



STAFF REPORT

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Zoom Webinar (**VIRTUAL**)

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

7:00 P.M.

1. ZONING MAP AMENDMENT & PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW

Applicant: Redwood USA, LLC
Location: 3041 Home Rd
Existing Zoning: PI – Planned Industrial District, City of Powell, and
I – Liberty Township Industrial District
Proposed Zoning: PC – Planned Commercial District, City of Powell
Request: Review and recommendation of approval to City Council of a zoning map amendment with Preliminary Development Plan from Liberty Township Industrial District & City of Powell Planned Industrial District to Planned Commercial District, for a mixed-use development on ±70 acres.

Aerial Site Image: <https://goo.gl/maps/bxiou2KMVqjF6ePy5>

Project Background

The ±70 acres at 3041 Home Rd is currently vacant. The northern two parcels (±35 acres), where GFS Chemicals was previously located, is outside the City of Powell boundary, in Liberty Township, and the applicant is in the process of annexing these parcels into the City. The southern two parcels (±35 acres) are within the City of Powell boundaries and are zoned Planned Industrial District.

The Planning and Zoning Commission first reviewed the Redwood project on July 10, 2019 as an informal Sketch Plan. At the Sketch Plan review, there was concern over rezoning the property and the proposal's consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. However, it was noted that these parcels have been sitting vacant for 10+ years without any interest from industrial developers, as this is a difficult piece of property to make work for industrial, logistically, due to the Home Road overpass. Concerns over architecture, volume of units, and traffic were also voiced. The minutes from the July 10, 2019 meeting are included in Commissioner's packets, and the Sketch Plan Review Staff Report is attached.

Following the Sketch Plan review, the Development Committee of City Council reviewed an updated proposal on November 4, 2020. The updated plans included new site details on the assisted living and skilled nursing facilities along the Home Rd frontage, and an economic analysis to demonstrate some financial benefits of the proposal. Additionally, the applicant's attorney stated there is a firm contract between Redwood and Foundation Health on this part of the development. Four of the five Committee members were in support of the project moving forward as proposed. Minutes from the November 4, 2020 Development Committee meeting are included in the meeting packet.

City Council passed a Services Resolution on March 16, 2021, and the applicant's Pre-Annexation Agreement was approved with Ordinance 2020-38. The applicant has also filed an annexation petition with Delaware County.

Proposal Overview

The applicant is requesting review and a recommendation of approval to City Council of an amendment to the Zoning Map to Planned Commercial District (PC) as well as a review and recommendation of approval to City Council for a preliminary development plan. The Zoning Code includes provisions for a Zoning Map Amendment to a Planned District with the approval of a Preliminary Development Plan. Both items are requested for approval as part of this application. Both requests will require final approval by City Council via an Ordinance. Upon approval, the applicant is able to request review and approval of the final development plan, which, based on the Zoning Ordinance will constitute an amendment addition to the zoning of the property as stated in Section 1143.11 of the Code. Once approved the final development plan will act as the official zoning regulation of the property. This step may be done in phases.

The proposal is to construct 327 multi-family dwelling units in 61 buildings, with a health care/commercial component along Home Rd. The proposal is made up of two subareas, Subarea A (11 acres) and Subarea B (59 acres).

Subarea A

This subarea is the proposed commercial area to the north of the site proposed to be developed with a skilled nursing facility on the southern portion of the subarea which consist of 4.2 acres. An assisted living/memory support building is proposed to the north on a lot of approximately 2.6 acres. The skilled nursing facility is proposed to be approximately 64,000 square feet to accommodate 80 rooms and the memory care facility is postponed at a size of approximately 32,000 square feet to accommodate 54 rooms. In addition to these two proposed facilities, a ± 3.9 acre commercial lot is shown on the plans. No details have been submitted to address the potential development pattern of this parcel. The development text proposes a limited range of office uses, as well medical, veterinary and elderly care uses. While personal services are proposed to be permitted, Staff is concerned that no other service-oriented businesses are permitted such as restaurant, which may provide an additional amenity to employees and/or residents within the area.

Subarea B

This subarea is 59 acres and is proposed for a maximum of 327 multi-family dwelling units on ± 59 acres, with an overall residential density of ± 5.5 du/ac. There are 61 buildings shown on the plan with the largest building accommodating eight units and the smallest building accommodating three units. Each unit has a two-car garage and additional parking in the driveway.

