



October 12, 2023

Steve Timms
City of Aurora - Planning Department
15151 E. Alameda Parkway
Aurora, CO 80012

RE: QUIKTRIP 4245 (DA 2350-00)

Dear Mr. Timms,

On behalf of QuikTrip Corporation, we are pleased to resubmit a Site Plan with a Conditional Use application for QuikTrip 4245, located at 14305 East Alameda Avenue. The consultants listed below have been assembled for this project and we look forward to working closely with Aurora to make this new project a success.

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Applicant	Planner/Landscape	Civil Engineer
QuikTrip Corporation 12000 Washington St, Ste 175 Thornton, CO 80241 303.248.0435 Jessica Glavas	Norris Design 1101 Bannock St, Denver, CO 80204 303.892.1166 Stacey Weaks	Lamp-Rynearson 4715 Innovation Dr, Suite 100 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970.226.0342 Michael Palizzi

ABOUT QUIKTRIP

QuikTrip (also known as QT) was founded in 1958. They are a privately held convenience store corporation with over 900 stores in 15 states and counting. In 2010, QuikTrip moved into the fresh food business, by adding state of the art made-to-order food and drinks. QuikTrip employs over 1,800 employees in warehouses, bakeries, and commissaries. The contributions of their hard-working, dedicated employees are rewarded with the best wages in the industry, great benefits, and promotions from within. QuikTrip operates every store (no franchises), and that guarantees you will have the same great experience every time you come to QuikTrip. Each store generates an average of \$1.3 million in annual and local state taxes. Moreover, QuikTrip donates 5% of annual net profits to charitable organizations. The QuikTrip team is excited to continue adding locations in Aurora to serve the community and contribute to the economic vitality of the City.

SITE CONTEXT

The proposed site is approximately 1.5 acres and is located at the northeast corner of East Alameda Avenue and South Crystal Street. Existing on site is a largely vacant commercial office building and accompanying underutilized surface parking lot. The development is located within the “Urban District” Placetype designation per the Aurora Places Plan, which calls for intensely developed areas consisting of mixed-use, entertainment, institutional, retail, restaurant, and multifamily residential uses.



Commercial services, including those proposed by the applicant, are designated a primary land use for this Placetype. The property is currently zoned MU-R, Mixed-Use Regional district, within which the proposed use of a fuel station is permitted as a conditional use. While a fuel station is certainly a component of the proposed use, the QuikTrip use also includes a full-service kitchen restaurant use. We believe this use is appropriate at this location given the existing transportation network, the mix of development in the area, and future area plans for medium to high density residential development. The East Alameda Avenue corridor has seen several properties redevelop to meet the current needs of the area. The surrounding area includes a regional shopping center and out lot retail services, restaurants, access to major roads, bus stops, and the nearby Aurora Metro Center Station.

The existing three-story office building on the site dates from the mid 1980's and is largely vacant except for one tenant who is expected to vacate when their lease expires. The current vacancies reflect a larger trend in commercial real estate, which is seeing a downturn in office space demand, with smaller footprints and efficiency in demand. Second-tier, older facilities, which the current building is considered, are in less demand due to increased maintenance costs and the wider transition in working trends. This trend is reflected in the commercial market of the Denver market as a whole, with over 200 listed commercial properties in Aurora alone, including vacancies near the project site such as Clock Tower Square and Parkside. The current building does not reflect the needs of the modern office market, with prohibitive costs associated with upkeep and necessary repairs. The current owner calculates approximately \$1.56 million in repairs ranging from the roof, elevator, HVAC, and other expenses. These expenses are prohibitive to the continued use of the property as an office building, encouraging rethinking the use of the site in a way that benefits the wider area. The lack of redevelopment on the site would continue to lead to vacancy issues and continued decline of the space in an area targeted for large-scale urban redevelopment.

Please describe in the more detail the existing sf of the building, how much is currently leased, when the lease ends, and how long the other tenant spaces have been vacant.
Please include some photos of the interior showing the deterioration and lack of modern amenities of the building.

ience store including a full- and supportive of the adjacent he property and immediately land uses reflecting this zoning Avenue and South Crystal Aurora such as gateways, major The proposed QuikTrip would m the full-service kitchen, as g com
Response: We have added this information into the updated LOI
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se. To facilitate an urban design dal transportation goals of the a building location that places Crystal Street. See Figure 1

below for detailed depiction of the proposed improvements to the corner of East Alameda Avenue and South Crystal Street.

