

# Council approves rezoning for potential Robert Smalls Phase II development

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## Current plans for Robert Smalls Phase II development call for 170 'workforce housing' units



A potential second phase for the Robert Smalls development in Spartanburg's Northside neighborhood took its first step forward on Monday as City Council voted unanimously to approve a rezoning of 459 Wofford Street, the property where the development would be located. The rezoning was needed in order for the project to move forward as the property was split-zoned between Zone R-6, General Residential District and Zone B-4, Heavy Commercial District, creating contradictory zoning requirements. Under the new change, the entire property will be zoned B-4.

Developer EquityPlus LLC. currently has plans to construct a 170-unit second phase to the Robert Smalls apartment development currently under construction. Phase 1 of the project will serve as a replacement for the dilapidated 190-unit Norris Ridge Apartments, with all of the units set aside for affordable housing for households with incomes of less than 50 percent of Spartanburg's area median income.

Units in the proposed second phase development would be reserved for "workforce" housing, designed to be filled by those earning between 50 and 80 percent of area median income, which tops out at around \$35,000 per year for an individual and \$51,000 per year for a family of four. In the case of both the affordable and workforce units, rent and utilities would be set to be no more than 30 percent of the individual household's income. The developer has also indicated the possibility of including a retail component in phase II of the development, and while the rezoning is an important first step in the process, the project is still in the early stages, with any future development agreement for Robert Smalls Phase II still requiring approval by City Council.

Also at Monday's meeting City Council gave final approval 4-3 to a change to the City's Urban Code that will allow indoor storage facilities in parts of the Northside and Downtown Spartanburg. While initially the proposed change would've only applied to properties in the Northside, Council member Rob Rain made a motion during the first reading to amend the ordinance to allow for indoor storage in all areas where the urban code applies. Currently the urban code applies for Downtown Spartanburg and the Northside, with the rest of the city under a more traditional zoning code. Council members Meghan Smith, Ruth Littlejohn and Erica Brown voted against.

The change allows buildings in the urban code's DT4 and DT5 areas to be used for indoor self storage units, but such developments would need to meet numerous other requirements set out in the code meaning that the building must have an "active ground floor" with no storage units fronting a public street, all storage must be internal and only accessible via interior hallways, and any self storage developments will need to go through the usual City Design Review Board process.