

APPLICATION SUMMARY:

Project Name:	Southbridge Planned Development Sixth Amendment of Area K for McDonald Reconditioning Facility
Case Number:	APD21-0001
Application type:	Planned Development Plan Amendment
Location:	1151 W Mineral Ave , Northwest corner of cul-de-sac
Size of Property:	6.64 acres
Zoning:	PD-C (current); PD-C (proposed)
Applicant:	McDonald Automotive Group
Applicant's Representative:	Steve More, Commercial Building Services
Owner:	McDonald Real Estate Mineral, LLC

Applicant Request: Approval of the sixth amendment to Area K of the Southbridge planned development plan to allow office, automotive service (not to include auto-body repair, vehicle painting, wrecking yard or demolition operations, or industrial assembly, and not open to the general public) and vehicle storage as permitted uses, and establish lot standards for height, gross floor area, unobstructed open space, vehicle routes and number of vehicle hauler trips, and architectural design.

PROCESSPre-Application Meeting

August 6, 2020 – Administrative

Preliminary Project Plan (voluntary)

November 23, 2020 – Planning Commission study session (discussion only, no action)

December 8, 2020 – City Council study session (discussion only, no action)

➤ Planned Development Plan Amendment

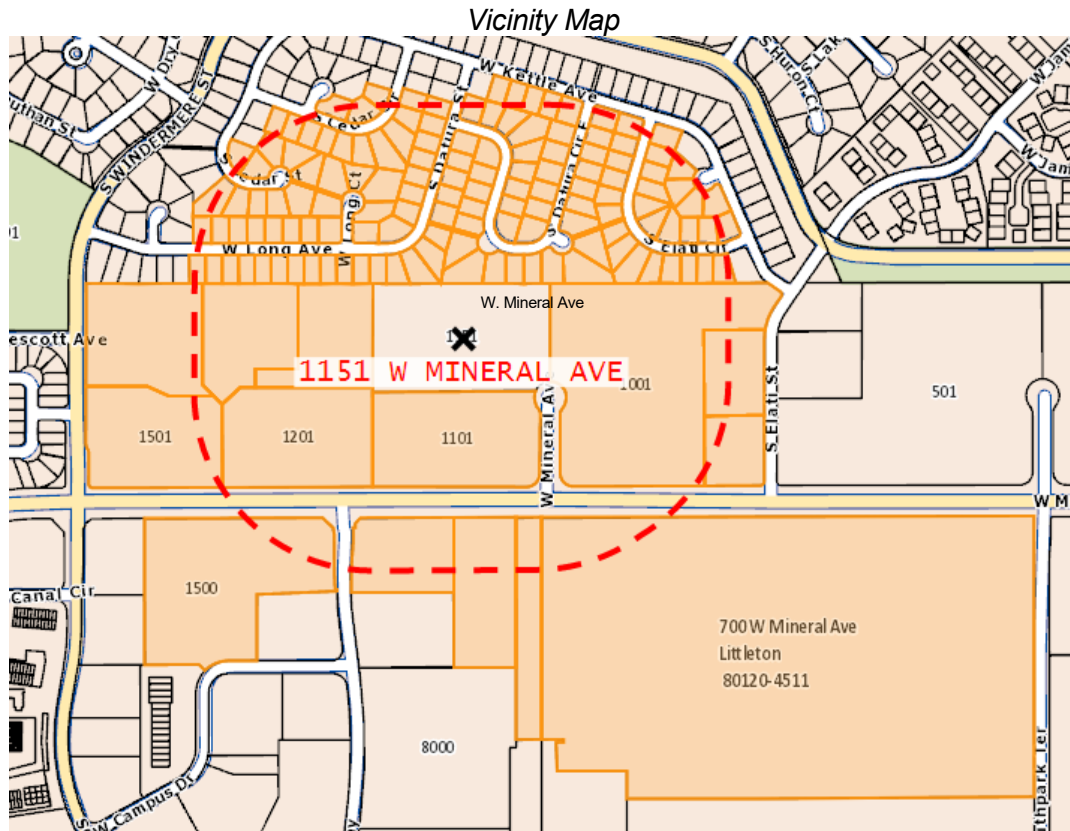
June 14, 2021 – Public hearing at planning commission, no recommendation of approval

July 6, 2021 – First reading by city council

July 20, 2021 – Decision with second reading and public hearing by city council (pending)

LOCATION

The 6.64-acre site is located east of S. Windermere St. at the northwest corner of W. Mineral Avenue cul-de-sac. The vicinity map on the following page shows the location of the subject property (highlighted) and the notification boundary in a red dashed line. Staff notified the Southbridge HOA of the application. In total, staff sent 341 notification cards to property owners and residents within the notification boundary.



