

STAFF REPORT

ITEM: Floodplain Permit Application for interior renovation of an existing commercial building located within the regulatory floodway at 600 W. Main Street.

APPLICANT: Becca Vermelis

ENGINEER: Urban James Engineering – Uwem J. Ekpenyong, P.E.

BACKGROUND

The applicant requests approval of a floodplain permit to allow interior renovations to an existing commercial building located at 600 W. Main Street, at the southwest corner of Main Street and Lahoma Avenue. The property is located within a FEMA-designated regulatory floodway.

The proposed work consists of interior tenant space renovations to prepare the building for future occupancy. Renovations include removal of select non-structural, non-load-bearing interior partition walls and restoration of commercial spaces to a white-box condition for future tenants. No changes are proposed to the building footprint, finished floor elevation, exterior walls, structural framing, site grading, or floodplain storage volume. The estimated cost of the proposed improvements is approximately \$175,000.

STAFF ANALYSIS

- The subject property is an existing commercial structure located within the mapped regulatory floodway. The proposed development consists entirely of interior modifications and does not include any expansion of the building footprint, placement of fill, excavation, grading, floodplain alteration, or modifications to the adjacent floodway.
- The applicant provided a Flood Zone Statement prepared by Urban James Engineering. The engineer reviewed the proposed renovations and determined that the removal of interior non-load-bearing partitions will not alter the finished floor elevation, building footprint, or available flood storage volume within the floodway. The engineer concluded that the proposed work will not adversely affect flood conveyance or flood storage capacity.
- Staff also reviewed the proposed improvements for compliance with the City's cumulative substantial improvement requirements. Based on the applicant's estimated construction cost of \$175,000 and the Cleveland County Assessor's improvement value of \$912,779 for the structure, the proposed work represents approximately 19.2 percent of the building value. Staff reviewed available records and found no evidence that cumulative improvements within the applicable tracking period would cause the structure to exceed the fifty percent (50%) substantial improvement threshold.

Proposed Development Characteristics

- Interior renovation of existing commercial tenant spaces
- Removal of non-structural, non-load-bearing partition walls
- No increase in building footprint
- No increase in finished floor elevation
- No fill placement or grading within the floodplain
- No watercourse alteration proposed
- No impact to flood storage volume or floodway conveyance capacity

APPLICABLE ORDINANCE SECTIONS (36-533)

(e)(2) – General Standards for New Construction and Substantial Improvements

(e)(2)(a) – Floodplain modification and fill restrictions

(e)(2)(e) – Compensatory Storage

(f)(3)(8) – No-rise condition requirements

DETAILED ORDINANCE ANALYSIS

(e)(2) – General Standards for New Construction and Substantial Improvements

Pursuant to the definitions of "Cumulative Cost" and "Substantial Improvement" contained in Section 36-533(c), staff evaluated the proposed project to determine whether the cumulative cost of improvements during the immediate past ten-year period equals or exceeds fifty percent (50%) of the market value of the structure. The applicant has indicated an estimated construction cost of \$175,000. The Cleveland County Assessor lists the improvement value of the structure as \$912,779, which is presumed to be the market value for purposes of this review. Based on the information provided, the proposed improvements represent approximately 19.2 percent of the structure value. Staff reviewed available records and found no evidence that cumulative improvements during the applicable review period would cause the structure to exceed the fifty percent (50%) substantial improvement threshold. Therefore, the project is not considered a substantial improvement under Section 36-533(c).

(e)(2)(a) and (e)(2)(e) – Floodplain Fill Restrictions and Compensatory Storage

The proposed project consists solely of interior renovations to an existing commercial structure. No fill placement, grading, excavation, or modification of the floodplain is proposed.

(f)(3)(8) – No-Rise Requirement

Engineer provided a No-Rise Certification.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of floodplain permit application #743.