

Hardwicke, Laura (Planning)

From: Withers, Brett (Council Member)
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 3:20 PM
To: Planning Commissioners
Cc: doug.howard@cushwake.com
Subject: Agenda Item 34 - Council Member Withers Letter of Support for Davidson Street MUG-A Zone Change

Planning Commissioners:

I am writing to express my support for the request to change the base zoning from IWD to MUG-A for two adjacent parcels on Davidson Street along the Cumberland River. Davidson Street is an area that both the NashvilleNext Community Plan and East Nashville community members call for transitioning away from an industrial district toward a high-intensity mixed-use neighborhood.

The existing Shelby Hills residential neighborhood to the northeast is experiencing private investment recently with many younger families choosing to live in this area for the neighborhood's scenic views of the riverfront, overall walkability, and especially its proximity to the Music City Bikeway, which runs along the front of this site connecting these parcels to downtown in one direction and Shelby Park and even Percy Priest Dam on the other.

Directly north just up the hill from this site lies the Envision Cayce campus where the master plan implementation is in full force along South 6th and South 7th Streets steps from these properties. The Envision Cayce Boscobel I, II and III phases lining Lenore Street along the southern portion of the Cayce campus closest to these properties are already completed or well under construction, bringing residents with mixed incomes together in some of the most pedestrian- and bike-friendly housing developments anywhere in Nashville. The Envision Cayce public investment is already generating additional private investment and housing demand in this long-neglected portion of East Nashville and the applicant's request to change this parcel assemblage's zoning from IWD to MUG-A supports and enhances the positive momentum that is underway in this area.

History records that what is today Davidson Street was originally the "riverside" portion of Riverside Drive in the early 20th Century when it ran along the Cumberland from downtown through then-new Shelby Park and then northward along what remains as Riverside Drive toward the Gallatin Pike. I have been working with the Cumberland River Compact and RootNashville to coordinate the planting of trees along Davidson Street not only to create shade along sidewalks but we also hope someday to remove unused asphalt and install landscaped median areas with large shade trees to cool the area and reduce stormwater runoff into the Cumberland River. In February of this year we were able to plant over 100 trees in the right of way along the sides of Davidson Street with help from many of our neighbors including from Nashville Soccer Club and PSC Metals. To the extent that we can transition these industrial parcels away from semi-truck and heavy equipment traffic and toward mixed uses that generate more pedestrian and bike traffic, our ability to convert truck parking spaces that presently exist on the street to landscaped median areas will increase and benefit our city's pedestrians and cyclists as well as our tree canopy and river water quality.

I would also point out that the requested MUG-A zoning encourages adaptive reuses, and so it is not inconceivable to me that potential future users could support the ultimate green building practice of

adaptively reusing formerly industrial structures along Davidson Street for residential, retail, office, entertainment uses or all of the above even within the same structure or campus. We have already seen this occur with another MUG parcel on Davidson about a block away. The requested MUG-A zone change will provide the flexibility that the applicants are seeking when marketing these parcels to new potential users while also removing potentially adverse uses so as to protect the surrounding neighborhood going forward.

It is for these reasons and more that I request your recommendation of approval of this base zone change proposal from IWD to MUG-A. I look forward to answering any questions that you or meeting participants may have at Thursday's Planning Commission meeting. Thank you for your service to our county.

Brett A. Withers

Metro Council, District 6

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