

**THE CITY OF GRETNA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING**

740 Second Street, Gretna, LA 70053

Council Chamber, second floor

August 12, 2025 - 5:30 PM

AGENDA

AGENDA ITEM(S):

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

2. Oath of Office:

(1) Planning and Zoning Commission Members:

Elizabeth Strohmeier

Tommy Tingstrom

3. Unified Development Code, Map Amendment (Rezoning): (Informational to Council)

(2) 59 Westbank Expressway (Assessment #0100002037; 0100002060) - Rezoning Request

Joseph Squatrito III, Applicant. For a proposed Outpatient Physical Therapy

Clinic. Changing zoning classification of Lots 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25, Square 9, Suburban Park Subdivision; from Single-Family Residential District (R-1); to Neighborhood Commercial district (C-1). (In District 1)

4. Variance Request(s):

(3) 36 Gelbke Drive (Assessment #0100004465); Jeremiah Johnson, Applicant (Leslie Pham, Owner)

Further described as Lot 23A-1, Square12, Garden Park Subdivision. To install a 26kW Generac generator with a 200 amp transfer switch, besides front yard. (In District 2)

5. Meeting Adjournment.



PLANNING & CITY DEVELOPMENT

August 8, 2025

59 Westbank Expressway ZONING CHANGE APPLICATION STAFF REPORT

Summary

An application was submitted to the City of Gretna from the prospective buyer of 59 Westbank Expressway, Gretna, Louisiana 70053, Mr. Joseph Squatrito who is requesting to rezone Lots 19 through 25, Square 9, Suburban Park Subdivision from R-1 Single Family Residential District to C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District to allow for commercial use by right at this location.

The applicant intends to purchase and develop the proposed site into an outpatient physical therapy clinic. This property contains a long-vacant commercial building with ample surface parking for the proposed use. Planned improvements by the applicant include repainting the building, cleaning and restriping the parking lot, installing perimeter fencing, renovating the interior, and upgrading the electrical and plumbing systems, among other enhancements. No new construction or expansion of the building's footprint is proposed. Please refer to the attached application and letter of support from the property seller.



Chilo Street Facade



O' Connor Street Façade



Figure 1 Current Zoning Map

Zoning Change Application Review

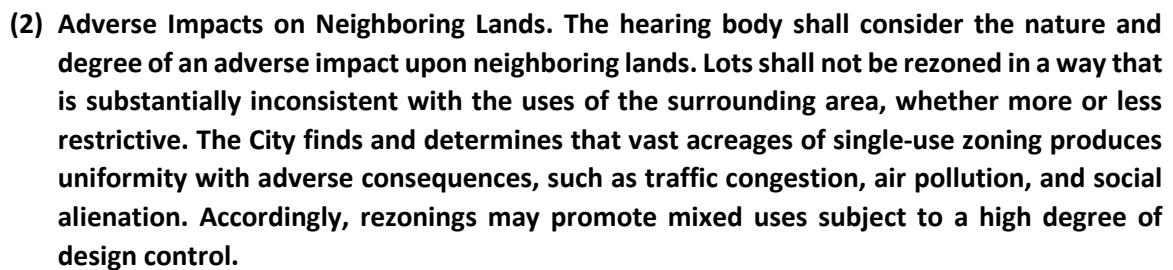
Existing zoning: The property is currently zoned R-1 (Single-Family Residential), as indicated in the above map excerpt. Despite this residential designation, the existing structure on the site is a commercial building that previously operated as a church and a beauty college. Because the property has been vacant for more than 6 months, it can only be reused commercially via Conditional Use Permit (CUP) under current zoning district regulations.

While there have been several parties interested in commercial reuse of this site, the uncertainty of the CUP process has proved a deterrent to sale or lease. Parking is also a limitation – despite lack of visible striping, in the past it was determined that the site did not have enough parking to support a new church establishment under current development standards.

Proposed zoning: The applicant is proposing a zoning change to C-1 Neighborhood Commercial to allow to establish an outpatient physical therapy clinic. This is not allowed by right under existing zoning and would require either a Conditional Use Permit for adaptive reuse, or a zoning change.

Section 58-61 part (i) Approval Criteria for Map Amendments. In its review of an application for a zoning map amendment, the Hearing Bodies shall consider the following criteria. No single factor is controlling; instead, each must be weighed in relation to the other standards.

Review: Proposed zoning of C-1 is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, which calls for commercial use in the area under the Future Land Use Map shown below.