Site Conditions

The CSX railroad tracks are the eastern boundary of the site and Liberty Park is to the west. To the south is the Woods of Powell neighborhood. The southern portion of the site is heavily wooded and there are wetlands present which are proposed to be preserved. Two streams cross the center of the site. The northern portion of the site contains the vacant buildings which were used by GFS Chemicals as well as the access drive off Home Road. The site has a depth of approximately 4,000 feet from the north to the south and an average width of 800 feet.

Proposed Layout

The proposal shows an access drive on the eastern portion of the site off Home Road, which previously served the GFS facility. All drives internal to the site are proposed to be private. As described above, the northern portion of the site is intended to be development with the elderly care facilities. Lot 1 is along the northern boundary fronting Home Road and shows a rectangular building with a central courtyard and a sizeable porte-cochère on the east side. Parking is proposed to the east and west sides of the building.

The skilled nursing facility in Subarea A (Lot 2) is indicated as a rectangular, one-story building with two interior courtyards. Access is shown off the main access drive from the east and around the entirety of the building. Limited parking is shown to the north and south.

Lot 3, which does not include a proposed layout as part of the proposal is located to the west with frontage along the railroad and Home Road. Access is indicated off a main drive that allows provides access to Lots 1 and 2.

Subarea B, which is intended to be developed with the apartments will also be accessed off the main drive off Home Road. There are three distinct areas of development within this subarea between the streams, which will be preserved with the proposed layout along with the vegetation surrounding the streams. There are several home footprints of varying sizes to accommodate the units. Each unit includes a two car garage with each unit being ranch-style and proposing dormers to indicate additional height.

Staff and the Architectural Advisor had serious concerns with the continuous paving for the road/sidewalk. Rumble strips, ribbon curb and/or barriers would be advisable at a minimum. It appears other Redwood developments, such as New Albany, are using traditional curbs and sidewalks. There could be a considerable amount of traffic on the east side of the overpass. Home Road continues to be developed, phasing is unclear as proposed and will also depend on an approved Traffic Impact Study by Delaware County.

Staff and the architectural Advisor are concerned that no development partner has been identified for Lot 3. While it is clear that the space is being allocated for commercial use, Staff requests a plan and timeline for bringing on a partner and identifying the intended use for the space.

Lastly, Staff request a plan for a walking trail or other community outdoor space that is more defined and provides additional opportunities the residents.

Development Text

The proposed development text includes setback information which appear appropriate for the proposal. The building height information requires clarification as 45 feet in Subarea B appears to exceed the proposed model of use. Open space and landscaping appears to be adequately addressed in the text. Staff has concerns about building height, building materials, roof pitches and garage doors not being adequately addressed in the text.

Architecture

Based on the comments from the architectural advisor, it appears from the elevations that there could be a lot of garages for the frontages. Side-loaded options and a variation of garage door styles would be preferred and should be addressed in the text. Addressing this subject in the text and plans would strive the intent for the proposal to be pedestrian friendly.

There is also a need to include a palette variation between blocks or phases, particularly due to the possibility of disorienting with so many units carrying the exact same materials and detailing for each product type. Based on Code, staff recommends the introductions of a cement board product for the siding, which is supported the Architectural Advisor. Vinyl is not a recommended or permitted material. Adding a board and batten option could assist with the variation as well.

As proposed, the roofs are expansive and staff requests that the applicant reevaluate the use of fake shed dormers and consider cupulas to break up the roof line. In addition, the entry gables need to be simplified, it appears as if there are sometimes 2 to 3 gables building off one another on the front elevation.

While Staff appreciates the interest in this site and understands the proposed land use and development pattern, the project could be more successful by utilizing more authentic materials, addressing the site concerns, and making adjustments to provide some variety among the development.

Comprehensive Plan Consistency

Land Use Plan

The parcels are designated as “Employment Center” in the land use portion of the Comprehensive Plan.

Office, tech space, and manufacturing are ideal for this land use type. However, as suggested in the intent statement to the right, the boundaries between Mixed Use Centers and Employment Centers may be ambiguous. The Redwood proposal includes employment-generating opportunities with the skilled nursing and memory care facilities, along with a residential component, which is expressed as an appropriate use in some Employment Center locations.

Additionally, this proposal works in tandem with the annexation of ±35 acres from Liberty Township into the City of Powell. This annexation is in line with the

strategic annexation policy that Powell, “pursues targeted annexations, and geographically ‘fills out’ to create a consolidated service area. This expansion can also go beyond Home Road to incorporate school facilities and commercial areas there” (Comprehensive Plan, pg. 26). Given the inconsistencies of developing in multiple jurisdictions and lack of access to the southern Powell parcels, the Redwood proposal is not feasible without the annexation and re-zoning of the northern two parcels.

