



August 28, 2018

Cobb County Planning Commission  
100 Cherokee Street  
Marietta, GA 30090

Re: SLUP-10, Buckner Crossing, LLC.

Dear Ms. Chairman and Commissioners:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Mableton Improvement Coalition, I am writing to express our opposition to this application and our recommendation that you recommend denial of this application for a Special Land Use Permit for self-storage. This application violates the spirit and the letter of the underlying 2009 zoning and the County's own ordinances related to self-storage in the NRC district, building setbacks and buffers. Further, the application does not meet the criteria established in the county ordinance for Special Land Use Permits.

1. Size of the building and Variances - We are not opposed to self-storage at this location, per se, but the placement of the Dollar Tree in the center of the parcel has created 3 remaining small parcels that can't be combined to accommodate such a large footprint. At 73,000 square feet, this 4-level self-storage is smaller than most proposals we have seen. However, variances for the front setback, north side setback, height restrictions, maximum F.A.R. ratio, and landscape buffer would be required to build it as shown in the application. It simply does not fit this site.
2. Violation of 2009 Zoning – The 2009 zoning, in which MIC participated, set forth specific restrictions for this parcel because of the single family homes on Buckner Road across from this property. In fact, one of the then-homeowners led this effort. Specifically, the current zoning stipulations call for residential-style buildings on this parcel and parking to be located interior to the property. These restrictions were intentional – the idea then and now is to provide these homes – built before this property was zoned – with a pleasant neighborhood view. The self-storage facility places parking in front of these homes, erects a 4-story

building just feet from the sidewalk and presents a view which is certainly not residential in character.

3. Noncompliance with Cobb County Ordinances – The ordinance provides that “Loading area, including adequate turnaround space for a tractor trailer vehicle, must be screened by a permanent architectural or landscape feature or as may be approved by the board of commissioners if not located to the side or rear of proposed structure.” The loading dock appears to face Veterans Memorial without any screening. Additionally, some of the building will be used for retail purposes. The Cobb County ordinance prohibits the issuance of business licenses beyond those for the self-storage facility itself – in other words, mixing self-storage and retail is now allowed by the county code.
4. No Stipulations Letter - Such a letter would describe the project and might address the issues raised above. That letter could have included provisions for architectural and landscaping review committees, descriptions as to how the retail would interact with the storage use, hours of operation, and other important considerations. We have requested such a letter repeatedly in connection with OB-35, but none has been forthcoming.
5. Failure to Meet the Criteria for a Special Land Use Permit – The County Code has 14 criteria on which SLUP applications are to be considered. It is not often we disagree with the Cobb County staff analysis, but in this case, we do. Specifically:

Criteria #1 – There **will be** a significant adverse effect on the neighborhood or area in which the proposed use will be located. The staff comment assumes this building can be modified to eliminate the variances and county code issues. We do not think that is possible if the business is to be economically viable.

Criteria #4 - The quiet enjoyment of surrounding property **will be** adversely affected. The homeowners on Buckner Road will be looking at a 4-story building almost on the sidewalk. The lowest floor might be below grade, but the grade is above the sidewalk, which means this building will tower over their homes.

Criteria #5 - Property values of surrounding property **will be** adversely affected. Certainly, the marketability of the affected homes on Buckner Road will be diminished, as will the undeveloped property to the north which will now need to provide additional buffer to compensate for the loss of buffer on the SLUP-10 property.

Criteria #6 – Adequate provisions **have not** been made for parking and traffic considerations. Truck access to the loading dock is not clear from the information presented.

Criteria #8 – This plan **is not** compatible with the surrounding neighborhood uses. Despite the staff comment here, this self-storage facility is placed on a residential road, not on Veterans Memorial where neighborhoods would not be impacted.

Criteria #9 – Adequate provisions are made regarding hours of operation **have not** been made. Staff comments reference operating hours, but no written information has been submitted, despite continued requests for a stipulations letter.

Criteria # 13 – The application **does not** comply with any applicable specific requirements set forth in this chapter for special land use permits for self-storage. Staff seems to be optimistic that the application can be changed to overcome these requirements, but we do not share that assessment.

Criteria #14 - The applicant **has not** provided sufficient information to allow a full consideration of all relevant factors

When an application presents issues, but those issues can be overcome, we often recommend approval, but with conditions. We cannot do that in this case. Given the number and impact of the variances needed, the noncompliance with the current zoning requirements, and the sheer impact of this building on the surrounding residential property, we must urge you to recommend denial of this application.

As always, we thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this public comment process. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 770 948-5394.

Sincerely,

Robin Meyer  
Chairman of the Board

cc: Cobb County Board of Commissioners  
Matt Dahlhauser, Buckner Crossing, LLC  
John Pederson, Cobb County Zoning Division Manager  
Robin Presley, Deputy County Clerk  
MIC Board of Directors and Zoning Committee