THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date: July 28, 2020

Subject: Conditional Zoning Request for the Franklin School of Innovation

Staff Resource(s): Todd Okolichany, AICP, LEED AP ND, Planning & Urban Design Director
Shannon Tuch, Principal Planner
Jessica Bernstein, Urban Planner II

Action Requested: Conditionally zone an existing school site from Commercial Industrial (CI) to Institutional Conditional Zone (INST CZ) and amend the Future Land Use Map from Industrial/Manufacturing to Employment/Anchor Institution Center

Project Location and Contacts:

- The project site consists of a single parcel located at 61 Innovation Drive (PIN 9627-01-2917)
- Owner / Petitioner: Franklin School of Innovation; Contact: Bryan Moffitt

Summary of Petition:

- The site is currently the location of the Franklin School of Innovation, which has been constructed in phases beginning with a Level I in 2015 (15-09144) and most recently reviewed and permitted as a Level II project in 2018 (18-01129 PZ).
- The third and final phase of construction is anticipated to be completed by 2025 and will total approximately 78,000 square feet of permanent building space, 140 parking spaces, and other facilities common to schools.
- The primary purpose of the conditional zoning request is to change the zoning classification in order to allow the use of temporary, factory fabricated classroom buildings on the subject site beyond the five year limit per Section 7-14-2(e)1 of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).
- Landscaping compliance was reviewed during the 2018 Level II review and included street trees along Sardis Road, parking lot landscaping and building impact landscaping as shown on plans. 2.17 acres of open space is provided on the site, exceeding the 15% requirement for the zoning district. Eight street trees were required and were initially provided; however, two trees were removed by Duke Energy for utility conflict as part of the widening of Sardis Road.
- Through this conditional zoning, the project is seeking a modification from the following zoning requirements (and further detailed in the exhibit B.1 conditions attached to this report):
    - Temporary factory fabricated school buildings will be permitted on the site.
    - Six street trees (rather than eight as required) will be maintained in the location as shown on plans, behind the sidewalk approximately 20 feet from the street and outside of the utility easement.
- The applicant will voluntarily provide a greenway easement along the Hominy Creek at the rear of the site to help meet city adopted goals and plans (also detailed in the exhibit B.1 conditions attached to this report).

Comprehensive Plan Consistency:

- This proposal is consistent with the Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan in that the project provides sidewalks along Sardis Road as well as commits to the future greenway along the rear of the site, directly adding to goals throughout the Livable Built Environment section of the Plan to increase walkability and multi-modal transportation options.
- Supporting schools and educational institutions is highly recommended throughout the Plan, notably in the Resilient Economy section. Linking schools to greenways is specifically highlighted in several sections of the Plan.
- While the request does necessitate a change to the Future Land Use Map as it is currently categorized as Industrial / Manufacturing, the Preferred Growth Scenario Map identifies areas for the the Employment / Anchor Institution use in the Candler area, not far from this site, and it is the category that is most appropriate for a large parcel with an educational use.
- Additionally, the underlying Commercial Industrial (CI) zoning is stated as an appropriate zoning district for the Employment / Anchor Institution category (pp. 342-3).

Compatibility Analysis:

- Commercial Industrial zoning is adjacent on both sides and parcels across Sardis Road are zoned Industrial, however there are a variety of uses in the vicinity including commercial uses along Sardis Road and multi-family residential in multiple directions as well. The Enka Intermediate School (Buncombe County) is less than a mile away from this site. The nature of the area is mixed between residential, commercial and industrial. The school use was allowed in the underlying zoning and is considered to be compatible with the surrounding uses.

Council Goal(s):

- Equitable and Diverse Community
- A Well-Planned and Livable Community
- A Clean and Healthy Environment

Committee(s):

- Technical Review Committee (TRC) - June 15, 2020 - approved with conditions
- Planning & Zoning Commission - July 1, 2020 - recommended approval (7-0)

Staff Recommendation:

- Staff recommends approval of this request with the conditions and finds that the use of temporary buildings until full build-out is able to be achieved is acceptable.

Suggested Motion to Approve:

- I move to approve the conditional zoning request for the property located at 61 Innovation Drive from Commercial Industrial to Institutional Conditional Zone with an amendment to the Future Land Use Map of the Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan from Industrial/Manufacturing to Employment/Anchor Institution Center and find that the request is reasonable, is in the public interest, is consistent with the city's comprehensive plan, and meets the development needs of the community in that: 1) the request allows for longer phasing for use of temporary buildings; 2) the use is appropriate in the underlying zoning district and is already in operation; 3) site improvements such as sidewalk and dedication of a greenway easement provide valuable amenities; and, 4) the proposed change to the Future Land Use of the Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan better aligns with the use of the property.

Attachment(s)

(1) Exhibit A Map - Existing Zoning
(2) Exhibit A1 Map - Proposed Zoning
(3) Exhibit B Map - Aerial
(4) Exhibit C Map - Future Land Use
(5) Exhibit D - Current Phase Plan
(6) Exhibit E - Staging & Final Build Out Plan
(7) (Draft) Exhibit B.1 List
(8) TRC Comments
(9) (Draft) Ordinance
(10) (Draft) Planning & Zoning Commission Minutes
(11) Planning & Zoning Commission Recommendation Form