

I have received a copy of Beltline SAP application BL-14-025. Here are my comments on this application:

(1) Overall this looks like a good project. The use and scale are appropriate for the site, which is a small commercial lot adjoining a single-family residential district. The layout of the site appears to be sensitive to this context. The tenant, Fidelity Bank, appears to have a very good reputation in comparison to its peers. This project should be an asset to our area. As an added bonus, it will rid us of two dilapidated structures that should have been demolished long ago, but were not because of the SAP process. As I see it, city staff owes the community for that.

(2) As you know, the community is interested in rezoning the lots fronting this section of Howell Mill into a Neighborhood Commercial District. This development appears to be entirely compatible with strictures that we have drafted for that district.

(3) The transitional yard design looks very good. The screening fence is appropriately located at its western boundary and it will be screened by evergreens from the residential property to its east. The nature of the screening fence is not described. It should be of an attractive wood and/or masonry type, not the chain-link and plastic-slat variety that was used on the property to its north (Flip restaurant).

(4) The small piece of land in the north east corner of the site that is marked as "ownership unknown" appears to be part of an alley easement that ran south from Verner Street. This is pretty clear from the city's GIS maps. As such, this site should own or include at least half of that land. It should be landscaped along with this rest of this site. At that corner, the site adjoins an undeveloped residential lot that fronts Verner Street, so appropriate screening should be used there as well. This should include an extension of the screening fence northward.

(5) The indicated driveway onto Howell Mill should be angled slightly to the north in order to discourage traffic from illegally entering at this point and to discourage exiting traffic from illegally turning left.

(6) At the driveway onto Antone, east-exiting left turns into the residential neighborhood should be forbidden as they are at the Flip restaurant next door and soon will be at the Advance Auto Parts one block to the north. In this way all three of these sites will have essentially identical driveway configurations. Here too, a slight angling of the driveway to the west would discourage illegal turns.

(7) The only street furniture indicated on the plan is a bicycle rack. This should be burgundy in order to match the street furniture that has been installed elsewhere in the neighborhood. This thematic consistency should enhance the sense of place in our area. We have not installed bike racks elsewhere, so this one could set the stylistic standard for those. The plan would also benefit from a bench in its northwest corner. This bench should also be burgundy and stylistically match the Victor Stanley RB-28 benches that are installed elsewhere in the neighborhood including the three at the fire station, which is the next site to the south. I provided similar comments regarding street furniture in the review of the Advance Auto Parts SAP application for a site one block north of this site, and they were ignored by planning staff. Please do not ignore them again.

(8) There is no screening indicated around the transformer in the parking lot. This would benefit from a hedge. It is very well situated away from the street, so this screening would be primarily for the benefit of the bank and its customers.

(9) There is an opportunity for an additional street tree (Crape Myrtle) in the northwest corner of the site just to the north of the driveway. One was recently destroyed there in a traffic accident.

(10) The crosswalk at the southwest corner of the site is poorly marked and situated. Most pedestrians cross Howell Mill either at Verner or mid block between Antone and Verner. As the sidewalks will need to be reconstructed for this project, it would be a good opportunity to relocate that crosswalk. If it is not relocated, it should be made more visible with new striping, signs, and reflectors.