PROPERTY AND APPLICATION BACKGROUND

Timeline

- 1979 *Southbridge Tentative PD plan adopted designating Area K as Office Park.*

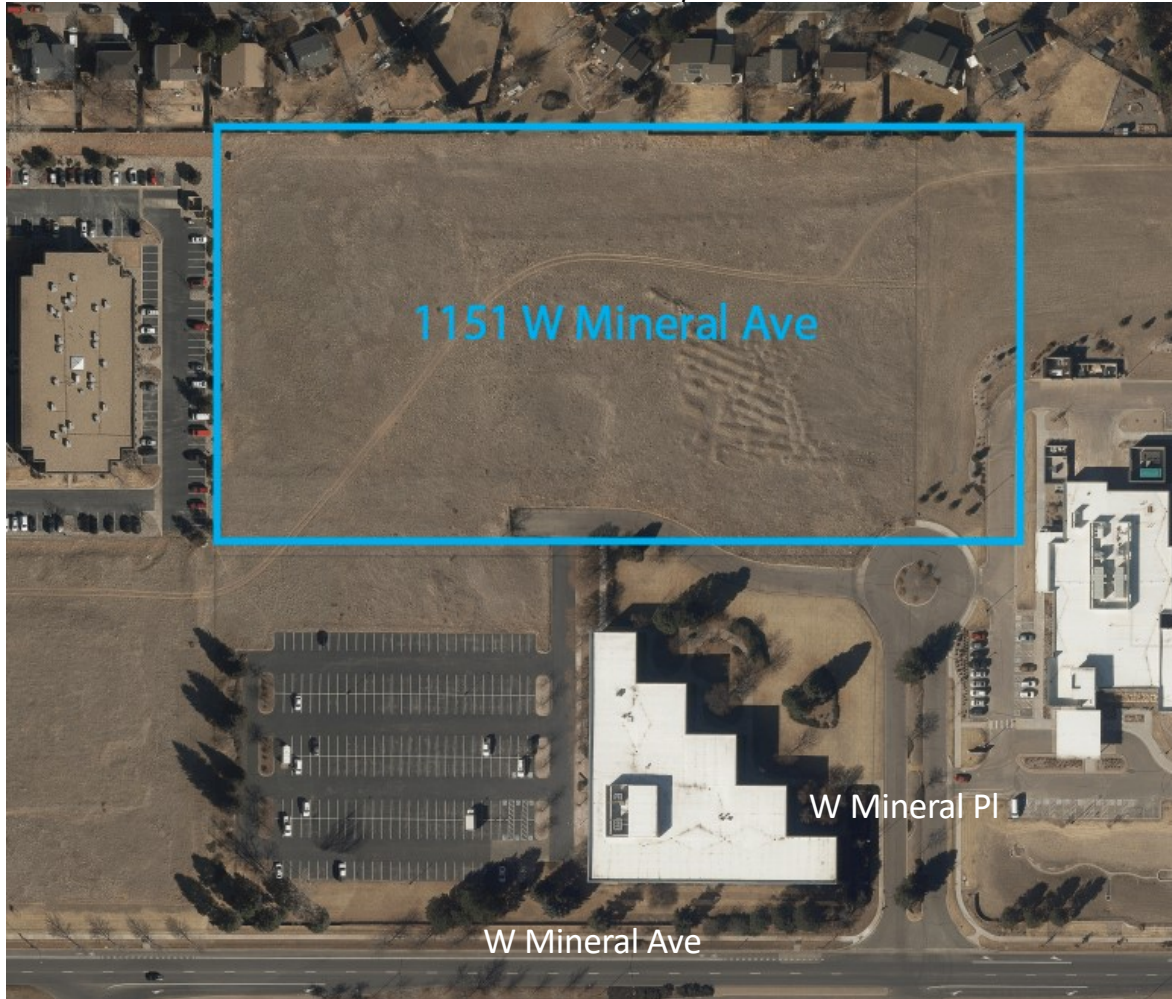
- 1992 – *Area K of the Southbridge PD plan is amended in specific areas to permit the*
 2017 *development of residential multi-family units (1992), a church (1996), incidental*
 accommodation of visiting missionary sleeping rooms (1999), and nursing home/
 assisted living/ memory care for the Stone Creek Living Facility (2017)

