



701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Council Memo

Department Source: Community Development

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: July 20, 2026

Re: PD Plan The Retreat at Columbia – Rezoning, PD Plan (Case #124-2026)

Impacted Ward: Ward 6

Executive Summary

Approval of this request would rezone 32.7 acres from A (Agricultural) to PD (Planned Development), and would approve a site-specific Statement of Intent (SOI) enabling the undeveloped acreage to be developed with 194 multifamily dwelling units purpose built for students. The Development Plan does not propose any design exceptions. The resulting development plan is to be known as "The Retreat at Columbia" and includes the vacant 32.7 acres of land presently unaddressed, approximately 350 feet north of the terminus of Gray Oak Drive.

Discussion

Crockett Engineering (agent), on behalf of Grindstone Acres, LLC (owner) seeks approval of a rezoning from A to PD, and adoption of a development plan to be known as "The Retreat at Columbia", also serving as a new preliminary plat for the vacant 32.7-acre tract of land, and a site-specific Statement of Intent (SOI) that adds multiple family dwellings (inclusive of customary accessory uses and related structures) as a use for the site. The subject site will be accessed from an extension of Grindstone Plaza Drive and a new street, Retreat Way, which connects to both the extension of Grindstone Plaza Drive and Rock Quarry Road. Approval of this PD plan would subsequently require final platting before development could be pursued.

This case was originally heard at the May 7, 2026 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. Following public comment, the applicant elected to table this case to June 4, 2026, so the applicant could perform supplemental research with respect to the submitted Traffic Impact Study (TIS). The City of Columbia requested that this case be tabled to the June 11 Commission meeting to permit a full review of the amended TIS to be completed. The original and supplemental TIS documents are attached to this memo.

The PD Plan, serving as a preliminary plat, illustrates the site as being one lot 32.7 acres in size. The site is accessed from Rock Quarry Road and an extension of Grindstone Plaza Drive. The southernmost stem of this site will be included in the tract split for future right-of-way dedications to facilitate the extension of Grindstone Plaza Drive upon final platting. The tract split also includes land that will be dedicated for the construction of Retreat Way, which will connect Grindstone Plaza Drive to Rock Quarry Road.

This site lies within the scenic roadway overlay (SR-O) that exists upon Rock Quarry Road. The SR-O spans 220 feet from each side of the centerline, but only restricts development within

the first 83-feet of each side of the centerline, where existing vegetation must be preserved. The applicant has illustrated this in the shaded red area of the attached PD plan, where all structures are outside of the aforementioned 83-foot buffer. The SR-O stipulates that all utilities on-site must be located underground unless otherwise required by such utility provider. The lot exceeds 300-feet of frontage along Rock Quarry Road in accordance with the minimum width requirement. There are no direct driveways accessing Rock Quarry from this development. Other regulations related to site development within the SR-O are to be addressed at the time of civil/site plan review.

Lot dimensions, setbacks, structure height, and parking requirements conform with typical requirements for development with the R-MF zoning district. While 15% landscaping is typically required for development, a reduction of the landscaping to 10% is requested. The landscape plan, however, illustrates 15% of the site being landscaped. The site has two pockets of climax forest, which total around 2.5 acres in area. The site is also largely encumbered by a type-II stream buffer with varying widths, which includes an inner and outer buffer.

The site has access to sanitary sewer at its northwest corner, access to water from either Rock Quarry Road or Gray Oak Drive, and access to electric from Gray Oak Drive. Standard 10-foot utility easements abutting right-of-way must be dedicated upon final platting of this site. Offsite utility easements will also be necessary as the proposed development only encompasses the north edge of proposed Retreat Way.

Final platting of this property will trigger right-of-way dedications for Rock Quarry Road, and will necessitate right-of-way dedications for the future extension of Grindstone Plaza Drive and future construction of Retreat Way. Retreat Way will align with Riback Road, which connects to Rock Quarry Road on the opposite side of the street. Final platting will also result in sidewalk construction along all public street frontage.

