



CITY OF FORT PIERCE

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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

TO: Robert J. Bradshaw, City Manager

THROUGH: Rebecca Grohall, AICP, Planning Manager

FROM: Kori Benton, Senior Planner

RE: Application for Planned Development (PD)
Rocla Concrete Tie Manufacturing Plant
600 S 3rd Street

DATE: June 29th, 2015

STAFF REPORT

Owner: FEC RR
7411 Fullerton St Ste 300
Jacksonville, FL 32256-3629

Applicant: Rocla Concrete Tie, Inc.
1819 Denver West Drive – Suite 450
Lakewood, CO 80401

Representative: Stephan Matthes, P.E.
Culpepper & Terpening, Inc.
2980 S. 25th Street
Fort Pierce, FL 34982

Requested Action: Approval of a Zoning Atlas Amendment and Planned Development (PD)

Location: 600 South 3rd Street

Parcel IDs: 2410-811-0001-030-1 & 2410-805-0005-000-1

Current Zoning: I-1, Light Industrial

Proposed Zoning: PD, Planned Development

Future Land Use: Industrial (I)

Surrounding Zoning:

North	East	South	West
I-1	C-4 / C-1/R-4	I-1	C-3/I-1

Site Size: 7.18 acres*

Utilities: Located within the FPUA Retail Service Area

Staff Analysis:

Request

In accordance with Sections 22-40, 22-59, and 22-127 of the City Code, the applicant is requesting the review and approval of a Planned Development (PD) to rezone the subject site and authorize the development of an industrial manufacturing plant. The subject property is currently zoned I-1, Light Industrial.

Project Summary

The proposed Rocla Crosstie Planned Development (PD-Rocla) is for the purpose of constructing a concrete railroad tie manufacturing facility, located on a 7.18-acre tract of land owned by the Florida East Coast Railroad (FEC), and subject to lease agreement with Rocla Concrete Tie, Inc. The proposed manufacturing facility will be located along the east side of South 3rd Street, south of the Citrus Avenue overpass, between the existing CEMEX/Rinker Concrete production plant and the existing FEC Ft. Pierce Terminal.

The proposed development plan consists of a 16,850 sq. ft. manufacturing facility, 2,625 sq. ft. support office, two concrete batch storage silos, and a large stabilized area for the storage and staging of finished product. The plan also incorporates an estimated 550 ft. railroad spur to accommodate deliveries to and from the site, vehicular parking, site lighting, landscaping, and storm water facilities to support the proposed plant. Construction is proposed for completion within a single phase, designated to commence in late August of 2015 and be completed by January 2016. The plant is intended to supply FEC with concrete ties for existing railways as well as the proposed All Aboard Florida (AAF) railway expansion project. The proposed crosstie manufacturing facility presents a specialized operation intended to provide rail cross tie production in two, eight hour work shifts. The work shifts are presented to be from 7 AM to 3 PM and 7 PM to 3 AM. Administration staff will be present from 7 AM to 4 PM.

Existing Conditions

The subject parcel is predominantly vacant, being best described as an impacted urban site that has been left altered and defunct from previous industrial activities. The historic native ecosystem is no longer present on the site. The vegetation present consists primarily of Brazilian pepper trees, vines, herbaceous weeds, and cabbage palms. One Gopher Tortoise has been located, as part of the environmental review of this site, which will be relocated to a new offsite location prior to development. There are no wetlands or notable topographic features present at the subject site.

Design

The proposed architectural design is reflective of a pre-engineered metal building with various architectural embellishments to improve the mundane presentation of a sizeable industrial structure. The height of the manufacturing structure is approximately 38 ft. with two storage silos extending to a peak height of 45' 7".

The design of the facility integrates a variation of features on the primary, western façade, to create visual relief towards South 3rd Street. The features are highlighted by decorative aluminum grilles, acting as faux louvres, placed across this elevation. The lower portion of the façade provides additional enhancements, however the upper portion of the structure, most visible from US Highway 1 offers minimal articulation. The exterior walls will remain predominantly painted metal panel, with the application of stucco to complement the lower portion of the primary facade. The low-slope roof design is typified by the metal structure envelope. The presented fenestration for the structures offers minimal design integrity and visual interest for the primary façade, as the entrances are all internal to the facility. The remaining elevations retain the industrial scheme of a pre-engineered building, offering faux louvres to create some architectural interest to disrupt the presented expanse

of walls. The strategic incorporation of a defined entrance, porch, and windows/shutters facing the east may enhance the building presentation and design. The developed plan does not include the replacement of the existing chain-link, barbed wire, fence presently securing the site. Fences and walls are an essential component of the overall design scheme, and should be appropriately integrated into the proposed design.

