



CITY OF FRANKLIN

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ENGINEERING

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Plan Commission Staff Report

To: Plan Commission Members

From: Joanna Tennell, Planning Director

Date: May 15, 2025

Re: Case PC-25-15 (A) & PC-25-16 (R): Umbarger Lane Annexation & Rezoning

REQUEST:

Case PC-25-15 (A) & PC-25-16 (R)...Umbarger Lane Annexation and Rezoning. A request by Arbor Homes to annex approximately 130 acres and rezone approximately 53 acres (woods) from Johnson County Single-Family (SR) to Agriculture (A) and approximately 77 acres (tillable acreage) from Johnson County Single-Family (SR) to Residential: Suburban Three (RS-3) with commitments. The subject property is located at the northeast corner of Umbarger Lane and CR 75 S, immediately south of the National Guard Armory and west of I-65.

ADJACENT PROPERTIES:

Surrounding Zoning:

North: Institutional (IN)
South: Johnson County SR
East: Industrial: Light (IL)
West: Johnson County SR

Surrounding Land Use:

North: National Guard Armory
South: Single-family residential
East: Industrial
West: Agriculture

CURRENT ZONING – JOHNSON COUNTY:

The purpose of Johnson County Single-Family Residential (SR) zoning district is to provide for single-family detached dwelling subdivisions with a more compact development pattern and less agricultural uses than the Agricultural / Residential (AR) district. These districts should be located close by or adjacent to public water and sewer systems and close to the established boundaries of incorporated municipal governments within the County. Limited civic uses are also available, provided that they blend into the neighborhood.

PROPOSED ZONING:

WOODS (North 53 acres) - The “A”, Agricultural zoning district is intended to provide locations for agricultural operations and related land uses. This district is further intended to reduce conflicts between residential and agricultural areas with the viability of agricultural operations, and limit development in areas with minimal infrastructure. This district should be used to protect agricultural operations from land uses that are incompatible with the available infrastructure.

TILLABLE ACREAGE (South 77 acres) - The “RS-3”, Residential: Suburban Three zoning district is intended to include areas for high density single family residences developed to a suburban model along with the contributing infrastructure and other necessary features.

CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Arbor Homes is requesting that 130 acres located immediately south of the National Guard Armory, on the east side of Umbarger Lane, west of I-65 and north of CR 75 S be annexed and zoned within the City of Franklin.
2. The northern 53 acres has an established woods and pond and is proposed to be zoned Agriculture (A) as there are no current development plans for the area.

The southern 77 acres, which is tillable acreage, is proposed to be zoned Residential: Suburban Three (RS-3) with commitments for a future residential subdivision (see concept plan).

3. The petitioner has offered commitments that are included as a separate attachment to the agenda. At the time the staff report was published, the final written draft of commitments had not been completed for staff review. This being the case, the most recent set of commitments are attached with the updated commitments to be provided as soon as they are available.

Staff has met with the applicant throughout the review process and has discussed the proposed commitments at length. Staff anticipates that the final written draft will be consistent with those discussions: amenities, lot size, architectural standards (materials, textures, windows, garages, etc.).

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD	JOHNSON COUNTY SR	REZONE REQUEST 53 acres to A	REZONE REQUEST 77 acres to RS-3 with commitments	
			RS-3	49% of the lots to meet RS-2 standards
Minimum Lot Area	13,000 sq.ft. 2 acres w/ septic	2 acres	7,200 sq.ft.	10,000 sq.ft.
Minimum Lot Width	80 ft.	200 ft.	50 ft. Commitment: 60 ft.	75 ft.
Front yard setback (local street)	30 ft.	50 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.
Side yard setback	10 ft.	50 ft.	8 ft.	10 ft.
Rear yard setback	20 ft.	50 ft.	15 ft.	20 ft.
Minimum Living Area	1,600 sq.ft.	1,000 sq.ft.	1,200 sq.ft.	1,600 sq.ft.
Minimum Ground Floor Living Area	N/A	N/A	40% Commitment: 825 sq.ft.	40% Commitment: 825 sq.ft.

4. One of the proposed commitments is in regard to providing lots that meet the RS-2 zoning standards while being interspersed throughout the subdivision in a similar manner as shown on the concept plan. The goal of having RS-2 lots interspersed with RS-3 lots is to provide one cohesive neighborhood instead of having a distinct separation which can result in the feel of separate neighborhoods.
5. In addition to the larger lots, the applicant has indicated that they will be committing to market and build a similar percentage (49%) of their Silverthorne series within the subdivision with the remainder being the Arbor Homes series. All homes would be required to meet the additional architectural standards outlined in the final draft of commitments.

6. Connections from the proposed internal sidewalk system to the proposed trail along Umbarger Lane will allow this future neighborhood to access the entire 20+ mile Franklin Greenway Trail system throughout Franklin.
7. Indiana Code requirements (IC 36-4-3-5) for voluntary annexation are:
 - a. Consent of 51% of the property owners or owners of 75% of the total assessed value of the land for property tax purposes.
 - b. At least one-eighth (1/8 or 12.5%) of the aggregate external boundary of the proposed annexation area must be contiguous with the existing city limits. A strip of land less than one hundred fifty (150) feet wide is not considered contiguous. (IC 36-4-3-1.5)
8. The proposed annexation area is 38.5% contiguous to the City of Franklin (contiguous: 3,275.4 ft of the total boundary: 8,503.98 ft.) and 100% of the property owners are parties to the petition.
9. Public utilities are currently available within the area. An existing sanitary sewer line runs along the entire southern boundary of the subject property as shown on the ALTA survey.
10. The proposed annexation is located within the Needham Fire Protection District (est. 3-19-90 by Ord. 1990-5). IC 36-4-3-7 outlines the effectiveness of an annexation within a fire protection district. Effective date of annexation would be the second January 1 that follows the date the ordinance is adopted.

