~~February 17, 2004 CPC~~
February 25, 2004 BS

STAFF'S
REQUEST ANALYSIS
AND
RECOMMENDATION

04SN0171

GDD Properties LLC

Bermuda Magisterial District
North line of Willis Road

REQUESTS: I. Rezoning from General Business (C-5) to Regional Business (C-4) of 3.6 acres with a Conditional Use to permit an exposition building.

II. Conditional Use Planned Development to permit exceptions to Ordinance requirements relative to signage on the proposed Regional Business (C-4) property and an adjacent 3.8 acre parcel currently zoned General Business (C-5).

PROPOSED LAND USE:

An exposition building is proposed. With approval of this request, other uses permitted by right or with restrictions in the Regional Business (C-4) District would be permitted. Exceptions to the sign ordinance are requested to permit two (2) freestanding signs, one (1) in excess of the permitted area and height, for the purpose of identifying the proposed exhibition center and the existing hotel use.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMEND APPROVAL SUBJECT TO THE CONDITION ON PAGE 2.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

REQUEST I:

Recommend approval of the rezoning to Regional Business (C-4) with Conditional Use for the following reasons:

Although the Jefferson Davis Corridor Plan suggests the property is appropriate for community scale commercial development, given the property's location at the interchange of a limited access road (I-95) and a collector road (Willis Road), commercial uses with a regional appeal would be appropriate.

REQUEST II:

Recommend denial of the Conditional Use Planned Development to permit exceptions to requirements of the Ordinance for signage for the following reasons:

A. The current sign standards of the Zoning Ordinance provide adequate identification for uses on the property.

B. Permitting the refacing of nonconforming signs at their current size undermines the intent of the Ordinance in bringing such signs closer to compliance with current Ordinance standards.

C. Approval of this request could encourage other businesses to seek similar exceptions.

(NOTE: CONDITIONS MAY BE IMPOSED OR THE PROPERTY OWNER MAY PROFFER CONDITIONS. THE CONDITIONS NOTED WITH "STAFF/CPC" WERE AGREED UPON BY BOTH STAFF AND THE COMMISSION. CONDITIONS WITH ONLY A "STAFF" ARE RECOMMENDED SOLELY BY STAFF. CONDITIONS WITH ONLY A "CPC" ARE ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION.)

CONDITION

(CPC) The Textual Statement revised January 30, 2004, shall be considered the Master Plan. (P)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Location:

North line of Willis Road, west line of Burge Avenue and east line of I-95. Tax IDs 795-671-5688 and 795-672-4820 (Sheet 18).

Existing Zoning:

C-5

Size:

7.4 acres

Existing Land Use:

Commercial (restaurant and hotel)

Adjacent Zoning and Land Use:

North - C-5; Vacant
South, East and West - C-5; Commercial or vacant

UTILITIES

Public Water System:

There is an existing sixteen (16) inch water line extending along the north side of Willis Road, adjacent to this site. In addition, a sixteen (16) inch water line extends along the west side of Burge Avenue, adjacent to the request site. Use of the public water system is required by County Code. The existing structure on the proposed C-4 site is connected to the public water system.

Public Wastewater System:

There is an existing eight (8) inch wastewater collector extending along the south side of Willis Road, adjacent to this site. Use of the public wastewater system is required by County Code. The existing structure on the proposed C-4 site is connected to the public wastewater system.

ENVIRONMENTAL

This request will have no impact on environmental facilities.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Fire Service:

The Centralia Fire/Rescue Station, Company Number 17, currently provides fire protection and emergency medical service. When the property is developed, the number of hydrants, quantity of water needed for fire protection and access requirements will be evaluated during the plans review process.

This request will have a minimal impact on fire and emergency medical services.

Transportation:

This request will have minimal impact on the anticipated traffic generated by development/redevelopment of the property.

LAND USE

Comprehensive Plan:

Lies within the boundaries of the Jefferson Davis Corridor Plan which suggests the property is appropriate for community scale commercial development. However, given the property's location at the interchange of a limited access road (I-95) and a collector road (Willis Road), commercial uses with a regional appeal would be appropriate.

Area Development Trends:

Surrounding properties to the south, east and west are zoned General Business (C-5) and are developed for various commercial uses, to include service stations and hotels. Property to the north is zoned General Business (C-5) and is currently vacant. It is anticipated that any infill development or redevelopment of area properties will be for commercial uses relying upon interstate traffic, consistent with the recommendations of the Plan.

Site Design:

The request property lies within a Highway Corridor District. The purpose of the Highway Corridor District standards is to recognize specified areas of the County as unique and to enhance patterns of development in those areas. Except as addressed by the Highway Corridor District standards, development of the site must conform to the Post Development District requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Together, these standards address access, parking, landscaping, architectural treatment, setbacks, signs, buffers, pedestrian access, utilities and screening of dumpsters and loading areas.

