



CITY OF FORT PIERCE

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

REBECCA GROHALL, AICP, PLANNING MANAGER
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING ♦ DEVELOPMENT REVIEW
HISTORIC PRESERVATION ♦ URBAN DESIGN ♦ URBAN FORESTRY ♦ ZONING

TO: Members of the City of Fort Pierce Board of Adjustment
THROUGH: Rebecca Grohall, AICP, Planning Manager
FROM: Kori Benton, Senior Planner
SUBJECT: Variance – Reduction in Driveway Width & Landscape Strips
A1 Kitchen Remodeling
3306 S 7th Street
DATE: May 21, 2015

STAFF REPORT

Owners/Applicants: Uriel Moreira Jr
1102 SW Elm Grove CT
Palm City, FL 34990-2129

Representative: Brad Currie, AICP
Engineering Design & Construction, Inc. (EDC)
469 NW Prima Vista Blvd.
Port St. Lucie, FL 34983

Requested Action: Approval of a variance for a reduction in the access driveway width from twenty-four (24) feet to twenty (20) feet, for a portion of a two-way driveway for a commercial site, and a reduction in the required landscape buffer to screen the access driveway, based upon site constraints.

Location: 3306 7th Street

Parcel ID: 2427-601-0040-000-4

Zoning: C-3, General Commercial

Surrounding Zoning:

North	East	South	West
C-3 RM-11 (SLC) IL (SLC)	C-3	C-3 IL (SLC)	R-4

Future Land Use: GC, General Commercial

Parcel Size: 2.76 acres

Utilities: Within FPUA Water/Waste Water & Electric Service Boundary

Staff Analysis:

In accordance with Article VIII of Section 22 of the City Code, the applicant is requesting the Board of Adjustment approve a variance to deviate from two sections of the City Code which regulate driveway dimensions, and landscape buffering of vehicular use areas.

The first request seeks to deviate from City Code Section 22-61 (b)(3) which requires a minimum of twenty-four (24) feet be provided for a two-way driveway for a commercial site. The application proposes the installation of a driveway of twenty (20) feet in width to provide access to the subject site.

The second component of the request proposes to deviate from City Code Section 22-187 (6) a. & b. which requires a landscaped strip of land which is at least ten (10) feet wide to be located between a vehicular use area and other property, as well as the installation of trees in said landscape strip at a rate of one tree per 200 sq. ft. of landscape area required. The application seeks to eliminate the required landscape strip on the south side of the proposed driveway, and the reduction in the required width from ten (10) feet to four (4) feet for the landscape strip on the north side, based upon site constraints.

The subject property is located between U.S. Highway 1 and South 7th Street and is zoned C-3, General Commercial. The property features an unusual configuration, with much of its area situated west towards 7th Street. 7th Street is an unimproved County Road, which prohibits access from commercial sites. The parcel parameters contain an eastern property boundary of 25 feet along US Highway 1, providing sole site access to US Highway 1. This established parcel width extending to US Highway 1 places constraints on the objective of meeting code requirements for improvement of a commercial access driveway. The applicant is seeking to construct an improved driveway and accompanying drainage with an overall development plan to place a retail granite business at the site.

The eastern section of this parcel contains a paved access to US Highway 1, which is utilized by three developed sites abutting to the north, and one to the south. This access has been in place for at least two decades, with apparent need for repair. In addition to the property dimension constraints, the subject section of the property currently holds several overhead utility lines which provide power to the adjacent commercial and industrial sites noted, and to any further development on the subject site.

Staff and the applicant have coordinated with Fort Pierce Utilities Authority (FPUA) regarding the current conditions and the proposal to explore potential options which do not reduce the driveway width before twenty-four feet. The presented site constraints coupled with limited options of pole relocation and underground utilities have eliminated options which provide greater area for widening of the proposed driveway, in the absence of additional property. The opportunity derived from the efforts provides the ability to adjust the location of the existing utility poles adjacent to the access point to US Highway 1, in order to widen the initial apron providing access. The increased width at the entrance will improve the maneuverability and function of the entrance from US Highway 1. A diagram of this proposed adjustment is attached as Exhibit A in the Staff Report appendix, and amongst the recommended conditions of approval.

An advised improvement to the proposed plan also includes paved connections to the established driveways abutting, the proposed aisle, to the north and south to deter damage from future access and use. Furthermore, the applicant is encouraged to provide a caution sign, within the initial segment of the driveway, acknowledging the reduced width to users. Such improvements are presented in Exhibit B in the Staff Report appendix.

Variance Criteria

The following criteria are specified in Section 22-108 of the City Code, which must be satisfied in order for a variance to be granted:

1. Special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, structure or building involved and which are not applicable to other lands, structures or buildings in the same zoning district;
2. The special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant;
3. The literal interpretation of the provision of the zoning ordinance would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of the ordinance and would result in unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant;
4. The variance granted is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building or structure;
5. The granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general intent and purpose of the ordinance and such variance will not be injurious to the area involved or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.

The applicant and staff acknowledge the unique circumstances presented by the subject property, and the limitations presented by the pre-existing utility infrastructure. These factors do not result from the actions of the applicant, however, minor modifications to the presented plan are advised to ensure the variance granted is the minimum that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building or structure, and that the granting of the variance will not be injurious to the area involved or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare. If, or when, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) seeks the improvement of this segment of US Highway 1, staff anticipates the capacity to consolidate drive aisles servicing the collection of sites abutting the subject property, which may include the integration of a turn lane to improve deceleration capacity for access.

Property Owner Response Summary:

A total of 12 notifications were mailed to abutting property owners. As of May 21st, 2015, no response letters have been received; however one meeting requested by the abutting property owner is scheduled with staff, prior to the Board of Adjustment meeting. An updated recording of responses will be provided to the Board at the hearing.

Staff Recommendation:

The characteristics associated with the presented site present factors consistent with criteria specified in Section 22-108 of the City Code, therefore Staff recommends approval of the variance with the following conditions:

- 1) The applicant increases the width of the driveway apron, at the entrance, in coordination with FPUA to adjust the affect utility pole;
- 2) The applicant installs paved connections to the abutting properties with established driveways connecting to the site;
- 3) The applicant installs a caution sign, within the initial segment of the driveway, acknowledging the reduced width to users; and
- 4) The applicant dedicates a utility easement to FPUA which encompasses the existing, and relocated overhead utility poles, prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the proposed development.

Exhibit A

Increased apron and driveway width at the entrance to improve the maneuverability and function of the entrance from US Highway 1



Exhibit B

The provision of paved connections to the established driveways abutting the site to deter damage to the driveway from continued use, as well as a caution sign, within the initial segment of the driveway to acknowledge the reduced width to users.

