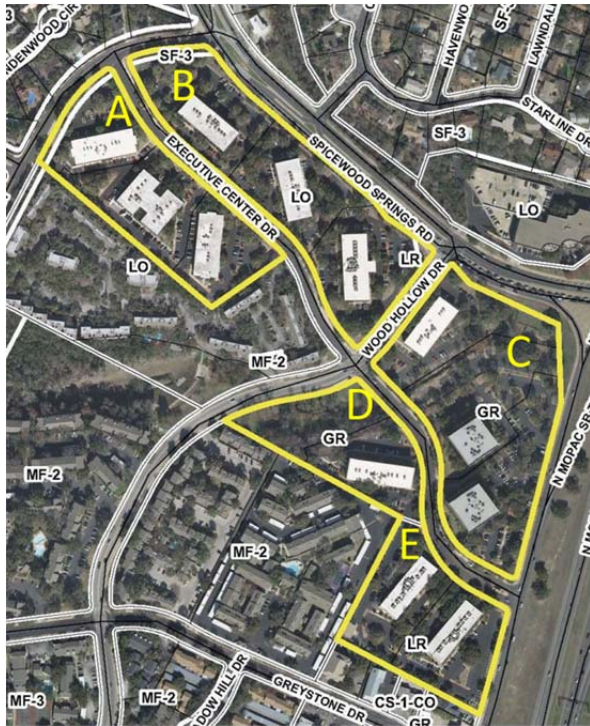


What is Possible – Under Current Zoning?

NWACA Background Article – May 22, 2015

A common question, as the community discusses the issues with the proposed Austin Oaks PUD, is “just what is possible under current zoning at that location?” Given the way the property is now zoned, what are the constraints and what are the entitlements that already exist? Here we examine some aspects of those questions.

The Austin Oaks property now consists of 5 parcels with 12 office buildings, as shown in the diagram.



	Size	Zoning	Current
A	6.07 acres	Limited Office (LO)	Three 2-story office buildings
B	8.05 acres	Limited Office (LO), small amount of Neighborhood Commercial (LR); Single Family (SF-3) along one edge	One 2-story, Two 3-story office
C	8.90 acres	Community Commercial (GR)	One 2-story, Two 3-story office
D	3.68 acres	Community Commercial (GR)	One 2-story office
E	4.67 acres	Neighborhood Commercial (LR)	Two 2-story office

These zoning classifications (called “zoning districts”) each have standards for development in the respective parts of the site. The standards are documented in the City of Austin Zoning Guide, which you can find on the NWACA web site in the Resources/Library area under Zoning . Briefly, their definitions:

- LO - Limited Office – office use that serves neighborhood or community needs and is located in or adjacent to residential neighborhoods; standards for LO designed to ensure the use is compatible and complementary in scale and appearance with the residential environment
- GR – Community Commercial – office or other commercial use that serves neighborhood and community needs and that generally is accessible from major traffic ways
- LR – Neighborhood Commercial – neighborhood shopping facilities that provide limited business services and office facilities predominately for the convenience of neighborhood residents

Here are some of the standards for each of the primary zoning classifications:

Standard	LO	LR	GR
Maximum building coverage	50%	50%	75%
Maximum impervious cover	70%	80%	90%
Maximum Floor to Area Ratio*	.7:1	.5:1	1:1
Maximum height	40 ft. or 3 stories	40 ft. or 3 stories	60 ft. (generally understood as 5 stories)

**Floor to Area Ratio (FAR) = ratio of total building floor area in relation to the area of its zoning lot. For example, on a 10,000 square foot lot where the FAR is .7:1, the floor area of a building cannot exceed 7,000 square feet.*

Another significant aspect is the use allowed for each category, some permitted under all conditions and some requiring a Conditional Use permit. The table below shows the various uses and whether or not they are allowed. If they require a Conditional Use Permit to be issued, that is indicated by C. An asterisk indicates that additional standards may apply, as described in the Zoning Guide. The Zoning Guide includes definitions of each of the Uses, so you may want to consult the Guide for more detail.

Uses for the Property	LO	LR	GR
Residential			
Bed and Breakfast	*	*	*
Civic			
Club or Lodge	C	C	C
Cultural Services (library, museum, etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day Care Services	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hospital Services – Limited (out-patient)	C	C	Yes
Religious Assembly	Yes	Yes	Yes
Residential Treatment	C	C	Yes
Safety Services (emergency, fire, police, etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Commercial			
Administrative and Business Offices	Yes	Yes	Yes
Art Gallery	*	Yes	Yes
Auto Rentals, Auto Repair Services, Auto Sales	No	No	Yes
Car Wash	No	No	Yes
Business or Trade School	No	No	Yes
Business Support Services	No	No	Yes
Communication Services (broadcasting)	Yes	No	Yes
Consumer Repair Services	No	Yes	Yes
Financial Services (banks, stock brokers, loans)	No	Yes	Yes
Food Sales	No	Yes	Yes
General Retail Sales - Convenience	No	Yes	Yes
General Retail Sales - General	No	Note 1	Yes
Hotel - Motel	No	No	Yes
Medical Offices – not exceeding 5,000 sq. ft.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Medical Offices – exceeding 5,000 sq. ft.	Yes	C	Yes
Personal Services (barber, beauty shop, tailor, etc.)	No	Yes	Yes

Pet Services	No	Yes	Yes
Printing and Publishing	No	Yes	Yes
Professional Office (law, accounting, etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Restaurant	No	Note 2	Yes
Service Station	No	*	Yes
Software Development	Yes	Yes	Yes
Theater	No	No	Yes

Note 1 - not exceeding 5,000 sq. ft. of gross floor space

Note 2 – Restaurant General – not exceeding 4,000 sq. ft. of gross floor space

Of significant concern to our neighborhood is the traffic generated by development in the neighborhood. The following table helps compute the traffic impact (average estimated car trips per day) by category of use of the property. This table is a small extract from a much larger table that can be found in the Resources/ Library for Zoning on the NWACA web site, www.nwaca.org .

Uses for the Property	Avg. Trips/Day
Multifamily residential (apartment)	.62 per unit
Townhouse	.52 per unit
Hotel	.60 per room
General Office	1.49 per 1000 sq. ft.
Clinic	5.18 per 1000 sq. ft.
Medical/Dental Office	3.57 per 1000 sq. ft.
Apparel Store	3.83 per 1000 sq. ft.
Arts and Crafts Store	6.21 per 1000 sq. ft.
Hair Salon	1.93 per 1000 sq. ft.
Sit-down Restaurant	7.49 – 11.15 per 1000 sq. ft.

Given the variety of possible uses, it's clear that there are many possible answers to the question of how the Austin Oaks property could be developed. Estimates of developable space have varied from 800,000 square feet to more than 1,000,000 while using the current zoning districts. However, one needs a full design (site plan) to determine an accurate figure. A site plan handles a variety of considerations that are not addressed with zoning: traffic (TIA and mitigation for projects with >2000 trips), parking, compatibility standards, landscaping, water quality and detention, environmental requirements regarding critical environmental features, and preservation of trees, to mention the most common concerns.

With all of the flexibility in site plans, it's difficult to provide definitive answers to the initial questions being asked. We hope that this information can help in brainstorming of possibilities.