

FILE NO.: LU2022-15-01

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

Location: Northwest Corner of Mabelvale Pike and Sibley Hole Road

Request: Light Industrial (LI) to Commercial (C)

Source: Jesse Griffin, PE, 11719 Hinson Road, Little Rock

**PROPOSAL / REQUEST:**

Applicant requests a Land Use Plan amendment from Light Industrial (LI) to Commercial (C). The site is an approximate 18-acre unplatted parcel. The application is located northwest of the Mabelvale Pike and Sibley Hole Road intersection, in the Geyer Springs West Planning District.

The existing Light Industrial (LI) land use designation provides for light warehouse, distribution or storage uses, and/or other industrial uses that are developed in a well-designed "park like" setting.

The proposed Commercial (C) 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 accompanies a zoning map amendment request. It is the applicant's intent to rezone the site to a General Commercial District (C-3) zoning designation (File No. Z-9655).

**EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING:**

The subject site is a large undeveloped tract. The current zoning is Single Family District (R2). This area of the City has a hodge-podge of land uses. The I-30 frontage road, University Ave, I-30, and I-430 serve as easy access to this area of southwest Little Rock. The area is made up of a mixture of residential (single-family & multifamily units), big-box retail and neighborhood commercial, industrial sites, and the new Southwest Little Rock High School campus.

**Figure 1. Zoning**

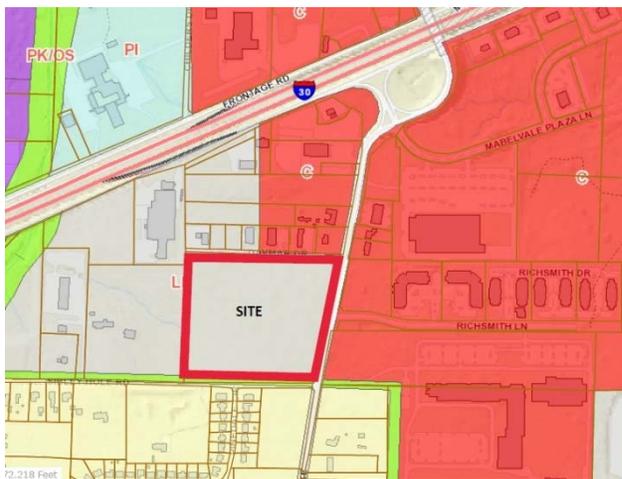


North of the site are seven approximate half acre unplatted parcels. Most of these tracts have been developed with an industrial type of metal building. Some of these parcels are zoned Light Industrial District (I-2), but most are non-conforming uses on Single Family District (R-2) zoned lands. A large tract to the west has Single Family District (R-2) zoning. The parcel is developed with a rural residential single-family home. South of the site across Sibley Hole Road are additional R-2 zoned lands. The land immediately to the south is currently a vacant tract. To the west is the entrance of the Pinedale Cove subdivision, then another large lot rural residential single-family home. To the east across Mabelvale Pike is the new Southwest Little Rock High School. The land is zoned Planned Development - Commercial (PD-C). North of the new high school are two multi-family developments (the Orchards of Mabelvale and the Valley Estates of Mabelvale) on lands zoned Planned Development - Residential (PD-R) and General Commercial District (C-3). In addition to the apartments north of the high school, there is a 2+ acre vacant site zoned C-3 with frontage along Mabelvale Pike.

### FUTURE LAND USE PLAN AND RECENT AMENDMENTS:

The City's Land Use Plan Map shows Commercial (C) land uses at road intersections and adjacent to I-30. A regional community shopping area is developing at the Interstate 30-Baseline Road interchange, east of Interstate 30. This is northeast of the subject site.

**Figure 2. Comprehensive Plan**



The site is within an area planned as a high intensity land use corridor characterized by commercial and industrial land uses. North of the site, lands are shown as Commercial (C) and Light Industrial (LI). The development to the north is generally industrial in nature. Lands east of the site, across Mabelvale Pike are all shown as Commercial (C). But immediately to the east and southeast development is mostly non-commercial land uses, including a school and apartments. Lands south of the site are designated Residential Low Density

(RL). This area consists of existing low density residential uses – large-lot residential and a single-family subdivision. West of the site is designated for Light Industrial (LI). Light industrial uses have not developed on the parcel immediately to the west. A rural residential single-family home still exists on this tract. On the Light Industrial lands to the northwest is an established industrial land use (fan manufacturer).

MASTER STREET PLAN:

The site is bound to the east by Mabelvale Pike, designated a Minor Arterial. To the south is Sibley Hole Road which is shown as a Collector.

