

**City of Rochester Hills
Department of Planning and Development**

**STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION
August 19, 2008**

Rayconnect, Inc. Industrial Building Site Plan Approval Request	
APPLICANT	Kirco Development 101 W. Big Beaver Rd., Ste. 200 Troy, MI 48084
AGENT	Lloyd Sova
LOCATION	Devondale and Austin Dr., North of Auburn, West of Crooks
PARCEL NOS.	15-29-452-027 and -028
FILE NO.	08-002
ZONING	I-1, (Light Industrial)
STAFF	Derek Delacourt, Deputy Director
REQUESTS	Wetland Use Permit Recommendation Natural Features Setback Modifications Site Plan Approval

SUMMARY

The parent company of Rayconnect, Inc., A. Raymond, announced plans to expand its operations in Rochester Hills after considering various sites in the Carolinas and Michigan. The project includes construction of a new 61,000 square-foot industrial building, including 9,300 square feet of offices in the City's SmartZone. A. Raymond has been in Rochester Hills since 1987, and Rayconnect, Inc. was formed in 2005. The building will be located on two vacant parcels totaling 9.9-acres on Austin Ave., currently a dead-end road, and the project is being developed concurrently with the City project to extend Austin Ave. to Devondale with provision of a 70-foot right-of-way. The extension of Austin Ave. is planned to bring further development to that area of the City.

The Austin Ave. connection project has been identified in the City's Master Land Use Plan for almost ten years; it is also identified in the City's Master Thoroughfare Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, and Local Development Finance Authority Plan. The intent of the project is to disconnect the residential portion of Devondale from the industrial/office portion of the corridor. It is also the desire of the City to provide a viable connection, (Austin Ave.) to open

the northern portion of the area to new, high quality industrial, office and flex space for development. The proposed project, incorporated with the City's road project is the first step in that direction.

This project is moving forward as a joint effort with the company, the State of Michigan, Oakland County, the City of Rochester Hills and its LDFA.

As you might recall, Mr. Anzek introduced Rayconnect, Inc. at the June 17, 2008 Planning Commission meeting prior to a press conference the next day announcing the project. The company provides fluid handling products.

The site can be currently accessed from Devondale, but the main drive will be from Austin when completed. There is an office/yard operating to the north, zoned I-1; the parcels to the west and east are vacant and also zoned I-1. The parcels directly to the south are zoned R-4, One Family Residential, and one is vacant and one has a home. There are 2.4-acres of wetlands regulated by the City and the MDEQ on the site and a portion of a wetland in the proposed right-of-way of Austin Ave.

Site Plan Details

Wetlands/Natural Features Setbacks

The City's Wetland Consultant, ASTI, has reviewed the proposal for conformance to the Wetland and Watercourse Protection Ordinance and Natural Features Setback Ordinance. The required parking on the east side of the site requires impact of .26 acre of wetland, and construction of the sedimentation basin requires impact of .04 acre. The plans propose to preserve 2.12 acres. The applicant has applied for a Permit from the MDEQ, and will require a Permit from the City. The City has also applied for a DEQ permit to extend Austin Ave., which will impact approximately .13 acre, which does not require a Wetland Use Permit from the City. A motion for recommendation is included for consideration.

The plans show a temporary and permanent disturbance of the Natural Features Setback for installation of the detention basin, fire lane, loading and parking. Approximately 700 linear feet of Natural Features Setback will be permanently impacted, which will require a Modification from the Planning Commission. There was a subsequent submittal by the applicant following ASTI's review, and the conditions in their letter of August 11, 2008 have been addressed. The applicant is in agreement with recommendations that they provide wetland enhancement at ASTI's direction, and conditions have been included in the proposed motion.

Landscaping/Trees

The Tree Conservation Ordinance does not regulate the site. The applicant states that they will try to preserve all trees over six inches in diameter if possible, and they are adding 96 trees to the plan as they would be required under the TCO. The applicant is in receipt of the comments from the City's Landscape Architect and will address all comments and post the required, to be

determined, bonds on a revised submittal prior to Final review. This is satisfactory to Staff. The parking lot islands and trees will be installed sufficiently to meet the Ordinance. Conditions of approval from the City's Landscape Architect's memo have been included in the Site Plan motion.

Buffers

There are no buffers required for the north, east or west property lines. Since the southern property line is adjacent to residential zoning, a Type A buffer would be required (50 foot width, six-foot high opaque screen wall/fence, IVO plantings). However, with the development of Austin Ave., a Type C Buffer is required and is being shown on the plans (10 foot width and IVO plantings).

