VALDOSTA-LOWNDES COUNTY ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

***Staff Report* - MEETING DATE: May 1, 2018**

VAR-2018-12

John Courson

U.S. Highway 41 South, Valdosta, Georgia

This is a request for a Variance to the Lowndes County Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) Supplemental Standards for Vehicle Repair Shops – specifically, the standards for Buffers. The subject property consists of 1.4 acres, and is located at the 2703 U. S. Highway 41 South, Valdosta, Georgia, in an C-H (Highway Commercial) zoning district.

Table 4.03.11 contained in the ULDC provides Supplemental Standards for Vehicle Repair Shops (as excerpted from the ULDC below). Vehicle Repair Shops are permitted within the C-H zoning district with Supplemental Standards. In this case, the subject property is currently unoccupied and was previously used as a vehicle repair shop as reflected on the last business registration of record (~2008). The subject property is currently under contract – the potential buyer would like to continue the use of the property as a vehicle repair shop. In reviewing the Supplemental Standards, a buffer yard will be required along the subject property's north and east lot lines. The required minimum buffer yard shall be sixty (60') feet wide (in lieu of the standard 30' wide) to contain a minimum of 6 shade trees and 37 shrubs every 100 linear feet. The applicant is requesting a Variance in its entirety to the buffer yard standards. ***Therefore, a Variance is being requested to the Minimum Buffer standard.***

4.03.11 Vehicle Repair Shops

A. Drainage pits for oil and fluid change shall be located within an enclosed structure. Applications for vehicle repair shops providing oil and fluid change facilities and services shall include proof of compliance with State and federal regulations regarding handling and disposal of oil and automotive fluids.
B. There shall be no more than two (2) cars offered for sale at any time.
C. There shall be no more than x (X) cars stored in addition to the cars offered for sale at any time.
D. Vehicle repair shops shall comply with the standards set forth in Table 4.03.11(D).

Table 4.03.11(D). Standards for Vehicle Repair Shops.

Buffers	2.0 times the buffer requirements stated in Section 4.07.06
Vibration or electromagnetic interference	Shall not be discernable on adjacent properties
Loading docks	Screened from view from adjacent properties and from the public right-of-way Setback a minimum of 100 feet from any residentially zoned property
Outside storage	Screened from view from adjacent properties and from the public right-of-way Setback a minimum of 100 feet from any residentially zoned property
Exterior lighting	Directed and shielded to avoid illumination of adjacent properties
Loudspeakers and paging equipment	Prohibited

The subject property is located in a Community Activity Center (CAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The CAC character depiction indicates areas for neighborhoods that has a concentration of activities such as general retail, service commercial, office professional, higher-density housing, and appropriate public and open space uses easily accessible by pedestrians.

Regarding the Buffer Area requirement, staff is generally satisfied with relieving the buffer yard standards given the proposed reuse of property, the location of the existing building, the existing chain-link fence, and the probability of future commercial zoning in the area. Staff is also considering the fact that the subject property is already developed commercially, and the