

Name: Land Use Plan Amendment – Geyer Springs East Planning District

Location: Approximately 0.25-miles north of Baseline Road on the East Side of Scott Hamilton Drive

Request: Residential Medium (RM) to Commercial (C)

Source: Jorge Vasquez, 6900 Baseline Road

PROPOSAL / REQUEST:

Applicant requests a Land Use Plan amendment from Residential Medium (RM) to Commercial (C) on an approximate 0.7-acre unplatted parcel located on the east side of Scott Hamilton Drive approximately 0.25 miles north of Baseline Road in the Geyer Springs East Planning District.

The existing Residential Medium land use designation accommodates a broad range of housing types including single family attached, single family detached, duplex, town homes, multi-family and patio or garden homes. Any combination of these and possibly other housing types may fall in this category provided that the density is between six (6) and twelve (12) dwelling units per acre.

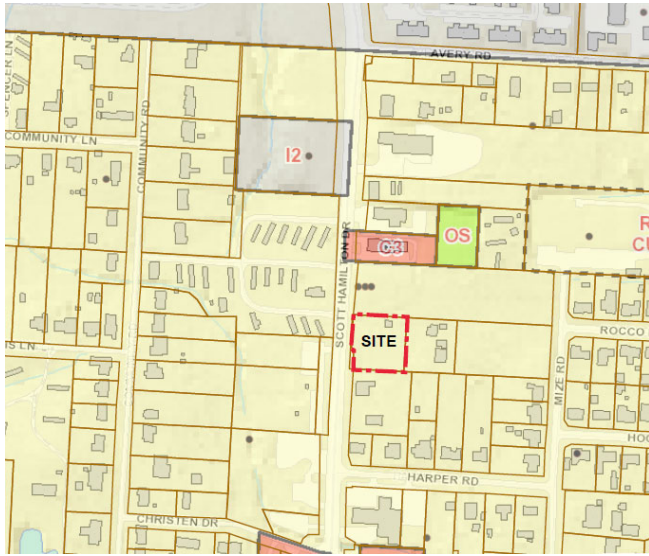
The proposed Commercial land use designation allows for a broad range of retail and wholesale sales of products, personal and professional services, and general business activities. Commercial activities vary in type and scale, depending on the trade area that they serve.

This land use amendment application is accompanied by a zoning map amendment request. It is applicant's intent to rezone the site to an Open Display Commercial District (C-4) zoning designation (File No. Z-9592).

EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING:

The subject site, zoned Residential (R-2), was previously developed with a single-family home and detached garage/shed. The single-family home was demolished sometime after 1998, but the shed in the rear yard remains. Much of the area within this portion of the East Geyer Springs Planning District was developed prior to annexation into the City of Little Rock.

Figure 1. Zoning

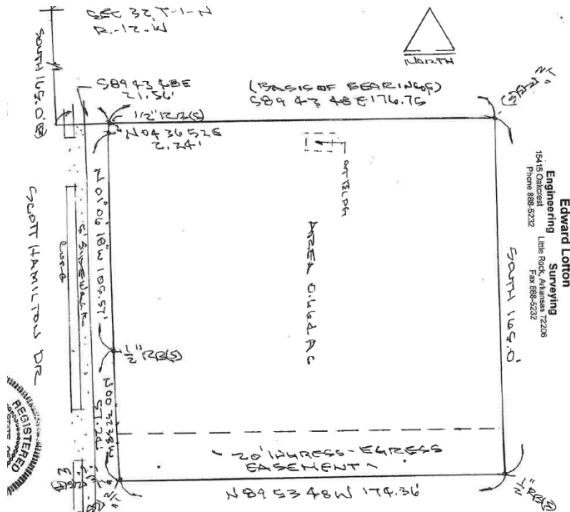


Immediately to the north of the site along Scott Hamilton Drive is a 2.5-acre parcel, undeveloped, zoned R-2. Immediately north of this vacant tract is a liquor store, zoned General Commercial District (C-3). Beyond the liquor store is a bar operating in a commercial structure on land zoned R-2 (the bar has been a commercial operation prior to 1998, the bar is a legal non-conforming use).

On the two R-2 zoned parcels south of the site are three detached single-family homes. The parcel immediately to the east of the subject site is a R-2

zoned parcel where a detached single-family home was developed. This parcel does not have street frontage - but instead is accessed by a 20-foot ingress/egress easement that runs along with southern part of the subject site (see Figure 2, below).