4 of 9

further mitigated by fencing and lots consolidation to prevent the possibility of multiple commercial entities and structures in this parcel.

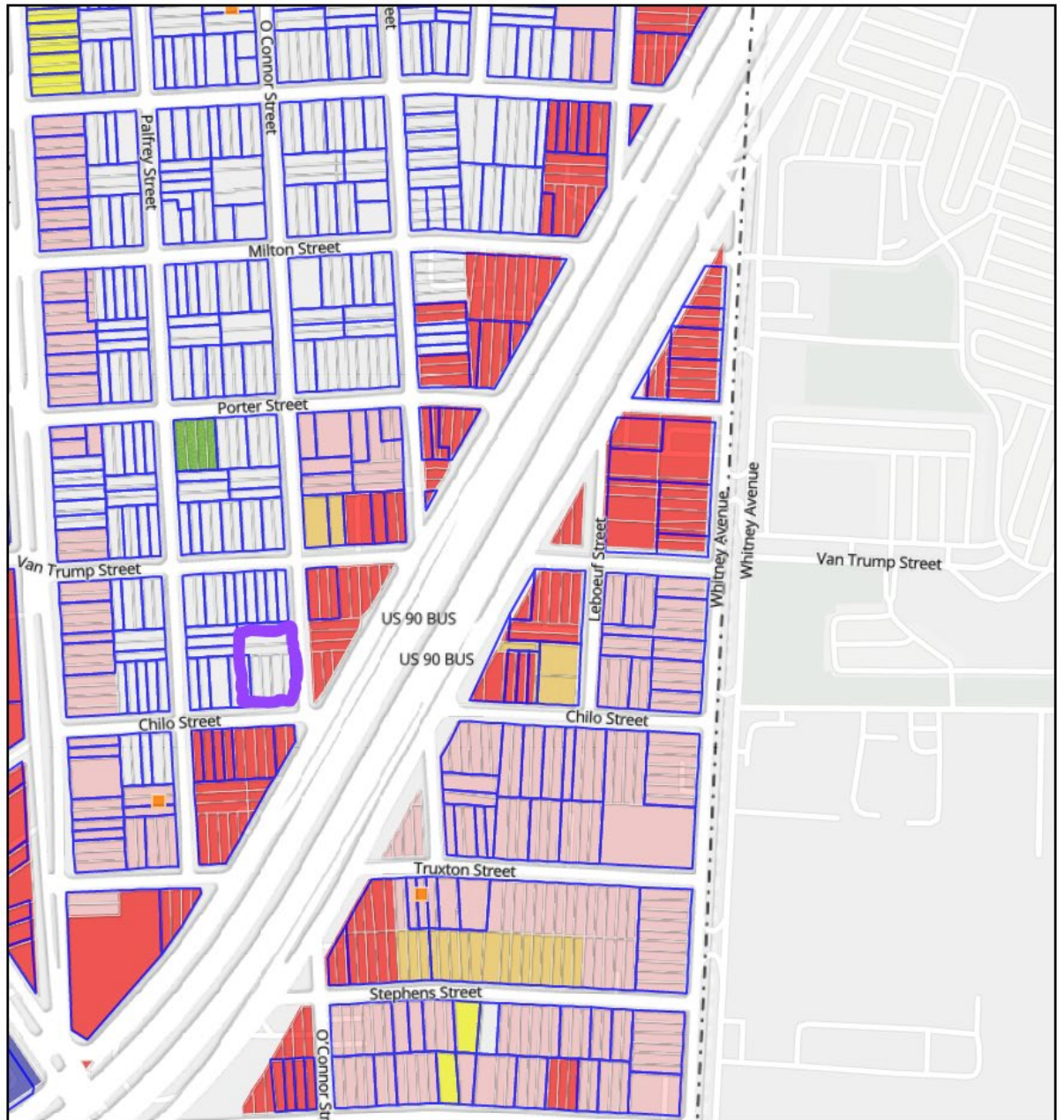
City of Gretna Current Land Use



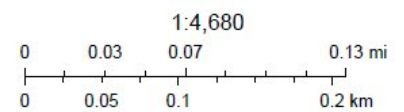
- (3) Suitability as Presently Zoned.** The hearing body shall consider the suitability or unsuitability of the tract for its use as presently zoned. This factor, like the others, should be weighed in relation to the other standards, and instances can exist in which the land may be rezoned to meet public need, to reflect substantially changed conditions in the neighborhood, or to effectuate important goals, objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan or UDC.

