

COMMISSION ACTION FORM

REQUEST: Rezone from Neighborhood Commercial (NC) to Downtown Service Center (DSC) for property located at 217 6th Street.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

United Church of Christ is proposing to rezone their approximately 0.5 acre property located at 217 6th Street (Attachment A) from Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zoning district to the Downtown Service Center (DSC) zoning district (Attachments C & D). The property owner seeks this change in an effort to proceed with future church improvements that would not be permitted under the Neighborhood Commercial zoning due to their built out site conditions. The church was originally built in 1899. The site has been zoned Neighborhood Commercial zone designation since 2000.

The surrounding neighborhood consists of a mixture of converted multi-family and single-family housing to the north, small scale commercial services such as an auto shop, small offices and corner stores between 6th and 7th streets. To south there is the Ames post office, Ames Public Library, public parking lots and some other institutional uses to the immediate south and west. Medium density residential zoning exists a block to the north with surrounding Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zoning near the church and Downtown Service Center (DSC) zoning to the immediate south along the south side of 6th Street.

The purpose of the DSC district is to provide for high density urban development within the City's urban core. A broad range of uses is allowed including commercial, cultural and governmental. Development is intended to be very dense with high building coverage and large buildings in scale with the predominant building pattern in the Downtown commercial area and with buildings placed closer together. The DSC zoning standards require intense development with a minimum height and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) requirement, while allowing for no setbacks or parking for development of a site.

Under the regulations of the DSC district, religious institutions are allowed to operate with a special permit granted from the Zoning Board of Adjustment. There are currently two known religious institutions within DSC zoning.

The current LUPP map (Attachment B) designates the property as Downtown Service Center which directly supports the proposed zoning.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council approve the request for rezoning of the properties at 217 6th Street from

Neighborhood Commercial Zone (NC) to Downtown Service Center (DSC) based upon staff's findings and conclusions as found in the addendum.

2. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council deny the request for rezoning of the properties at 217 6th Street from Neighborhood Commercial Zone (NC) to Downtown Service Center (DSC) if the Commission finds that the City's regulations and policies are not met.
3. The Planning and Zoning Commission can defer action on this request and refer it back to City staff for additional information.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

In this circumstance the essential form of the site is set by the existing building. Major changes to the property would not occur without demolition of the church, which is not desired by the property owner. The abutting properties on the north side of 6th are NC zoning. Changing to the DSC zoning is not likely to change the character of the area or the physical relationship of the site to its neighboring uses. Furthermore, DSC zoning requires a Special Use Permit for changes to the property and it is reviewed through a noticed public hearing by the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

The proposed rezoning is appropriate within the context of this block and the established patterns of use in the downtown service center area. The LUPP land use map designation also supports allowing for the rezoning.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the Planning and Housing Department that the Planning and Zoning Commission act in accordance with Alternative #1, which is to recommend that the City Council approve the request for rezoning of the property, located at 217 6th Street, from "NC" (Neighborhood Commercial) to "DSC" (Downtown Service Center), as depicted in *Attachment D*.

ADDENDUM

REZONING BACKGROUND:

Existing Site. The property totals approximately 21,600 square feet. The site has frontage along 6th Street and Kellogg as well as access from a side alley. The original structure on the property was constructed in 1899 and has had additions constructed throughout the years. No new construction has taken place on the property under the current Neighborhood Commercial Zone designation that has been in place since 2000.

The current site layout presents non-conformities with regard to FAR maximum limits and lot coverage maximum limits in the Neighborhood Commercial Zoning District. Additionally, the site does not provide onsite parking as is required by Neighborhood Commercial zoning.

Existing Land Use Policy Plan. The LUPP Map designates the property as Downtown Service Center. The Downtown Service Center designation was placed along both sides of 6th Street, even though the zoning does not match across the north side of 6th Street. Based on the LUPP Map this designation supports both the existing NC Neighborhood Commercial Zone and the Downtown Service Center DSC zoning that the applicant is proposing to rezone the property in question to. The LUPP text identifies the boundaries of 'Downtown' for planning purposes as "6th Street on the north; Duff Avenue on the east; South 3rd Street on the south; and Grand Avenue on the west." Therefore it can be concluded that the proposed re-zoning of the property is consistent with the LUPP.