- 2020 *August 6, applicant and staff meet for a pre-application meeting.*
 October 15, applicant requests optional preliminary project plan process (P4).
 November 23, 2020, planning commission holds P4 study session. December 8,
 2020, council holds P4 study session.

- 2021 *January 11, staff receives complete application for an amendment to the planned*
 development plan named Southbridge Area K. Technical review of the PD
 Amendment and proposed site development plan. Applicant holds a required post-
 submittal neighborhood meeting on March 31, 2021.

The property is currently vacant. To the north of the property are single-family homes in the Southbridge PD-R area. The east, west, and south sides of the site are office buildings with office uses. The aerial map below shows the property and its surroundings.

Aerial Map



The property is not within any flood zone.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The applicant requests approval of the sixth planned development (PD) amendment to the Southbridge PD, applicable only to the 6.64-acre property.

The objective of city council's public hearing is to either recommend approval or denial of the proposed PD amendment to council. If approved, the proposed PD amendment would:

- Allow for automotive service (not to include auto-body repair, vehicle painting, wrecking yard or demolition operations, or industrial assembly, and not open to the general public);
- Allow for vehicle storage;
- Establish restrictions on the number of vehicle trucks on site per day, designated routes,

loading areas and requirements, fencing types, and general architectural standards for review of the site development plan; and

- Establish zoning standards for unobstructed open space, setbacks, building height, and gross floor area.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Overall Concept

The proposed PDP amendment expands the permitted uses for the site to include limited automotive services which are not open to the public and vehicle storage along with the current office use. The applicant proposes a 50-foot landscaped buffer between the houses to the north and the vehicle storage area. The applicant currently has an auto-body operation in the SouthPark PD, south of the subject property, which will continue the more intensive auto-body repair uses.

REVIEW CRITERIA AND STAFF ASSESSMENT

PDs and major amendments to PDs should meet the following intentions as listed in the Littleton City Code (LCC), Title 10, Section 10-2-23(B) (numbered sub-sections reprinted in **bold** type).

