

STAFF CASE REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

Case Number:	2014-132	PC Meeting Date: 12-8-14
Applicant Request:	Special Exceptions Permit for a Climate Controlled Warehouse in LM-1 Light Manufacturing Zone	
Property Location:	221 Taft Highway	
Property Owner:	John O. Lines, Jr.	
Applicant:	Jim Morrison	
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVE, subject to conditions as stated below	

PROJECT ANALYSIS

RPA Land Use & Transportation Comments

Project Description

The applicant plans to construct climate-controlled storage buildings on this site. Each of the two proposed buildings would be 60 feet wide by 235 feet long (14,100 sq. ft.) and will be located on the east side of the lot, leaving the existing vegetation on the west side of the lot, facing Taft Highway, undisturbed. Vehicular access is proposed from Taft Highway at the south end of the lot. The applicant does not propose to provide sidewalks, parking, or dumpsters.

Site Description

This 3.87-acre site located along Taft Highway, just south of the Fairmount Pike intersection, is currently wooded and undeveloped. Immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the property is a gas line easement.

Nearby uses include the Fairmount Orchard to the north, retail (The Bread Basket) to the south, and single-family residential across Taft Highway to the west. Wooded, and currently undeveloped, land lies to the immediate east of the property.

The land slopes approximately 50 feet down from the northwest corner of the property to the southeast.

The property is located along a curve in Taft Highway, and a guardrail extends along almost the entire length of the Taft Highway frontage. A survey would be needed to determine the exact location of the guardrail in relation to the property boundary. These conditions, along with the grade of the road and the proximity to the Fairmount Pike intersection may warrant additional consideration of the access to the property.

Zoning History

Adjacent zones include the A-1 Agriculture Zone to the north and east, LM-1 Light Manufacturing Zone to the south and R-1 Residential Zone to the west across Taft Highway.

The abutting property to the south was rezoned from A-1 Agriculture Zone to M-2 Wholesale and Light Industry District, with conditions, in 1992. The same property was subsequently rezoned to the new LM-1 Light Manufacturing Zone in 2002. Currently, that property is developed with The Bread Basket (bakeries is one of three principal uses allowed in that zone).

Four (4) parking spaces are required for every 1000 square feet of net leasable floor area for the

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proposed use “or such lesser number of spaces as shall provide reasonable parking for the use of the building per approval of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.” The applicant does not propose to provide any parking on-site and will therefore need approval from the Board of Mayor and Alderman.

Plans/Policies

The property is located within the study boundary of the 1997 Walden’s Ridge Plateau Area Plan. The plan recommends a commercial center just south of the Taft Highway and Fairmount Pike intersection. The Plan does however caution against “haphazard development, resulting in poorly designed conventional strip development. Strip development typically consists on an abundance of asphalt and parking, numerous curb cuts, little or no landscaping, generic box-like buildings, and a general lack of cohesion.” As part of the Town Corridor Character Area discussion, the plan recommends important character elements that can include “small to moderate scale buildings, landscaping, architectural detailing, preservation of tree cover, and rural vistas, and compact site design with less emphasis on parking.”

Operational Comments

For non-residential development, the Town of Walden requires the applicant to hire a traffic engineer to study access issues. Approval for a curb cut on Taft Highway will also require approval from the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) for impacts to the existing guard rail.

RPA Summary

This case is a companion to case 2014-131, a rezoning request from A-1 Agriculture Zone to LM-1 Light Manufacturing Zone. In the LM-1 Light Manufacturing Zone, “Warehouses (mini or self-storage)” are a use subject to the issuance of a Special Permit by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

The Town of Walden Zoning Ordinance defines Warehouse (mini or self-storage) as “A building or group of buildings in a controlled access and fenced compound that contains various sizes of individual, compartmentalized, and controlled-access stalls or lockers for the storage of customer’s goods or wares.”

Warehouses, as a special permitted use, have the following additional requirements:

- 1) There shall be no outdoor storage of any kind.
- 2) The perimeter of the site shall have a ten (10) feet deep (as measured towards the interior of the property) landscape yard. The zoning ordinance provides specific details as to the required landscape elements.

The applicant provided a site plan showing most of the required elements except for drainage. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen may require that drainage be shown on the site plan prior to their review or choose to defer the review of drainage and other stormwater considerations to the stormwater review process. The site plan does not depict the entirety of the perimeter landscape requirement. However, it does show a 20’ deep landscape buffer along the eastern property line where the use abuts agriculturally-zoned property. Also, the applicant is proposing to leave an undisturbed buffer along much of the western and northern portions of the site. The applicant did not state in the submittal if he plans on seeking a variance from the 10’ deep perimeter landscaping requirement of the special permit.

