

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT**

For Planning Commission Meeting of December 17, 2013

**SUBJECT: Germain Motors Site Plan for City Council Approval  
(2575 South State Street)  
File No. SP13-048**

**PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION**

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Germain Motors Site Plan, subject to variances for parking lot and landscape modifications being granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

**PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION**

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby approves the proposed landscape modifications in order to reduce the requirement for depressed landscape islands, according to Chapter 62 (Landscape and Screening Ordinance), Section 5:608(2)(c).

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that this petition be **approved** because, if the requested variances are approved, it complies with all the applicable local, state, and federal laws, ordinances, standards, and regulations; the development would limit the disturbance of natural features to the minimum necessary to allow a reasonable use of the land; would not cause a public or private nuisance; and would not have a detrimental effect on public health, safety, or welfare.

**STAFF REPORT**

The Germain Motors Site Plan was postponed by the Planning Commission at the November 19, 2013 meeting to allow the petitioner to revise plans to address concerns noted by staff and Planning Commission regarding the expansion of the proposed parking areas and additional impervious surface.

The petitioner has submitted revised plans in response to the comments received. All plan revisions deal with the proposed parking lot expansion and required landscaping. There have been no changes to the buildings or overall site layout. City staff has confirmed revisions to the plan help address these concerns, as described below.

Porous Pavers - The plan has been modified to install an additional 5,027 square feet of porous pavers for the expansion of the display areas along State Street and Oakbrook Drive. While the extent of the parking area remains the same, the pavers will reduce total impervious surface on

the site. The pavers will be designed to match the existing porous pavers previously installed in a display area along Oakbrook Drive.

Interior Landscape Islands – The petitioner has added 8 new depressed landscape islands to the parking storage areas in the rear. Consistent with City Code, the addition of these landscape areas breaks the expanse of the parking area into no more than 15 consecutive spaces and results in the removal of 24 parking spaces. As a result, the variance request to eliminate the requirement of installing the landscape islands has been withdrawn.

The depressed landscape islands also allow for additional infiltration of storm water runoff. The landscape islands decrease the impervious surface on the site by 2,998 square feet and provide a planting area for 16 additional trees (2 trees per landscape Island).

Landscape Modification Request – The Landscape Modification has now been modified to eliminate the request for the reduction of 8 trees to be planted on site. With the additional landscape islands now proposed, all required trees will be planted on the site.

The Landscape Modification request remains in order to permit the existing landscape islands to remain without alterations (depression) that allow infiltration. Due to the location of these landscape islands and existing trees, Natural Resources staff is supportive of the revised modification request.

Variations – As mentioned previously, the variance from the requirement of interior landscape islands in the storage areas has been withdrawn. The remaining variations for exceeding the maximum amount of small car parking spaces, reduced aisle widths and allowing stacked parking remain. Based on the changes to the plan to reduce impervious surface on site and the proposed car storage use, Planning staff is supportive of the revised variance request.

Vegetated 'Green' Roof – The petitioner contacted an architect specializing in green roofs to assess the possibility of constructing a green roof on one or all of the buildings. The architect discussed with City staff and contacted numerous sources in the area. The petitioner has indicated that a vegetated roof is not feasible without significant alterations to the existing buildings. An email summarizing petitioner's efforts is attached.

### REVISED PARKING COMPARISON CHART

	EXISTING	PROPOSED	REQUIRED
Parking – Automobiles*	331 spaces – Regular 460 spaces – Small Car 791 total spaces*	188 spaces – Regular 851 spaces – Small Car** 1,015 total spaces	430 spaces MIN No maximum
Parking – Bicycle	6 Class C	14 Class A 14 Class C	14 Class A MIN 14 Class C MIN

\* Variations granted, May 2005

\*\* Variations requested, January 2013 (expected ZBA meeting date)

