



# Town of Knightdale

## Staff Report

Title: Ample Storage Phase 3  
Conditional District (ZMA-5-23)

Staff: Gideon Smith, Senior Planner

Date: November 12, 2024

Director Signature: JB

Asst. Town Manger Signature:

Town Manager Signature:

### **I. REQUEST:**

Rivers & Associates, Inc., on behalf of owner, Ample Storage Lake Worth, LLC, has submitted an application requesting a Zoning Map Amendment to rezone approximately ±6.98 acres of land located at 1107 Great Falls Court, and further identified by Wake County PIN 1744-86-8623, from Highway Business (HB) and Manufacturing & Industrial (MI) Districts to Manufacturing & Industrial – Conditional District (MI-CD) to allow for the expansion of the existing storage facility.

### **II. PROJECT PROFILE:**

PROPERTY LOCATION:	1107 Great Falls Court
WAKE COUNTY PIN:	1744-86-8623
CURRENT ZONING DISTRICT:	Highway Business (HB) and Manufacturing & Industrial (MI) Districts
PROPOSED ZONING DISTRICT:	Manufacturing & Industrial – Conditional District (MI-CD)
NAME OF PROJECT:	Ample Storage Phase 3
APPLICANT:	Rivers & Associates, Inc.
PROPERTY OWNER:	Ample Storage Lake Worth, LLC
DEVELOPER:	Ample Storage Lake Worth, LLC
PROPERTY SIZE:	6.98 acres
CURRENT LAND USE:	Mini-Warehouses (95,640 square feet; 750 storage units)
PROPOSED LAND USE:	Mini-Warehouses (+82,038 square feet; +539 storage units)
PROPOSED PARKING:	17

### **III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Conditional District (ZMA-CD) rezoning process provides a procedure for the rezoning of property based upon the recognition that certain types of zoning districts would be inappropriate at particular locations in the absence of special conditions. This process affords a degree of certainty in land use decisions not possible when rezoning to a general category allowing many different uses.

Conditional Districts provide for orderly and flexible development under the spirit and intent of the general policies of the General District without the constraints of the principal structure dimensional standards. All standards and requirements of the corresponding General District shall be met, except to the extent that the conditions imposed are more restrictive than those standards. However, when a Conditional District is a requirement of Section 3.1 of the UDO, petitioners may also ask that certain standards identified be decreased. Within an approved Conditional District, no use shall be permitted except pursuant to the conditions imposed on the Conditional District in the approval of the rezoning.



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The Master Plan, as a site-specific Conditional Zoning Plan, is itself a condition of the ZMA-CD. In addition to the Master Plan, the applicant shall provide the exact land use classifications proposed for the Conditional District, which has been detailed in Section VIII of this Staff Report. Such use classifications may be selected from any of the uses, whether permitted by right or special use, allowed in the General District upon which the Conditional District is based. Uses not otherwise permitted within the General District shall not be permitted within the Conditional District.

### **IV. PROJECT SETTING – SURROUNDING ZONING DISTRICTS AND LAND USES:**

The proposed rezoning features one parcel located at 1107 Great Falls Court, which is currently located within the Town’s Corporate Limits. Therefore, an annexation petition is not required. The subject property is currently split zoned with the front portion adjacent to Knightdale Boulevard zoned Highway Business (HB) and the rear portion zoned Manufacturing & Industrial (MI). The proposed request would rezone the entire subject property to Manufacturing & Industrial – Conditional District (MI-CD)

DIRECTION	LAND USE	ZONING
North	Quarrying and Stone Cutting	MQ
South	Ample Storage Phases 1 & 2	HB
East	Day Care; Professional Services; Vehicle Services – Maintenance/Body Work/Repair	NMX
West	Quarrying and Stone Cutting	MQ

