

The County of Spotsylvania
Department of Planning



Planning Commission Staff Report

Special Use #SUP16-0010
(Battlefield Voting District)

Staff Recommendation: Approval with the recommended conditions

I. Overview

Applicant:	Gramm & Bethard, LLC (Safford Auto)
Request:	Special use approval to allow commercial off-street parking for new car inventory as a principal use on 2.8774 acres of property. This request is a companion request to Rezoning case R16-0007.
Tax Map Parcels:	23A-2-10, 23A-2-11, 23-A-139
Location:	The property is located at 10823 Courthouse Road which is located along the south side of Courthouse Road (Route 208), approximately 1,145 feet east of the intersection of Hood Drive (Route 636) and Courthouse Road (Route 208).
Zoning Overlay:	Airport Protection Overlay District Highway Corridor Overlay District
Future Land Use Designation:	Commercial
Historic Resources:	None
Date Application Deemed Complete:	October 19, 2016

II. Analysis

The special use permit application SUP16-0010 Gramm & Bethard, LLC is the companion case to rezoning R16-0007 Gramm & Bethard, LLC and Fields Investments, LLC to allow Safford Auto to operate a commercial off-street parking lot for the purpose of storing new vehicle inventory on 2.8 acres (after right of way dedication). Safford Auto's dealerships include Safford Kia, Safford Chrysler Jeep Dodge, and Safford Fiat which are all currently located in Spotsylvania County off of Route 1 and Lafayette Boulevard. Until recently, Safford's overflow new vehicle inventory was stored on leased property off of Industrial Drive; however the property is no longer available and Safford has utilized temporary facilities while these applications have been in process.

The proposed parking lot will be utilized by all of the Safford dealerships the overflow new vehicle inventory. The parking lot for new vehicle inventory storage is expected to generate 35 vehicle trips per day. The parking lot will only be accessed by Safford Auto employees retrieving cars from the property when necessary. No delivery truck and tractor trailer traffic will visit the vehicle storage lot. All vehicle deliveries will occur at the associated dealership then the individual vehicles will be driven to the storage lot until needed for sales.

The property is located on the south side of Courthouse Road (Route 208), approximately 1,145 feet east of the intersection of Hood Drive. The property is mostly vacant but for one single family dwelling currently used as residential rental property. Immediately surrounding the property are commercial uses including the SPCA, S&K Home Remodeling office, Pro-Build lumber yard, offices and the Gulf Gas station. The property is surrounded by Commercial 2 and 3 (C-2 and C-3) zoning except for a vacant 13 acre tract of land with a split zoning of Residential 1 (R-1) and Commercial 3 (C-3). The property is designated on the Future Land Use Map within the Comprehensive Plan as Commercial. The proposal is an investment and redevelopment of an unused or underused site which is targeted for higher intensity commercial. The business investment and redevelopment, along with transportation improvements which will be discussed in detail below, are consistent with the goals and objectives for commercial development within the Primary Development Boundary as identified in the Comprehensive Plan. (For a complete Comprehensive Plan Analysis, please refer to Appendix A.)

The Generalized Development Plan (GDP) identifies the two developments included with the rezoning case including the subject parking lot and an office building. Two points of access are proposed with the developments. The Safford Auto development includes a completely fenced and gated parking lot consisting of 346 parking spaces. The fencing visible from Courthouse Road will be constructed of a decorative aluminum and the remainder of the fence will be chain link. No interparcel connections are provided from the proposed parking lot in order to accommodate the specific need for a completely secured parking lot for new vehicle inventory storage. A stub is provided on the proposed office site to the proposed parking lot and the applicant has proffered as part of the rezoning a future connection to the vacant property to the south upon future redevelopment in order to accomplish interparcel connectivity among the commercial properties. A twenty (20) foot landscaped street buffer is provided along the frontage of parking lot. Additionally, the applicant has provided evergreen plantings within the aluminum fence line along the frontage of the parking lot development and extending 50' back along each property line in order to further limit the visual impact of the parking lot

from Courthouse Road. The applicant has provided the required transitional screening along the rear of the property; however along the property line adjacent to the SPCA and the contractor's office, the applicant is requesting a waiver to the transitional screening requirement. The applicant has provided letters from the affected property owners indicating they are in favor of waiving the transitional screening, and given their acquiescence and the existing intensity of the adjacent development staff has identified no concerns with the waiver request. The applicant is also requesting a waiver to the interior parking lot landscaping requirement as this would limit the amount of available for vehicle storage. Staff has no concerns with the waiver to the interior parking lot landscaping requirement as the view sheds from Courthouse Road will be limited with the enhanced street buffer.

