

Proposed Zone Change to Planned Development (PD) at 198 E. McMillan Street and 237 William H. Taft Road in Mt. Auburn

City Planning Commission

April 4, 2025

BACKGROUND

APPLICANT

- Union on Taft, LLC

DEVELOPER

- Uptown Rental Properties & Chick-fil-A Inc.

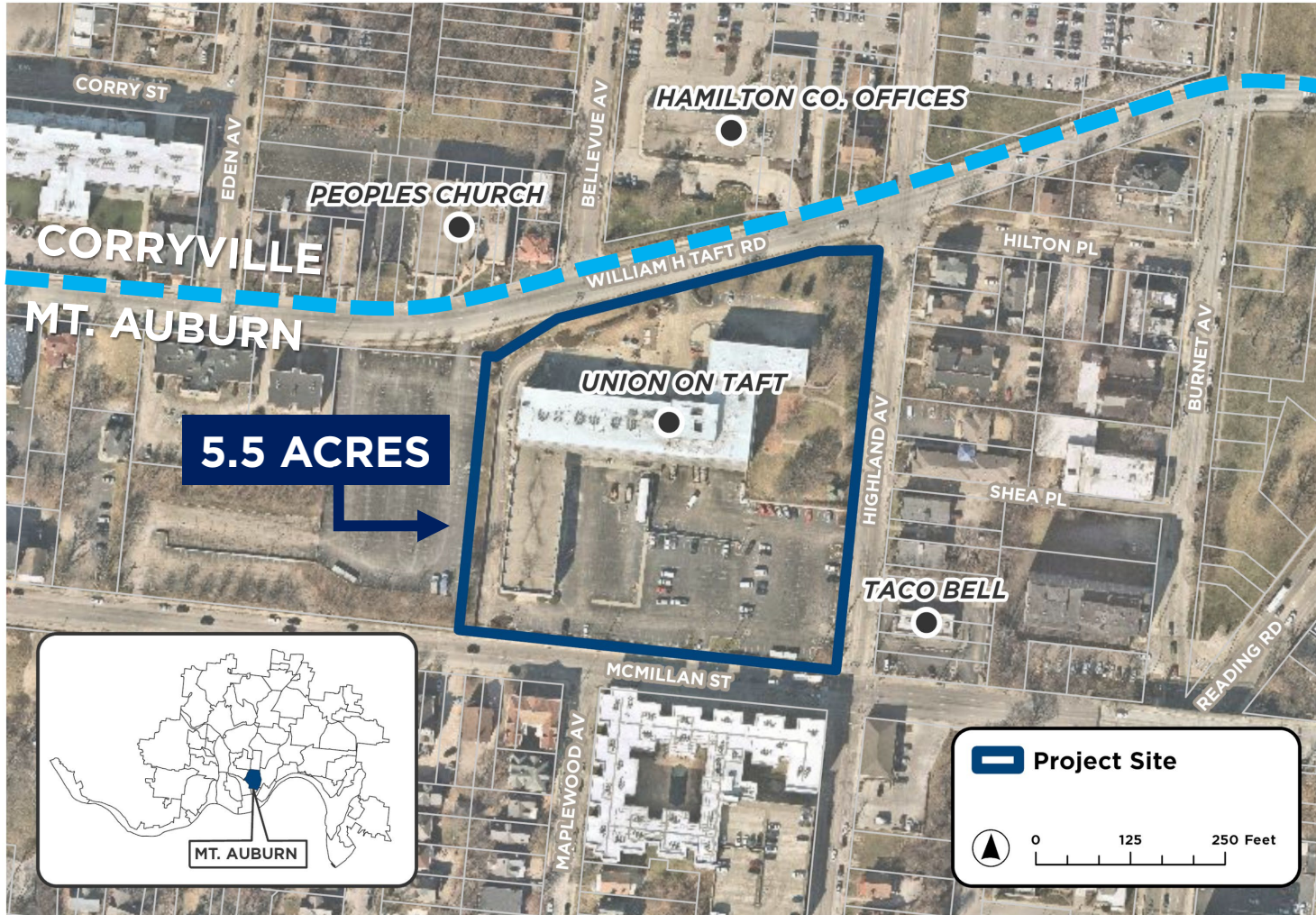
REQUEST

- Allow for a mixed-use development with an existing multi-family apartment building and a new drive-through restaurant.



BACKGROUND

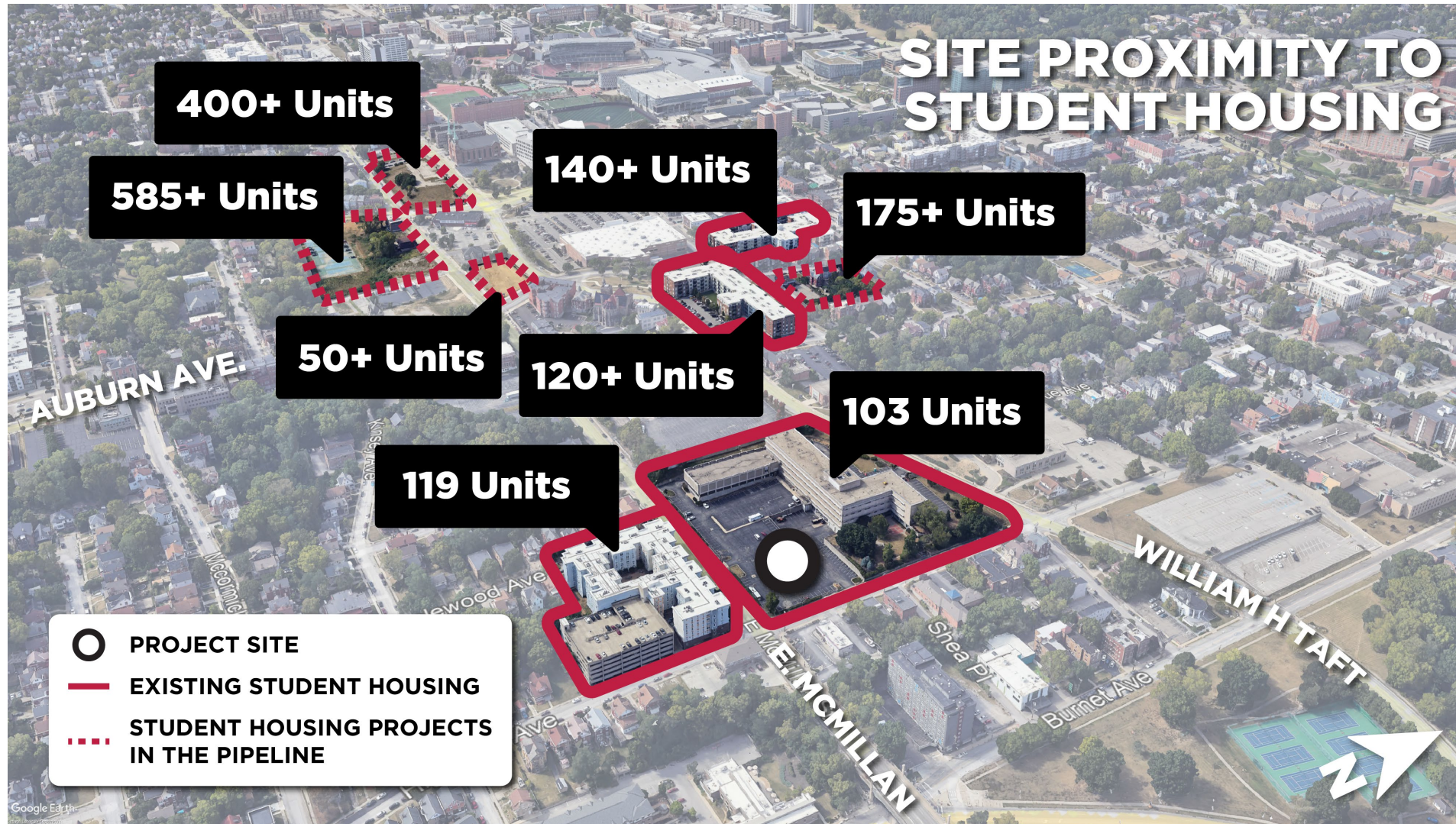
A PROPOSED ZONE CHANGE TO PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (PD) AT WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT, HIGHLAND, & MCMILLAN



