

FILE NO.: Z-4411-N

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NAME: Pleasant Ridge Towne Center Revised Long-form PCD

LOCATION: Located at 11525 Cantrell Road

DEVELOPER:

Schickel Development Company  
11601 Pleasant Ridge Road  
Little Rock, AR 72223

ENGINEER:

White-Daters and Associates  
24 Rahling Circle  
Little Rock, AR 72223

AREA: 27.0 acres

NUMBER OF LOTS: 3

FT. NEW STREET: 0 LF

CURRENT ZONING:

PCD

ALLOWED USES:

C-2, Shopping Center District

PROPOSED ZONING:

Revised PCD

PROPOSED USE:

Allow a second access to the shopping center via Woodland Heights Road

VARIANCE/WAIVERS: A variance from Sections 30-43 and 31-210 to allow driveways inconsistent with the typical driveway spacing criteria.

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BACKGROUND:

On December 20, 1994, through Ordinance No. 16,808, the City Board of Directors approved a PCD that would allow the development of a mixed use "Neighborhood Commercial" shopping center and an accompanying office development. The site was a 12.83 acre-tract and of the area, 11.48 acres was proposed to be developed as the shopping center. The proposed structure was 97,680 square feet, and 463 parking spaces were indicated. A 1.35-acre tract was to have 10,000 square feet of office building space with an additional 50 parking spaces. The uses proposed for the

shopping center were all by-right C-2 and C-3 zoning district, except that there were to be no service stations, auto glass or muffler shops, convenience stores, or car washes within the scope of the PCD. The uses proposed for the office building were all uses by right in the O-2 and O-3 zoning district.

On January 9, 1997, the Commission reviewed a request for a change in the right-of-way dedication and street improvement requirement to Fairview Road. The developer requested all right-of-way dedication and street improvements be taken from the property located to the east of Fairview Road. The Board of Directors adopted Ordinance No. 17,331 on December 3, 1996, which allowed a five-year deferral of street improvements (or until development of the Pleasant Ridge Square PCD) to Fairview Road.

The Little Rock Planning Commission granted a three-year time extension for the proposed submission of the final development plan at their December 22, 1997, Public Hearing. The applicant submitted a Final Development Plan for the Pleasant Ridge Square Long-form PCD, which was approved on February 1, 2002.

The Little Rock Board of Directors adopted Ordinance No. 19,233 on November 9, 2004, establishing a revision to the Pleasant Ridge Town Center PCD. The development was proposed as a 300,000 square foot retail center with restaurant space developed as a "Life-style Center". The approval allowed the creation of three lots.

Ordinance No. 19,281 adopted by the Little Rock Board of Directors on February 15, 2005, revised the previously approved PCD to allow Coulson Oil to add an additional driveway to their site and adjust the southern property line. The site plan indicated the drive would be added to the southwestern corner of the property to adjoin to the proposed driveway for Pleasant Ridge Town Center. The applicant indicated with the adjustment, the existing Coulson PCD would function more appropriately with the approved Pleasant Ridge Town Center site plan. Coulson Oil also proposed the sale of a portion of their lot to the Pleasant Ridge Town Center along the southern perimeter. The sale of the property resulted in a rear yard buffer and landscape strip that was less than the typical minimum required per the Highway 10 Design Overlay District.

The Board of Directors adopted Ordinance No. 19,633 on November 21, 2006, revising the previously approved PCD for the shopping center to allow the creation of two (2) additional lots for the Pleasant Ridge Town Center. The previous approval allowed for the creation of three (3) lots which had been final platted. The developer proposed the placement of the two (2) additional lots along Cantrell Road within the area identified as future restaurant sites. According to the applicant the restaurant out-parcels were needed to allow the transfer of property to prospective tenants. The approval brought the total available lots on the site to five (5). There were no other modifications proposed to the previous approval.

On December 7, 2006, the Little Rock Planning Commission denied a request to allow the western-most drive located along Cantrell Road to become a full service intersection. The denial of the request was appealed to the Board of Directors and was

scheduled to be heard on February 20, 2006. The item was withdrawn from the Board of Directors agenda prior to action by the Board of Directors.

Ordinance No. 19,730 adopted by the Little Rock Board of Directors on April 3, 2007, allowed a revision to the previously approved PCD to allow additional sign locations within the development. The approval allowed building signage located on the portion of the flat wall located on the northeast corner and northwest corner of the center shopping center building. No other modifications to the approved site plan were proposed with the revision to the PCD.

On October 15, 2009, the Little Rock Planning Commission made a recommendation of approval of a request by Chick-fil-A to place signage along their western façade. On November 17, 2009, the Little Rock Board of Directors denied the request.