Existing Zoning. In line with the text of the LUPP, the current zoning boundary for the Downtown Service Center (DSC) District is 6th Street on the north. The Neighborhood Commercial (NC) District encompasses the area between 6th and 7th Streets from Clark Avenue to Duff Avenue and is also supported by the Downtown Services Center land use designation. This area is supported by the same land use designation as DSC due to the proximity to downtown and the transitional nature of the residential and downtown area.

Infrastructure. The site is fully served by City infrastructure. Sanitary sewer and water are available, as is electric services.

Access. Vehicular access is provided to the site from 6th street through the existing alley along the east side of the property. No traffic improvements are anticipated. Institutional uses are not required to have onsite parking in the DSC zoning districts per section 29.406(2)

Applicant's Statements. (See Attachment E)

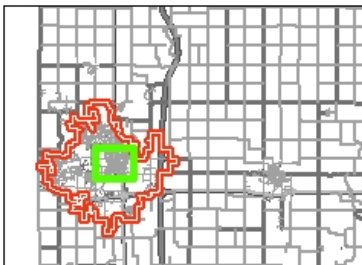
Findings of Fact. Based upon an analysis of the proposed rezoning and laws pertinent to the applicant's request, staff makes the following findings of fact:

1. *Ames Municipal Code Section 29.1507(1)* allows for City Council to initiate the amendment, supplement, or change the regulations, districts, or Official Zoning Map of the City.
2. The subject property has been designated on the Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) Future Land Use Map as “Downtown Services Center.”
3. The LUPP text identifies the boundaries of the Downtown for planning purposes as “6th Street on the north; Duff Avenue on the east; South 3rd Street on the south; and Grand Avenue on the west.” It further identifies the block encompassing the subject properties (6th to 7th Streets between Grand and Clark Avenue) specifically as within the residential area adjacent to downtown.
4. Infrastructure is adequate to serve the site. Necessary easements for service line connections to the site will be determined at the Site Plan review stage.
5. Existing access to this site will remain from the alley north of the properties accessed from Grand and 7th Street.

Public Notice. Notice was mailed to property owners within 200 feet of the subject site and a sign was posted on the subject property. As of this writing, no comments have been received.