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Zoning Review

Zoning District	OG-T (Existing Zoning District)	CC-M-T (Adjacent Commercial District)	CC-P-T (Adjacent Commercial District)
Uses Allowed	<p>Restaurant use permitted with conditions.</p> <p>Drive-throughs <u>not</u> permitted.</p>	<p>Restaurant use permitted.</p> <p>Drive-throughs <u>permitted in rear yard.</u></p>	<p>Restaurant use permitted.</p> <p>Drive-throughs <u>not</u> permitted.</p>

SPECIFIC PURPOSES OF A PD (§ 1429-01)

- a. Establish a procedure for the development of land in order to allow for a **more efficient** and **economic development** of property than ordinarily permitted by **conventional zoning**.
- b. Ensure orderly and thorough planning and review procedures that **lead to quality design and development**.
- c. Encourage **creativity** in developments by allowing greater flexibility in **access, light, open space and amenities**.
- d. Encourage **common open space** and provide for its **maintenance**.
- e. Encourage the **coordinated development** of properties that might otherwise be developed individually.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF A PD (§ 1429-05)

- a. Minimum Area
- b. Ownership
- c. Multiple Buildings on a Lot
- d. Historic Landmarks and Districts
- e. Hillside Overlay Districts
- f. Urban Design Overlay Districts

BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF A PD (§ 1429-05)

- a. Minimum Area
- b. Ownership
- c. Multiple Buildings on a Lot
- d. Historic Landmarks and Districts → **Does not apply**
- e. Hillside Overlay Districts → **Does not apply**
- f. Urban Design Overlay Districts → **Does not apply**

CONCEPT PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STATEMENT (§ 1429-09)

- a. Plan Elements
- b. Ownership
- c. Schedule
- d. Preliminary Reviews
- e. Density and Open Space

CONCEPT PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STATEMENT (§ 1429-09)

- a. Plan Elements**
- b. Ownership** → Applicant
- c. Schedule** → Two Phases
- d. Preliminary Reviews** → Coordinated Site Review
- e. Density and Open Space** → 73% Impervious Surfaces /27% Open Space

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT



USES

- Phase One: Residential
- Phase Two: Restaurant

LAND AREA

- Phase One: 4 acres
- Phase Two: 1.5 acres

The two phases would be subdivided, if approved

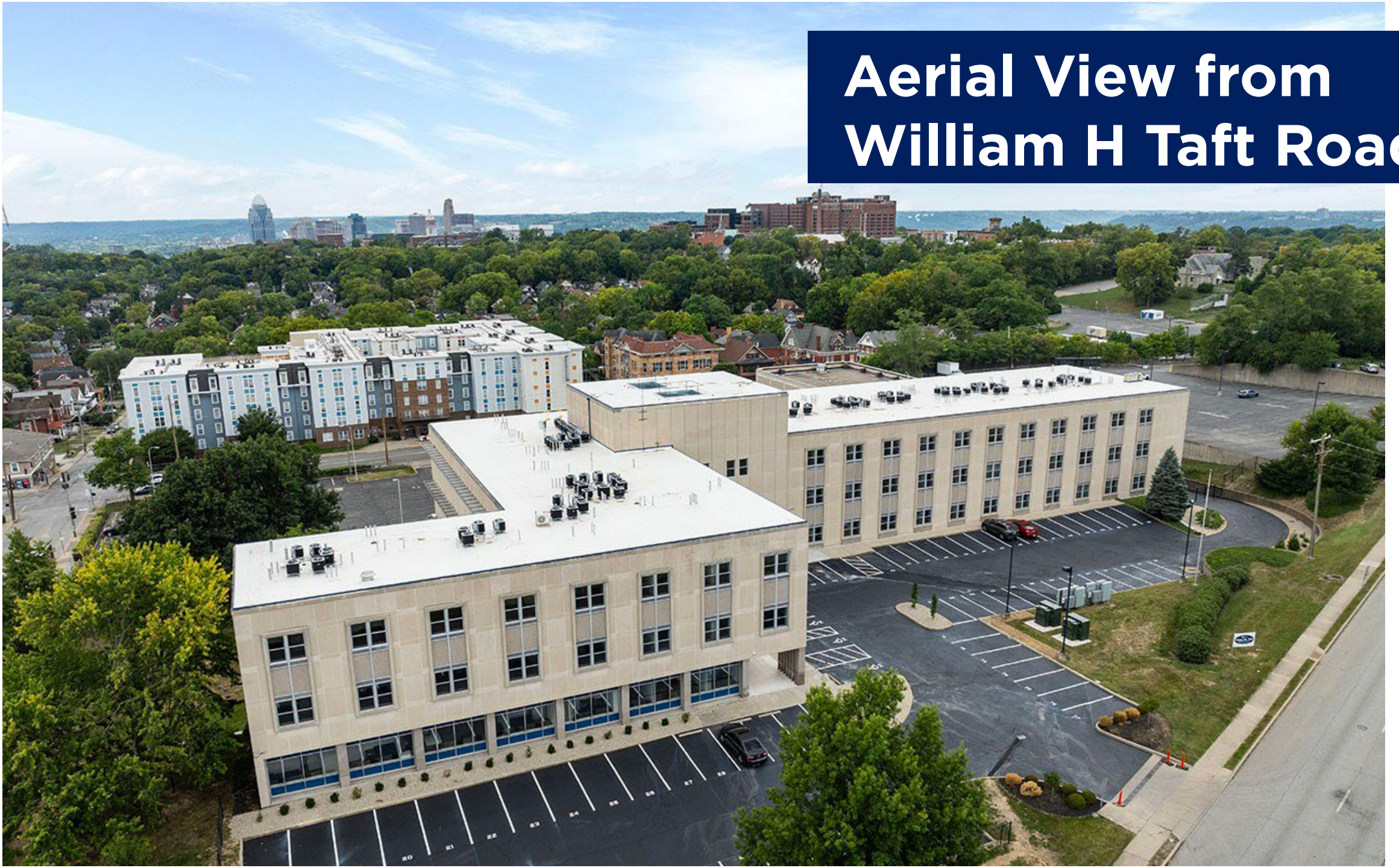
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT



PHASE ONE

- **No proposed changes**
- Completed in 2023
- Existing apartment building (The Union on Taft Apartments)
- 103-units (student housing)
- 180 parking spaces
- Outdoor courtyard

Aerial View from William H Taft Road



Site View from E. McMillan Street



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT



PHASE TWO

- Existing surface parking
- Proposed Chick-fil-A

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT



PHASE TWO

- Reviewed through the City's Coordinated Site Review (CSR) process in **September 2024**.
 - **DCPE** recommended a **zone change to (CC-M-T)** with the need for additional variance relief.
 - **DOT** required a **traffic analysis**, including trip generation and distribution.

Site View from Highland Avenue



Site View from E. McMillan Street



CORRESPONDENCE

- **DCPE-Applicant Meeting:** October 2024
 - A meeting was held to discuss the CSR comments.
 - Variances Required with CC-M-T zone change:
 - Drive-through Location → **Rear yard**
 - Building Location → **Building built to corner**
 - Front Yard Setback → **12-ft. max front yard setback**
 - Parking Location → **Rear yard**
 - Building Transparency → **50-60% facing roadways**
 - Staff suggested changes to the site design to better conform with CC-M-T.

CORRESPONDENCE



Chick-fil-A location
in Kettering, Ohio
(Dayton suburb)

CORRESPONDENCE

- **DCPE-Applicant Meeting:** January 2025
 - A meeting was held to discuss site updates and path forward
 - **Changes to building and drive-through locations could not be made** to preserve the traffic flow required for the restaurant use.
 - Additions that were made:
 - Landscaping to comply with DOTE requirements
 - Masonry walls and fencing along E. McMillan Street and Highland Avenue,
 - Order point canopy along E. McMillan

CORRESPONDENCE

- **DCPE-Applicant Meeting:** January 2025
 - Based on the changes, DCPE **did not support** a **zone change to CC-M-T**.
 - It was determined that the only **path forward** for the development was a **zone change to a Planned Development** that included the existing multi-family apartment building.

