

Ogden mulls rezoning for new bank as neighbors fear more traffic and flooding



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A proposed rezoning at an intersection that crosses Ogden's main artery could clear the way for a new bank but neighbors have voiced a host of concerns, from increased traffic to flooding fears.

Dallas Harris Land Company, LLC, the owner of the 1.15-acre lot bordered by Market Street and Torchwood Boulevard, wants to rezone the land from residential to commercial to build a new drive-thru bank.

The lot, located at 7491 Market St., has historically served as a buffer between Market Street's bustle of traffic and the neighborhoods situated hundreds of feet away.

The property is currently undeveloped and has been known to be used for homeless encampments, according to the rezoning application.

Plans for the project include a 2,400-square-foot bank building that's set to include drive-thru windows and access from both Torchwood Boulevard and Market Street, according to site plans.

During a June 2021 community meeting that notes describe as "a bit contentious," neighboring property owners said they had concerns about traffic, drainage and safety issues that could stem from the site's development.

Traffic congestion topped their list. Specifically, they cited worries that commercial use would generate more traffic in the area and cause cars and trucks to back-up into their neighborhoods during rush hour and other busy times of the day. Increased traffic could contribute to neighborhood safety issues, they said.

Residents also expressed fear that development of the site could lead to more flooding during hurricanes and other storms, according to meeting notes.

Clark Henry with Our Ogden, a group that advocates for smart growth in the community, said the rezoning fits into Market Street's development as a commercial corridor.

"I don't see Market Street as a prime residential location," he said. "There's a long list of development opportunities that are worse than a bank."

However, Henry said he hopes developers will make sure to put in place water management systems that will reduce flooding during heavy storms.

Henry lives in a subdivision on the other side of Market Street and said he knows the area has a history of flooding.

Developers of the project added a stormwater pond to their plans following the June community meeting and plan to add a fence and bushes as a buffer from existing homes in the area.

The rezoning is set to be considered by the New Hanover County Planning Board at its April 7 meeting.