

Planning Staff Analysis

Z25-0008/CAT 35

City Council District #3

REQUEST:

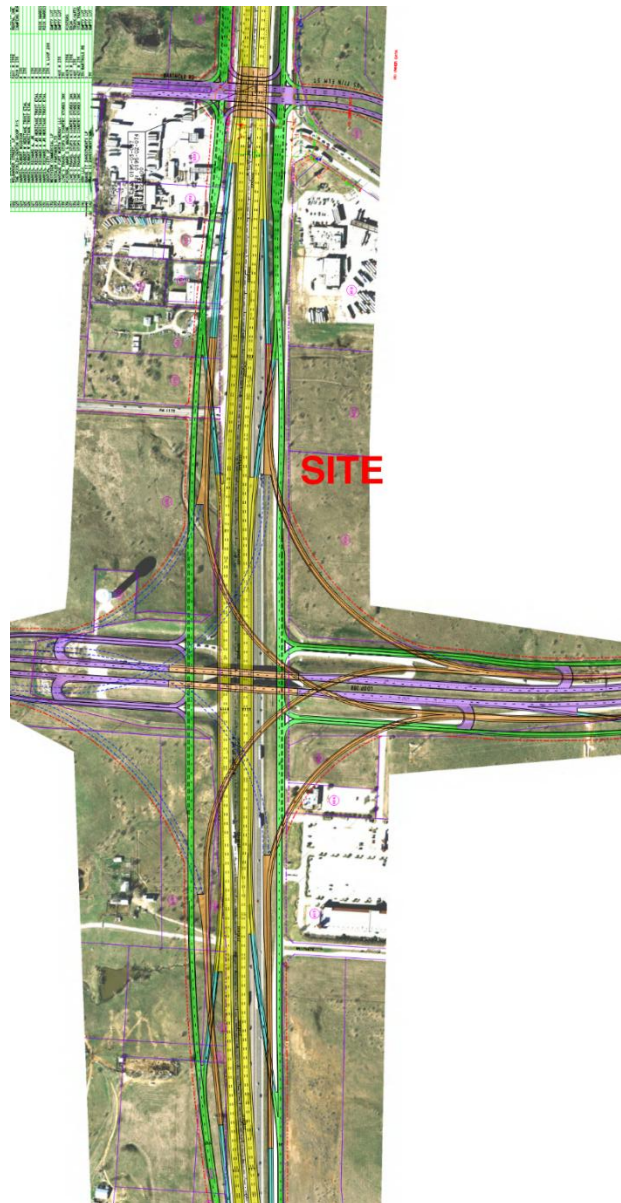
Request to rezone 68 acres from Planned Development 142, Hillcrest Center, to Planned Development – General Office (PD-GO) District.

SITE DATA:

The approximately 68-acre site is located in the middle of three highways with frontage along North Interstate 35, Loop 288, and Highway 77 (North Elm Street). This configuration results in a highly visible site that is part of the City's northern gateway. The subject property is undeveloped and is currently accessed from Loop 288. Future access to the site will be permitted from Highway 77 and Interstate 35 Frontage Road, subject to TxDOT review and approval.

TxDOT is currently planning future improvements to nearby roadways (see inset schematic, right). Currently there is not a timeline for construction, but staff expects work will begin after 2030. While the roadway designs and details are not complete, the following are anticipated to be included in the final projects:

- **Loop 288 (east/west corridor in schematic):** The main lanes for Loop 288 will remain in the same configuration with two lanes for each direction separated by a median. Future improvements include elevated direct connection ramps from Loop 288 to both North and South Interstate 35. Frontage roads along Loop 288 will connect to the Interstate 35 frontage roads. The subject property has approximately 2,770 feet of frontage along Loop 288 and will be able to obtain driveway access to the frontage roads.
- **Interstate 35 (north/south corridor in schematic):** Future improvements include an expansion of the main lanes to three lanes each way, frontage roads, and direct connection ramps to Loop 288.
- **Highway 77:** No changes to the main travel lanes are anticipated, and the roadway will remain in the current configuration of four lanes separated with a median. Some changes to the intersection with I35 are likely.



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SURROUNDING ZONING AND USES:

Surrounding land uses and zoning are detailed in the table below. An aerial map and zoning map are also provided as Exhibits 3 and 4, respectively.