Review: Current zoning is suitable for the existing lots of record which abut other single-family residential lots. Current zoning was likely established after the existing structure was built. When reviewing all zoning in this corridor, this is the only similar lot (Westbank Expressway address, corner frontage) that is not zoned commercial – and therefore is deemed more suitable for the proposed change of zoning. See corridor map on the next page.

City of Gretna Planning & Zoning



8/8/2025, 12:22:10 PM



- (4) Health, Safety, and Welfare. The amending ordinance must bear a substantial relationship to the public health, safety, or general welfare, or protect and preserve historical and cultural places and areas. The rezoning may be justified, however, if a substantial public need or purpose exists, even if the private owner of the tract will also benefit.**

Review: The deteriorating metal warehouse located on the property does not contribute to historical significance. It has long been vacant and is considered a blighted property in need of repairs and revitalization; recently, the property was subject to court proceedings due to code violations, including peeling paint and an unsecured rear entrance, which allowed unauthorized occupancy by unhoused individuals.

Approving a zoning change for this site would enable redevelopment, potentially improving public safety, enhancing neighborhood aesthetics, and aligning the property's use with community goals and planning objectives as outlined in Gretna's Comprehensive Plan.

- (5) Public Policy. Certain public policies in favor of the rezoning may be considered. Examples include a need for affordable housing, economic development, mixed-use development, or sustainable environmental features, which are consistent with neighborhood, area, or specific plans.**

Review: Here, the City's interest in encouraging the redevelopment of this long-vacant building, which has remained underutilized for an extended period, is a factor. With this consideration, the proposed zoning change and subsequent renovation of the structure is considered a betterment.

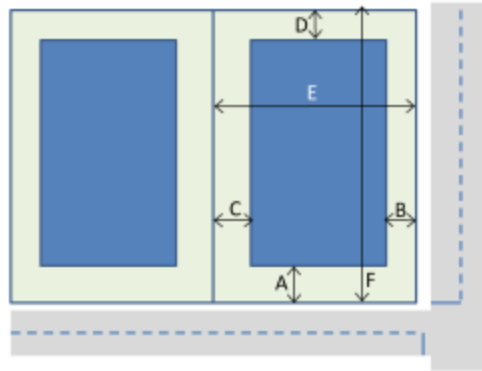
- (6) Size of Tract. The hearing body shall consider the size, shape, and characteristics of the tract in relation to the affected neighboring lands. Amendatory ordinances shall not rezone a single lot when there have been no intervening changes or other saving characteristics. Proof that a small tract is unsuitable for use as zoned, or that there have been substantial changes in the immediate area, may justify ordinance rezoning.**

Review: The combined size of the six underlying lots of record is approximately 150 x 750 feet. These dimensions meet the minimum required for C-1 as shown in the UDC exhibit below. Staff suggests the zoning change be considered conditional upon a major resubdivision of the existing six lots of record into a single consolidated lot. The purpose of lot consolidation is to prevent the establishment of multiple new commercial facilities and uses, at a density that would not be appropriate or desirable abutting single family lots.

Exhibit 58-126: Commercial District Development Standards Summary

Design Element	Principal Structure Standards		Section Cross-Reference
	C-1	C-2	
Maximum height	35'/45'	45'/65'	Sec. 58 -56
Minimum front setback (dimension A)	10'	20'	Sec. 58-171
Minimum side setback, exterior (dimension B)	5'	5'	Sec. 58-171
Minimum side setback, interior (dimension C)	0'	5'	Sec. 58-171
Minimum rear setback (dimension D)	10'	15'	Sec. 58-171
Minimum lot width (dimension E)	40'	none	Sec. 58-172
Minimum lot depth (dimension F)	75'	none	Sec. 58-172
Minimum lot area	5,000 sq.ft.	5,000 sq.ft.	Sec. 58-172

Commercial District Development Standards



- (7) Other Factors.** The hearing body may consider any other factors relevant to a rezoning application under state law.

Review: At this time, no other factors have been identified for review.

- (8) Applicant Representations.** The hearing body shall not consider any representations made by the petitioner that, if the change is granted, the rezoned property will be used for only one of the possible range of uses permitted in the requested classification unless such limitations are part of the motion for zoning approval. Rather, the hearing body shall consider whether the entire range of permitted uses in the requested classification is more appropriate than the range of uses in the existing classification.