The proposed parking lot design shown on the PD plan allows access for fire apparatus, and comports with design standards for drive aisles within parking lots. The PD plan illustrates 731 parking spaces being provided, in excess of the 516 required, but not greater than 200% of the minimum. 37 bicycle parking spaces are to be provided, 5% of the provided parking and is in compliance with sec. 29-4.3(k) of the Unified Development Code.

The attached landscaping plan for this development illustrates street trees being planted within right-of-way along the northern side of Retreat Way, as well as trees within the proposed parking lot. Such landscaping provisions are in compliance with Secs. 29-4.4(c), (d), (f), and (g) of the Unified Development Code. To supplement the Rock Quarry SR-O, the applicant illustrates elm and maple trees being planted within the SR-O. As the existing vegetation on the site must be preserved, but is presently only grassland, these improvements are believed enhancements to the SR-O. The trees will also provide screening from the roadway and privacy for the 6 dwelling units sited nearest the SR-O. A tree preservation plan has also been added to this report.

The subject site is designated as being located within the “Neighborhood” district as depicted on the Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Map. The subject site is also located within a tier I growth priority area, as it currently lies within city limits and the urban service area, does not require extensive infrastructure extension, and has access to the existing street network, although new street construction will be necessary for the development of the site. The site also lies within a quarter mile of an existing commercial node and corridor. Future commercial development along Grindstone Parkway between Grindstone Plaza Drive and Rock Quarry Road is also believed to supplement commercial needs for potential tenants of this development. The site is also approximately a half-mile travel distance from the Go COMO’s Black route which may potentially serve tenants utilizing public transit.

A TIS (Traffic Impact Study) was required for this proposal and did not identify any necessary off-site improvements to the public roadway network as there were not significant delays to the public street network attributed to this development. When Grindstone Plaza Drive is extended, traffic control measures must be installed. The TIS for this development incorporated future improvements for Grindstone Plaza Drive that are obligated for a separate development when modeling for roadway capacity and future level of service.

Additional information pertinent to analysis is included in the staff report to the Planning and Zoning Commission for this case. As traffic concerns were the most pertinent concerns brought about during public hearings for this proposal, the extensive analysis in the staff report is omitted from this memo for the purpose of brevity.

Ultimately, the TIS indicated that induced traffic from this development will not result in substantial drops in the existing level of service to warrant off-site improvements. The supplemental memo for the TIS indicates that traffic at Rock Quarry and Stadium is likely to be around 80 trips at the peak hour, 40 outbound and 40 inbound, which is not substantial enough to warrant off-site improvements, and is around a 2% net increase in vehicles during these peak periods. The identified peak hours in the TIS are consistent with the ITE trip generation manual in regards to hourly distribution of entering and exiting vehicle trips for land use code 225, off-campus student apartments, low-rise, over 0.5 miles from campus. Analysis of trip generation from adjacent multifamily development indicates ITE projections may be in excess of realized trip generation for similar development.

The Rock Quarry Road Special Area Plan (SAP) was adopted in October of 2002 by City Council, and is attached to this report. The document notes this area as being designated for low-density residential. Low-density residential, per the SAP, is classified as being up to 3 units/acre, while medium density is up to 6 units/acre, and high density is classified as being up to 12 units/acre. This proposal is over 6 units/acre, but not more than 7 units/acre and would be considered medium to high density. Analysis related to the SAP is included in the staff report to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

The joint City of Columbia and Boone County Housing Study, adopted in October 2024, states that purpose-built housing should be avoided downtown particularly, both for students and seniors. Those interviewed for this study noted concerns that student housing development is outpacing housing stock for workforce needs. Students comprise

approximately a quarter of the population in the City of Columbia, and consequently represent a substantial portion of multifamily rental demand. The study also notes that proximity to the educational institutions in town is the most important factor for students looking for housing.

