

# Gulf Shores Medical Park - Rezoning

Staff Report: Lee Jones  
Application #:ZA19-000060

COW Meeting Date: February 3, 2020  
Applicant: City of Gulf Shores

Property Location: South of the Microtel  
Inn & Suites on State Highway 59.

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**    **APPROVE**

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## **SUMMARY OF REQUEST**

The City of Gulf Shores seeks to rezone 11.48 acres from IND Industrial to BA Arterial Business.

## **OVERVIEW**

The proposed rezoning is necessary for the development of a freestanding medical emergency department and to accommodate future medical-related growth in the area. Rezoning the property from Industrial to Arterial Business will further implement the Vision 2025 Plan's goal to provide the community with prompt access to state-of-the-art medical facilities.

## **LOCATION AND CONTEXT**

The 11.48 acre property is located on the east side of Highway 59 directly south of the Microtel Inn & Suites. The property is owned by the City of Gulf Shores, and it is currently vacant. The surrounding zoning and land uses are as follows:

North – BG & BA Zoning / Microtel Inn & Suites and the former Sacred Heart Medical Building  
South – IND Zoning / Jack Edwards Airport  
East – IND Zoning / Jack Edwards Airport  
West – BA and Highway 59 / Beach Girl Coffee and The Pool Store

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Freestanding Emergency Department (FED)**

- On November 12, 2019, the City Council approved a ground lease with Community Health Systems for the establishment of a Freestanding Emergency Department on this 11.48-acre property. Community Health Systems is one of the nation's leading operators of general acute care hospitals and the organization's affiliates own, operate or lease 99 hospitals in 17 states, including South Baldwin Regional Medical Center in Foley.

The Freestanding Emergency Department will be a 24-hour, 13,387 square foot facility that is open every day of the year, providing ground and air ambulance transports. Advanced services will be available on site, such as X-Ray, ultrasounds, CT scans, laboratory testing, and pharmaceutical services with advanced medications. The Freestanding Emergency Department will provide 40 to 50 full-time jobs for emergency-trained physicians.

- The City of Gulf Shores received a Certificate of Need from the Alabama State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA) during a hearing on November 20. This certificate will allow the City to move forward with the establishment of a Freestanding Emergency Department and other medical-related facilities on this property, in a partnership with Foley Hospital Corporation.

The FED project construction is anticipated to begin in the Spring of 2020 with the completion date scheduled for Summer 2021.

### **Vision 2025 Plan**

The 2025 Vision for Sustainability Plan was adopted in 2015. The Plan contains five critical

actions for the growth of Gulf Shores. Action Item #1 is the development of a medical facility that provides direct access to quality wellness services and emergency care to our citizens and visitors.

### **Future Land Use Plan**

The Future Land Use Plan designates this property as Commercial/Mixed Use. The Commercial/Mixed Use category supports uses such as beach tourism, community and neighborhood retail, office, restaurant, hospitality, accommodations, and includes institutional service uses such as medical facilities. The Plan encourages the concentration of regional commerce, recreation, and institutional services within activity centers and along major corridors such as State Highway 59.

### **BUILD Grant**

Gulf Shores is one of only three municipalities in the state of Alabama to receive a Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) federal transportation grant in 2019. This is a \$23,000,000 project that will provide improved access to multiple transportation options for the Gulf Shores area, including the new medical center complex and Freestanding Emergency Department.

### **Existing Zoning**

The IND Industrial District is intended to provide locations for manufacturing and processing industries, service industries, warehousing, or research and testing operations. Due to the use of heavy equipment or machinery or to the nature of the materials and processes involved, these uses require special locations and development safeguards to prevent pollution of the environment by noise, vibration, odors or other factors. Such industries may require sites extensive in size and served by adequate utilities service and transportation.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Future Land Use Plan Compliance**

The current IND zoning in this location is not supported by the Future Land Use Plan. The proposed BA zoning is consistent with the designated Commercial/Mixed Use future land use designation for this property. The proposed BA Arterial Business District is intended to provide locations for a variety of commercial and office activities along the main entrance highway to the City and at other locations where similar development may occur. The BA zoning district also allows medical and office uses that the current IND zoning does not. The BA zoning is necessary in order to fulfill the Future Land Use Plan's recommendation in Section III. *Major Development Themes*, calling for the development of a, "prestigious medical facility invested in people, patient and family-centered care, medical discovery and education."

### **Vision 2025 Plan Implementation**

The Freestanding Emergency Department is planned to be the City's first major medical improvement from the Vision 2025 Strategic Plan. Changing the zoning from Industrial to Arterial Business will be necessary in order to permit the FED, as well as other future medical-related uses that are envisioned for the site.

### **BUILD Grant Assistance**

The Medical Village Access Improvements include a new signalized intersection at 34th Ave and Hwy 59. This new intersection, with right and left turn auxiliary lanes, will serve as the main entrance to the forthcoming Freestanding Emergency Department. In addition to the new signal, E 2<sup>nd</sup> St will also be improved and extended to 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue, providing additional access to the new signal. A future phase of BUILD grant construction includes the extension of 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue, through the old Sacred Heart site, to a new intersection at Cotton Creek Dr. These infrastructure improvements, along with the development of the new FED, will provide additional opportunities for mixed-use and medical-related business development within this prime quadrant of our city.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the City Council approve the rezoning of this 11.48 acre parcel from IND to BA.

## Gulf Shores Medical Park Subdivision – Location Map