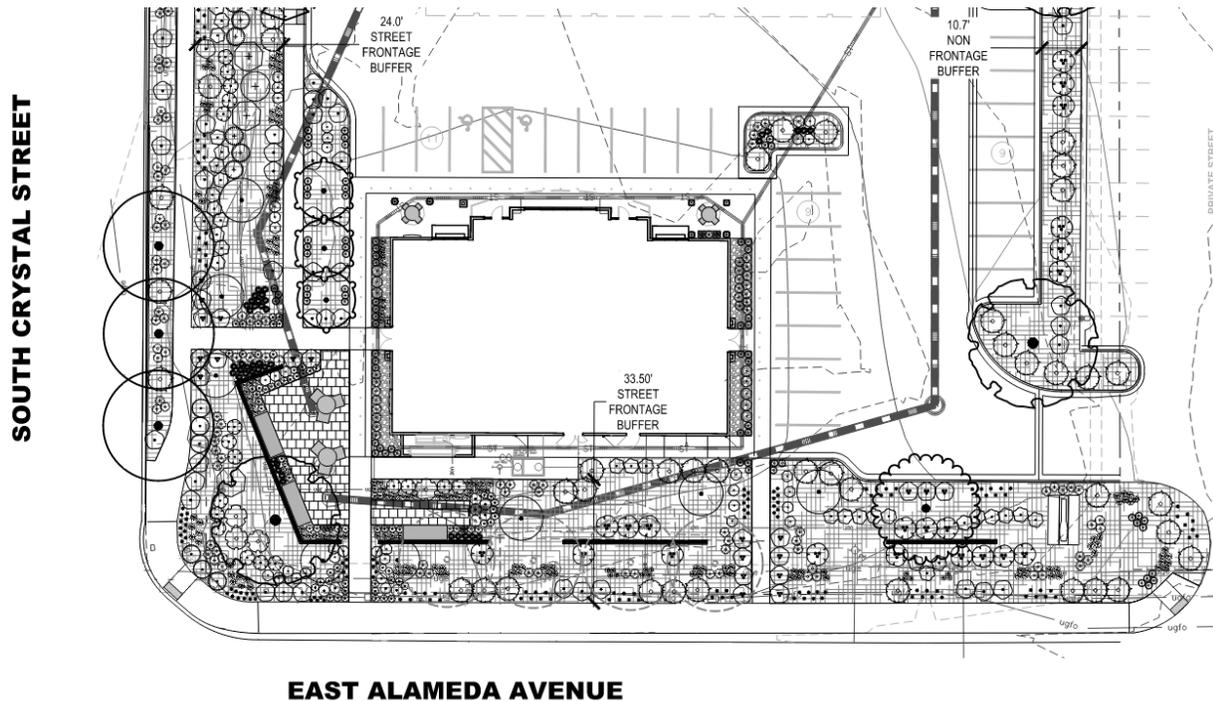


Figure 1. Enhanced streetscape including landscaping and building location along East Alameda Avenue and South Crystal Street complete with outdoor seating area and pedestrian connections to and from the site.

This proposed project would take advantage of a currently underutilized property by providing a facility that will provide high-quality and convenient fuel, food, and services to customers to and from the area in a clean, modern, and well-built facility. The full-service kitchen and associated seating areas provide a convenient food and service option for neighbors and visitors to the area. Needed pedestrian connectivity is provided at this corner via walkways that link the existing sidewalks along East Alameda Avenue and South Crystal Street to the interior of the site. Enhanced landscaping at the corner is intertwined by walkway connections to the pedestrian plaza area serving as a transition to the development from East Alameda Avenue for pedestrians. Sidewalk connections are provided along the north and east borders of the site to facilitate pedestrian movement from the site north and east further into the surrounding area. South Crystal Street functions as an entrance into Aurora City Place commercial and retail area. The enhanced landscape and proposed building location provide a quality urban environment and encourages access to the site by providing a vibrant, in demand use. The proposed building's primary frontage further addresses South Crystal Street with enhanced architectural treatment provided with the building. The overall streetscape landscaping ties the development to the larger East Alameda Avenue streetscape and creates a scale that complements other developments along this segment of East Alameda Avenue.

