

CASE SUMMARY

APPLICATION TYPE: SPECIAL USE



File Number: 8-E-25-SU

Related File Number:

Application Filed: 6/24/2025

Date of Revision:

Applicant: LYNN HOLT

PROPERTY INFORMATION

General Location: West side of Town Center Blvd, north of S Northshore Dr

Other Parcel Info.:

Tax ID Number: 154 09813 OTHER: (PART OF)

Jurisdiction: City

Size of Tract: 1.02 acres

Accessibility: Access is via Town Center Boulevard, a median-separated local street with four lanes within a right-of-way that varies between 100 ft and 130 ft.

GENERAL LAND USE INFORMATION

Existing Land Use: Agriculture/Forestry/Vacant Land

Surrounding Land Use:

Proposed Use: Bank with drive-through facility

Density:

Planning Sector: Southwest County **Plan Designation:** MU-CC (Mixed Use Community Center), SP (Stream Protec

Growth Policy Plan: N/A (Within City Limits)

Neighborhood Context: This area is a mixed use node near the intersection of S. Northshore and Pellissippi Parkway comprised of single family attached and detached dwellings and multifamily apartment developments, as well as large and small scale retail operations and commercial services.

ADDRESS/RIGHT-OF-WAY INFORMATION (where applicable)

Street: 2002 THUNDERHEAD RD

Location:

Proposed Street Name:

Department-Utility Report:

Reason:

ZONING INFORMATION (where applicable)

Current Zoning: C-R-2 (Regional Commercial), (C) (Previously Approved Planned District)

Former Zoning:

Requested Zoning:

Previous Requests:

Extension of Zone:

History of Zoning: The property was zoned R-1 upon its annexation in 2000 (6-AA-00-RZ), and rezoned from R-1 to TC-1 in 2001 (4-Q-01-RZ). A request to rezone the property from C-R-2 (Regional Commercial)/(C) (Previously Approved Planned District) to C-G-3 (General Commercial) was approved by the Planning Commission, but withdrawn at City Council (12-B-20-RZ).

PLAN INFORMATION (where applicable)

Current Plan Category: MU-CC (Mixed Use Community Center), SP (Stream Protection)

Requested Plan Category:

SUBDIVISION INFORMATION (where applicable)

Subdivision Name:

No. of Lots Proposed: No. of Lots Approved: 0

Variances Requested:

S/D Name Change:

OTHER INFORMATION (where applicable)

Other Bus./Ord. Amend.:

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION AND DISPOSITION

Planner In Charge: Mike Reynolds

Staff Recomm. (Abbr.): Deny the development plan and alternative compliance request for a branch bank with a drive-through facility due to not meeting the purpose and intent for alternative compliance with the TC-1 (Town Center) district regulations (Article 3, Section 3.12.N.3) or the Development Plan and Standards for Northshore (Town Center).

Staff Recomm. (Full):

Comments:

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

This proposal is for a 4,135 sqft ORNL Federal Credit Union branch bank with two drive-through lanes and modifications to the former TC-1 (Town Center) district regulations utilizing the "alternative compliance" provision in the TC-1 Administrative Procedures, Article 3, Section 3.12.N.3. of the former zoning ordinance (see page 12 of Exhibit E).

The structure is set back approximately 50 feet from the front property line with two drive-through lanes and a sloped planting area between the structure and the road. Parking associated with the branch bank is on the south side of the new structure. The two small parking areas along the boardwalk are intended for additional parking for the existing 3-story ORNL office building. NOTE: All surface parking in the TC-1 district must be shared and cannot be reserved per the shared parking agreement approved with the Development Plan and Standards for Northshore ("Development Plan").

The relevant sections of the former TC-1 zone are provided below.

EXCERPTS FROM THE TC-1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS (See Exhibit E for the full TC-1 zoning standards)

1) General description. The purpose of the town center district is to encourage the creation of pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use urban developments, providing shopping, employment, housing, and business and personal service. A high level of attention to site and building design is required to promote attractive, functional development that is more compatible with residential development than other commercial zoning districts.

2) The core area. The property is located in the core area of the Town Center (see Exhibit F). Pedestrian-oriented uses are required on the ground floor. Upper-story uses can include dwellings, offices, studios, or other permitted uses.

ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE

The administrative procedures for the TC-1 zone allow for alternative compliance to be considered by the planning commission (Article 3, Section 3.12.N.3). This section states that "the purpose of alternative compliance is to foster innovative, high quality, environmentally-sustainable development that meets the intent of this pedestrian-oriented, mixed use district that would not otherwise be allowed by a strict interpretation of the district regulations." See Exhibit B for the applicant's alternative compliance request and justification letter.

A. REQUESTED ZONING MODIFICATIONS

See Exhibit E for the full TC-1 zoning standards.

1) Section 3.12.E – Allow a drive-through to be located at the front and side of the building. The drive-through canopy, featuring two lanes, four ITMs (interactive teller machines), and a third bypass lane, is situated to the side and rear of the structure.

NOTE: Drive-through businesses are prohibited except for banks and pharmacies, which must be located to the rear of the structure. However, the drive-through lanes and bypass lane are part of the

drive-through facility and are not permitted at the front or side of the structure.

2) Section 3.12.H – Allow off-street parking to be located to the side of the building.

NOTE: Parking is located on the south side of the structure. The parking to the rear of the structure is intended for use by the existing ORNL office building.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND STANDARDS FOR NORTHSORE

1) Conceptual Master Plans

Exhibit F – Illustrative Master Plan and Land Use Plan from the adopted Development Plan and Standards for Northshore (2004)

In the illustrative master plan, the building shown on the subject site has a small footprint and a plaza on the road side of the building, and a boardwalk to the rear. There is no surface parking in this area. The land use plan shows the boundary of the core and peripheral areas (low and medium density residential).

Exhibit G – Vehicular Plan and Pedestrian Circulation Plan from the adopted Northshore Town Center design guidelines (2011)

In these plans, the subject site is shown with a 2-story multi-tenant structure located close to the road and two smaller one-story structures along the lake, with surface parking between. The adjacent site to the west, where the existing ORNL building is located, shows a single building close to the lake with parking in front. When the existing ORNL building was approved in 2015 (7-E-15-UR), these 2011 plans were used as rationale for allowing the parking and a drive-through facility to be located in front of the building, even though the 2011 guidelines did not amend the 2004 development plan for the area zoned TC-1, and zoning variances and/or alternative compliance were not approved to allow the parking and drive-through in front. The 2011 plans were also developed with the assumption that the site of the existing ORNL building was to be rezoned to PC-1, but it remained TC-1.

UNDERGROUND UTILITIES

In 2009, a sewer easement was established on the subject site, along the Town Center Boulevard frontage. The concept plan for Town Center Boulevard, Boardwalk Boulevard, and the interstate off-ramp into the development was approved in 2011 (3-SB-11-C), at the same time as the design guidelines for the PC-1 portion of the site that includes the vehicular and pedestrian plans showing a multi-tenant building along the road frontage. The proposed location of the sewer line was not shown on the concept plan. The sewer line was installed in 2012 with the roads and other infrastructure improvements. The property owner/developer designed and installed the sewer line, and the utility district accepted it for maintenance in perpetuity.

In the applicant's alternative compliance request and justification letter, the sewer line is referenced as justification for the location of the bank building and why the drive-through facility, including queuing lanes, cannot be located to the rear of the building without impacting the vehicular circulation between the adjacent properties. If the sewer line is moved, the building could be built closer to the road, so there is additional space to the rear for the drive-through facility. This would meet the intent of the TC-1 district to create a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use urban development, as stated in the general description.

MASTER SIGN PLAN

The applicant is also requesting a modification of the master sign plan (3-C-11-UR) to allow a ground sign on the subject site. The existing ORNL building has a ground sign, and that was the only ground sign approved in this area. If approved, the sign cannot exceed 30 sqft in area and 6 ft in height.

STANDARDS FOR EVALUATING A SPECIAL USE (ARTICLE 16.2.F.2.)

1) THE USE IS CONSISTENT WITH ADOPTED PLANS AND POLICES, INCLUDING THE GENERAL PLAN AND THE ONE YEAR PLAN.

A. The One Year Plan and Southwest County Sector Plan's land use classification is MU-CC (Mixed Use Community Center), which is envisioned to be developed at a moderate intensity with a variety of housing types. The core of the district, with its predominant commercial and office uses, should be within 0.25 miles of the higher intensity residential uses (such as townhouses and apartments). The location criteria excludes auto and truck-oriented uses such as industrial, strip commercial, and warehouse/distribution uses unless the proposal calls for redevelopment of such areas.

