

CITY OF SMYRNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MEMORANDUM

To: License and Variance Board

From: Rusty Martin, AICP, Community Development Director
Caitlin Crowe, Planner I

Date: May 20, 2021

**RE: VARIANCE CASE V21-050
3300 South Cobb Drive – Parking reduction from 23 spaces to 12 spaces**

BACKGROUND

The applicant is proposing to remodel the existing Dunkin' Donuts at 3300 S Cobb Drive to accommodate an extended drive-thru and relocate the order window. The proposed changes will necessitate a parking reduction of 11 spaces; thus, the applicant requires a variance to reduce the parking requirement from 23 spaces to 12 spaces. Section 906 of the Zoning Ordinance controls the minimum required parking spaces per use.

ANALYSIS

The subject parcel is a 0.31-acre lot located on the southwest corner of the intersection of South Cobb Drive and Concord Road (see Figure 1). The subject parcel and all adjacent parcels are zoned GC (General Commercial) and are all occupied by various commercial uses.

The subject property is currently occupied by a 1,743 square foot Dunkin' Donuts building with an existing drive-thru lane entering off South Cobb Drive and exiting off Concord Road. The applicant is proposing a complete remodel of the existing restaurant building that will include an interior remodel and the addition of an exterior patio facing Concord Road. However, the primary focus of the remodel will be to relocate the drive-thru service window from the north side of the building to the south side of the building to accommodate more stacking as customers place and wait for their orders. The current drive-thru lane with the service window on the north side of the building accommodates 4 stacked vehicles, which often leads to vehicles stacking out onto South Cobb Drive. The relocation of the service window to the south side of the building and extended drive-thru lane will allow for 10 stacked cars to better accommodate the drive-thru demand and relieve the traffic issues that currently exist today due to the vehicle spillover on South Cobb Drive. An access lane, which bypasses the restaurant, will still be available to those wishing to enter the surrounding shopping center.

Section 906.17 of the Zoning Ordinance requires 23 parking spaces on the subject property, which is calculated at one space per 75 square feet of gross floor area. However, the site is currently under parked with only 16 parking spaces. Four parking spaces will be removed to make room for the extended drive-thru lane, bringing the total parking spaces to 12. Given the existing developed site conditions, the proposed drive-thru expansion towards the northern

property line is the only feasible area in which to expand; in order to maintain an adequate width and turning radius for vehicles, the four parking spots could no longer fit on the site. The four parking spaces that will be removed will be the three parallel spaces along Concord Road and one space at the location of the exit for the new drive-thru lane. The elimination of these spaces will provide an access lane around the building and allow for the drive-thru lane to be relocated to the south side of the building. The majority of the Dunkin' Donuts business is through the drive-thru window, which does not require customers to park in the parking lot to order. The 12 spaces will still provide sufficient parking for those wishing to dine inside and for staff parking, thus Community Development is supportive of the parking reduction.

Community Development believes the hardship is not self-created, as the non-conforming parking existed when the building was constructed and has not obstructed daily operations for the subject property or surrounding businesses. Additionally, the parking lot will be redesigned and landscaped to comply with the current code requirements, including ADA parking.

STAFF COMMENTS

The applicant is requesting to deviate from the City's required parking minimums. According to Section 1403 of the Zoning Ordinance, variances must be reviewed under the following standards: (1) Whether there are unique and special or extraordinary circumstances applying to the property; (2) Whether any alleged hardship is self-created by any person having an interest in the property; (3) Whether strict application of the relevant provisions of the code would deprive the applicant of reasonable use of the property; and (4) Whether the variance proposed is the minimum variance needed. Community Development has reviewed the requests against the variance review standards and found them to be in compliance with the review standards. Community Development believes that the requested variances will not adversely affect surrounding properties. Therefore, Community Development recommends **approval** of the requested variance with the following condition:

1. Approval of the requested variance shall be conditioned upon the development of the property in substantial compliance with the site plan and elevations submitted with the variance application.

