

Justification for Rezoning of former Bluegrass Baptist School from R-1D to P-1
May 28, 2017



This rezoning is in support of the redevelopment and adaptive re-use of the existing church school, which will cease operations at the end of this year due to bankruptcy. This is a substantial economic change in the neighborhood. However, this developer has chosen to work with the school and to adaptively re-use the facility in a way that honors their past good works. The developers have owned the property since the late fall and have allowed the school to finish out the school year rent-free. After a few months of getting the right professionals together, a plan was carefully composed and the name Afton Gardens was chosen.

As a first step, the developer met with the city twice to tweak their intended elder care project. Next, they planned an additional on-site neighborhood meeting with yard signs and letters hand delivered to residents. Attendance sign-in and meeting minutes are also included with this rezoning packet. As the neighborhood was in support of this elder care project, this rezoning is submitted to move the project along. The attached meeting minutes go into greater detail as to the vision and programming of the assisted living facility, community center, child/elder day care, medical office space, gardens, and senior apartments.

The existing perimeter tree buffer is to remain, and the playgrounds will be open to the community during unused hours as has been the custom with the school. A sidewalk connection and related pedestrian easement to the park are shown on the proposed site plan. The developer is glad to restrict the lighting to be Dark Sky friendly or cut-off type fixtures. We expect that 2 detention areas will be required due to keeping the large building and bucking grades (and we understand that costs us more money).

A traffic report is provided with additional information even though the LFUCG MPO Planning staff did not require a study because it is below the threshold (meaning it is not perceived as a problem by another part of the city staff).

- 1) A Professional (P-1) zone is appropriate and the existing single family residential (R-1D) zone is inappropriate, for the following reasons:
 - a) Site is not existing duplexes; it is an existing church-school with gym.
 - b) If restricted via a development plan, the proposed P-1 zone will be no more intensive a land use than the existing zoning or use would allow
 - c) The existing church campus is maintained as redevelopment occurs.
 - d) P-1 provides for primary uses which match the church campus for: assisted living, clinic, child care center, and community center.

- 2) P-1 is the more appropriate zoning, as compared to the staff-suggested R-3 or R-4 for the following reasons:
 - a) The site has historically provided neighborhood employment, which is desired by the neighborhood. Under R-1D, R-3, or R-4 no long-term employment would occur.
 - b) The well-attended neighborhood meeting we held did not want an R3 or R4 zone. Those are uses the neighborhood does not want. See the longer minutes for exact responses.
 - c) R-3 is a close but not fully adequate zone as the medical office space would not be acceptable as a business entity leasing from a business entity. Even though the rates for the clinic are to be reasonable, they will not be subsidized.

- d) The single medical office, being of a small size and non-chain proprietorship, is unlikely to cause increased traffic. In fact, including a small medical office would likely keep traffic low, since much of the clientele is likely to come from on-site and within the neighborhood. This clinic is envisioned to be a walk-in type of general practice.
- 3) Project agrees with Comp Plan in Goal #1, A, B, C and D.
- a) "Pursue incentives and regulatory approaches that encourage creativity and sustainability in housing development" – This project creatively re-develops an existing school and church into something new for middle income persons at various life stages. This project has Redevelopment Opportunities of the Comp Plan on page 72 by reusing the existing school and gym facilities for assisted living and day care. This element also agrees with the Infill Strategy of the Comp Plan on page 99.
- b) "Plan for housing that addresses the market needs for all of Lexington-Fayette County's residents, including, but not limited to, mixed-use and housing near employment and commercial areas." – This project will provide middle-income rental units for different life stages near housing units where someone could be close to an aging parent. An integrated medical office is a necessary part of providing this type of care. By having varied housing choices, this project meets the Comp Plan as described on page 40.
- c) "Plan for safe, affordable, and accessible housing to meet the needs of older and/or disadvantaged residents." – This project directly addresses this need in middle-income elderly housing for assisted living and apartments as well as day care. The family-minded perspective of the facility will be far better than other institutional facilities without being a high priced option many cannot afford. This project also agrees with the Affordable Child Care of the Comp Plan on page 65 for the day care portion of this project.
- d) "Create and implement housing incentives that strengthen the opportunity for economic development, new business, and jobs, including, but not limited to higher density and housing affordability." – This project will create jobs where some have been lost by the closing of the church and school. By maintaining a neighborhood employer, there will continue to be an anchor for economic stability in the neighborhood. Project agrees with the Local Assets for Job Creation of the Comp Plan on page 61 and Adaptive Reuse, and Live where you work of the Comp Plan on page 74, 97.
- 4) The Armstong Mill West Small Area Plan coordinates with the vision of this project in the following ways and on the pages listed:
- a) Pg 12: "Lastly, the baby boomer generation (ages 50 to 69) also remains a large population and would prefer to age in place." This development provides precisely this goal.
- b) Pg 14 "There are very few resources and services such as grocery stores and medical offices in close proximity to neighbors". Our project includes the medical office. We removed the grocery component we desired in our early meetings with the city. It is interesting that small grocery stores are highly desired by everyone but considered mini-marts in the existing code, which are unacceptable to most zones. The graph on this page shows that most residents own one vehicle, which highlights the importance of having a in-neighborhood medical office as a walkable option for medical care.

- c) Pg 27 Shows the high rental in this area which would be a part of R3 or R4 as an alternate, which the neighborhood does not want more of.
- d) Pg 30-31 Shows the need for low to middle income housing mix. This is a middle to low income development
- e) Pg 32 "Nearly 28 percent of the current population is 65 or older almost 10 percent live alone), and in the next decade another 10 percent of the population will turn 65. Over half (54 percent) of the population has a disability, with seniors accounting for a large portion. Both an aging and disabled population present issues of accessibility, as many units may not have the facilities to accommodate their mobility needs." This directly speaks to the need for this development.
- f) Pg 47 Suggests that we should celebrate assets, which In this case is the church school (Rather than tear down and build all new R3 R4)
- g) Pg 49 Poor access to healthcare, which will be provided by the medical office.
- h) Pg 50 Need healthcare/medical, community garden, community garden, and desire to reduce crime around the park. Our project includes all of these items, especially by having 24/7 employment with eyes on the ground in the neighborhood.
- i) Pg 51 Rental properties, code enforcement and public housing rental concentration are all of great concern to the neighborhood. This is one of two main reasons why the developer is proposing P1 instead of R3 or R4.
- j) Pg 53 84% of respondents travel 1-10 miles for healthcare with a top neighborhood dislike of too many rentals.
- k) Pg 54 Summary is completely in line with our vision:
 - A safe, modernized, progressive neighborhood that presents attractive opportunities for businesses and families to grow and flourish and instill community pride.*
 - A more walkable neighborhood that is safe by design with interconnected parks and green areas.*
 - Our neighborhood will be easy and safe to travel by car, bike and foot. It will be well connected, well lit and safe at night, well-kept with quiet and friendly neighbors. The neighborhood will have safe activities for kids and teens. It will be green and visually appealing, convenient for shopping, medical services and healthy food.*

The developer has done many things that are above and beyond the city's arduous requirements to prove this is a project which is good for the community. Furthermore, the developer's team has met with staff several times to try to come to agreement for the many unique parts of this project. The development team has convinced the actual neighbors and looks forward to showing the same to those who will vote on this case.

