

**AGENDA REPORT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
August 6, 2020**

SUMMARY

A request by A Civil Group (agent) on behalf of West Rock II, LLC (owners) for approval of a rezoning and development plan to be known as, "The Godfrey PD Plan." The applicant is proposing 4, 4-unit apartment buildings (16 units) with vehicular access onto Green Meadows Road. The 1.45-acre property is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Green Meadows Drive and Green Meadows Circle. **(Case #127-2020)**

DISCUSSION

The applicants are seeking to rezone their property at the northwest corner of Green Meadows Road and Green Meadows Circle, from R-1 (One-family Dwelling) to PD (Planned District) to facilitate the construction of four apartment buildings, each housing four, two-bedroom units. The proposed PD plan depicts these units arranged around a central parking area, with 3 buildings to the west and one to the east. Each building is oriented to face the entry drive and parking area. Each unit includes a one-car garage (16 total spaces) and there are 18 on-site surface parking spaces provided for residents and visitors.

Rezoning Considerations

A concept review meeting was held in November 2019 to discuss the development of the subject property (see attached development proposal). At that time staff determined that the use of a planned district was appropriate in this location due to a number of factors, including the unique nature of the location and visual prominence of the property on Green Meadows Road, as well many site factors, like limited access, the shape of the lot, and the location of the property near the entrance to the Green Meadows and Greenbriar-Trail Ridge neighborhoods; both single-family developments.

Planned districts are intended to allow for innovation and flexibility in design, to encourage creative mixes of complimentary uses, and to promote environmentally sound and efficient use of land. The stated objectives of planned districts are to allow for a mixture of housing types and uses, to provide more-usable open space and amenities, and provide, to the City, amenities or benefits that help achieve the goals of Columbia Imagined which are not otherwise required of the base zoning districts.

During the concept review, the potential project density and maximum number of dwelling units upon the subject site were discussed. It was concluded that a reasonable number of dwelling units would be approximately 12, which equates to a development density of approximately 8-9 dwelling units per acre. These conclusions were offered given the site's proximity to Rock Bridge Christian Church, multiple single-family neighborhoods, and to at least two heavily trafficked intersections.

Staff finds that the site is a transitional property providing a demarcation between more intense development generally to the south and east and less intense development to the north and west. Staff believes the site is a candidate for greater development densities than that of the contextual single-family housing to the north and west; however, also believes the density should be capped and use of

the site should be more contextually sensitive through construction of housing forms more compatible with the less intensely developed areas surrounding it.

Development Plan Considerations

The attached PD plan depicts development of a four-building apartment complex flanking a central driveway accessed via Green Meadows Road. Each of the proposed buildings contain four, 2-bedroom dwelling units each with an attached one-car garage. The remainder of the required parking is provided via 18 additional on-site surface parking spaces.

It should be noted that of the 18 on-site surface spaces one van accessible space is located in a driveway serving one of the garages. This location would render the garage space inaccessible to its dwelling unit. As such, staff's evaluation of available parking on the site is reduced by one parking space. A total of 15 garage spaces, 18 on-site surface spaces (including 2 accessible spaces), and 4 bike spaces are shown on the development plan.

The development is required to provide a total of 40 parking spaces (36 vehicle and 4 bike). Vehicle parking spaces may be reduced at a ratio of 1:1 for each **required** bike space provided. Given this allowed reduction, the total required vehicle parking for this development is 32 spaces. The site plan shows a total of 33 vehicle spaces (15 garage and 18 surface, including accessible). It should be noted that the parking table on the PD plan does not accurately account for the parking space distribution.

It should be noted that the driveways leading to each garage space have not been counted as part of the on-site surface parking. Counting such spaces is not permitted in multi-family development since "tandem-parking" is not allowed. However, should the garages not be used for vehicle parking the driveways would accommodate 1 of the required 2 on-site parking spaces for each dwelling. Furthermore, while the driveway spaces cannot be "legally" counted as parking spaces to serve development residents they effectively increase the number of available on-site surface spaces that could be used for residents or guests.

The proposed setbacks shown on the PD plan reflect setbacks depicted on Rock Bridge Christian Church Plat 2 which showed a 25' setback along the Green Meadows Circle frontage, a 15' setback along the Green Meadows Road frontage. The PD plan further shows a 20' setback along the western property boundary of the site which is offered as a buffer between the proposed development and the church. The setback also accommodates a 16' sanitary sewer easement which would serve the western residential units.

While the roadway frontage setbacks are being shown on the PD plan they are not considered consistent with the setbacks which would be required for the type of development now being proposed. The proposed setbacks would permit buildings to be located approximately 18' from a major collector roadway. This is out of character with the area given all other multi-family uses are screened from Green Meadows Road by means of vegetation or berms and maintain setbacks 25' or greater.

In response to review comments regarding the apparent reversal of the generally applicable setbacks for such a development and its orientation, the applicant responded "they desired to honor the recorded setbacks shown on Plat 2." It should be noted that the recorded setbacks were based on the existing

R-1 zoning and Green Meadows Road access restrictions applicable to single-family development which is the only development presently permitted on the site. As a point of clarification, since Plat 2 was recorded the requirement that setbacks be shown on final plats has been eliminated from the platting requirements.