Figure 2. Ingress/Egress Easement

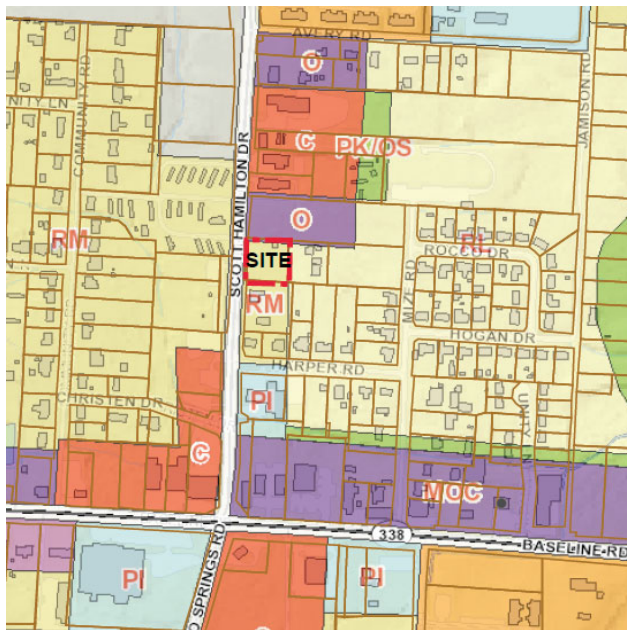


West of the site, across Scott Hamilton Drive, is a mobile home park situated on R-2 zoned lands; south of the mobile home park is a large parcel where a car lot is in operation on R-2 zoned lands (both land uses are legal non-conforming).

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN AND RECENT AMENDMENTS:

Much of the development in the area occurred before annexation into the City of Little Rock, when it was not subject to zoning controls. This resulted in a haphazard placement of commercial uses encroaching into single-family residential neighborhoods. One of the prime purposes of the Land Use Plan is to protect and stabilize existing neighborhoods. The southern half of the district lies outside city limits and still does not have zoning controls.

Figure 3. Zoning



North of the site is an unplatted parcel with an Office (O) land use designation, the Office (O) designation was intended to provide the adjacent Residential uses with a buffer from the Commercial node immediately to the north where there is a liquor store and a bar (Long Branch Original Biker Bar).

East of the site are lands designated Residential Low (RL), these lands are developed with detached single-family homes, some within platted subdivisions, others on more rural lots (unplatted and larger).

West of the site, across Scott Hamilton Drive, the majority of lands are designated Residential Medium (RM); this area is made up of detached single-family homes and manufactured homes. South of the site is land designated Residential Medium. There are three detached single-family homes on two parcels on this land.

Most commercial uses within the existing Commercial Future Land Use designation area along Scott Hamilton Drive, north of the site, were developed when these lands were outside the jurisdiction of the City of Little Rock. Thus, City zoning controls were not applicable at the time. The package/liquor store, between an existing bar and an industrial equipment supplier, is the only use/parcel within this Commercial area that obtained a zoning change from the City of Little Rock

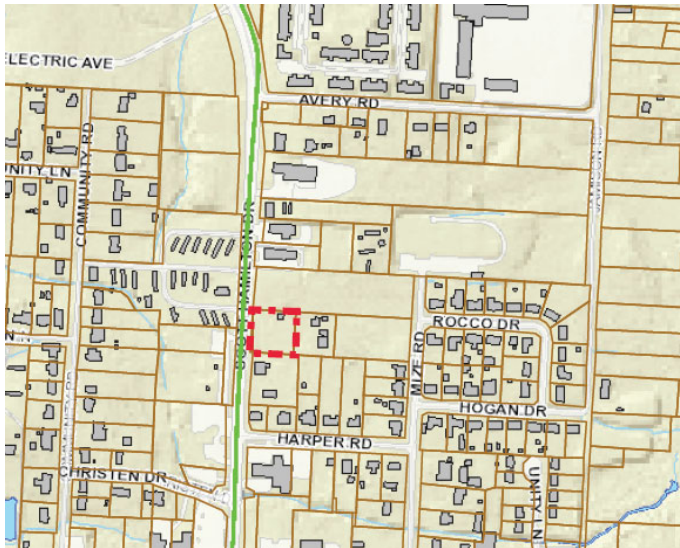
Numerous curb cuts and uneven setbacks cause visual problems and create traffic hazards within commercial areas of Geyer Springs East. The Future Land Use Plan tried to address these problems by limiting the amount of commercial land use. The Plan attempts to discourage further strip commercial development along major roads by showing Commercial at the major intersections and in areas of concentrated commercial use along the arterials. Along most of Baseline Road in

areas of little to no existing commercialization the Plan shows Office (O) as the future development pattern.

A land use amendment case has not been heard in the East Geyer Springs Planning District since 2007, when a site east of Utility Lane and Baseline Road (adjacent to the Cardboard Baler/Trash Compactor repair operation) was denied a change from MOC to C; this site remains undeveloped.

MASTER STREET PLAN:

Figure 4. Zoning



The subject site has frontage along Scott Hamilton Drive, the lot immediately to the east of the site uses a second curb cut in the southern part of the lot for its access. Scott Hamilton Drive is shown as a Minor Arterial.

