



Town of Haymarket
15000 Washington Street, #100
Haymarket, VA 20169
703-753-2600

STAFF REPORT

TC Meeting Date: January 6, 2025
Agenda Title: Special Use Permit Application #2024-001, Chick Fil A Drive Through
Zoning District: B-2 Business Commercial
Requested Action: Denial of Special Use Permit #2024-001
Staff Lead: Thomas Britt, Town Planner



The applicant is requesting to alter the drive through lanes currently serving the Chick Fil A site to allow for more efficient delivery of orders via the drive through area of the business.

The property is part of the Quarles property parcel, located on the western end of the corporate limits of Haymarket, near the intersection of Washington Street and James Madison Highway. The address for this site is 15186 Washington Street.

Staff recommends that the Town Council Deny Special Use Permit SUP#2024-001, Chick Fil A Drive Through.

BACKGROUND

Request: The applicant has requested to extend the second drive through lane (right most lane) out to the right, onto the current bank property and along the current row of landscaping. The drive through lane will then reconvene with the existing lane (left lane) at the exit/pedestrian crossing. This expansion is proposed to function as a bypass to the pickup window and an additional order pickup point.

Site Location: 15186 Washington Street, near the northeast corner of the intersection of Washington Street and James Madison Highway.

Zoning: This site is zoned B-2, Business Commercial.

Surrounding Land Uses: The site is surrounded by B-2 zoned properties, with I-1 Light Industrial zoning to the south of the site across Washington Street. To the northeast of the site is a townhouse neighborhood that was rezoned from B-2 to R-2 in 2018.

Background and Context: The Chick Fil A has operated a drive through service area and pickup location that was initially approved by Special Use Permit in December 2015. The drive-through section currently has two lanes for staff to take orders, then merges into one lane for order pickup after the menu boards. The applicant has requested to extend the second drive through lane (right most lane) out to the right, onto the current bank property and along the current row of landscaping. The drive through lane will then merge back with the existing lane (left lane) at the exit/pedestrian crossing. This expansion is proposed to function as a bypass to the pickup window and an additional order pickup point.

The expansion of the drive lane will reduce the travel lanes on the bank property to a single lane, in a counter clockwise direction. The expansion will also narrow the entry point into the parking lot of the Haymarket Lifetime Smiles dentist office that is currently under construction at 15234 Washington Street. As part of general site improvements associated with the drive through expansion, the applicant is proposing to alter the back entry/exit point from Chick Fil A onto Crossroads Village Boulevard to a one-way exit onto Crossroads Village Boulevard with the curbed island expanded into the entry/exit point to reduce the right of way. With the proposed expansion of the drive through lane the applicant will remove the existing landscaping and replace the removed landscaping buffer on the islands at the end of the drive through lanes and the expanded curb on the property line between Chick Fil A and Crossroads Village Boulevard. See excerpt below for the Zoning Ordinance reference for the landscaping requirements in the parking lot.

Zoning Ordinance Reference Section 58-19.13 Parking Lot Landscaping (d)

(d) Parking lots adjacent to other parking lots.

(1) Landscape area requirements. A continuous landscape strip at least five feet in width shall be located between the property owner's parking lot and the property line.

(2) Number of trees and shrubs. There will be two trees and six shrubs for every 30 linear feet of landscape parking strip.

(3) Species of vegetation. All trees and shrubs planted to meet the requirements of this section shall be identified in sections 58-19.12.

The applicant has provided two additional exhibits that are provided for with the additional attachments. Differences between the initial proposal (Exhibit 1) and Exhibits 2 and 3 are as follows:

Exhibit 1: Landscaping buffer between Chick Fil A and VNB removed, expanded drive through lane separated by plastic delineators and bike curbs. Virginia National Bank parking remains perpendicular to the storefront.

Exhibit 2: Landscaping buffer between Chick Fil A and VNB removed, 2' curb installed between drive through and VNB, landscaping at the front of the bank removed to accommodate for 2' incursion onto property, bank parking perpendicular to building.