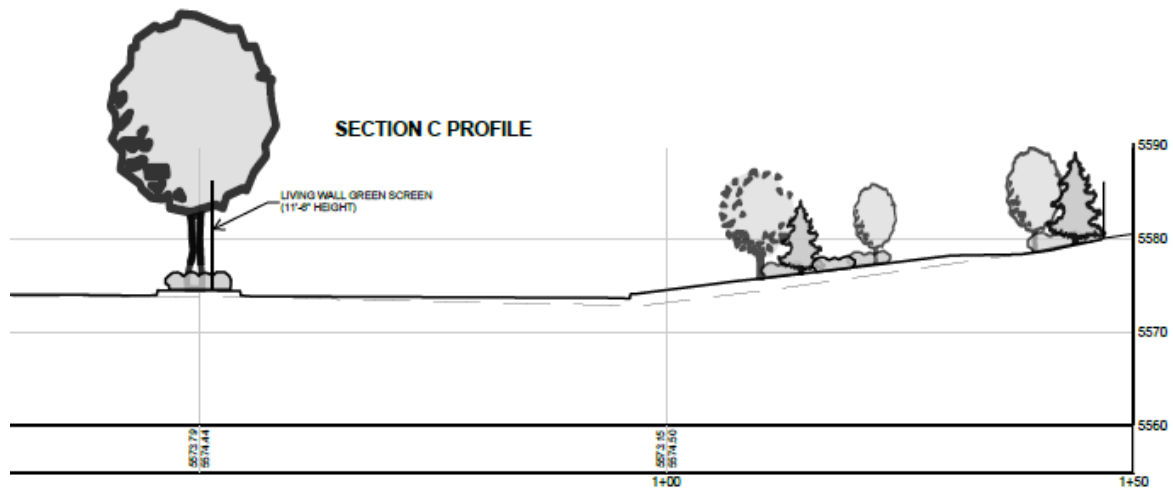
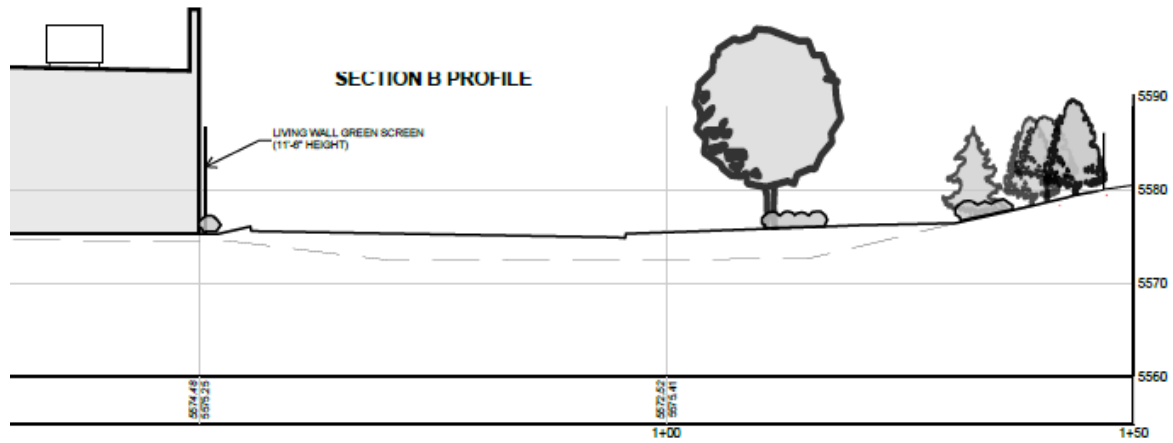
1. Encourage more creative and effective use of land and public or private services, and to accommodate changes in land development technology so that the resulting economies benefit the community. The subject property was designated for office park development per the Tentative Southbridge PD Plan. The site, however, has remained vacant and undeveloped since the original 1979 PD plan. Area K of the Southbridge PD plan has been amended three times to allow for flexibility from the strict office park use and to accommodate the development of a church, residential multi-family units, and an assisted living and memory care facility, none of which were ever constructed. The proposed development includes office uses and expanding allowed uses to include limited automotive services and vehicle storage to support dealership operations of the McDonald Automotive Group located in Littleton. The proposal is consistent with this intent statement.

2. Encourage innovation and efficiency in residential development to meet the growing demands for housing of all types and designs for persons of any social or economic status. Not applicable.

3. Encourage innovative development or redevelopment of all land uses to meet the contemporary needs of the community by providing for a greater variety and mix of uses including those which may coexist on the same parcel or within the same building as shown on an approved general PD plan. There appears to be a growing demand for automotive service with a vehicle storage component in Littleton. Two other sites in the SouthPark PD, south of the subject property, are being developed as auto-body and repair sites with a vehicle storage component. The applicant currently has a site within the SouthPark PD for auto-body and more intensive repair operations. The proposed PD amendment would limit operations at the Southbridge site to reconditioning services. The site will also include office uses which are a permitted use currently. The restriction for no auto-body repair, vehicle painting, or demolition services better coexists with the proposed uses on the site and surrounding area.

4. Provide a process which relates the design and development of a site to the particular characteristics of the site. The site requires a 50' open-space buffer between the subject property and the residential houses to the north. The PD amendment proposes enhanced landscaping within the buffer zone for visual screening from the adjacent residential development. The PD amendment also proposes landscape screening for the building, automotive entrances, and vehicle storage on the site.