B. The proposed branch bank is considered an office use, but it is auto-oriented because of the drive-through facility that wraps around the building.

C. The proposal is not consistent with General Plan, Development Policy 10.4, to rigorously enforce zoning regulations and conditions of approval to maintain public confidence in the planned development process, because it does not meet the TC-1 zoning standards or, in Staff's opinion, the purpose of alternative compliance, which is to foster innovative, high-quality, environmentally-sustainable development that meets the intent of this pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use district that would not otherwise be allowed by a strict interpretation of the district regulations.

2) THE USE IS IN HARMONY WITH THE GENERAL PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THIS ZONING

CODE.

A. The former TC-1 district is intended to encourage the creation of pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use urban developments, providing shopping, employment, housing, and business and personal services. A high level of attention to site and building design is required to promote attractive, functional development that is more compatible with residential development than other commercial zoning districts.

B. The building is set back approximately 50 ft from the front property line, with drive-through lanes between the building and the public right-of-way, which is not consistent with the intent of the TC-1 zoning, to create a pedestrian-oriented development, or the conceptual master plan for Northshore Town Center.

C. The TC-1 district allows a 1-story structure with up to 7,000 sqft of ground floor area. The proposed 4,185 sqft bank is consistent with this standard.

3) THE USE IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE IT IS PROPOSED, AND WITH THE SIZE AND LOCATION OF BUILDINGS IN THE VICINITY.

A. The proposed 1-story structure is consistent with the existing development in the area, which includes the adjacent 3-story ORNL office building and 1-story commercial and office structures on the opposite (east) side of Town Center Boulevard.

NOTE: The development on the opposite side of Town Center Boulevard does not have the same zoning and development standards as the subject property.

B. The building is located in the middle of the lot, which is not consistent with the conceptual master plan that shows buildings located along the road frontage or the lake. The buildings directly across Town Center Boulevard, which are more directly related to the subject site, are approximately 25 ft from the front lot line.

4) THE USE WILL NOT SIGNIFICANTLY INJURE THE VALUE OF ADJACENT PROPERTY OR BY NOISE, LIGHTS, FUMES, ODORS, VIBRATION, TRAFFIC, CONGESTION, OR OTHER IMPACTS DETRACT FROM THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT.

A. The bank with a drive-through facility, as proposed, could have a negative impact on pedestrian safety.

5) THE USE IS NOT OF A NATURE OR SO LOCATED AS TO DRAW SUBSTANTIAL ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC THROUGH RESIDENTIAL STREETS.

A. The bank with a drive-through facility will not draw additional traffic through residential streets.

6) THE NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE SURROUNDING AREA IS NOT SUCH AS TO POSE A POTENTIAL HAZARD TO THE PROPOSED USE OR TO CREATE AN UNDESIRABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PROPOSED USE.

A. There are no known uses in the vicinity that could be a potential hazard or create an undesirable environment for the proposed use on this site.

Action:	Approved	Meeting Date:	8/14/2025
Details of Action:	Approve the development plan and alternative compliance request for a branch bank with a drive-through facility because it does meet the purpose and intent for alternative compliance with the TC-1 (Town Center) district regulations (Article 3, Section 3.12.N.3) and the development plan and standards for Northshore (Town Center).		
Summary of Action:	Approve the development plan and alternative compliance request for a branch bank with a drive-through facility because it does meet the purpose and intent for alternative compliance with the TC-1 (Town Center) district regulations (Article 3, Section 3.12.N.3) and the development plan and standards for Northshore (Town Center).		
Date of Approval:	8/14/2025	Date of Denial:	Postponements:
Date of Withdrawal:	Withdrawn prior to publication?: <input type="checkbox"/> Action Appealed?:		

LEGISLATIVE ACTION AND DISPOSITION

Legislative Body:

Date of Legislative Action:

Date of Legislative Action, Second Reading:

Ordinance Number:

Other Ordinance Number References:

Disposition of Case:

Disposition of Case, Second Reading:

If "Other":

If "Other":

Amendments:

Amendments:

Date of Legislative Appeal:

Effective Date of Ordinance:

