

**AGENDA REPORT  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING  
January 6, 2022**

**SUMMARY**

A request by SSE (agent), on behalf of TS Storage, LLC (owner), for approval of a new PD (Planned Development) Plan to be known as the *TS Storage PD Plan*, a revised statement of intent to add a new permitted use of *Self-service storage facilities*, and design exceptions to Sec. 29-4.1 for reduced side and rear yard setbacks. The 1.79-acre property is located at the northeast corner of Grace Lane and Richland Road. **(This case was tabled at the December 9 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting) (Case # 25-2022)**

**DISCUSSION**

The applicant is seeking to develop the site with a *Self-service storage facility* that would cater to the storage of larger vehicles such as recreational vehicles and boats. The request includes a revision to the existing statement of intent since *self-service storage facility* is not a permitted use for this planned development. In addition, a design exception is requested for the site to allow a 10-foot setback instead of a 20-foot setback along the north and east property which is discussed in detail later in this report. Finally, an existing note on the final plat for this site restricts its access to Richland Road. The applicant is seeking to remove this restriction, which is the purview of the Council by ordinance or by resubdivision of the property. It has been noted for information purposes given the revised PD plan includes an access to Richland Road.

The site was previously zoned C-P (Planned Commercial) prior to the adoption of the UDC in 2017, when all separate planned zoning districts were converted to PD zoning. The C-P zoning was granted in 2003, along with the adjacent R-2 zoning, and a statement of intent (SOI) was approved at that time as well. The 2003 SOI is attached and permitted mostly C-1 uses (roughly equivalent to today's M-N) along with a few additional uses. The site is currently platted as a single lot, Lot 77 of *Eastport Gardens Plat 2*, which was approved in 2003.

The PD plan shows the improvement of the site with 11 storage units in the center of the site built at an angle to facilitate easy access for large vehicles, and 17 units along the east property line. Access to the site is shown from Grace Lane on the west and Richland Road on the south. At this time, the access shown on Richland Road would not be permitted due to a restrictive note on the final plat (note #6) that prohibited this lot from obtaining access to Richland Road. From review of the case, the note was required to be added due to access management concerns of the Public Works Traffic Engineer at the time.

Public Works has reviewed the proposed access to Richland Road and recommends leaving the restriction in place, as it is consistent with the current access management requirements in UDC Section 29-5.1(f)(1)(iv)(D). This section currently prohibits driveways for new non-residential lots with less than 300 feet of street frontage. This lot currently has approximately 225 feet of frontage along Richland Road, so if this property were platted today it would be prohibited from constructing a driveway along Richland Road. Since the lot was previously platted, this provision does not apply, but the note on the plat has the same effect.

Also worth noting is the high likelihood of the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Richland Road and Grace Lane in the near future. While this project has not been added to the CIP, given the recent approvals of development east of this site, and the traffic analysis associated with those developments, the roundabout has been identified as an improvement that will likely need to take

place as growth continues. With the construction of a roundabout, the distance between the intersection and the requested driveway will only decrease furthering access concerns.

Restrictive notes on plats may be removed by Council by ordinance, and the applicant is seeking to have this prohibition eliminated by Council along with the approval of the PD plan. The Commission may make a recommendation regarding the access to Richland Road if they so choose, and that recommendation will be provided to Council. If Council does determine that the access to Richland Road should be granted, staff would recommend that as a condition of granting that relief, the area on the site necessary to construct a roundabout at this intersection be dedicated to the City by deed, so that the City is not required to purchase the property in the future.

Landscaping is generally provided per UDC requirements. A ten-foot landscape buffer is provided along the property edges where the site abuts residentially zoned property, and an 8-foot tall screening device in the way of vinyl fencing is provided as well. Street trees are shown every 40 feet, which is closer than the standard 60 feet-on-center plantings, due to an additional condition in the use specific standards for *Self-service storage facility* uses. The statement of intent requires at least 20% of the site remain in landscaping, which is more than the City minimum of 15%.

