

STAFF REPORT ON PETITION FOR ZONE MAP AMENDMENT

PLN-MAR-18-00018: CITADEL STORAGE PARTNERS II, LLC

DESCRIPTION

Zone Change: From a Commercial Center (B-6P) zone
To a Wholesale and Warehouse Business (B-4) zone

Acreage: 3.88 net (4.10 gross) acres

Location: 133 N. Locust Hill Drive

EXISTING ZONING & LAND USE

<u>Properties</u>	<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Existing Land Use</u>
Subject Property	B-6P	Vacant (formerly a movie theater)
To North	R-4	Multi-family Residential
To East	R-4	Multi-family Residential
To South	B-6P	Commercial Shopping Center
To West	B-3	Commercial Shopping Center

URBAN SERVICES REPORT

Roads – North Locust Hill Drive is a two-lane collector street that connects Richmond Road (US 25/US 421) to Rio Dosa Drive, also a collector street, to the northeast of the subject property. Locust Hill Drive continues across Richmond Road to the south and connects to Mt. Tabor Road. The subject property is less than 1,000 feet from the signalized intersection of Richmond Road and N. Locust Hill Drive. One access point exists for the development, which the petitioner proposed to maintain. Access to the warehouse facility is proposed to be gated.

Curb/Gutter/Sidewalks – Curb, gutter and sidewalks do exist along the subject property's frontage along N. Locust Hill Drive. Additional pedestrian accommodations will be required into the site from the public right-of-way.

Storm Sewers – The subject property is located within the East Hickman Creek watershed. Currently, a detention basin exists at the rear of the property to accommodate the site's stormwater. Additional assessment will be necessary to verify that the existing basin is adequate to serve the proposed development and to address water quality requirements of the LFUCG Stormwater Manuals. No FEMA special flood hazard area exists on the property or in its general vicinity.

Sanitary Sewers – The subject property is located in the East Hickman sewershed and is served by the West Hickman Sewage Treatment Facility, located in northern Jessamine County. Since the use of the property is proposed for a major redevelopment, the petitioner will need to secure Capacity Assurance Program approval prior to the final development plan being certified.

Refuse – The Urban County Government serves this residential area with refuse collection on Fridays; however, commercial developments often contract with a private collection service to address their specific needs.

Police – The subject property is located within the Division of Police's East Sector. The East Sector Roll Call Center is the closest police station to the subject property; it is located approximately 2 ½ miles southwest of the site on Centre Parkway in the Gainesway neighborhood.

Fire/Ambulance – Fire Station #21 is located approximately 1¼ miles southeast of the subject property, at the intersection of Mapleleaf and Dabney Drives.

Utilities – All utilities, including gas, electric, water, phone, and cable TV currently serve the site and could be reconfigured to serve the proposed warehouse use of the subject property.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND PROPOSED USE

The 2013 Comprehensive Plan's mission statement is to "provide flexible planning guidance to ensure that development of our community's resources and infrastructure preserves our quality of life, and fosters regional planning and economic development." The mission statement notes that this will be accomplished while protecting the environment, promoting successful, accessible neighborhoods, and preserving the unique Bluegrass landscape that has made Lexington-Fayette County the Horse Capital of the World.

The petitioner proposes to construct a two-story self-storage facility, and associated off-street parking. The proposed facility will be approximately 130,000 square feet of space, with 872 units available for rent.

CASE REVIEW

The petitioner has requested a zone change from a Commercial Center (B-6P) zone to a Wholesale and Warehouse Business (B-4) zone for just under four acres of property. The site is located on the north side of N. Locust Hill Drive, between the intersections of Richmond Road (US 25/US 421) and Rio Dosa Drive.

The subject property is the former location of the Movie Tavern theater complex, which moved to Jessamine County about three years ago. The immediate area along Locust Hill Drive is characterized by retail sales, restaurants, professional offices and services (B-3 and B-6P zoning), and multi-family residential (R-4 zoning). A behavioral health and rehabilitation facility is also located within the immediate area, but is accessible from Rio Dosa Drive.