A traffic impact analysis was completed and no right turn lanes are required. In order to address the specific needs of the two developments, the applicant proposes the two separate access points, along with the construction of sidewalk and a 400' turn lane section which will connect an intermittent right turn lane which currently runs along Courthouse Road. Both the County and VDOT agree the public safety benefits of the continued right turn lane and sidewalk in this area outweigh the benefits that may result from a shared access point. Additionally the applicants have proffered to dedicate 15' of right of way along Courthouse Road as part of the rezoning.

STANDARDS OF REVIEW FOR SPECIAL USE APPROVAL	
STANDARD	STAFF COMMENT
1. Proposed use is in accord with the comprehensive plan and other official plans adopted by the county.	The proposed use is consistent with the Future Land Use Map and the goals and objectives identified for commercial development within the Primary Development Boundary.
2. Proposed use or development of the land will be in harmony with the scale, bulk, coverage, density, and character of the area.	The proposed use is consistent with the intensity and scale of the surrounding commercial development. The applicant has provided the required transitional screening adjacent to the vacant residentially zoned property and the applicant has provided an enhanced street buffer to limit the visual impact of the parking lot from Courthouse Road.
3. Proposed use will not hinder or discourage the appropriate development and use of adjacent land and buildings or impair the value thereof.	The proposed use will not hinder or discourage appropriate development. While an interparcel connection to the vacant residentially zoned parcel to the south is not provided with the current proposal, the applicants as part of the rezoning, have proffered a future connection upon redevelopment of the parking lot site.
4. Proposed use will not adversely affect the health or safety of persons residing or working in the neighborhood.	The proposed use will not adversely affect the health or safety of the neighborhood. The construction of the

	sidewalk and continuation of the right turn lane along the frontage is a public safety benefit.
5. Proposed use will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements within the neighborhood.	The proposed use will not be detrimental to the public welfare. The construction of the sidewalk and continuation of the right turn lane along the frontage is a public safety benefit.
6. Proposed use is appropriately located with respect to transportation facilities, water supply, wastewater treatment, fire and police protection, waste disposal, and similar facilities.	The proposed use is appropriately located with no identified negative impact to capital facilities.
7. Proposed use will not cause undue traffic congestion or create a traffic hazard.	The propose use does not trigger any required transportation improvements; however the as part of the companion rezoning application and the special use permit the applicant will construct 400' of right turn lane which will connect an intermittent right turn lane currently along Courthouse Road.
8. Proposed use will have no undue adverse impact on environmental or natural resources.	The propose use will have no identified adverse impact on the environment or natural resources.

III. Key Findings

In Favor:

- The proposal is consistent with the County's land use vision for the area and is an investment and redevelopment of an underused site targeted for higher intensity commercial use.
- The redevelopment will result in an increase in real property tax revenue and an increase in tax revenue of the proposed business uses.
- The proposal includes an enhanced evergreen buffer along the frontage of parking lot development which will reduce the visual impact along Courthouse Road.

Against:

- A large vehicle storage lot accommodating 346 spaces is out of character with the surrounding commercial development.
- A vehicle storage lot is not the highest and best use for the property as it translates to tax revenue. For example, a brick and mortar office development would generate more tax revenue than a parking lot.

