY COUNCIL OF FALCON HEIGHTS ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. Section 113-212 of the City Code of Falcon Heights, Minnesota is hereby amended to read as follows (additions are underlined and deletions are shown with strikethrough):

Section 113-212 – Fairway Commons Planned Unit Development

(a) *Legal description.* The legal description of this PUD is as follows:

PID 212923110029: The East 250 feet of the North 500 feet except the West 150 feet of the East 160 feet of the North 283 feet of the Northwest quarter of the Northeast quarter of the Northeast quarter of Section 21, Township 29, Range 23, West of the Fourth Principal Meridian.

PID 212923110038: The West 150 feet of the East 160 feet of the North 283 feet of the Northwest quarter of the Northeast quarter of the Northeast quarter of Section 21, Township 29, Range 23, West of the Fourth Principal Meridian;
("Subject Property")

(b) *Purpose.* The purpose of the Fairway Commons Planned Unit Development is to provide for age-restricted apartments.

(c) *Permitted uses and zoning regulations.* The R-5M mixed use high density residential district regulations shall apply to the property subject to the following modifications:

a. Permitted uses:

1. One principal structure consisting of 126,329 square feet and 110 apartment units.
2. No conditional uses.
3. No interim uses.
4. Setbacks as depicted in the Site Plan, C2.0, dated _____ prepared by Civil Site Group, Inc.

b. Parking. Vehicle parking shall be as follows:

1. 44 surface parking stalls as depicted in the Site Plan dated _____ prepared by Kaas Wilson Architects.
2. 72 sublevel parking stalls as depicted in the Floor Plans – Level -1 dated _____ prepared by Kaas Wilson Architects.

(d) *Development plan.* The PUD must be maintained in accordance with the following development plan, which is on file with the city and which is incorporated herein by reference.

(1) The following plans prepared by Kaas Wilson Architects and Civil Site Group, Inc. with up to five percent variance, to not increase nonconformities from City Code, as approved by the city administrator:

a. Architectural drawings, dated _____, prepared by Kaas Wilson Architects including:

1. Site Plan;
2. Floor Plans – Level -1;
3. Floor Plans – Level 1;
4. Floor Plans – Level 2-4;
5. Exterior Materials; and
6. Exterior Elevations.

b. Site development plans, dated _____, prepared by Civil Site Group, Inc. including:

1. Removals Plan, C1.0;
2. Site Plan, C2.0;
3. Overall Site Plan & Turning Movement, C2.1;
4. Grading Plan, C3.0;
5. Utility Plan, C4.0;
6. Civil Details, C5.0, C5.1, C5.2;
7. Landscape Plan L1.0;

8. Landscape Plan Notes & Details L1.1;
9. SWPPP – Existing Conditions, SW1.0;
10. SWPPP – Proposed Conditions, SW1.1;
11. SWPPP - Details, SW1.2;
12. SWPPP – Narrative, SW1.3; and
13. SWPPP – Attachments, SW1.4, SW1.5.

(e) *Additional conditions.* The PUD must be maintained in accordance with the following additional conditions.

- (1) Trees shall be planted and/or maintained along throughout site as shown in plans submitted by Civil Site Group, Inc., dated _____.
- (2) Snow storage may not be stored in any parking area for more than 48 hours.
- (3) Open space as shown on plans submitted by Civil Site Group, Inc., dated, _____, must be maintained as open space and not converted to another use.
- (4) Charging stations for not less than four electric vehicles must be provided on site.
- (5) The building may not exceed four stories, or 50’ in height.

SECTION 2. Zoning Map. The zoning map of the City of Falcon Heights shall not be republished to show the aforesaid zoning, but the Clerk shall appropriately mark the zoning map on file in the Clerk's Office for the purpose of indicating the rezoning hereinabove provided for in this ordinance, and all of the notations, references, and other information shown thereon are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of this ordinance.

SECTION 3. Effective Date. This ordinance is effective immediately upon its passage and publication.

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2026, by the City Council of Falcon Heights, Minnesota.

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS

BY: _____
Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor

ATTEST:

DRAFT

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SECTION 3. Effective Date. This ordinance is effective immediately upon its passage and publication.

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2026, by the City Council of Falcon Heights, Minnesota.

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS

BY: _____
Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jack Linehan, City Administrator

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ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

Meeting Date	April 8, 2026
Agenda Item	C2
Attachment	N/A.
Submitted By	Jack Linehan, City Administrator

Item	1407 Larpenteur Acquisition
Description	The City will consider the purchase of two parcels at 1407 Larpenteur - Get Pressed during the regular meeting. This workshop is a chance to preview the policy item and discuss the acquisition and next steps in the workshop setting.
Budget Impact	The purchase would come from cash on hand in the city's fund balance. The City will need to do a subsequent budget amendment to transfer funds from the General Fund - fund balance to Capital 403 - Parks/Recreation/Public Facilities Capital Improvements line. This would be done at the next meeting.
Attachment(s)	- See regular meeting agenda packet
Action(s) Requested	Staff requests City Council discuss the item and provide direction if there are any concerns over the regular meeting policy item consideration.