

**HALL COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATION REPORT**

**Applicant** ..... Fifth Third Bank c/o Tammala Brooks

**Request** ..... **Special Use** | amend conditions of zoning

**Proposed Use** ..... Financial Institution

**Size** ..... 1.37± acres

**Zoning** ..... Planned Commercial Development (PCD)

**Location** ..... **3654 Thompson Bridge Road** | Tax Parcel 10104  
000002

**Commission District** ..... Two

**Planning Commission Date** ..... July 7, 2025

**Staff Recommendation** ..... **Approval, with conditions**, as the proposed use  
is consistent with the “Regional Activity Nodes  
and Corridors” future land use designation  
within the Comprehensive Plan

**Record Number**.....HZCU25-0008

**Planning Commission Recommendation** .....**Approval, with conditions**

**Vote: 4-0**

**Planning Commission Conditions:**

1. Development is approved as generally shown on the site plan dated December 17, 2024, and described in the project narrative dated March 26, 2025, modified as necessary for compliance with conditions herein and development standards enforced at the time of site plan approval.
2. The development shall comply with the architectural design standards as described in the project narrative, with final materials and colors approved by the Director of Planning and Development, or their designee.
3. The driveway into the property from Thompson Bridge Road (S.R. 60) will serve both the financial institution and the storage facility by utilizing a shared driveway easement.

4. An easement for shared stormwater detention facilities shall be established to serve both Tract A and Tract B.
5. Hours of operation for the financial institution shall be limited to 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturdays and closed on Sundays.
6. An eight foot tall opaque wood fence with a ten foot landscape buffer shall be constructed along the northwest property line which abuts Lanier Village Estates as reflected on the site plan dated December 17, 2024.
7. No variances or development exceptions are granted as part of this request that are not explicitly granted herein. The development shall comply with the Unified Development Code of Hall County, as well as any other agencies or reviewing departments, including, but not limited to the Fire Marshal and Hall County Engineering.
8. All conditions of zoning shall be made a part of any plats or construction plans created for the property.

**Excerpts from the minutes of the July 7, 2025 meeting**

**Applicant's Presentation:**

**Vamsee Polamarasetty, Planner**, presented a summary of the request.

**Anthony Ponting, 302 West Third Street, Cincinnati**, presented the request. The applicant is requesting to amend the conditions of zoning on a 1.37± acre tract zoned Planned Commercial Development (PCD) within the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD) for a financial institution. Per the narrative, the applicant is requesting to develop a bank with drive-thru banking services. The subject property was rezoned on May 26, 2022, from Agricultural Residential III (AR-III) and Residential II (R-II) to Planned Commercial Development (PCD) for a climate-controlled storage facility and medical office facility (ZON2022-00019). The rezoning approval was subject to two conditions.

**Public Forum:**

**Richard Bergen, 4514 Evening Song Lane, Gainesville**, spoke in favor. Mr. Bergen thanked the applicant for listening to the community during the preliminary project meetings and believes the bank will be a low-impact neighbor. Mr. Bergen asked for clarification if the outdoor lighting would be directed downward.

**Dustin Barrett, 1744 South Lumpkin Street, Athens**, spoke in favor. Mr. Barrett described the application as beneficial for both the developer and the community as the bank will provide a service to the community and be a low-impact neighbor to the adjacent residents.

**Planning Commission Comments:**

Mr. Braswell clarified the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD) does have standards that the applicant must adhere to which requires all lighting to be directed downward and non-spill. Mr. Braswell

thanked the applicant for selecting an underground detention pond solution as it is a great improvement to the development.