Ordinance No. 20,240 adopted by the Little Rock Board of Directors on April 6, 2010, allowed a revision to the PCD to allow seasonal sales on the site. The approval allowed the placement of a temporary trailer for a shaved ice business to be placed on the site from April through September yearly.

On May 17, 2011, the Board of Directors adopted Ordinance No. 20,438 to amend the PCD to allow the creation of an additional lease parcel to the site. The lease parcel/building footprint was located between Chick-Fil-A restaurant and the Chipotles Mexican Grill. The building did not increase the square footage of the overall development beyond the approved 315,000 square feet. The approved revision indicated a maximum 6,000 square foot building with a drive-thru along the west side. The approval allowed the flexibility to vary the plan to eliminate the drive-thru and add parking and also reduce the building size to add parking or some combination thereof should the tenant space vary from the approved site plan.

On June 2, 2011, the Little Rock Planning Commission withdrew a request to allow signage on the eastern façade of an out-parcel located along the eastern entrance drive to the Pleasant Ridge Town Center shopping center. The request would allow the placement of signage along the eastern and western facades of the building, both located without public street frontage. The eastern façade abuts an access drive entering the shopping center. The western façade faces the Chick-fil-A.

On February 7, 2012, the Little Rock Board of Directors adopted Ordinance No. 20,543 to allow a revision to the driveways on Cantrell Road. The approval allowed the main entrance drive adjacent to Chipotles Mexican Grill and the Shell Station to be realigned to match a proposed driveway located on the north side of Cantrell Road which would serve a future office building. The Arkansas State Highway Department denied this request.

Ordinance No. 20,790 adopted by the Little Rock Board of Directors on September 17, 2013, allowed a revision to the signage plan for the furniture store. Wall signage on the east and southern façades was approved. The signage on the eastern façade was located over the tenant's front door and on the southern façade the sign faced into the

shopping center. No signage was allowed along Cantrell Road or on the western façade of the building.

A. PROPOSAL/REQUEST/APPLICANT'S STATEMENT:

The applicant is now proposing to revise the previously approved PCD to allow a second access to the shopping center. The proposed entrance is located at the south end of the shopping center where the property fronts Woodland Heights Road. The proposed entrance would allow vehicles entering and exiting the center to the south direct access to Woodland Heights Road. This would eliminate the need for cars to travel on Woodland Heights Road to the east where it fronts Christ the King School. The elementary school has property on both sides of Woodland Heights Road. Children cross the street in this location to gain access to the play areas on the north side of Woodland Heights Road. The entrance would also eliminate the need for cars to travel west on Fairview Road where there is a church, single-family homes as well as the Jewish Learning Center for Children on the north-south leg of Fairview Road. The proposed entrance would eliminate the conflicts with pedestrians both school age and adults walking on Fairview Road.

The applicant states the proposed entrance, is a more direct access to the south side of the center and the access would not increase traffic on Woodland Heights Road and Fairview Road. The proposed entrance would simply shorten the route taken by motorists already accessing the center via these two (2) streets thereby reducing conflicts for motorist and pedestrians and improving safety.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The site is developed with a shopping center with three (3) out-parcels located along Cantrell Road. The western most out-parcel is a Chick-fil-A restaurant and the eastern most out-parcel has developed with a Chipotle's Mexican Grill. The center parcel contains a furniture store. Also located in the immediate area of this development are a number of restaurants, two convenience stores, banks and office buildings, a drycleaners, a liquor store and a City of Little Rock Fire station. North of the site, across Cantrell Road, is the Walton Heights Subdivision. South of the site is Christ the King Church and School and Easter Seals. The Pleasant Forest Subdivision is also located south of the site. West of the site are churches, single-family homes and office uses.

C. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS:

As of this writing, staff has received a few informational phone calls from area residents. All owners of property located within 200-feet of the site along with the Pleasant Forest Neighborhood Association, the Pleasant Valley Property Owners Association and the Walton Height Candlewood Property Owners Association were notified of the public hearing.

D. ENGINEERING COMMENTS:

PUBLIC WORKS CONDITIONS:

1. Street Improvement plans shall include signage and striping. Traffic Engineering must approve completed plans prior to construction.
2. Driveway locations and widths do not meet the traffic access and circulation requirements of Sections 30-43 and 31-210. Driveways on collector and commercial streets must be at least 250 feet from other driveways. A variance must be requested for the proposed driveway location.
3. The driveway median should be redesigned and narrowed at the entrance to prevent vehicles from entering the exit side of the driveway. Contact Nat Banihatti of Traffic Engineering at time of permitting to discuss revised plan.
4. On site striping and signage plans should be forwarded to Public Works, Traffic Engineering for approval with the site development package.