Minor Arterials provide the connections to and through an urban area. Their primary function is to provide short distance travel within the urbanized area. Since a Minor Arterial is designed to be a high volume road, a minimum of 4 travel lanes with a 90-foot right-of-way and two sidewalks is required.

The primary function of a Collector is to provide a traffic connection from Local Streets to Arterials or to activity centers, with the secondary function of providing access to adjoining property. The Collector system should not be continuous but should direct traffic to Arterials. This class of road is generally at a spacing of a quarter to a half-mile. A 36-foot-wide section with a 60-foot right-of-way and one sidewalk is required.

Neither Mabelvale Pike nor Sibley Hole Road are currently built to standard. At the time of redevelopment a change in the section may be required.

BICYCLE PLAN:

The Master Street Plan shows a Class II Bike Lane proposed on Mabelvale Pike. Class II Bike Lanes consist of a paved area on both sides of a roadway with a painted stripe separating the bikeway from motor vehicle traffic. A Class II Bike Lane is used for safety reasons where mixing of bicycle and motorized vehicles is unsafe for both. These routes may either be a smooth paved shoulder or a section of the paved roadway. Class II Bike Lanes require minimal construction and are likely to be located on higher volume and speed roadways.

There is no existing bicycle infrastructure along Mabelvale Pike or Sibley Hole Road.

PARKS:

There are no city recognized parks in the immediate vicinity.

HISTORIC DISTRICTS:

There are no city recognized historic districts in the vicinity of this amendment.

**Figure 3. Master Street Plan**



ANALYSIS:

The subject site is situated between I-30 and Mabelvale (a section of Little Rock originally platted as Mabelvale before annexation). Large areas of Commercial (C) were put on the Land Use Plan Map in the 1990s at the Baseline and Mabelvale Pike interchange with Interstate 30. Light Industrial (LI) was shown along the interstate from this commercial node west to the Interstate-430 interchange. In the 1990s, commercial uses moved from the Baseline-Geyer Springs Roads intersection to the Baseline-Interstate30-Sible Hole Road interchange. This site is the eastern edge of the Light Industrial (LI) area with Commercial (C) show to the east.

Development in the vicinity was previously characterized by limited sporadic industrial uses and a few low-density residential developments. South of the application area has been large-lot residential since the time of annexation around 1980. The Pinedale Cove subdivision, southwest of the site, dates from the late 1980s and early 1990s. There is an application for the property due south, across Sibley Hole Road for a church (Z-9648).

The most recent development has been to the east. Along Mabelvale Pike to the northeast has been largely commercial in nature – tire retail store and equipment rental business. To the east, across Mabelvale Pike two multi-family developments have been completed- the Orchards of Mabelvale and the Valley Estates of Mabelvale. The most recent activity in the vicinity is the new Southwest Little Rock High School campus. This is on some 60-acres southeast of the site, across Mabelvale Pike.

A Commercial land use at this site would likely bring more traffic and people into the area. It could also serve patrons at the high school campus, long term residents, and those occupying the new multifamily developments to the east. Given how the residential properties are set back south of Sibley Hole Road, thoughtful design of any new commercial development could reduce any potential negative impacts. The request to amend the Future Land Use Map to Commercial (C) at the subject site would expand the amount of commercial lands in the area. As noted earlier in the Staff Report areas shown for Commercial (C) have been developed as both multifamily and as a high school. The result of these actions removed over 70-acres proposed for commercial use. These changes with the proposed amendment would result in a net reduction of lands proposed for commercial use within the immediate vicinity.

The change does not include the Park/Open Space (PK/OS) area along the north side of Sibley Hole Road. This would further protect the existing and proposed Residential Low Density (RL) areas along the south side of Sibley Hole Road. The amendment in land use at the site would not eliminate in entirety the amount of undeveloped lands designated for Light Industrial (LI) in this area. Nor would the extension of the Commercial (C) designation onto these lands preclude some uses that would be allowed in a light industrial zoned area. In recent years, there has not been an increase in the number or size of the light industrial uses developed or proposed in the vicinity.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS:

Notices were sent to the following neighborhood association: Pinedale and Southwest United for Progress. At the time of writing, Staff had received no comments from area residents or from Neighborhood Associations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends approval of the applicant's request to amend the land use designation at the subject site from Light Industrial (LI) to Commercial (C).

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PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(DECEMBER 9, 2021)

The item was placed on consent agenda for approval. By a vote of 10 for, 0 against and 1 vacancy the consent agenda was approved.