Figure – 1



Figure – 2 Site Plan

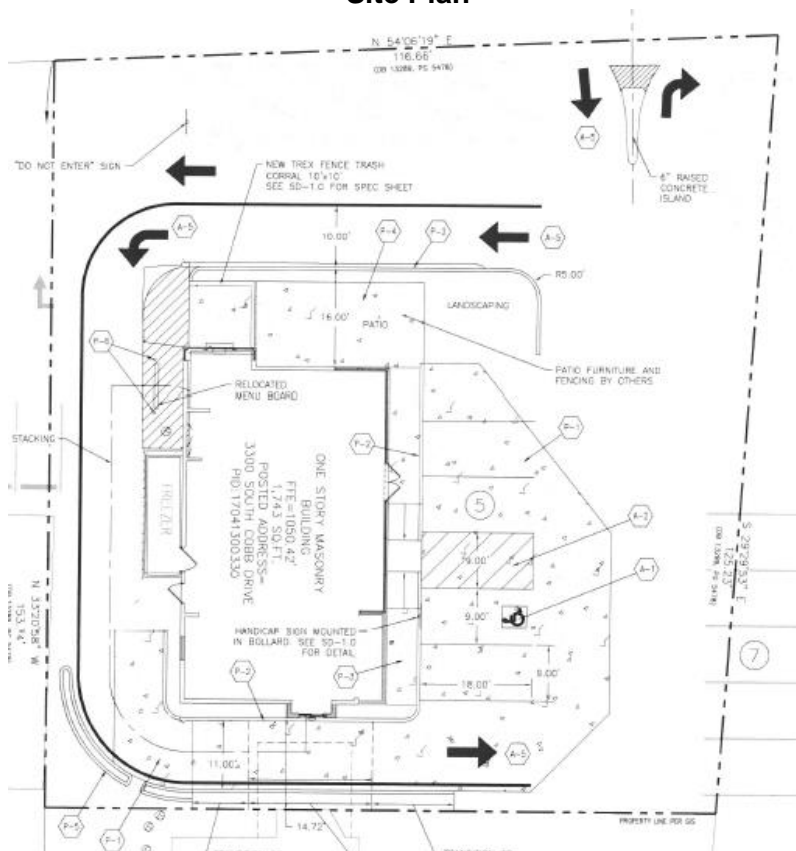


Figure – 3
Front Elevation facing South Cobb Drive

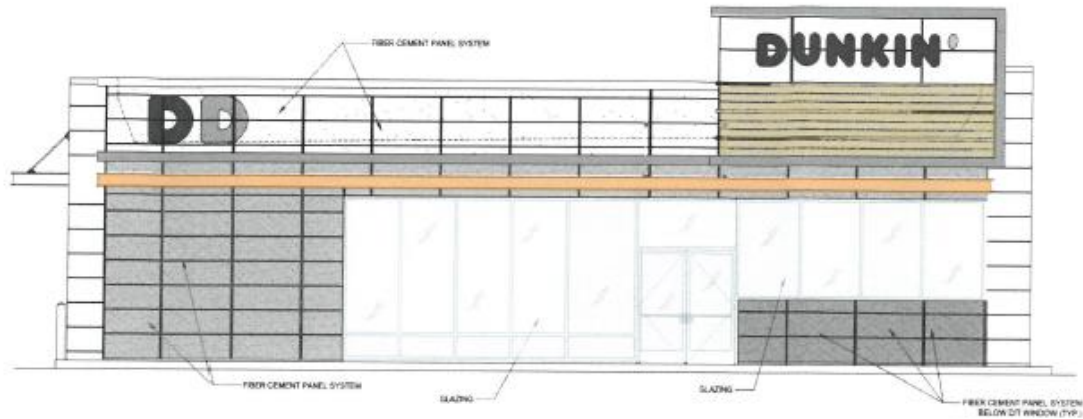


Figure – 4
Side Elevation facing Concord Road

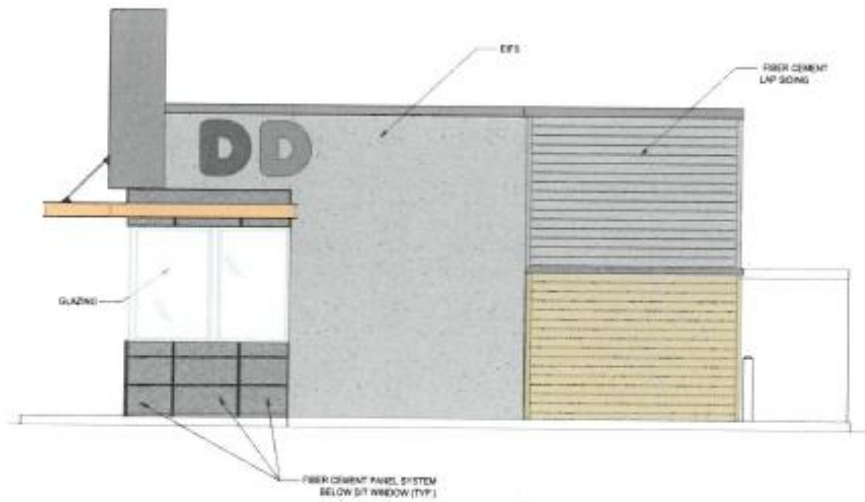


Figure – 5
Subject Property from South Cobb Drive



Figure – 6
Subject Property from Concord Road



Figure – 7
Proposed Drive-Thru Extension Location



Figure – 8
Adjacent Property to the South



Figure – 9
Adjacent Property across South Cobb Drive



Figure – 10
Adjacent Property across Concord Road