QuikTrip plans on providing high-quality architectural design for both the convenience store and the fuel canopy. Both structures will comply with the City UDO and all other City regulations and guidelines. The primary façade is proposed to be of dark brick or similar masonry, with metallic silver and red elements to delineate entries, and provide both horizontal and vertical articulation. This will create a more varied streetscape in combination with the plaza and landscaping to provide visual



interest to the development, in line with the goals and policies of the adopted UDO and other regulations of the City of Aurora.

OPERATIONS PLAN

The convenience store with fuel sales will be open 24 hours per day. The store expects to employ on average 22 people, with 4 employees per shift, 3 shifts per day. The peak visitation to the site correlates with normal business travel hours. In the morning from 6am-9am as people are heading to work and school, stopping for gas, coffee and donuts. From 11am-1pm as people are searching out affordable, on-site lunch options. From 4pm-6pm when people are on their way home and stopping to pick up a quick essential for dinner. The number of customers during these peak hours are directly dependent on the number of residents within the immediate area and visitors that currently uses the - adjacent roadway and area transit systems. The Full-Service kitchen will sell food classically understood as American Fare, including grilled cheese, breakfast sandwiches, sub sandwiches, tacos, pizza, pretzels, ice cream, mac and cheese, donuts and other ready to go type meals. Traditional snack items will also be sold at the store such as chips, candy, and fruit. QuikTrip also plans to sell beer and wine like most grocery stores do along with non-alcoholic drinks including sports drinks, soda, coffee, and smoothies.

There are 8 fuel stations which equates to 16 pumps. Auto-diesel will be provided but will not include semi-truck diesel. Deliveries will take place typically at non-peak times and will be made through the entrance from the parking lot to the east of the building, except for the fuel truck, which will deliver directly at the fuel tanks. There will not be outdoor storage of materials and there will be no hazardous materials stored on site.

COMPLIANCE WITH CITY OF AURORA PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Along with complying with the UDO, the proposal is further supported by existing planning documents from the City of Aurora including the City Center Station Area Plan and the Aurora Places Comprehensive Plan.

City Center Station Area Plan

The City Center Station Area Plan speaks both directly to the subject property and describes general uses and urban design forms for the area. As noted in the City Center Station Area Plan page 18, this area has seen infill and redevelopment of restaurant pad sites along East Alameda Avenue. Fundamentally, this QuikTrip site is very similar to the recent additions of prestige fast food restaurants including In-N-Out and Raising Cane's. The QuikTrip brand is new to the Colorado market in a similar to the above-mentioned restaurants and is known as a higher quality, all-encompassing convenience store, a better alternative to other convenience stores. Both In-N-Out and Raising Cane's feature layouts similar to the proposed QuikTrip layout and represent a like use and feel along East Alameda Ave.

The City Center Station Area Plan also notes that "according to U.S. Census Bureau data, the central core of the City Center area (Census Tracts 810 and 811) received significant net inflow of workers. In 2018, 12,965 employees living outside the area worked in the area, while 5,489 residents of the tracts commuted away, giving the area a net employee flow of nearly 7,500 individuals." These numbers are likely to have been impacted by COVID-19 some but still provide a good understanding of the latent support in the area for the QuikTrip proposal. As opposed to commuters traveling past a largely



vacant office building and surface parking lot located at the subject parcel, they now have the option to stop at the QuikTrip to fuel up or grab food on the go. This creates an immediate vibrancy and demand to the area that was not their before and creates a much more visually engaged entrance to the surrounding retail and commercial area.

