

Zone Change Project Letter

Rock Haus Foundation Property

The intent of this project letter is to request a Zone Change from “R-2” to “C-1A” zoning at 511 E. North St. to allow the Rock Haus Foundation to expand their existing campus to offer critical resources to the local IDD community.

The Rock Haus Foundation is a local nonprofit organization that supports individuals of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) within Comal County. The Rock Haus Foundation’s mission is to promote a fully inclusive community for individuals with IDD while offering opportunities for education, employment, socialization, rec/leisure, and self-advocacy.

In February of 2023, the Rock Haus Foundation was deeded 5.2 acres of property located at 511 E. North St. in New Braunfels. This provided them the opportunity to develop a master building plan designed to meet both the current and future needs of our community. This plan is Rock Haus’ vision for the future. The North St. property will become a campus designed to meet the needs of individuals with IDD and their families for generations to come.

Below is a summary of the proposed master plan:

1. Building One is designed to be a multi-purpose facility. This building will include a gym for games, exercise, and social interaction, and a kitchen for meal prep and training for food service jobs.
2. Building Two is designed to house an Individualized Skills and Socialization (ISS) program. The ISS program is a person-centered approach that emphasizes community integration and inclusion. The program generally runs M-F, 9:00 am-3:00 pm. This building will be occupied by an area Service Provider for both on-site and off-site activities that prioritize the health and well-being of individuals and their families.
3. Building Three is designed to provide office space for area organizations that offer services to the community’s IDD population. This is an opportunity to give area families and caregivers the comprehensive and coordinated services they need for their loved ones. The key to connecting families with these services will be through navigators/case managers whose offices are located on our campus to allow for ease of communication and travel for families.

The current zoning on the property is “R-2” Single-Family and Two-Family District, and the existing non-residential uses on the property are considered legal non-conforming. Authorized agents for the Rock Haus Foundation met with the City of New Braunfels’ Development Planning staff and were advised that to expand the campus it is required to request a zone change to permit the uses as outlined in the proposed master plan. The requested zone change would also bring the existing uses to conforming status.

The Rock Haus Foundation is requesting to change the zoning designation to “C-1A” Neighborhood Business District. The “C-1A” district would permit the proposed office uses by right and due to the proximity to the residential homes we believe “C-1A”’s purpose of providing “office, business and professional services, and light retail and commercial uses to serve adjacent neighborhoods” aligns well with the subject property’s location and

proposed use. Additionally, the “C-1A” purpose statement of “No major shopping or office centers are included in this district. No use that is noxious or offensive by reason of vibration, noise, odor, dust, smoke or gas shall be included in this district” aligns with the intention of protecting the integrity of the existing residential neighborhood.

In the Property’s Deed, signed by the Rock Haus Foundation as the Grantee, it states “It is expressly understood and agreed that this conveyance shall be effective for only so long as Grantee does not execute a document that purports to convey the Property and uses the Property for a public purpose, including but not limited to the following:

- a. To utilize Property to serve and support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) through specialized programs and provisions in New Braunfels and Comal County.
- b. To provide a homebase for the NBISD Transition Program currently known as the Gateway program.
- c. To repair, improve and maintain the facility and its history for future generations.”

Therefore the Zone Change on the property to the “C-1A” district would still hold restrictions on commercial uses outside of those for a public purpose, such as those proposed by the Rock Haus Foundation.

The Rock Haus Foundation invited over 40 of the surrounding property owners to a neighborhood meeting on April 26th, 2024 to discuss the proposed zone change. The letter was an invitation to learn about the Rock Haus Foundation and their vision for the project, ask any questions regarding the proposed zone change, and voice any concerns they may have before the request was submitted to the City of New Braunfels for consideration. At the meeting, the Rock Haus Foundation provided a presentation and answered attending property owners’ questions about the property, proposed expansion, and zone change. The property owners that attended supported the proposed expansion and the zone change required.

We believe this request is consistent with the following objectives from the City of New Braunfels’ Strategic Plan:

- Community Identity
 - Objective 2: Safeguard the character, integrity, and stability of neighborhoods.
- Community Well-Being
 - Objective 3: Support quality of life investments, specifically focused in the underserved areas of New Braunfels.
 - Objective 6: Formalize the partnership with Police, Fire, and the City’s non-profit/ social sector, to respond to critical issues, address non-emergency social services and evaluate holistic public health and safety needs.
 - Objective 9: Support the New Braunfels Youth Collaborative and other organizations to ensure middle and high school aged youth in the community can flourish intellectually, physically, and emotionally.

We believe this request is consistent with the following actions from Envision New Braunfels:

- Action 1.3: Encourage balanced and fiscally responsible land use patterns.
- Action 1.6: Incentivize infill development and redevelopment to take advantage of existing infrastructure.

- Action 2.1: Sustain community livability for all ages and economic backgrounds.
- Action 2.31: Encourage youth amenities that keep families in town.
- Action 3.35: Support local non-profits whose mission includes these goals.
- Action 3.6: Pro actively provide a regulatory environment that remains business and resident friendly.
- Action 8.3: Foster opportunities for collaboration with local nonprofits.
- Action 8.16: Create an environment that increases employment opportunities at all education and skill levels.

We believe this request is consistent with the following goals from Envision New Braunfels:

- Growth and Future Land Use Goals:
 - “Protect the character, integrity and stability of neighborhoods where families can live.”
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space Goals:
 - “Continue to plan, develop and operate a variety of indoor and outdoor facilities that support multiple activities; grow recreation facilities, programs, activities and services in the areas of highest community need.”
- Facilities Goals:
 - “Ensure public facilities and spaces are available, welcoming, and accessible to all residents.”
- Education and Youth Goals
 - “Foster an environment that encourages youth to want to stay, return and invest in the future of the city.”
 - “Through collaborative efforts, continue to provide and expand coordinated and comprehensive opportunities and environments to prepare children and their families for early education and their complete education journey.”
 - “Provide locations for social opportunities for teens after school/evenings.”

This request aligns with the objectives of the City of New Braunfels’ Strategic Plan and the goals and actions of Envision New Braunfels. This zone change request is required for the Rock Haus Foundation’s campus to expand and better serve the IDD community in New Braunfels and Comal County. The Rock Haus Foundation’s master building plan is designed to meet both the current and future needs of our community, and changing the zoning designation to “C-1A” Neighborhood Business District would be one of the first steps to meeting their goal.