Review: Given the above criteria, the Commission must consider ALL possible ranges of permitted uses in C-1. Given the proximity to residential lots, not all commercial uses

possible in C-1 would be possible or appropriate for this location, or be supported by the amount of parking available. C-1 zoning prohibits intensive commercial uses, limits what can be adjacent to residential properties to reduce nuisance situations (ie car shops, veterinary clinics, animal boarding etc.).

Notice Requirements and Public Comment

Posting and mailed notification requirements for this CUP application were satisfied as of August 7, 2025. As of the date of this report, one call from a neighboring property owner was received, informational in nature.

Recommendation for Approval with Conditions

Staff have reviewed the application in accordance with the criteria outlined in the Unified Development Code (UDC) and recommend approval of the zoning change to C-1, conditioned upon the consolidation of all lots into one lot of record, and establishment of 8-foot sight-obscuring fencing on the side and rear property lines that abut residential lots.

The major resubdivision to achieve the lot consolidation could be applied for after a zoning change is approved, but before it is officially recorded in the City Zoning Map, and during the renovation phase. This recommendation is intended to prevent the future sale or redevelopment of individual lots into separate businesses, which could negatively impact the surrounding residential area.

Sincerely,



Amelia Pellegrin, AICP
Director of Planning & City Development

Attachments: CUP Application, Letter of Intent, Survey, Site Plan and Construction Plans, and Public Comments (none).



APPLICATION FOR UDC MAP AMENDMENT

OFFICE USE ONLY

Introduced on: _____ Adopted on: _____

District No. _____ Councilman _____

Current Zoning: _____

Proposed Zoning: _____

Certified mail cost \$6.85 x _____: \$ _____

(Non-Refundable) fee \$ 500.00

TOTAL DUE: \$ _____

I AM REQUESTING A MAP AMENDMENT ORDINANCE FOR: (PLEASE PRINT) DATE: 7-20-25

Address of property
for change: 59 Westbank Expressway, GRETNA, LA 70053.

Current legal
description: 19-25 9 Suburban Park
Parcel ID: 0100002060
Lot(s) Square(s) Subdivision

Applicant's
Name: Joseph Squatrito III Contact
Phone No. 504-914-6080

Applicant(s)
Address: 4621 W Napoleon Ave Ste 101 Metairie, La 70001 E-Mail Joe@msptla.com

Owner of
Record: Greater Zimfield Family Worship Center Contact
Phone No. 504-341-7205

Owner's
Address: 636 11th St Westwego, La 70094 E-Mail info@gzfwc.org

Current use of property? Vacant

Proposed use of property? Outpatient Physical Therapy Clinic

Zoning Change From/Current Zoning: R1 To/Proposed Zoning: Commercial

List improvements to be made if this map amendment is granted:

- repaint building, clean and restripe parking lot, completely fence in
property, new electrical/AC in building, renovate interior with walls,
flooring, new plumbing, new offices.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

APPROVED FOR PRESENTATION

Planning and Zoning Official

Dated

REMARKS:

I AFFIRM THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN IN
THIS APPLICATION IS TRUE AND CORRECT
(PLEASE SIGN AND DATE BELOW)

Signature of Applicant OR Owner of Record

Joseph Squatrito III
PRINT NAME

Owner

Title

GREATER ZIONFIELD FAMILY WORSHIP CENTER

Pastor Samuel Travis, Jr. & First Lady Felicia Travis



636 11th Street ◆ Westwego, LA 70094

Church 504-341-7205

Fax 504-341-8074

website: www.gzfwc.org ◆ email: info@gzfwc.org

July 18, 2025

To: City of Gretna

This letter is to authorize the potential (buyer)Movement Specialist Physical Therapy on behalf Greater Zionfield FWC to represent a change use concerning the property @ 59 Westbank Expressway, Gretna, La. In reference to filing an application for zoning or subdivision.