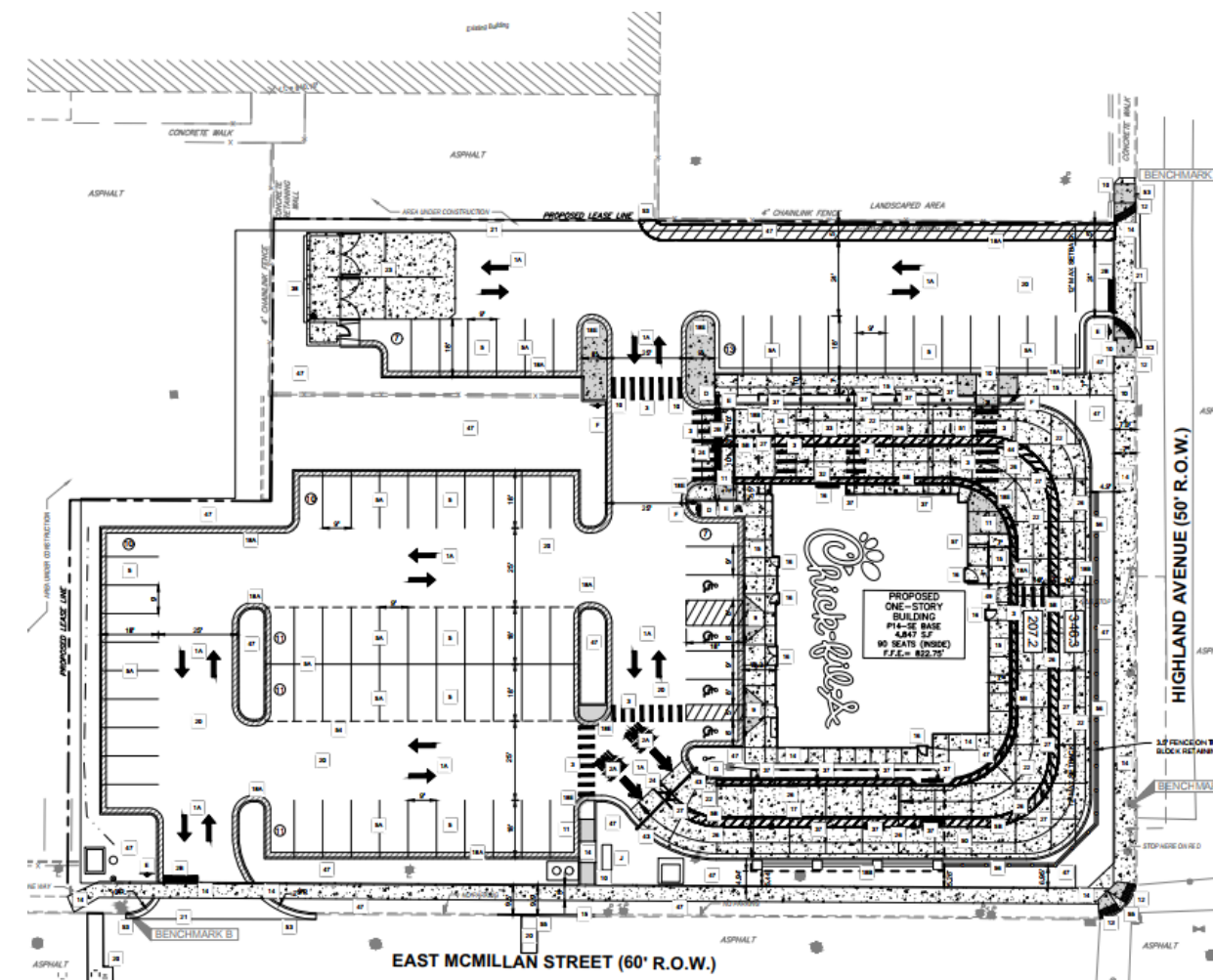
CORRESPONDENCE

- **DCPE-Applicant Meeting:** March 2025
 - A meeting was held to discuss the City Planning Commission process and proposal.
 - DCPE discussed the concern for the site's **lack of proposed pedestrian connectivity**
 - Following the meeting, the applicant team **resubmitted the site plan** to include:
 - Pedestrian walkway from Highland Avenue
 - Pedestrian walkway from E. McMillan Street
 - Internal crosswalks connecting the walkways to the building

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

PHASE TWO

- One-story building
- Approx. 21-ft tall
- 5,020 square feet
- Approx. setbacks:
 - 52-ft on E. McMillan Street
 - 45-ft on Highland Avenue



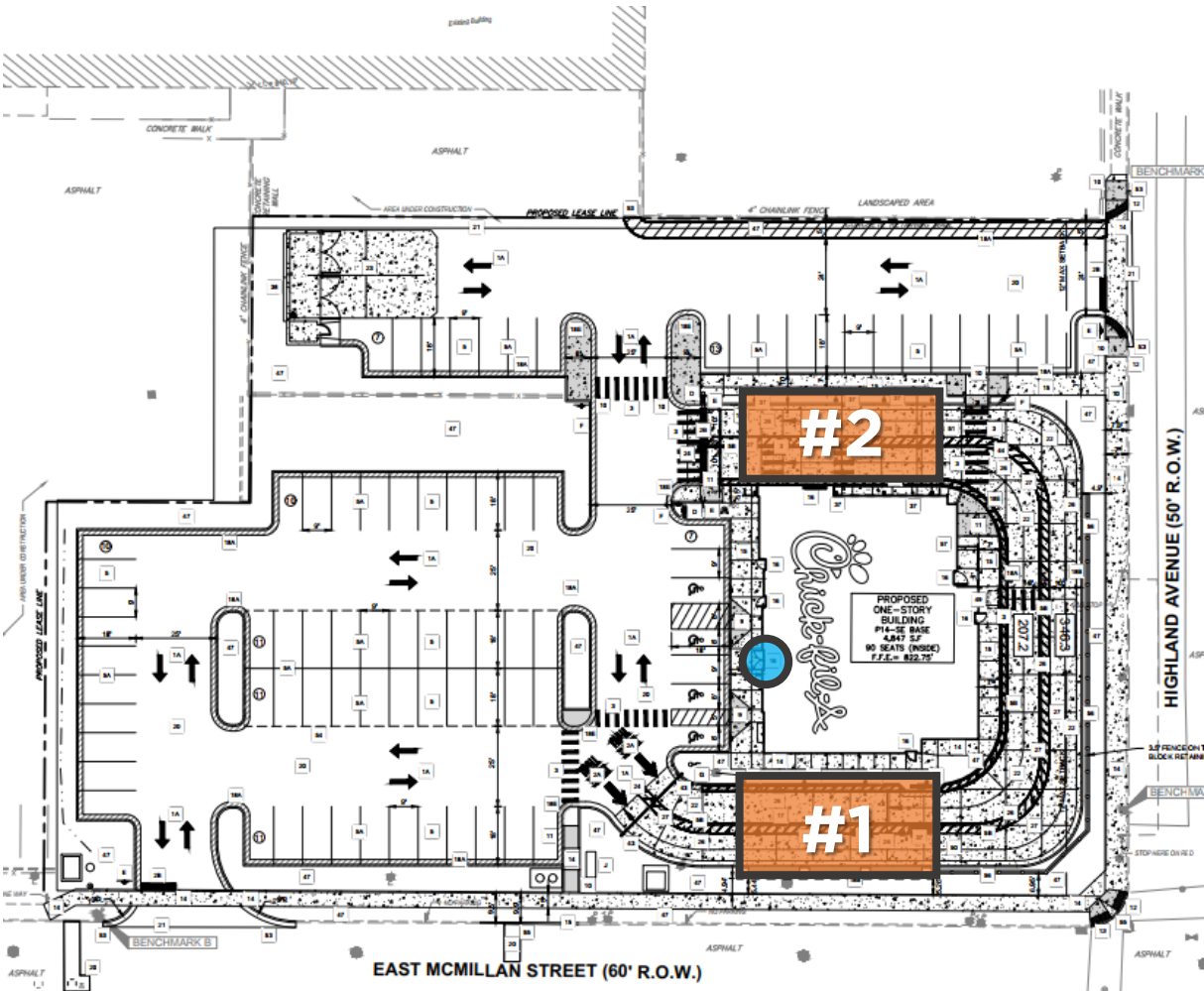
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

PHASE TWO

- **Main entrance** is on the west façade **(blue dot)**
- **Two canopies** are proposed **(orange blocks)**

