

STAFF ANALYSIS

STAFF PERSON: Rebecca Ragsdale, Planning Manager
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: November 15, 2023
PROJECT: SE202300028 Mechums Trestle Parking Special Exception
PARCEL ID: 05700-00-00-031A0

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, which requires restaurant uses to provide 13 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area, including outdoor seating. The applicant proposes to add 640 square feet of patio area for outdoor seating, which would result in requiring 59 total parking spaces, and requests a special exception. As authorized by § 18-4.12.2(c), the request is to reduce the required minimum parking spaces from 59 to 51 parking spaces on-site. Due to site constraints, additional parking cannot be added to the site. As stated in the applicant's materials (Attachment A), the reduction request is based on an analysis of parking requirements of similar jurisdictions. Staff has also compared that information to the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) parking manual for restaurants of a similar size, which require fewer spaces than current County Code requirements.

CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The property consists of 1.39 acres and is zoned C1 Commercial. It is currently developed with a 3,922 square foot restaurant building and 51 parking spaces. The property is located at 4300 Three Notched Road (Route 240), at the intersections with Ivy Road (Route 250) and Browns Gap Turnpike and across from the Buckingham Branch Railroad Trestle. Surrounding properties are zoned Rural Areas and are undeveloped. A future roundabout is proposed at the intersection adjacent to this property but is not expected to reduce parking on the property.

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 in 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 offers 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.

After reviewing this proposal, staff in the Planning and Zoning divisions believe that the proposed 51 parking spaces would accommodate the expected needs for this restaurant use. The applicant and staff have reviewed parking requirements of more than six local jurisdictions in Virginia, along with the ITE manual data for restaurants. Some jurisdictions distinguish between types of restaurants, including specific requirements for restaurants less than 5,000 square feet in size. A requirement of 10 spaces per 1,000 square feet is more typical. Based on this information, staff has no public health or safety concerns with the proposed parking reduction. Parking spillover onto adjoining parking lots or streets is not expected and additional parking needed would primarily be related to outdoor seating. Staff expects to review and possibly update County parking standards soon as part of the Zoning Modernization project.

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 for a restaurant use from 59 spaces to 51 spaces.