

Lexington-Fayette Urban County Planning Commission
200 East Main Street
Lexington, Kentucky 40507

RE: Zone Change Application from A-U to R-4
141 Opportunity Way, a newly created parcel of 2250 Leestown Road

Dear Chairman,



Proposed Request

AU Associates has requested that the 10 acre parcel on 141 Opportunity Way to be rezoned from Agricultural Urban (A-U) zone to High Density Apartment (R-4) zone. We submit that the proposed use is appropriate. Likewise, we believe that the parcel can be redeveloped in accord with the goals and objectives spelled out in the 2013 Lexington-Fayette Comprehensive Plan ("Comp Plan").

Location of Property

The roughly 10 acre parcel is located on 141 Opportunity way, off of Leestown Rd. The site is under the ownership of the Veterans Administration Medical Center at 2250 Leestown Rd. The property is across from Leestown Middle School and Bluegrass Community and Technical School and connected to VA Medical Center. The current Zone designation is A-U, Agricultural Urban. Most nearby parcels are also designated by A-U Zoning. The planned development will be responsible for coordinating all public utilities. The longest connection is from public works locations at the Leestown intersection on Opportunity Way. Sanitation and storm water capacity is available due to the new Town Branch Commons Corridor Project. The VA Hospital was opened in 1934 and sits on a total of 135 acres with a total of sixty-four structures on site. This specific section of the VA requesting rezoning, formerly housed medical facilities and living quarters for the staff. The buildings on the proposed 10 acre development were last occupied in the 1980s. This project will be composed of 50 units that are deed restricted for low income households that have incomes of 60% AMI (area median income) or lower, with preference given to veterans.

Justification

First, it is our conclusion that the current zoning designation is no longer an appropriate designation for the uses that this parcel proposes.

A-U zoning has been described as a "placeholder" zone for properties within the urban service area, that are not quite ready for development and until proper community services are readily available. According to our analysis, the site is ready to be developed for multifamily affordable housing.

Secondly, it is our conclusion that this rezoning request is in agreement with the 2013 Comprehensive Plan is based on the following:

"Theme A: Growing Successful Neighborhoods" (2-3)

Theme A of the comp plan expresses several ideas embracing higher quality residential living in Lexington-Fayette. It states that "Goal 1: Expand housing choices" has an objective of "plan for safe,

AU Associates, Inc.
159 Old Georgetown Street
Lexington, Kentucky 40508
Telephone (859) 233-2009
Telefax (859) 259-0401
www.auassociates.com

affordable, and accessible housing to meet the needs of older and/or disadvantaged residents" (2). This objective is met with this zone change because safe, modern and accessible affordable housing is provided for specific disadvantaged residents, in this case, veterans. This zone change allows for high density residential living for families in area that needs more housing stock and options to support Lexington's growing population. "Goal 2: Support infill and redevelopment throughout the Urban Service Area as a strategic component of growth," is supported with this rezoning. This project has identified areas of opportunity for infill and adaptive reuse that is respective of the areas current context and setting. Redeveloping existing structures that are already well within the Urban Service Area (3), instead of sprawling outwards, inefficiently using rural land is a necessity for sustainable growth in Lexington, as well as providing access to nearby LexTran Stops. "Goal 3: Provide well designed neighborhoods and communities," is also supported with this rezoning. R-4 zoning will allow for "expanded option for mixed-use and mixed-type housing throughout Lexington-Fayette County" (3). The proposed development will not only use well designed new developments and adaptive uses but will also increase the overall quality of the existing neighborhood (38).

"Theme D: Improving a Desirable Community" (7-8)

Theme D of the Comp Plan discussed ideals related to improving the standard of living in Lexington. As mentioned earlier, this zoning provides for additional housing density in a desirable location within the urban service area, while respecting the context of the neighborhood. This rezone will also bring residents into closer proximity to their needed services, as specified in Goal 3 (7), especially education (Leestown Middle and Blue Grass Technical College) and services (provided at the Veterans Administration Building).

"Theme E: Maintaining a Balance Between Planning for Urban Uses and Safeguarding Rural Land" (8-9)

The desires of Theme E specifically spell out ways to uphold the different urban and rural uses in Lexington-Fayette. This rezone aligns with Goal 1, "Uphold the Urban Services Area Concept," and Goal 3, "Maintain the current boundaries of the Urban Service Area Rural Activity Centers," by having dense development occur with the Urban Service Area, instead of a sprawling development that consumes vital rural lands (8). The new development on this parcel will occur on A-U zoned land not currently contemplated as available in the land index.

Conclusion

Given the reasons stated above, 141 Opportunity Way should be rezoned from Agricultural Urban (A-U) zone to High Density Apartment (R-4) zone. This proposal adheres to many of the applicable goals and objectives of the Comp Plan. We also submit that the current designation of A-U zoning is no longer appropriate and R-4 is appropriate. The new zoning will allow for safe and responsible development to occur that we will adhere to the demands of the Lexington-Fayette community.

Sincerely,

Jordan Lloyd
AU Associates