Pursuant to the provisions within the UDC related to PD plan approval, the Commission may recommend and the Council may approve revisions to UDC's dimensional requirements of which setbacks is a modifiable element. Given these provisions, the applicant's submitted PD plan and variation in setbacks is permitted and will need to be considered in conjunction with a recommendation on this request.

The proposed access to the subject site is from Green Meadows Road. This is permitted given the proposed development is multi-family. Staff is supportive of this access arrangement given that the existing single-family neighborhoods are almost exclusively accessed from the east via Green Meadows Circle; particularly for those homes located on Greenbriar Drive and Melody Lane. Restricting access to the proposed development as shown will assist in minimizing potential increased traffic impacts from the new development. It should be noted that a proposed driveway to access the site's trash collection dumpster would be accessible from Green Meadows Circle.

Design Exception Considerations

The proposed site design would require a design exception from the requirements of Section 29-4.7(f) which states that newly constructed structures shall provide front entrances oriented toward the street from which the property is addressed. The east-facing buildings (abutting the church property) generally face the intersection of Green Meadows Road and Green Meadows Circle; however, access to the west-facing building is oriented internally toward the parking lot and does not meet this requirement. The applicants are seeking relief from this requirement to allow the front entrance to be closest to the parking area thereby avoiding the need to construction sidewalks around the building and outward to connect to the existing public sidewalks.

Staff views the need for this design exception as evidence that the proposed building layout and density of the development exceed the capacity of the property. Fewer structures or a different building form would allow for compliance with this UDC provision. Approval of this exception would result in diminishing the visual quality and sense of arrival into the surrounding neighborhoods which is counter to the Comprehensive Plan's goals and objectives of creating "livable and sustainable" neighborhoods that promote walkability and connectivity.

Additionally, it should be restated that the applicant is seeking approval of the PD plan with the setbacks as shown. These setbacks are not consistent with adjoining development and are considered by staff, given the design of the project, to be reversed from what would be typically applied to this property. The setbacks, if approved, would permit dwelling units within approximately 18.7' of the Green Meadows Drive right of way. This proximity would significantly limit future right of way modifications. Furthermore, approval of the exception would impact the visual characteristics of the surrounding development and potentially diminish the quality of life for development residents.

Conclusion

Staff believes the requested PD zoning is appropriate for this location due the site’s constraints and the opportunity it affords developers to use creative solutions to mitigate contextual impacts. However, the proposed development plan appears to be an effort to maximize the density on a high-visibility site that is located along a high-traffic corridor. The PD plan fails to incorporate enhanced amenities, quality open space for its users or the City, and offers little innovation in its design or housing options. These factors are core purposes for why a property should be considered for rezoning to a PD district. Furthermore, the proposed setbacks shown on the Plan are contextually out of character with similarly dense developments along the Green Meadows corridor. The setbacks should be reestablished to ensure a proper setback is achieved from Green Meadows Road.

The 2019 concept plan for this site depicts a development pattern more contextually appropriate for this acreage. While the plan does not contain the same level of development intensity as the proposed PD plan, it is believed that the plan better supports the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan by introducing and providing opportunities to construct varied housing types within this location of the City.

RECOMMENDATION

Deny the requested rezoning from R-1 to PD, and the associated PD plan and design exception.

Alternatively, should the Planning Commission desire to approve the requested rezoning and PD Plan such recommendation should be subject to the following conditions prior to forwarding the request to Council:

1. Revision of the PD Plan to address the additional impervious surfaces added by providing the accessible routes to the trash dumpster; and
2. Revision of the PD Plan parking summary table to address the actual parking space distribution (garage vs on-site surface); and
3. Revision of the SOI to address parking provision inaccuracy with respect to the parking allocation shown on the PD Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

- Locator maps
- Proposed Statement of Intent
- Proposed Godfrey PD Plan
- Accessible Route Exhibit
- Concept Review Plan (11/19/2019)
- Applicant’s Density Exhibit
- Public Correspondence (supportive & non-supportive)

HISTORY

Annexation date	1964
Zoning District	R-1 (Single-Family Residential)
Land Use Plan designation	Neighborhood District
Previous Subdivision/Legal Lot Status	Lot 202, Rock Bridge Christian Church Plat 2

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Area (acres)	1.45
Topography	Generally flat, slight slope to the east
Vegetation/Landscaping	Turf/Natural
Watershed/Drainage	Perche Creek
Existing structures	Vacant

UTILITIES & SERVICES

All utilities and services provided by the City of Columbia

ACCESS

Green Meadows Road	
Location	South side of property
Major Roadway Plan	Major Collector
CIP projects	N/A
Sidewalk	Sidewalks constructed

Green Meadows Circle	
Location	North side of property
Major Roadway Plan	N/A
CIP projects	N/A
Sidewalk	Sidewalks constructed

PARKS & RECREATION

Neighborhood Parks	Rock Bridge Park
Trails Plan	N/A
Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan	Both access roadways are Green Routes

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

All property owners within 200 feet and City-recognized neighborhood associations within 1,000 feet of the boundaries of the subject property were notified of this pending request on June 8, 2020. 11 postcards were distributed.

Public information meeting recap	Number of attendees: N/A (No mtg held due to COVID-19) Comments/concerns: General inquires received; concerns with multi-family expressed.
Notified neighborhood association(s)	Green Meadows NA, Village South HOA, Crescent Green HOA, Greenbriar-Trail Ridge NA
Correspondence received	8 letters (attached) and several phone calls in opposition