Pastor Samuel Travis JR

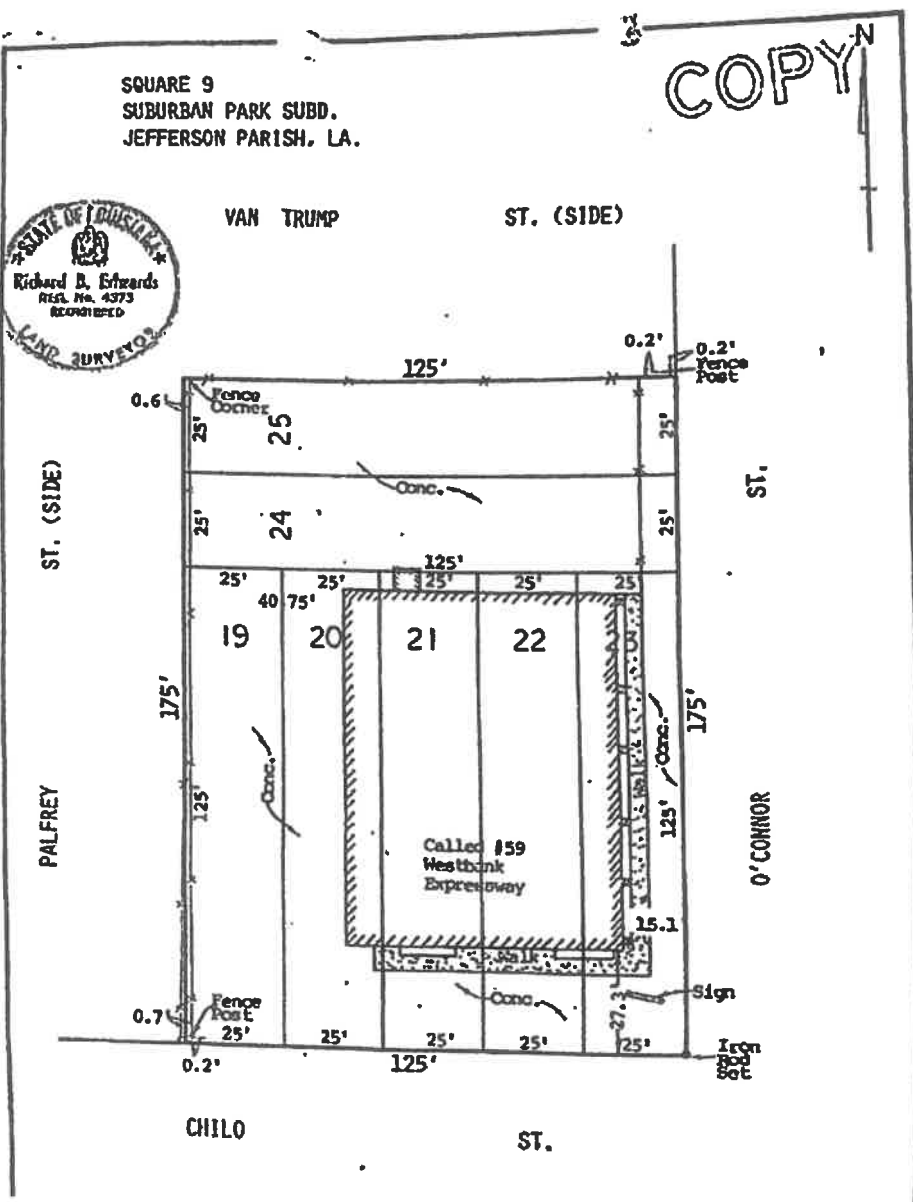
Pastor Samuel Travis, Jr. 18 Jul 18, 2025 10:58 CDT

Pastor Samuel Travis Jr.

“Building Strong Families for a Brighter Tomorrow”

COPY

ST. (SIDE)





City of Gretna

740 Second Street (70053)

P. O. Box 404

Gretna, Louisiana 70054-0404

Mayor

Belinda Cambre Constant

Councilmembers

Wayne A. Rau

Councilman-at-Large

Rudy S. Smith

District One

Michael A. Hinyub

District Two

Mark K. Miller

District Three

Jackie J. Berthelot

District Four

Departments

Building

Danika E. Gorrondona

Citizens Affairs

Rachael Stanley

City Clerk

Norma J. Cruz

City Development

Amelia Pellegrin

Code Enforcement

Angel L. Gonzales

Environmental Affairs

Madason Priore

Finance & Tax

Raylyn C. Stevens

Human Resources

Gwen Turner

Information Technology

Michael T. Wesley

Operations

Eric Stahl

Parks & Parkways

Amie L. Hebert

Public Utilities

Ron Johnson

Tourism

Summer Cook

July 21, 2025

RE: Rezoning for 59 Westbank Expressway

Dear Gretna Neighbor,

An application has been submitted to the City of Gretna from the potential buyer of 59 Westbank Expressway, Gretna, Louisiana 70053, Mr. Joseph Squatito, who is requesting to rezone Lots 19 thru 25, Square 9, Suburban Park Subdivision