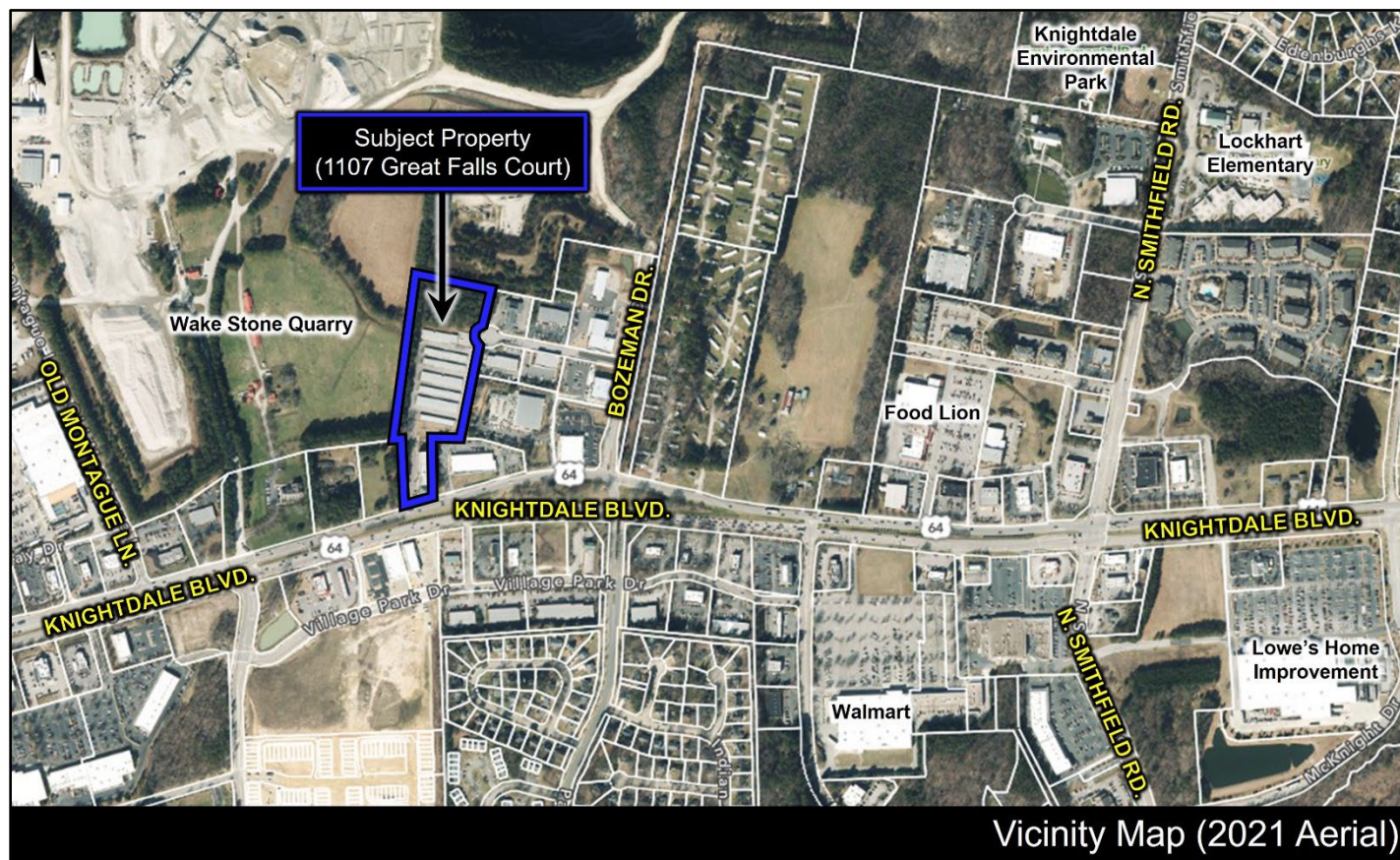






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Vicinity Map (2021 Aerial)

### **V. PROPOSED MASTER PLAN:**

The applicant has submitted a full Master Plan in accordance with Section 12.3.F of the UDO. The applicant is proposing to expand the existing storage facility (Ample Storage) by constructing a three-story storage building at the rear of the subject property. As proposed, each floor will be approximately 27,346 square feet in area, for a total of 82,038 square feet with approximately 539 storage units. Similar to the existing storage building along Knightdale Boulevard (Phase 2), the proposed building will be climate controlled with internal access to the storage units.

If the proposed rezoning is approved, the subject property will be developed with a total of 177,648 square feet and approximately 1,289 storage units across all three phases. According to the applicant, the new building will not contain any office space or restroom facilities as these components are already provided within the Phase 2 building along Knightdale Boulevard.

Since a Conditional District is a requirement of Section 3.1 of the UDO for the proposed use (Mini-Warehouses), the applicant may also ask that certain standards identified be decreased. The applicant's requested exceptions to the applicable standards are detailed in Section VIII of this Staff Report.

The applicant and Staff met multiple times early in the process as the plan evolved. Further analysis of the site plan is detailed below.

