

Zoning Justification Statement

Request for Zone Change from Industrial to C-2 Commercial

Applicant: Auckland Land Trust

Property: 524 Baxter Avenue, Louisville, KY 40204

THE PROPOSAL

The applicant is requesting a change in zoning from Industrial to C-2 Commercial for the property located at 524 Baxter Avenue, situated at the corner of Baxter Avenue and Hull Street. The subject site is approximately 10,000 square feet and is currently an underutilized and deteriorating structure, sitting vacant in an otherwise vibrant, high-activity commercial corridor.

The applicant proposes a mixed-use redevelopment that includes retail and commercial space on the first two floors and residential units on the third floor. Commercial uses are envisioned to include a restaurant, microbrewery, and event space, bringing new energy and economic vitality to this prominent intersection.

This strategic redevelopment will activate a long-vacant site, align with surrounding land uses, and support goals of Plan 2040 by promoting sustainable, connected, and equitable development in an already thriving area.

Plan Element 1 – Community Form

524 Baxter Avenue is located in a high-density urban corridor along Baxter Avenue, an established commercial spine marked by restaurants, breweries, and entertainment venues. Surrounding properties include Gravely Brewing, Baxter Jacks, Agave & Rye, Prohibition Distillery, and the Baxter Avenue Morgue—all of which contribute to a dynamic, mixed-use environment. Residential neighborhoods are located primarily on adjacent side streets, providing a built-in customer and workforce base.

Rezoning to C-2 allows for the mixed-use development proposed, which is more compatible with the prevailing pattern of land use than the current Industrial designation. The project promotes walkable, mixed-use development, improves an underutilized site, and complements surrounding uses without encroaching on residential fabric. It contributes positively to the corridor by strengthening the commercial node while offering new housing options.

The property is currently vacant, lacking any landscaping, pedestrian activation, or functional use. Redevelopment will introduce new landscaping, lighting, and improved building aesthetics, eliminating current blight and improving neighborhood character.

Plan Element 2 – Mobility

The property is well-served by existing transportation infrastructure. Located on a major bus route, and with sidewalks along both Baxter Avenue and Hull Street, the site supports multi-modal access for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. The project's parking will include on-site spaces, street parking, and potential for leased off-site parking, as well as a one-way traffic flow plan to reduce vehicular conflicts.

By promoting a live/work/play environment in an already walkable corridor, the development reduces dependency on vehicle trips and aligns with Plan 2040's goal of sustainable, low-impact urban mobility.

Plan Element 3 – Community Facilities

The site is served by all necessary urban infrastructure, including water, sewer, electricity, and emergency services. No unusual service demands or infrastructure expansions are anticipated. Utility connections will be efficiently planned, and all site lighting will be directed downward to prevent light pollution.

Plan Element 4 – Economic Development

The proposal represents a significant private investment in Louisville's core urban area. Redeveloping this long-vacant industrial parcel into a vibrant, mixed-use destination will enhance the local economy through new employment opportunities, attract entrepreneurial tenants, and provide event and dining options for locals and visitors alike.

The inclusion of residential units further supports neighborhood stability and economic resilience by increasing housing supply and creating a built-in customer base for nearby and on-site businesses.

Plan Element 5 – Livability

This proposal contributes to public safety and neighborhood well-being by activating a deteriorated structure, which currently invites loitering, vandalism, and potential dumping. New lighting, landscaping, and regular daily activity from residents, staff, and patrons will increase safety and vibrancy. The adaptive reuse of this infill site promotes environmental stewardship and aligns with urban sustainability goals.

Plan Element 6 – Housing

Though not a large-scale residential development, the inclusion of upper-story housing helps diversify the housing mix in this corridor and supports Plan 2040's goal to promote mixed-use neighborhoods with physically accessible, quality housing options. The zoning change to C-2 allows this vertical integration of retail and residential uses, increasing neighborhood livability and connectivity.

NO ADVERSE EFFECTS ON ADJACENT PROPERTIES

The proposed zoning change is consistent with surrounding land uses and will not negatively impact adjacent properties. To the contrary, this redevelopment will improve neighborhood character, enhance safety, and eliminate a source of blight. The design incorporates appropriate buffering, lighting control, and traffic circulation, ensuring that public health, safety, and welfare are preserved and enhanced.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND OUTREACH

A neighborhood meeting was held in advance of this application. Attendees expressed interest and general support for the proposal, recognizing the value of replacing a long-vacant site with a vibrant commercial and residential use.

COMPLIANCE WITH KRS 100.213

For the reasons stated above, the proposed zone change from Industrial to C-2 is in agreement with the Comprehensive Plan (Plan 2040) and furthers its goals for Community Form, Mobility, Community Facilities, Economic Development, Livability, and Housing.

There is no evidence that the existing zoning is appropriate given the current and future conditions of the area, and rezoning to C-2 is the most logical and beneficial use of the property. The proposal is compatible with adjacent land uses and will not have a negative impact on public health, safety, or welfare.