



STAFF ANALYSIS

Date: August 13, 2019
To: Board of Commissioners
From: Jason Burdette, Planning Director
Re: CFA Church, Conditional Planning Area Map Amendment

1. INTRODUCTION

APPLICANT INFO

- **Owner(s):** Sadler Square Davidson Limited Partnership
- **Applicant:** CFA Church
- **Site Designer:** LS3P; Cole Jenest & Stone
- **Location(s):** 261 Griffith Street (Parcel ID: 00325506)
- **Planning Area(s):** Village Commerce
- **Area:** +/- 3.71 acres

REQUEST

The applicant proposes to re-designate approximately 3.71 acres located on Griffith Street (Sadler Square Shopping Center) from Village Commerce to Conditional Planning Area.

2. PLANNING STAFF PRELIMINARY REVIEW

OVERVIEW

The applicant proposes a Conditional Planning Area Map Amendment for +/- 3.71 acres currently zoned Village Commerce Planning Area. The Davidson Planning Ordinance (DPO) allows the Conditional Planning Area as an option for developers/property owners to ask for exceptions from the ordinance in a manner that is mutually agreeable to the developer and the Town of Davidson.

The request includes one parcel, 261 Griffith Street (Sadler Square Shopping Center). The applicant proposes to renovate the currently vacant space previously occupied by the Healthy Home Economist grocery store (+/-20,000 sf). The proposed renovation includes an auditorium with seating for 350, classrooms for children and youth, offices, and potentially a kitchen to provide meals to those in need.

The purpose of tonight's discussion is to determine if the Board of Commissioners would like to see this proposed conditional rezoning move through the formal Conditional Planning Area Map Amendment (i.e. rezoning) process.

BACKGROUND

CFA Church began leasing space from Our Town Cinema at Sadler Square. Religious institutions are not a permitted use in the Village Commerce Planning Area. However, the church is operating under a temporary use permit which identifies the use as secondary to the primary use and requires annual renewal. Religious institutions are permitted by the DPO within eight of the town's 16 standard planning areas with additional requirements.

Per the DPO, these additional requirements pertain to those uses which fall under the "Places of Assembly" definition and are specific to elementary schools, secondary schools, and religious institutions. No point of property used for a Place of Assembly shall be located nearer than 1,320 feet (1/4 mile) from any other substantially similar Place of Assembly.

There are three existing religious institutions located within 1,320 feet of the proposed CFA Church. All were located at their current sites prior to the adoption of the separation requirement and the current zoning.

Per the DPO, the Village Commerce Planning Area is established to create a strong emphasis on development and redevelopment of commercial, retail, and residential land uses. Development should generate a dense mix of retail frontage. Provisions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders are essential to the success of the Village Commerce Planning Area.

REQUESTED CONDITIONS

CFA Church requests a conditional map amendment for the following reasons:

- **Allowing the Religious Institution use at 261 Griffith Street.** This parcel is located in the Village Commerce Planning Area which does not allow religious institutions.
- **Allowing the Place of Assembly to be located within 1,320 feet of similar Places of Assemblies.** When religious institutions are permitted by the DPO, they are permitted with additional requirements. As described above, these additional requirements mandate a ¼ mile separation between similar uses.
- **Additional conditions to consider?** Through the Conditional Planning Area Map Amendment process, the Board of Commissioners may attach additional conditions to an approval. These could include transit amenities, tree plantings, sidewalk improvements, among others.

RELATED TOWN GOALS

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

- **Principle 1 Character/Community:** *We must preserve Davidson's character and sense of community* (compact developments with community open space; neighborhoods welcoming to all citizens; and neighborhoods as integral parts of town).
- **Principle 2 Unique Downtown:** *We must preserve and enhance Davidson's unique downtown* (social and civic center; provide a variety of retail and services; mixed uses; maintain and increase walkability/bikability).

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2010)

Chapter 3 Goals and Recommendations: Goal 5 (Page 56) Provide Support and Space for Churches, Religious Institutions, Childcare Services, and Community Centers

Chapter 3 Goals and Recommendations: Goal 1 (Page 65) Prioritize Infill and Mixed-Use Development Within or Near Already Developed Areas

2018-2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

Historic Preservation Strategy: The Town of Davidson will preserve our historically significant structures to retain our authenticity as a historic, small college town.

Economic Development Strategy: The Town of Davidson will use existing assets and manage growth to encourage an appropriate mix of residential and commercial development. Focus on commercial growth.

STAFF CONCERNS

While recognizing that religious institutions are a valuable component of Davidson, the applicant's request is specific to a site specifically identified as commercial/retail. Numerous plans, visioning exercises, and ordinances speak to the need for vibrant retail centers that enhance the pedestrian realm. This proposal falls short of those expectations. Committing the space to a religious use for the long-term would limit future commercial/retail opportunities on the site.

3. FYI OR RECOMMENDED ACTION

The applicant is meeting with the board of commissioners to understand the viability of the Map Amendment (i.e. rezoning) request prior to initiating the official Conditional Map Amendment process. The purpose of tonight's discussion is to determine whether the board of commissioners would like to see this proposed rezoning move through the formal Map Amendment (i.e. rezoning) process. The board of commissioners should provide direction to the applicant as to whether they believe the proposed rezoning to Conditional Planning Area to be a reasonable request worth pursuing further.

4. PROCESS/NEXT STEPS

Assuming affirmative responses at each point in the process:

- **BOC Pre-Development Consultation:** August 2019
- **Conditional Map Amendment Application:** Fall 2019
- **Rezoning Process/BOC Approval:** Winter/Spring 2020
 - Includes Public Hearing and Planning Board Recommendation

5. RESOURCES & ATTACHMENTS

RESOURCES

- Davidson Planning Ordinance (2015): <http://www.ci.davidson.nc.us/DocumentCenter/View/8499>
- Comprehensive Plan (2010): <http://www.townofdavidson.org/340/Davidson-Comprehensive-Plan>

ATTACHMENTS

- Proposed Site Plan (LS3P, Cole Jenest & Stone)