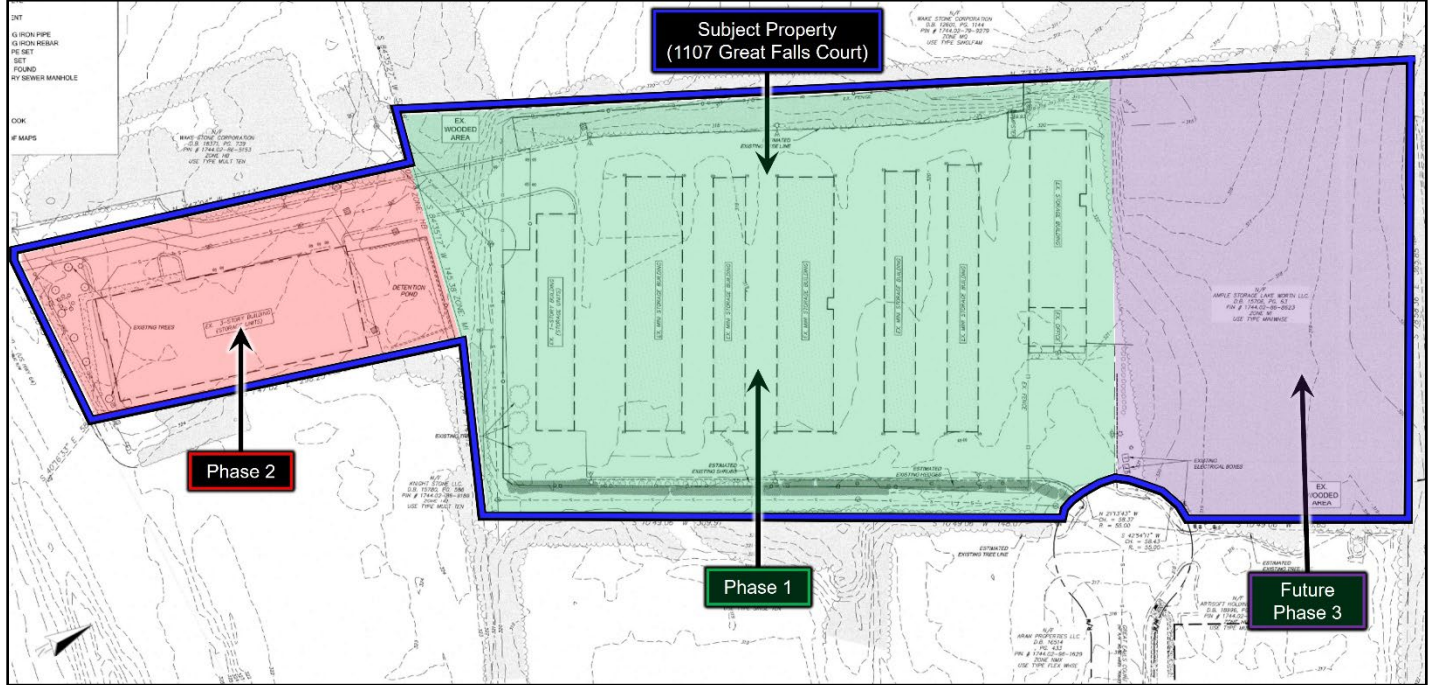




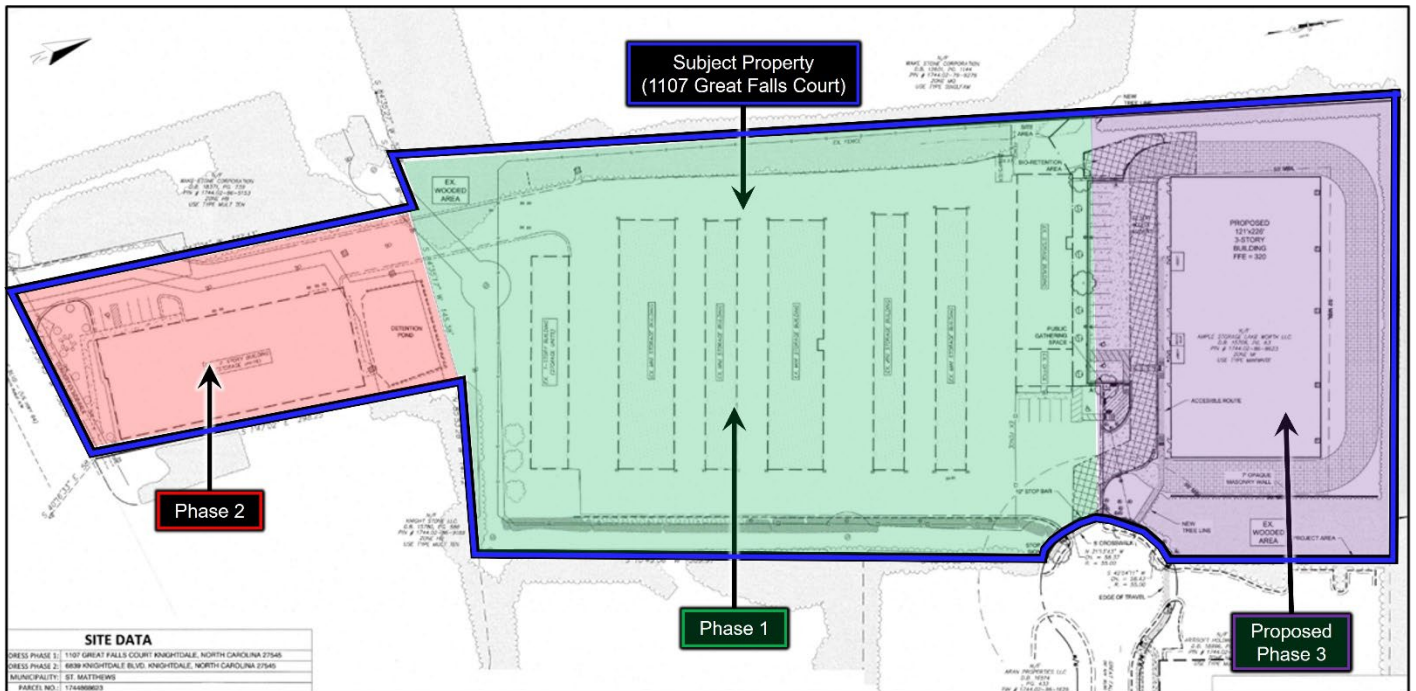
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### Ample Storage Phases 1 & 2 – Existing Conditions



### Ample Storage – Proposed Phase 3 Master Plan

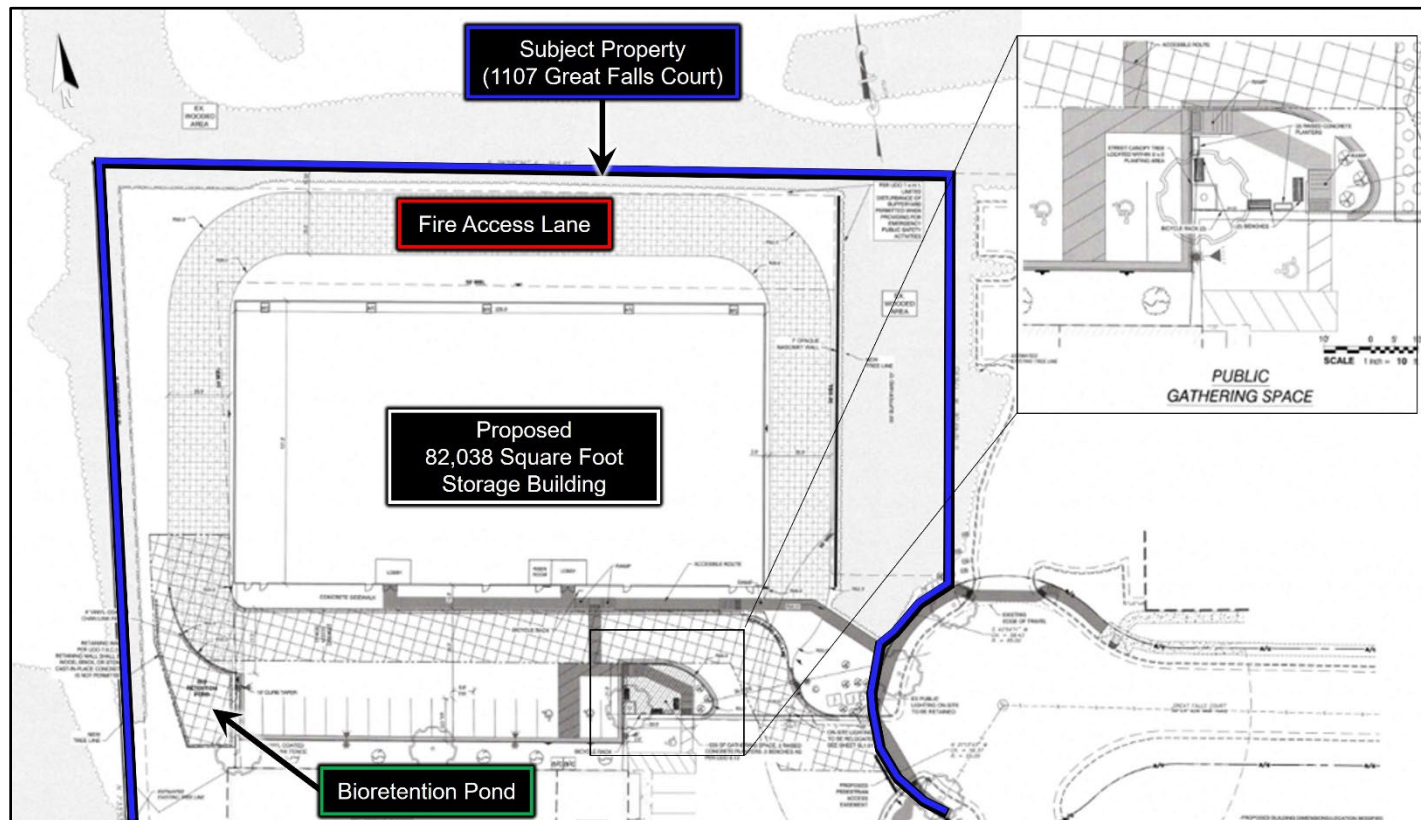




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### Ample Storage Phase 3 – Proposed Master Plan



#### **VI. STAFF SITE PLAN ANALYSIS:**

Staff has reviewed the plan for UDO consistency and found the Master Plan generally complies with the required provisions. The following items are being highlighted for Council review and further consideration.

#### **Landscaping & Environmental Features**

A 50-foot Type D Buffer is required along the eastern property line to provide spatial separation and to decrease visual contact between the proposed storage building and existing businesses. As proposed, the applicant intends to comply with this regulation by constructing a six- to eight-foot-tall masonry wall between the proposed storage building and the eastern property line and supplementing the existing vegetation as needed to meet the performance standards of this buffer type. No other buffers are required as the surrounding properties to the north and west are zoned Mining & Quarrying (MQ).