#1 – Drive-through order point,
approx. 60-ft long

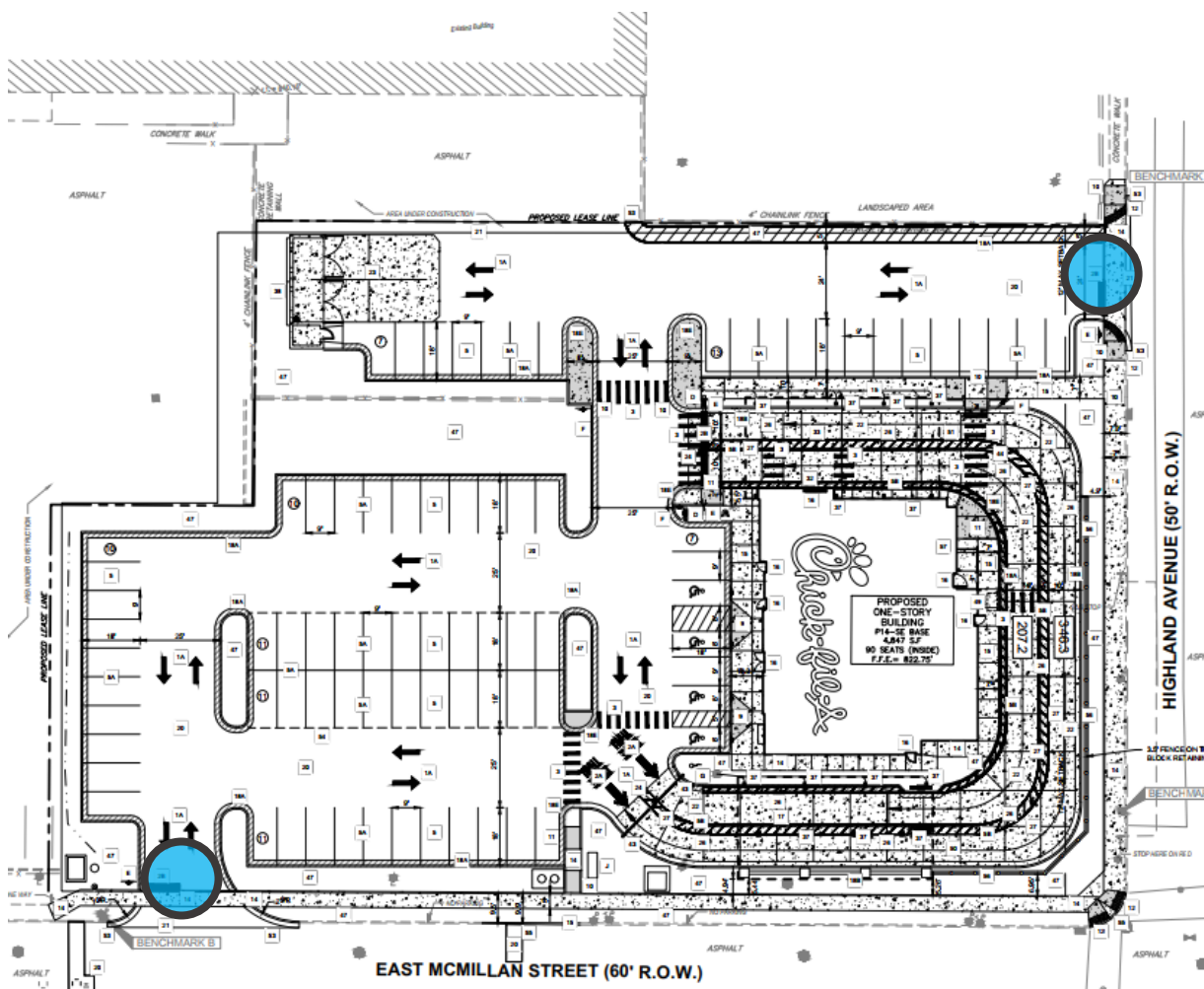
#2 – Drive-through pick-up window,
approx. 31-ft x 50-ft



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

PHASE TWO

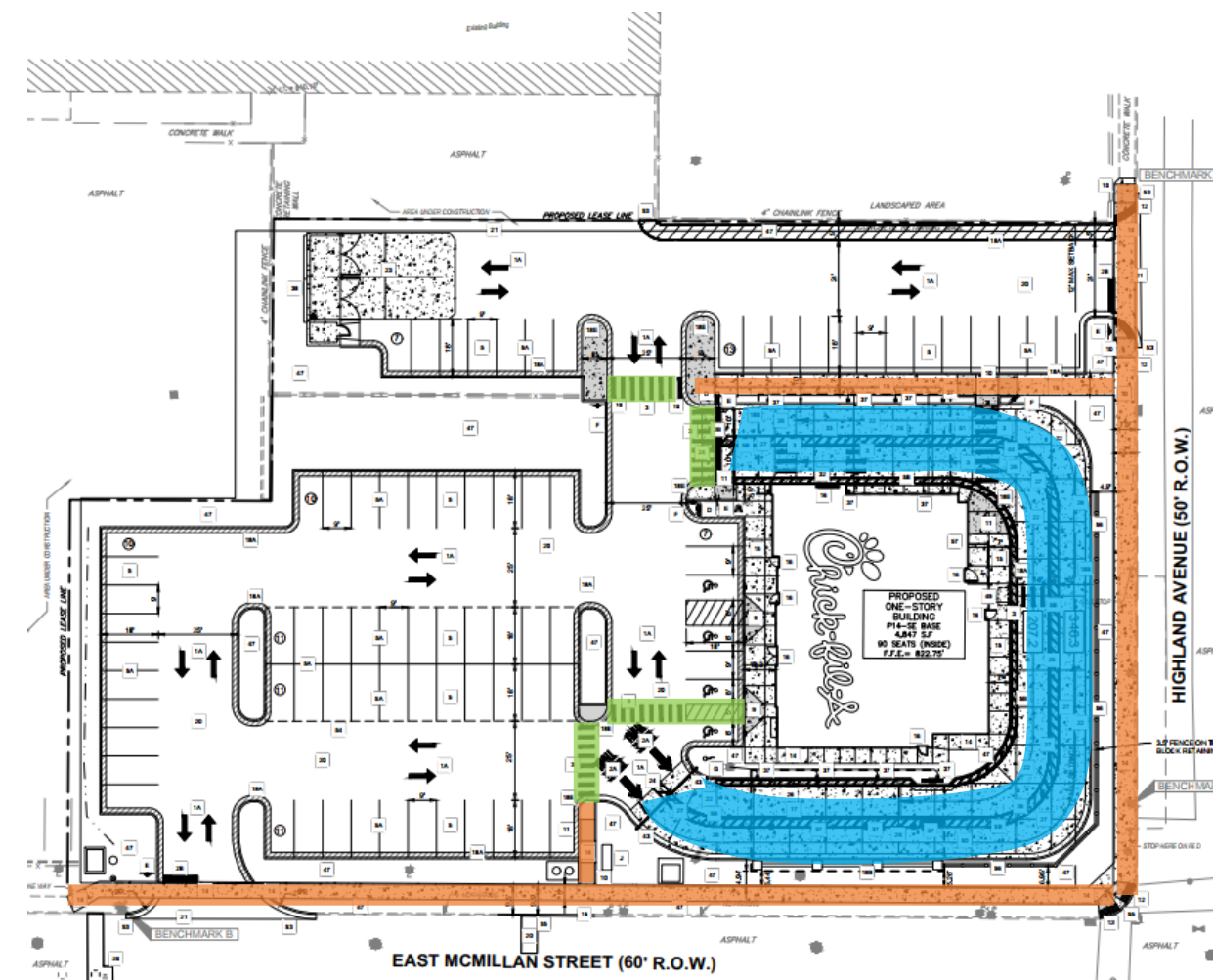
- 76 parking spaces
- **Driveway entrances** on E. McMillan Street and Highland Avenue (**blue dots**)
- **Existing E. McMillan Street driveway moves 100-ft west, away from the Highland Avenue intersection**



