

Summary of Planning and Zoning Commission Votes
 Regular Meeting of the Aurora Colorado Planning Commission
 June 24, 2020

Agenda Item #	Item Description	Plg Dept Recom	Plg Comm Action*	Est. City Council Schedule**
5a.	FITZSIMONS VA LIGHT RAIL DEVELOPMENT – ZONING MAP AMENDMENT (Ward I) CASE MANAGER: Stephen Rodriguez APPLICANT: Ruschmeyer Corporation Development Application: DA-2225-00 Case Number: 2020-2001-00 General Location: South of the intersection of Wilderman Place and E 17 th Place	Recommend Approval	Recommended Approval For Approval: 7 For Denial: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 0	City Council Meeting Date July 20, 2020

PLEASE NOTE:* Planning Commission approvals and denials are always listed in terms of the APPLICANT'S original request, regardless of whether the Commission's motion was phrased as a motion to approve or to deny. For example, Commission members voting FOR a motion to deny approval are listed as voting for "denial".

** City Council hearing dates listed are preliminary—final dates may be subject to change.

Planning Department
City of Aurora, Colorado

SUMMARY OF PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIONS

Project Name: FITZSIMONS VA LIGHT RAIL DEVELOPMENT

Planning Commission Hearing Date: June 24, 2020

City Council Meeting Date: July 20, 2020

Ward: Ward I

Project Type: Zoning Map Amendment (Rezoning)

DA Number: DA-2225-00

Case Number(s): 2020-2001-00

Location: QS:04G – South of the intersection of Wilderman Place and E 17th Place

Case Manager: Stephen Rodriguez

Description:

The applicant, Ruschmeyer Corporation on behalf of the property owner, Dwight Lieb, is requesting a Zoning Map Amendment (Rezone) from R-1 (Low Density Single-Family District) and I-1 (Business/Tech District), to MU-TOD (Mixed-Use Transit Oriented Development District), for a 3-acre site located in Subarea A. The site is located east of the VA Hospital on Fitzsimons Parkway, and is generally bounded by I-225 to the east, E. 17th Place to the north, and Colfax Avenue to the south. The subject property is occupied by seven existing single-family dwellings south of E. 17th Place, vacant land south of E. 17th Avenue, is located within the Fitzsimons - Colfax Station Area Plan and is identified as a primary area for redevelopment.

The future vision is for the redevelopment of the existing property as medium to high intensity commercial, residential, hotel, civic and entertainment uses, and office development. The preliminary concept plan reflects residential and retail/office next to the adjacent light rail, transitioning to higher density residential that will include ground floor retail fronting Tollgate Creek. Additional retail and underground parking are shown conceptually on the sketch plan. Resident amenities, public plazas, public art, structured urban streets and clear pedestrian routes-of-travel are also required. The elements will be incorporated into a master plan and site plan illustrating these concepts and will be submitted under a separate application at a future date. The *conceptual* plan has been provided in Exhibit D.

The site is identified within the Fitzsimons-Colfax Station Area Plan as TOD-Core. The goal is to redevelop the site as a mixed-use high-density project in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan, Station Area Plan, and MU-TOD zoning district, with direct street access to the Colfax Station and the Fitzsimons/Anschutz Medical Campus.

The Zoning Map Amendment is required be approved by the City Council in order to permit the proposed high intensity mix of uses.

Ten adjacent property owners and eight registered HOA's were notified of the zoning map amendment (rezone) application and no community comments were received. Staff received one call from a long-time adjacent resident, requesting an update on the application and general feedback on development in the area. No written comments were received. Based on the absence of community comments, a neighborhood meeting was not held.

Testimony Given at the Hearing:

Stephen Rodriguez, Case Manager, gave a presentation of the item. Commissioner Bush noted that there is a lot of wildlife in the area and asked what consideration is being given to them. Mr. Rodriguez responded that at the site plan level the applications will be referred to the State of Colorado Wildlife.

Commissioner Hogan asked if there is going to be a challenge with the development being near a flood plain. Mr. Rodriguez responded that to his knowledge, the subject property is not in a flood plain, however, any issues would be addressed during site planning and civil engineering review in the future by the city's flood plain administrator and FEMA if required.

Chairman Lyon asked if the Planning Commission will see this project again in the future. Mr. Rodriguez responded that yes, site plans and the master plan will come before the Planning Commission for approval in the future. Chairman Lyon noted that if this project was in Area C there would not be a public hearing; it would be approved administratively. He further stated that as a resident of Area C he does not believe that projects should be approved differently from one area to another, all should be approved the same way and give residents in all areas the opportunity to voice concerns at a public hearing.

Commissioner Turcios noted there is a homelessness problem in the area and asked staff if the city will require that the applicant reach out to them and/or coordinate with community organizations that help the homeless. Mr. Rodriguez responded that this is not a city requirement, however, the city always encourages that applicants work with organizations like this to address the homeless issue. Commissioner Turcios went on to ask about displacement of residents regarding the single-family homes included in the rezone and Mr. Rodriguez responded that Mr. Dwight Lieb owns the homes and that there may be some residents who still live in the homes in the interim. Chairman Lyon stated that the issue could be addressed in the future public hearing for this project area.

Michael Sheldon, applicant representative, 8400 S Crescent Pkwy, Suite 682, Greenwood Village, stated that the homelessness issue will be examined and investigated as part of this development.

Commissioner Gaiser asked about the affordable workforce residential and if the Aurora Housing Authority is or would be involved. Mr. Sheldon stated that they will be working with the Aurora Housing Authority and that extent of the affordable workforce housing component will be determined at the site plan level.

Commissioner Turcios stated that there is also a task force created by the City Council and they would be a great resource to work with.

Robert Evans, 2653 Xanadu Street, Aurora, CO, a citizen, stated concerns regarding construction traffic routes negatively affecting the Morris Heights neighborhood. Mr. Evans asked if Fitzsimons Pkwy can be blocked off so that construction traffic can be rerouted and cannot come through the neighborhood. Mr. Evans went on to state that cars travel at excessive speeds through the neighborhood currently. Brianna Medema Traffic Engineering responded that Traffic Engineering requires a Traffic Impact Study at the time of site plan analyzes signal timing and looks at construction traffic in residential areas. Ms. Medema stated that the city website is available to look at traffic calming options for the Morris Heights neighborhood. Ms. Medema went on to state that a Traffic Control Plan with construction traffic routes is required, and that the developer is required to follow those specific routes. Planning Manager, Brandon Cammarata, stated that traffic would be looked at later in the site plan process. Mr. Sheldon responded and agreed that traffic issues will be examined later in the development process.

Planning Commission Results

Agenda Item 5a - Zoning Map Amendment from R-1 and I-1 to MU-TOD

A motion was made by Commissioner Bengen and seconded by Commissioner Bush.

Move to recommend approval to the City Council the Zoning Map Amendment from R-1 and I-1 to MU-TOD because the proposal complies with the criteria in Section 146-5.4.1(C) of the Unified Development Ordinance for the following reasons:

1. It is compatible with the spirit and intent of the Aurora Places Comprehensive Plan.
2. The applicant has demonstrated that the change in zoning can be made compatible with surrounding development.
3. The applicant demonstrates that the proposed change in zoning will not create significant dislocations of tenants or occupants of property.

Further Discussion:

No further discussion occurred.

Action Taken: Recommended Approval
Votes for the Zoning Map Amendment: 7
Votes against the Zoning Map Amendment: 0
Absent: None
Abstaining: None