Parking

According to the Ordinance, one parking space for every 550 square feet of usable floor space in the industrial area and one for every 200 square feet of usable floor area in the office requires 113 spaces. The applicant is providing 122 spaces, including 35-banked parking spaces. In addition, one space for each 500 square feet in loading area plus one for each 20,000 square feet over 20,001 square feet requires 3 loading spaces. The applicant is providing four loading spaces. There will be five handicap spaces next to the front door of the offices.

Detention

A portion of the open space for the development will be used as stormwater detention on the western and southern portions of the site. The system will have pre-treatment systems to filter the water prior to release.

As noted in the HRC letter of August 4, the public utility and road grading information is not available at this time because Austin Road is not complete. HRC reviewed the plan based on conceptual information about the storm water detention, and as the public utility and road grading design is finalized, some changes to the site plan may be required. Any further expansions to the building will also require additional review, but the plans as presented have been deemed in compliance by HRC.

Traffic

When completed, traffic will utilize Austin Ave. for its primary access. Until that time traffic, including construction traffic, will utilize Devondale for access to the site. The applicant has agreed to meet with the City's traffic engineers on a continuing basis to best manage construction traffic and to adhere to any restriction necessary for safety. The applicant also understands that they will be responsible for maintenance of Devondale until such time as the Austin connection is completed.

Also, at the applicant's request, the residents of Devondale were notified of this meeting. This project does not require notice prior to the Planning Commission meeting.

Lighting

The lighting will be consistent with the surrounding commercial and industrial uses. According to the Environmental Impact Statement, the lights will be shielded and directed downward from adjacent residential to the south. Lighting is mainly located in the eastern and northern portions of the site. A Photometric plan is included in the packet for full review.

Elevations

The building will be a combination of brick (office area) and metal siding and concrete block for the assembly and shop area. The applicant will bring colored renderings to the meeting.

**The Fire Department review was done prior to the latest submittal from the applicant, which addresses the three comments from the memo of July 30, 2008. Those notes are shown on the plan as requested. The Fire Department will be required to verify those notes prior to final approval by Staff.

As part of the technical review for this project, the plans and supplemental documentation have been reviewed by all applicable City departments and consultants and have been recommended for approval or approval with conditions. Based on the review comments included in this report or contained within the enclosed information, staff recommends approval of the following motions relative to City File No. 08-002 (Rayconnect, Inc. Industrial Building).

THANK YOU.

Wetland Use Permit Recommendation

MOTION by _____, seconded by _____, in the matter of City File No. 08-002 (Rayconnect, Inc. Industrial Building), the Planning Commission **recommends** City Council **approve** a **Wetland Use Permit** to impact approximately .30 acre for the industrial use construction (parking, loading, fire lane) and a detention basin, based on plans dated received by the Planning Department on August 13, 2008, with the following findings and subject to the following conditions.

Findings:

1. Of the approximately 2.4 acres of City-regulated wetlands on site, the applicant is proposing to impact approximately .30 acre.
2. The impact of .04 acre is located in a low-quality wetland, but it will improve water quality to be discharged into another wetland.

3. The applicant has reduced potential wetland impact by incorporating a retaining wall in the area of impact for the required vehicle parking.
4. No prudent alternatives exist for constructing the parking, fire lane and detention basin for the development.

Conditions:

1. That the applicant receive all applicable DEQ permits and Oakland County Drain Permits Prior to issuance of a Land Improvement Permit.
2. That the applicant provide a detailed soil erosion plan with measures sufficient to ensure ample protection of wetlands areas, prior to Construction Plan Approval.
3. Investigate the possibility with Staff regarding further reduction of wetland impact by means of steeper slopes, prior to Final Approval by Staff.
4. Indicate on revised plans installation of plantings, such as shrubs and canopy trees, to create an upland-wetland transition and ecotone on the wetland side of wall as mitigation for the wetland impact, to be approved by the City's Wetland Consultant, prior to Final Approval by Staff.
5. Evaluate with Staff proposed impact beyond the retaining wall to determine if it can be further reduced, prior to Final Approval by Staff.
6. Verification by ASTI that conditions from the August 11, 2008 were addressed on the current plans, prior to Final Approval by Staff.