Fiscal Analysis

Municipal income taxes are Powell’s largest source of general fund revenue, making up about 44% of the City’s total revenue (Comprehensive Plan, pg. 85). The fiscal analysis on the Scenario 2a: Strategic Annexation of Powell’s future development explains some strategic reasons for developing senior housing, similar to that which Redwood is proposing. The Comprehensive Plan states, “These households will generate demand for medical services, which could be developed close by and would generate high levels of income and property taxes. Other providers of senior-oriented goods and services might also be attracted.” It should be noted that the proposed Redwood units are not restricted to senior housing, but are geared towards those who are downsizing, or young professionals without children. According to the Comprehensive Plan, this is also a consideration for community cohesion and quality of life, as it provides housing stock for Powell residents to age in place within the community they call home. The Redwood Mixed Use Development proposal includes a fiscal impact study created by Bill LaFayette of Regionomics. The study states, “The net present value to Powell of the Redwood proposal is \$8.2 million, compared to the \$1.14 million for the industrial alternative.” Please note that these results are based on assumptions as outlined in the proposal document.

Intent

Employment generating land uses are critical to Powell’s fiscal health, contributing to the City’s revenue base. The community currently has a limited amount of employment centers; existing business parks and corridors should be encouraged to infill with additional facilities if possible. Incorporating new employment centers will be an important part of Powell’s growth strategy. A variety of office, tech/flex space and clean manufacturing/assembly facilities should be encouraged in key locations. It should be noted that Mixed Use Centers also provide employment opportunities, including a mixture of office and retail uses. Likewise, the boundaries between adjacent Mixed Use Centers and Employment Centers may be fuzzy. Employment-generating institutional uses with a residential component, such as nursing homes and assisted living facilities, are appropriate in some locations as well.

Ordinance Review

The Code, Section [1141.07](#) does not contain specific criteria for zoning map amendments, however, City Council has previously indicated a general support to change the zoning of the site as part of the annexation agreement, which was adopted on January 5, 2021. The Code includes criteria for a request for Zoning Map Amendment to a Planned District, which requires the review and approval of a Preliminary Development Plan. The applicant has provided a very detailed Preliminary Development Plan, many details of which would typically be presented at the Final Development Plan step. Considering that there are additional steps to be reviewed and approved by the Commission and well as City Council, Staff recommends the Commission provide comments on the Zoning Map Amendment request (with Preliminary Development Plan) and defer both to a future date in anticipation of Staff and Commission concerns/comments having been sufficiently addressed. The request for a Zoning Map Amendment will require approval by Council in form of an ordinance.

In terms of the amendment request for a Planned District (Planned Commercial District in this instance) the Code provides the following criteria as part of Codified Ordinance 1143.11(g):

(1) If the proposed development is consistent with the intent and requirements of this Zoning Ordinance;

While this proposal provides a housing need within the City that is needed and desired, the proposal comes short of development details that allow staff to thoroughly analyze the requirements and adherence to the Zoning Ordinance, nor the proposed deviations. Staff is concerned about building heights, materials, lot coverage as well as uses. All should be finalized prior to approval of a Zoning Map Amendment.

(2) The appropriateness of the proposed land uses with regard to their type, location, amount, and intensity, where not specifically specified in this Zoning Ordinance;

As stated above, Staff has concerns about building height, building materials, roof pitches and garage doors not being adequately addressed in the text. Side-loaded options and a variation of garage door styles would be preferred and should be addressed in the text. Addressing this subject in the text and plans would strive the intent for the proposal to be pedestrian friendly.

There is also a need to include a palette variation between blocks or phases, particularly due to the possibility of disorienting with so many units carrying the exact same materials and detailing for each product type. Based on Code, staff recommends the introductions of a cement board product for the siding, which is supported the Architectural Advisor. Vinyl is not a recommended or permitted material. Adding a board and batten option could assist with the variation as well.

As proposed, the roofs are expansive and staff requests that the applicant reevaluate the use of fake shed dormers and consider cupulas to break up the roof line. In addition, the entry gables need to be simplified, it appears as if there are sometimes 2 to 3 gables building off one another on the front elevation.

While Staff appreciates the interest in this site and understands the proposed land use and development pattern, the project could be more successful by utilizing more authentic materials, addressing the site concerns, and making adjustments to provide some variety among the development.

(3) The relationships between uses, and between uses and public facilities, streets, and pathways;

Other than the items outlined in the recommendation, Staff appreciates the proposed uses as well as the open spaces. No public facilities are proposed or required as part of this project. As discussed, the applicant should work with City Staff as well as the Township to implement a path along the east side of the property, which could provide access to Liberty Park and tie into the Woods of Powell neighborhood.

