

# SUPPLEMENTAL STAFF REPORT ON PETITION FOR ZONE MAP AMENDMENT PLN-MAR-23-00015 MEADOW OAKS FARM, LLC



## **STAFF REVIEW**

In the period following the October Subdivision and Zoning Committee meetings, the applicant met with staff to discuss the concerns described within the initial staff report and the comments received during the committee meetings. Since that time, the applicant has submitted updated information including an updated development plan and letter of justification. The changes to the development plan are primarily related to the addition of pedestrian connections along the northern Man O War Boulevard frontage that stub into the property located at 3100 Winchester Road.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

In the time since their initial application submission, the applicant has met with the Blackford Oaks Place Owner's Association, and the Greenbrier Resident Association, as well as other adjoining property owners. The applicant indicated that these groups were supportive of the request.

## **EXPANSION AREA MASTER PLAN**

While the applicant's proposal is not in line with the recommended low-density residential land use prescribed for this area within the Future Land Use element of the 1996 Expansion Area Master Plan, the applicant opines that the request meets the overall intent behind the Expansion Area Master Plan.

The EAMP calls for Community Center areas to be more centrally located, and accessible throughout each of the sub-areas. This proposal addresses several issues of connectivity that were created when the original Community Center (CC) zone planned for Expansion Area #2.a shifted locations in 2009 away from the middle of Expansion Area #2.a to the western border, along the interstate. This shift better accommodated members of the traveling public, but resulted in a significant drop in walkability for the neighborhoods northeast of Polo Club Boulevard, such as the Blackford Oaks neighborhood. The applicant's proposal, with its connections to Feliciana Road, will provide connections to commercial and retail opportunities for these impacted neighborhoods that will not require crossing higher intensity roadways.

The EAMP calls for Community Centers to be organized around public spaces, and a mixing of uses. Unlike the existing Commercial Center developments in Expansion Area #2.a, this proposal does have intentionally designed public spaces in the great lawn, pond, and cemetery features that are reinforced with vertically mixed development.

While the recommendation of approval for the 2017 rezoning of the initial Community Center zone in this development found a residential density of 4.29 units per acre to be appropriate within the community center, the applicant contends that the proposed increase in density to approximately nine units per acre is appropriate given the property's proximity to the high intensity roadway, and the EAMP's call for vertical mixed use space, which necessitates higher density development.

In considering rezoning requests within the 1996 Expansion Area, the 2018 Comprehensive Plan states that considerations regarding the EAMP "should be in addition to, and not in place of, the Placebuilder process and criteria" (pg 268). While not in compliance with the Future Land Use Element that was envisioned in 1996, the staff does find that the proposal is in keeping with the character of the CC zone, and will serve as a community center for the planned residential component of the Meadow Oaks/ Ashford Oaks development, as well as the adjoining Blackford Oaks development as was intended in the EAMP.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES**

In response to Staff's request for more information regarding compliance with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan, the applicant has identified policies that they opine are being met with the request. The applicant indicates that their updated design provides for pedestrian scale development that effectively connects to existing neighborhoods as well as future growth anticipated in the rest of the residential development (Theme

A, Design Policies #1, 2, and 5). The proposal expands the variety of housing present

in the area, with multi-family units being introduced above the commercial and hotel uses (Theme A, Design Policy #8). The CC zone will allow additional neighborhood supportive businesses, such as restaurants, medical and dental offices, offices for businesses and professional services that will support the surrounding area (Theme A, Density Policy #3). The proposed mixed use development emphasizes large community greenspaces, as well as the site's natural features (Theme C, Livability Policy #7).

Staff finds that the Comprehensive Plan policies indicated by the applicant are being met with this request.

### **DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA**

The revised plan also addresses several of the Development Criteria previously identified by staff as requiring further clarification.

#### 1. Site Design, Building Form and Location

*A-DS7-1 Parking should be oriented to the rear of the property for non-residential or multi-family residential development; A-DS5-3 Building Orientation should maximize connections with the surrounding area and create a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.*

In staff's initial review, the location of the proposed parking areas were identified as an area where further information and justification was needed. The applicant is intending to utilize both the great lawn to the south, and the farm pond to the east as focal points for the entire Meadow Oaks development. While the applicant does wish to provide some flexibility in parking location, they opine a relocation of the parking to these areas detracts from the natural amenities. The applicant has stated that the visual impact of the parking spaces along the public roadway will be minimized by screening and the existing topography.