#### **Architectural Standards & Elevations**

According to the applicable Use Specific Standards for mini-warehouses, all exterior walls must be brick, stone, or decorative masonry, and metal siding is prohibited. The architectural plans included within the Master Plan demonstrate compliance with this standard. In addition to this requirement, the proposed building is required to meet the General Building Design Requirements set forth in Section 6.4 of the UDO, as well as the Manufacturing Building Type Standards set forth in Section 6.12 of the UDO. Overall, the proposed design generally meets the



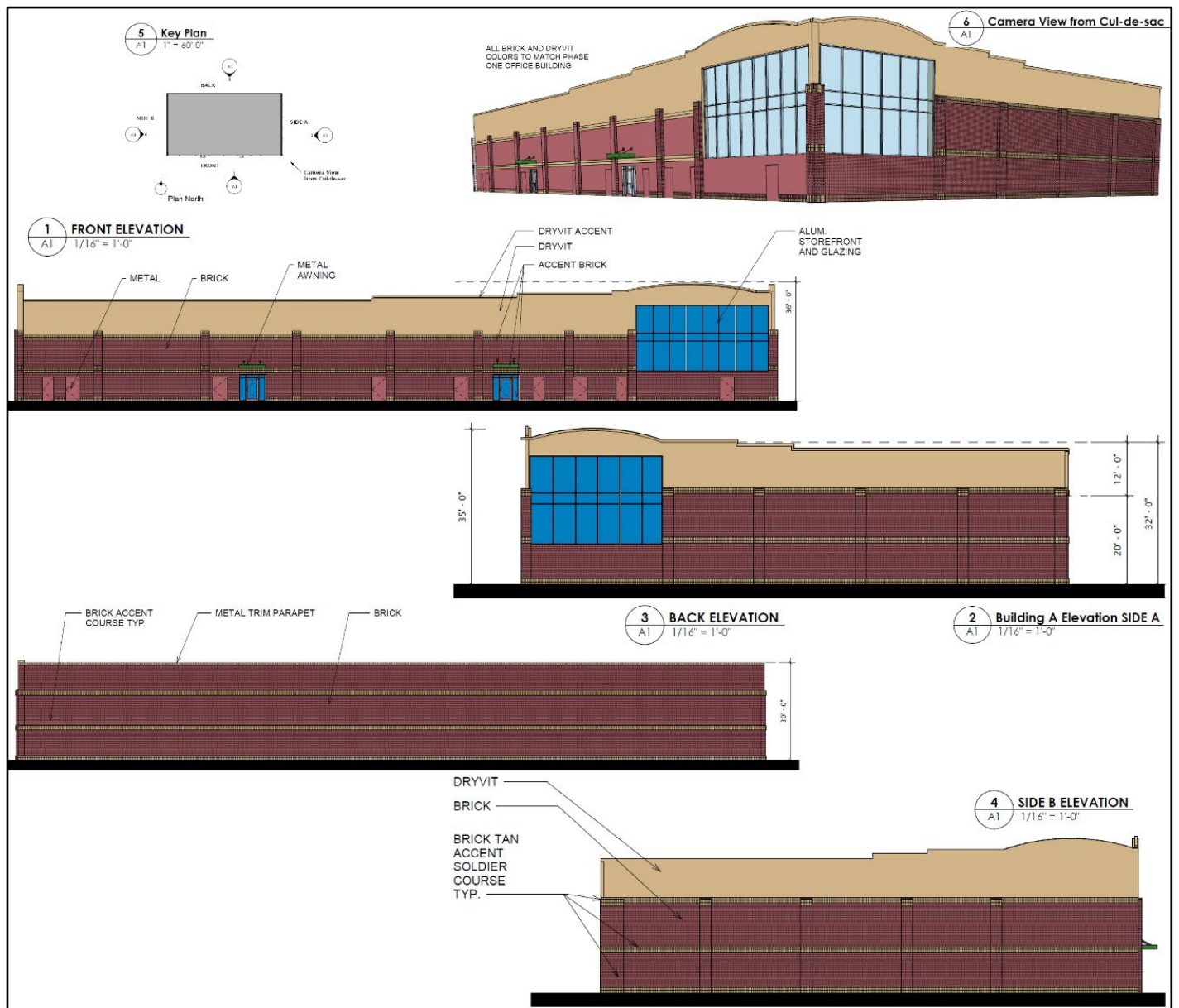


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spirit and intent of the UDO for the Manufacturing Building Type, however, Staff recommendations for greater consistency with these standards can be found in Section VIII of this Staff Report.

### Proposed Architecture for Phase 3





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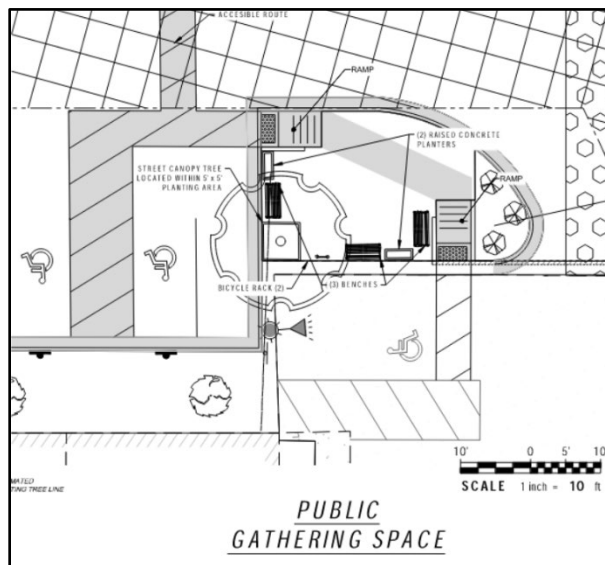
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### Example Architecture in the Vicinity



### Public Gathering Spaces

Per Section 6.12 of the UDO, developments must include an area of public gathering for employees, patrons, and other users. This is intended to further activate the public realm and encourage more outdoor activity. The applicant is proposing approximately 525 square feet of public gathering area near the entrance to the proposed storage building, which exceeds the required minimum area. As proposed, the three benches and two raised concrete planters comply with the public gathering area activation requirements. One of the required bicycle racks will also be located within this area. The other will be installed next to the front door of the proposed storage building.



