



## Department of Planning & Zoning Staff Report – Special Exception 2024-2-SE

### APPLICATION INFORMATION

- **Applicant**  
St. Charles Parish  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
274 Judge Edward Dufresne Parkway  
Luling, LA 70070  
985.783.5090
- **Request**  
Expansion of park space under R-1A zoning with a waiver from the permanent dust-free paving requirement for the parking area.

### SITE INFORMATION

- **Location:** 279 Ashton Plantation Boulevard, Luling (Parcel B)
- **Size of Site:** 9.97 acres
- **Current Zoning and Land Use:** R-1A; undeveloped but cleared
- **Surrounding Zoning and Land Use**  
R-1A is adjacent to the sides and rear; MS zoning is located across Ashton Plantation Boulevard.  
  
St. Charles Parish Parks and Recreation soccer fields and an associated parking lot are adjacent to the Luling Avenue side; single family homes are adjacent to the Lauve Lane and Gassen Street sides; an undeveloped but cleared field is adjacent to the Lac Calcasieu side; an assisted living center is located across Ashton Plantation Boulevard.
- **Future Land Use Recommendation**  
*Low-to-Moderate Residential:* Single-family detached dwellings; attached dwellings such as duplexes, patio/zero-lot line homes and townhomes; and accessory units. Neighborhood retail, services, offices and institutions are also permitted in appropriate locations such as along transportation corridors or at intersections. (over six dwellings per acre)
- **Flood Zone & Minimum Building Elevation**  
1992 Flood Insurance Rate Map: X  
2013 Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map: X and AE4
- **Traffic Access**  
The site has 140 ft. of frontage on Ashton Plantation Blvd. Access to the subject site and the proposed aggregate parking area will be through the existing driveway for the hard surface parking lot on the adjacent site. This driveway will be widened to handle the additional traffic.
- **Utilities**  
The Parish's GIS shows water and sewer along Ashton Plantation Blvd. Sewer is also available along the rear of the site.  
  
The site plan shows an existing 45 foot drainage servitude on the northern and eastern sides of the site.

## APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

### **Appendix A. Section VI. – Zoning District Criteria and Regulations.**

[I.] R-1A. *Single family residential detached conventional homes*—Medium density.

*Policy statement:* This district is composed of areas containing one-family dwellings constructed on a permanent foundation, connected to public utilities and which meet the architectural standards of a permanent residence. The district regulations are designed to protect the residential character of the areas by prohibiting all commercial activities; to encourage a suitable neighborhood environment for family life by including among the permitted uses such facilities as schools and churches; and to preserve the openness of the areas by requiring certain minimum yard and area standards to be met.

1. Use Regulations:
  - b. Special exception uses and structures include the following:
    - (1) **Parks, public libraries, fire stations, police or sheriff's stations or substations, and sewer pumping stations.**
    - (2) Showing the operation of historic buildings and/or sites and their related activities, provided a certificate from the United States Department of Interior is furnished by the owner verifying that the building and/or site is on the National Register of Historic Places.
    - (3) Accessory uses to golf courses and country clubs limited to the following:
      - art studios
      - churches and religious institutions
      - commercial recreation facilities
      - commercial schools
      - personal service businesses, examples include but are not limited to beauty shops and barber shops, acupuncture, and massage services
      - professional offices, examples include but are not limited to doctors, dentists, engineers, architects, landscape architects, plan services, realtors, insurance
      - restaurants and cafeterias

### **Appendix A. Section IV. – General Provisions.**

A. *Special exception use—Procedure.*

1. An application for a special exception use shall be submitted to the Department of Planning and Zoning. Applications shall include all plans, surveys, illustrations, and documents which completely describe the proposed use.
2. The Planning Department shall review the application using the *evaluation criteria* found in Section C.
3. A decision by the Planning and Zoning Director or his designee shall be issued in writing to the applicant either approving, denying, or approving with conditions to the request.
4. **Should the Planning and Zoning Director find that the literal enforcement of one (1) or more provisions of the ordinance is impracticable or will exact undue hardship because of peculiar conditions pertaining to the land in question, the application may be forwarded to the Planning Commission to request a waiver with a supporting resolution from the Parish Council.**

C. *Evaluation criteria.* Those uses requiring approval for either a *special exception* or a *special permit use* shall be evaluated by the criteria below. These criteria are to be considered illustrative and not restrictive. Other criteria may be considered though not specifically listed below if said criteria affect the general health, safety, and welfare of the public.

1. Compliance with the current St. Charles Parish Comprehensive Plan.
  2. Compatibility with existing uses on abutting sites in terms of site development, building design, hours of operation, and transportation features related to safety and convenience of vehicular and pedestrian circulation.
  3. Adequacy and convenience of off-street parking and loading facilities and protection of adjacent property from glare of site lighting.
  4. Potentially unfavorable impacts on other existing uses on abutting sites to the extent such impacts exceed those impacts expected from a permitted use in the zoning district.
  5. Protection of persons and property from erosion, flood or water damage, fire, noise, glare, and similar hazards or impacts.
  6. A site development plan shall be required as part of the application process. The following design criteria shall be evaluated on the plan:
    - a. Required yards and open space.
    - b. Ingress and egress to property.
    - c. Parking and loading areas.
    - d. Location of garbage facilities.
    - e. Landscaping, buffering, and screening.
    - f. Signage.
    - g. Height and bulk of structures.
    - h. Location and direction of site lighting.
- D. Conditions of approval may be applied to ensure compatibility of the proposed use with existing uses in the same district and surrounding area.
- E. Any special exception use or special permit use which does not commence construction or operation within twelve (12) months after the date of approval shall expire. One extension not to exceed six (6) months may be granted at the Planning and Zoning Director's discretion.
- F. Any special exception use or special permit use that ceases operation for a period of six (6) months shall expire unless otherwise specified by law.
- G. *Notice.* The Planning and Zoning Department shall post a sign on the affected property which calls attention to the Planning Commission's public hearing at least ten (10) days prior to that hearing date. Similar notification shall also be posted at the principal office of the Department of Planning and Zoning. The public hearings shall be advertised in the official journal of the Parish at least three (3) times on at least three (3) separate weeks, and at least fifteen (15) days shall elapse between the first publication and the date of the hearings. Notice of the time