Proposed Cross-Section Demonstrating Screening and Landscape Buffer



5. Require that the nature and intensity of development be supported by adequate utilities, transportation network, drainage systems and open space to serve the development, and to minimize impacts on adjacent existing and future development. The current permitted use of the property is designated as 'office park.' The site could be developed with the single office use with the same or larger building footprint, height, and the same parking area. The original Southbridge PD did not establish maximum height, floor-to-area ratio, gross floor area, impervious surface, or parking areas. Subsection 10-2-23(D)2b of the LCC establishes a maximum height of 30 feet within 150 feet of a residential zone but does not restrict height otherwise. The proposed PD amendment establishes a max height of 45 feet when not subject to the 30-foot height requirement. The proposed PD amendment further establishes a gross floor area of 42,200 square feet and an unobstructed open space requirement of 25% which is above the code requirement of 20%. The applicant has proposed several storm water quality treatments for the site including a bio-retention pond, pervious pavers, and landscaping.

The proposed development has limited office use along with the private automotive service facility and vehicle storage. The PD amendment restricts vehicle haulers to one per day and estimates an average of five per week. The PD amendment further restricts all vehicle trucks and individual vehicle trips to established truck routes on Mineral and Broadway to avoid 'cut-through' traffic into the neighborhoods. The PD amendment clarifies that vehicle delivery and pick-up are to occur only on private property, while the site

development plan further specifies the hauler route and drop-off will only occur on the south portion of the property which is at least 225 feet from the adjacent residential development. The traffic letter submitted with the application and prepared by a licensed transportation engineer finds that “little to no traffic impacts are anticipated with the proposed auto reconditioning and storage project and the existing roadway network can support the trips.”

Alternatively, the site could develop as a single office use. An estimation of trips generated by a singular office use suggests the office use would far exceed the proposed 144 daily trips generated by the service center that is not open to the public, especially for trips generated during peak times. Given the potential traffic impacts and unspecified height and gross floor area of a single-use office building, the proposed development meets this criterion.

6. Encourage development that is consistent with the policies and guidelines established in the adopted Comprehensive Plan for the area and for the City. The PD amendment application was received on January 11, 2021 and subject to the Envision Littleton Comprehensive Plan adopted October 15, 2019 (the comprehensive plan). Staff has developed a comprehensive plan checklist that solicits applicant responses to the goals and policies established in the comprehensive plan that may apply to their proposed project. Staff reviews the narrative checklist and provides comments. The final comprehensive plan checklist is attached.

The planning commission comments and recommendation for denial appear to be focused on the character area designation as Suburban Commercial. Staff contends the PD amendment complies with the comprehensive plan for the following reasons.

First, in regard to zoning matters, the comprehensive plan establishes the vision as realized by regulations. When a plan meets or exceeds a requirement in the code, for instance the 20% unobstructed open space requirement is increased to 25% in the PD Amendment, that consideration should be relied upon. Therefore, when the comprehensive plan states that a characteristic of Suburban Commercial character is “primarily from reduced site coverage relative to most auto-oriented commercial development,” the PD amendment proposes a reduced site coverage which exceeds the current code requirement.

The comprehensive plan states the character area should be “encouraged at key community entries and along high-profile roadway corridors, may also involve other criteria to yield less intensive and more attractive development outcomes relative to auto-oriented areas, including higher standards for landscaping (along street frontages and within parking areas), signs, and building design.” The site location is setback substantially from Mineral which is considered high-profile corridor. Staff finds that the building architecture provides four-sided articulation and elevated design associated with business parks which is reinforced in the PD amendment. Further, the PD plan establishes higher standards for landscaping that is not currently required.

The comprehensive plan states the character area “may exclude some auto-oriented uses that cannot achieve a Suburban character (e.g., car washes).” Staff contends that the limited number of trips compared to a traditional office use limits the auto-oriented nature of the site. Further, the site is not open to the public, as opposed to a carwash referenced in the comprehensive plan, which both reduces the number of vehicle trips but limits the auto-oriented nature of the site.

The comprehensive plan states “near residential properties and areas, the permitted scale and intensity of nonresidential uses should be limited to ensure compatibility (including adequate buffering/screening, criteria for placement and orientation of buildings and parking areas, height limits, and residential-in-appearance architectural standards).” Staff finds that the PD amendment establishes an enhanced landscape buffer, height limits, architectural standards, and orientation of the site to mitigate the proposed intensity of the use. These standards are not currently in place and a proposed office development could be much taller without any enhanced landscaping. Further, a proposed development could develop with only 20% unobstructed open space.