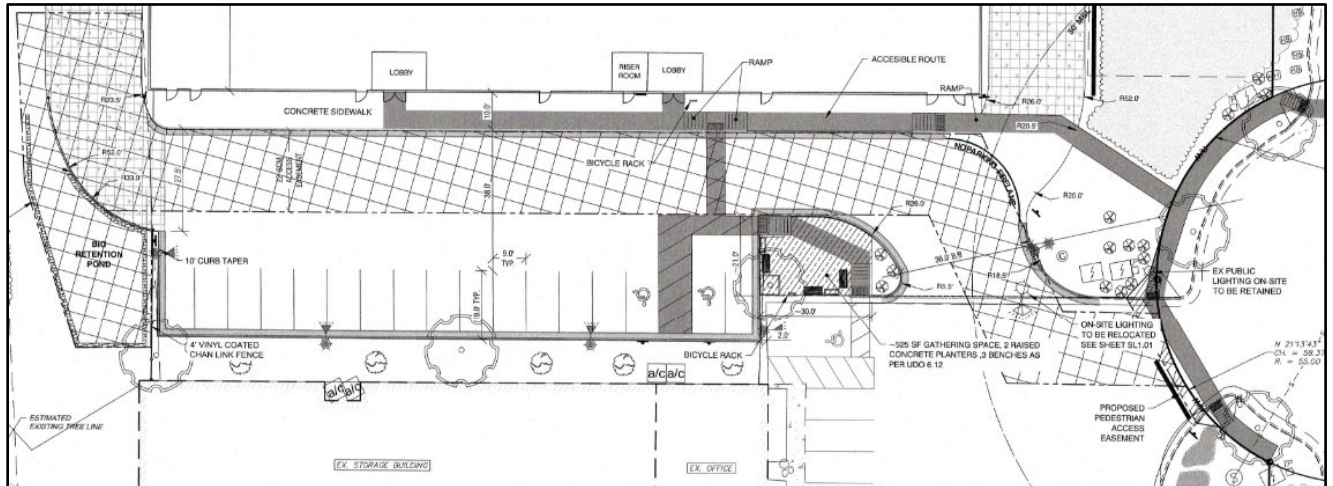


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### Parking

The applicant has demonstrated compliance with the parking requirements. Based on the size of the proposed storage building (~82,038 square feet), the maximum number of parking spaces for the expansion is 21 parking spaces; the minimum is 11. A total of 17 new parking spaces are proposed.



### Pedestrian Connectivity

In order for walking to be a viable transportation choice for local trips, circulation routes must be safe, convenient, and highly connected. Pedestrian circulation and connectivity should primarily take place adjacent to planned streets within the right-of-way; however, a considerable amount of pedestrian activity also takes place on-site, where vehicle speeds are lower but the numbers of potential conflict points are higher.

The applicant is proposing to construct a sidewalk along the terminus of Great Falls Court, completing the sidewalk network that runs along the northern side of Great Falls Court from Bozeman Drive to the subject property. The southern side of Great Falls Court does not have a sidewalk network.

### VII. LEGISLATIVE CASE PROCEDURES:

Staff met with the development team in August of 2023 to discuss the potential of a project at this location. A Conditional District rezoning is a legislative process that requires Town Council to hold a public hearing and receive a recommendation from the Land Use Review Board prior to acting on the application. Additionally, certain application procedures are required, such as having a pre-application meeting with staff, and holding a neighborhood meeting with any property owners within 200 feet of the outer boundaries of the subject development. Below is a timeline of the required elements.

- Pre-application meeting: August 1, 2023
- Neighborhood Meeting (In-Person): April 11, 2024

The neighborhood meeting was held at 1107 Great Falls Court (the subject property) on April 11, 2024. No members of the public attended the meeting; however, the applicant did discuss the proposal and the maintenance of the required





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buffers with Wake Stone Corporation, an adjacent property owner to the north, prior to the neighborhood meeting. In general, Wake Stone did not have any concerns with the proposal.

A copy of the mailed notice, the list of recipients, and a summary of the meeting are attached as part of the application packet. Additionally, the Town of Knightdale notified the public of the proposed rezoning request.

- First Class Letters Mailed: October 8, 2024
- Sign Posted on Property: October 8, 2024
- Legal Ad Published in Wake Weekly: October 4 & 11, 2024

Following the formal submittal and review of the proposed Master Plan, the applicant met with the Development Review Committee (DRC) on June 13, 2024, to discuss the technical comments and details associated with the proposed plan. Staff discussed with the applicant items involving screening, fencing, vegetative buffers, stormwater design, and fire lane requirements. The DRC voted unanimously to **continue** the proposal pending the applicant addressing the review comments and Town Council's decision on the Rezoning request.

### **VIII. PROPOSED CONDITIONAL DISTRICT REZONING:**

In accordance with Section 12.2.G.3.f of the UDO, all standards and requirements of the corresponding General District shall be met, except to the extent that the conditions imposed are more restrictive than those standards. However, when a Conditional District is a requirement of Section 3.1 of the UDO, petitioners may also ask that certain standards identified be decreased. Within an approved Conditional District, no use shall be permitted except pursuant to the conditions imposed on the Conditional District in the approval of the rezoning.

Town Council may attach reasonable and appropriate conditions including but not limited to the location, nature, hours of operation and extent of the proposed use with consent of the applicant. The applicant will have a reasonable opportunity to consider and agree to any additional requirements proposed by either the LURB or the Town Council prior to final action.

Staff have reviewed the major site elements and found the majority to be in compliance with all requirements of the Manufacturing & Industrial District and UDO. Major site elements and their compliance statements are listed below. As mentioned previously, in certain instances, the applicant has requested alternative standards, which are also detailed in *italics* below.

- Zoning:** The subject property is currently split zoned with the southern portion adjacent Knightdale Boulevard zoned Highway Business (HB) and the northern portion zoned Manufacturing and Industrial (MI). The proposed mini-warehouse use requires a Conditional District rezoning in the Manufacturing & Industrial (MI) District. This process allows for flexibility to achieve the applicant's goals while meeting the spirit and intent of the UDO and Comprehensive Plan. The applicant is requesting approval of a Conditional District Rezoning from HB and MI to MI-CD to allow for the expansion of the existing storage facility.

The applicant has requested that only mini-warehouse uses are permitted on the subject property. All other uses otherwise permitted in the HB or MI Zoning District shall be prohibited.



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B. **Setbacks:** The proposed Master Plan complies with the minimum setbacks for the Manufacturing Building Type:

Minimum Setbacks (UDO, Sec. 6.12)			
	Front	Side	Rear
Manufacturing Building Type	50 ft.	50 ft.	50 ft.