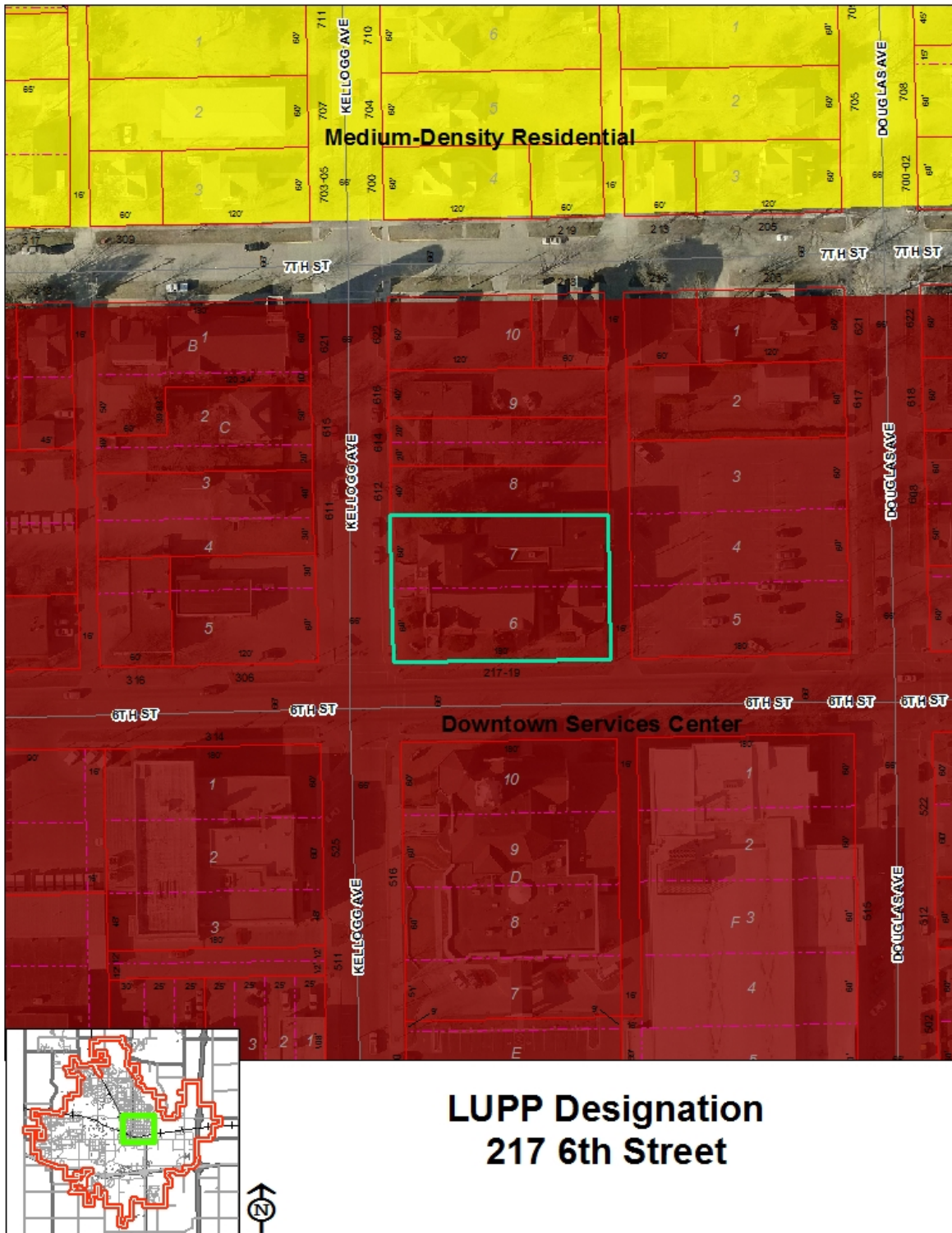
Conclusions. Based upon the analysis in this report, staff concludes that the proposed rezoning of the subject property is consistent with the Future Land Use Map, as well as the Goals and Objectives of the City of Ames Land Use Policy Plan.