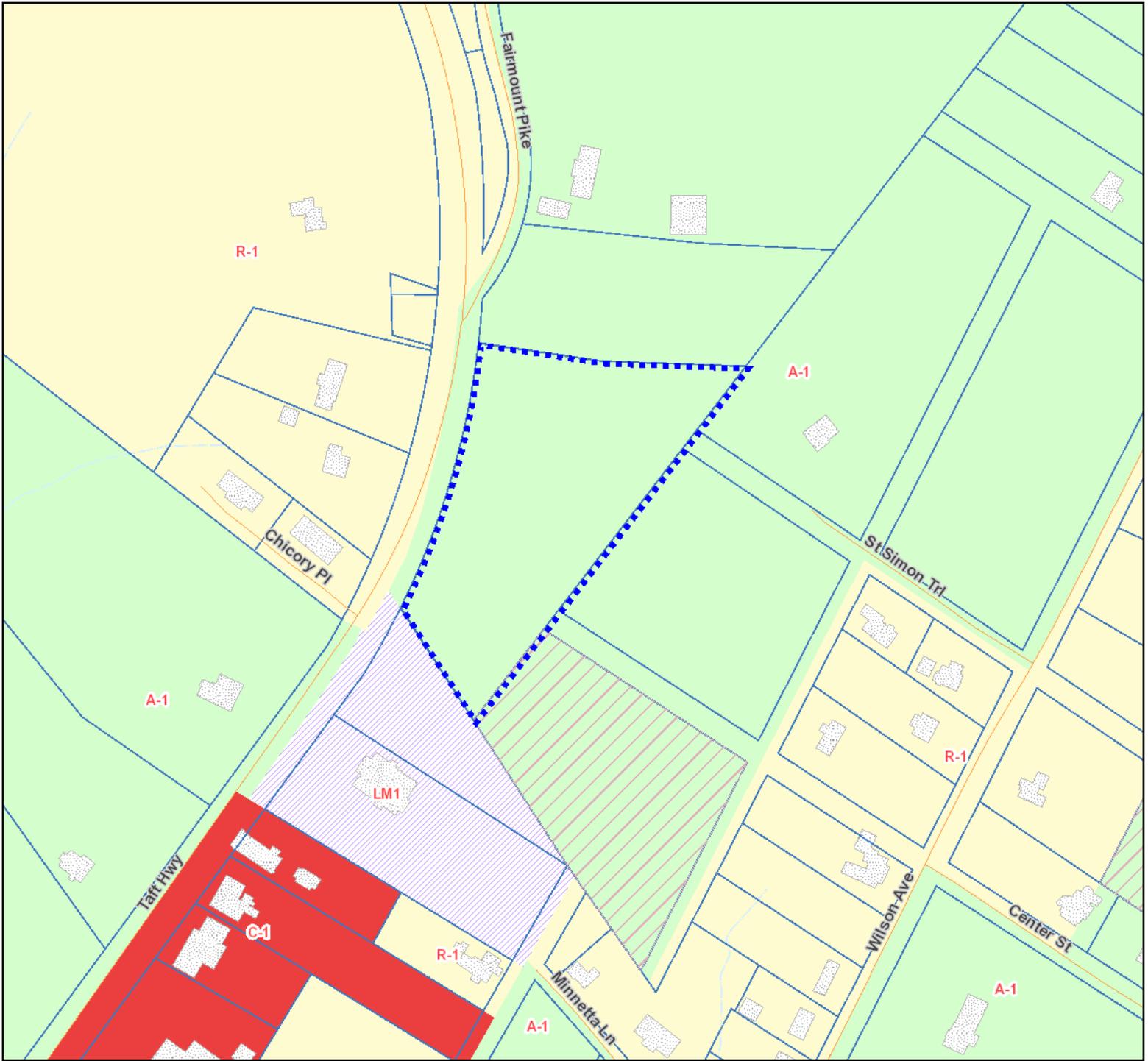
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The staff recommendation for the rezoning case for this site recommends a condition to maintain a 100' deep undisturbed buffer from Taft Highway.

The proposed use is not specifically addressed in the adopted plan for the area. As noted as part of the rezoning case for this site, this property is in the area that is a recommended location for a commercial center. While the proposed use of climate controlled warehouses would not necessarily be consistent with the surrounding residential uses, the applicant is proposing to leave the western wooded portion of the site undisturbed, which would provide a visual buffer from Taft Highway.

The RPA recommends approval of the applicant's request for a Special Exceptions Permit for a climate controlled warehouse in the LM-1 Light Manufacturing Zone with conditions to help the development meet the intent of the area plan. The following signage condition is intended to help provide a cohesive development pattern for this area by requiring similar signage to newer commercial development along the Taft Highway corridor in Walden such as The Bread Basket and Ace Hardware.

1. Limited to buildings 14,100 square feet or smaller and no more than two buildings on the site;
and
2. All exterior lighting shall be equipped with full cut-offs to direct light downward and to minimize glare, shadows, and excessive light levels.
3. Light spill on neighboring property shall not be permitted.
4. Signage, not attached to the proposed building(s), is limited to one post and panel or monument sign with a maximum sign face of 25 square feet and a maximum height of six feet. The sign shall have not internal illumination.



2014-132 Special Permit for a Climate Controlled Warehouse in LM-1 Zone

This block contains the map's metadata and branding. On the left is a small inset map of Tennessee. On the right is a north arrow and a scale bar labeled "242 ft". At the bottom center is the text "Chattanooga Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency". At the bottom right is the logo for "RPA", which consists of a stylized grid pattern above the letters "RPA".