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

PHASE TWO

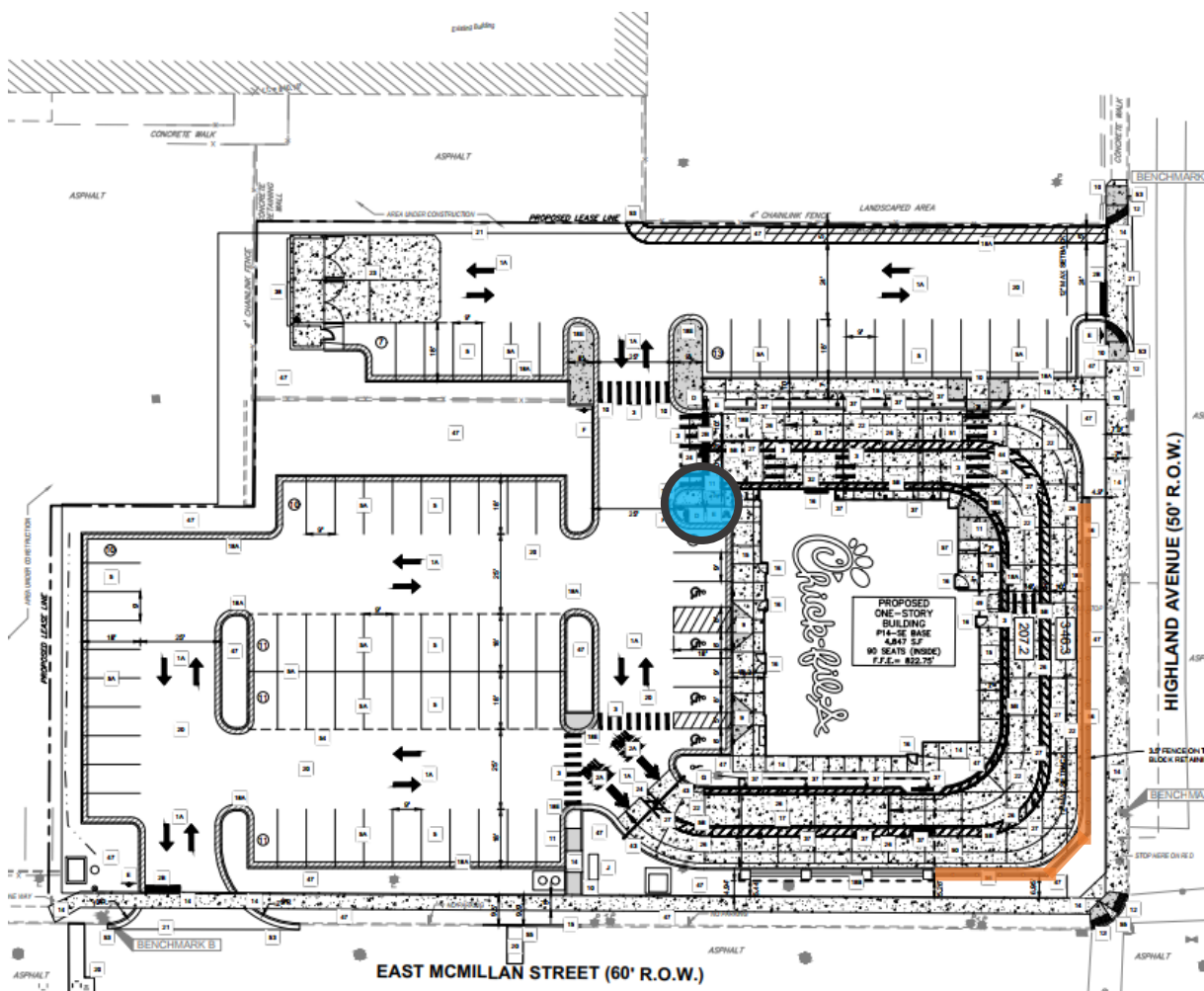
- Two-way driveways
- **Two-lane drive-through (blue line)**
- Pedestrian Network
 - **Sidewalk access** on E. McMillan Street and Highland Avenue (**orange lines**)
 - Four pedestrian **crosswalks** (**green blocks**)



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

PHASE TWO

- **Outdoor eating area** for four guests (**blue dot**)
- Existing fences and retaining walls would remain, except for a 20-ft reduction to one internal wall
- **New proposed 2-ft retaining wall with 3.5-ft fence** along Highland Avenue and E. McMillan Street (**orange line**)

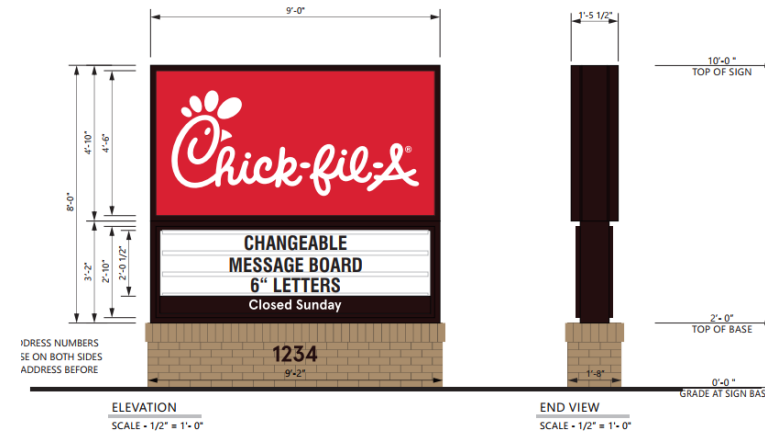
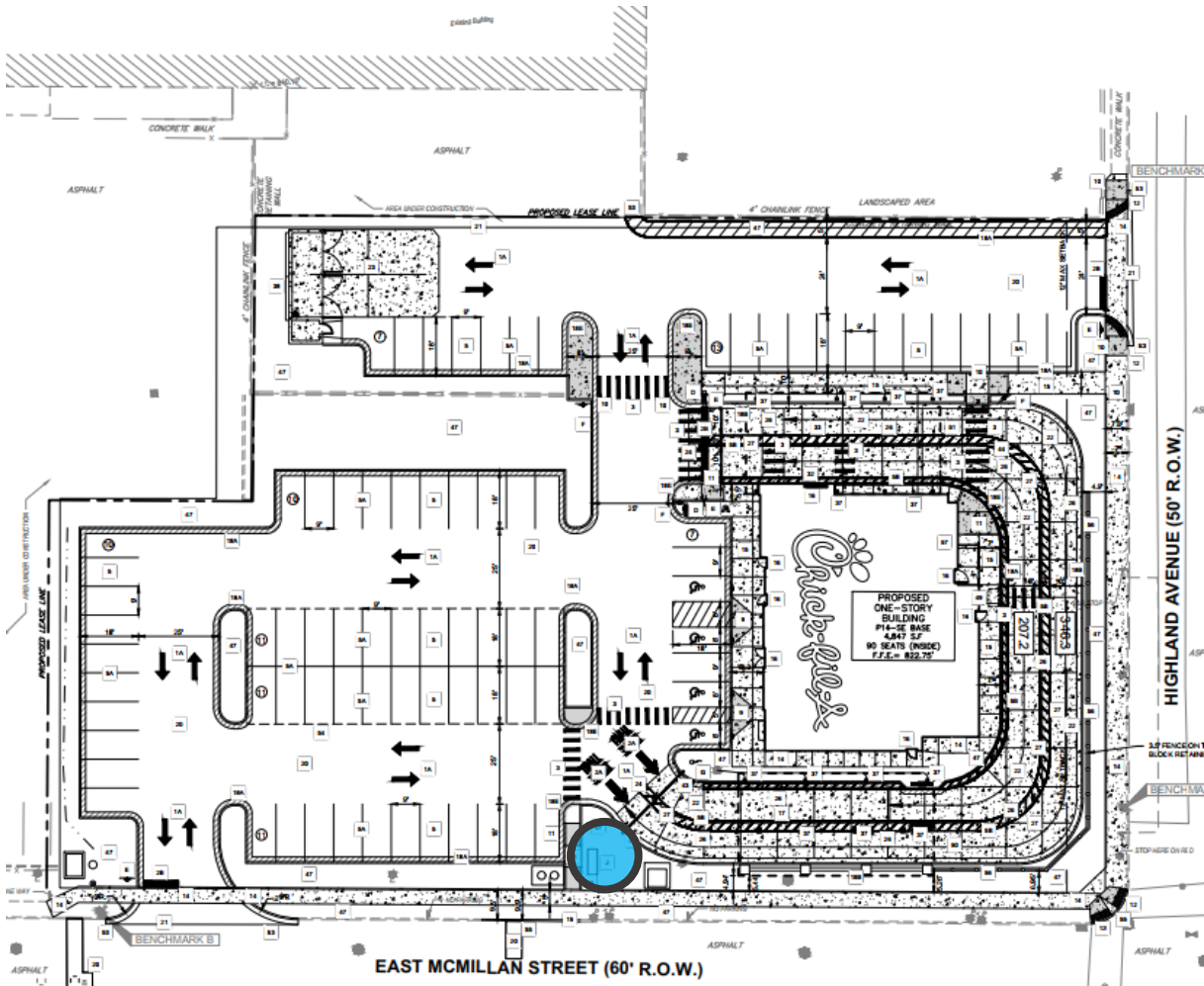


PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

PHASE TWO

- Signage Plan was submitted with five sign typologies:

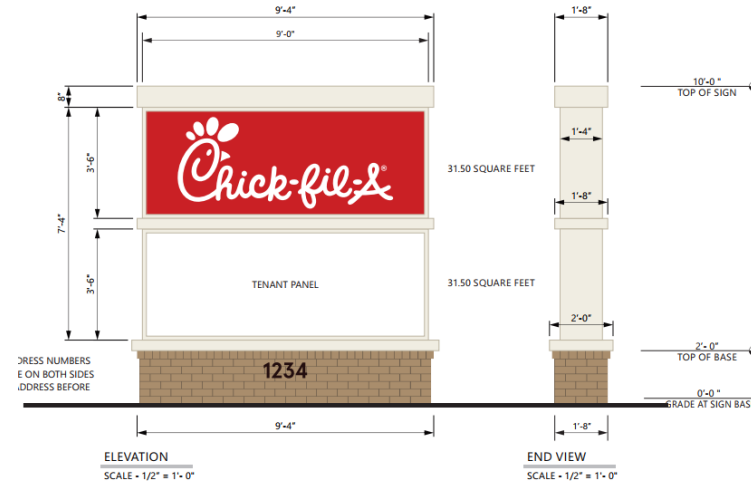
- A ground sign located along E. McMillan Street



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

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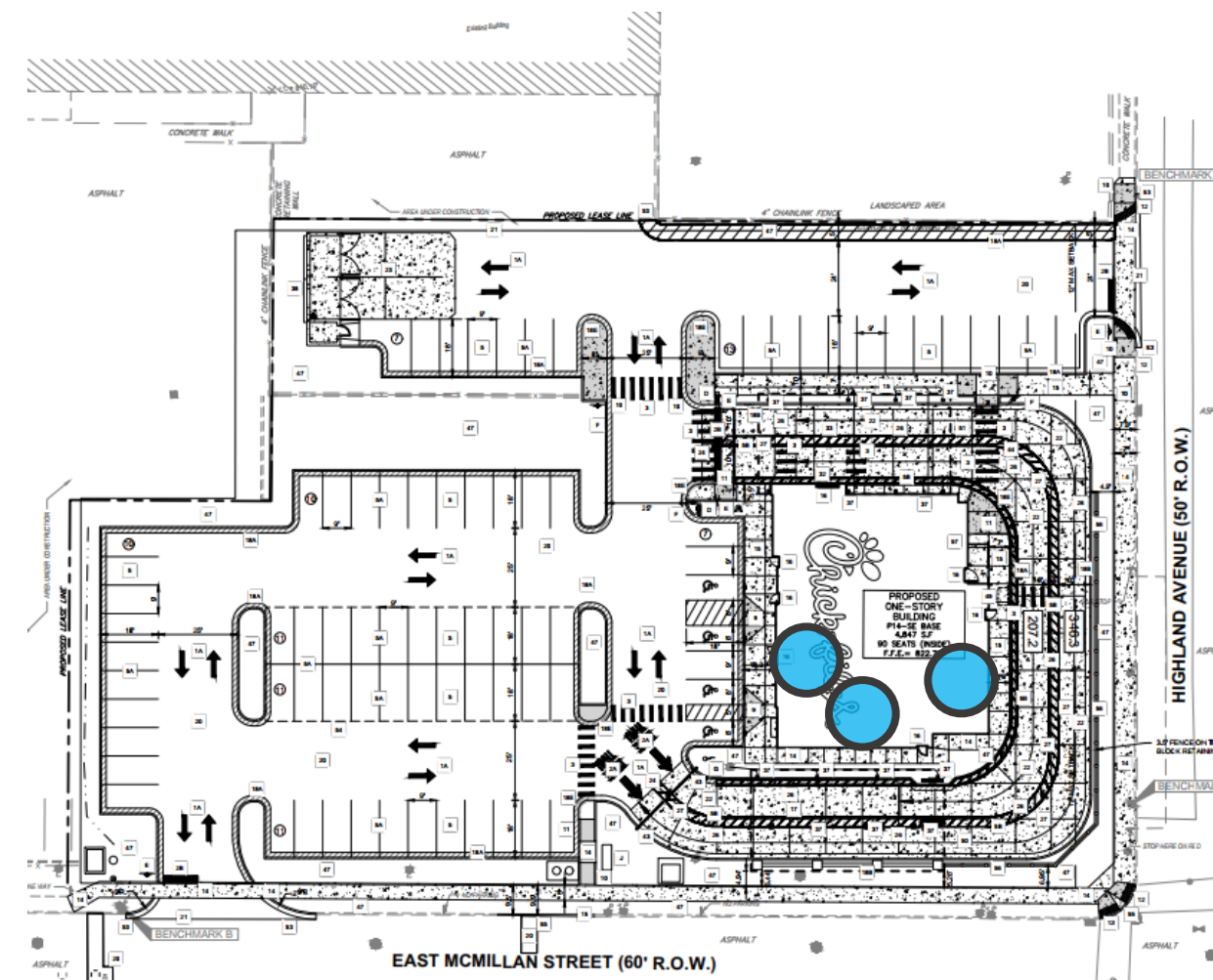
- Signage Plan was submitted with five sign typologies:
 1. A shared ground sign located near the corner of William H Taft Road and Highland Avenue
 2. A shared ground sign located near the corner of William H Taft Road and Highland Avenue



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

PHASE TWO

- Signage Plan was submitted with five sign typologies:
 1. Freestanding signs in the parking lot
 2. Freestanding signs on the east side of the building
 3. Wall signs on the west, south, and east façades

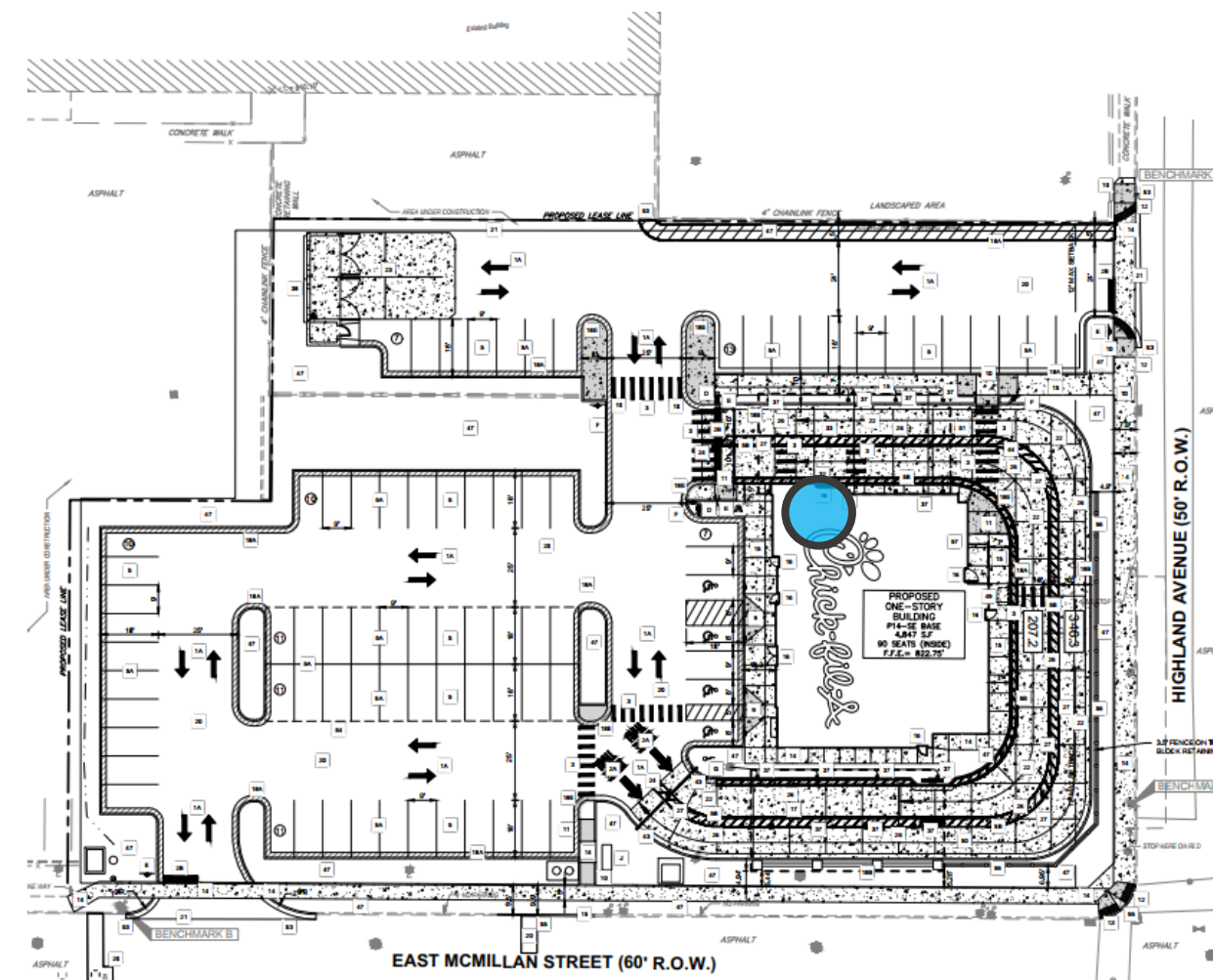
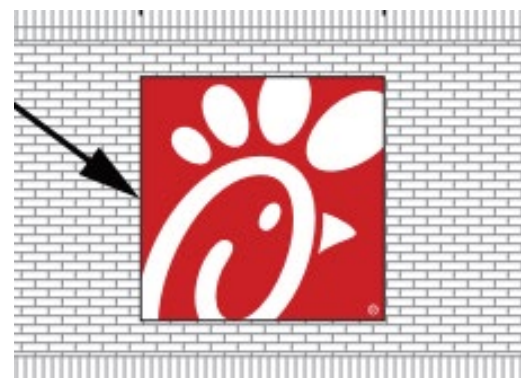


PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

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- Signage Plan was submitted with five sign typologies:

4. A wall sign on the north façade

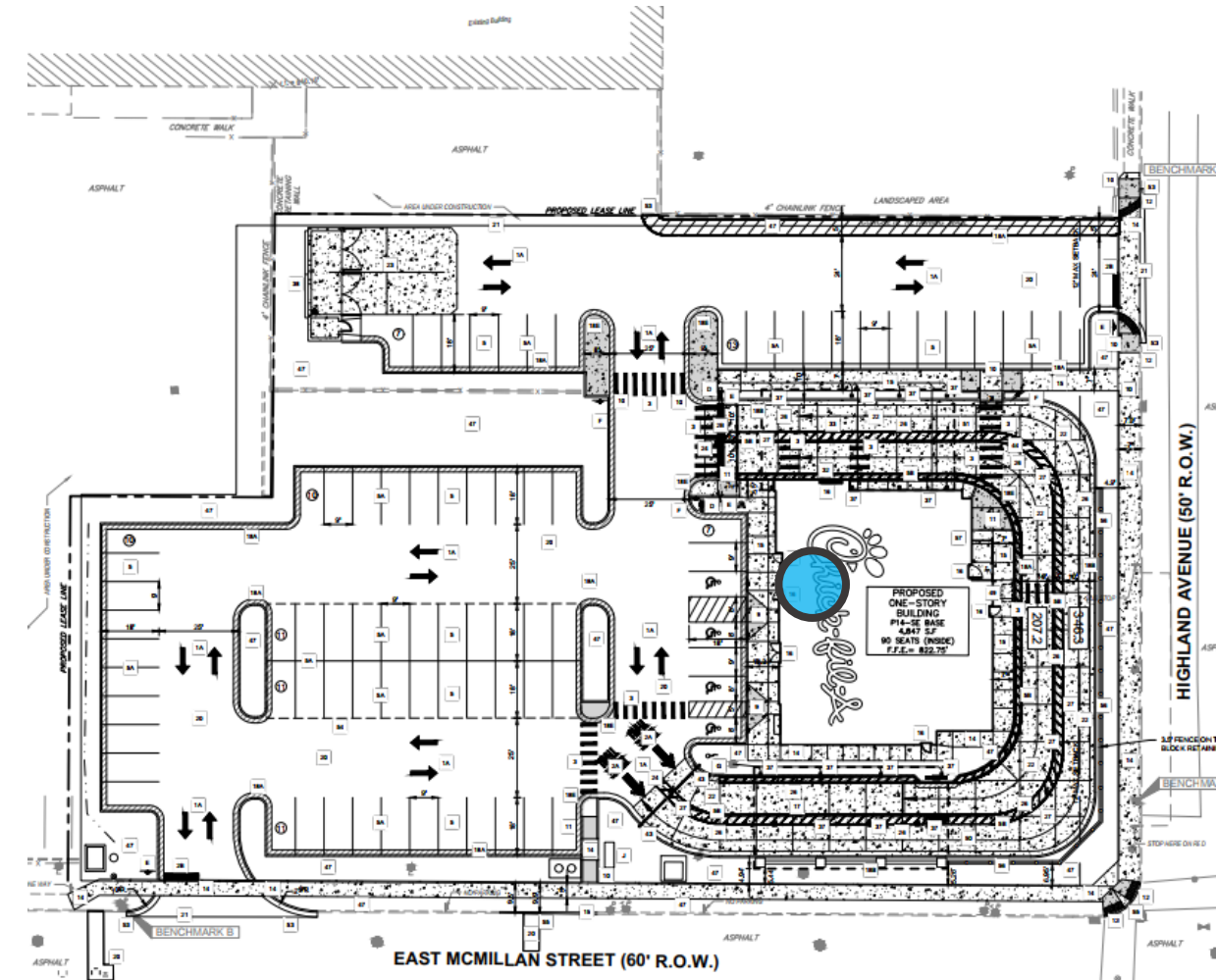


PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

PHASE TWO

- Signage Plan was submitted with five sign typologies:

5. A wall sign on the west façade



ELEVATION
SCALE - 1" = 1'-0"

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

PHASE TWO

- Staff from the Department of City Planning and Engagement (DCPE) **supports the proposed signage plan with the exception of the Shared Ground Sign (#2).**
- DCPE suggests that the **Shared Ground Sign (#2) be removed from the signage plan** if the Concept Plan and Development Statement are approved.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

PHASE TWO

- **Under §1429-13 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code, a Final Development Plan shall be submitted to the City Planning Commission** for any portion of an approved Concept Plan that the petitioner wishes to develop following approval of the Concept Plan, Development Program Statement, and Planned Development designation by City Council.
- Landscaping Plan submitted with Final Development Plan needs to conform with requirements of **§1425.29, *Surface Parking Lot Landscaping***

PUBLIC COMMENT

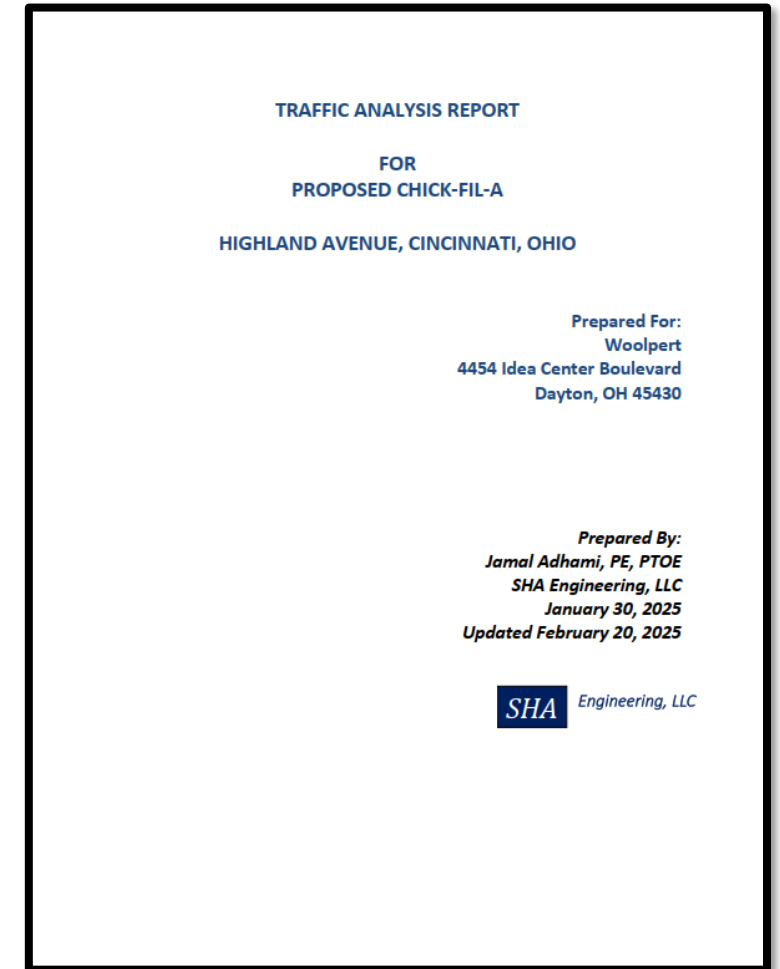
- **Mt. Auburn Community Council (MACC)**
 - Applicant team has attended **4** MACC meetings
 - General support for the restaurant use
 - Concerns about traffic
 - **MACC has not voted or provided a letter of support**
- **Other community meetings**
 - Mt. Auburn CDC
 - Corryville CDC
 - University of Cincinnati
 - The Port of Greater Cincinnati