Access & Deliveries

Vehicular access to the proposed manufacturing facility will be from an existing two-way driveway on South 3rd Street. This entrance is the sole access for delivery vehicles and employees, further serving the adjacent CEMEX site to the north. Thirty-seven (37) vehicular parking spaces (two of which are handicapped-accessible), a few motorcycle parking spaces, and a bicycle rack are presented in front of the facility. An off-street loading space is provided within the interior of the site, amongst other protocols to accept material deliveries.

The function of the facility demands the frequent delivery of raw materials to the site for processing and fabrication of the concrete railroad ties. These materials are intended to be primarily shipped to the site via truck; however there will also be rail side delivery to the facility. The FEC is proposing to construct a separate rail spur to service the Rocla site to facilitate the transport of materials into, and export of the finished product. The product from this facility is intended for heavy rail use; therefore the most feasible method of transportation is offered via the railway.

Outdoor Storage

A significant element of the development plan is an expansion storage area, approximately 3 acres, intended to stage finished concrete ties and provide space for loading on the support rail lines. The presented material for this area is crushed granite or a washed limerock over a filter fabric. The existing plan provides minimal visual relief for this expansive area, which is visible from Citrus Avenue and adjacent sites.

Stormwater Retention & Landscaping

Stormwater facilities for the proposed impervious areas are presented via two dry retention areas located at the north and south corners of the site. Such areas will be adequately screened with shrubs and trees to minimize their presence.

The presented landscape plan, updated since submittal to the Planning Board, emphasizes the provision of parameter buffers along the south, east, and north portions of the site, as well as interior areas designated to screen the manufacturing complex. A total of 169 new trees are proposed for planting on-site, consisting primarily of sabal palms. The design has been enhanced to configure various palm plantings with taller configured to frame the west building façade corners in order to scale down the verticality of the main building, based upon staff's recommendations. The presented palms are coupled with live oaks and gumbo limbos forming a planting pattern that seeks to screen the facility from adjacent sites, on the same grade. A series of hedge plants are planned along the western boundary of the project.

Interior vehicular use landscaping is an integral component of a development plan to enhance site aesthetics, assimilation into the surrounding environment, and provides green and open space to interrupt large areas devoted to asphalt or paved areas. The updated landscape plan incorporates a satisfactory level of interior landscape area, based upon the nature of the facility, and proximity to commercial and residential districts, however it is still recommended that a small portion of the interior landscaping considered, is shifted to further break-up the large expanse of storage area presented within the plan.

Right-of-way, Sidewalks, & Lighting

A ten-foot (10') right-of-way dedication is incorporated along the boundary of South 3rd Street for future uses by the City of Ft. Pierce. The applicant is proposing payment in-lieu of providing a sidewalk along South 3rd Street, within this area, based upon the infrequent use and absence of direct connections within the vicinity.

Site lighting will be provided for the parking area and the perimeter of the proposed structure in accordance with City Code requirements, however the design for light fixtures within the primary parking area, and adjacent to the South 3rd Street right-of-way should be enhanced for greater consistency with the City's design review guidelines.

Traffic Impacts

The traffic impact study, accounting for the specialized operation, suggests 112 additional daily trips will be generated by the proposed project. The peak hour of operation traffic is presented by the combination of administrative staff and early shift employees with an arrival time between 6 AM and 7 AM, at a rate of 24 Vehicles Per Hour (VPH), for this period. The study suggests that the nature of the facility's operations and timing of the shift work presents negligible trips during the AM and PM peak hours of traffic on the surrounding roadway networks. The analysis presented concludes that all of the surrounding roadway segments are expected to operate at their current adopted level of service (LOS) with the additional trips.