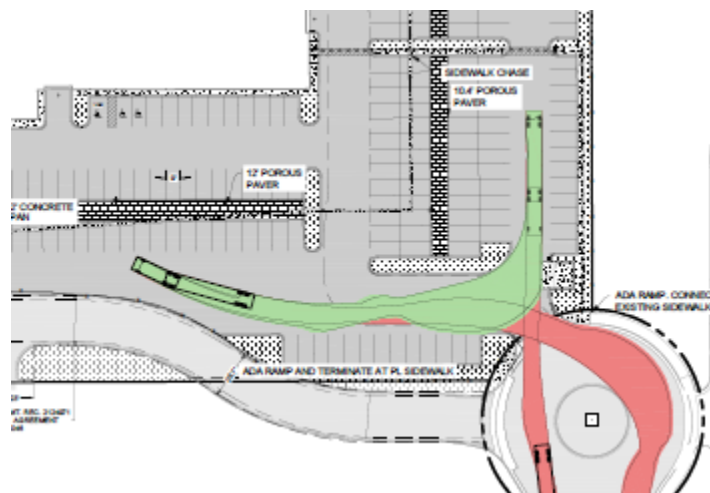
Finally, the comprehensive plan states the character area should have “more opportunity for natural and/or swale drainage (and storm water retention/absorption) versus concentrated storm water conveyance in auto-oriented areas.” The PD amendment proposes enhanced storm water retention and absorption through a bio-retention pond, permeable pavers, and enhanced landscaping.

Staff finds that the proposed development can meet the code requirements established in 10-2-23 of the LCC and the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan.

NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH AND PUBLIC NOTICE

The applicant conducted a required pre-submittal neighborhood meeting in June 2020. The applicant provided notes from the meeting which are attached. The applicant has also maintained a private project website at <https://sites.google.com/view/1151wmineralave>. The applicant held a post-submittal neighborhood meeting on March 31, 2021. The city has also received several emailed responses to the proposed development. Those emails were attached to the applicable review memos to the applicant and attached to the staff report. The applicant has addressed comments from the neighborhood meetings and emailed comments as such:

- Limited public access to the 50-foot landscaped buffer area to the north based on security concerns from adjacent residential properties;
- Clarified operation and maintenance of the bio-retention pond to mitigate concerns regarding mosquitos and trash;
- Limit vehicle hauler to south portion of the site as depicted on the site development plan to limit noise for adjacent residential properties as depicted here:



- Limit vehicle hauler trips to one per day and an average of 5 per week.
- Require all vehicle trips only on Mineral Ave and Broadway to address concerns regarding cut-through traffic into the neighborhoods;
- Clarified and reduced lighting levels for security lighting to eliminate trespass and glare onto neighboring properties;
- Added permeable pavers to enhance stormwater mitigation techniques; and
- Reduced the number of vehicles stored on the site since original design and set maximum number for vehicle storage on the PD Plan.

Mailed public notice of the proposed PD amendment was sent to all property owners and occupants within 700 feet of the site within 15 days of the scheduled Planning Commission meeting. Notice of the public hearing was posted on the subject property and at city locations in advance of the council hearing in compliance with the city’s public notice requirements.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The city has performed an economic analysis for the proposed use. Overall, the development of only office would be a net positive economic impact for the use and economic multipliers from employment and wages. Permitting the reconditioning center along with office remains a net positive economic impact for the use and economic multipliers from employment and wages.

OUTSIDE REFERRAL AGENCIES

The city referred the PD amendment and site development plan to nine outside referral agencies. Referral review comments have been addressed for the PD amendment.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

On June 14, 2021, the planning commission held a public hearing to consider a recommendation on the proposed PD amendment. Staff prepared a draft resolution recommending approval of the PD amendment to the city council. The planning commission did not adopt the resolution by a vote of four to three, effectively recommending denial of the application.

Since the planning commission hearing, the applicant made slight revisions to the proposed PD amendment to help address concerns about adverse impacts to surrounding property owners. The following modifications were made:

- The applicant has modified the PD amendment since the planning commission public hearing to include a lighting curfew at 10 pm; and
- The PD now also includes provisions to limit delivery and access to the site to regular business hours.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of City Council Ordinance 12-2021