Northwest (across I35): Zoning: Highway Corridor (HC) and Mixed-Use Regional (MR) Use: Travel Plaza and Multifamily	North: Zoning: General Office (GO) Use: Travel Plaza, Automotive Repair Shop, Major and Light Manufacturing	Northeast: Zoning: General Office (GO) Use: Undeveloped
West (across I35): Zoning: Light Industrial (LI) Use: Warehouse and Light Manufacturing	SUBJECT SITE	East: Zoning: General Office (GO) Use: Undeveloped
Southwest (across I35): Zoning: Light Industrial (LI) Use: Undeveloped	South: Zoning: PD -142 Use: Undeveloped and Commercial	Southeast: Zoning: Mixed Use Regional (MR) and PD-142 Use: Undeveloped and Multifamily

CONSIDERATIONS:

A. Section 2.4.5.E of the DDC provides approval criteria applicable to all applications.

1. General Criteria

a. Unless otherwise specified in this DDC, City review and decision-making bodies must review all development applications submitted pursuant to this subchapter for compliance with the general review criteria stated below.

The review criteria were applied as required.

b. The application may also be subject to additional review criteria specific to the type of application, as set forth in sections 2.5 through 2.9.

Section 2.7.3.D of the DDC applies to this rezoning to PD Overlay request. An analysis of this request per those criteria can be found below in Consideration B.

c. If there is a conflict between the general review criteria in this section and the specific review criteria in sections 2.5 through 2.9, the applicable review criteria in sections 2.5 through 2.9 controls.

There are no conflicts between the general criteria and the criteria specific for rezoning to PD Overlay requests.

2. Prior Approvals

There have been no prior approvals associated with this request.

3. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Other Applicable Plans

The decision-making authority:

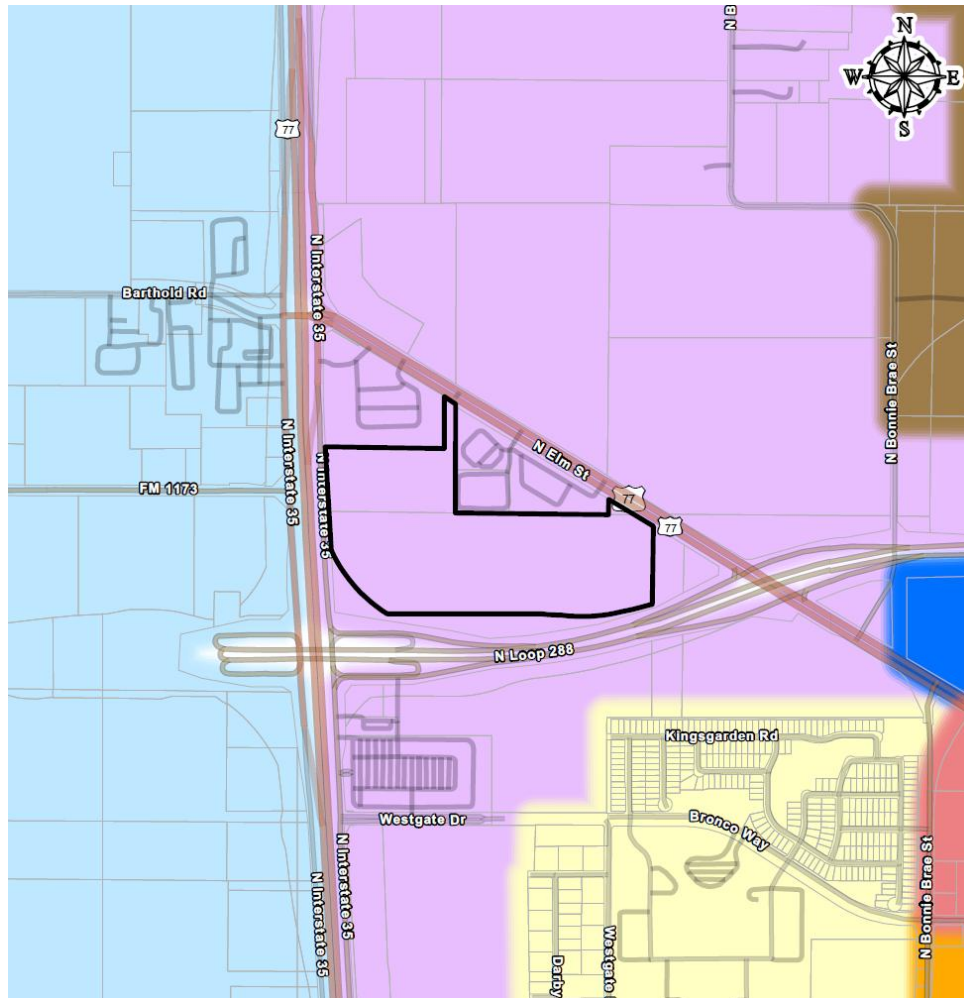
a. Shall weigh competing goals, policies, and strategies.