Elevation plans that show building 1 and 2 were also submitted for review, principally to ensure compliance with UDC Section 29-4.7 (Design Guidelines). This use is subject to these standards and the applicant was aware that they would not meet the transparency requirements. In efforts to address this deficiency, the applicant opted to provide elevations showing design and building materials for review by the Community Development Director who has the administrative authority to waive the transparency requirements if it is found that compliance is not appropriate in a given context, which was the case in this situation.

### **SOI Revision for *Self-service storage facilities***

The applicant is requesting to revise the existing SOI so that the use *Self-service storage facilities* may be added to the list of permitted uses. In order to revise the SOI to add a new use, all of the uses from the 2003 SOI must be recategorized to match a current use from the UDC's permitted use table. The attached list reflects the recategorized uses, and includes the additional use being requested.

The intent of the development is to allow the storage of recreational vehicles, boats and other large vehicles within buildings. The current SOI, which was approved in 2003 prior to the UDC, originally allowed all C-1 uses, along with four other uses. C-1 was a commercial district that was intended to provide commercial retail and service in proximity to residential neighborhoods. This is similar to the intent of today's M-N (Mixed use-neighborhood) district, and the two districts include generally the same uses. At the time the property was granted C-P zoning, *Self-service storage facilities* was a conditional use in the C-1, but it was not included in the SOI.

The applicant now proposes to add *Self-service storage facilities* to the use list. However, this use is no longer allowed as a conditional use in M-N, but is permitted in the M-C district. The use also includes several use-specific standards that the development must adhere to that are found in Section 29-3.3(w), which is attached.

In regards to allowing the additional use at this location, staff has concerns with this request, which include the fact that this site was originally intended for commercial uses that would provide services to the surrounding neighborhood. The current SOI includes almost exclusively C-1 uses and of the additional four uses, three of them (Bakery, Car Wash, and Convenience Stores) were conditional uses in the previous C-1. The other use, Bicycle Repair, was allowed in the C-2 (roughly equivalent to M-DT). No C-3 (roughly equivalent to M-C) uses were permitted at that time. It is true that a *Self-service storage facility* was considered a C-1 conditional use in 2003, similar to other uses that are allowed on

this site. However, it is also relevant that this use was not included in the original SOI, which it could

have been had the applicant requested it and PZC and Council approved it. And with the approval of the UDC, the use is no longer a conditional use in M-N, due to recognition that it is not a desirable use in close proximity to residential neighborhoods. The inclusion of an M-C use at this location would not be consistent with the existing set of uses, which are all typically geared more towards commercial services that could be utilized by residents.

The subject site is also shown within the study boundaries of the East Area Plan. The EAP states that commercial nodes within the study area are not expected to meet regional commercial needs, but rather the everyday convenience and service needs of the surrounding residents (pg. 104). With the nature of the use being focused on the storing a specific vehicle type, it is expected that there would be limited utilization of the use by local surrounding neighborhoods. It is more likely to have a regional service area.

There are two typical concerns with *Self-service storage facilities* as a use that make it more suited in a heavy commercial or even industrial setting, which is why they were placed in M-C zoning. The first is that they tend to have an industrial appearance, with little ornamentation and design, and are typically unattractive. The applicant in this case has provided a more attractive design than normally expected, but this is somewhat in response to design guideline requirements.

The other concern is actually a feature that many might find favorable, and that is the minimal amount of traffic that the site generates. While this may be seen as a benefit to some, the goal of a commercial use within proximity to residential uses, especially at a site that is walkable from nearby residential properties, is to have an active use that provides services to the residents. *Self-service storage facilities* have little traffic on a day-to-day basis, and it is unlikely that a high percentage of nearby residents will utilize the property. In addition, the lack of traffic creates an environment where there are few customers to the site, and little day-to-day observation of the site, which is not conducive to being near a neighborhood.