***Motion: A motion to approve, with conditions was made by Shannon Davidson and seconded by Frank Sosebee. Vote: 4-0***

Conditions:

1. Development is approved as generally shown on the site plan dated December 17, 2024, and described in the project narrative dated March 26, 2025, modified as necessary for compliance with conditions herein and development standards enforced at the time of site plan approval.
2. The development shall comply with the architectural design standards as described in the project narrative, with final materials and colors approved by the Director of Planning and Development, or their designee.
3. The driveway into the property from Thompson Bridge Road (S.R. 60) will serve both the financial institution and the storage facility by utilizing a shared driveway easement.
4. An easement for shared stormwater detention facilities shall be established to serve both Tract A and Tract B.
5. Hours of operation for the financial institution shall be limited to 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturdays and closed on Sundays.
6. An eight foot tall opaque wood fence with a ten foot landscape buffer shall be constructed along the northwest property line which abuts Lanier Village Estates as reflected on the site plan dated December 17, 2024.
7. No variances or development exceptions are granted as part of this request that are not explicitly granted herein. The development shall comply with the Unified Development Code of Hall County, as well as any other agencies or reviewing departments, including, but not limited to the Fire Marshal and Hall County Engineering.
8. All conditions of zoning shall be made a part of any plats or construction plans created for the property.

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### **Memo to the Planning Commission**

Dear Planning Commission,

This application was tabled at the June 16, 2025 Planning Commission meeting to July 7, 2025 due to the Public Notice Sign not being posted within the state mandated window. A public hearing was not held.

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### **Excerpts from the minutes of the June 16, 2025 meeting**

**Applicant's Presentation:**

**Vamsee Polamarasetty, Planner**, recommended that the application be tabled to the July 7, 2025 meeting to allow the public notice sign to be posted the required minimum of 15 days before the public hearing.

**Motion: A motion to table to July 7, 2025, was made by Stan Hunt and seconded by Frank Sosebee.  
Vote: 4-0 (Varner absent)**

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**Staff recommends APPROVAL of the applicant's request, with the following conditions:**

1. Development is approved as generally shown on the site plan dated December 17, 2024, and described in the project narrative dated March 26, 2025, modified as necessary for compliance with conditions herein and development standards enforced at the time of site plan approval.
  2. The development shall comply with the architectural design standards as described in the project narrative, with final materials and colors approved by the Director of Planning and Development, or their designee.
  3. The driveway into the property from Thompson Bridge Road (S.R. 60) will serve both the financial institution and the storage facility by utilizing a shared driveway easement.
  4. An easement for shared stormwater detention facilities shall be established to serve both Tract A and Tract B.
  5. Hours of operation for the financial institution shall be limited to 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturdays and closed on Sundays.
  6. An eight foot tall opaque wood fence with a ten foot landscape buffer shall be constructed along the northwest property line which abuts Lanier Village Estates as reflected on the site plan dated December 17, 2024.
  7. No variances or development exceptions are granted as part of this request that are not explicitly granted herein. The development shall comply with the Unified Development Code of Hall County, as well as any other agencies or reviewing departments, including, but not limited to the Fire Marshal and Hall County Engineering.
  8. All conditions of zoning shall be made a part of any plats or construction plans created for the property.
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### **Summary Analysis**

The applicant is requesting to amend the conditions of zoning on a 1.37± acre tract zoned Planned Commercial Development (PCD) within the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD) for a financial institution. Per the narrative, the applicant is requesting to develop a bank with drive-thru banking services.

The subject property was rezoned on May 26, 2022, from Agricultural Residential III (AR-III) and Residential II (R-II) to Planned Commercial Development (PCD) for a climate-controlled storage facility and medical office facility (ZON2022-00019). The rezoning approval was subject to the following two conditions:

1. The development shall substantially conform to the submitted building elevations with colors approved by the Director of Planning and Development.
2. The building materials and architectural design shall be consistent with §17.420.050. subject to the following variances:
  - a. Applicant requests that the PCD allow the property to be divided into two parcels, one to hold the medical office building (Tract A) and the other to hold the storage facility (Tract B) as depicted on the site plan. If divided, Tract A will be approximately 1.31 acres and Tract B will be approximately 4.23 acres.
  - b. Hall County Ordinance 17.240.160 requires that lots abutting a divided four-lane highway have a minimum of 500 feet of frontage. The subject property has approximately 300 feet of frontage. Applicant requests a variance allowing this rezoning despite the property not having 500 feet of frontage. Applicant further requests that the variance allow for the lots to be divided as requested in the immediately preceding paragraph with the existing frontage. If divided, Tract A will have approximately 220 feet of frontage, and Tract B will have approximately 80 feet of frontage.
  - c. The driveway into the property from Thompson Bridge Road (S.R. 60) will serve both the medical office building and the storage facility, for which the Applicant requests approval of a shared driveway easement. Applicant also shall request plans for interparcel access with the abutting Kroger shopping center site south of the subject property.
  - d. Applicant shall request approval of shared easement for stormwater detention facilities to serve Tract A and Tract B.
  - e. Applicant requests a variance from Hall County Ordinance 17.420.050.F.4. to allow up to two internally illuminated LED digital signs, with automatic change capacity, for the subject property, one for the medical office building and the other for the storage facility.
  - f. Applicant requests approval of building materials consistent with the elevations provided with Applicant's rezoning and variance application. Applicant requests variance from the Hall County Ordinance 17.420.050.H.2. to allow use of materials displayed in elevations.