Architectural Treatment:

Architectural treatment of buildings, including materials, color and style, shall be compatible with buildings located within the same project. Compatibility may be achieved through the use of similar building massing, materials, scale, colors and other architectural features.

Within Post Development Areas, no building exterior which would be visible to public rights of way can be constructed of unadorned concrete, block or corrugated and/or sheet metal. All junction and accessory boxes must be minimized from view of adjacent property and public rights of way by landscaping or architectural treatment integrated with the building served. Mechanical equipment, whether ground-level or rooftop, must be screened from view of adjacent property and public rights of way and designed to be perceived as an integral part of the building.

Buffers and Screening:

The Development Standards Manual requires that solid waste storage areas (i.e: dumpsters, garbage cans, trash compactors, etc.) be screened from view of adjacent property and public rights of way by a solid fence, wall, dense evergreen plantings or architectural feature. In addition, sites must be designed and buildings oriented so that loading areas are screened from public rights of way.

With the approval of this request, outside storage would be permitted as a restricted use. Outside storage areas would be limited to no more than ten (10) percent of the gross floor area of the principal use and must be screened from view of public rights of way.

Signs:

Currently, two (2) freestanding signs are located on the property that identify development on the 7.4 acre tract, consisting of an existing hotel and vacant restaurant use which is proposed for the exhibition center use.

The first sign, located adjacent to I-95, measures approximately 660 square feet in area and seventy-one (71) feet in height. Signs for the site are currently regulated by the Ordinance. For new signs, these standards permit one (1) freestanding sign, 150 square feet in area and twenty (20) feet in height, measured at the road grade for I-95. Since the applicant proposes to reface this existing nonconforming sign, the Ordinance would permit an averaging of the existing sign area and height with that permitted for new signs. The intent of this averaging capability is to bring nonconforming signs closer to compliance with current Ordinance standards. Using this averaging, the refaced sign would be permitted at a maximum of 405 square feet in area and forty-five (45) feet in height. The applicant has requested that the sign, once refaced, be permitted to retain its existing square footage and height. (Textual Statement, Item 1)

A second freestanding sign, which also identifies the existing hotel and restaurant uses, is located along Willis Road. A second freestanding sign located on a collector road would require that the property also front a major arterial; that the sign not exceed thirty (30) square feet in area and ten (10) feet in height; and that the sign not be legible at the same time as any other sign from any one (1) direction. The existing sign is located on property fronting a limited access road and a collector road. Further, this sign measures approximately ninety-nine (99) square feet in area and nineteen (19) feet in height, and when viewed from Willis Road, is legible along with the second freestanding sign along I-95. Therefore, this existing sign is not permitted. The applicant has requested that the sign be retained and refaced at its existing square footage and height. (Textual Statement, Item 2)

CONCLUSIONS

The Jefferson Davis Corridor Plan suggests the property is appropriate for community scale commercial development. Given the property's location at the interchange of a limited access road (I-95) and a major arterial (Willis Road), commercial uses with a regional appeal would be appropriate. Given these considerations, staff recommends approval of the rezoning to Regional Business (C-4) with Conditional Use to permit an exposition building.

The current sign standards of the Ordinance provide adequate identification for uses on the property. Approval of the exceptions to freestanding sign area, height and number requirements could encourage other businesses to seek similar exceptions and lead to sign proliferation along the I-95 and Willis Road corridors. Further, permitting the refacing of nonconforming signs at their current size undermines the intent of the Ordinance in bringing such signs closer to compliance with current Ordinance standards. Given these considerations, denial of the exception to freestanding sign limitations is recommended.

CASE HISTORY

Planning Commission Meeting (2/17/04):

> The applicant did not accept staff's recommendation, but accepted the Planning Commission's recommendation. There was no opposition present.
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> Mr. Wilson noted that this was a unique situation given the opportunity to fill vacant commercial space and upgrade the existing site without increasing the amount of signage currently located on the property.
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> On motion of Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Gulley, the Commission recommended approval subject to the Condition on page 2.
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> AYES: Unanimous.

The Board of Supervisors, on Wednesday, February 25, 2004, beginning at 7:00 p.m., will take under consideration this request.

