

**City of Greensboro Planning Department
Zoning Staff Report and
Plan Amendment Evaluation
November 13, 2006 Public Hearing**

The information provided in this staff report has been included for the purpose of reviewing proposed zoning changes. Since the zoning process does not require a site plan, there may be additional requirements placed on the property through the Technical Review Committee process to address subdivision and development regulations.

Item: A
Location: East side of Freeman Mill Road, north side of West Whittington Street, west side of Bilbro Street, and west side of South Eugene Street

Applicant: Otis Hairston, Jr. on behalf of Warnersville Community Coalition
Owner: Greensboro College

GFLUM

From: Mixed Use Commercial and Mixed Use Residential
To: Low Residential

Zoning

From: PI
To: RS-9

Conditions: N/A

SITE INFORMATION	
Maximum Developable Units	N/A
Net Density	N/A
Existing Land Use	Greensboro College Athletic Facilities
Acreage	29.559
Physical Characteristics	<i>Topography:</i> Rolling <i>Vegetation:</i> Mature Trees <i>Other:</i> N/A
Overlay Districts	N/A
Historic District/Resources	N/A
Generalized Future Land Use	Mixed Use Commercial and Mixed Use Residential
Other	N/A

SURROUNDING ZONING AND LAND USE		
Location	Land Use	Zoning
<i>North</i>	Institutional, Commercial and Industrial Uses	HB, HI
<i>South</i>	Single Family Residential	RS-9
<i>East</i>	Single Family Residential	RS-9
<i>West</i>	Freeman Mill Road	RS-9, HI

ZONING HISTORY		
Case #	Year	Request Summary
3198	2003	The rezoning of this property was approved from RS-9, HI and CD-GO-M to PI by the Zoning Commission on October 13, 2003 by unanimous vote. The Planning Department recommended approval of the rezoning. Two speakers, one from Bilbro Street and the other from Ashe Street, spoke in opposition to that request.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PI (EXISTING) AND RS-9 (PROPOSED) ZONING DISTRICTS
PI: Intended to accommodate mid- and large-sized public, quasi-public, and institutional uses which have a substantial land use impact or traffic generation potential. It is not intended for smaller public and institutional uses customarily found within residential areas.
RS-9: Primarily intended to accommodate moderate to high density single family detached dwellings in developments where public water and sewer service is required. The overall gross density will typically be 4.0 units per acre or less.

TRANSPORTATION	
Street Classification	Freeman Mill Road – Major Thoroughfare, W. Lee Street – Major Thoroughfare.
Site Access	There is one proposed access that has been approved by GDOT for the property. It meets all City standards.
Traffic Counts	Freeman Mill Road ADT = 29,300, W. Lee Street ADT = 27,710.
Trip Generation	N/A.
Sidewalks	N/A.
Transit	Yes.
Traffic Impact Study	Not required per TIS Ordinance.
Street Connectivity	N/A.
Other	N/A.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW	
Water Supply Watershed	No, 90% of site drains to South Buffalo & 10% to North Buffalo
Floodplains	N/A
Streams	N/A
Other	N/A

LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS	
Location	Required Planting Yard Type and Rate
North	N/A
South	N/A
East	N/A
West	N/A

CONNECTIONS 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES

Connections 2025 Written Policies:

Reinvestment/Infill Goal: Promote sound investment in Greensboro’s urban areas, including Center City, commercial and industrial areas, and neighborhoods.

Man-made Environment Goal: Preserve and enhance the character and visual quality of Greensboro’s built environment, including historic resources, private developments, and public landscapes.

POLICY 5D: Preserve and promote Greensboro’s historic resources and heritage.

POLICY 6A.4: Implement measures to protect neighborhoods from potential negative impacts of development, redevelopment, and/or public projects that are inconsistent with the neighborhood’s livability, architectural or historical character, and reinvestment potential.

Connections 2025 Map Policies:

The area requested for rezoning lies within the following map classifications:

Existing:

Mixed Use Residential: This designation applies to neighborhoods or districts where the predominant use is residential and where substantial, compatible local-serving nonresidential uses may be introduced. Such use mixes are typically found in older, in-town neighborhoods that accommodate "corner stores" and other local services, as well as in newly developed traditional neighborhood developments (TNDs). This district is also applied in areas suited to a diverse mix of housing types and densities. Ensuring that buildings are of the appropriate scale and intensity is critical.

Mixed Use Commercial: This designation is intended to promote a mix of uses, of which various commercial uses remain predominant, but where residential, service, and other uses are complementary. Where applied to older highway corridors characterized by “strip” commercial uses, the intent is to encourage infill and redevelopment for a more diverse and attractive mix of uses over time. Examples include residential units over commercial uses or a wider array of economically viable uses to replace obsolete uses. Such areas also may represent opportunities for the introduction of substantial higher density and/or mixed-income housing, with negligible impacts on, or resistance from, nearby single-family neighborhoods. Ensuring that buildings are of the appropriate scale and intensity is critical, as is ensuring that sites are

designed in a coordinated, as opposed to a lot-by-lot, manner. New “strip” commercial development is discouraged.

Proposed:

Low Residential (3-5 d.u./acre): This category includes the City's predominantly single-family neighborhoods as well as other compatible housing types that can be accommodated within this density range. Although there are some existing residential areas in the City developed on lots greater than 1/3 acre, future residential developments and "conventional" subdivisions should generally maintain a gross density of no less than three dwellings per acre, except where environmental constraints (e.g., the Watershed Critical Area) prevent such densities from being achieved. Compact developments that include clustered, small lots with substantial retained open space are encouraged.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT HISTORY		
Case #	Date	Request Summary
		There have not been any map amendments in the immediate vicinity of this case.

APPLICANT STATED REASONS FOR REQUEST

Explain in detail why the change is needed and a justification for such a change:

The use of the majority of the property as athletic fields for Greensboro College presents a number of negative impacts on the surrounding residential property, including damage to property from balls, trespassing on private property by athletes retrieving balls and exposure of neighborhood children to vulgarity from coaches and players. The anticipated construction of a new sports complex will bring additional problems of noise, bright lights, parking problems, litter and tailgating activities incompatible with surrounding residences. Additionally the creation of the sports complex will result in the eventual demolition of the historic J.C. Price School on this site, which is opposed by the neighborhood.

Explain in detail the conditions that you think may warrant a Plan Amendment (i.e. unforeseen circumstances or the emergence of new information, unanticipated changes in development pattern, rezonings, transportation improvements, economic opportunities, changes in socioeconomic conditions, etc.):

The construction of the sports complex by Greensboro College involves the eventual removal of the former J.C. Price School building, the last remaining structure from the original Warnersville community that was demolished during urban renewal in the late 1960s. Doing so would remove the remaining remnants of this historic African American community and destroy the integrity of this quiet residential community.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ANALYSIS

Need for the Proposed Change:

The protection of existing neighborhoods from incompatible development and the preservation and enhancement of the city's historic resources and heritage are both goals listed in the

Connections 2025 Comprehensive Plan. As the applicant has stated the introduction of potentially negative impacts from the reuse of this site on the adjacent residential area could be a legitimate concern. However the residential properties surrounding this site are physically separated by roadways and some vegetation from the existing sports fields and parking lots. The site's former use as a campus of Guilford Technical Community College means the adjacent residences have previously dealt with various levels of traffic, noise and lighting for many years and the proposed sportsplex would most likely generate similar levels of activity as the former campus. The city's interest in protecting its historic resources and the historic connection between the former school and surrounding neighborhood is also an important consideration for this area. However to our knowledge the college has not made any formal decisions on the future of the building on this site.

Given the site's location adjacent to two major thoroughfares (Freeman Mill Road and W. Lee Street) and close proximity to an active rail line between W. Lee Street and Oakland Avenue, additional low density residential development for this site is not ideal. The northern portion of the site also backs up to several commercial uses with buildings and sites that would not be compatible with single family residences. Additionally, steep topography on portions of the site, particularly along the western portion fronting Freeman Mill Road, does not easily lend itself to single family residential development.

The current Mixed Use Commercial and Mixed Use Residential designations covering the site are also appropriate to allow the adaptive reuse of the property formerly owned by GTCC while acknowledging the primarily commercial uses to the north and west and the primarily residential uses to the east and south. The current designations also provide a better fit given the site's location next to two heavily traveled roadways to the west and north. Conversely the proposed Low Residential designation would not provide the preferred transition of land uses for this area, from higher intensity commercial uses and major roadways to lower intensity residential uses.

Effect of the proposed Change on the Need for City Services and Facilities (e.g. roadway level of service, traffic counts, planned road improvements, transit, accidents statistics, and environmental constraints such as; location within a Water Supply Watershed, floodplain, streams):

Given the site's location, minimal impact on existing city infrastructure is anticipated. Use of the property for the proposed sports complex and related sporting events could increase traffic on interior residential streets at peak times. However the potential traffic impact is not anticipated to be significantly greater than the previous community college use on this site.

Implications, if any, the Amendment may have for Other Parts of the Plan:

Given this site's location and surroundings, approving a change in designation to Low Residential could set a precedent for allowing additional low residential development adjacent to heavily traveled roadway corridors and incompatible non-residential areas. It could also lessen the current emphasis on creating appropriate transitions of land uses relative to established neighborhoods.

Unforeseen Circumstances or the Emergence of New Information (e.g. significant economic opportunity in Tier 2 or 3):

The creation of the sports complex by Greensboro College allows the site to be adequately reused after the relocation of GTCC to its new eastern Greensboro campus.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MONITORING COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Monitoring Committee met on November 6, 2006 and made the following comments concerning this request:

- The Committee does not support this request since the site has always had some type of school (GTCC campus and public school prior to Greensboro College's ownership) with associated athletic fields so any new impacts on neighborhood should be minor
- Concerns about changes to primary building on site (former J C Price School) should have been addressed during the previous rezoning case in 2003
- Greensboro College should be "good neighbor" and work with the neighborhood to address any potential negative impacts (noise, lights, traffic) from sportsplex activities using fencing, landscaping, redirected lighting, etc.
- Committee is reluctant to deal with third party changes since identified issues could be resolved with direct conversations between Greensboro College and the neighborhood
- Greensboro College needs to live up to earlier comments as part of 2003 rezoning

CONFORMITY WITH OTHER PLANS

The following aspects of relevant plans may be applicable in this case:

City Plans: N/A

Other Plans: N/A

STAFF COMMENTS

Planning: This property contains the former Price School which in 1984 was rezoned with conditions to allow use by Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC).

At the request of Greensboro College, this property was rezoned to Public and Institutional in October 2003. Part of the reason for the rezoning was to make the zoning classification consistent with the remainder of the Greensboro College campus once the subject property was acquired from GTCC. At that time, Greensboro College had already been using the athletic fields on the property and had spent a considerable sum of money improving those fields.

Staff recommended in favor of that 2003 rezoning since Public and Institutional is the necessary and appropriate zoning classification for a college or university. Staff felt that the college's use of this property was compatible with the Comprehensive Plan since it resulted in a beneficial adaptive reuse of the property once GTCC relocated to its new eastern Greensboro campus.

GDOT: The northern portion of this rezoning will encompass a possible alignment of the Downtown Loop Trail and the Southeast Trail connector (between Freeman Mill Road and Eugene Street aligning with Bragg Street). While the Rezoning is not necessarily incompatible with future trail development, this alignment was chosen due to the availability of open space.

Water Resources: Drainage channels carrying public runoff require appropriately sized drainage, maintenance, utility easement.

Housing and Community Development: No additional comments.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on all the information contained in this report, the Planning Department recommends denial of the Comprehensive Plan amendment to the Low Residential land use classification and denial of the rezoning to RS-9 Residential Single Family primarily due to:

- Mixed Use Residential/Mixed Use Commercial are the appropriate land use classifications for this area located on the periphery of Downtown Greensboro.
- Public and Institutional is the necessary and appropriate zoning classification for a college or university land use.
- The current classifications provide appropriate transitions of land uses for this area.