

November 04, 2025

City of Venice  
Planning and Zoning Department  
401 W. Venice Ave.  
Venice, FL 34285  
Attn: Rebecca Paul, Planning Coordinator

RE: Panda Express – 2217 Laurel Rd, Nokomis, FL 34275

## **Land Use Compatibility Analysis**

### **A. Compatibility with Existing Neighborhoods**

The proposed Panda Express will be part of the broader Laurel Rd Development, a master-planned commercial area that includes a mix of retail, restaurant, and service-oriented businesses. The site is appropriately zoned CG (Commercial General) and is designated for restaurant use, which aligns with the existing commercial uses in the development.

### **B. Compatibility Review Elements**

#### **i. Land Use Density and Intensity**

- The Panda Express will occupy 1.07 acres of land, which is consistent with the density and intensity of surrounding commercial parcels within the Laurel Rd Development.
- The proposed restaurant use is compatible with adjacent commercial establishments and other retail and dining businesses.
- The project will generate additional commercial activity and is expected to complement existing businesses without overburdening infrastructure or utilities.

#### **ii. Building Heights and Setbacks**

- The building height is 23'-3", well within the permitted height standards for commercial properties in the CG zoning district.
- Setbacks exceed the minimum zoning requirements:
  - Front setback: Required 20', Proposed 59.7'
  - Side setback: Required 8', Proposed 37.2'
  - Rear setback: Required 10', Proposed 148.6'
- These setbacks ensure adequate buffering from adjacent properties and contribute to the overall orderly development of the commercial area.

#### **iii. Building Heights and Setbacks**

- The quick-service restaurant (QSR) with a drive-thru is consistent with the existing commercial uses along Laurel Rd, which includes multiple restaurant and retail establishments.
- The proposed development supports the area's economic growth and enhances food service options for local residents, commuters, and visitors.
- The drive-thru layout has been designed to minimize on-site congestion and to ensure safe ingress and egress.

**iv. Site and Architectural Mitigation Design Techniques**

- The architectural design of the Panda Express follows the company's modern aesthetic, incorporating high-quality materials and finishes that blend with surrounding commercial buildings.
- Landscaping buffers along property boundaries will enhance aesthetics and mitigate potential visual impacts.
- Parking and circulation have been designed to efficiently accommodate customer traffic.
- The site plan ensures safe pedestrian connectivity through designated walkways and crosswalks within the larger development.

**C. Considerations for Determining Compatibility**

**i. Protection of Single-Family Neighborhoods from Incompatible Uses**

- The Panda Express site is within a commercial zone and is part of a larger commercial development, ensuring that residential neighborhoods are not directly impacted.
- The nearest residential properties are buffered by commercial parcels, minimizing any potential land-use conflicts.

**ii. Prevention of Incompatible Commercial or Industrial Uses**

- The Panda Express restaurant aligns with the commercial retail and dining uses planned for this development.
- No industrial or high-impact uses are proposed, ensuring that the project remains in harmony with surrounding businesses.

**iii. Phasing Out Nonconforming Uses**

- The Laurel Rd Development is a planned commercial district, eliminating concerns about nonconforming uses.
- The Panda Express conforms to current zoning and land-use regulations, supporting the Comprehensive Plan's vision for this area.

**iv. Densities and Intensities Compared to Existing Uses**

- The proposed development density is comparable to existing uses within the Laurel Rd Development.
- The intensity of the restaurant use is appropriate for this high-traffic commercial corridor, where similar dining establishments already operate.
- The project will provide economic benefits and job opportunities while maintaining compatibility with surrounding properties.

**Conclusion**

The proposed Panda Express at 2217 Laurel Rd is fully compatible with the surrounding commercial development and complies with the City of Venice's land-use policies. Its design, density, setbacks, and function align with the existing commercial framework, ensuring that it enhances the overall Laurel Rd Development while maintaining a harmonious relationship with adjacent properties.