Exhibit 3: Landscaping buffer between Chick Fil A and VNB removed, 2' curb installed between the drive through and VNB, bank parking altered to 45 degree parking to accommodate for adequate aisle width, with a reduction in 2 parking spaces and an extension of the north curb to match the length of the parking spots. The landscaping stays in front of the bank façade, but its depth is reduced to accommodate for the additional space required for the curb installation.

Additional Analysis for Matters to be Considered in Special Use Permit Application Review follows.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Matters to be Considered in Application Review (per Section 58-4.28 of the Zoning Ordinance)

- (1) The nature of the proposed use, including factors such as traffic, noise, light, hours of operation, and number of employees involved.

As previously stated, the expansion of the drive through is intended to expedite mobile order pickup for existing customers and provide a more efficient service through the drive through lanes. The applicant has stated that in the short term the expanded lane will function as a bypass, but in the long term it will serve as a pick-up point for mobile orders, termed “mobile-through” by the applicant.

The applicant has provided a traffic impact study which shows the resulting net increase of traffic flow to be zero, with the same number of trips generated with the new design as before. The desire for more efficient pickup is shown via the proposed lane expansion, but there is no accounting for the change in customer volume despite the proposal and the traffic study. The last overall site traffic study was conducted for Crossroads Village Center in 2018. The alterations of the traffic patterns at Virginia National Bank’s lot and the entry-exit point at Crossroads Village Boulevard have not been analyzed.

The applicant has stated that the hours of operation and the number of employees will not change with the expansion of the drive through.

Town Staff asked the applicant to provide potential wayfinding options on Chick Fil A’s site and on adjacent sites in the hopes that pedestrians and drivers using the facilities will be less confused about the altered traffic patterns. The applicant has provided an additional exhibit proposing additional wayfinding options on site to direct pedestrian and car traffic. The proposed options include directional signage at the entry and exit points to Haymarket Lifetime Smiles and Virginia National Bank and the exit point onto Crossroads Village Boulevard, wayfinding drive through signage indicators at the Washington Street entrance into Chick Fil A, and directional signage, pedestrian crossing indicators, and a do not enter sign at the exit point of the drive through space. These proposed options are thorough in providing more visibility of the proposed new traffic patterns on site.

(2) The character of the existing area, including existing structures and structures under construction, existing public facilities, and public facilities under construction, and private, commercial and/or service facilities available within the existing area.

The applicant is proposing to remove the landscaping buffer between the drive through lane and the Virginia National Bank parking lot to accommodate the expansion. This would require a waiver request, which the Zoning Administrator has stated she will not grant.

The applicant discussed with Town Staff that installation of a curbed island in place of the landscaping buffer would reduce the Virginia National Bank parking lot depth from 24ft to 21 ft.

To mitigate the effects of this proposed alteration on Virginia National Bank, while also improving the drive through traffic for existing customers, the applicant is proposing to install delineators between the two properties in the place of a hardscape curbed island. These delineators can be vertical, 3"-5" high speed humps, or a combination of the two. While the delineators will act as a passive barrier and allow for flexibility when maneuvering the site, the hardscape buffer will no longer provide protection to the vehicles in the drive through lanes, the employees working the drive through lanes or the vehicle on the bank site utilizing the parking lot. The lack of permanent buffer causes concern for increased potential for accidents within the drive through vicinity.

The removal of the hardscape and expansion of the drive through lane will require the Virginia National Bank parking lot traffic pattern to be rerouted to a one-way counterclockwise traffic flow to accommodate for Chick Fil A's bypass lane. There is concern for the long-term impacts to the site and the customer accessibility. The parking area will remain the same for the bank lot. However, the area to back up will be reduced from 24 feet to 21 feet depending on the type of delineator/curb installed, requiring drivers to utilize multi-point turns to avoid backing into the delineators and thus the vehicles in the drive through lanes. The vehicle maneuvers for the bank parking lot are depicted on the third page of the site plan. If the exhibits meet outside agency parking and safety requirements, Town Staff prefer the exhibits with curb installation versus delineators. Per the last correspondence with the Prince William County Fire Marshal office, exhibits 1 and 2 are preferred over exhibit three to ensure that emergency vehicles can turn within the site.