From: R-1 Single Family Residential District

To: C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District

The applicant intends to purchase and develop the proposed site into an outpatient physical therapy clinic. The property is currently a long-vacant commercial building with ample surface parking. Planned improvements include repainting the building, cleaning and restriping the parking lot, installing perimeter fencing, renovating the interior, and upgrading the electrical and plumbing systems, among other enhancements. No expansion of the building's footprint is proposed. For further details on the proposed development, please refer to the attached letter of support from the current property owner and the submitted application.

This request will be considered for approval by the Planning Commission at the meeting on August 6, 2025, at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers, and they will make a recommendation to the City Council who will vote at the Council Meeting on August 13, 2025, at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers, pursuant to Section 58-63 of the UDC, available at www.gretnala.com/UDC. Any questions, comments, or concerns may be submitted to the Planning Department by calling (504) 363-1556 or by e-mailing gnoorulhaqq@gretnala.com.

Sincerely,

Amelia Pellegrin, AICP
Director of Planning & City Development

Phone: (504)363-1505 - www.gretnala.com - Fax: (504)363-1509



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & CITY DEVELOPMENT
36 GELBKE DRIVE – VARIANCE
STAFF REPORT TO PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

August 8, 2025

SUMMARY

An application has been submitted to the City of Gretna by property owner Leslie Pham for a variance at 36 Gelbke Drive, Gretna, Louisiana 70053, to install a generator in the front yard, concealed by plantings. This is necessary because the limited setback areas on the property prevent compliance with required 3-foot setback for mechanical equipment in the side or rear yards.

DESCRIPTION

36 Gelbke Drive is zoned R-1, intended for single-family residential use. The lot is irregularly shaped, which presents challenges for meeting standard zoning requirements. According to Section 58-171 of the Gretna Unified Development Code (UDC), mechanical equipment must be located in the side or rear yard, with a minimum setback of 3 feet from the property line. In 2023, the applicant constructed a 981-square-foot addition and installed an in-ground swimming pool in the rear yard. These improvements, along with narrow side yards, have left insufficient space in the side or rear yards to meet the required 3-foot setback for a generator.

As a result, the applicant contends that placing the generator in the front yard is the only area that meets the setback requirement. Per Section 58-262 of the UDC, any mechanical equipment located in the front yard must be screened from view at the front property line. The applicant has submitted a site sketch detailing the proposed screening. Since the lot cannot accommodate the generator in compliance with standard R-1 zoning regulations, a variance is required to allow its placement in the front yard with appropriate screening.

A variance is only applicable “when a physical hardship exists that presents an exceptional or unusual physical condition of a lot, which condition is not generally prevalent in the neighborhood, and which

condition would prevent a reasonable or sensible arrangement or use of building or lot,” UDC Section 58-65. The approval criteria for granting a variance are also included here for reference:

Variance Approval Criteria. The Planning & Zoning Commission shall not grant approval for a requested variance unless it makes a finding, based upon the evidence presented to it, that indicate each of the following:

- (1) The variance granted is the minimum amount of relief required to enable reasonable use of the affected property.
- (2) The approval, if granted, will not cause any diminution or depreciation of property values of any surrounding property or will not alter the essential character of the locality.
- (3) The approval, if granted, will tend to preserve and advance the prosperity and general welfare of the neighborhood and community.
- (4) The approval, if granted, will not be detrimental to the public welfare or seriously affect or be injurious to other property in which the property is located, in that it will not: impair an adequate supply of light and air; or increase substantially the congestions in the public streets, create a traffic hazard, or permit inadequate parking; or increase the danger of fire; or substantially affect or overburden existing stormwater management or sewerage systems; or otherwise endanger the public safety; or cause serious annoyance or injury to occupants or adjoining premises by reason of emission of odors, fumes, gases, dust, smoke, noise, vibration, light or glare, or other nuisances.
- (5) A physical hardship with special conditions and circumstances exists that is peculiar to the land, structure, or building involved and which are not applicable to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same zoning district; and the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the intentional actions of the applicant or any person who may have or had interest in the property.
- (6) The purpose of the variance is not based exclusively upon a desire to serve the convenience or profit of the property owner or other interested party, and strict adherence to the regulation for the property would result in a demonstrable hardship upon the owner as distinguished from mere inconvenience or economic relief.
- (7) Literal interpretation of the provisions of this chapter would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same district under the terms of this chapter.

