



**Board of County Commissioners**

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District No. 3

October 2, 2007

Darren Leafblau  
10505 W. Berry Drive  
Littleton, CO 80127

Re: The Rock of Southwest Church Rezoning, 10393 W. Alamo Place, Second Submittal

Dear Mr. Leafblau,

This letter will serve as a response to your second submittal for your proposal to rezone the property at 10393 W. Alamo Place from Planned Development (P-D) to a new Planned Development. Please find below a highlighted list of the comments received from various agencies and Planning Staff. Where discrepancies or contradictions are encountered, please contact me for clarification.

**CURRENT PLANNING**

In our April 2, 2007 response letter, staff noted the existing facility is embedded within a mature and established residential neighborhood. The streets that serve this facility operate at collector levels, but there are also many lots that take direct driveway access to the serving streets. Staff had researched several churches within similar residential neighborhoods and found these churches range in size between 2,200 and 19,651 square feet of gross floor area. Staff had further concerns in regard to the 17,000 square foot "youth center" that could be used for plays, receptions, or musical events. Staff is unclear what would prevent this youth center from becoming an event center.

Accordingly, it was staff's position that the facility is already at or beyond the scale of what would be appropriate for the community, and did not support a rezoning that would allow further expansion.

In a September 14<sup>th</sup> 2007 meeting between staff and several representatives of the Rock of the Southwest Baptist Church, one of the representatives suggested to staff that the Abiding Hope Lutheran Church at the southeast corner of S. Simms Street and W. Coal Mine Avenue was an example of a comparably sized church in a residential neighborhood. Staff does not agree. There are several major differences between the two churches:

1. The Abiding Hope Lutheran Church is allowed a total floor area of 42,200 square feet (within a 35,700 square foot footprint). The Rock of the Southwest Baptist Church proposes up to 63,000 square feet of total floor area within a 43,000 square foot footprint.

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2. The Abiding Hope Lutheran Church is located at an arterial intersection. Subsequently, the 1996 rezoning proposal to allow expansion was supported by staff because the church served as a transitional buffer between the intersection and the residential neighborhood. The Rock of the Southwest Baptist Church is approximately 1,000 feet from either Kipling Parkway or Bowles Avenue (both arterials) and is completely surrounded by a residential neighborhood. Far more residences are impacted by the Rock of the Southwest Baptist Church.
3. Although access for the Abiding Hope Lutheran Church is obtained from Robb Way (a local street) because of the location of this church on an arterial corner, the majority of traffic resulting from church services passes only two residences, both of which do not take their access from Robb Way. Many homes obtain their access from Alamo Place and Lewis Street, along which the majority of traffic generated by the Rock of the Southwest Baptist Church travels.
4. The Abiding Hope Lutheran Church is located on a 4-acre lot. With available parking on this lot almost maximized, staff counted 131 parking spaces as opposed to the 330 parking spaces on an 8-acre lot (much of which is still undeveloped) proposed by the Rock of the Southwest Baptist Church.
5. A large public school is located adjacent to the Rock of the Southwest Baptist Church, whereas the Abiding Hope Lutheran Church is located between an existing residence and W. Coal Mine Avenue. The combination of this existing church and school already generates a large amount of traffic.

Therefore, staff still does not support this rezoning proposal based upon the scale and the lack of compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.

The following options are available to you:

1. Withdrawal the application.
2. Request a public hearing of the present proposal with the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners. If this option is chosen, staff will not support this proposal and will recommend denial to the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners. However, it is important for the applicant to work on the Official Development Plan so that the best product is presented at the public hearing. Staff recommends the Written Restrictions be revised to address the following:
  - a) The first ODP submittal restricted height to 30 feet with the exception of the bell tower. The present proposal exempts miscellaneous roof top equipment and parapet screens from the height restriction. Staff does not support these exceptions. Staff notes, however, that chimneys and vent pipes are typically excluded from height requirements.
  - b) The number and size of proposed signage is excessive. The existing Official Development Plan allows one 50 square foot ground sign and one 16 square foot wall sign, whereas the present proposal requests an additional wall sign and two more "event" signs up to 40 square feet each. Staff cannot find sufficient justification as to why more signage is warranted.

- c) The original ODP restricted telecommunications equipment to the bell tower. The present proposal states "all telecommunications power and control panels will be visually concealed from public view" and "all visible panels conduit, and antennas shall be the color of the adjacent building material". Staff recommends the applicant instead require all telecommunications equipment to meet the "Highest Design Standards" of the Telecommunications Uses Section of the Zoning Resolution.
- d) Please see the additional red-marks on the proposed ODP.

### **LONG RANGE PLANNING**

This property is subject to the recommendations in *The South Jefferson County Community Plan*. New staff comments are in *Italics*.

### **LAND USE**

- 1) The various policies in the Land Use section that apply to this property are the General policies, Redevelopment policies (p. 29-29), and the Design Guidelines (p. 89-90).
- 2) Churches are treated as office when being reviewed by the Community Plan.
- 3) New development should maintain or increase the tax base. (p. 28)
- 4) We do not feel this proposal can be supported as proposed. The scale is too large for this residential area. *The South Jefferson County Community Plan recommends that non-residential development should be residential in character, with the maximum height limited to 30 feet from peak to grade, and be of a scale compatible with the residential neighborhood. It does not appear that these recommendations are met.*
- 5) We have found five examples of churches in other similar areas. Those churches range from 2,225 sq. ft. GFA to 19,651 sq. ft. GFA. This proposal is for more than double the largest church in a residential neighborhood we found. How is this larger size justified? *The Rock of Southwest Baptist Church is proposing a maximum gross floor area of 63,000 square feet with a maximum building footprint of 43,000 square feet.*
- 6) This proposal does not meet the requirements of the design guidelines, primarily for reasons of scale, and landscaping.
- 7) At a minimum redevelopment should maintain existing buffers, separations and screening and preferably enhance these items. (p. 28) *The Plan recommends that building setbacks increase as building heights increase.*
- 8) A trail connection is being committed to by the written restrictions. Is the connection that is most needed from Tract H to Alamo Place or from Tract A to the elementary

school? Any other comments from Jefferson County Open Space, the Foothills Park and Recreation District, and the school district should be followed. *Written Restriction M. 1. – Trail Connections states that a trail connection will be provided through the property from adjacent Tract H to West Alamo Place. The Plan's Open Space and Trails map shows an opportunity for a trail along the north side of West Alamo Place.*

#### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

- 9) The Plan maps do not indicate any historic resources on this property.