*D-PL2-1 Developments should aim to provide a neighborhood-serving use that does not already exist in the vicinity, or that fills a specific need.*

The applicant opines that the traffic from the hotel will help sustain the mix of retail, restaurant, and other commercial uses within the Community Center zone that cater more directly to the day to day needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, the applicant notes that the hotel will serve not only the traveling public, but can also accommodate guests of the residents in the immediate vicinity.

Overall, staff finds that the request now meets the criteria for Site Design, Building Form, and Location, as the request buffers the proposed parking areas with landscaping, provides for multi-family housing along an arterial roadway, and incorporates pedestrian oriented commercial opportunities and additional neighborhood serving uses.

#### 2. Transportation and Pedestrian Connectivity

*D-CO2-2 Development should create and/or expand a safe, connected multi-modal transportation network that satisfies all users' needs, including those with disabilities;*

The revised development plan features a sidewalk network that now spans the entirety of the Man O War Boulevard frontage, and allows for a complete connection to the larger pedestrian networks in the area.

Staff now finds that the request is in agreement with the criteria for Transportation and Pedestrian Connectivity as the proposal provides for safer and more direct pedestrian connections both within the site, and to the surrounding areas, provides for an increase in density along a major roadway.

#### 3. Greenspace and Environmental Health

The request meets the criteria for Greenspace and Environmental Health, as the request will preserve the existing farm pond for use as an amenity, will retain the existing mature trees along the existing farm road, and will improve the overall tree canopy through additional landscaping.

**STAFF RECOMMENDS: APPROVAL, FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:**



1. The proposed Community Center (CC) zone is in agreement with the 2045 Comprehensive Plan's Goals and Objectives for the following reasons:
  - a. The proposal will promote and enhance tourism by providing accommodations for vacationers and individuals traveling to the proposed healthcare campuses on Polo Club Boulevard (Theme C, Goal #1.d).
  - b. The development will include a number of amenities and uses that are attractive to young and culturally diverse professionals, as well as a workforce of all ages and talents (Theme C, Goal #2.d).
  - c. The extensive internal pedestrian network and deliberate connections to the development to the north and south provide for safe social interactions between neighborhoods (Theme A, Goal #3.a).
2. The proposed rezoning is in agreement with the Policies of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, for the following reasons:
  - a. The applicant's updated design provides for pedestrian scale development that is effectively connecting to existing neighborhoods and future growth anticipated in the rest of the Meadow Oaks/Ashford Oaks development (Theme A, Design Policies #1, 2, and 5).
  - b. The proposal expands the variety of housing present in the area, with multi-family dwelling units being introduced above the commercial and hotel uses (Theme A, Design Policy #8).
  - c. The request will allow additional neighborhood supportive businesses, such as restaurants, medical and dental offices, as well as offices for businesses and professional services that will support the surrounding area (Theme A, Density Policy #3).
  - d. The proposed mixed use development emphasizes large community greenspaces, as well as the site's natural features (Theme C, Livability Policy #7).
3. The justification and corollary development plan are in agreement with the development criteria of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.
  - a. The proposed rezoning meets the criteria for Site Design, Building Form and Location, as the proposal buffers the proposed parking areas with landscaping, provides for multi-family housing along an arterial roadway, and incorporates pedestrian oriented commercial opportunities and additional neighborhood serving uses.
  - b. The proposed rezoning meets the criteria for Transportation and Pedestrian Connectivity, as the proposal provides for safer and more direct pedestrian connections both within the site, and to the surrounding areas, and provides for an increase in density along a major roadway.
  - c. The proposed rezoning meets the criteria for Greenspace and Environmental Health as the proposal will preserve the existing farm pond for use as an amenity, will retain the existing mature trees along the existing farm road, and will improve the overall tree canopy.
4. While it was not recommended within the Future Land Use element of the 1996 Expansion Area Master Plan, the proposal is in agreement with the following aspects of the plan:
  - a. The proposal provides a greater mixing of uses centered around common public open space within the cemetery, great lawn, and farm pond.
  - b. The request helps address issues of accessibility resulting from the shift in the originally anticipated location of the Community Center in Expansion Area 2.a.
  - c. The increase in residential density is in keeping with the intent of the Community Center zone, which prioritizes a vertical mixture of uses around public open space.
  - d. The proposed CC zone expansion will provide for greater pedestrian connections to the surrounding development, allowing nearby residents the ability to meet daily needs without having to utilize a car.
5. This recommendation is made subject to approval and certification of PLN-MJDP-23-00056 MEADOW OAKS UNIT 2 (ASHFORD OAKS)(AMD) prior to forwarding a recommendation to the Urban County Council. This certification must be accomplished within two weeks of the Planning Commission's approval.