While purpose-built student housing is generally intended for a specific population rather than the broader market, such developments may help reduce competition for existing rental housing stock elsewhere by accommodating student demand in dedicated housing developments. Purpose-built student housing still counts toward provision of multifamily units for rent, although it may not be marketed to the general population. The provision of 194 dwelling units would be in excess of the goal of 163 units per year for the next 25 years, as discussed in the Housing Study. Providing units in excess of the annualized target is not believed to negatively impact the City's housing objectives.

The requested rezoning to PD from A enables development supported by the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, and the site has access to utilities with existing capacity to support the development, and lies within the Urban Service area, and a tier 1 growth priority area. While the proposed development would be compliant in the R-MF district, PD zoning is supported given the presence of the SR-O on the eastern edge of the site, and goals and policies of residential development within the Rock Quarry Road Special Area Plan. The proposed development also comports with the 2024 Housing Study goals for provision of multifamily dwelling units for rent in the City.

The proposed PD plan aligns with requirements for multifamily dwellings and the SR-O. The proposed landscaping plan complies with the landscaping requirements of 29-4.4 of the Unified Development Code. A reduction in required landscaping, if deviating from proposed landscaping plans, is believed to be appropriate when considering the existing environmental features on the site and the size of the tract, as more than 50 percent of the site will remain in open space.

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing on this request at the May 7, 2026 meeting. Staff provided its report and the applicant provided a presentation on the proposed development. Multiple members of the public spoke in regards to this request. Concerns during the May 7 meeting centered around the validity of the performed TIS, as well as the capacity and safety of Rock Quarry Road presently, and compatibility of multifamily uses in this area. The applicant requested this case be tabled during the May 7 meeting to perform supplemental traffic research to address the expressed concerns.

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a second public hearing on this request on June 11, 2026 meeting. Staff again provided its report, and the Commission posed questions. Notably, the Commission asked if the SAP should be a consideration for this proposal. City legal counsel noted that the comprehensive plan trumps the SAP in terms of consideration for rezoning requests. The Commission Chair questioned if purpose-built student housing should be considered multifamily units, per the housing study. The applicant then spoke on the proposed development. The traffic engineer that assisted with the TIS also spoke regarding the purpose of a TIS, and supplemental information pertaining to this proposed

development. Commissioners asked multiple questions of the traffic engineer related to the selected peak hours, trip distribution, and general trip generation in total for the development.

Multiple members of the public then spoke in regards to this request. Principal concerns included adherence with the Rock Quarry SAP, adequacy of street infrastructure and capacity for Rock Quarry, veracity of the TIS, land use compatibility, and safety concerns with introducing more trips on this street. One member of the public spoke in support of the request citing the City's climate goals and belief in the need for multifamily development in walking distance to commercial uses. Another member spoke in support noting their belief that development of this nature would be an asset to the southern part of the City and that the preservation of greenspace being a positive influence.

The Commission had additional discussion related to this proposal. Notably, discussion centered around when/if future improvements should be made to Rock Quarry, as well as the value of the provision of purpose-built student housing compared with other community needs. The Commission then made a motion to approve the proposed development plan. The motion failed with a tie vote (3-3), meaning a recommendation of denial is forwarded to City Council.

The staff report to the Planning and Zoning Commission, locator maps, the PD plan, site-specific statement of intent, landscape plan, tree survey, Traffic Impact Study, Supplemental Traffic Impact Memo, Rock Quarry Special Area Plan, meeting minutes excerpts, and public correspondence are attached for reference.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: None anticipated. Any extension of services to serve the property would be at the applicant's expense.

Long-Term Impact: Limited expenses anticipated, outside of maintenance for extended utility facilities. Possible impact would be increased traffic on Rock Quarry, and solid waste collection costs. Such cost would be off-set by increased tax collection and user fees.

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Inclusive and Equitable Community, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Land Use & Growth Management, Secondary Impact: Economic Development, Tertiary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities

Legislative History



701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Date	Action
NA	NA

Suggested Council Action

Denial of the proposed rezoning, PD plan, serving as a preliminary plat, and associated statement of intent, as recommended by the tie (3-3) vote of the Planning and Zoning Commission.