C. **Additional Use Standards:** Some uses require additional, specific standards based on the nature of operations and potential impacts to surrounding properties. The following standards are applied to mini-warehouse uses (UDO, Sec. 5.7.D). General compliance has been demonstrated on the Master Plan.

- a. All areas shall be screened from any adjacent residence or off-site view from a public street by a Type-A Buffer Yard (Section 7.4.I.2).
- b. Metal siding is prohibited. All exterior walls shall be brick, stone, or decorative masonry.
- c. No outdoor storage of goods or materials shall be permitted.

D. **Building Type Standards:** The applicant is requesting that the proposed architectural plans included in the Master Plan be considered consistent with the Manufacturing Building Type Standards even though there are deficiencies pertaining to façade articulation and glazing. The below improvements are no longer recommended by Staff based on the discussions at the Joint Public Hearing and the applicant’s willingness to accept the Staff recommended condition.

- a. Since the southern and eastern facades will be visible from Great Falls Court (public right-of-way), these facades need to include more articulation to add more architectural interest and variety, to relieve the visual effect of a single, long wall, and to visually break a horizontal wall into human-scale vertical proportions.
- b. Additional windows, or glazing, need to be added to the first floor of the proposed storage building to not only meet the transparency requirements for new buildings, but also to provide architectural continuity from Phase 2 (three-story building on Knightdale Boulevard) to Phase 3.  
*According to the applicant, the biggest concern with windows on the first floor is security and vandalism.*
- c. Enhance the current architectural design of the southern and eastern façades to be more consistent with other buildings on the subject property and adjacent properties.

E. **Parking:** General compliance with the mini-warehouse parking requirements has been demonstrated. *The applicant has requested flexibility from Section 7.1.K.1 of the UDO, which states that no off-street vehicle accommodation area is permitted within any required setback. As proposed, the required fire access drive that surrounds the proposed building on the north, east, and west, is completely within the 50-foot rear setback and within the majority of the side setback. This flexibility is requested to ensure proper fire protection on all sides of the proposed building.*

F. **Landscaping & Screening:** General compliance with the mini-warehouse landscaping and screening requirements has been demonstrated.

G. **Roadway Improvements & Street Trees:** General compliance with the mini-warehouse public roadway improvement requirements has been demonstrated.





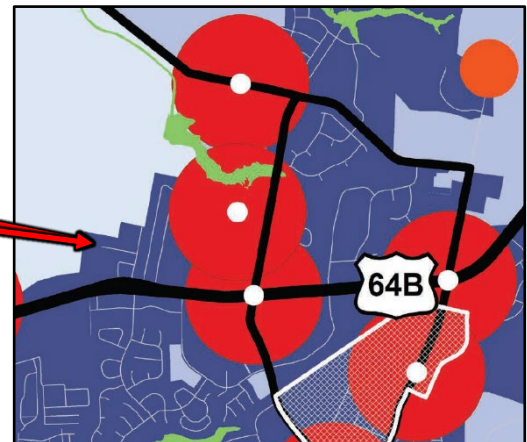
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- H. **Public Utilities/Water Allocation Policy:** The subject property has existing and active public water and sewer services. According to the applicant, the existing Phase 2 building contains restroom facilities for patrons. Water and sewer are not proposed to be connected to the proposed storage building to the rear of the property. Therefore, the proposed development is not required to comply with the Water Allocation Policy.
- I. **Stormwater Management:** As proposed, a bioretention pond will be constructed to the southwest of the Phase 3 storage building. *Staff recommend that a more decorative style fence is installed around the proposed bioretention pond rather than a vinyl coated chain link fence.*
- J. **Lighting:** General compliance with the mini-warehouse lighting requirements has been demonstrated.
- K. **Signage:** All site signage will be reviewed under a separate zoning review. All proposed signage shall comply with Chapter 8, Sign Standards, of the UDO.

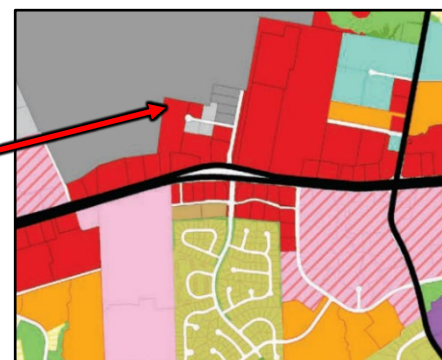
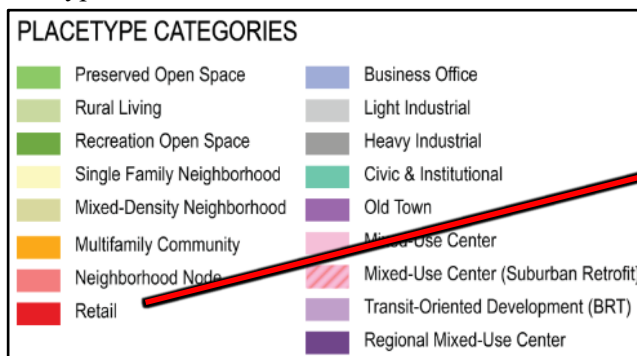
### VIII. KNIGHTDALENEXT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

- A. The KnightdaleNext 2035 Comprehensive Plan features the Growth Framework Map, a high-level tool for assisting in the decision-making process for development proposals. The intent is to prioritize development proposals based on how well it fits within the surrounding area. The subject property is within the Corporate Limits and is a Target Investment Area.



### **B. Growth & Conservation Map**

The Growth & Conservation Map designates parcels in Knightdale into different place type categories based on their current state and the anticipated pattern of development. The subject property is designated as a “Retail” Place Type.





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The “Retail” Place Type is defined as:

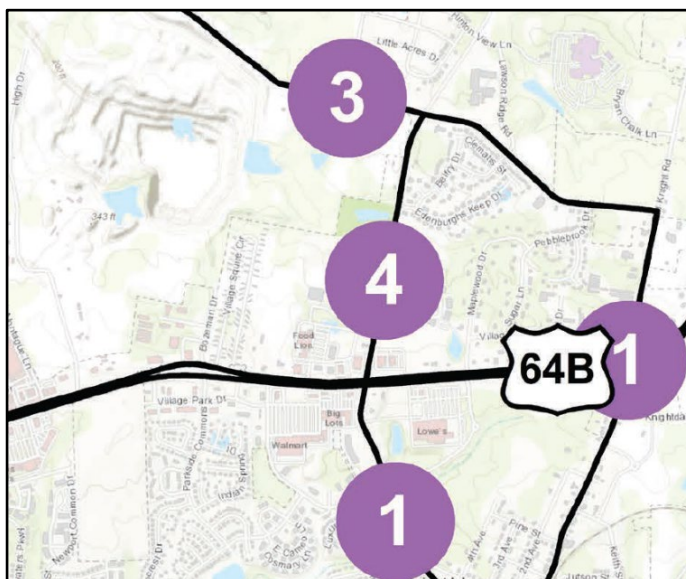
Retail districts serve the daily shopping needs of the region, the community, and surrounding residential neighborhoods. They are typically located near high-volume roads and key intersections. Surface parking lots and internal streets are common in retail districts. Retail districts also include a common green and other public spaces throughout the development to encourage community gathering, outdoor dining, people-watching, etc. Cross-access between retail destinations is provided via service roads with provisions for pedestrian access between buildings that support a park-once mentality (or walk-to, bike-to environment from surrounding residential neighborhoods).

The Place Type transect, seen below, builds off of the Growth & Conservation Map and helps to illustrate how developments should blend together as Knightdale grows. The Retail Place Type falls into the Districts category.



### C. Gateway Entrances Map

Gateways help those traveling into Knightdale easily identify their entrance into Town. The subject property is not located within the vicinity of a designated Gateway.







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### D. Trails and Greenways Map

The Trails & Greenway Map provides the general alignment of greenways in Knightdale. These trails should connect to the existing Town infrastructure or provide new recreational opportunities for residents. The Map does not indicate that any greenways or trails should be constructed adjacent to the proposed development.

The subject property fronts Knightdale Boulevard, which is identified as a 6-Lane Median Divided Boulevard roadway cross-section. This cross-section requires a ten-foot-wide sidepath along the subject property's frontage with Knightdale Boulevard. As proposed, the applicant intends to install the required sidepath along Knightdale Boulevard.



### E. Street Network Map

Development activities should assist with the construction of a comprehensive transportation network. The proposed development will utilize Great Falls Court, which is an existing public street. The subject property also fronts Knightdale Boulevard, which is identified as a 6-Lane Median Divided Boulevard roadway cross-section. This cross-section requires a ten-foot-wide sidepath along the subject property's frontage with Knightdale Boulevard. As proposed, the applicant intends to install the required sidepath along Knightdale Boulevard.

The Street Network Map does not call for any additional roads to be constructed.





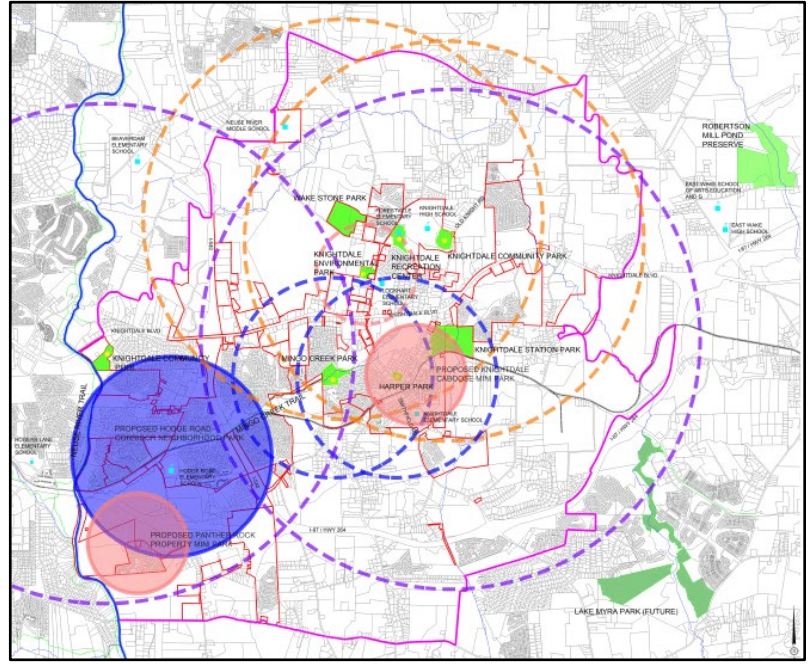
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### CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN:

The Knightdale Town Council adopted the Town’s first ever Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan in April 2022. This plan includes recommendations for future park facilities based on community needs and existing conditions.

The plan indicates that this proposal is within the two-and-a-half-mile service area of Knightdale Station Park and the Knightdale Community Pool, the two-mile service area for the Knightdale Community Park and Wake Stone Park, and the one-mile service area for Mingo Creek Park.



### CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

North Carolina General Statute 160D-605 requires that **prior to** adoption or rejecting any zoning amendment, the governing board shall adopt a statement describing whether its action is consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan and explaining why the board considers the action to be reasonable and in the public interest.

The KnightdaleNext 2035 Comprehensive Plan contains 10 guiding principles categories developed by the community. These guiding principles should be embraced by development proposals to enhance quality-of-life and economic prosperity across town. The principles embody the core philosophy and Town vision expressed by the community.

Of the ten guiding principles detailed in the Comprehensive Plan, the following applies to this development proposal:

### INFILL DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT



Promote infill development and redevelopment activities for vacant and under-utilized areas of Knightdale. In doing so, prioritize the transformation of older properties throughout Town that might not be economically-viable in the future (such as declining retail shopping centers).





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### COMPACT DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS



Guide future growth into more compact and efficient development patterns that will help manage the timing, location, and magnitude (length and size) of expensive infrastructure investments. Prioritize infill development and redevelopment in identified activity centers over continued green field development patterns, and use public infrastructure investments in the activity centers to encourage and leverage future private investments. Acknowledge that increased densities and intensities, and a mix of residential and nonresidential uses, will be needed in the activity centers to accommodate anticipated Town growth. Activity centers added to the Growth and Conservation Map in the future should reflect orderly and incremental growth patterns away from existing and identified activity centers in the 2035 KnightdaleNext Comprehensive Plan.

### ECONOMIC VITALITY



Promote a healthy and sustainable business environment by investing actively in infrastructure, providing favorable incentives, and building a community that is attractive to employers and their workers. Continue to promote Knightdale as a vibrant place, and build a competitive advantage to attract knowledge-based businesses to the area. Investment and recruitment initiatives should realize “triple bottom-line” benefits for Town residents by seeking to improve the tax base, promote economic vitality for local shops and businesses, and increase access to employment opportunities in the Town.

## **IX. JOINT PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY:**

A joint public hearing with the Land Use Review Board and Town Council was held at the October 17, 2024 Town Council meeting. No members of the public attended this meeting, however, Council and LURB members had general discussions with Staff and the applicant regarding the requested UDO flexibility, tree canopy retention and replacement, parking requirements, architectural design and treatment, and public art. Certain discussion points are highlighted below in greater detail.

