

STAFF ANALYSIS

STAFF PERSON: Ben Loppacker, Planner I
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: September 3, 2025
PROJECT: SE-2025-00023 Chick-fil-a Parking Exception
PARCEL IDs: 07800-00-00-055A2

Special exception request to modify the minimum parking requirement in County Code § 18-4.12.6.

PROPOSAL

The applicant requests a special exception to reduce the minimum number of parking spaces otherwise required by County Code §18-4.12.6. The Code requires restaurant uses to provide 13 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area. The applicant proposes for the existing building to remain with some site adjustments, specifically: removing 3 existing parking spaces to expand the queuing area of the existing drive-through window. This proposal would not result in an increase of the gross floor area total. The applicant requests a special exception, as authorized by § 18-4.12.2(c), to reduce the required minimum parking and provide a total of 61 parking spaces on-site, instead of the 63 parking spaces otherwise required by the Code. As stated in the applicant's materials (Attachment A), the requested reduction is based on a parking study by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) trip generation data specific for fast food restaurants with drive-through windows. The applicant has also indicated that site constraints hinder adding more parking spaces to the site.

CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The property is 1.8 acres and is zoned Highway Commercial (HC), currently developed with a 4,827 square foot restaurant and drive-through building (1626 Richmond Rd.) and 64 parking spaces. The property fronts on both Richmond Rd., with access from Luxor Rd. Surrounding properties to the south and west are all zoned as mixed commercial and developed with commercial uses. The properties to the east are zoned Planned Residential Development and have been developed with residential uses as part of the Westminster Canterbury of the Blue Ridge development. The parcel to the north, which is zoned R6, Residential, is part of the Pavilions at Pantops development.

ANALYSIS OF SPECIAL EXCEPTION REQUEST

Under County Code § 18-33.9(A), proposed special exceptions are reviewed under the criteria from the applicable section(s) of the Zoning Ordinance. County Code § 18-4.12.2(c) allows for parking reductions in commercial zoning districts on an individual case if the Board of Supervisors finds that the public health, safety, or welfare would be equally or better served by the modification or waiver and that the modification or waiver would not otherwise be contrary to the purpose and intent of the Zoning Ordinance.

Staff provides the following analysis of the proposed modification against these criteria:

County Code § 18-4.12.2(c)-that the public health, safety or welfare would be equally or better served by the modification or waiver and that the modification or waiver would not otherwise be contrary to the purpose and intent of this chapter

Staff in the Planning, Zoning, and the Architectural Review Board divisions have reviewed this request and believe that the proposed 61 parking spaces would accommodate the expected needs for this use. As indicated by the ITE Parking Generation Manual 5th Edition (2019) and based on Chick-fil-a's experience, the amount of parking needed for this restaurant based on its square footage is 61 parking spaces. Staff has no public health or safety concerns with the proposed parking reduction. Parking spillover onto adjoining parking lots or streets is not expected. Therefore, the 61 spaces proposed by the applicant would meet the expected parking needs.

Granting the special exception would allow the existing landscaping buffer along the property's frontage with Route 250 to remain in place. The buffer already serves as a visual screen along the Route 250 Entrance Corridor. If the request were denied, the applicant would need to remove parts of the landscaping buffer and convert it into surface parking, which would impact the character of the area. Therefore, approval of this request would allow the existing site characteristics to remain in place and would not affect the character of the surrounding area along the Entrance Corridor.

There are no applicable supplemental regulations from Section 5 that apply to the parking reduction. Drive-through windows are subject to County Code § 18-5.1.60. This proposal meets all requirements of County Code § 18-5.1.60, including a longer drive-through lane than required, which reduces the need for the three spaces that will be removed. This special exception would be in harmony with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Ordinance, and would not negatively affect the public health, safety, and welfare as indicated above.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment C) to approve a special exception to reduce the minimum required on-site parking from 64 spaces to 61 spaces.