- (4) Adequacy of provisions for traffic and circulation, and the geometry and characteristics of street and pathway systems;**
All internal streets are intended to be private, which is appropriate given the proposed development. However, Staff is concerned about the lack of differentiation between the roadway and the sidewalk. No curb is provided and the limited nuance of color between the sidewalk and the road could potentially create a hazard for the intended demographic of residents. A type of ribbon curb or tree lawn would be a preferred solution.
- (5) Adequacy of yard spaces and uses at the periphery of the development;**
This criteria has been met.
- (6) Adequacy of open spaces and natural preserves and their relationships to land use areas and public access ways;**
The applicant will be required to provide information for floodway/flood plain boundary, OEPA Olentangy River buffer, and the City of Powell Stream Corridor Protection Zone per City Code 1147.16, as it pertains to potential impacts of the proposed development with the Final Development Plan.
- Staff also requests that the applicant consider a dedicated public pathway system connecting from Woods of Powell North subdivision path to Home Road on the eastern side of site. A short section of gravel path could be potentially be paved in the township to make the connection.
- (7) The order, or phases, in which the development will occur and the land uses and quantities to be developed at each phase;**
As part of the Final Development Plan, the applicant will be required to provide a stormwater feasibility study demonstrating proper stormwater availability for required stormwater volumes. The one year pre-developed storm shall be detained for the 100 year post-developed event. In addition, the applicant will be required to provide information for floodway/flood plain boundary, OEPA Olentangy River buffer, and the City of Powell Stream Corridor Protection per City Code 1147.16, as it pertains to this site. The calculations shall be included as part of the Final Development Plan.
- (8) Estimates of the time required to complete the development and its various phases;**
The plans should align the development plan in accordance with subareas and phasing. Once approved, final development plans expire within 2 years of original approval.
- (9) Improvements to be made by the Municipality, if any, and their cost;**
This proposal does not require any improvements made by the City. A Traffic Impact Study will be required to address the internal roadway geometry as well as site access, none of which will be funded by the City.
- (10) The community cost of providing public services to the development;**
No public improvements are required for this application.
- (11) Impacts of the development on surrounding or adjacent areas.**
The applicant will be required to, as part of the for Final Development Plan, to submit to the City a revised Traffic Impact Study that is currently being coordinated with Delaware County, identifying the proposed offsite improvements and the schedule/phasing of construction and implementation.

Staff Recommendation

The Planning and Zoning Commission should make two motions for this proposal, one for the Zoning Map Amendment application, and one for the Preliminary Development Plan application. Both items will require approval by City Council as an Ordinance.

Motion 1

- 1) Staff recommends the Planning and Zoning Commission table the request for review and recommendation of approval to City Council of a Zoning Map Amendment until such time as the concerns raised in the submitted Preliminary Development Plan have been sufficiently addressed.

Motion 2

- 2) Staff recommends the Planning and Zoning Commission table the request for review and recommendation of approval of the Preliminary Development Plan to City Council to allow the applicant to address, at a minimum, the following concerns raised by staff and any other concerns raised by the Commission:
 1. That the applicant work with the Liberty Township Fire Department to address concerns regarding the geometry of the private drives and gain assurance the site can be sufficiently served in case of an emergency;
 2. That a phasing plan be provided that aligns with the subarea boundaries, including identifying the proposed offsite improvements and the schedule/phasing of construction and implementation.
 3. That the applicant provide a sketch/concept plan to indicate how a commercial component would be laid out on Lot 3;
 4. That a stormwater feasibility study demonstrating proper stormwater availability is provided as part of the final development plan;
 5. That the applicant agree, as part of the final development plan, to submit a revised Traffic Impact Study in coordination Delaware County;
 6. That the applicant work with Staff and Liberty Township to provide a dedicated public pathway system connecting the eastern property boundary to the Woods of Powell neighborhood;
 7. That the applicant demonstrate the proposed private roadway and sidewalk combination has been implemented in other projects;
 8. That the applicant provide, at the Final Development Plan step, adequate information to demonstrate a one year pre-developed storm will be detained for the 100 year post-developed event;
 9. That the applicant work with Staff to identify opportunities for a shared-use path along the east side of the development;
 10. That the applicant investigate potentially paving A short section of gravel path in the township to make a path connection;
 11. That the applicant satisfactorily address all comments within the staff report in regard to the proposed development text, particularly pertaining to divergences, lot coverage, building materials and architecture.