



PLANNING STAFF REPORT

MEMO DATE: April 7, 2021

MTG. DATE: **APRIL 14, 2021**

TO: Village of Cottage Grove Plan Commission
Village of Cottage Grove Architectural Review Committee

CC: Village of Cottage Grove Board of Trustees
Matt Giese – Village Administrator
Lisa Kalata – Village Clerk
Larry Konopacki – Village Attorney
Kevin Lord – Village Engineer

FROM: [Erin Ruth, AICP – Village Planning Director](#)

RE: **Grand Appliance Site Plan**

BACKGROUND

Property Owner: Grand Appliance & TV

Location: Lot 14 of the Commerce Park, SE corner of Limestone Pass and Landmark Drive

Area: 2.55 acres

Agents: Ken Verstegen – Keller
Ben Schulte – Ruekert-Mielke

Existing Zoning: PI, Planned Industrial

Proposed Zoning: PI, Planned Industrial

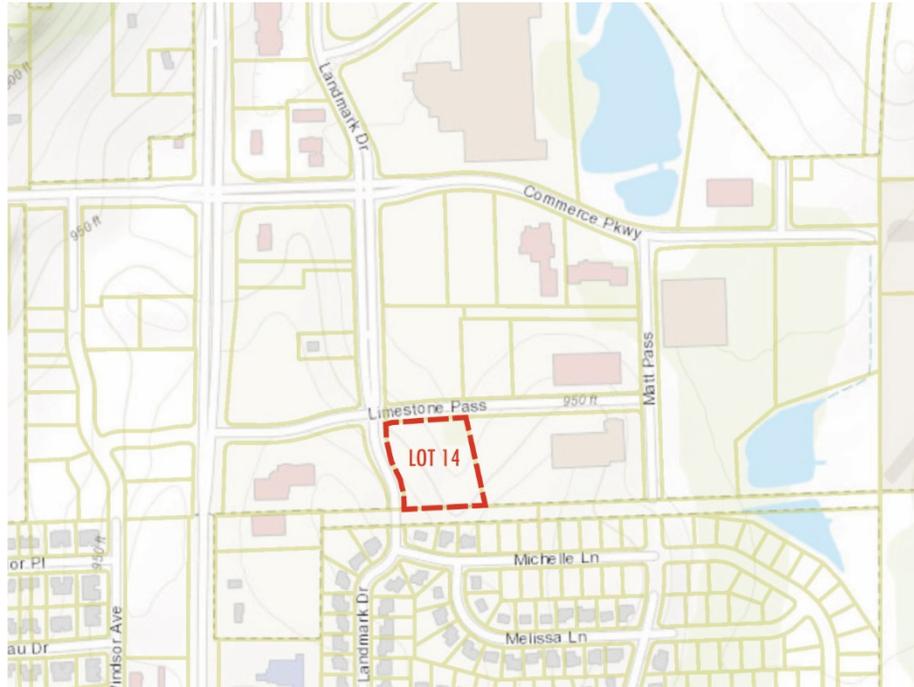
OVERVIEW

The applicant, Grand Appliance & TV, is seeking approval of a site plan for a 40,000 sq. ft. warehouse building located on Lot 14 of the Commerce Park (the SE corner of Limestone Pass and Landmark Drive).

The facility will house nine employees during normal hours of operation (5:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.). Traffic in and out of the site is expected to peak at the beginning and end of the hours of operation. The interior is almost entirely warehouse space with a small office and restroom area.

The building exterior will consist of precast concrete panels.

LOCATION MAP



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENCY

The Comprehensive Plan shows this area as Planned Industrial on the Future Land Use map. The project represents the type of development envisioned for the Commerce Park in terms of appearance and land use. In the opinion of staff, the project is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

COMMERCE PARK COVENANTS CONSISTENCY

The proposed use is permitted by the covenants.

The proposed concrete wall panels are compliant with the covenants, and they are similar to those used at Johnson Health Tech and Stihl.

The covenants state that “roof mounted equipment shall be so located and screened to eliminate visibility from streets and street levels adjacent to the building.” The applicant shows a ground mounted AC unit. If in the process of further design and construction units are instead placed on the roof, a diagram shall be provided to staff to demonstrate compliance with this requirement.

Per the covenants, “each lot shall include an infiltration basin with a minimum size of 10% of the building roof area.” It has been verified to the satisfaction of the Village Engineer that the subject parcel does not have soils suitable for infiltration. Therefore, the required basin would not be functional. Due to the lack of suitable soils the applicant has requested a waiver of this requirement. This situation is identical to the conditions on the Dolphin Swim Academy (Lot 15 across the street to the north). Staff has no objection to the requested waiver.

