



Memorandum

To: Town Council
From: Matthew Glassman, Chair of the Planning Commission *mg*
Meeting Date: February 25, 2026
Re: Recommendation on Modifications of Site Plan Requirements
First Baptist Church of Vienna – 450 Orchard St NW

Summary

On February 25, 2026, the Planning Commission reviewed a request from First Baptist Church of Vienna for a modification of site plan requirements related to lot coverage at 450 Orchard Street NW.

The request seeks approval of 48.5% lot coverage, where 43% was approved previously, and 25% is permitted in the RS-12.5 zoning district. The modification is necessary to bring existing site conditions into formal compliance following installation of two sheds (circa 2019) and a prior expansion of the parking lot constructed before 2014 without zoning permits.

After discussion and consideration of staff's report and the applicant's presentation, the Planning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend approval of the requested modification to Town Council.

Proposal Overview

The First Baptist Church of Vienna property is zoned RS-12.5 and designated Institutional on the Comprehensive Plan. The church building was originally constructed in 1957, with a two-story addition added in 1997.

The request before the Commission pertains specifically to:

- An expansion of the parking lot constructed prior to 2014; and
- Installation of two sheds and a connecting driveway around 2019.

The previously approved site plan reflected 43% lot coverage. The existing improvements increase total lot coverage to 48.5%, necessitating approval of a modification of site plan requirements in order to regularize the site.

Staff clarified that the parking lot expansion is considered vested based on its age. The sheds were relocated to address setback compliance concerns, and the applicant stated that the relocation exceeded the minimum required adjustment to ensure conformity.

Key Discussion Points

The applicant emphasized that the request is not for new construction but to bring existing conditions into compliance. The Commission acknowledged that the site’s institutional use and long-standing parking configuration reflect the operational needs of the church.

One Commissioner noted the church’s longstanding cooperation with Louise Archer Elementary School, including allowing use of the church parking lot during school events. While not a formal factor in the lot coverage analysis, this was cited as reflective of the church’s role as a community partner.

During discussion, a Commissioner raised concerns about long-term maintenance of an existing trench drain serving the parking lot. Staff indicated that engineering review would consider appropriate maintenance and operational matters as needed.

The Commission’s deliberation focused on whether the requested modification was reasonable given the institutional nature of the property and the fact that the improvements are existing conditions.

The Commission determined that approving the modification would bring the property into formal compliance without introducing new intensity beyond what is already constructed and functioning on the site.

Planning Commission Recommendation

On February 25, 2026, the Planning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend that Town Council approve the requested modification of site plan requirements to permit 48.5% lot coverage at 450 Orchard Street NW.

Motion: Commissioner Kenney
2nd: Commissioner Plowgian
Roll Call Vote: 5-0

Matthew Glassman, Chair	Aye
Douglas Noble, Vice Chair	absent
Keith Aimone	absent
Deepa Chakrapani	Aye
Stephen Kenney	Aye
David Miller	Aye
Jessica Plowgian	Aye

Closing

The Planning Commission respectfully submits this recommendation and the meeting record for Town Council’s consideration at its March 23, 2026 meeting.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if additional clarification is helpful as Council reviews this matter.