PUBLIC COMMENT & NOTICE

- **Public Staff Conference:** March 6, 2025
 - **3** public members in attendance
 - General support for the project
 - Praise for the applicant's involvement with MACC
 - Concerns around traffic flow on Highland Avenue and internal stacking spaces
- **CPC Notice:** March 21, 2025
 - **1** public letter of opposition
 - Concerns about the site design and auto-oriented use of the site.

TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

- **DOT E Accepted Traffic Analysis:**
February 2025
 - Submitted by SHA Engineering, LLC
 - DOT E **accepted the analysis recommendations** and determined that **no changes are necessary** for the right-of-way to support the traffic for the proposed restaurant.



Consistency with *Plan Cincinnati* (2012)

- Compete Initiative Area
- Connect Initiative Area
- Policy Principles
- Live Initiative Area
- Sustain Initiative Area



Consistency with *Plan Cincinnati* (2012)

- **Compete Initiative Area → Consistent**
- **Connect Initiative Area → Consistent**
- Policy Principles
- Live Initiative Area
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Consistency with *Plan Cincinnati* (2012)

- Compete Initiative Area
- Connect Initiative Area
- **Policy Principles → Not Consistent**
- **Live Initiative Area → Not Consistent**
- **Sustain Initiative Area → Not Consistent**

Consistency with *Green Cincinnati* (2023)

Mobility Focus Area

Strategy: Improve bike and pedestrian connectivity so that residents can safely access the places they need to go

Action: Improve sidewalk connectivity and maintenance in neighborhoods where connectivity/walkability is lacking



Consistency with *Green Cincinnati* (2023)

Mobility Focus Area → Consistent

Strategy: Improve bike and pedestrian connectivity so that residents can safely access the places they need to go

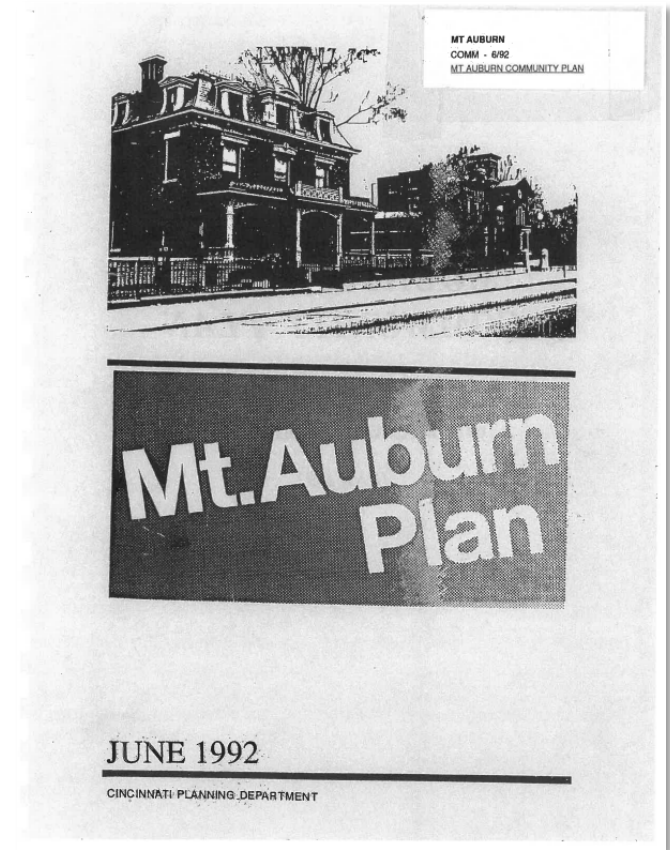
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Consistency with *Mt. Auburn Community Plan* (1992)

Commercial Development Section

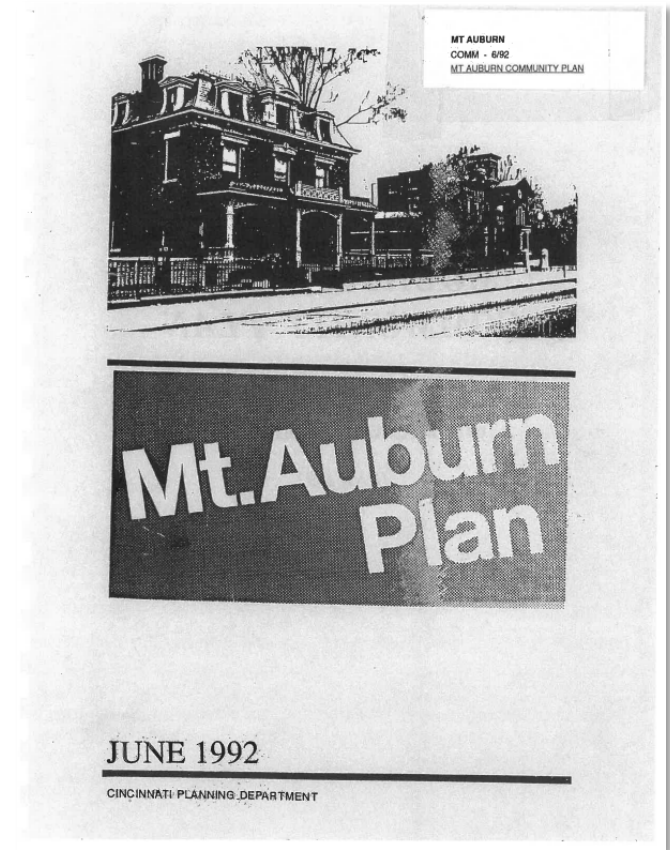
Goal: Limit retail business development to centralized locations near transit and residences



Consistency with *Mt. Auburn Community Plan* (1992)

Commercial Development Section → Consistent

Goal: Limit retail business development to centralized locations near transit and residences



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Planning Commission Action (§ 1429-11.a)

1. PD plans are **consistent with applicable plans** and policies and is **compatible with surrounding development**;
2. PD plans enhance the **potential for superior urban design** compared to the applicable base zoning district;
3. Deviations from the applicable base zoning district regulations are **justified by the benefits of the PD** design plans;
4. PD plans include **adequate provisions** for utility, trash, landscaping, traffic circulation, and other maintenance of the property.

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ANALYSIS

CONCLUSION

- Staff from the Department of City Planning and Engagement **does not support the proposed zone change** for the following reasons:
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 - The proposed PD is not consistent with the specific purposes of the Planned Development district.
 - The proposed PD **does not align** with Plan Cincinnati's principles and goals to create pedestrian-scaled, walkable, mixed-use developments and reduce fast-food establishments in the City.

CONCLUSION

- Staff from the Department of City Planning and Engagement **does not support the proposed zone change** for the following reasons:
 - The proposed PD is not consistent with the specific purposes of the Planned Development district.
 - The proposed PD does not align with Plan Cincinnati's principles and goals to create pedestrian-scaled, walkable, mixed-use developments and reduce fast-food establishments in the City.
 - The proposed PD is auto-oriented and **does not enhance** the potential for **superior urban design**.

RECOMMENDATION

The staff of the Department of City Planning and Engagement recommends that the City Planning Commission take the following actions:

- 1. ADOPT** the Department of City Planning and Engagement Findings as detailed in this report; and
- 2. NOT APPROVE** the Concept Plan and Development Program Statement as submitted; and
- 3. DENY** the proposed zone change from Office General-Transportation (OG-T) to Planned Development (PD), including a Concept Plan and Development Program Statement, at 198 E. McMillan Street and 237 William H. Taft Road in Mt. Auburn.