



Department Source: Community Development - Planning

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: August 5, 2024

Re: Report - Merideth Drive Right-of-Way Vacation (Case #201-2024)

Executive Summary

A request (see attached) has been received seeking authorization to direct staff to prepare an ordinance to vacate an approximate 305-foot x 25-foot (7,625 sq. ft.) portion of excess public right of way dedicated to accommodate the former alignment of Scott Boulevard, now known as Merideth Drive. The portion of right of way to be vacated is immediately north of the Daniel Boone Little League baseball/softball complex northwest of the intersection of Chapel Hill Road and Scott Boulevard. The portion of right of way to be vacated adjoins presently undeveloped property owned by the applicant.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council authorization to proceed in the preparation of a vacation ordinance allowing the excess right of way to be released and combined with the adjacent undeveloped property. If such authorization is granted, the applicant seeks to incorporate the vacated right of way into the adjacent undeveloped land to facilitate a redevelopment of the property for single- and two-family residential purposes.

Discussion

A Civil Group (agent), on behalf of Starr Property Investments, LLC (owner), is seeking authorization to permit staff to proceed with the preparation of an ordinance vacating an approximate 305-foot by 25-foot (7,625 sq. ft) portion of Merideth Drive south of Georgetown Drive and north of the Daniel Boone Little League property located northwest of the intersection of Scott Boulevard and Chapel Hill Road. Merideth Drive was previously the alignment of Scott Boulevard prior to its relocation and reconstruction further to the east.

Merideth Drive provides access to 12 residentially zoned lots (inclusive of the undeveloped land owned by the applicant) and the Daniel Boone Little League facilities south of Georgetown Drive. A fully functional, approximate 22-foot non-curb/gutter street is in place within an approximate 85-foot right of way corridor. The existing right of way is excessive with respect to the Merideth Drive classification as a residential street which requires only a 50-foot of right of way.

Given Merideth Drive was the former right of way for Scott Boulevard, when the applicant's lots were created as part of the 1995 Atkinsons Woods Plat 1 subdivision, an additional 20-foot of right of way was acquired. This additional 20-foot of right of way has never been improved for street purposes. Since acquiring that additional right of way, Scott Boulevard has been relocated and reconstructed in its current alignment. Now that Scott Boulevard has been moved eastward within an entirely new approximately 125-foot right of way, the existing 85-feet of the former Scott Boulevard alignment are believed excessive by



City of Columbia

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approximately 35-feet. Of this approximate 35-feet, 20-feet are adjacent to the applicant's property and are not improved for street purposes associated with Merideth Drive.

The current improved portion of Merideth Drive lies within an approximate 65-foot wide corridor west of the western right of way line of relocated Scott Boulevard (see attached "vacation graphic") and is not centered within this corridor. The centerline of the existing Merideth Drive improvements are approximately 35-feet from the western right of way line of relocated Scott Boulevard with the remaining "improved" corridor being 30-feet west of the road's centerline.

Merideth Drive would now be classified as a "residential" street which requires a minimum of 50-feet of right of way. The applicant's request to vacate the unimproved 20-feet of right of way that was acquired as part of the 1995 Atkinsons Woods Plat 1 and an additional 5-feet of the existing 65-foot wide corridor would result in 60-feet of right of way being retained for Merideth Drive. This retained right of way would meet and exceed the functional classification of the roadway.

It should be noted that no formal review of this request has been undertaken; however, preliminary review of City utility mapping has identified that the portion of right of way to be vacated contains public utilities. As a part of any authorized vacation process, staff would require that a concurrent request to accept a new public utility easement containing the existing utilities within the right of way would be submitted to ensure that rights presently afforded the City with respect to utility maintenance are retained. It should be further noted that based on the approved Atkinsons Woods Plat 1, a 15-foot utility easement was established along the western right of way for the existing 85-foot wide Merideth Drive corridor.

This easement coupled with the requirement that the improvements within the 25-feet of right of way to be vacated would effectively result in a 40-foot front yard setback impacting any future development on the applicant's undeveloped property. While this area cannot be used for habitable building construction, it would serve to separate any future construction from potential negative impacts of Scott Boulevard traffic and would accommodate necessary on-site parking.

The requested vacation is not believed to result in any detrimental impacts to adjacent development or operation of existing City facilities. The vacation would return land dedicated for roadway purpose that has never been used as such and is not believed to be necessary for those purposes. Furthermore, the vacation of the excess right of way will not result in a roadway corridor less than required by the city's development standards.

A copy of the applicant's request with explanation of purpose, vacation exhibit, annotated vacation exhibit, and locator maps are attached for review.



Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: None. Any relocation of existing utilities resulting from development of the former right of way would be borne by the applicant.

Long-Term Impact: Potentially revenue positive given current land status does not generate property taxes. Maintenance costs of existing public infrastructure within the right of way corridor are neutral.

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Reliable and Sustainable Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Resilient Economy, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Land Use & Growth Management, Secondary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
N/A	N/A

Suggested Council Action

Direct staff to proceed with technical review of the requested vacation and present an ordinance to vacate excess right of way upon completion of such review.