



# 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 Planning Board

THROUGH: Rebecca Grohall, AICP, Planning Manager

FROM: Kori Benton, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Application for Planned Development (PD)  
Rocla Concrete Tie Manufacturing Plant  
600 S 3<sup>rd</sup> Street

DATE: June 2, 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. 25<sup>th</sup> Street  
Fort Pierce, FL 34982

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

Location: 600 South 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 new and replacement 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, inhibited by the previous use. The vegetation present consists primarily of Brazilian pepper trees, vines and herbaceous weeds, with cabbage palms scattered between. 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 the storage bin structures 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The features are highlighted by decorative Chippendale aluminum grilles 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 no architectural interest to the Citrus Avenue right-of-way to the north. The strategic incorporation of a defined entrance, porch, and windows/shutters would enhance the building presentation and design. The design presentation does include the replacement of the existing chain-link and 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), minor motorcycle parking, 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 occasional production demands may necessitate rail side delivery to the facility. The FEC is proposed 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 3.19 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 does not provide a landscaping or visual relief for this expansive area, which is visible from Citrus Avenue, and adjacent sites.

### Stormwater Retention & Landscaping

Stormwater facilities for the additional impervious area are presented to be served by two dry retention areas located at the north and south corners of the site.

The presented landscape plan emphasizes the provision of parameter buffers along the south, east, and north portions of the site. A total of 122 new trees are proposed for planting on-site, consisting primarily of sabal palms. The palms are coupled with live oaks and gumbo limbos for a planting pattern that seeks to screen the facility from adjacent sites. A series of hedges are planned along the western boundary of the project. The design suggests that tall 3-level palm plantings are configured to frame the west building façade corners in order to scale down the verticality of the main building. It is recommended that palm species with a capacity for greater height and spread, such as coconut and washintonia palms, are considered to improve the scale and interaction of landscaping with regards to the proposed facility.

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 City of Fort Pierce landscaping regulations provide varying tiers of interior vehicular use area landscaping based upon the zoning designation, as follows:

I-1 & I-2 Industrial Zoning Districts	All Other Zoning Districts
At least one square foot of interior landscaping for each thirty (30) square	At least one square foot of interior landscaping for each fifteen (15)

feet of vehicular use area.	square feet of vehicular use area.
-----------------------------	------------------------------------

The proposed development plan currently incorporates a mere 597 sq. ft. of interior vehicular use area, based upon a represented vehicular use area of 15,466 sq. ft. and an supposition of providing at least one square foot of interior landscaping for each thirty (30) square feet of vehicular use area. The conflict identified with the presented allocation of interior landscaping is the cumulative area for "Roadways & Parking" of 53,175 sq. ft. presented by the Site Plan. This area, at the intended rate of one square foot for each thirty (30) square feet of vehicular use area, would demand a minimum of 1,772.5 sq. ft. of interior landscaping. Due to the nature of the facility, and proximity to commercial and residential districts, it is recommended that a more conservative formula for interior landscaping is considered, primarily aiming to 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.

### 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 such negative 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 transfer present concerns related to the generation of dust from the subject site. The adjacent commercial and residential uses may be negatively impacts from the prospects of dust generation and transfer. The proposed plan suggests the use of modern manufacturing techniques, and appropriate material for driveways and the stabilized storage will alleviate the concerns of dust generation, however Staff requests additional operational details or data from similar facilities to ensure prevention protocols are adequately integrated into the development plan.

## 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 in conflict with the standards for consideration, stemming primarily from the intensity of the proposed facility and potential impacts to the surrounding commercial and residential districts.

## 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.

The nature, intensity, and hours of operation of the subject facility are more appropriately classified as heavy industrial and better suited for designated areas which provide an environment conducive to intensive manufacturing and industrial uses. Such designations are strategically located and oriented in a manner which minimizes impacts and negative externalities, upon neighboring districts, associated with the intensity of use. The prospects of an intense industrial use adjacent to Historic Downtown, River's Edge Historic District, and the US Highway 1 commercial corridor present elements, such as noise, odor, vibration, dust, hazardous conditions, and industrial traffic inconsistent with the Future Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

## Technical Review Committee

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

### Staff Recommendation:

The proposed zoning atlas amendment and Planned Development (PD) to rezone the subject site and development an industrial manufacturing plant seeks to create a defined development plan and support facilities for the intended user upon the subject site. Code compliance issues such as the limited compliance with the City's design review guidelines, landscaping requirements, and prospective industrial traffic, noise, and dust impacts to adjacent roadways and sites encompass concerns many of the regulatory concerns of the project. Furthermore, the underlying intensity of the proposed use is not consistent Future Land Use Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan; therefore staff recommends the Planning Board forward a recommendation to deny the presented plan and rezoning request.