Minor Arterials provide the connections to and through an urban area. Their primary function is to provide short distance travel within the urbanized area. Generally, these roads are spaced at one mile intervals and have a right-of-way of 90 feet.

Since a Minor Arterial is a high-volume road, a minimum of 4 travel lanes is required. Future development at this site may require dedication of right-of-way and may require street improvements for entrances and exits to the site.

BICYCLE PLAN:

There is an existing Class III Bike Route shown along Scott Hamilton Drive. The Master Bike Plan designated Scott Hamilton Drive, a 4-lane minor arterial with a posted speed limit of 40 mph, for a future Class II Bike Lane. Future development at this site may require dedication of right-of-way and may require street improvements for entrances and exits to the site.

PARKS:

There are no city recognized parks in the immediate vicinity.

HISTORIC DISTRICTS:

There are no city recognized historic districts that would be affected by this amendment.

ANALYSIS:

The subject site is located in an area of the City that was largely developed prior to being annexed into the City of Little Rock. Many of the commercial areas within the Geyer Springs East Planning District are composed of numerous curb cuts and uneven setbacks cause visual problems and create traffic hazards.

The Land Use Map attempts to discourage further strip commercial development along major roads by showing Commercial at the major intersections and in areas of concentrated commercial use along the arterials. Along most of Baseline Road in areas of little to no existing commercialization the Plan shows Office (O) as the future development pattern.

To the east (rear) of the lot, there is a land locked residential parcel. This residential parcel has a twenty (20) foot ingress/egress easement across the subject site. If a zoning change and a commercial development at this site were to occur, the twenty (20) foot ingress/egress easement would have to be maintained.

One of the prime purposes of the Land Use Plan is to protect and stabilize existing neighborhoods. The change of land use, and a subsequent zoning change at this site to a Commercial zoning designation would directly impact the adjacent lot and neighborhood at large, increasing the encroachment of Commercial uses.

Many of the Commercial uses near the site are legal non-conforming. Their use was grandfathered when they came into the City. Non-conforming uses are not allowed to expand without obtaining a zoning change that would bring their use into compliance.

A change in land use at the site to a Commercial land use appears to conflict with the City's long-term goals.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS:

Notices were sent to the following neighborhood associations: Upper Baseline Windamere. Staff has received no comments from area residents or from Neighborhood Associations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends a denial of the applicant's request to amend the land use designation at the subject site from Residential Medium (RM) to Commercial (C) at the subject site.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(JULY 8, 2021)

Walter Malone, Planning Staff reviewed the application for a Land Use Plan Amendment. The area was mostly developed prior to annexation and there are several non-conforming businesses in the general vicinity. Both Baseline Road and Scott Hamilton Drive have been widened from two-lane roads to four and five lane Arterials since annexation. This has brought the roads closer to the previously existing structures. There is commercial development and zoning at the Scott Hamilton-Baseline intersection to the south. Within this commercial are there are vacant commercial structures as well as vacant commercial land. In this location on Scott Hamilton there is no intersection to build a commercial node around and a change could lead to the commercial strip development of the road. For these reasons staff cannot support the request. Mr. Malone turned the meeting over to Monte Moore for the zoning item (see Z-9592 for complete minutes).

Ms. Judy McDaniel, indicated she was here to help translate for Mr. Vasquez (the applicant) who does not speak English well. She gave some history of Mr. Vasquez and the church he pastors in southwest Little Rock. She indicated that Mr. Vasquez had cleaned up the site since he acquired it and provided pictures. She indicated the things he has done have been of high quality.

Mr. Jorge Vasquez, address the commission. He talked about the thirteen years he has been working in the area and his path to citizenship. Mr. Vasquez discussed the mission of the church and that the church was losing some of its funding. The intend of the park lot is to support the church. The was discussion about changing the lives of families. Mr. Jorge Vasquez Jr. translated the rest of Mr. Vasquez presentation. More detail about the Church and its activities was presented as well as Mr. Vasquez's activities. Commissioner Todd asked about the location of the church being different than this application. It was confirmed there are different locations. Commissioner Vogel indicated that the area would not development residentially and the Plan should be changed. Commissioner Berry talked about the need to review the Land Use Plan in the area. There was discussion about the need for redevelopment in the area. Jamie Collins Director of Planning and Development responded to Commissioner Rahman's question about process. A motion was made to approve the requested application minus Staff's recommendation of denial. By a vote of 7 for 1 against, 2 absent and 1 open position the amendment was approved.

At the end of the hearing Commissioner Berry moved to ask Staff to review the Land Use Plan along Scott Hamilton Drive from Baseline Road to Interstate 30. By a unanimous voice vote the motion was approved.