Prepared by Matt Kowalski  
Reviewed by Wendy Rampson

Attachments: 11/19/13 Planning Staff Report  
Revised Landscape Plan

c: Petitioner: Robert Wanty  
Washtenaw Engineering Company  
3526 W Liberty Road, Suite 400  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Owner: Car Ger MI Ann Arbor LLC  
8270 Greensboro Dr. Suite 950  
McLean, VA 22102

Systems Planning  
File No. SP13-048

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT**

**For Planning Commission Meeting of November 19, 2013**

**SUBJECT: Germain Motors Site Plan for City Council Approval  
(2575 South State Street)  
File No. SP13-048**

**PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION**

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Germain Motors Site Plan, subject to variances for parking lot and landscape modifications being granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

**PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION**

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby approves the proposed landscape modifications in order to use existing vegetation to count toward the interior parking lot landscaping requirements and eliminate the requirement for depressed landscape islands, according to Chapter 62 (Landscape and Screening Ordinance), Section 5:608(2)(c).

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the rezoning and site plan be **postponed** to give the petitioner an opportunity to address staff comments.

**LOCATION**

The site is located on east side of South State Street at the corner of Oakbrook (South Area, Malletts Creek Watershed).

**DESCRIPTION OF PETITION**

The petitioner seeks to construct additions to two of the three existing buildings on the site and construct an additional 248 vehicle parking spaces. The three buildings on site are composed of auto showrooms and service functions for Porsche/Audi, Volkswagen and Honda. As part of this project, some of the dealerships will switch buildings: Volkswagen will occupy the northernmost building; Porsche/Audi will occupy the middle building; and Honda will remain in the southernmost building.

The petitioner is proposing a 4,877 sf addition to the Volkswagen building, for a total building size of 18,722 sf. A 6,429 sf addition is proposed to the Porsche/Audi building, for a total building size of 31,097 sf. The Honda building will not have any building additions and will remain 36,101 sf.

The site currently contains 791 vehicle parking spaces, with an additional 248 parking spaces proposed for a total of 1,039 parking spaces. The majority of the site's parking spaces are used for vehicle display and storage. The additional vehicle parking spaces will be located along the southern half of the S. State Street frontage, along the Oakbrook Drive frontage and in the rear car storage lots. The vehicle storage area located in the rear of the site is comprised of two large parking areas divided by an engineered vegetated slope and retaining wall.

The petitioner is requesting three variances from Chapter 59 (Off-Street Parking) in order to allow tandem parking, reduced aisle widths and exceed the maximum percentage (30%) of small car parking spaces. The petitioner is also requesting one variance from Chapter 62 to eliminate the requirement for required interior landscape islands in the car inventory and display areas.

A total of 28 bicycle spaces are required: 14 Class C bicycle spaces and 14 Class A spaces. All Class C spaces will be provided near the three building entrances, and the Class A spaces will be provided inside each building.

There currently are three curb cuts on South State Street providing access to the site; no modifications to the drives are proposed. Pedestrian connections have been added from the South State Street sidewalk to building entrances, as well as internal sidewalks in between buildings and customer parking areas on the site.

There are existing storm water facilities on the east side of the site and an adjacent site (same owner) across Boardwalk to the east of the site. The storm water facilities are under the jurisdiction of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner (WCWRC). Based on the total of impervious surface on the site, the petitioner is required to provide first flush, bankfull and 100 year storm detention capacity. The WCWRC has reviewed and approved the storm water plan, which includes minor modifications to the existing system and maintenance items to be addressed during construction.

There are four landmark trees located on the north side of the site, and three of these are proposed to be removed. The landmark trees are being removed for the expansion of the parking area and are not impacted by the proposed building additions. The alternatives analysis provided indicates that in order to preserve the three landmark trees and provide the amount of parking desired, a parking structure would need to be constructed. Eleven additional trees will be planted as mitigation for the landmark tree removal. There are no other natural features on the site.

The petitioner is requesting a landscape modification in order to reduce the total number of trees provided (95 provided, 103 required) within interior landscape islands and eliminate the requirement for depressed landscape islands. The petitioner's Landscape Modification Request application and justification are attached.