The traffic concern identified by staff is specific to the intersection of Georgia Avenue and South US Highway 1. Presently, a right-of-way and turn radius deficiency exists which presents conflicts with truck traffic turning east onto Georgia Avenue, as well as from Georgia Avenue north or south onto US Highway 1. A turn analysis was obtained through an engineering consultant to verify and assess the experienced deficiency, which will be augmented by the addition of truck traffic proposed by the development. Exhibits from this examination are provided for further review. Staff is seeking further review and consideration of a proportionate fair-share contribution to assist in mitigating the additional impacts to the noted deficiency. The widening and improvement of this intersection will improve safety and efficiency upon this critical intersection, benefitting the commercial and industrial sites along South 3rd Street, as well as travelers upon US Highway 1. Furthermore, it is noted that the condition of South 3rd Street, and adjacent roadway links to the subject site are deteriorated and subject to further decline with the additional industrial traffic and delivery trips to the site. The impacts to the noted roadways from the subject site and adjacent uses should be further considered to account for amplified activity and prospective improvement with the subject project.

Rocla Concrete Tie, Inc. is proposing to provide, up to a maximum, contribution of \$50,000.00 to assist the City to development conceptual designs and budgets for improvements to the Georgia Avenue and US Highway 1 intersection, and resurfacing of 3rd Street between Delaware Avenue and Georgia Avenue.

Noise & Dust

City Code Section 11-52.18 sets forth the primary noise regulations and sound level limitations. The review and enforcement of noise is measured from the real property line of the nearest receiving property based upon the time of day, and categorization of the receiving property as Residential, Commercial, or Industrial. The presented development presents a variety of operational aspects that may generate noise from sources including, but not limited to, delivery of construction materials, manufacturing activities, transfer of finished products to storage area, and the loading of finished ties onto trains for transportation. The presented activities, hours of operation, and proximity to commercial and residential districts generate concerns regarding potential impacts to surrounding properties.

The presented plan indicates that sound levels of the facility will remain under the perceived 70 (dBA) sound level limit; however the regulation is dependent upon the receiving property category, adjacent to the subject

area. As noted, commercial and residential districts are in close proximity to the proposed development site. Additional operational details or noise violation prevention protocols should be presented to ensure compliance with established restrictions.

Furthermore, the utilization of concrete ingredients, manufacturing of concrete products and on-site transfers of materials and finished products present concerns related to the generation of dust from the subject site. The adjacent commercial and residential uses may be negatively impacted from the prospects of dust generation and transfer. The proposed plan suggests the use of modern manufacturing techniques, and use of appropriate material for driveways and stabilized storage, will alleviate the concerns of dust generation, however Staff seeks to ensure prevention protocols are adequately integrated into the development plan, encumbering operations to high operational standards.

Rezoning

Pursuant to City Code Section 22-131 before an amendment, including a zoning atlas change, is approved, findings will be made that the following standards are satisfied:

- (1) The amendment is consistent with the comprehensive plan;
- (2) The amendment will not have an adverse affect on the ability of the city to:
 - a. Satisfy land and water use needs; and
 - b. Meet transportation demands and provide community facilities and services; and
- (3) The amendment will promote and protect the public health, safety and general welfare.

The presented rezoning, and coupled development plan present dynamics that shall be carefully considered with regards to the standards for consideration, stemming primarily from the intensity of the proposed facility, potential impacts to the surrounding commercial and residential districts, and consistency with the comprehensive plan.

The site is located within the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA), in which the city has undertaken significant efforts and redevelopment projects, including the demolition and removal of buildings, acquisition of real property when necessary to eliminate unsafe or unattractive conditions, or to eliminate obsolete uses detrimental to the public welfare and have a blighted influence on the surrounding area. The City's investment in decommissioning the former H.D. King Power plant and coordination to construct the facility in an appropriate industrial district is an example of these efforts. The existing CEMEX concrete facility, adjacent to this site, presents a use with unattractive conditions and obsolete uses detrimental to the redevelopment of commercial and mixed-use development among adjacent sites, to support efforts to revitalize Downtown. The challenge acknowledged by Staff, in considering the request, is the long-standing railroad operations, and its impacts, that have historically guided development of adjacent properties toward heavy commercial and light industrial land uses.

Comprehensive Plan

The subject property is designated with an Industrial (I) future land use. The Industrial designation is intended for parcels suitable for industrial development and to promote the City's position as a major employment center. In contrast to the more intense Boundary and Heavy Industrial designations, the uses allowed under this designation include light manufacturing and processing facilities; storage and distribution facilities; warehousing; general and intensive commercial uses; research corporate parks, large business parks and mixed use office parks; office, retail, and service uses that provide support to employees; and compatible public, quasi-public, and special uses.

