



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 7050 Watts Road
Application Type: Alteration to a previously approved PD(GDP), Initial Approval Requested
Legistar File ID # [57488](#)
Prepared By: Janine Glaeser, UDC Secretary

Background Information

Applicant | Contact: Daniel Stewart, 7050 Watts Rd., LLC/Michelle L. Burse, Burse Surveying & Engineering, Inc.

Project Description: The applicant is requesting Initial Approval for Major Alteration to an existing Planned Development Use (PD). The development team is only requesting approval of the General Development Plan (GDP) at this time and notes that there will be a future Specific Implementation Plan (SIP) at the time of development of the new lot. The larger zoning lot currently includes At Home and Walmart stores (however, modifications are not proposed on the specific Walmart property). The applicant proposes to divide the zoning lot’s parking area and add another lot with a commercial building. Staff understands the proposed building to be a one-story commercial structure.

Project Schedule:

- The UDC received an informational presentation for this proposal on October 2, 2019
- The UDC referred consideration of this item on January 29, 2020
- The Plan Commission is scheduled to review this item on March 9, 2020.
- The Common Council is scheduled to review this item on March 17, 2020.

Approval Standards:

The UDC is an advisory body for Planned Development zoned properties. The site is also part of a Large Retail Development which requires that the Urban Design Commission to approve the proposed alteration project using the design standards and guidelines for a Planned Development and Large Retail Developments.

The proposed project must meet design standards for Planned Development pursuant to Section 28.098(2) PD Approval Standards and Large Retail Development pursuant to Section 33.24(4)(f) and Planned Multi-Use Sites pursuant to Section 28.137(2)(e) of the Zoning Code. When applying the requirements, the Urban Design Commission shall consider relevant design recommendations in any element of the City's Master Plan or other adopted City plans. Staff notes that the specific standards of Section 33.24(4)(f) apply to buildings over 40,000 square feet, or more.

Summary of Design Considerations & Plan Consistencies

In reviewing the modifications, the Planning Division continues to have significant concerns regarding the loss of the existing landscape buffer to accommodate surface parking lot expansion to support the new development. The original PD includes landscaped screening buffer between Watts Road and parking that roughly varies in depth from about 30’ at its narrowest point, up to over 80’ to the east. This proposal removes a large portion of this Watts Road landscaping buffer. In pre-application discussions, staff raised concerns regarding the removal of the existing buffer for the purpose of creating surface parking and a one-story commercial building. Planning Division staff have encouraged that future development maintain the approved buffer along the Watts Road Frontage.

Staff recommends the Commission review the proposal and provide feedback based on the applicable approval standards for a Planned Development and Large Retail Development and comments from the October 2nd Informational Presentation. The PD Zoning Statement of Purpose and Standards are attached. The Large Retail Development Statement of Purpose requires that the addition will enhance the urban fabric and be compatible with the existing development context.

Below are the comments provided by the UDC at their **January 29, 2020** meeting:

- I'm wondering if your elevational differences are going to block all your potential signage.
- Zoning does not state that if it's a Watts Road address that the front of the building has to face Watts Road.
- Look at reorienting the building.
- I'm wondering if you want to move that entrance to the right a little bit. Making a left turn seems difficult so close to the intersection.
- The big concern is the loss of berm which is part of the PD, and how the applicant is going to mitigate that.
- The 7 parking spots backing into a road on the north side of the building, is that a concern?
- I'm concerned with the loss of the buffer. If you are removing that bay of parking on plan south, we don't really know the justification for the number of parking stalls, specifically because there's a sea of parking just across the road.