E. SUBDIVISION COMMITTEE COMMENT: (January 7, 2015)

Mr. Joe White and Mr. Brian Dale of White-Daters and Associates were present representing the request. Staff presented an overview of the item stating there were no outstanding technical issues associated with the request. Staff stated the purpose of the amendment was to allow a second access to the existing shopping center. Staff noted the parking indicated on the site plan was in place.

Public Works stated the approval would require a variance to allow the driveways as proposed. Staff stated the driveway median should be redesigned and narrowed at the entrance to prevent vehicles from entering the exit side of the driveway.

There were no more issues for discussion. The Committee then forwarded the item to the full Commission for final action.

F. ANALYSIS:

There were no outstanding technical issues associated with the request in need of addressing via a revised site plan. The applicant is requesting to revise the previously approved PCD to allow access to the site from a newly created curb cut. The drive would be an extension of the existing parking area located south of Belk's. No other modifications are proposed for the approved site plan.

Staff is not supportive of the request. The applicant has stated the secondary entrance to the south would shorten the route taken by motorists already accessing the center via Fairview and Woodland Heights thereby reducing conflicts for motorist and pedestrians and improving safety. The applicant has

also stated the addition of the second entrance would enhance the shopping center. Staff does not feel this is the case. The development appears to have been a very successful development with most of the tenant space leased and all the out-parcels have been developed. By opening the rear access motorist will potentially use this access as a cut-through to and from Cantrell Road when Rodney Parham backs up or when motorist are trying to get around the congestion at Cantrell and Rodney Parham.

G. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the request.

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PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(JANUARY 29, 2015)

The applicant was present. There were no registered objectors present. Staff presented the item stating the applicant had submitted a request on January 13, 2015, requesting deferral of this item to the March 12, 2015, public hearing. Staff stated they were supportive of the deferral request.

There was no further discussion of the item. The Chair entertained a motion for approval of the item as presented by staff. The motion carried by a vote of 10 ayes, 0 noes, 0 absent and 1 open position.

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STAFF UPDATE:

The applicant submitted a request dated March 2, 2015, requesting deferral of this item to the April 23, 2015, public hearing.

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PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(MARCH 12, 2015)

The applicant was present. There were no registered objectors present. Staff presented the item stating the applicant had submitted a request dated March 2, 2015, requesting deferral of this item to the April 23, 2015, public hearing.

There was no further discussion of the item. The Chair entertained a motion for approval of the item as presented by staff. The motion carried by a vote of 11 ayes, 0 noes and 0 absent.

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PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(APRIL 23, 2015)

The applicant was present representing the request. There were registered objectors present. Staff presented the item with a recommendation of denial.

Mr. Philip Kaplan was present representing the request. Mr. Kaplan stated he had represented Schickel Development for a number of years. He stated the ordinance approved by the Board of Directors in 2004 stated the rear entrance would not be opened without Board of Directors approval. He stated nine and one-half (9 ½) years later Mr. Schickel was requesting to open the rear entrance. He stated when the center opened there was no data to support where the traffic would come or how that traffic would access the center. He stated now there was data to support the need for the rear entrance and the impact opening the entrance would have on the neighborhood streets.

He stated there were 800,000 trips per year entering the center from the south. He stated the cars traveled Fairview Road and Woodland Heights Road to enter the center. He stated with this number of automobiles there was a safety concern for Christ the King School and Easter Seals. He stated both crossed Woodlands Heights to access the administration building and playground area for Christ the King School. He stated Easter Seals used the schools playground equipment located on the north side of Woodland Heights Road. He stated Christ the King was in support of the request to open the entrance. He stated with the opening of the entrance a four-way stop would be added which would slow traffic and allow for safe pedestrian access. He stated with the previous application Pleasant Valley Property Owners Association and Easter Seals were both speaking in opposition of the request. He stated with the current request both had decided to remain neutral. He stated staff's position was based on suppositions and not facts. He stated there were traffic numbers which revealed the center had not increased traffic on the residential streets and opening the south entrance would not increase traffic concerns in the area.

Mr. Ernie Peters addressed the Commission. He stated his firm was Peters and Associates and had been hired by Schickel Development to review the traffic patterns in the area. He stated based on traffic counts it was determined there were 800,000 vehicle trips per year entering the center from the south. He stated there were five drive entrances to the shopping center from Fairview and Woodlands Heights Roads. He stated the traffic was already in the area. He stated opening the south entrance would not create additional traffic but would relieve traffic on Woodland Heights Road and Fairview Road.

