

# CITY OF SMYRNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Council

From: Russel Martin, AICP, Community Development Director  
Joey Staubes, AICP, Planner II

Date: January 6, 2021

CC: Joe Bennett, Interim City Administrator  
Planning and Zoning Board

RE: **REZONING CASE Z21-001– 912 Daniel Drive**

**Applicant:** GFAC Real Estate

**Existing Zoning:** GC  
**Proposed Zoning:** OD- Conditional  
**Size of Tract:** 3.29 acres

**Titleholder:** GFAC Real Estate

**Location:** 912 Daniel Drive

**Contiguous Zoning:**  
North NRC&R-20 (County)  
South GC (Smyrna)  
East HI (County)  
West R-20 (County)

**Land Lot:** 444

**Ward:** 5

**Access:** Atlanta Rd

**Existing Improvements:** 4 Commercial Structures on One Lot

**Hearing Dates:**  
P&Z January 11, 2021  
Mayor and Council February 15, 2021

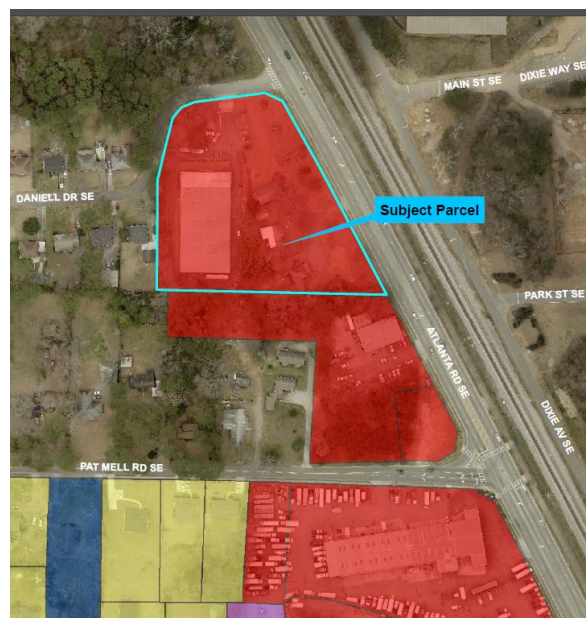
## Proposed Use:

The applicant is requesting a rezoning from GC to OD-Conditional for use as a self-storage facility. The future land is CAC and a land use change to Industrial is required.

## Staff Recommendation:

**Denial** of the rezoning from **GC** (General Commercial) to **OD-Conditional** (Office-Distribution).

**Planning Board Recommendation:** The Planning Board voted to deny the request by a vote of 6-0 at the January 11, 2021 meeting.



## **STAFF COMMENTS**

Section 1508 of the Smyrna Zoning Code details nine zoning review factors which must be evaluated by the Planning and Zoning Board and the Mayor and Council when considering a rezoning request. The following provides the nine factors followed by an analysis of each factor in italics. Both the Applicant's response as well as Staff's analysis to each factor are listed. It is hoped that providing both responses results in a better understanding of what is actually being proposed.

1. Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property.

Applicant Response:

*"The proposed use is suitable in view of the use and the development of the adjacent and nearby properties. The majority of the area is commercial or industrial. Self-storage by nature is a good transition to residential zone and also a good neighbor to residential zones."*

Staff Analysis:

*The zoning proposal consists of one tract of land totaling 3.29 acres and is zoned GC. Approval of the zoning proposal to OD-Conditional would allow for the construction of a self-storage facility. The adjacent property to the north is zoned NRC & R-20 (Cobb County). The adjacent property to the south is zoned GC (General Commercial). The adjacent property to the west is zoned R-20 (Cobb County). The adjacent property to the east across Atlanta Road is zoned HI (Cobb County). The proposed rezoning to OD-Conditional would be inconsistent with the land use of the subject property and surrounding properties along the west side of Atlanta Road.*

2. Whether the zoning proposal or the use proposed will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property.

Applicant Response:

*"There will be no adverse effect on the use or usability on adjacent or nearby properties."*

Staff Analysis:

*The proposed use would have an adverse effect upon the existing use or usability of the property and of nearby properties. The proposed use is inconsistent with the adjoining commercial and residential uses. The subject property is currently accessed directly from Atlanta Road and not impact any additional local streets.*

3. Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned.

Applicant Response:

*"The property is difficult to develop under the current zoning due to the steep topography. Self-storage will better permit to use an under/over design - "walk out" design that is not suited for most other commercial uses. There is a need for additional local self-storage based upon the existing self-storage and population."*

Staff Analysis:

*The subject parcel has a greater economic use as currently zoned. The GC zoning district allows a plethora of compatible uses than the OD zoning district allows. The existing GC zoning district allows over 90 permitted uses whereas OD is limited to only 10 permitted uses. Rezoning from GC to OD would limit the permitted uses and lower the existing economic value of the property.*

4. Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities or schools.

Applicant Response:

*"Self-storage has the least amount of traffic when compared to other commercial properties. This is because the clients do not have to come to the storage often, they only visit occasionally to use their storage space. The proposed use will not cause any excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities or schools. Given the very low number of visitors per day, it does not have a negative impact on utilities or streets. It will have a positive impact on the town as it will provide a service for local residences and will also be one of the highest tax payers in town."*

Staff Analysis:

*Based upon information from the City Engineer, the proposed use will not cause an excessive or burdensome use of the existing streets or transportation facilities.*

*The building is currently serviced with water and sewer from the county.*

5. Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the land use plan.