There is a stormwater drain at the corner of the Chick Fil A parcel and the Lifetime Smiles parcel that will require the appropriate measures to ensure that it is not impacted by the expansion of the drive through. The applicant will be required to update the site plan, detailing the stormwater infrastructure in this area, along with the impacts and any proposed modifications to the system. If there is no direct or indirect impact to the stormwater system, the applicant shall properly state such determination on the site plan.

The Haymarket Lifetime Smiles dentist office's main entry to the site will be significantly narrowed to one travel lane into the parking lot. The applicant has not shown the entire Haymarket Lifetime Smiles site and parking lot on the site plan, therefore the Staff is unable to fully determine the impacts on the site. The site plan associated with this SUP is on hold until Town Council votes on SUP #2024-001. If the SUP is approved, the applicant shall fully depict the site on the site plan further showing the travel lanes into and out of the parking lot, the proposed exit area for the site and the full extent of the parking.

Lastly, the reduction of entry points into Chick Fil A will force any and all potential customers of Chick Fil A—which includes nearby residents, users of the future daycare facility and adjacent businesses—and any other users or customers of the multitenant structures along Washington street, to circle around Crossroads Village Boulevard and access the Chick Fil A drive through via the Washington Street and VNB entrance to the facility. The proposed alteration in the traffic pattern has not been significantly analyzed to provide an accurate estimate of the traffic alterations to the surrounding sites, but the traffic pattern change would direct all vehicles to the drive aisles between CVS and VNB/Lifetime Smiles rather than distribute accessibility of adjacent sites evenly along Crossroads Village Boulevard.

(3) The area's designation on the town's comprehensive plan, and relevant text provisions of the plan.

Town Comprehensive Plan. 1.2.9 Community Design Policy

Industrial/Retail, West of Fayette Street

This section of town has experienced the most rapid growth over the last 10 years. Primarily a light industrial zone, retail shops and services have recently been added to create an almost even split between the two. Zoning regulations and architectural design have created a sense of age to the town as one travels from Route 15 to the center of town. As development has progressed, styles of new buildings show a regression of architectural styles from modern (Sheetz), to neo-colonial (Leaberry and Quarles shopping centers), to late-1800s urban (second Bloom building) and finally to colonial (Giuseppe's Restaurant and Remax Realtors). One historic structure has been saved, Winterham, albeit in the midst of a new shopping and professional complex. This regression is in concert with the overall goal of maintaining the feel of the town center as the oldest portion of Haymarket. Only one property of this part of town is undeveloped, the land between Quarles and Giuseppe's Restaurant. The overall design of a retail or professional complex on this site must flow into this age progression. Accordingly, the style and size of structures here should fit between mid-1800 and early 1900. Locations in this part of town should be accessible by foot traffic. Parking will generally be available on site.

The proposed expansion of the drive-through lane will reinforce and even increase vehicle dependency to access and use the site, which will also promote further reliance on vehicle trips to this site and in this retail area. The heightened intensity of use of the land use as vehicle traffic increases will also discourage pedestrian movement on this site and when accessing other sites. Approval of this design may set a precedent for future developments to also include or apply for more high volume, vehicle-centered modes of pickup or use, which would discourage pedestrian walkability and decrease foot traffic in this area of Town.

(4) The minimum off-street parking area required, and the amount of space needed for the loading and unloading of trucks.

