

Stone Brook Academy  
(previously known as Prestmore Academy)  
Site Selection Log

**SITE 2**  
02/01/2017

# SITE 2



Site 2 includes three options. All options are nearly pad ready sites, and include internal infrastructure. Sites A and B have restrictive covenants in place from McDonald's for competing uses (NOTE: the restrictive covenants are expected to expire in the next 90 days). This area is zoned COR-2 Retail, and has been anticipated to be developed into restaurants and/ or small format retail. Access is good. Location is good. Visibility from Hwy 10 is fair.

# **(1) Stone Brook Feedback**

## **A. Why can't Stone Brook be located on Site #2?**

1. Look/ feel/ vision are very important to Stone Brook. These sites don't meet their vision—and they don't believe having their facility located here meets the vision of The COR. Please see "Site 1 Log" for more information on their vision.
2. The McDonald's sites on the west end of The COR (Site #2) are pure traditional retail sites. Stone Brook's use does not mix well for many reasons (perception of safety, traffic congestion, and perception of fit with other users).
  - Likely will be sandwiched between convenience retail users like a McDonald's and gas station—that doesn't fit their model well.
  - This node will create significant traffic volume with large parking lots, and lots of cross traffic inside the site—which is ideal for a traditional convenience based retail user—not a safe and secure childcare center/ academy.
  - The large concrete retaining wall for Armstrong reduces visibility, and doesn't provide a sense of security/ safety.
3. The McDonald's sites are fixed/ pre-determined sizes. They are 25%-35% bigger than what Stone Brook needs, and will result in wasted space, or more remnant city-owned lots (worse than Site #1).
4. Placing Stone Brook on Site #1 (not this McDonald's site) is a good transition of uses. Site #1 is the in-between point, from COR-1 to COR-2 zoning districts. Re the McDonald's site (Site #2), there is no transition. It would be awkward to place a classy childcare center/ academy in-between a gas station and McDonald's and up against a massive retaining wall.
5. They believe this site pulls them too far west—away from Ramsey Boulevard, too far away from a "walkable location", and too far away from Northstar commuters. .
6. Stone Brook agrees these sites could potentially work for their development, from a physical site layout perspective, and are willing to discuss only if Site #1 is denied by the City. Site #1 is their most desired site, regardless of price.
7. In order to make the McDonald's sites work, the price would need to come down to \$3.30 psf (similar to what they want to pay for Site #1). This will result in a \$335,000-\$531,000 subsidy by the City. Based on preliminary feedback, it doesn't appear the City would be willing to provide that level of subsidy.

### McDonald's Pads

- 1.23 acres, \$12.00 psf, \$642,945
- 1.35 acres, \$12.00 psf, \$705,672

## ***(2) Staff Feedback***

- Staff did not spend a significant amount of time reviewing these options. Generally, yes, these sites would work from a physical site layout perspective.
- These are nice sites (from a development readiness perspective). They include internal roadways, utilities, mass grading, have been platted, external arterial infrastructure in place, etc.
- Locating Stone Brook on these sites would make for a much easier/cleaner discussion for the City (from a real estate development perspective/ master developer perspective). These sites would generally allow for this type of use (from a zoning perspective).
- Staff would like to note—there are three potential issues with this site location for Stone Brook:
  - Stone Brook only needs 0.9 - 1.0 acres of land. Wasted land (or remnant lots) would result from development of Stone Brook on these pre-determined sized sites. Could range from about .25 acre to .45 acre of wasted land or 25%-35% (depending on the site/ size of Stone Brook). Because of the pre-determined/ pre-platted lots—it would be challenging to reconfigure lots today. This would also result in a missed opportunity for tax base.
  - These sites are considered premium sites, listed at premium prices (\$12 per square foot). These are arguably the only pad ready sites in The COR (most other sites will result in various policy/ development issues). Staff believes the City has the ability to capture more dollars in land proceeds on these sites (in comparison to what Stone Brook is offering—\$3.00 psf). Selling these properties at \$3.00 psf (or close to)—it would likely trigger a business subsidy process/ request—which Stone Brook is trying to avoid.
  - The policy question of “fit” does surface with this particular site location. Does a children’s academy fit here (from a master developer perspective)? Or, was this area visioned for more traditional retail/ restaurants? If the City does move forward with recommending this site location, staff believes this question may need to be discussed. Why does the City think this project “fits’ here?

### ***(3) EDA Feedback***

- From the perspective of development readiness, the EDA does believe this site is well-suited for this project. From a development perspective, the EDA is comfortable with this site—they are little/ no issues—the site is ready to go (basically pad ready).
- If Stone Brook would be willing to purchase this site, within the City’s acceptable deal range, the EDA would likely support Stone Brook being located on this site. However, Stone Brook has indicated they cannot pay full price for this site.
  - Generally, some EDA members were concerned with request from Stone Brook to sell this site at “like cost” in comparison to their preferred site (Site #1). That would be a swing of \$12 psf down to \$3psf roughly. Some EDA members felt that was too much of a gap, and the City would be leaving too much land proceeds on the table. Generally, reducing land costs by said amount would require a formal business subsidy—which some EDA members voiced opposition.
- Stone Brook only needs 0.9 to 1.0 acres. These sites are 1.23-1.35 acres. Some EDA members voiced concern about wasted space/ land.

## ***(4) Planning Commission Feedback***

- The Planning Commission did not discuss other sites in great detail. Generally, they were comfortable with this site location. Generally, the Planning Commission felt this site fits the project better, and meets The COR vision better. The Planning Commission would like to see Stone Brook moved to sites 2-4.