Applicant Response:

*"The future land use is CAC – Community Activity Center. The vast majority of customers will local from a 5 mile radius."*

Staff Analysis:

*The subject property has a Future Land Use designation of CAC (Community Activity Center) on the city's 2040 Future Land Use Plan. The OD zoning district is not listed as a compatible zoning district under the CAC land use designation. Therefore, the proposed OD zoning district is not in compliance with the policy and intent of the city's Comprehensive Plan. The proposed rezoning to OD for use as a*

*self-storage facility will require a land use change to the Future Land Use Map to the Industrial Land Use Category. The surrounding area is comprised of single-family residential and commercial properties, and an Industrial Land Use would be incompatible with the surrounding properties.*

6. Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal.

*Applicant Response:*

*“The existing industrial uses will be replaced with a more suitable use for the area. The old and outdated buildings will be replaced with a new state of the art self-storage facility.”*

*Staff Analysis:*

*The property is currently zoned GC (General Commercial) and the property consists of a commercial building and several residential structures. The GC zoning category is a zoning with the vast majority of commercial and retail uses allowed in the zoning code and provide a greater economic value to the city. The existing or changing conditions do not support approval for a rezoning to OD and accompanying land use change, and no changes to Future Land Use Map have occurred in the surrounding area since the adoption of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.*

7. Whether the development of the property under the zoning proposal will conform to, be a detriment to or enhance the architectural standards, open space requirements and aesthetics of the general neighborhood, considering the current, historical and planned uses in the area.

*Applicant Response:*

*“The proposed development (and removal of existing eye sores) will enhance the architectural standards and aesthetics for the area. A significant amount of landscaping is proposed to further enhance the area. See attached landscaping plans for more details.”*

*Staff Analysis:*

*The development of the property under the zoning proposal would not enhance the architectural standards and aesthetics of the general neighborhood. The proposed elevations consist of stone, EIFS, and metal paneling and do not enhance architectural standards for the surrounding area. The proposed building may be an improvement to the existing building on the property; however, the proposed building is not up to the architectural standards of new construction in Smyrna. The property as currently zoned GC would provide a greater benefit to the general neighborhood than a downzoning to OD.*

8. Under any proposed zoning classification, whether the use proposed may create a nuisance or is incompatible with existing uses in the area.

Applicant Response:

*“No, the proposed zoning classification will not create a nuisance or be incompatible with existing uses in the area.”*

Staff Analysis:

*The proposed use of the property as a self-storage facility will not create a nuisance for existing uses in the area.*

9. Whether due to the size of the proposed use, in either land area or building height, the proposed use would affect the adjoining property, general neighborhood and other uses in the area positively or negatively.

Applicant Response:

*“The proposed use and design will enhance the general neighborhood positively by replacing the abandoned houses and the industrial warehouse currently on the property with a modern self-storage facility surrounded by beautiful landscape. The land slopes will be used to minimize the building heights.”*

Staff Analysis:

*Factors associated with the size of the proposed use, in either land area or building height should have no negative effect upon all adjacent and nearby properties.*

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

GFAC Real Estate is requesting a rezoning from GC (General Commercial) to OD-Conditional (Office-Distribution) for the ability to construct a self-storage facility. The subject property is zoned GC and has been used commercially with several structures on one lot. The existing buildings will be demolished for the construction of a new self-storage building. The proposed building will be 68,400 sq. ft. The basement level will consist of 30,000 sq. ft., the first floor will consist of 30,000 sq. ft. and a detached building will contain an additional 6,800 sq. ft. The elevation along Atlanta Road will be one story and the building will follow the contour of the property to have a basement level at the rear of the property. The setback along Atlanta Road will be 75 ft., 50 ft. along Daniel Drive, and a decorative fence is proposed around the building. The project consists of a 15 ft. landscape buffer along the front, side, and the rear of the property.

The proposed building will utilize stone, EIFS, and metal paneling for the front façade. The applicant has provided architectural renders with the zoning application for reference.

The applicant requests a parking reduction from 34 spaces to 10 spaces.

## **Project Analysis**

### **Engineering Review**

The City Engineer has reviewed the proposed rezoning with respect to transportation, stormwater management and stream buffer issues. The City Engineer has requested right of way dedication along Daniel Drive with sidewalks, a deceleration lane along Atlanta Road, and a sidewalk connection to the building from Atlanta Road. There are no stream buffers affecting the property.

### **Fire Marshal Review**

The Fire Marshal's office has reviewed the current proposal and in general believes that it meets the Fire Code requirements for fire truck access.

### **Planning Review**

Community Development has reviewed the zoning proposal against the city's 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Plan. The zoning proposal to Office-Distribution requires a Land Use change from CAC (Community Activity Center) to I (Industrial).

Community Development has reviewed the proposed development against the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance with respect to the use as a self-storage facility. The proposed development meets most of the zoning requirements for a self-storage facility; however, the development requires the following variance:

- 1) A reduction in required parking from 34 spaces to 10 spaces (**Staff Supports**)

Community Development is not supportive of the change in zoning from GC to OD-Conditional and accompanying land use change. No land use changes have occurred to the surrounding area since the adoption of the 2040 Comprehensive Future Land Use Plan, thus, there are no changing conditions to support the proposed zoning change. A rezoning to OD-Conditional is incompatible with the surrounding area and the OD-Conditional zoning does not provide greater benefit to the city compared to the current GC zoning.

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## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Community Development recommends **denial** of the rezoning from GC to OD-Conditional at 912 Daniel Drive.

**Subject Property**



**Adjacent Properties**