The subject property is currently undeveloped. A previous structure on the site was demolished (HCNEW23-0046) as part of the planned commercial development for the construction of the self-storage facility (HCNEW23-0007). A land disturbance permit (HDEV25-0071) has been submitted for the subject property for the construction of the proposed financial institution.

The surrounding properties are zoned and developed as follows:

North: Planned Commercial Development (PCD): Retirement community, Lanier Village Estates (ZON2018-00063)  
East: Planned Commercial Development (PCD): Self-storage facility (ZON2022-00019)  
South: Highway Business (H-B) & Planned Commercial Development (PCD): Shopping center  
West: Planned Office Development (POD): Undeveloped

Per the submitted site plan and narrative, the applicant is requesting to amend conditions of the original rezoning (ZON2022-00019) to develop a 2,400 square foot bank with two lanes to provide drive-thru banking services and 14 parking spaces including 1 ADA space.

The site plan shows that access to the proposed development will be provided through the existing driveway serving the self-storage facility. The narrative states that one illuminated monument sign will be placed along Thompson Bridge Road. To provide additional screening from the adjacent residential properties, the applicant proposes an eight foot tall opaque wood fence, along the northwest property line abutting Lanier Village Estates. No changes are being proposed to the previously approved buffer, setback or development standards.

Water and sanitary sewer service will be provided by the City of Gainesville as confirmed in a letter dated April 3, 2025.

### **Zoning Analysis**

When considering a zoning amendment to the zoning maps, the Planning Commission must study the need and justification for the change based on a determination of the facts applicable to the particular case, and the following general lines of inquiry must be considered:

- a) Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use, development and zoning of adjacent and nearby property; **The proposed amendments to the site plan and conditions are suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby properties.**
- b) Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property; **It is not anticipated that the proposed amendments to the development would adversely affect adjacent or nearby property.**
- c) Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned; **The property has reasonable economic use as currently zoned; however, approval from the Board of Commissioners is required to amend conditions of zoning.**
- d) Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, schools, police protection, fire protection, public health facilities or emergency medical service; **If approved, the proposed amendments are not anticipated to cause an excessive or burdensome use of the existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, schools, police protection, fire protection, public facilities, or emergency medical service.**

- e) Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the future land use plan for the physical development of the area; **The zoning designation has been established by previous board action with the original approval of the development. The requested modification does not significantly impact the designated future land use of the area.**
- f) The extent to which property values are diminished by the existing zoning restrictions; **Staff is unable to determine the extent to which property values are diminished by the existing zoning restrictions.**
- g) The extent to which the destruction of the subject property's value under the existing zoning promotes the health, safety, morals or general welfare of the public; **Staff is unable to comment on the impact of property values without a full market analysis. Multiple factors impact property values including construction types, proposed uses, and maintenance. Often it is difficult to determine the effect of a development on adjacent properties until the development is completed.**
- h) The relative gain to the public as compared to the hardship imposed upon the individual property owner; **Staff has not identified a hardship imposed on the property owner as the property is currently zoned.**
- i) The length of time the property has been vacant as zoned considered in the context of land development in the area in the vicinity of the property; **The subject property is currently zoned Planned Commercial Development (PCD) and development of the property is currently pending the decision of the Board of Commissioners whether to amend conditions.**
- j) Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use or development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal; **Staff is not aware of any changing conditions affecting the use or development of the property.**
- k) Whether the change would create an isolated district unrelated to the surrounding districts; **As the request is to amend zoning conditions of an existing Planned Commercial Development (PCD), this amendment does not create an isolated district unrelated to surrounding zoning.**
- l) Whether the present zoning district boundaries are illogically drawn in relation to existing conditions in the area; **There is no evidence that the present zoning district boundaries are illogically drawn.**
- m) Whether the change requested is out of scale with the needs of the county as a whole or the immediate neighborhood; **The request is not out of scale with the needs of the immediate neighborhood or the county as a whole.**
- n) Whether it is impossible to find adequate sites for the proposed use in districts permitting such use and already appropriately zoned; **A request to amend the conditions of zoning requires approval by the Board of Commissioners.**