If the property is not located within a Fire Protection District, the annexation can take effect 30 days following the adoption of the ordinance by the City Council.

The petitioner has requested that the property be removed from the Needham Fire Protection District and is coordinating this process with the Needham Fire Protection District and Johnson County Commissioners.

- a. The Resolution of the Needham Fire Protection District consenting was adopted April 14, 2025.
11. The Technical Review Committee reviewed the petitions at their April 24, 2025 meeting.
12. The property would need to go through the Primary Plat and Secondary Plat/Construction Plan review processes prior to development.
13. The 2013 Franklin Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Plan, identifies this area as Traditional Residential. "Traditional residential areas include both (1) existing neighborhoods which are extensions of the core residential areas and (2) new development which is consistent in character and design features with the existing traditional and core residential areas. Land use in traditional residential areas is dominated by single-family homes of a diversity of sizes and styles. Also included are isolated occurrences and small clusters of neighborhood-serving convenience businesses, neighborhood parks and open spaces, and neighborhood-scale churches and schools. Accessory residences and select two and multi-family residential structures may be maintained and incorporated into these areas subject to restrictions which ensure adequate parking and compatibility with the scale, function, and design features of the neighborhoods."
14. The 2013 Comprehensive Plan, states that future development could continue to threaten the already limited supply of ecologically significant natural features remaining in Franklin and the city must take measures to ensure that these areas are at least protected and positively expanded. Natural Resources and Recreation Goal 5: Continue to take steps toward improving the overall quality and quantity of urban canopy cover within the city.

PC-25-15 (A): UMBARGER LANE ANNEXATION

PLAN COMMISSION ACTION – ANNEXATION:

Plan Commission action (either *favorable*, *unfavorable*, or *no recommendation*) is a recommendation to the City Council, which takes action on the annexation petition.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION – ANNEXATION:

Staff recommends a *favorable recommendation* be forwarded to the City Council.

PC-25-16 (R): UMBARGER LANE REZONING to Residential: Suburban Three (RS-3) and Agriculture (A)

CRITERIA FOR DECISIONS – REZONING:

In taking action on rezoning requests, the Plan Commission shall pay reasonable regard to the decision criteria outlined in Article 11.6 (I) of the City of Franklin Zoning Ordinance.

1. ***Comprehensive Plan: The City of Franklin Comprehensive Plan and any other applicable, adopted planning studies or reports.***

Staff Finding:

Staff finds that the request to rezone the southern 77 acres of the property to RS-3, with the proposed commitments as discussed in meetings with the applicant, is consistent with the comprehensive plan as a variation of medium and larger lot sizes will be provided.

Staff finds that the request to rezone the 53 acres to A is the most responsible request at this time as the property is currently highly wooded with an existing pond.

2. ***Current Conditions: The current conditions and the character of current structures and uses in each district.***

Staff Finding:

The single-family residential developments constructed on the east side of Franklin have traditionally provided larger lots and larger, move-up homes. As the inventory of move-up homes is limited in the City of Franklin, it is common that homes on the eastside do not remain on the market long. Many of these current homes are constructed of combinations of brick, masonry, stone, wood, and vinyl. Some are 100% brick.

As the northern 53 acres is highly wooded, agricultural zoning is appropriate until more information is available in the future.

3. ***Desired Use: The most desirable use for which the land in each district is adapted.***

Staff Finding:

Since the completion of Homesteads at Hillview in 2017, construction of new single-family residential developments in the City of Franklin has been limited to areas west of US 31. This proposed single-family residential development will provide additional housing options on the east side closer to the I-65 corridor.

4. *Property Values: The conservation of property values throughout the City of Franklin's planning jurisdiction.*

Staff Finding:

The rezoning request should not negatively affect the property values in the area. The development of the property offering varying lot sizes than currently available could increase the property values.

5. *Responsible Growth: Responsible growth and development.*

Staff Finding:

The proposed rezoning to RS-3, with commitments, allows for a larger lot development of homes constructed with additional architectural standards than is currently available and is consistent with the comprehensive plan and surrounding area.

PLAN COMMISSION ACTION – REZONING :

In the rezoning process, the Plan Commission has the authority to review the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. Plan Commission action (either *favorable*, *unfavorable*, or *no recommendation*) is a recommendation to the City Council, which takes action on the rezoning petition.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION – REZONING:

WOODS (North 53 acres): Based on the criteria for decisions above, staff recommends a *Favorable Recommendation* be forwarded to the Franklin City Council to rezone the 53 acres to A (Agriculture).

TILLABLE ACREAGE (South 77 acres): Staff will withhold providing a recommendation until the final draft commitments have been received and thoroughly reviewed.