
Application: Special Exception SE2021-2
Applicant: FedEx Ground Package System, Inc.
Owner: FedEx Ground Package System, Inc.
Address: 49 FedEx Drive
Description: Proposed Staff Parking and Trail Lots Expansion

Proposal

FedEx Ground Package System, Inc. submitted an application for special exception and site plan review to construct an employee parking lot expansion and a new trailer lot expansion at the FedEx distribution facility located at 49 Fedex Drive in the IT zone pursuant to Sections 25, 44, 55, and 61 of the Middletown Zoning Code.

Existing Conditions

The property consists of a total of 205 acres of land in an industrial zone with frontage on Middle Street and Industrial Park Road. It is improved with a 500,000 SF trucking terminal and distribution center for FedEx. The site is also improved with surface parking area, driveways and truck/trailer parking lots. The site contains steep slopes, mature vegetation, wetlands and watercourse.

The location of the proposed trailer parking expansion lot is located directly west of the existing parking lot and located directly east from Sawmill Brook. The area is located is partially within the 100 ft upland review area and the AE flood zone with a flood elevation at ± 23 ft. The area is also located in the Natural Diversity Database Area. Soil types include pootatuck fine sandy loam and Wilbraham and Menlo soils, extremely stony.

Proposed Conditions

The applicant proposes to construct a new 7.4 acre trailer parking lot to accommodate 222 trailer parking spots, a 2,078 LF retaining wall, driveway, drainage system, and compensatory storage system for 71,196 CY of storage, 156K CU of fill, landscaping, grading and other associated improvements.

A second portion of the project includes an expansion of the employee parking lot, with associated grading, drainage system, lighting, landscaping, and other associated improvements.

Background

In 2015, The Planning and Zoning Commission approved Special Exception SE2015-5 for the construction of a new package distribution facility with associated truck terminals, offices and other associated improvements.

Buildings and Uses

The property has special exception for the existing trucking terminal and distribution use. There are no changes proposed to the building. The expansion of the trailer parking is considered an expansion of the special exception use.

Parking, Loading and Circulation

The site is currently improved with 632 employee parking spaces that are accessed from two curb cuts on Middle Street. The proposal includes the removal of an earthen mound to reconfigure a portion of the parking lot and create a net increase of 68 parking spaces. Since there is no change in the footprint of the building, the additional parking would be excess to the parking demanded (Section 40). A new curb cut will be constructed to alleviate congestion on site that can occur during shift changes.

Drainage

The stormwater management plan consists of collecting stormwater runoff from the new impervious surfaces through a network of catch basins and directing it to new detention systems. Overflow from the employee parking lot will connect to an existing manhole under the parking lot. Overflow from the new trailer parking lot will be discharged through an outlet pipe in the retaining wall to a rip rap and drainage basin.

The trailer parking lot will be located in the AE flood zone and outside of the floodway. The design includes compensatory storage of flood water under the parking lot. The applicant has calculated that 71,827 CY of storage is required and offers 71,196 CY yards of storage. The plan includes six pipes to allow floodwater to fill the storage area.

Utilities

There is no change to the sanitary sewer infrastructure. The electrical plan will be modified to accommodate new park lighting and security measures.

Erosion & Sediment Controls

The proposed erosion & sedimentation controls consisting of a single row of silt fencing and straw barrier along the downslope of the disturbed area. A temporary sedimentation basin will be constructed adjacent to the trailer parking expansion.

Landscaping

The landscaping plan for this development area consists of planting pussy willow, white oak, and a conservation seed mix in the drainage basin.

Lighting

New light poles will be installed in the expanded parking areas. The applicant provided a lumen plan that shows no light spillover off of the property.

Special Exception Findings (44.04)

The Commission may grant a special exception when making a finding on the following criteria:

Compliance with the City Plan

The proposal is supported by 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development because the plan looks to anchor institution to serve as economic drivers for growth. FedEx is already a major employer in the City and is seeking expansion.

The property is in the Metacomet greenway corridor and the proposed development is adjacent to Sawmill Brook which feeds into the Mattabeset River. Development associated with the construction of the trailer parking expansion may have impacts on the stream corridor. The location is in a flood hazard zone, and it is unclear if the proposed design for the compensatory flood storage area will adequately protect the area from the displacement of flood waters. It is unclear what measure of best practices in stormwater management are being utilized in this project.

Adverse Effects

The proposed use is not likely to have any adverse impacts on health or safety of residents or workers.

Visibility and Accessibility

N/A

Traffic Movement

A third curb cut will be installed on Middle Street to help disperse and alleviate onsite traffic congestion that can occur during shift changes. The curb cut will align with an existing curb cut to a commercial property on the west side of Middle Street.

The applicant has provided a traffic study to determine the impact the expansion will have on adjacent streets. The report measures existing conditions and projects future conditions if the project is both not constructed and constructed. Some intersections show a decrease in level of service while many show no change in service. The study provides a list of suggestions that should be addressed by the applicant, the City or the State.

Orderly Development

A third curb cut will be installed on Middle Street to help disperse and alleviate onsite traffic congestion that can occur during shift changes. The curb cut will align with an existing curb cut to a commercial property on the west side of Middle Street. Though there are a few residential properties on Middle Street in the vicinity of the proposal, the subject property is surrounded by other commercially and industrially used properties in the IT zone.

All traffic associated with the trailer parking expansion will utilize the existing curb cut on Industrial Park Road, which has adequate site distances.

Property Values and Character

All adjacent property to the project site is in the IT zone and are primarily developed with other commercial and industrial uses. There is a cluster of single-family houses ± 350 ft from the proposed employee lot expansion. The existing parking lot is across the street from the

dwellings. With proper landscaping and screening, it is unlikely these proposed uses would negatively impact property values or character.

Parking and Loading

There is no expansion of the building proposed so there is no increase in parking or loading demand in accordance with Section 40 of the Zoning Code.

Compliance with Standards

There are no additional special exception standard for the existing trucking terminal and distribution use in Section 44.08 of the Zoning Code.

Issues To Be Resolved/ Comments

1. The public hearing should remain open until the IWWA decides on the pending wetlands permit application.
2. Connecticut River Conservation District comments dated 4/20/21 should be addressed.
3. Commission on Conservation and Agriculture comments dated 4/20/21 should be addressed.
4. The applicant should address all recommendations and conclusions listed in the Traffic Study.
5. Details should be provided for the compensatory storage area including details on the openings.
6. Structural plans for the retaining wall should be provided that include the compensatory flood openings and an analysis of hydrostatic pressure of flood water.
7. Details should be provided showing how the stormwater detention system will not be inundated with floodwater in the case of a flooding event.
8. The applicant should consider revising the stormwater management system for the trailer parking lot to include multiple discharge points to reduce the concentrated flow of water.
9. Pre-treatment measures should be installed to clean oils and other contaminants from stormwater prior to discharge.
10. The applicant should consider additional screening of the employee parking lot expansion.
11. The applicant should provide a sequencing and logistics plan for the proposed construction.