Natural Features Setback Modification

MOTION by _____, seconded by _____, in the matter of City File No. 08-002 (Rayconnect, Inc. Industrial Building), the Planning Commission **grants Natural Features Setback Modifications** for the permanent impact to as much as 730 linear feet and a temporary impact of 28 linear feet of natural features setback associated with the required stormwater detention basin and the industrial development, based on plans dated received by the Planning Department on August 13, 2008, with the following findings and subject to the following conditions.

Findings:

1. A Natural Features Setback Modification is needed to construct the detention basin, fire lane and parking area.
2. Impacts associated with the stormwater system, parking fire lane appear to be unavoidable.

Conditions:

1. All restoration to natural features areas will utilize native seed and vegetation, to be reviewed and approved by the City's Wetland Consultant prior to Final Approval by Staff.
2. Add a note to the plans that natural features areas will be permanently marked prior to construction, to be reviewed and approved by staff prior to issuance of a Land Improvement Permit.
3. Add a note indicating that Best Management Practices will be strictly followed during construction to minimize the impacts on the Natural Features Setback.
4. That ASTI verifies that conditions from the August 11, 2008 were addressed on the current plans, prior to Final Approval by Staff.

Site Plan

MOTION by _____, seconded by _____, in the matter of City File No. 08-002 (Rayconnect, Inc. Industrial Building), the Planning Commission **approves** the **Site Plan**, based on plans dated received by the Planning Department on August 13, 2008, with the following findings and subject to the following conditions.

Findings:

1. The revised site plan and supporting documents demonstrate that all applicable requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, as well as other City ordinances, standards, and requirements, can be met subject to the conditions noted below.
2. The proposed improvement will promote safety and convenience of vehicular traffic both within the site and on the adjoining street.
3. Off-street parking areas have been designed to avoid common traffic problems and promote safety.

4. The proposed improvements should have a satisfactory and harmonious relationship with the development on-site as well as existing development in the adjacent vicinity.
5. The proposed development will not have an unreasonably detrimental nor an injurious effect upon the natural characteristics and features of the site or those of the surrounding area.

Conditions:

1. Tree Protection Fencing must be installed, inspected, and approved by the City's Landscape Architect prior to issuance of the Land Improvement Permit for this development.
2. Address any outstanding comments from the City's Landscape Architect, including from the memo dated July 28, 2008, prior to Final Approval by Staff.
3. Provide a landscape bond for replacement trees and landscaping, in an amount to be determined by the City's Landscape Architect from revised plans, prior to issuance of a Land Improvement Permit for this development.
4. Appropriate approvals from the Oakland County Drain Commissioner must be obtained prior to issuance of a Land Improvement Permit for this project.
5. Fire Department to verify that comments from memo dated July 30, 2008 have been addressed, prior to Final Approval by Staff.
6. Storm water detention must be provided conforming to the current City of Rochester Hills Engineering Design Standards. Additional information and calculations will be required on the construction plans to demonstrate conformance.
7. Address conditions of approval from the HRC letter dated August 4, 2008, prior to Construction Plan Approval.
8. Correct street labeling to read Austin Ave. rather than Austin Dr.
9. Parcel combination to be completed and legal description to be corrected, prior to construction.

Reference: Plans dated received by the Planning Department July 25, 2008 (Cover Sheet, Sheet C-1; Topo Survey, Sheet C-2; Tree Inventory, Sheet C-3; Preliminary Site Plan, Sheet C-4; Preliminary Grading, Sheet C-5; Preliminary Utility Plan, Sheet C-6; Existing Drainage, Sheet C-7; Preliminary Drainage, Sheet C-8; Preliminary Detail Sheet, Sheet C-9; Preliminary Landscape Plan and Details, Sheets L-1 and L-2; Woodland Preservation Plan, Sheet L-3; and Tree Inventory, Sheet L-4, prepared by PEA; Photometric, Sheet EP-1, Preliminary Site Plan, Sheet S-1; Preliminary Floor Plan, Sheet A-1; Preliminary Mezzanine Plan, Sheet A-2; Preliminary Elevations, Sheet A-3, prepared by Mandell, Bilovus, Lenderman & Associates, P.C.

Attachments: Letter from Kirco, dated 08/13/08; Assessing Department memo dated 07/28/08; Building Department memo dated 07/28/08; Fire Department memo dated 07/30/08; Planning and

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Development memo dated 07/28/08; ASTI Environmental Letter dated 08/11/08; HRC Letter dated 08/04/08; Parks and Forestry memo dated 07/30/08; OCDO letter dated 08/06/08; Environmental Impact Statement dated received 07/25/08; Letter from City dated 08/13/08; and PC Minutes dated 07/17/07.

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