Per the covenants, “loading which is visible from adjacent streets shall only be allowed for buildings with two street frontages” and “street side loading shall be allowed provided said loading area must be screened from view of adjacent streets.” The proposed project includes a loading area that faces Limestone Pass. The proposed project implements landscaping features including trees and native prairie grass to help mask the loading dock. In the opinion of staff, the dock is well screened from the intersection. Vehicular circulation requirements dictate that the dock area is in line with the driveway, so it cannot be completely screened from Limestone Pass. In the opinion of staff, the landscaping around the driveway and the grade change to the dock provides adequate screening.

The covenants state the setbacks in the Planned Industrial area are 25’ on the street, 10’ on the side, and 30’ on the rear. The applicant is seeking a waiver for intruding into the street setback on Limestone and the rear setback to the south. However, because this is a corner lot either the east or south yards could be considered the rear and the project is compliant if the east yard is considered the rear. Therefore, the waiver is only needed for the street side yard which is deemed necessary by the applicant due to extreme grade changes on the east side.

ZONING CONSISTENCY

The proposed project consists of an ‘indoor storage’ land use, as defined by 325-49(E)(1). The use is permitted by right in the Planned Industrial district.

Per the land use definitions noted above, the indoor storage requires 1 space per employee on the largest shift. The applicant states that there will be 9 employees associated with the facility. Therefore, 9 spaces are required and 29 are provided.

It is not clear if there is adequate room for cars to drive around the south end of the 18 parking stalls as that area is narrower than the drive aisle elsewhere on the site. If the intention is for cars to be able to drive through that location, there may be potential conflicts with the entry doors on the building. There is also potential for conflict between the southeasternmost parking stall and any truck potentially parked outside the at-grade overhead door. Staff recommends one of three options: 1) infill the area between the south end of the parking and the building with a landscaped area to block vehicle travel through the area, 2) remove the two southernmost parking stalls to allow a wider path of travel, or 3) fill both the area noted in 1) above and the two southernmost parking stalls with a landscaped surface.

The density and intensity requirements for the Planned Industrial district are found in 325-41(A). Per those regulations, the minimum landscape surface ratio is 20%, while the actual is

32%, meeting the requirement. The maximum permitted floor area ratio is 0.6, while the actual FAR is approximately 0.36 which meets the requirement.

The minimum setbacks per the zoning ordinance are 30' on the front and street sides, 10' on the side, 10' on the rear, and 10' to all paved surfaces. The proposed site plan meets these requirements. The applicant is seeking a waiver for the street side as noted above.

325-41(A)(8) includes design guidelines within the Planned Industrial district. The Commerce Park Covenants also include design guidelines as described below. Wherever the covenants and the ordinance conflict, the stricter requirement is applicable. Per the zoning guidelines, the most attractive façade must face the street, and higher quality architectural materials must be used including at least 1/3 masonry on the street façade. The proposed project meets these requirements.

The applicant shall provide a photometric plan and lighting details to verify that any outdoor lighting complies with Article VI of the Zoning Ordinance.

Typically, a more significant landscaped buffer would be required at the south property line adjacent to residential property. However, the property immediately to the south is a 66' wide remnant from annexation of the property that became the Quarry Ridge subdivision and is owned by the current developer of Quarry Ridge. It is unclear at this time what the future use of the parcel may be, if any. There is currently a large earthen berm on the parcel to the south. The existing berm and the added distance provided by the 66' parcel would appear to make the landscaping buffer redundant. The developer agreement shall note that the landscaped buffer shall be installed within 12 months of the removal of the berm and or development of the parcel to the south.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the requested site plan be **APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS**, with the conditions as follows:

1. Sign permits are granted via a separate review process.
2. A waiver is granted for the intrusion into the street side yard due to the significant grade changes on the eastern side of the parcel and given the taller prairie grass adjacent to the building in this area provides a stronger visual buffer than a regular turf lawn.
3. The applicant shall implement one of the following options: 1) infill the area between the south end of the parking and the building with a landscaped area to block vehicle travel through the area, 2) remove the two southernmost parking stalls to allow a wider path of travel, or 3) fill both the area noted in 1) above and the two southernmost parking stalls with a landscaped surface.

4. If in the process of further design and construction mechanical units are placed on the roof instead of the ground as shown on the site plan, a diagram shall be provided to staff to demonstrate compliance screening requirements.
5. A landscaped buffer meeting the requirements of Article V shall be installed by the applicant within 12 months of the removal of the earthen berm on the property to the south or the development of that parcel.