- o) Whether the need for rezoning could be handled instead by a variance request to the Planning Commission; **The request to amend conditions could not be handled alternatively as a variance.**
- p) Whether there would be an ecological or pollution impact resulting from major modifications to the land if the request is granted; **Any land disturbance activities on the property shall be required to go through the land development permitting process, and as a result are subject to local, state, and federal regulations. As a result, there are no anticipated ecological or pollution impacts resulting from any modification to the land if the request is granted.**
- q) Whether there is reasonable evidence based upon existing and anticipated land use that would indicate a mistake was made in the original zoning of the property; **There is no indication that a mistake was made in the original zoning.**

#### **11.2.6.E - Submission requirements**

1. Any person or persons requesting a change in the official zoning map or use subject to approval of the County Commission must file an application with a plat or map of the property attached thereto, together with payment of such fees set forth in this Sec 11.2. to cover administrative and advertising costs, in the Planning and Zoning Department office. Such person or persons or their authorized agent must appear in person at the public hearing held to consider the district change. **The proposal meets the requirement. The applicant has paid the appropriate fees and understands that someone must be present at both the Hall County Planning Commission meeting and the voting meeting of the Hall County Board of Commissioners.**
2. All applications for a change of zoning classification or use subject to approval of the County Commission must include:
  - a. A narrative statement identifying the existing and proposed use of the property and addressing each of the criteria set forth in this Sec. 11.2. **The proposal provides a narrative outlining the intent of the development; however, the applicant has not prepared a response to each of the criteria listed in 11.2.6.E.2.**
  - b. A site plan drawn to scale designating the area covered by the application and identifying existing and proposed buildings and uses, adjacent existing land uses, zoning on contiguous parcels, including those across an abutting public right-of-way, and any other significant site improvements proposed to accommodate the proposed use or buffer adjacent uses, etc., or a plat of the subject property where no specific land use is proposed. In cases where only a plat or map is provided and no land use is proposed, the Planning Commission and County Commission may evaluate the application based on the most intense possible land use permitted in the proposed district. **The proposal meets the requirement.**
  - c. For any application for a slow rate land treatment system as defined in 7.6.9.D.1, additional requirements apply. **This standard is not applicable to the applicant's request**
  - d. For any application proposing the development of 100 or more residential dwelling units, a traffic impact study must be submitted prior to consideration of the application by the County Commission. At the applicant's expense, the traffic impact study must be prepared



by a professional engineer in accordance with requirements established by the Hall County Engineering Department. The Engineering Department must review the traffic impact study and forward any comments to the County Commission. **This standard is not applicable to the applicant's request.**

#### **Development Support and Constraints**

##### **Hall County Environmental Health**

In an email dated May 13, 2025, Emily McGahee stated "No comment. Public sewer."

##### **Georgia Department of Transportation**

In an email dated May 8, 2025, Nakia Nembhard, GDOT Civil Engineer 2, stated that GDOT coordination is required.

##### **Hall County Public Works and Utilities**

In a memo dated May 16, 2025, Bill Nash, Director of Public Works and Utilities, provided the following comments:

##### **Engineering:**

This site may require a stormwater management report should the site plan indicate the proposed development meets stormwater thresholds for impervious surfaces and/or disturbed acreage.

##### **Traffic:**

No comment.

##### **Utilities:**

Gainesville sanitary sewer service area.

##### **Hall County Fire Marshal**

In an email dated May 9, 2025, John Hornick, NPQ Fire Service Plans Examiner 1, stated, "The Hall County Fire Marshal's Office has no comments as proposed."