There are no competing goals, policies, or strategies related to this proposal.

b. May approve an application that furthers the overall goals of the Comprehensive Plan even if the development does not match the future land use designation in the Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed Planned Development Overlay is consistent with the goals, policies, and actions of the Comprehensive Plan and with the Future Land Use Designation of Business Center (light purple shading on the inset map below and in Exhibit 5) as outlined below:

Future Land Use



The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation for the subject property and surrounding area is Business Center, which is envisioned to be the City's employment centers, intended to allow for a range of businesses both in terms of sizes and types. Sites should be designed to include generous, linked open space to maximize value and promote visual quality and compatibility. General Office District conforms to the goals and purpose of Business Center, as it permits a variety of employment, service, and commercial uses while requiring design standards consistent with office or commercial developments. These standards include overall tree canopy, building orientation, and landscaping. Because of the site's prominent location near Denton's north gateway, the proposed PD-GO District provides additional enhancements to encourage a higher-quality design. Specifically, the overlay conditions include a wide landscape area between the roadways and parking/building areas, screening of loading area dock doors, enhanced building entrances, and limits to accessory outdoor storage.

The request is also consistent with the following goals and urban design principles of the Comprehensive Plan:

Community Character & Urban Design

GOAL CC-4: Create Character: Achieve exemplary urban design in future and existing development throughout Denton's neighborhoods, centers, and land uses

Uses within the Business Center Future Land Use Designation should follow appropriate urban design principals outlined in 4.16.6:

- *Encourage the development of office and business workplaces in proximity to commercial, civic, and recreational uses.*
The subject property is located in a developing area with elementary, secondary, and college level educational facilities, residential neighborhoods, commercial development, and parks nearby.
- *Screen all loading docks, platforms, and overhead bay doors from public view. Loading function should be located away from front streets and should be designed or screened in such a way as to reduce their visibility.*
The proposed Overlay PD conditions prohibit dock doors from facing the street and provide additional screening for loading areas to minimize the visibility of loading areas, consistent with the desired urban design principles.

4. *Compliance with this DDC*

- a. *The proposed development shall comply with all applicable standards in this DDC, unless the standard is to be lawfully modified.*

This request is for a rezoning to an Overlay Planned Development with a General Office base zoning district (PD-GO). The proposed Development Standards provided in Exhibit 7 indicate an intent to develop in accordance with the 2019 DDC and impose enhanced and alternative development standards as outlined in the document, which are further summarized in the table in Exhibit 1.

- b. *Compliance with these standards is applied at the level of detail required for the subject submittal.*

Compliance with the DDC has been analyzed at the level of detail necessary for an Overlay Planned Development. Subsequent development will be subject to the appropriate applications, development standards, and review processes of the DDC.

5. *Compliance with Other Applicable Regulations*

The PD regulations document indicates that development on the subject site shall comply with all provisions of the 2019 DDC with modified and additional standards. Further, the development will be required to comply with the City's criteria manuals for roadway, utility, and drainage improvements, as well as TxDOT requirements.

6. *Consistent with Interlocal and Development Agreements*

There are no interlocal or development agreements applicable to the site.

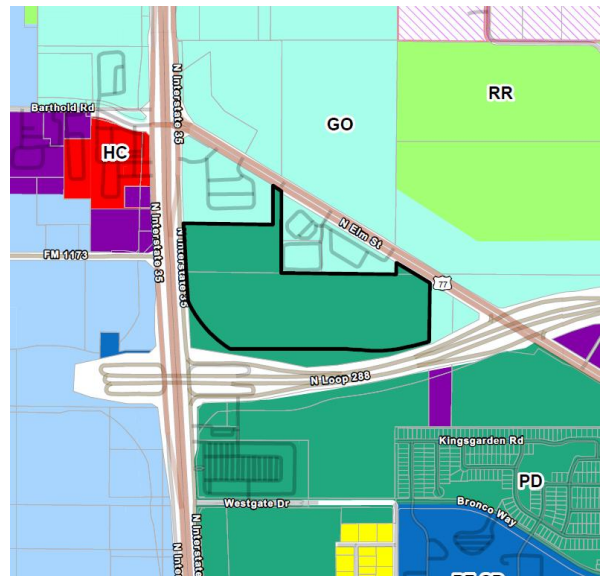
7. *Minimizes Adverse Environmental Impacts*

Subsequent development of this site would be required to show compliance with all DDC regulations related to tree preservation, stormwater control, and landscaping during the review of the Zoning Compliance Plan. Compliance with these current standards would generate a better result with more overall trees and landscaping than what would occur under the current PD-142 standards.