Attachment A

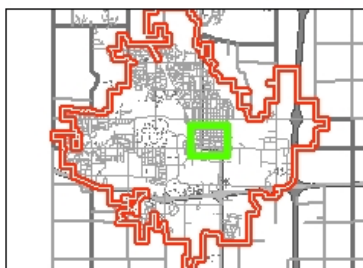
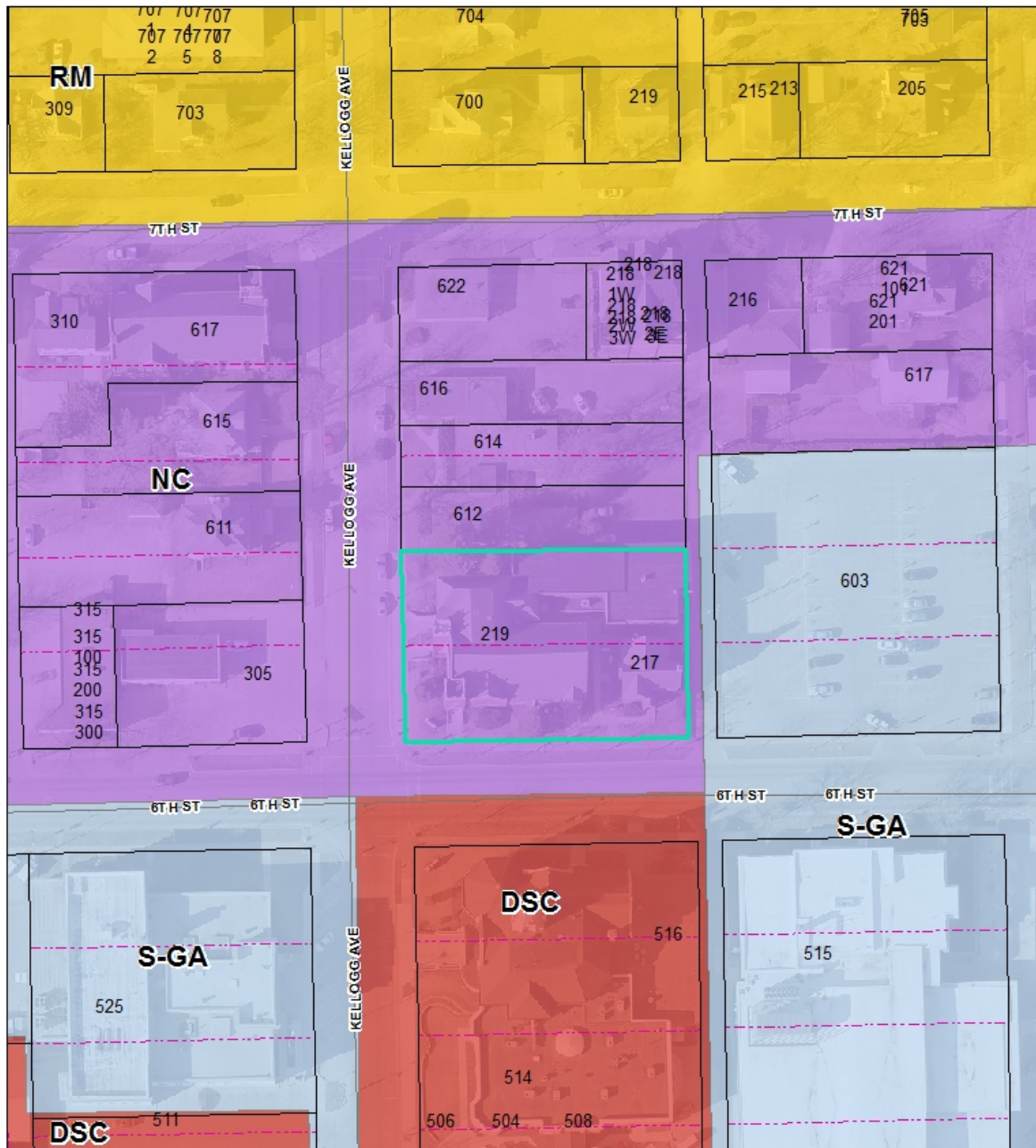