and place of the public hearing shall be sent by certified mail not less than ten (10) days in advance of the hearing to all abutting property owners.

- H. *Revocation.* A special exception or special permit use may be revoked by ordinance of the Parish Council after a public hearing finding that any of the following conditions or events have occurred:
1. Violation the terms and conditions of the approval.
  2. Uncorrected violations of the zoning ordinance.
  3. Violation of the Parish Code of Ordinances.
  4. A request is made by the property owner to revoke the use.

**Appendix A. Section VIII. – Site Design Requirements.**

A. *Off-street parking in general:*

2. ***Any area where off-street parking is provided (including additional parking areas that are not required by this ordinance) must be surfaced with permanent dust-free paving except for single-family residences in the O-L District which must be surfaced with appropriate materials.***

<b>SPU CRITERIA COMPLIANCE</b>
--------------------------------

The proposal meets the criteria as follows:

1. *Compliance with the current St. Charles Parish Comprehensive Plan.*

The site is designated *Low-to-Moderate Residential* on the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map. The recommended residential zoning districts of the Comprehensive Plan allow for parks via a Special Exception Use, thus complying with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. **Complies**

2. *Compatibility with existing uses on abutting sites in terms of site development, building design, hours of operation, and transportation features related to safety and convenience of vehicular and pedestrian circulation.*

The property is adjacent to an existing park with soccer fields and accessory parking. This request would expand upon that use. Other development in the area includes single family neighborhoods and an assisted living center. The soccer field expansion would not be incompatible. **Complies**

3. *Adequacy and convenience of off-street parking and loading facilities and protection of adjacent property from glare of site lighting.*

Site lighting is not a part of this request.

The plan depicts a 97,900 sq. ft. aggregate parking lot that may accommodate 277 parking spaces, including 7 handicap accessible spaces. The driveway providing access to the existing hard surface parking on the adjacent soccer field site will be widened and utilized to access the proposed aggregate parking area.

The use of an aggregate surface does not meet the Parish's site design requirements for parking areas, which must consist of permanent dust-free paving. **Does Not Comply**

4. *Potentially unfavorable impacts on other existing uses on abutting sites to the extent such impacts exceed those impacts expected from a permitted use in the zoning district.*

The R-1A district is primarily limited to the development of site-built single family homes. The expansion of soccer fields and associated parking areas is not expected to have any more of an impact compared to the development of this site for such purposes. **Complies**

5. *Protection of persons and property from erosion, flood or water damage, fire, noise, glare, and similar hazards or impacts.*

Noise impacts are not expected from this type of development but the noise ordinance will provide for any enforcement necessary should it occur. Drainage review occurs as part of the building permitting process. **Complies**

6. *A site development plan shall be required as part of the application process. The following design criteria shall be evaluated on the plan:*

- a. *Required yards and open space.* No structures are proposed that would need to meet setback or open space requirements. **N/A**
- b. *Ingress and egress to property.* The site has 140 ft. of frontage on Ashton Plantation Blvd. Ingress/egress is shown through the existing driveway for the hard-surface parking area on the adjacent soccer field site. This driveway would be widened to accommodate the additional traffic. **Complies**
- c. *Parking and loading areas.* The plan shows a 445 ft. by 220 ft. aggregate parking area. The use of an aggregate surface does not meet Parish Site Design Requirements, specifically *Appendix A., Section VIII.A.2. Any area where off-street parking is provided (including additional parking areas that are not required by this ordinance) must be surfaced with permanent dust-free paving except for single-family residences in the O-L District which must be surfaced with appropriate materials.* **Does Not Comply**
- d. *Location of garbage facilities.* **N/A**
- e. *Landscaping, buffering, and screening.* **N/A**
- f. *Signage.* Signage is not proposed as part of this request. **N/A**
- g. *Height and bulk of structures.* No structures are proposed. **N/A**
- h. *Location and direction of site lighting.* Lighting is not included in this request. **N/A**

## ANALYSIS

The applicants request approval of a Special Exception Use to expand existing park space under R-1A zoning, specifically the addition of new soccer fields and an expanded parking area within Ashton Plantation.

Special Exception Uses are typically approved administratively by the Director of Planning and Zoning. This request comes before the Planning Commission due to the need for a waiver allowing the proposed parking area to consist of an aggregate surface instead of the required permanent dust-free paving.

The majority of applicable evaluation criteria are met, with the exception of the hard-surface parking requirement as detailed under the previous section.

The Department does not object to the use of an aggregate surface for the parking area due to the nature of the primary use and the lack of permanent structures as part of its development.

## DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

**Approval.**

**If the Planning Commission approves this request, it will be forwarded to the Parish Council for consideration of a supporting resolution.**