When analyzing pedestrian movement in the area the project is also supportive. Pedestrian movement in the area is influenced by the Aurora Metro Center Station light rail station. The FasTracks light rail system operated by RTD within the Denver metro area is largely a commuter system and it can be expected that pedestrian movement from the Aurora Metro Center Station light rail station will be associated largely with area employment, particularly with people walking from the station to their place of employment. As noted by the City Center Station Area Plan, 24.9% of area jobs are either retail or food and accommodation services. Many of these jobs are located either at the Aurora City Place or Town Center at Aurora commercial and retail areas. Another 17.0% of jobs in the area are Public Administration jobs largely located at the Aurora Municipal center. Combined, that is 49% of the jobs in the area located largely within 1 mile of the QuikTrip site, with most of the retail or food and accommodation jobs having the option to walk past the site from the light rail station to get to work. The convenience and the quality of food that QuikTrip provides, when considering the price point that it comes at is less than the surrounding restaurants, makes the proposal particularly attractive to employees working at City Place and Aurora Town Center who utilize the Aurora Metro Center Station to get to work. For Public Administration jobs in the area, QuikTrip offers a quality to go option for lunch. Being supportive of these area employment groups inherently will make the site more attractive and vibrant and will contribute to a walkable environment by providing either a destination for some or a place to stop by on the way to their destination.

The proposal also supports the Guiding Principles of the City Center Station Area Plan, including the following:

- The Economic Engine Vision includes a priority that asks to “*Support the employment center with the types of services, restaurants, entertainment, and mobility options that are appealing to firms and employees*”. QuikTrip is very much a type of service that will be supportive of the local firms and employees. Services are needed in the area to attract and maintain employers and having a QuikTrip available to local firms and employees is a benefit. Local employees can stop for breakfast or lunch and have a convenient option to fuel up before or after work.
- The Authenticity and Placemaking Vision includes a priority that seeks to “*Activate the ground floor of buildings along primary streets, plazas, and promenades with active commercial, retail, community, and residential uses*”. The enhanced landscaping and architecture of the building, including the location of the building at the corner of East Alameda Avenue and South Crystal Street supports an active ground floor building, creating an on the ground vibrancy to the area. Furthermore, this vision also aims to “*Curate a successful mix of retail/restaurants to support the community and different selection from the surrounding retail centers.*” QuikTrip is a unique convenience and fuel store in that it features a full-service kitchen that produces quality food. QuikTrip stores have a sterling reputation for being clean, well run and pleasant stores and the addition of QuikTrip to the area provides a different selection than the surrounding retail centers.

Aurora Places Plan

The Aurora Places Plan designates this area as Urban District and lists commercial service as an allowed use. Commercial service is further defined as places where people shop, eat, work, and



receive professional and personal services. The uses can be low-intensity and small in scale and also can be large and intense. The QuikTrip proposal is squarely within this realm and provides a place for people to shop and eat within the neighborhood. This project furthers the Aurora Places Plan Core Principle of *A Strong Economy* by supporting the Goals of “*Support a growing availability of job opportunities for people with a variety of skill levels and experience*”. QuikTrip prides itself on customer service and provides competitive pay for part-time and full-time employees above that of a traditional convenience store. Jobs created by QuikTrip directly support this goal. This application also supports Defining Feature Number 3 of the Aurora Places, Placetypes Urban District which calls for development to “use attractive, connected and well-designed urban streetscapes throughout the district. Place buildings at or near the sidewalk to maintain a traditional streetwall effect”. The layout of the site has changed since the previous submittal to align the building along the corner of East Alameda Avenue and South Crystal Street to better frame the corner and provide an enhanced urban entrance to the neighborhood. The addition of courtyard, landscaping, and seating areas adjacent to the building further support Defining Feature Number 4 of the Aurora Places, Placetypes Urban District which calls for uses that “utilize civic plazas, courtyards, and parks and open space as gathering places for residents, employees and visitors”. The seating area will provide a place for visitors and neighbors to gather and enjoy morning coffee, meet for lunch or catch up with a friend. The intent of the site layout is to facilitate a more urban feeling while also providing convenient services and food options for neighbors and visitors.

CONDITIONAL USE APPROVAL CRITERIA

- a. The application complies with the applicable standards in this UDO, other adopted City regulations (including but not limited to any use-specific standards for the proposed conditional use in Section 146-3.3), any approved Master Plan that includes the property, and any conditions specifically applied to the development of the property by the Planning and Zoning Commission or City Council in a prior decision affecting the property;

The application has been completed to the applicable standards outlined in the UDO and other adopted City regulations. The proposed project is appropriate for the surrounding area and will provide services to an area of Aurora experiencing significant development and redevelopment.