No cars are parked in this section of Chick Fil A and no unloading of trucks takes place at the drive through exit point either. On this site, truck deliveries have usually taken place near the dumpster enclosure and entry-exit point at the northeast corner of the site. Loading and unloading of trucks will be affected if the entry-exit point at the rear of Chick Fil A via the extension of the curbed island and creation of a one way exit point from the site. The property owner will need to designate a new loading/unloading site so as not to block traffic flow at the new exit point or other major entry-exit locations on site.

Virginia National Bank will lose 2 parking spots if exhibit 3 is approved, but the reduction still meets the Zoning Ordinance parking tabulations for the site. Bank trucks and other loading occurring at the front of the VNB building will block a higher portion of customer parking if the site has a reduction of two parking spaces.

(5) Whether the public health, safety and welfare will be preserved, and any reasonable conditions necessary for such preservation.

If exhibit 1 is chose, the lack of a solid barrier between the drive through-space and VNB and Haymarket Lifetime Smiles parking lot increases the risk of vehicles driving into or out of the space, damaging property and vehicles, and injuring pedestrians or employees of Chick Fil A, VNB, and Haymarket Lifetime Smiles. The proposed curb installation in exhibits 2 and 3, while safer and more distinct of a barrier then just delineators, is a reduction in the dimensions of the original barrier between the drive through and parking lot.

(6) Any other factors relating to the purposes of zoning that the planning commission and/or Haymarket Town Council, in its legislative discretion, shall consider as relevant.

The entire proposal is possible if a waiver of the Zoning Ordinance requirement for buffer landscaping is approved (see Section 58-19.13d, referenced earlier in this report). The Zoning Administrator has affirmed any waiver requests for this landscaping requirement would be denied. As such, the entire project structure is based on a violation of the Zoning Ordinance. While Chick Fil A and Virginia National Bank both sit on the same pad site, approval of this proposal will set a precedent that businesses in separate buildings may be altered as needed to meet the needs of an adjacent business with consideration only given to the business benefitting most to the proposal.

Exhibit 3 provides the best balance of the proposed use, preserving driver safety, and mitigating any negative effects of the proposal. However, due to the Fire Marshal office's recommendations of exhibits 1 and 2 in regard to emergency vehicle turns, the

aforementioned removal of the original landscaping buffer, and the alterations of Virginia National Bank’s façade to preserve the aisle width for the angled parking, exhibit 3 is not a feasible proposal.

As referenced in the above sections, the proposed drive through expansion may have the following negative effects on the site and the surrounding area: increase of traffic, decrease in driver access to the site and to adjacent businesses, inconsistent safety hazards associated with the drive through design, potential detrimental effects to the operations of adjacent businesses, and inconsistency with the standards set for this section of Town in the Haymarket Comprehensive Plan. With these effects considered, Town Staff recommend denial of SUP #2024-001 for the Chick Fil A drive through expansion.

The Planning Commission Held a Public Hearing for SUP#2024-001 July 15th, 2024. In the September 10th 2024 Planning Commission Meeting, the Commission unanimously voted to recommend denial of SUP#2024-001. Please see the attached September 10th Planning Commission minutes for the Commission’s comments associated with the application.

Draft Motion: “I move that the Haymarket Town Council deny SUP#2024-001, Chick Fil A Drive Through Expansion.”

Or an alternate motion.

Public Notice and Input

The Town posted notice of public hearing for the SUP application for all residents of the Town in the Prince William Times on November 14th and November 21st, 2024.

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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ATTACHMENTS

- A—Special Use Permit Application
- B—Applicant Narrative
- C—Revised Special Use Permit Plan Exhibit 1—includes delineator options
- D—SUP Proposal Exhibit 2
- E—SUP Proposal Exhibit 3
- F—Proposed Landscaping Relocation
- G—Submitted Traffic Impact Study
- H—Proposed Signage and Wayfinding Installations on CFA and Adjacent Properties

I—Written approval from landlord of Quarles Property for traffic rerouting

J—September 10, 2024 Planning Commission Minutes with Vote on SUP#2024-001