

Attachment A - Staff Analysis

STAFF PERSON: Andy Reitelbach
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: January 11, 2023
PROJECT: SE202200053 Airport Auto at Northside Drive
PROPERTY OWNER: Northside Drive LLC
LOCATION: Near Northside Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22911
PARCEL ID: 03200-00-00-022M0
MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Rio

Staff Report for Special Exception SE202200053 to permit a supporting commercial use with a gross floor area of 46% of the buildings on an industrial site, which exceeds the 25% maximum permitted by-right in the Heavy Industry zoning district (§ 18-26.2(a)). This request is associated with the proposed development of an automotive repair and tire sales center on Parcel ID 32-22M.

SPECIAL EXCEPTION REQUEST:

The applicant has requested a special exception to permit the development of a supporting commercial use that exceeds 25% of the gross floor area of the existing freestanding building or multiple buildings on an industrial site. The applicant proposes to develop an automotive repair and tire sales center, which would be designated as a supporting commercial use, with a gross floor area of approximately 20,480 square feet, which is 46% of gross floor area of the existing buildings on the industrial site. The parcel is within the Northside Industrial Park, which consists of Parcel ID Nos. 03200000007200, 032000000022C3, 03200000007000, 03200000007300, 03200000007100, 03200000002200, 032000000022M0, 03200000006700, 032000000022C5, 03200000007400, 032000000022C4, 032000000022C1, and 032000000022C6. Together these 13 parcels are considered the “industrial site” for purposes of the zoning regulation limitation on commercial uses.

This auto center is proposed on Parcel ID 32-22M, which is zoned Heavy Industry (HI). The subject parcel is approximately 9.23 acres and is located at the southwest corner of U.S. Route 29 and Northside Drive within the Northside Industrial Park. It includes a narrow pipestem that extends around Parcel ID 32-22N (See Attachment C – Location Map and Attachment D – Zoning Map).

The applicant’s narrative, providing a detailed request and justification for this special exception, along with relevant exhibits and a concept plan, is included as Attachment D.

PLANNING HISTORY:

SDP200100038 approved a site plan to allow a one-story 81,540 square foot building (that was never built) on Parcel ID 32-22M. Existing industrial uses developed on other portions of the Northside Industrial site include an equipment rental agency, a building materials store, a concrete supplier, and an auto body shop. The site is designated Heavy Industrial in the Places 29 Master Plan.

If this special exception request were approved, a site plan that complies with all relevant regulations of the Zoning Ordinance would be required. Because the subject property is located

within the Entrance Corridor Overlay District, it would also be required to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Architectural Review Board (ARB).

RELEVANT CODE SECTIONS:

The relevant regulation is provided in § 18-26.2(a) of the County Code, which is a chart identifying the permitted and the prohibited uses and structures in the County's industrial zoning districts. Under the *Commercial Uses* section, "Supporting commercial; use exceeds 25% of the gross floor area of the freestanding building or multiple buildings on an industrial site," is identified as permitted by Special Exception in the HI zoning district.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

Factors for consideration in a special exception request are described in County Code § 18-33.9(A). This section states that factors, standards, criteria, and findings, however denominated, are to be taken into consideration. The Board of Supervisors does not need to make specific findings in order to approve a special exception.

In the absence of applicable special exception factors, staff has evaluated this request based on the intent of the Industrial zoning districts and the Neighborhood Model Principles of the Comprehensive Plan.

County Code §18-26.1 Intent of Industrial Districts - Generally:

Industrial districts are intended to be for the purpose of providing places of employment and strengthening the local economic base in furtherance of the economic development policy of the comprehensive plan. To this end, the following shall be encouraged: (i) the establishment and continuation of industrial uses and their supporting uses in the locations and at the levels of intensity designated for those uses in the comprehensive plan; (ii) the establishment of new industrial uses that are appropriate for the character of the industrial districts; and (iii) the enlargement and expansion of existing industrial uses.

The proposed use of an automotive repair and tire sales center would provide a place of employment for County residents. Because this use is proposed on a parcel that is currently vacant, it does not prevent the existing industrial uses along Northside Drive from continuing their operations. Although the auto repair business would not be strictly an industrial use, such a use may also support the nearby industrial uses by providing a site for those businesses, and their employees, to drop off their trucks and other automobiles for service and repair, along with the purchase of necessary automobile equipment such as tires. This location along Route 29 would also provide a convenient spot for the proposed auto repair for other industrial properties situated in the northern areas of the County. Because the subject parcel is located in an existing industrial site, the development of an auto repair center would be appropriate for the character of an industrial district. The proposed use would not prevent the enlargement or expansion of existing industrial uses at the site, as the adjacent industrial parcel is also currently vacant.

Furthermore, the applicant has designed the use to utilize only a portion of the subject parcel, and much of the space that is to be developed will be asphalt parking lots to store automobiles awaiting repair. Although one building is proposed for the front-center portion of the parcel, the other buildings and the stormwater management areas are designed along the periphery of the parcel, providing those large contiguous areas that are either undeveloped or used for parking and vehicle storage. This design would allow for easier redevelopment in the future, if an industrial use were interested in locating on this parcel.

Comprehensive Plan: Development Areas Objective 2

*Create a physical environment that supports healthy lifestyles through application of the Neighborhood Model Principles. (*Individual principles include "Mixture of Uses" and "Redevelopment.")*

The proposed use would contribute to a mixture of uses in the surrounding area. There is residential to the south and to the west across Route 29, where the North Pointe project is being developed, along with the current industrial uses on Northside Drive. The automotive repair and tire sales center, which is a designated secondary use in the Heavy Industrial land use designation in the Places29 Master Plan, would provide a supporting commercial use in the area that could serve both the existing industrial/commercial uses in the area and nearby residents who may need to have their vehicles maintained and repaired. Allowing for an increase in the maximum percentage of the gross floor area would allow for greater flexibility for the applicant to develop the site to provide this supporting use.

Currently, there are several vacant parcels along Northside Drive, including this one. Developing this site would promote additional activity in this area, which has been designated in the comprehensive plan as an appropriate location for increased industrial and commercial activity. As mentioned in the section above, because of the proposed layout of this site, there is potential for development in the future. A significant portion of the site would remain vacant, and much of the developed areas would consist of parking lots to store the vehicles awaiting repair. These contiguous areas of vacant land and asphalt in the center and rear of the parcel could be redeveloped with another use at a later time. In addition, the proposed buildings could be retrofitted with a permitted HI use if there were interest at some point in the future.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of SE202200053 Airport Auto at Northside Drive, a special exception to permit a supporting commercial use on 46% of the gross floor area of the buildings on an industrial site, which exceeds the 25% maximum permitted by-right.