#### **Design Exceptions: *Table 4.1-2: Dimensional Standards for Mixed Use Districts***

Design exceptions are requests from an applicant for relief from standards within Section 29-4 of the UDC, which is known as the “Form and Development Controls” section of the code. If not for the PD zoning, these requests would require approval from the Board of Adjustment. Exceptions to the UDC may be considered for PDs in order to provide for creativity within a site, and best practice is that exceptions should “generally require that planned developments provide to the city amenities or benefits that help achieve the goals of the Columbia Imagined comprehensive plan (as amended) and that are not otherwise required by the base zoning districts in return for the added flexibility in uses and design offered by the PD district”.

As previously noted, the applicant has requested that a new use be added to the list of permitted uses in the statement of intent - *Self-service storage facilities*. The applicant has requested that this use be allowed 10-foot side and rear setbacks, where the site is adjacent to residentially zoned property to the north and east. Staff has determined that the required setbacks are 20 feet in this situation. The use is currently only allowed in the M-C district, and is thus subject to M-C setback requirements as listed in Table 4.1-2. The setbacks are 20 feet when an M-C zoned property is adjacent to residentially zoned property.

It should be noted that when the C-P zoning was granted in 2003, setbacks were 10 feet when adjacent to residential properties in the C-P zoning district. This is still consistent with the setbacks in the current M-N zoning district; however, the PD zoning district no longer includes its own setbacks, separate from the setbacks required in non-PD zoned property. The current process for determining setbacks in new

PDs is to evaluate the uses of the site and recommend an appropriate setback for the uses listed. In

this case, a 20-foot setback is required. The increase in the setback from M-N to M-C is in recognition of the additional impacts M-C uses may have on residential properties, and the additional distance is intended to mitigate these impacts.

The applicant has stated that the setbacks are necessary to ensure proper maneuverability on the site for the larger vehicles, and that surrounding property owners do not object to the reduced setbacks. Staff does not believe that the reduction offers the same amount of protection to the surrounding residential property, and there are no clear benefits to the City nor to the surrounding property owner that would warrant the relief in this situation.

The applicant is providing some enhanced elements that could be considered beneficial. The design shown in the elevations is of a higher standard than most similar properties, the open space is 5% more than what is the minimum amount required, and the site has been designed to ensure that no development would occur within the area that the City would need to acquire in order to construct a roundabout. However, a reduction in setbacks for the adjacent residential properties is not a design exception that staff would support, as it is an important tool in mitigating the impact of the proposed development.

**29-3.3(w) Use specific standards; Primary use of land and buildings: Self-service storage facility.**

The applicant is proposing to construct buildings that would exceed 14 feet in height. Prior to the UDC adoption, *Self-service storage facilities* were not allowed to exceed 14 feet in any scenario. The UDC provided allowances for buildings to exceed 14 feet, but with conditions. Per the use specific standards (attached), there are 2 pathways to allow heights to exceed 14 feet. The first path is outlined in (w)(1)(vi), which lists five standards that, if met, would allow a building to exceed 14 feet without any additional entitlement approval. Four of those standards are met; however, (A) of this section requires that the site not be adjacent to residentially zoned property, which the site does not comply with. This leaves the second pathway listed in (w)(2), which requires a conditional use permit normally, and allows the applicant to seek relief from the standards in (w)(1)(vi) if the applicant can demonstrate that there are special circumstances unique to the property that make the additional conditions unnecessary to ensure the visual compatibility of the proposed building with surrounding properties.

Approval of the statement of intent and the PD plan would essentially have the same result as approving a conditional use for a similar use that was located in the M-C district. Staff is providing the standards for granting the conditional use that are within the use-specific standards for Self-service storage facility, which are attached, for review by the PZC for consideration. While a conditional use permit approval is not required in this case, it is worth reviewing how the UDC would evaluate this use if the site were on M-C zoned property next to residentially zoned property. The use-specific standards specifically state that additional conditions can be imposed when buildings exceed 14 feet in order to mitigate any impacts, and specific areas that the PZC may consider include, but are not limited to, limits on signage, additional setbacks, additional screening or fencing, orientation of buildings, and maximum height.

