
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 Trailer Lot Expansions

UPDATE:

The Planning and Zoning Commission tabled and continued the public hearing for this application on the April 28th regular meeting so that the applicant could address staff, department, district, and agency comments.

Since the last meeting, the applicant submitted the following:

- A revised site development plan set that eliminated the trail parking expansion. Two small expansions to existing trailer lots are now proposed. One location encroached the 100ft upland review area.
- A revised stormwater management report.
- Correspondence from CT DEEP regarding a Natural Diversity Database review finding no impact on the state-listed species.

The Inland Wetland & Watercourses Agency approved Wetlands Permit #2021-02 on June 2, 2021.

The Connecticut River Conservation District provided revised comments requesting low impact development (LID) strategies be implemented on the new stormwater management.

Various City departments have reviewed the revised plans and found them acceptable.

Proposal

FedEx Ground Package System, Inc. submitted an application for special exception and site plan review to construct an employee parking lot expansion and new trailer lot expansions 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 area is also located in the Natural Diversity Database Area. The property is served by city water and sewer.

Proposed Conditions

The applicant proposes to construct two expansions of existing trailer parking area, 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 site also is currently improved with two trailer parking areas totaling 839 trailer spaces that are accessed from Industrial Park Road. Since there is no change in the footprint of the building, the additional parking would be excess to the parking demanded (Section 40). The current parking demand based on the size and use of the structure is 346 regular parking spaces.

Employee Parking Expansion

The proposal includes the removal of an earthen mound adjacent to Middle Street to reconfigure a portion of the parking lot and create a net increase of 68 parking spaces. A new curb cut will be constructed to alleviate congestion on site that can occur during shift changes. Four EV charging stations are proposed (5.8% of employee parking expansion).

Northwest Trailer Lot Expansion

The applicant proposes to construct a new trailer parking lot expansion adjacent to an existing parking area located in the northwest corner of the main Fedex campus. This area is currently landscaped area that contains the Fedex logo within the landscaping. This land is currently significantly lower than Middle Street area and a portion of the grade is held back using a retaining wall. This expansion accommodates 22- 50 ft long parking stalls for long trailers and 26- 30 ft parking stalls for shorter trailers, driveway, curbing, drainage system, landscaping, grading, and other associated improvements.

Southeast Trailer Lot Expansion

The applicant proposes to construct a new trailer parking lot expansion adjacent to an existing parking area located in the southeast corner of the main Fedex campus. This area is currently lawn area that drains to an existing catch basin. This expansion accommodates 21- 50 ft long parking stalls for long trailers and 21- 30 ft parking stalls for shorter trailers, driveway, curbing, drainage system, landscaping, grading, and other associated improvements.

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.

Stormwater collected from the trailer lot expansions and directed to the existing drainage systems that were installed with the site was developed for Fedex.

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. An anti-tracking pad is proposed at the construction entrance to the disturbed areas.

Landscaping

The landscaping plan for this development area consists of planting pussy willow, white oak, and a conservation seed mix in the drainage basin. Existing boulders will be relocated along the edge of the parking area.

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.

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 and Middle Street, which have 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 applicant should address all recommendations and conclusions listed in the Traffic Study.
2. Public Works comments dated 5/20/2021 should be addressed.
3. The owner should be responsible for remaining in compliance with the Stormwater System Operation and Maintenance Plan last revised May 14, 2021 and associated maintenance schedules post construction.