

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. 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.