



Planning and Economic Development

Ed Anzek, AICP, Director

From: James Breuckman, AICP
To: Planning Commission
Date: 9/28/2011
Re: Petition to Allow Accessory Gas Stations in the B-3 District

Meijer recently requested that the City consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to permit gas stations in the B-3 District. It is Meijer's desire to construct a gas station at their site on Rochester Road, but the Zoning Ordinance currently does not permit gas stations in any zoning district other than the B-5 district. City Staff indicated to Meijer that we could not support rezoning a portion of their site frontage to B-5 as that was not supported by the Master Land Use Plan.

Meijer subsequently submitted a request to the City Council to consider amending the Zoning Ordinance. Council reviewed the request at its September __ meeting and referred the matter to the Planning Commission for study. It is our intent to review the request and the big picture considerations with you at your October 4 meeting, after which we may begin drafting Ordinance amendment language for your consideration, providing that a majority of the Planning Commission agrees that we should move forward with this item.

In advance of the meeting on October 4, please give the following some thought and be prepared to offer your initial input on how we can best advance forward with the Ordinance amendment.

1. **Accessory Use or Principal Permitted Use.** Gas stations can be allowed as a principal permitted use, which would allow them to be the only use on a particular parcel. Alternately, they could be permitted only as an accessory use on the same parcel as a principal permitted use. Allowing them as accessory uses can help to limit the possibility of gas stations proliferating throughout the B-3 district by establishing specific site design criteria. The site design criteria can effectively limit them to larger parcels where on-site circulation exists and where it is not necessary to create additional curb cuts onto busy thoroughfares such as Rochester Road.
2. **Minimum Lot Area.** The appropriate minimum lot area for a gas station will depend on if the gas station is a principal permitted use (smaller minimum lot area) or if it is an accessory use (larger minimum lot area).
3. **Access Requirements.** Gas stations in the B-3 district could be limited to secondary access drives or existing driveways.
4. **Setbacks and Site Design Requirements.** Building and canopy setbacks can guide site design. For instance, canopies can be located in front of, on the side of, or behind buildings.
5. **Building Design Requirements.** Building design requirements may be warranted, particularly if access to the gas station is from an on-site access drive. It will be important to ensure that the building elevations facing the major arterial road be designed as a front façade.

We look forward to beginning the discussion about this potential amendment with you.

Thank you.