**United Church of Christ
217 6th Street**

Attachment B

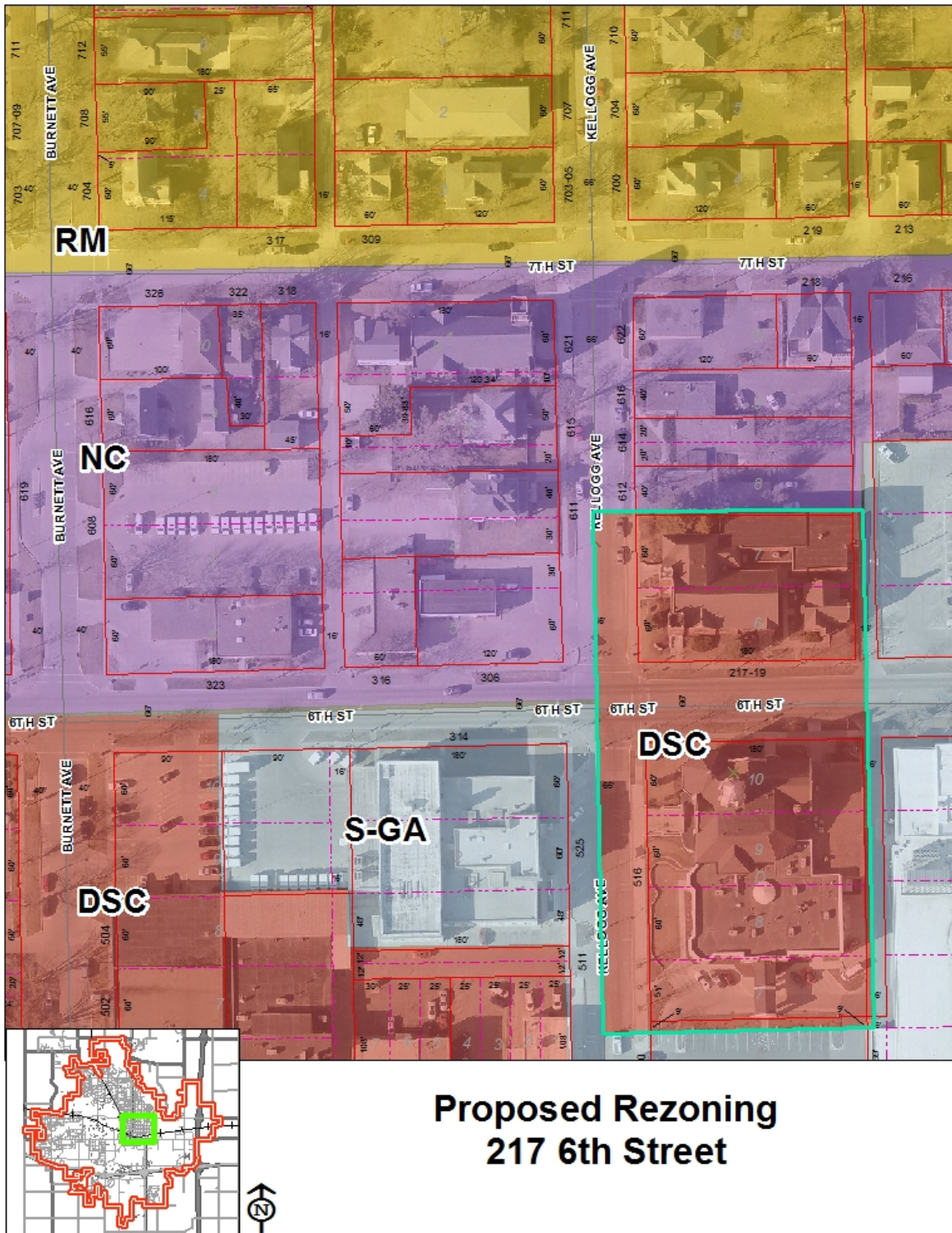


Attachment C



217 6th Street
Current Zoning

Attachment D



Attachment E

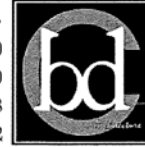
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Request for Rezoning

United Church of Christ - Congregational
217 6th Street, Ames

December 11, 2015

Current Property: Church Buildings
217 6th Street

Legal Description: Lots 6 & 7, in Block 5, of the original town of Ames

Current Use: The property has been used to house the functions of the church congregation, at the present location for 150 years. As the church plans for the future, it intends to remain at the current facility, and continue to upgrade and enhance its physical facility as a way to maintain and grow its overall church programs.

Current Zoning of Property: NC - Neighborhood Commercial

Requested Zoning of Property: DSC - Downtown Service Center

Reason for Rezoning Request:

The church congregation embarked upon a multi-year 150th Year Capital Campaign over a year ago to "Set the Stage" for its future sustainability and growth over the next century. One of the central themes of the Campaign was to create a more inviting and welcoming experience for everyone. The planning group established a Masterplan of changes to occur at the church, and the current Priority Item under consideration is enclosing the physical courtyard between the sanctuary building and the classroom wing, to create a more open and direct passage from the parking area to the sanctuary and gathering center in the center of the facility.

Under the current NC zoning, buildings are allowed a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.7. In the DSC zone the maximum FAR is 1.0. Our current structure is higher than the existing FAR, at 0.77. It is our belief this maximum was established to maintain a more open, smaller scale site developments adjacent to residential areas. The current facility, placed on this site as one of the first structures in Ames, has existed next to the downtown area for its entire existence. Even the classroom and fellowship hall additions have been at the site for nearly a century. It has been next to downtown and acted as a buffer to the residential neighborhood to the north for a long time.

The proposed changes in the Masterplan are primarily internal, and are barely visible from the street. The visual impact of the church on the community will not change, its exterior aesthetic will not be affected.

The adjacent DSC zoning is set up for properties with buildings that more completely cover the site, such as this church building. Since church facilities are allowed with each of these zoning categories, and since the community has come to expect this church building on this corner next to downtown, we believe it is appropriate to adjust the zoning designation to more accurately reflect how the facility functions within the community, as it has in the past and as it intends to continue over many decades to come, and allow the proposed changes to occur.