### 1. **Tree Canopy & Parking Infrastructure**

- a. **Public Hearing Concern:** Is there adequate tree cover across the site and near the parking spaces? Can the number of parking spaces be reduced to help offset the urban heat island effect?

**Applicant Response:** The number of parking spaces can be reduced; however, the applicant would prefer to keep the proposed pavement in this area so that clients can easily maneuver their vehicles around the site after dropping off or picking up personal belongings from the facility.

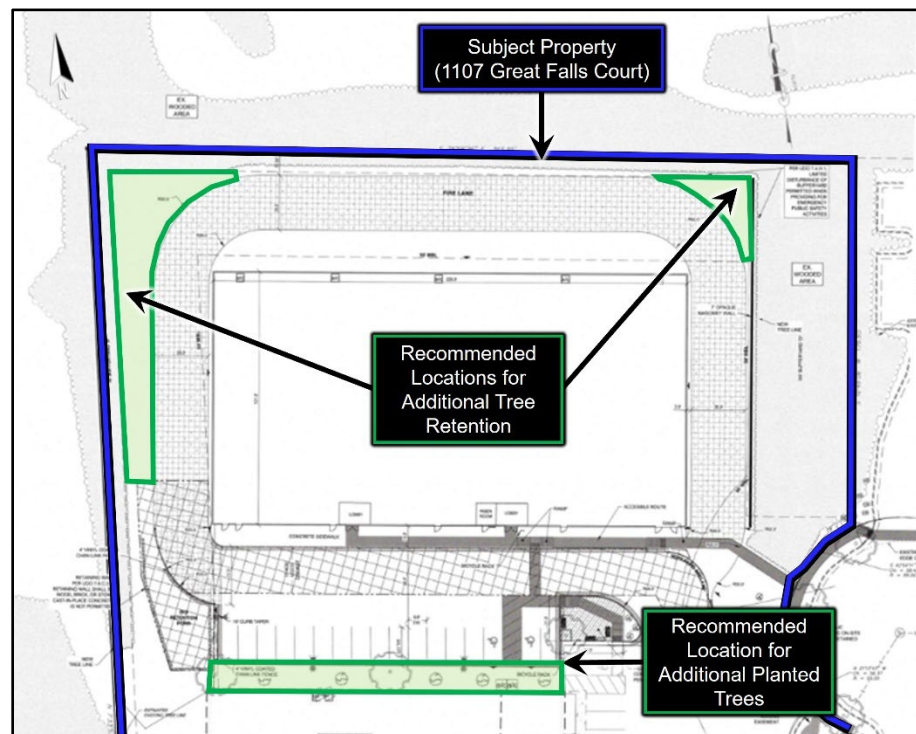
**Staff Analysis:** The intent of the public hearing concern was to reduce the amount of impervious pavement on the site through the reduction of parking spaces. A maximum of 22 parking spaces are



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permitted; a minimum of 11 parking spaces are required. Staff support the reduction by one half (11 parking spaces) but do not see the benefit of this reduction if the applicant still needs the impervious pavement for vehicle maneuverability. To help offset some of the urban heat island effect, Staff recommend that additional canopy and understory trees are planted to the south of the proposed parking spaces. In addition, Staff recommend that more of the existing tree canopy in the northeast and northwest of the site is retained during and following construction.



## 2. Building Architecture

- a. **Public Hearing Concern:** The glass windows on the second and third stories of the proposed building should extend down to the first floor to comply with the applicable architectural regulations set forth in the UDO. The concept of a mural being commissioned for this section of the building, in lieu of additional glass windows, was also discussed.

**Applicant Response:** The biggest concern with glass windows on the first floor of the proposed building is security and vandalism. The applicant is concerned that unwanted activities could gravitate towards the new storage building because of the lack of residences and lack of businesses that remain open after typical work hours. The applicant contends that the required landscaped buffer and masonry wall, and the existing vegetation will reduce, or completely eliminate, the visibility of the lower section of the proposed building from the public right-of-way. The applicant would prefer to invest in a mural or public art and place it in a location that is highly visible for citizens, visitors, and clients to see and enjoy.





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**Staff Analysis:** The UDO grants Town Council the authority to provide flexibility during the Conditional District Rezoning process based on the merits of the proposal. Staff recognize that there needs to be a balance between the requested flexibility and UDO requirements, and that Town Council expects high quality development in return for this flexibility. Through the discussion with Town Council, LURB, and the applicant at the Joint Public Hearing, the concept of adding a mural to the existing Ample Storage building along Knightdale Boulevard or installing a piece of public art along Knightdale Boulevard in front of the building was suggested.

Following the Joint Public Hearing, staff met with the applicant to discuss their willingness to consider either a mural or public art along Knightdale Boulevard. The applicant is amenable to a condition being placed on Town Council's final decision that requires some form of public art (mural, freestanding art, etc.) to be installed along Knightdale Boulevard in lieu of making any changes to the architecture of the proposed storage building. A Staff recommended condition is highlighted below.



### **X. STAFF RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:**

Pursuant to NCGS Section 160D-703 and Section 12.2.G.3.f of the UDO, the LURB may recommend and the Town Council may attach reasonable and appropriate conditions. Below is a Staff recommended condition based on the discussions at the Joint Public Hearing.

1. The property owner shall be required to provide an art installation (i.e. public art, mural art, sculptures, statues, fountains, or a similar art installation) in front of the existing Ample Storage along Knightdale Boulevard building, or another area on the subject property that is visible from the Knightdale Boulevard public right-of-way. All art shall be approved by Development Services prior to installment. Said art shall be installed prior to issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy associated with Phase 3 of the development.



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### **XI. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Review the request, forward the following advisory statement to Town Council, and recommend approval of ZMA-5-23 to Town Council.

*The proposed Zoning Map Amendment is consistent with the KnightdaleNext 2035 Comprehensive Plan as it addresses several of the guiding principles such as promoting infill development activities for vacant and under-utilized areas of Knightdale, embracing compact development patterns by prioritizing infill development over greenfield development, and continuing to enhance Knightdale's economic vitality through investment into an existing business. Further, it is consistent with the General Growth Framework as a Target Investment Area, the Growth & Conservation Map's designation as a "Retail" Place Type, the Roadway Network Plan, and the Sidepaths & Greenways Plan. The request is reasonable and in the public interest as it aids in developing a vibrant, sustainable, and safe community design in which people not only desire to visit, but to also live, work, and play.*