

Sumter City-County Planning Commission

Staff Report

September 25, 2013

RZ-13-13, 7800-7840 Myrtle Beach Highway (County)

I. THE REQUEST

Applicant: Heath Properties/Dharmesh M. Patel

Status of the Applicant: Property Owners

Request: A request to rezone two parcels of land—one that is +/-1.2 acres in size, and a second parcel +/-4.84 acres in size, from Agricultural Conservation (AC) to General Commercial (GC)

Location: 7800-7840 Myrtle Beach Hwy

Present Use/Zoning: Gas Station & Convenience Store site; Motel / AC

Tax Map Reference: 338-00-02-003 & 338-00-02-004

Adjacent Property Land Use and Zoning:
North – Gas Station with Convenience Store & Motel / (AC)
South – Undeveloped / (AC)
East - Wooded Acreage / (AC)
West - I-95 & Agricultural / (AC)

II. BACKGROUND

This request is to rezone the two parcels shown in the orthophoto to the right, from Agricultural Conservation (AC) to General Commercial (GC). These parcels are under separate ownership and are located at 7800 Myrtle Beach Highway and 7840 Myrtle Beach Highway. The parcels are located directly on Myrtle Beach Highway and are approximately 750 ft. east of the I-95 interchange.



The applicants wish to rezone their properties for redevelopment purposes. Historically, both properties have been used for intense commercial purposes. These developments predate County regulations and were developed in a manner that more closely reflect today's General Commercial District standards.

7800 Myrtle Beach Highway was constructed in 1970 as a gas station/convenience store and was in operation until the facility closed in February 2012. The convenience store and gas canopy structures were recently demolished, as shown in the photograph below, in order to reconstruct the 40+ year old gas station/convenience store that was located on the property as part of the BP branding requirements.



After demolition of the structures, it was discovered by the owners that the property was not zoned commercially as they had assumed, but was in fact zoned Agricultural Conservation (AC). The setback standards in the AC district will not allow for redevelopment of the site as initially proposed by the owners.

7840 Myrtle Beach Highway was also built in 1970 as a motel with a restaurant. Both the motel and restaurant operated under various owners over the last 40+ years, however; the facility closed in 2009 and has not reopened since. As seen in the photographs on the following page, the property at 7840 has fallen into disrepair. Given the vandalism and neglect at the site prior to acquisition by Mr. Patel, and changes in the fire code, in order to reuse the site as a motel/restaurant, it is highly likely that the site will require demolition and reconstruction. Current setback standards within the AC district may also hamper redevelopment potential at this site.



III. COMPATIBILITY WITH THE 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

As shown in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan map to the right, the subject property is influenced by the Priority Commercial/Mixed Use Planning Area and the Rural Development Planning Area.

Commercial and mixed-use areas or nodes are identified on the map to direct future, high quality commercial and mixed use development. The areas include anticipated green fields and



established locations expected to redevelop with higher and better uses over time—the properties under review are in just such an area.

As set forth in the broader Plan policies, commercial development is expected along major corridors. New priority locations are designated for protection against undesirable uses such as industrial, automotive repair, or uses primarily engaged in outdoor storage. Design layout, impact on adjacent properties, landscaping, and architecture all play a vital role in determining context viability. It should be noted that both of the parcels under review are within the County Highway Corridor Protection District, a design overlay district which helps to further the objectives and policies of the Priority Commercial/Mixed-use area.

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan directs both small scale (area supportive) and large scale (destination) commercial uses to our priority areas and to major intersections and arterial corridors. While at the same time, the Plan is supportive of directing small scale commercial uses to locate at intersections with arterial roads or major crossroads such as the Interstate-95/Myrtle Beach Highway (U.S. 378) interchange within the Rural Development Planning Area. In fact, the Plan specifically states, “*development in the I-95 Corridor, particularly at the interchange is strongly encouraged...*” (LU 19).

It is obvious based on the existing pattern of development in the area in conjunction with the 2030 Plan Objective, that some level of commercial/retail supportive uses are reasonable and expected in proximity to the Interstate-95/Myrtle Beach Highway (U.S. 378) interchange.

IV. TRAFFIC REVIEW

The properties under review have frontage on Myrtle Beach Highway. The 2012 AADT is 5300. No public transit fixed route serves the area. The properties are located in the Highway Corridor Protection District overlay which calls for a strict separation of new curb cuts. As per Article 3, Section 3.v.3, curb cuts should not be less than 1000 foot intervals, where feasible. Future projects on the subject properties may be expected to redesign their access to reduce the number of encroachments onto US 378/Myrtle Beach Hwy. In addition, a Traffic Impact Study may be required depending upon the future specific use of the proposed rezoning, in conjunction with encroachment permit(s) from the SCDOT.

V. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on the existing patterns of development in the area and the location of the interchange in conjunction with the 2030 Plan, Staff is supportive of rezoning these properties to the General Commercial district—in this instance, it just makes sense. Encouraging new commercial development and the revitalization/reinvestment in existing sites in and around the Interstate-95/Myrtle Beach Highway (U.S. 378) interchange furthers the community vision for this area.

VI. PLANNING COMMISSION – SEPTEMBER 25, 2013

The Sumer City-County Planning Commission at its meeting on Wednesday, September 25, 2013, voted to recommend approval for this request.

VII. COUNTY COUNCIL – OCTOBER 8, 2013 – FIRST READING