- (8) Granting the variance requested will generally not confer on the applicant any special privilege which is denied by this chapter to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same district similarly situated

NOTICE REQUIREMENTS AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Posting and public notice requirements for this variance application were satisfied as of July 31, 2025.

No public comment has been received at this time. A quasi-judicial hearing will be conducted at the regular meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission on August 12, 2025, for approval.

RECOMMENDATION WITH CONDITIONS

The variance is recommended for approval due to the physical hardship present on the site. Given the limited setback areas, adhering to the 3-foot setback requirement significantly limits options for compliance. Granting this allowance would not be out of character for the immediate area nor would it create a development outcome that is out of the ordinary. This recommendation is based on the condition that the plans meet all other UDC requirements, including screening.

Sincerely,



Amelia Pellegrin, AICP
Director of Planning and City Development
Attachments: Variance Application, Site Sketch, Site Plan.

Beauregard Drive (rear)

Property Line

Vernon Street (side)

Property Line

5th Street (side)

Property Line

Project Notes:

- Generator will be mounted on a 12" stand
- Generator will be installed at or above elevation of slab
- Generator will be installed with minimum 5' overhead clearance
- Generator not with 5' of doors/windows
- All soffit vents will be permanently sealed within 10ft of either side of generator
- Generator 10ft from all air intakes and dryer vents
- Exhaust pointed away from habitable structures
- Installation meets all Manufacturer Installation Guidelines
- Carbon monoxide detectors will be installed in all bedrooms, all floors, and in the living areas.

Please sign below to accept the Generator Location as shown

X

A/C

A/C

Water
Heater

GAS

ATS

Elec
Service

24"

30'

7'

35'

26kW
Generac

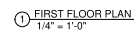
Customer will screen
from view with foliage

Exhaust
Direction



(front)

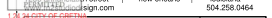
36 Gelbke Drive



note:

1. provide double joists under walls parallel to span.
2. provide solid blocking below bearing walls perpendicular to joist span.
3. provide rows of bridging @ 8'0" o.c. [max] for joists spans over 10'-0"
4. install trim-joist as per manufacturer's recommendations including blocking, bracing, bridging, etc.
5. provide solid blocking below columns.

○ STAIR NOTES
6" = 1'-0"



2023.36 | 36
Gelbke Drive

Home Renovation
Gretna | LA

first floor
plan

2023.36

a101



VARIANCE REQUEST APPLICATION

****Fee: \$300.00 (Non-Refundable)**
(May require "Hardship Letter")

(PLEASE PRINT)

NOTE: Please submit application at least 10- working days prior to Council meeting.

Application date: 07/01/2025

36 Gelbke Dr, Gretna, Louisiana 70053

Address of property for variance request: 📍

Current Zoning of property 📍

Single Family Dwelling 23A-1

12

GARDEN PK SUB

Legal Description of Property: Lot(s)

Square

Subdivision

Jeremiah Johnson

(504) 310-4410

permits@readypowerusa.com

Applicant's Name: 📍

Contact Phone No.

E-mail address (if any)

4900 Calliope Street, New Orleans, LA 70125

Applicant's Address: 📍

Leslie Pham

(504) 338-1069

dahnguyen@gmail.com

Owner's Name 📍

Contact Phone No.

E-mail address (if any)

36 Gelbke Dr, Gretna, Louisiana 70053

Owner's Address: 📍

Type Variance requested:

☒ Yard } Front ☒ Rear ___ L side ___ R side ___ ☐ Height restriction ☐ Lot area per family ☐ Other (See attached)

Explanation: Installing a 26kW Generac generator with a 200 amp transfer switch. No other location to install besides front yard would be approved by the city.

Reason for

request: Installing a 26kW Generac generator with a 200 amp transfer switch. No other location to install besides front yard would be approved by the city.

APPROVED FOR PRESENTATION

Planning and Zoning Official signature for presentation

Approval date

Remarks: _____

I AFFIRM THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN IN THIS APPLICATION IS TRUE AND CORRECT.

Leslie Pham

Signature of Property Owner

Leslie Pham

Property Owner (PRINT NAME)

Jeremiah Johnson

Applicant's Signature

Jeremiah Johnson

Applicant (PRINT NAME)

07/01/2025

Date