#### **DESIGN GUIDELINES**

- 10) Please ensure that this development follows the Design Guidelines as noted on pages 89-90 of the South Jeffco Community Plan. In particular, please note:
- a) Provide a minimum of 40% open space for office. *This has been provided.*
  - b) Limit height to a maximum of 30 feet, measured from peak to grade. *The building height has been limited to 30 feet, but not as measured from peak to grade.*
  - c) Be of a scale and design compatible with the residential neighborhood. *The scale of the church including the size and height of the structure, the increased parking area, and the overall impacts associated with the scale of this church in the residential neighborhood continue to be a concern.*
  - d) A landscape strip that is an average of 20 feet wide should be installed adjacent to any road. *The Written Restrictions refer to a landscaped strip, a minimum of 20 feet in width, shall be placed along West Alamo Place.*

#### **OTHER COMMENTS:**

- 11) The use is not of a concern, but the scale of the use is a concern. *The scale and impacts to the residential neighborhood continues to be a concern.*
- 12) The size of the facilities for building/grounds maintenance and storage should be specified. *The facilities for building/ground maintenance and storage are addressed in Written Restrictions D. f. Accessory Uses. A maximum of two units totaling 1,800 square feet is allowed. The storage of hazardous a dangerous materials is prohibited.*
- 13) The low power telecommunications standards should be a separate section. This section should reference Jefferson County's highest design standards. Tower height should be specified. Tower location should be more specific, now it says they will be within 6 feet of the building. Is a tower appropriate on all sides of the building? We feel they should be located away from existing residences. *The location of the bell tower is indicated on the ODP graphic. It is located on the east side of the building with a parking lot separating the adjacent residential neighborhood. The architecture and design of the bell tower is not addressed*

- 14) How many signs total area allowed, including existing and proposed? *The total number of signs is not addressed. The Written Restrictions state that the existing signs shall remain. An additional free-standing area identification sign abutting West Alamo Place with a maximum height of eight feet and a maximum face size of fifty square feet per side, two wall identification signs with a maximum size of sixteen feet per sign and directional signs with a maximum face size of five square feet per sign are also included.*
- 15) The hours of lighting should be reduced to 10:00 PM. *The hours of lighting is not addressed at this time.*
- 16) The language regarding the lighting of signs should be modified. The Plan recommends innovative lighting techniques, such as only lighting letters, or not using back-lighting. We recommend that internally lit box signs be prohibited. *The Written Restrictions prohibit internally illuminated ground signs.*
- 17) What type of landscaping is proposed between the church and adjacent residences? We recommend a 20 foot landscape strip, with specific planting standards. *The Written Restrictions address the placement of a twenty foot landscape strip along West Alamo Place.*

## **PLANNING ENGINEERING**

These comments have been based upon the application package and the requirements of Jefferson County. Please see [http://www.co.jefferson.co.us/ext/dpt/public\\_works/planning/index.htm](http://www.co.jefferson.co.us/ext/dpt/public_works/planning/index.htm) for the Planning and Zoning website to get the latest County Regulations and Community Plans. The comments are separated into 2 sections: REZONING and CONCLUSION. The plat comments should be considered during design of the site but do not need to be addressed until the plat process.

## **REZONING COMMENTS**

- 1) **Street Intersection Spacing:** Street intersections shall meet the spacing requirements of the LDR Section 15 A.1.c. and LDR Section 15 A.2. The nearest streets, intersections, and driveways, both adjacent and opposite to the proposed development need to be shown on the site plan. **Please show proposed access locations for proposed expansion.**
- 2) **Traffic Study:** The Traffic Study submitted with this preliminary application is **not acceptable**. Please refer to the comment # 4. from the Jefferson County Highways and Transportation Department.
- 3) **Soils – Dipping Bedrock:** This site is located in the Jefferson County Designated Dipping Bedrock Area. The applicant will need to submit both a Geology and a Soils/Geotechnical Report in accordance with LDR Section 25 and 26, and provide detailed grading plans with the rezoning submittal. The grading plans need to show overburden soil or fill at least ten (10) feet thick beneath the anticipated bottom of foundations and the top of the bedrock. (ZR Section 50).

- 4) Highways and Transportation Department: The revised traffic study submitted used a correction factor of %35, this is not acceptable. Also redo traffic counts on a day when weather is nice. All other comments from 3-20-07 still apply. Please call Tim Murrery at 303-271-8457 if you have any questions.

### CONCLUSION


These initial case comments are based solely upon the submitted preliminary application package. They are intended to make the applicant aware of regulatory requirements. Failure by Planning Engineering to note any specific item does not relieve the applicant from conforming to all County regulations. Furthermore, if the proposed site layout and design are altered substantially during subsequent County land development processes (rezoning, platting, exemptions, resubmittals), Planning Engineering reserves the right to modify these initial comments or add appropriate additional comments.

The applicant should respond to these comments in writing. If there are any questions please contact Sean Madden at 303-271-8719 or email at smadden@jeffco.us.

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Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Thank you,

  
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