

Sumter City-County Planning Commission

September 25, 2013

MSP-11-46 (Revision 3) 1805 Hwy. 521 South: Continental Tire (County)

Note: New address of 1805 Hwy. 521 South was assigned by County on January 11, 2012

I. THE REQUEST

Applicant:	Continental Tire/Alliance Engineering
Status of the Applicant:	Property Owner/Consultant
Request:	Revision to original plan to approve Final Landscaping Plan and Access Road relocation.
Location:	1805 Hwy. 521 South
Size of Property:	+/- 449 acres
Present Use:	Manufacturing Facility (under construction)
Zoning:	Heavy Industrial (HI)
Tax Map #:	2520005088, 2520005030, 2520005024

II. BACKGROUND

Alliance Consulting Engineers, on behalf of Continental Tire and Sumter County has submitted a revision to the Continental Tire site plan first approved on November 17, 2011. **The purpose of the submission is to garner Final Landscaping Plan and Relocate the Primary Access Point to St. Matthews Church Rd.**

Continental et. al. request these approvals for the 3 million sq. ft. Continental Tire Manufacturing Facility with the first phase of just under 1 million s.f. under construction. The 449.47 acre property is located on the north side of Hwy. 521 South, between Mooneyhan Rd. and St. Matthews Church Rd.

The submission, dated July 2013, prepared by Alliance Consulting, includes basic engineering site plan details for land disturbance, site, stormwater, and future phases. The plan set also includes specific design and landscaping across the site (Exhibit 1 includes response letter dated 9-1-13).

The site plan shows that St. Matthews Church Rd. @ Hwy. 521 will be the primary access point for the manufacturing facility and operations.

Land Use & Zoning Compatibility:

This area of Sumter County is designated by the 2030 Comprehensive Plan as a Priority Economic Development node within the Suburban Development Policy Area (page LU 15). The purpose of identifying such places is to clearly represent to the community areas of priority investment and areas which the community will direct, support and encourage major employers to locate. This site is expressly identified in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan as a priority economic development location, known in the Plan as the “Gibbs Rail Site” (page ED 10).

The property was recently rezoned to Heavy Industrial by Sumter County Council, an act implementing the 2030 Land Use Plan.

III. SITE PLAN REVIEW (plan review focus on landscaping and access only)

Traffic Impact Analysis and Access Management Review:

No update to the traffic study was submitted, although we understand an encroachment permit has been issued by SCDOT (attached as Exhibit 2). Alliance has reported that the signalization and lane configuration originally proposed for the site entrance @ Hwy. 521 will be transferred to this location at 521 and St. Matthews Church Rd.

We recommend the traffic study be revised to reflect the change in primary access location. Trip distribution and impacts to the area road network may be altered. Some analysis is due..

Landscaping and Environmental Elements:

A landscaping plan has been submitted with specific designs shown for the following areas:

- 1) Hwy. 521, Mooneyham, and St. Matthews Church Rd. street frontages
- 2) Entrance feature landscaping at Hwy. 521/St. Matthews Church Rd and St. Matthews Church Rd./Site entrance.
- 3) Perimeter Landscaping adjacent to residential properties.
- 4) Parking Lot landscaping

Without issue, Staff finds items 1-3 acceptable and reasonably consistent with the requirements of the Sumter County Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance.

However, the landscaping proposed for the parking lot, both perimeter and interior does not meet Zoning Ordinance requirements and is therefore an outstanding issue. Staff provided an analysis to the applicant on September 9, 2013 (Exhibit 3) and in relevant part offered the following:

The Continental employee parking lot contains an estimated 754 spaces and zero (0) internal islands. There is no perimeter landscaping or bufferyard designed for the parking

lot. There is some planting proposed as part of the internal parking lot driveway. We consider this planting area as part of a perimeter buffer requirement. Continental argues that this is sufficient; we disagree and take the position that this drive aisle buffer would be required *in addition to* internal parking lot landscaping. The entire lot is estimated to be 7-9 acres in size.

While we acknowledge that the Ordinance is quite flexible in allowing applicants to approach site landscaping from a multitude of perspectives, there is still an obvious expectation for parking lot landscaping. This language *requiring* parking lot landscaping is set out clearly in the Ordinance:

Landscaping shall be provided as part of a site plan...It shall be conceived as a total pattern throughout the site, integrating various elements of site design, preserving and enhancing the particular identity of the site, and creating a pleasing site character (8.d.1).

*Reasonable landscaping should be provided at site entrances, in public areas, **in parking lots** (emphasis added), adjacent and around the perimeter of buildings (8.b.6).*

Within parking lots, landscape concrete planters should be considered as part of the overall planned landscape concept (8.d.8.)

*(In parking lots) A mix of hardy flowering and/or decorative evergreen and deciduous trees may be planted. **The evergreens should be used along the perimeter of the parking lot for screening, and the deciduous trees for shade within the lot** (emphasis added 8.d.8.c).*

***Parking lots** (emphasis added), garbage collection and utility areas, and loading and unloading areas shall be screened around their perimeter by a buffer strip of five (5 ft.) feet wide (8.d.7.c.2).*

Thus, flexibility can not be interpreted as optional. We note for the record that Continental submitted a parking lot design which included internal islands as part of an SSOE submission dated May 16, 2012 (attached to Exhibit 3). Therein and attached to this memo, is a parking lot plan (absent specific landscaping) which shows 34 separate internal islands and what appears to be a perimeter buffer area for planting.

It is not clear why this submission has been abandoned. We note that the plan shows a planted drive aisle in the parking lot. A nice element, however it cannot be confused for interior parking lot landscaping. We find the current submission does not meet the zoning ordinance tests, that the plan:

- 1) Does not preserve or enhance the identity of the site and does not create a pleasing site character;
- 2) Does not provide reasonable landscaping in the parking lot;
- 3) Does not employ landscape concrete planters in the parking lot as part of an overall planned landscape concept;
- 4) Does not use evergreens along the perimeter of the parking lot for screening and does not use deciduous trees for shade within the lot, and;

5) Does not provide a 5 ft. perimeter buffer strip and screening of the lot.

Recommended action: please revise parking lot landscaping to include both internal parking lot islands (we think the location of the islands in the May 16, 2012 SSOE plans is a great place to start) and insert a 5 ft. perimeter buffer around the parking lot consistent with 8.d.7.c.2.

In addition, if the 5 ft. perimeter buffer is not shown, the plan cannot be approved by the Planning Commission and the applicant would have to process a zoning variance to eliminate the 5' perimeter parking lot buffer through the Board of Appeals.

IV. TECHNICAL REVIEW MEETING

No meeting held.

V. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff is not in a position to recommend approving due to the landscaping plan deficiencies identified in this report. We recommend the landscaping plan be revised as noted in Section III.

VII. PLANNING COMMISSION – SEPTEMBER 25, 2013

The Sumter City – County Planning Commission at its meeting on Wednesday, September 25, 2013, took the following action on the request referenced above:

1. Approved the relocation of St. Matthews Church Rd. as the primary access point for the Continental Site;
2. Deferred action on the landscaping portion of this request until a future meeting in order to give the applicant and staff time to discuss a suitable compromise.

VII. PLANNING COMMISSION – OCTOBER 23, 2013