8. *Minimizes Adverse Impacts on Surrounding Property*

Given the adjacent zoning and developed uses to the north and east, staff does not anticipate adverse impacts—the PD’s base GO District is a logical extension of the existing zoning pattern. Residential and commercial areas south of the site are separated from the site by Loop 288 so that traffic, light, and noise generated by the proposed development will likely be muted.

However, due to the site's prominent location, the proposal includes an Overlay PD to minimize the visual impact of a large-scale development from adjacent roadways, including increased landscape area at the street, screening for dock doors and loading areas, and limited accessory outdoor storage. See the summary table in Exhibit 1 or the full PD standards in Exhibit 7 for more detail.



9. *Minimizes Adverse Fiscal Impacts*

This proposed rezoning is not anticipated to create significant adverse fiscal impacts based upon the city's Fiscal Impact Model, which was estimated based upon the development of an industrial use. The Model estimates net impact of \$6,101,700 to the City's General Fund and 896 new workers. See Exhibit 8 – Fiscal Impact Summary for additional information.

As noted previously, if the rezoning is approved, any use permitted within the PD Overlay could be developed on the subject property, and a change in land use would modify the results of the Fiscal Impact Model analysis.

10. Compliance with Utility, Service, and Improvement Standards

This proposed rezoning would not affect utilities, services, or improvements. Subsequent review of the Zoning Compliance Plan and Civil Engineering Plans must adhere to the applicable utility requirements, including extensions of any facilities as needed.

11. *Provides Adequate Road Systems*

As discussed above, the subject property has frontage along three TxDOT-owned roadways which will provide adequate capacity for the uses and development scale permitted in the proposed PD Overlay. A Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) is not required with a PD Overlay; however, a TIA will be required for the development of this site if it meets the thresholds in the City's criteria manual for a TIA at the time of Zoning Compliance Plan submittal. Specifically, if the development will generate 100 peak hour trips, 1,000 vehicle trips a day, or take access from a TxDOT roadway, a TIA would be required. Any associated improvements will need to be accounted for during review of subsequent development plans.

12. *Provides Adequate Public Services and Facilities*

The proposed rezoning is not anticipated to negatively impact public services and facilities as outlined below:

- Wastewater: The subject property is located near the future Milam/Clear Creek Interceptor Project and has negotiated adequate wastewater connections with the City.
- Water: If the rezoning is approved, appropriate water connections and extensions will be reviewed and designed in accordance with all applicable standards.

13. *Rational Phasing Plan*

The proposed rezoning does not have a phasing plan.

B. Section 2.7.3.E of the DDC provides approval criteria applicable to all applications.

1. *Complies with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan;*

As described in Consideration A above, the proposed rezoning meets this criterion.

2. *Complies with the goals of relevant Area Plans;*

As described in Consideration A above, there are no area plans applicable to the subject property.

3. *Complies with this DDC, except where modifications are expressly authorized through the PD Regulations Document and PD Development Plan;*

As detailed in Exhibit 7 and described in Consideration A above, the proposed rezoning meets this criterion.

4. *Provides a greater level of building design quality, community amenities, and connectivity than would be required if the project were not being developed in a PD District;*

Because of the site's prominence as part of the City's northern gateway and at the confluence of three highways, the proposed overlay is intended to accomplish the following:

- **Enhance the landscape space and screening at the right-of-way**

As proposed, the PD regulations exceed the typical DDC standards for screening at the right-of-way by requiring a landscape buffer with a minimum width of 30 feet along Loop 288 and Highway 77 and 35 feet along I-35. Because a 20-foot public utility easement is required along all TxDOT roadways, the proposed minimum width will allow for sufficient space for the screening elements outside of the easement. Additionally, because the applicant anticipates needing more than two rows of parking for buildings along I-35, the proposal specifies the screening elements for parking along the I-35 Frontage Road (masonry wall and evergreen ornamental trees) to ensure views from the roadway into the parking lot are limited by physical barriers regardless of the time of year.