The project is proposed to be completed in three phases. The first phase will consist of building and parking modifications to the center building (Porsche/Audi) and the southern building

(Honda). The second phase will be the building addition and parking lot modifications to the northern building (Volkswagen). The final phase will consist of construction of the additional parking areas in the rear of the site. The estimated cost of construction will be \$5.5 million.

As required by the Citizen Participation Ordinance, the petitioner mailed out postcard notification. There were no comments submitted by the public in response to the mailing. Staff has not received any feedback from the public in regards to this petition.

### COMPARISON CHART

		EXISTING	PROPOSED	REQUIRED
Zoning		M1A (Limited Light Industrial District)	M1A (Limited Light Industrial District)	M1A (Limited Light Industrial District)
Gross Lot Area		426,017 sq ft (9.78 acres)	426,017 sq ft (9.78 acres)	13,000 sq ft MIN
Maximum Gross Land Coverage of Structure		13.9%	16.1%	40% MAX
Maximum Useable Floor Area in % of Lot Area		17.5% (74,614 sq ft)	20.2% (85,920 sq ft)	75% MAX (319,512 sq ft)
Setbacks	Front – State Street (center building)	63 ft	54 ft	15 ft MIN No maximum
	Front-Oakbrook	118 ft	118 ft	15 ft MIN No maximum
	Front – Boardwalk	600+ ft	600+ ft	15 ft MIN No maximum
	Side	31 ft 6 in(north)	1 ft 9 in(north)	None
Height		24 ft MAX	24 ft	35 ft MAX
Parking – Automobiles*		331 spaces – Regular 460 spaces – Small Car 791 total spaces*	188 spaces – Regular 851 spaces – Small Car 1,039 total spaces**	430 spaces MIN No maximum
Parking – Bicycle		6 Class C	14 Class A 14 Class C	14 Class A MIN 14 Class C MIN

Note: There is no rear setback because the site has frontage on three public streets; the remaining property lines are classified as sides.

\* Variances granted, May 2005

\*\* Variances requested, December 2013 (expected ZBA meeting date)

### SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

	LAND USE	ZONING
NORTH	Public School Transportation Facility and Office	M1 (Limited Industrial District)
EAST	Storm Water Facility, Railroad, Industrial	M1A (Limited Light Industrial District) and M1 (Limited Industrial District)
SOUTH	Office	O (Office District) and ORL (Office, Research and Limited Industrial District)
WEST	UM Commuter Parking Lot	O (Office District)

### HISTORY

The site, with the existing Volkswagen dealership building, was annexed into the City in 1968. A site plan for the Honda dealership building was approved in February 1971. The Zoning Board of Appeals approved variances in July 1972 to allow parking in the front setback, and in August 1976 for a 24-inch tall screen and five-foot wide landscape buffer at State Street. Revised site plans were approved in September 1979 to expand the showroom and in August 1986 to expand the Honda service area. The site plan was administratively amended in November 1986 to shift the location of the detention area to the southeast corner of the site. The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) granted variances in December 2000 to allow reduced aisle widths, stall dimensions, an excess of small car spaces and stacked parking only in the vehicle storage area and a revised site plan was approved in February 2001 to expand the Honda dealership. Construction was never initiated, however. In December 2003, a site plan was approved to construct a new automobile dealership building (replacing an existing structure), to add a carwash facility (for the dealership's use only), to expand the parking and vehicle storage areas, and to establish a storm water management system for the entire 12.37 acres. This construction was completed in 2004.