The petitioner requests a rezoning to the B-4 zone in order to locate a self-storage (aka mini-warehouse) facility of almost 130,000 square feet in size. The proposal is for a two-story building of 30 feet in height, with restricted access at the front of the property.

The property was originally rezoned in 1981 from an Agricultural Urban (A-U) and a Low Density Apartment (R-3) zones to the current B-6P zone in order to develop a shopping center, including numerous outlots.

The 2013 Comprehensive Plan no longer includes a parcel-based land use element; rather, it encourages land use decisions to be made based upon small area plan recommendations, policy statements and the Goals and Objectives of the Plan. The petitioner opines that this request is in agreement with the policies, goals and objectives of the 2013 Plan.

The Planning Commission must look to the Comprehensive Plan for guidance as to whether the proposed B-4 zone is supported by the Plan at this location. The 2013 Comprehensive Plan encourages the consideration of how proposals relate to existing development in the immediate vicinity, as well as protecting neighborhoods and residential areas from incompatible land uses. The Goals and Objectives encourage creating jobs and prosperity (Theme C) by supporting local assets to further the creation of a variety of jobs and job opportunities that lead to prosperity for all (Theme C, Goals #1 & #1.a.). Furthermore, the plan also seeks to enable infill and redevelopment that creates jobs where people live (Theme C, Goal #1.d.). The plan also supports infill and redevelopment if it is respectful of the area's context and design features (Theme A, Goal #2.a.), and encourages compact, contiguous and mixed-use sustainable development within the Urban Service Area to accommodate future growth needs. Beyond the goals and objectives, policy statements in the Plan focus on the need for the development of land in the most appropriate relationships, compatibility of land uses and creating neighborhood nodes of commercial development or a focal point.

The Locust Hill Shopping Center and other adjoining commercial development has created an activity node at the intersection of Man o' War Boulevard and Richmond Road to provide the necessary goods and services to the nearby residential developments and neighborhoods in this immediate vicinity. A self-storage facility generates very few jobs, is generally highly impermeable (with very little open or

greenspace), is an inefficient use of highly limited Urban Service Area property, and is not a neighborhood-oriented land use. Although the petitioner contends that the proposed use is a “better transition’ between the B-6P and R-4 zones, and that a 5-foot buffer respects its neighbors in the adjacent residential developments, there is no need to create a transition at all because the B-6P and R-4 zones are already compatible. The recent updates to the B-6P zone reduce barriers to potential redevelopment.

The petitioner also contends that the proposed self-storage facility addresses a “vital neighborhood need;” however, there is no evidence that self-storage is necessary or desired by the residents of the neighborhood. Neighborhood-oriented businesses are those furnish the ordinary or daily necessities for the surrounding residential areas. They are businesses that are used by pedestrians (walkable) and which do not interfere with pedestrian movement. The Comprehensive Plan does call for community facilities and services, although this is not the type of facility that is discussed in the text of the Plan, which calls for healthcare services and hospitals, schools, libraries, and parks and recreation that the community truly needs. Self-storage facilities provide a convenience to local citizens, but are not walkable nor do they furnish daily necessities. The staff cannot agree with the applicant that the requested rezoning is in agreement with the 2013 Comprehensive Plan.