- b. The application is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan;

The proposed development is compatible and consistent with the adjacent highway, commercial, retail and residential uses surrounding the site. As noted in the analysis provided within this narrative, this application is supportive of the Comprehensive Plan. The convenience store will offer the surrounding neighborhoods a new option for high-quality to-go food as the store is equipped with a full-service kitchen preparing grab-and-go meals, coffee, and drinks. Specifically, this application supports Defining Feature Number 3 of the Aurora Places, Placetypes Urban District which calls for development to “use attractive, connected and well-designed urban streetscapes throughout the district. Place buildings at or near the sidewalk to maintain a traditional streetwall effect”. The layout of the site has changed since the previous submittal to align the building along the corner of East Alameda Avenue and South Crystal Street to better frame the corner and provide an enhanced urban entrance to the neighborhood. The addition of courtyard, landscaping and seating areas adjacent to the building further support Defining Feature Number 4 of the Aurora Places, Placetypes Urban District which calls for uses that “utilize civic plazas, courtyards,



and parks and open space as gathering places for residents, employees and visitors". The seating area will provide a place for visitors and neighbors to gather and enjoy morning coffee, meet for lunch or catch up with a friend. The intent of the site layout is to facilitate a more urban feeling while also providing convenient services and food options for neighbors and visitors.

- c. The size, scale, height, density, multi-modal traffic impacts, and hours of operation of the proposed use are compatible with existing and planned uses in the surrounding area;

The proposed development will be integrated into the surrounding street network and existing development. At this time there is a large assortment of commercial uses along East Alameda Avenue and South Crystal Street, including restaurants, retail, and other services. New prestige fast food restaurants including In-N-Out, Chick-fil-A, and Raising Cane's highlight the viability of site to support well known brands that are valued by the community. QuikTrip similarly fits within this designation both in terms of its reputation and within its urban form and function. This development would be in line with the existing uses and be built in a manner that takes into consideration the aesthetic character of the surrounding area as well. The proposed plan frames East Alameda Avenue, with a landscaped plaza and pedestrian connection to the existing sidewalk connecting the various commercial uses and larger community network. The fueling canopy is located at the rear of the store, visually removed from the East Alameda Avenue frontage. The building has been designed to the standards of QuikTrip stores throughout existing markets, including new stores in the Front Range area including Denver, Firestone, Parker, and Bennett. These designs include brick facades, with metallic and colored accents, as well as pedestrian scaled lighting and seating areas.

- d. The proposed use will not change the predominant character of the surrounding area;

The zoning for the project as stated above is MU-R, Mixed-Use Regional, and the location of the site is in the midst of a large commercial area within Aurora. Immediately to the south is the Aurora Town Center shopping mall, to the north is a large retail center, while either side of the property is in use as commercial, retail, and food services. The proposed use as a convenience store with a fuel station will complement the mix of uses and character of the existing development, and as the area continues to develop in a residential capacity, would add a valuable service to new residents as well as visitors and travelers. Furthermore, the proposed store serves to enhance the overall character of the area through thoughtful construction and design that adheres to the goals and standards of existing plans. The site is currently occupied by a largely vacant office building, with large areas of impervious parking area and poor pedestrian connections. The proposed store would include enhanced pedestrian access as well as a landscape area enhancing the aesthetic value of the location. This would be in line with other similar type uses recently approved and constructed in the vicinity, including the neighboring Raising Cane's and In-N-Out restaurants.

- e. The City's existing infrastructure and public improvements, including but not limited to its street, trail, and sidewalk systems, have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development, and any burdens on those systems have been mitigated to the degree practicable; and

The proposed QuikTrip site is not anticipated to negatively impact the existing utilities or adjacent roadways.



- f. The application demonstrates that the proposed use will not create significant dislocations of tenants or occupants of the property, or that any impacts are outweighed by other public benefits or progress toward other Comprehensive Plan goals that would be achieved by approval of the application.