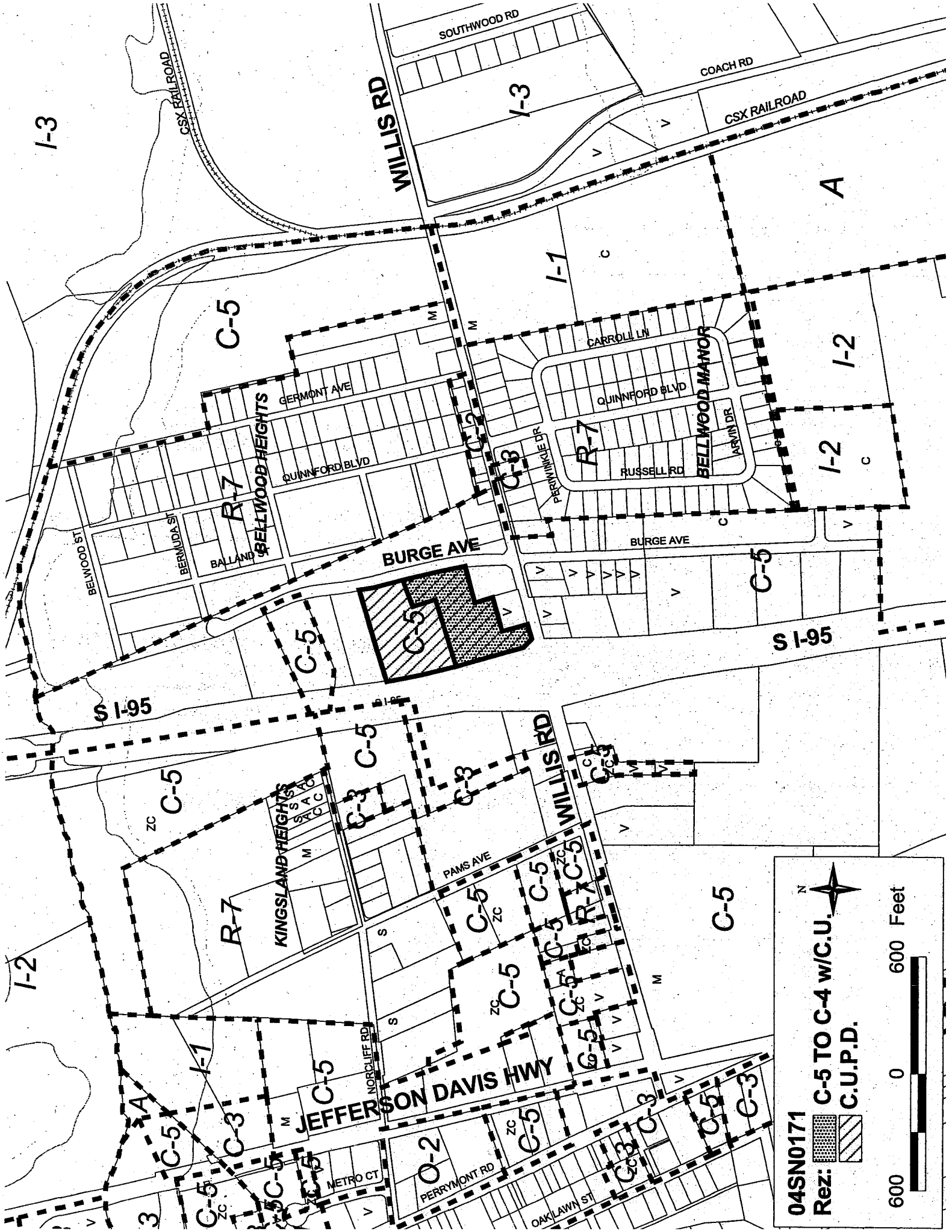
Textual Statement
October 21, 2003
Revised January 30, 2004

1. Freestanding Identification Sign: I-95

   a. A 255 square foot exception to the 405 square foot sign area permitted for a refaced freestanding identification sign.
   b. A 26 foot exception to the 45 foot sign height permitted for a refaced freestanding identification sign.

2. Freestanding Identification Sign: Willis Road

   Permit a second freestanding identification sign to be located on Willis Road. Such sign shall not exceed 99 square feet in area and 19 feet in height.



04SN0171
Rez: C-5 TO C-4 w/C.U.
C.U.P.D.
600 0 600 Feet
N
WILLIS RD
SOUTHWOOD RD
COACH RD
CSX RAILROAD
I-3
I-1
I-2
A
C-5
C-3
R-7
BELLWOOD HEIGHTS
BELLWOOD MANOR
GERMONT AVE
QUINNFORD BLVD
CARROLL LN
RUSSELL RD
ARVIN DR
PERIWINKLE DR
BURGE AVE
BELWOOD ST
BERMUDA ST
BALLAND ST
S I-95
KINGSLAND HEIGHTS
PAMS AVE
NORCLIFF RD
JEFFERSON DAVIS HWY
METRO CT
PERRYMONT RD
OAK LAWN ST
O-2