In April of 2005, Planning Commission denied a proposal to construct 13 stacked parking spaces within the Oakbrook Drive front setback and two vehicle display pads within the State Street front setback. The proposed project did not meet City Code requirements and could not be approved without variances from the ZBA. After Planning Commission action, the petitioner applied to the ZBA for the necessary variances to permit the modifications requested. In May 2005, the ZBA granted a variance to allow the stacked parking within the Oakbrook Drive front setback, reducing the setback from 52.70 feet to 34.48 feet. At the ZBA meeting, the petitioner indicated that due to the installation of Oakbrook Drive, the setback along the southern property line was changed from a side setback (25 feet minimum) to a front setback (52.70 feet minimum) presenting the petitioner with an unreasonable hardship. The ZBA concluded that because of the nature of this change in required setbacks, a hardship did exist and subsequently granted the requested variance. At that same meeting, the ZBA denied the variance requested to install two vehicle display pads within the front setback of State Street.

The petitioner submitted a new plan for Planning Commission approval in June of 2005. The new plan proposed adding only the 13 additional stacked parking spaces and not the vehicle display pads. This plan was approved and proposed construction was completed in 2005.

In January 2011, revisions were approved to Chapter 55(Zoning) which reduced the front setback requirement from 40 feet to 15 feet.

## PLANNING BACKGROUND

This site was included in the recent South State Street Corridor Plan and recommended for office, research and limited industrial uses in the future and ORL zoning (Area 1 land use recommendations). The Plan recommends enhanced non-motorized access to buildings and addition of “gateway” features to prominent sites along the corridor. In addition, the Plan states specific recommendations for Resource Management within the corridor. The recommendations include integrating better stormwater management methods (as identified in the Mallett’s Creek Restoration Plan) and ensuring future development is consistent with the adopted Natural Features regulations.

The Non-Motorized Plan recommends improved pedestrian connections between the buildings and the street. Bicycle lanes are available along South State Street in front of this location.

## STAFF COMMENTS

Systems Planning (Engineering) – Adequate utilities exist to serve the site. No footing drain disconnects will be required. Petitioner must record an easement over the existing sanitary sewer main.

Planning – The proposed additions and renovations to the existing buildings will be a significant upgrade to the site and improve building appearance from South State Street. The addition of pedestrian connections to the buildings and added bicycle parking are consistent with intent of the Master Plan: Land Use Element and the South State Street Corridor Plan.

Planning staff has concerns regarding the amount of parking proposed to be constructed and the additional impervious surface, as well as the impact on the landmark trees. The parking and display area on the southern half of the site will be moved 32 feet closer to State Street than currently exists. While still remaining behind the required front setback (15 feet), a variance is required to provide tandem parking in this location. Staff does not support the granting of a variance for the expansion of this parking area.

Staff acknowledges that the area in the rear functions differently than a typical parking lot and in general would support reduced aisle widths and tandem parking, consistent with past ZBA approvals of similar requests for this site. However, staff encourages the petitioner to take additional steps to reduce impervious surface and/or provide alternative methods that would allow for an increase of car storage while reducing the expansion of paving.

Natural Resources (Landscaping) – Staff does not support the requested landscape modification or variances as proposed. The petitioner has not provided significant justification to satisfy the standards for impact to the landmark trees. Staff acknowledges that the car storage area in the rear of the site functions differently than a typical parking lot, however the intent of landscape islands is more than just aesthetic or pedestrian value. Landscape islands are intended to reduce the impervious surface, assist in storm water function and help reduce the heat island effect of large paved surfaces.

Malletts Creek Coordinating Committee (MCCC) – The MCCC met in early October to discuss the project and offered the following recommendations:



In the process of recognizing the Malletts Creek Restoration Plan, April 2000, on October 3, 2000 the City Planning Commission specifically resolved to minimize impervious area within the Malletts Creek watershed. This development proposal and the requested variance to exceed the parking maximums in Chapter 59 are in direct opposition of the recommendation of the Malletts Creek Restoration Plan and the City Planning Commission resolution. The Malletts Creek Coordinating Committee (MCCC) is not supportive of the request for a variance from the Landscape Ordinance (Chapter 62), requirement to have landscape islands every 15 spaces. Varying from this requirement will result in more impervious area, and thus more runoff will be contributed to Malletts Creek.

The Malletts Creek Coordinating Committee (MCCC) is not supportive of the request for a variance from the Landscape Ordinance (Chapter 62), requirement to have depressed bioswales within the interior landscaping of the parking lot. The purpose of this requirement is partially storm water quality driven. The variance could possibly be justified and/or mitigated if the petitioner provided a similar amount of storm water management throughout the site in the form of green roofs, sand filters, level spreaders, or other low impact development techniques.

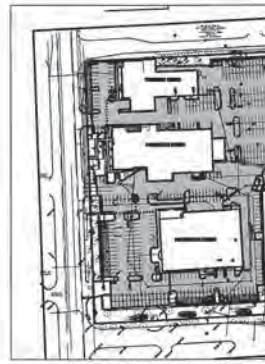
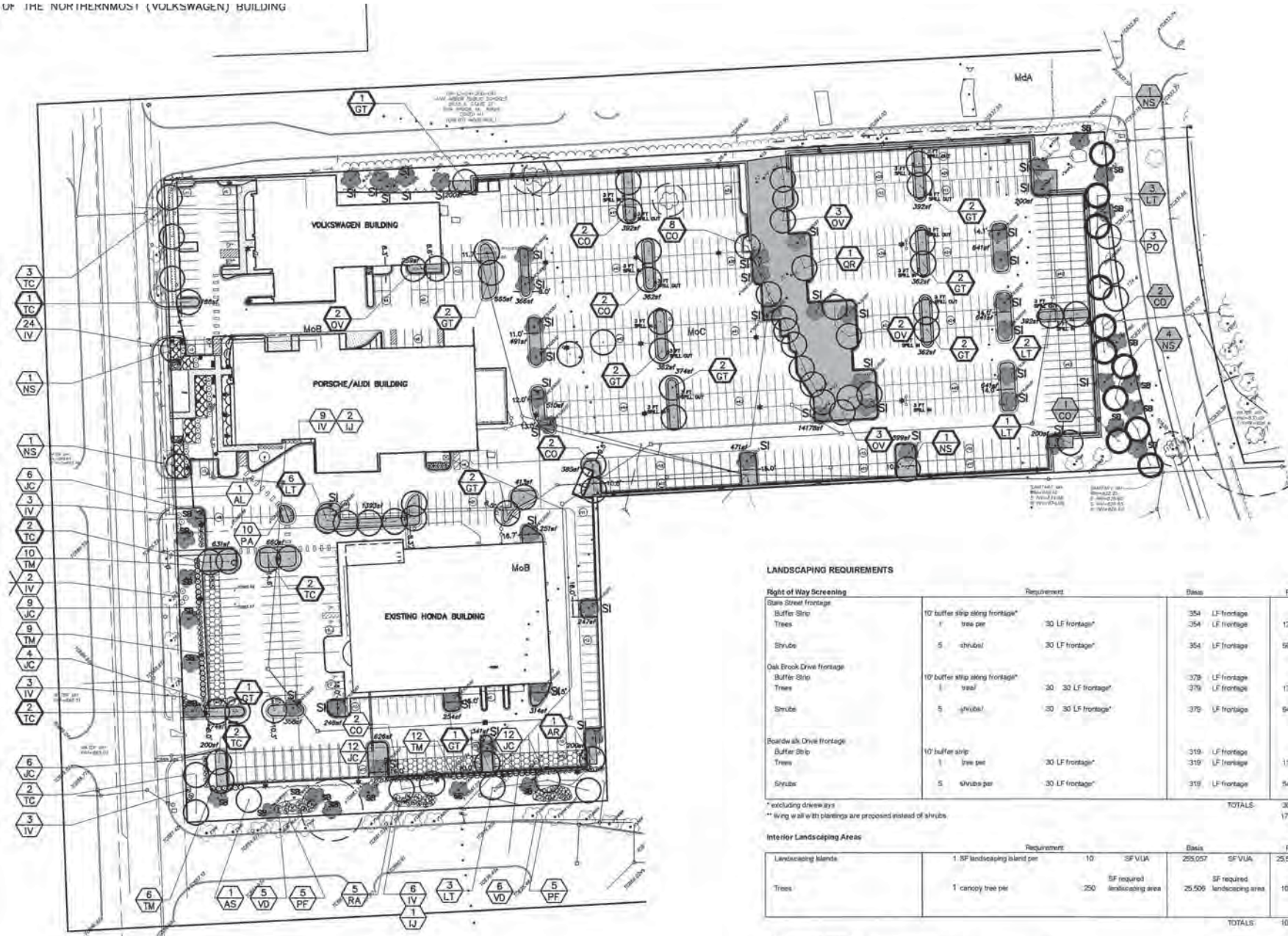
Prepared by Matt Kowalski  
Reviewed by Wendy Rampson

Attachments: Parcel/Zoning Map  
Aerial Photo  
Site Plan  
Landscape Plan  
Elevations  
Landscape Modification Application

c: Petitioner: Robert Wanty  
Washtenaw Engineering Company  
3526 W Liberty Road, Suite 400  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Owner: Car Ger MI Ann Arbor LLC  
8270 Greensboro Dr. Suite 950  
McLean, VA 22102

Systems Planning  
File No. SP13-048



VEHICULAR USE A  
SCALE: 1"=200'

**LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS**

Requirement	Basis	Required	Provided
<b>Right of Way Screening</b>			
<b>State Street Frontage</b>			
Buffer Strip	10' buffer strip along frontage*	354 LF frontage	12.5'-22.7' wide buffer strip along road frontage
Trees	1 tree per 30 LF frontage*	354 LF frontage	8 existing trees (shown as SB)
Shrubs	5 shrubs/ 30 LF frontage*	354 LF frontage	7 new trees 18 existing shrubs 56 new shrubs planted 5' o.c.
<b>Oak Brook Drive Frontage</b>			
Buffer Strip	10' buffer strip along frontage*	378 LF frontage	34.5' wide buffer strip along road frontage
Trees	1 tree/ 30 LF frontage*	378 LF frontage	13 existing trees (shown as SB)
Shrubs	5 shrubs/ 30 LF frontage*	378 LF frontage	6 new trees 18 existing shrubs 75 new shrubs planted 5' o.c.
<b>Boardwalk Drive Frontage</b>			
Buffer Strip	10' buffer strip	319 LF frontage	23.3'-49.6' wide buffer strip along road frontage
Trees	1 tree per 30 LF frontage*	319 LF frontage	8 existing trees (shown as SB)
Shrubs	5 shrubs per 30 LF frontage*	319 LF frontage	3 new trees 0 existing shrubs 91 new shrubs planted 5' o.c.
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>30 trees:</b> <b>177 shrubs</b>	<b>32 trees (existing + new)</b> <b>167 shrubs (existing + new)</b>

\* excluding driveway  
\*\* living wall with plantings are proposed instead of shrubs

**Interior Landscaping Areas**

Requirement	Basis	Required	Provided
Landscaping Islands	1 SF landscaping island per 10 SF VUA	25,057 SF VUA	25,506 SF
Trees	1 canopy tree per SF required landscaping area	25,506 SF required landscaping area	30,021 SF in existing and proposed conversional islands
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>103 trees</b>	<b>103 trees (existing + new)</b>

**Landmark trees removed**  
Total inches dbh of trees removed: 53.75 (3 boxelders (Acer negundo))  
Total landmark mitigation trees required (2.5" cal): 11

**Landmark trees saved, with work in critical root zone**  
Total inches dbh of trees removed: 49.73 (1 boxelder, 1 honeylocust (Gleditsia triacanthos))  
Total landmark mitigation trees required (2.5" cal): 0 (Only planted if trees die within 3 years of project)

**DIAMETER - Does not include Mahoeanus Plantings in front of Porsche/Audi Building**