



Legislation Text

File #: 2022-1482, Version: 1

Public Hearing: YES NO **Department:** Planning & Sustainability

SUBJECT:

COMMISSION DISTRICT(S): Commission District 04 Super District 06

Application of AK Memorial Shopping Center, LLC to rezone properties from C-1 (Local Commercial) to OD (Office Distribution) Zoning District to allow for OD (Office Distribution) uses, which may include film/movie/tv production studios., at 5615 Memorial Drive.

PETITION NO: D3. Z-22-1245670 (2022-1482)

PROPOSED USE: Film/movie/tv production studios.

LOCATION: 5615 Memorial Drive, Stone Mountain, Georgia 30083

PARCEL NO. : 18-070-03-007, 18-070-03-011, 18-070-03-012

INFO. CONTACT: Brandon White, Planning Manager

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PURPOSE:

Application of AK Memorial Shopping Center, LLC to rezone properties from C-1 (Local Commercial) to OD (Office Distribution) Zoning District to allow for OD (Office Distribution) uses, which may include film/movie/tv production studios. The property is located on the south side of Memorial Drive, approximately 200 feet west of Hambrick Road at 5615, 5611, and 5639 Memorial Drive in Stone Mountain, Georgia. The property has approximately 610 feet of frontage along Hambrick Road and 800 feet of frontage along Memorial Drive and contains 16.46 acres.

RECOMMENDATION:

COMMUNITY COUNCIL: (August 2022) Approval. (April 2022) Approval.

PLANNING COMMISSION: (September 1, 2022) Full Cycle Deferral. (May 5, 2022) No Recommendation.

PLANNING STAFF: Approval with Conditions.

STAFF ANALYSIS: The applicant is seeking rezoning of the subject properties to repurpose all or a portion of the site for film/movie/tv production studios or to continue with retail and other commercial use options. The applicant may use all or a portion of the existing building “to provide offices and mill space to support the studio space.” Notably, the proposal may include construction of 2-3 sound studio buildings in front of the existing building. Outdoor filming on-site is not planned. This portion of the Memorial Drive corridor is marked by a repetitive pattern of commercial uses (e.g., fast food chains, retail, gas stations, etc.) in varying stages of activity, vacancy, or blight. The proposed rezoning for a film studio would facilitate the repurposing

of the site and provide a unique opportunity for a catalytic project along the Memorial Drive corridor. The future land use change could spark the conversion of this neighborhood center character area to commercial redevelopment corridor. The intent of the Commercial Redevelopment Corridor (CRC) Character Area is to “promote the redevelopment of declining commercial corridors and to improve the function and aesthetic appeal of more stable commercial corridors.” CRC commercial zoning options include: OI (Office-Institutional), OIT (Office-Institutional-Transitional), NS (Neighborhood Shopping), C-1 (Light Commercial), C-2 (General Commercial), and OD (Office-Distribution). The proposed film studio use is only permissible in the OD (Office-Distribution) Zoning District, the M (Light Industrial) Zoning District, and select overlay districts. Moreover, if approved, the rezoning proposal may align with CRC character area guidelines including streetscape enhancements along its frontages, improved signage, and the transformation of a largely unused parking lot into a more functional use. Rather than a neighborhood focal point, this conversion opens up the corridor for consideration of non-noxious, light industrial uses; flex industrial use; and other innovative opportunities that may reinvigorate a corridor of outdated commercial shopping plazas and stimulate the economic activity. The film studio proposal may accomplish some of the *Memorial Drive Revitalization Corridor Plan* goals:

- Initiative 1.6-Re-Brand the Corridor, reflects the desire to shift how the corridor is viewed. The County is in the process of embarking on a rebranding effort for the Memorial Drive Corridor to improve signage, placemaking, wayfinding, and identity. This site should be prominently identified.
- Initiative 1.8-Market for Filming, indicates a desire to increase interest in active filming along the corridor by area TV/film producers. This proposal brings the TV/film industry to the corridor.
- Initiative 2.2-Establish an Arts Corridor, to embrace and cultivate the arts community in the area. This proposal can contribute to this initiative. The applicant has pledged to design a mural along the perimeter fencing of the complex in addition to other partnerships with members of the art community.
- Initiatives 3.1-Address Changes in the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning & 3.2-Expedite Permitting & Approvals, to lay the regulatory framework to make it conducive for desired development along the corridor. In addition to the future land use and rezoning applications, a proposed text amendment to permit increased height of structures without a special land use permit (SLUP) in the OD (Office Distribution) Zoning District, subject to conditions is also on this agenda. Therefore, upon review of Section 7.3.5. of the *Zoning Ordinance*, staff recommends “Approval, with conditions of the rezoning request”.

If approved, Staff recommends the attached conditions.

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: (September 1, 2022) Full Cycle Deferral 8-0-0. LaSonya Osler moved, Jana Johnson seconded for a full cycle deferral to the November 2022 zoning agenda, per Staff recommendation. **(May 5, 2022) No Recommendation.** LaSonya Osler moved, Jana Johnson seconded for Approval with 9 conditions, per Staff recommendation. Motion failed 4-0-2. Lauren Blaszyk and Gwendolyn McCoy abstained. **This application moves forward to the Board of Commissioners with no recommendation from the Planning Commission.** The Board did want noted for the record concerns regarding traffic, security, noise and neighborhood contact/input.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL VOTE/RECOMMENDATION: (August 2022) Approval 7-0-0. (April 2022) Approval 10-0-0.