Staff notes that the nature, intensity, and hours of operation of the subject facility present industrial activities that may be better suited for a heavy industrial district, which is more conducive to intensive manufacturing and

industrial uses, however the facility is intended to integrate with an established industrial railroad operation, which entails a similar operational intensity. The proposed development plan, and prevention protocols integrated and suggested seek to minimize the impacts and negative externalities, upon neighboring districts, associated with the intensity of use in order to assimilate with the adjacent to Historic Downtown, the River's Edge Historic District, and the US Highway 1 commercial corridor.

Community Facilities and Services

The scale and demands of the presented development plan do not adversely impact the City's capacity to fulfill the land and water use needs of the community, or the provision of most community facilities and services. The existing level of transportation needs, and increase in traffic presented from the project, demand further consideration to ensure adequate infrastructure is in place to serve the transportation demands of the community. Specific deficiencies have been identified within roadway links existing and impacted by this project, which require suitable resolution to ensure levels of service are maintained, and eventually improved. Improvements to enhance capacity at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and US Highway 1, and the stabilization of South 3rd Street warrant commitment from the developer, adjacent users, and the City of Fort Pierce.

The projected contribution of up to \$50,000.00 from the developer, to assist the City in developing conceptual designs and budgets for improvements to the Georgia Avenue and US Highway 1 intersection, and resurfacing of 3rd Street between Delaware Avenue and Georgia Avenue, further this initiate to provide such improvements.

Public Health, Safety and General Welfare

The City of Fort Pierce has crafted, and enacted, various regulatory ordinances and policies to minimize externalities from commercial and industrial operations. The development plan presented seeks to ensure compliance with sound level limitations, minimize dust generation from the subject site, and integrate landscape buffers to screen the presented industrial facility. Staff emphasizes the capacity to further integrate prevention protocols into the development plan through the adoption of a defined delivery route for the facility, confined operational hours for the rail component servicing the site, and reasonable contributions to roadway improvements to minimize impacts presented by the intensity of the facility operations and further the public health, safety and general welfare.

Technical Review Committee

All affected departments have reviewed the proposed Development Plan for consistency with established ordinances and requirements of the City Code. Findings and comments from review by affected departments, and the corresponding responses and plan amendments by the applicant are provided for consideration.

Planning Board Recommendation:

The Planning Board, at their June 9th, 2015 meeting, voted 7-3 to recommend approval of the requested Zoning Atlas Amendment and associated Planned Development (PD), further affirming the use as light-industrial.

Property Owner Response Summary:

A total of 184 notifications of the proposed Zoning Atlas Amendment and Planned Development (PD) were mailed to the owners of property located within 500 feet of the subject property. As of June 29, 2015, 15 responses have been received. Of these responses, 5 are in opposition, and 10 are in support of the request. An update will be provided to the City Commission at the meeting.

Staff Recommendation:

The proposed Zoning Atlas Amendment and Planned Development (PD) present concerns related to the prospective industrial traffic, noise, and dust impacts to adjacent roadways and sites. The applicant and staff have coordinated to develop mitigation through design, and integrate prevention protocols into the development plan to minimize many of the noted concerns, with the necessity to address transportation impacts to adjacent roadways and minor design elements; therefore Staff recommends the approval of the requests as presented, with the following conditions:

- 1) Adoption of a defined delivery route for the facility, which deters use of, and minimizes conflicts with residential or non-industrial roadways;
- 2) The facility confines operational hours for the rail component, servicing the site, to reflect the established time schedule for transitioning of noise limitations (limiting operations between 11 pm – 7 am);
- 3) The property owner and/or applicant provide necessary, and reasonable, contributions to roadway improvements, not to exceed \$50,000, in order to offset impacts of the facility operations prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy;
- 4) The existing chain-link, barbed wire, fence presently securing the western portion of the site is replaced with an appropriate alternative to comply with established design review guidelines.
- 5) The property owner and/or applicant provide payment in-lieu of providing a sidewalk along South 3rd Street, prior to building permit issuance;
- 6) The property owner and/or applicant record a unity of title for the project boundaries, prior to building permit issuance;