

Project Summary

The applicant, Tim Christopherson, is requesting approval of Conditional Use to allow an Indoor Shooting Range in an MU-C zone district. The subject site is located along the highway frontage road (S Abilene St) just south of the E Mississippi Ave and I-225 intersection and involves tenant improvements to the inside of an existing building.

The subject site is within the COMMUNITY SHOPPING CENTER #04 Subdivision and was the former 'World of Tile' located at 1310 S Abilene Street. This site was zoned B-1 prior to the adoption of the Aurora Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) on September 21st, 2019. Before this date, B-1 zoned sites were permitted by right for indoor shooting ranges. This applicant was already granted his building permit on September 30th, 2019.

The applicant's business proposal involves opening an indoor shooting range franchise under the 'Shoot Indoors' brand which currently operates a location in Broomfield, CO. Shoot Indoors locations specialize in safely introducing customers to recreational shooting, and they do not sell guns which differentiates them from most other ranges. Improvements to the building's air filtration, security, sound insulation, and interior layout are proposed as part of this application.

The proposed business will be a proven franchise operation that safely introduces customers to target shooting. The original location in Broomfield was managed by the applicant for the past five years and has safely served over 225,000 customer visits since it opened in 2014.

The applicant proposes offering 12 lanes split into two bays which allows group classes to be held while still leaving one bay open to walk-in customers. The proposed hours of operations are 10 am to 10 pm Monday-Thursday, 10 am to 8 pm Friday, and 8 am to 8 pm Saturday and Sunday. The proposal is for 15 to 20 employees total. The applicant states that education is a large part of the proposed business and offers a weekly free firearms safety class. There will be at least three range safety officers on duty at all hours of operation.

Community Comment. The most commonly cited issues throughout the opposition comments will likely be concerns regarding noise levels, safety, property values, and the use itself. The applicant plans to address these same concerns as the previous conditional approval granted for Chambered Shooting Sports in October 2019. The applicant also plans to use the exact same range and ventilation equipment as the previous applicant. The proposed site is unique in that it was already permitted for indoor shooting range use since at least 2006.

Security Measures. One of the concerns from community members has been security and safety of the proposed use. The applicant has stated this is also a primary focus for the operation of his business, however by not selling firearms the security risk is much lower. Several different measures for security are proposed. These include cameras in and around the building, an alarm system, and secure doors. In

order to get into the ranges, visitors will have to go through a check-in process and a secure interior entry vestibule. Security measures also extend to proposed training and standard procedures for staff which includes requiring mandatory "Range Safety Officers" certifications and other training to detect questionable behavior or intoxication of individuals attempting to use the range.

Noise Mitigation. Another concern is noise. The code outlines noise maximum standards which apply to all properties and construction activities. This property and use must abide by these standards. Code Section 146-4.11.2.E.2 details maximum permissible sound levels, and requires that commercial properties which abut residential zone districts emit no more than 55 decibels of noise between 7:00 am and 9:00 pm, and no more than 45 decibels from 9:00 pm to 7:00 am. In order to address this, the applicant has proposed significant noise reduction measures.

The applicant proposes to address these concerns by using a 'box-in-a-box' range design. The inside box incorporates 8" thick concrete-filled block walls covered with a steel deck which is topped with 4" of sound dampening insulation. This inside box forms the range area which is air gapped from the exterior of the building which itself has 8" concrete block walls and an insulated roof. The individual range bays will also have sound dampening panels and textured walls to further reduce sound waves. At the end of the range will be a rubber berm which is an industry standard for stopping projectiles but also serves to further reduce sound. All of these measures are intended to minimize detectable sound from outside the building. Regardless of these measures this business is subject to enforcement of the noise ordinances and can receive citations in the event of non-compliance.