As noted above, the current use of the property is a three-story office building constructed in the mid-1980s. The building currently houses one tenant whose lease concludes later this year. At this time, the office space is dated and is not a competitive office space in the market. Recent trends in office use, exacerbated by the onset of Covid-19 and continuing through the recent economic fluctuations have shown a decreased demand for traditional office space. More employees work from home or through hybrid schedules, while businesses as a whole are seeking smaller, shorter-term leases for office space, or new construction with various amenities to increase in-person attendance. This is a trend seen in major urban areas across the country. At the time of submittal, a search for current commercial real estate listings in the Aurora area yielded more than 200 results, of these 200 there are approximately 20-30 in the areas near the proposed site from the Aurora Mall up to 6th Avenue. These include current vacancies in the Clock Tower Square complex, as well as the newer Parkside development across Sable Boulevard. As the office market continues to adjust to changes in how companies and employees work, the redevelopment of this site into a full-service convenience store with a fuel station would provide more functionality and the maximize use of the land versus a vacant office space. Per a study of the Denver office market in 2022 (conducted by Newmark), there is currently 5.9 MSF of available sublease space in the Denver market, with 3.9 MSF of that vacant. Per this study, this is the highest amount for both of those measurements in 20 years. While the overarching goal of the plan is to intensify the district, the lack of demand in office space, in addition to the large amount of product on the market, does not seem to support the maintenance of this office space, which has been only partially utilized and would continue to be so for the foreseeable future.

- g. The application mitigates any adverse impacts on the surrounding area to the degree practicable.

The proposed development would mitigate any adverse impacts during the construction process. The completed convenience store with a fuel station would provide an aesthetically compatible and functional store with landscaping, improved traffic flow, and increased services to the surrounding community.

SITE PLAN APPROVAL CRITERIA

- a. The application complies with the applicable standards in this UDO, other adopted City regulations, any approved Master Plan that includes the property, and any conditions specifically applied to development of the property by the Planning and Zoning Commission or City Council in a prior decision affecting the property.

The application has been completed to the applicable standards outlined in the UDO and other adopted City regulations. The proposed project is appropriate for the surrounding area and will provide services to an area of Aurora experiencing significant development and redevelopment.



- b. The City's existing infrastructure and public improvements, including but not limited to its water, wastewater, street, trail, and sidewalk systems, have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development, and any burdens on those systems have been mitigated to the degree practicable.

The proposed QuikTrip site is not anticipated to negatively impact the existing utilities, adjacent roadways, trails, and sidewalks. Capacity on all accounts is available at the site no burden is expected to the City's existing infrastructure and public improvements.

- c. Major Site Plans shall be designed to preserve and protect natural areas, ridgelines, swales, natural landforms, water quality and wildlife habitat of riparian corridors, wetlands, and floodplains affected by the proposed development and to integrate those areas into site design where practicable.

The subject property is flat and has been developed already by the previous use. No natural areas, ridgelines, swales, natural landforms, water quality and wildlife habitat of riparian corridors, wetlands, or floodplains are located on site.

- d. The application will improve or expand multi-modal connections with adjacent sites, neighborhoods, and urban centers.

The application improves pedestrian connectivity through the site and to the surrounding area by fronting to and engaging with the East Alameda Avenue and South Crystal Street through provision of pedestrian connections via new walkways, enhanced landscaping, and outdoor patio seating area. The site layout makes the corner of East Alameda Avenue and South Crystal Street more vibrant than the current use. By increasing the overall urban form of the site multi-modal connections within the area will be improved as the pedestrian environment has been improved significantly.

- e. The application is compatible with surrounding uses in terms of size, scale and building façade materials.

This application is compatible with the surrounding uses. It is similar to the recently approved In-N-Out and Raining Canes restaurants in its size, scale and façade. The use proposed is similar to those uses found along East Alameda Avenue.

- f. The application mitigates any adverse impacts on the surrounding area to the degree practicable.

No adverse impact on the surrounding area is expected as a result of this application.

We look forward to working with the City of Aurora on this project. Please contact us with any questions. Thank you for considering our application.

Sincerely,
NORRIS DESIGN

Stacey Weaks
Principal