IV. Recommendation and Conditions

The proposal is consistent with the surrounding development and the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan for commercial development within the Primary Development Boundary. Please note, in order to allow the off-street parking lot for the new vehicle inventory the companion rezoning (R16-0007) must be approved in addition

to the special use permit. Based on staff's analysis and the key findings in favor, staff recommends approval of the special use permit with the following conditions:

1. Development of the off-street parking lot for new vehicle inventory storage shall be in compliance with the Generalized Development Plan titled, "Generalized Development Plan Safford Auto – Fields Investments Properties Rezoning and Special Use" last revised March 23, 2017 and prepared by W W Webb & Associates, PLLC.
2. If not already constructed as part of development on tax parcels #23A-2-9 and/or #23A-2-9A, all transportation improvements identified on the GDP shall be included on the site plan for the off-street parking lot for the new vehicle inventory development and constructed within twelve months of site plan approval.
3. The off-street parking lot for the new vehicle storage shall not be used as a sales lot.

Spotsylvania County Government

Appendix A

Comprehensive Plan Analysis

SUP16-0010: SAFFORD AUTO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ANALYSIS

The Spotsylvania County Comprehensive Plan presents a long range land use vision for the County. The Comprehensive Plan sets forth principles, goals, policies, and implementation techniques that will guide the development activity within the County and promote, preserve, and protect the health, safety, and general welfare of its citizens. Specifically, the Plan provides data and analysis on land use, transportation, housing, natural and historic resources, and public facilities and utilities. The purpose of this document is not to regulate, but rather guide land use, transportation, and infrastructure decisions. This guidance seeks to ensure continued economic and community vitality while ensuring necessary policies and infrastructure are in place to provide for the continuation of quality services to Spotsylvania's residents and businesses.

The Safford Auto proposal is located within the Primary Development Boundary in an area designated for Commercial land uses as depicted on the Future Land Use Map. Land within the Primary Development Boundary is intended to develop with higher residential densities and more intensive non-residential uses than outside of the boundary. As per the Spotsylvania County Comprehensive Plan Future land Use element, the Commercial land use category consists of a variety of retail and office uses, examples of which include, but are not limited to: medical facilities, shopping centers, restaurants, automobile service and sales facilities, and similar uses. The proposal includes the establishment of a commercial off-street parking use as a special use in the Commercial 3 zoning district. The Safford Auto proposal is consistent with the intent of the Commercial land use designation and development character within the Primary Development Area.

As commercial off-street parking, the Safford Auto proposal requires a special use permit under Commercial 3 zoning. Commercial 3 zoning is considered appropriate and complementary to the Commercial land use category in the Comprehensive Plan. As per County Code Section 23-4.5.1, Special uses are considered generally compatible with other land uses permitted in a zoning district but which, because of their unique characteristics or potential impacts on the surrounding neighborhood and the county as a whole, require individual consideration of their design, configuration, and/or operation at the particular location proposed.

An analysis considering the Safford Auto proposal as it relates to Comprehensive Plan Goals, Policies, and Guiding Principles is below:

Introduction and Vision:

Proposal is business friendly resulting in business investment and redevelopment of an unused or underused site targeted for higher intensity commercial use. (Guiding Principles and Policies A, A.1)

Land Use:

Proposal will result in a development project consistent with surrounding land uses and County land use vision for the area. (Future Land Use Map Designation and Land Use Descriptions, Land Use Policies Applicable to All Land Uses #8)

Proposal is business friendly resulting in business investment and redevelopment of an unused or underused site targeted for higher intensity commercial use. (Commercial Land Use Policies #6)

Proposal helps diversify commercial uses, consistent with goals to encourage non-retail commercial operations. (Commercial Land Use Policies #7)

Transportation:

Proposal includes dedication of right of way (15') along Route 208. County Thoroughfare Plan identifies this section of Route 208 as 6 lane divided section with 150' variable right of way. (Transportation Policy 2.2)

Historic Resources:

All existing structures have been previously surveyed for historic significance and documented at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Structures were not considered significant and/ or eligible for National Register. (Historic Resources Policies and Strategies 2, 2.1)

Natural Resources:

Existing developed site. No impacts to unique and/ or endangered resources including rare species expected to result. (Natural Resources Policy 1, Strategy 1)

Proposal is expected to be compatible with adjacent uses and noise levels. (Natural Resources Policy 1, Strategy 10)