- **Reduce the visual impact of loading areas and dock doors**

Current DDC Subsection 7.9.7B prohibits off-street loading spaces in any front yard or in any required street side yard but does not prohibit dock doors from facing the street. To minimize the visual impact of loading areas, the proposed PD explicitly prohibits dock doors from directly facing the street. And while the DDC requires loading areas to be screened in DDC Subsection 7.10.5B.4,

the proposed overlay prescribes the screening mechanisms for loading areas in side yards. The mechanisms include screening walls, building projections, wing walls, retaining walls, or similar structures.

- **Provide flexibility in parking regulations and design to ensure adequate parking for both industrial and office uses over the life of the development**

According to the applicant, future tenants are likely to include warehouse and light industrial uses; however, once constructed, the buildings and associated parking will likely remain for many decades, and opportunities for office tenants or other uses could occur. In order to develop the site to be flexible and adaptable to future conditions, the applicant has proposed an alternative parking ratio: one space per 2,000 square feet minimum and one space per 500 square feet maximum. Additionally, the proposed PD allows the Director to make a more nuanced determination for any specific use with a parking demand study in accordance with DDC Subsection 7.9.4E.

- **Increase the architectural standards**

Large-scale industrial buildings can present architectural challenges when trying to create visual interest. The building size needed and interior activities can often drive the architectural forms, but front entrances can be important focal points to break up the massing and invite visitors into the space. The DDC regulations combine commercial and industrial design standards, specifically DDC Subsection 7.10.5D, which requires a horizontal and vertical break of at least three feet every 50 continuous feet, which is appropriate for small- and medium-scale buildings, but may not always be preferred or logical on large industrial buildings with walls spanning 500- to 600-feet long. Therefore, the PD proposal increases the intervals between the breaks to 100 feet to more appropriately match the scale of the larger buildings but requires enhancements for the primary entrances with an additional 30% window glazing.

- **Limit the amount and permitted locations for accessory outdoor storage**

Under the base GO District zoning, Outdoor Storage, Accessory is a permitted use with Use-Specific Standards related to screening, the type of materials, and safety. As a permitted accessory use, the typical rule of thumb is that outdoor storage could not exceed the square footage of the primary use. Therefore, under the base zoning, if a building is 100,000 square feet, accessory outdoor storage could occupy up to 49,999 square feet of the site. To reduce the visual impacts associated with outdoor storage, the proposed PD limits the amount of outdoor storage allowed to no more than 30% of the truck court area, which must be screened with a wall or similar structure. As a result, any outdoor storage will be screened and limited to a smaller footprint.

5. *In the case of proposed residential development, that the development will promote compatible buildings and uses and that it will be compatible with the character of the surrounding area;*

Residential uses are not proposed as part of this PD. The only residential use permitted in the base GO zoning district is multifamily, which requires a Specific Use Permit and would therefore come before the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council for approval if the use were to be contemplated in the future.

6. *In the case of proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, recreational and other non-residential uses or mixed-uses, that such development will be appropriate in area, location, and overall planning for the purpose intended; and*

The proposed PD-GO District is appropriate for the subject site, as it is a logical extension of the existing zoning pattern and will allow for development of uses and building scape consistent with what is typically found along highways. The overlay standards would help ensure a higher quality design for the site to its visually prominent location.

7. *The provisions for public facilities such as schools, fire protection, law enforcement, water, wastewater, streets, public services and parks are adequate to serve the anticipated population within the PD District.*

This proposed PD Overlay is required to comply with utility, service, and improvement standards when the site develops. If the PD is approved, future applications will be reviewed to ensure compliance with all applicable standards.

Water and Wastewater

Development of the site will require a connection to existing water and wastewater facilities and extensions as needed.

Nearest Fire Station

The closest fire station to the subject property is Fire Station 5 at 2230 W. Windsor Drive, approximately 2.11 miles away. The subject site is within the eight minute or less response time boundary; however, ongoing and future roadway construction could slow response times or require use of an alternate route.

Parks

The proposal does not include residential uses; therefore, park dedication is not required.

Schools

The proposal does not include residential uses; therefore, no impacts to schools are anticipated.

8. *The condition and/or restrictions imposed by the PD are necessary and sufficient to address any significantly adverse impacts to surrounding properties or the neighborhood.*

As detailed in Exhibit 7 and described in Consideration A above, the proposed Development Standards have been developed to address potential visual impacts associated with large-scale warehouse, light industrial, and employment uses.