Section 29-3.3(w)(2) states that the typical standards for the *Self-service storage facility* can be waived if the applicant shows that due to special circumstances unique to the property, they are not required to ensure the visual compatibility of the proposed building with surrounding properties. The applicant has stated that this is a unique use, unlike typical self-service storage facilities. In this situation, the storage will be for recreational vehicles and other larger vehicles, and the additional height, which is generally the feature that the UDC places limits upon, is necessary to allow for the expected height of the vehicles. While this is true, it does not negate the fact that the site is adjacent to residentially zoned

property. If there was a large distance between this site and the nearest residential structure, for

example 200 feet away, staff might view that as a mitigating factor where prohibiting this type of use next to residential property is not necessary. But in this case, the neighboring duplexes are setback about 35 feet from the property line. It does not seem warranted to waive the restriction on *Self-service storage facilities* in this scenario. One mitigating factor that could be considered is that they are only requesting an additional 8 feet of height (14' to 22'). This limits the impact of the height to a degree, but at this time staff does not support allowing the use to exceed 14 feet.

**Conclusion**

There are several aspects of the proposed PD plan that are supportable. The building design that was submitted for the storage facility does include a higher degree of design, with more desirable building materials than what typically may be expected. The additional height requested is also limited to 8 feet above the 14 foot limit. Traffic will be minimal when compared to other uses.

However, *Self-service storage facility* is a use that is only permitted in M-C at this time, and this site was not intended for the regional commercial uses when it was originally zoned. This is also reiterated in the East Area Plan’s recommendation that commercial uses in this area be more focused on providing commercial services to nearby residents. And the design exception that is being requested is in direct conflict with the protections provided in the UDC (20-foot setbacks and 14-foot building height limit when next to residential). Given these factors, staff does not support the addition of the *Self-service storage facility* in this location, and does not support the PD plan.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Denial of the *TS Storage PD Plan* and the associated revision to the Statement of Intent to include *Self-service storage facility* as a permitted use.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (ATTACHED)**

- Locator maps
- PD Plan
- Statement of Intent
- Applicant Narrative
- Elevations
- Correspondence
- Statement of Intent (6/16/03)
- Final Plat (2/2/04)
- UDC Section 29-3.3(w)

**SITE CHARACTERISTICS**

<b>Area (acres)</b>	1.79
<b>Topography</b>	Slightly sloping south
<b>Vegetation/Landscaping</b>	Turf, limited trees
<b>Watershed/Drainage</b>	Grindstone Creek
<b>Existing structures</b>	None

**HISTORY**

<b>Annexation date</b>	2001
<b>Zoning District</b>	PD
<b>Land Use Plan designation</b>	Commercial, Neighborhood
<b>Previous Subdivision/Legal Lot Status</b>	Lot 77 of <i>Eastport Gardens Plat 2</i>

**UTILITIES & SERVICES**

<b>Sanitary Sewer</b>	City of Columbia
<b>Water</b>	PWSD #9
<b>Fire Protection</b>	City of Columbia
<b>Electric</b>	Boone Electric

**ACCESS**

<b>Richland Road</b>	
<b>Location</b>	Along the north side of property
<b>Major Roadway Plan</b>	Major Arterial; Unimproved and City maintained; 100-106-foot ROW required; 50-foot half-width provided; No additional right-of-way required for dedication.
<b>CIP projects</b>	None
<b>Sidewalk</b>	Sidewalks required.

<b>Grace Lane</b>	
<b>Location</b>	West side of site
<b>Major Roadway Plan</b>	Minor Arterial; Improved and City maintained; 84'-100' of ROW required, 40-foot half-width currently dedicated; additional ROW dedication may be required if property were to replat in the future
<b>CIP projects</b>	None
<b>Sidewalk</b>	Sidewalks required.

**PARKS & RECREATION**

<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	Within half-mile of Eastport Park
<b>Trails Plan</b>	Within half-mile of Eastport Park trails
<b>Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan</b>	8-foot pedway at southeast corner of Grace Ln and Richland Rd.

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

All property owners within 200 feet and City-recognized neighborhood associations within 1,000 feet of the boundaries of the subject property were notified of this pending request on November 3, 2021. Fifteen postcards were distributed.

Report prepared by Clint Smith

Approved by Patrick Zenner