Additionally, the staff finds that the proposed B-4 zoning and land use are inappropriate for the subject property because they are not compatible with the adjoining land uses or consistent with any of the nearby zoning in this immediate area. The staff would note that, of 20 self-storage facilities currently located in Lexington-Fayette County, twelve (60%) are located outside of New Circle Road, what is considered an suburban environment. This is a higher percentage than the national average, which breaks down as follows: urban – 32%, suburban – 52% and rural – 16% (“2015-2016 Self Storage Industry Fact Sheet” by Self Storage Association International). The statistics would indicate that our community already has the right amount (or more than the right amount) of self-storage facilities, especially given the knowledge that three additional facilities of similar characteristics are planned/proposed for completion in the near future. There is an existing self-storage facility along Palumbo Drive that is in the process of expanding (building permit issued on August 28, 2018 for an site on Blake James Drive for climate control storage), and there are planned facilities on Manchester Street and W. Main Street that have been approved by the Planning Commission. Additional storage options in the immediate area are not needed as the existing facilities have available space.

Again, no other B-4 zoning currently exists in the immediate vicinity or anywhere along the Locust Hill Drive, Richmond Road or Rio Dosa Drive corridors. The area is characterized by neighborhood-oriented commercial development. Demand for the existing, abandoned building is clearly lacking, but potential redevelopment opportunities with the existing zoning have improved over the past six months with the revisions to the B-6P zone. The existing zoning offers many land uses that would be considered compatible within the character of the commercial activity node and the adjoining neighborhood. Ultimately, the staff finds that the existing B-6P zone is not inappropriate for the subject property as it is in keeping with the commercial zoning in the immediate area.

Lastly, the staff is not aware of any unanticipated changes of a physical, social or economic nature within the immediate area since the Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2013 that would support B-4 zoning for the subject property.

The Staff Recommends: Disapproval, for the following reasons:

1. The requested rezoning to a Wholesale and Warehouse Business (B-4) zone is not in agreement with the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, for the following reasons:
 - a. The Goals and Objectives and policy statements of the Plan encourage the consideration of how proposals relate to existing development in the immediate vicinity, and focus on protecting neighborhoods and residential areas from incompatible land uses. No B-4 zoning exists along the Locust Hill Drive, Richmond Road or Rio Dosa Drive, and a self-storage facility is not a neighborhood-oriented land use.

- b. The Goals and Objectives encourage creating jobs and prosperity (Theme C), but the proposed self-storage facility will generate very few jobs in support of this policy.
 - c. Policy statements in the Plan focus on the need for the development (or redevelopment) of land in the most appropriate relationships, compatibility of land uses and creating neighborhood nodes of commercial development or a focal point. The Locust Hill Shopping Center has been that neighborhood node that provides necessary goods and services to the adjoining neighborhoods in this immediate vicinity.
 - d. The Comprehensive Plan supports infill and redevelopment that it is respectful of the area's context and design features. In this case, the context of the area is neighborhood businesses and high density residential. Incorporating a warehouse facility within the neighborhood is out of character.
 - e. Self-storage facilities do not address a "vital neighborhood need" nor are they "community facilities and services" as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan. Neighborhoods should be served by neighborhood-oriented businesses that furnish the ordinary or daily necessities for the surrounding residential areas, and that are used by pedestrians (walkable) and which do not interfere with pedestrian movement. Self-storage facilities provide a convenience to local citizens, but are not walkable nor do they furnish daily necessities.
2. The proposed B-4 zone is not appropriate for the subject property, for the following reasons:
 - a. Statistical information would indicate that our community already has the right amount (more than the national average of 52% for suburban facilities) of self-storage facilities outside New Circle Road, especially given the knowledge that three additional facilities of similar characteristics are planned/proposed for completion in the near future.
 - b. There is no other B-4 zoning or land uses compatible with B-4 uses in the immediate vicinity, including the neighborhood business, professional office, medical and multi-family residential uses.
 - c. Additional storage options in the immediate area are not needed as the existing facilities have available space.
 3. The existing Commercial Center (B-6P) zone remains appropriate at this location because it offers many land uses that would be considered compatible within the character of the immediate area and the adjoining residential neighborhood. Recent changes to the B-6P allow compatible redevelopment options for the site that have not yet been explored.
 4. There have been no unanticipated changes of a physical, social or economic nature within the immediate area since the Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2013 that would justify a B-4 zone for the subject property.