Mr. Keith Wingfield addressed the Commission in support of the request. He stated he was on the building committee for Christ the King School and had been for 34 years. He stated he was currently the chair of the building committee and had been for the past seven (7) years. He stated in the original application the church felt they could not take a stand because there were members on both sides of the issue. He stated the church had 6,000 members and 1,800 families. He stated the church's concerns was the passage of the number of vehicles in front of the drop-off and pick-up for the school. He stated the church owned property on both sides of Woodland Heights Road and the administration and playground were on the north side of Woodland Heights Road. He stated 850 children attended the school. He stated with the creation of the four-way a safe intersection would be of benefit and take traffic off unimproved roads.

Mr. Craig Williams addressed the Commission in opposition of the request. He stated his home was located on Pleasant Forrest Drive. He stated in 1998 there were 3800 cars per day on Pleasant Forest Drive. He stated once the intersection at Rodney Parham Road was improved the traffic on Pleasant Forest increased significantly. He stated in 2004 there were 5,000 cars per day on Pleasant Forest Drive. He stated traffic circles on Pleasant Forest Drive were installed to help slow traffic. He stated during the approval process the developer promoted the shopping center as a destination place where people would walk to shop and entertain. He stated the developer was now claiming concern of pedestrian and traffic conflict on Fairview and Woodland Heights Road. He stated there was no way to measure the risk of opening the rear entrance. He stated when there were backups on Rodney Parham and Cantrell Road the cars currently spilled over to Pleasant Forest Drive. He stated with the widening of Cantrell Road, cars would continue to access Pleasant Forest Drive to avoid the construction on Cantrell Road. He stated the developer was requesting to open the rear entrance as a benefit to the shopping center not because it was inconvenient for shoppers to access the site from the current entrances on Woodland Heights and Fairview Roads.

Mr. Alan Smith addressed the Commission in opposition of the request. He stated his home was located two (2) blocks off Rodney Parham Road. He stated when access to Rodney Parham was improved the traffic also increased. He stated the developer did meet with the property owners association and the discussion after the meeting was more of I wish it would not happen.

Mr. Ray Rogers addressed the Commission in opposition of the request. He stated his home was located on Pleasant Forest Drive. He stated the development the Board of Directors approved was a family life style center for shopping. He stated the ordinance approved by the Board of Directors did not allow for the southern entrance. He stated the shopping center had access from several locations and did not need this additional access. He stated opening the rear entrance was of no benefit to the residents of the area.

Ms. Paula Pottenger addressed the Commission in opposition of the request. She provided the Commission with a number of slides from a PowerPoint presentation showing the traffic circles which had been installed on Pleasant Forest Drive and the damage to property and vehicles which had occurred. She stated the circles were not designed properly. She stated there was constantly debris around the circles and they were not maintained. She stated the traffic circles were oversized and dysfunctional. She stated to allow the southern entrance to be opened would only increase traffic on Pleasant Forest and continue the blight which was being caused on the neighborhood by this developer.

Ms. Ruth Bell addressed the Commission in opposition of the request. She stated traffic was like water and would take the path of least resistance. She stated if a stop sign was needed the City could install the sign and not open the southern access to the shopping center which was going to increase traffic in the neighborhoods.



Mr. Jeff Yates addressed the Commission in opposition of the request. He stated safety was a concern and a stop sign could be installed without opening the rear access. He stated his concern was there were plans in place for improvements to Cantrell Road and Rodney Parham Road which were not being coordinated. He stated it was important to provide overall connectivity. He stated the southern access should not be opened until the improvements to Cantrell Road were complete to view the impact comprehensively.

Mr. Gregory Hopkens addressed the Commission in opposition. He stated his firm represented Smiley Technologies. He stated the concern was the long term impact opening this rear access would have on the adjacent properties. He stated once the access was opened it would be difficult to remove the access. He stated a memorandum had been provided to the Commission outlining their concerns.

Mr. Kaplan addressed the Commission concerning issues which had been raised. He stated Mr. Schickel did not install the traffic circles but at the request of the City he contributed \$70,000 for the installation. He stated the deal was not that the entrance would not be installed but would be reviewed and approved by the City prior to installation.

Mr. Peters stated there were plans to improve Rodney Parham to the north of the intersection with Pleasant Forest which included the addition of a bike lane. He stated the plans for the portion of Rodney Parham Road to the south had not been finalized. He stated the traffic was already accessing the center. He stated opening the southern entrance would allow a more direct access to the center.

There was a general discussion by the Commission concerning the request and traffic in the area. The Commission noted patrons were already access the shopping center from the south via Woodland Heights and Fairview Roads. Commissioner Berry stated driving the area the streets were substandard and he felt the area was "crying for connectivity". He stated this would allow for a grid traffic pattern. He stated he did not feel there would be any additional traffic on Pleasant Forest Drive as a result of creating access through a southern entrance.

A motion was made to approve the request including all staff recommendations and comments except that of denial. The motion passed by a vote of 8 ayes, 2 noes and 1 absent.