



February 6, 2024

To: The City of Columbia, MO

From:
William Munroe
Diventures
11640 Arbor Street
Suite 100
Omaha, NE 68144

Subject: Letter of intent to develop Lot 101 in Copperstone Corner

City of Columbia Administration, City Council, and citizenry,

This letter of intent expresses our desire to purchase and develop over one and half (1.57) acres of real property in Copperstone Corner, a development undergoing concurrent review which Diventures intends to be a part of. Please see attached Site Plan and associated documentation showing where Diventures will be located within the development.

We are nearly complete with our due diligence and feasibility analysis of the property, and, in that process, have engaged and retained the professional assistance of architecture (hdesigngroup), civil engineering (Olsson), contracting (Nabholz Construction) and geotechnical (Terracon) firms. The final stage of our purchase agreement evaluation is conditional upon the PD approval of the Copperstone Corner development and of Diventures, along with the design exceptions proposed therein and elaborated on below.

Pending approval of this PD and barring any significant findings that would jeopardize our ability to use the property as intended, we intend to construct and operate a swim and scuba aquatics training center. A full-service Diventures in Columbia will be a family-friendly business, with a brand new, welcoming facility. Operating daily from 7am to 8pm, our facility includes a 60ft, 12ft deep pool, classrooms, a small retail component for the sale of swim and scuba related merchandise and a minor travel component to coordinate world-wide scuba diving adventure trips.

This PD is being submitted pursuant to implementation within the Copperstone Corner Planned Development and to address issues regarding Section 29-4.3 and 29-4.6 of the Unified Development Code of Columbia, Missouri. Requested design exceptions include a modification to the maximum parking allowed and the location of an entry door along a public street.

SECTION 29-4.3(e)(2)(i) AND TABLE 4.3-1

Section 29-4.3 states that off-street parking is not to exceed 200% of the minimum off-street parking required – this would cap parking for Diventures at 42 parking spaces. Diventures requests that the City of Columbia grant a design exception to the maximum parking allowable within this PD. It is imperative to Diventures business and beneficial to the development overall that 67 parking spaces are provided off street for Diventures lot.

More than half of Diventures business is in swimming lessons – it is central to our business function and positioning in the market. Our business model and design allow for 12 teaching stations that operate with 4 kids per station between the hours of 3pm and 8pm, with full utilization during these hours. We have as many as 48 students coming and 48 students going on the half hour. Scuba diving training, also a large part of our business, has staff and students arriving for classes at times that sometimes overlap with our other activities. We also have as many as 25 staff members during peak hours.

Based on our experiences with stores we have built in Omaha (NE), Springfield (MO), and North Liberty (IA), parking needs to be around 75 parking spaces. Any less than this and we will not be able to meet the needs of Diventures activities and our business model. Ad-hoc solutions have proven unfavorable in the past, and we prefer to get this right from this point of the process.

The Copperstone Corner development is being planned with on-street parking; it has been suggested that perhaps this can be used to buffer the needs of Diventures business. This does not make sense for a couple of reasons. If we adhere to the maximum parking requirement, then a third of the parking we need will be forced onto the street. Also, because Diventures business is consistent between our peak hours, shared by other businesses (3p-8p), this will monopolize a good part of the on-street parking planned and potentially force on-street parking beyond the development.

During neighborhood meetings held on 7/27/2022 the community expressed concerns that on-street parking could be an issue since they have had on-street parking bleed into the surrounding area with recent developments. If Diventures is allowed a design exception for 67 parking spaces, we can prevent Diventures parking from potentially being an issue with the development of Copperstone Corner at large.

SECTION 29-4.6(c)(1)

Per the Unified Development Code, buildings shall have one or more operating entry doors facing and visible from an adjacent public street. Diventures requests a design exception to this section of code on the basis that Diventures will be addressed and accessed via private roads within Copperstone Corner, and because the overall orientation of building features operates within the planned circulation of the development.

During discussions with City Staff about Diventures we have discussed that an address off Capital Drive, a planned private road in the Copperstone Corner development, makes sense. The reasons for this include primarily a means for locating the lot by the Fire Department but are also implicated by the means of which the development is accessed – a private road connection from West Vawter School Road. Diventures will be accessed via Capital Drive, therefore our building is primarily accessed, and our main entry is oriented in this direction. Furthermore, Copperstone Corner will be provided with pedestrian pathways that serve the property as part of the development.

The design for a Diventures facility emphasizes the natatorium space and uses materials, fenestration, color, and signage to all play a role in creating a sort of mural on the outside facing West Vawter School road, inviting people to our facility, while the main entry of our facility, which adequately meets the other requirements of the section of code in question, will face Capital Drive. We argue that because of the nature of the planned development and Diventures design within it, it makes the most sense to consider that a front-door presence off Capital Drive adequately meets the intent of this section.

Serving thousands of swim and scuba students every year, we are a mission-driven organization that takes an active role in our local communities as a water safety advocate and as a provider of special needs swim lessons and scuba instruction. In addition to offering free-of-charge water safety training seminars to schools, churches, and community youth organizations, we are also an active supporter of several first responder organizations, water safety teams and dive teams. We further support local community involvement by providing our full-time team members three paid hours per month to support a local non-profit organization of their choice in our communities.

Diventures will be a positive and synergistic development in Columbia. If approved, we intend to begin the construction as quickly as possible and have already retained the services of a general contracting firm to that end. Provided our current schedule is followed, we intend to be operating the facility in full capacity Q1 of 2024.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Respectfully,

William Munroe
General Manager
Diventures
402.612.3033



For office use:

Case #: 78-2024	Submission Date: 2/6/24	Planner Assigned: PRZ
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DESIGN EXCEPTION NARRATIVE - SECTION 29-4.6(c)

If a design adjustment is requested, the Director or Commission may recommend approval of the design adjustment if it determines that the following criteria have been met, and the Council shall consider these criteria in making a decision on the requested design adjustment¹:

Please explain how the requested design adjustment complies with each of the below criteria:

1. The design adjustment is consistent with the City’s adopted comprehensive Plan and with any policy guidance issued to the Department by Council;

Based on the "Columbia Imagined" future land use plan and the Copperstone Corner development, the increase in commercial development is anticipated and desired for this area. Diventures is a retail and aquatic center that meets those development expectations.

2. The design adjustment will not create significant adverse impacts on any lands abutting the proposed plat, or to the owners or occupants of those lands;

After discussions with city staff during the conceptual review regarding the Diventures development, it was anticipated that the site will be addressed off of Capital Drive, a private road within the Copperstone Corner development. With Diventures being accessed via the private road, the main entry of the building is oriented in the same direction. It should be anticipated that the surrounding properties, when developed, will be addressed in the same manner.

3. The design adjustment will not make it significantly more difficult or dangerous for automobiles, bicycles, or pedestrians to circulate in and through the development than if the Subdivision Standards of Section 29-5.1 were met;

The Diventures lot and overall orientation of the building will operate within the planned circulation of the Copperstone Corner development and the only means of direct access will be provided by the private road, Capital Drive. By moving the operating entry door to align with the site orientation, it will eliminate the need for vehicles to maneuver entirely around the building in search of the entry.

4. The design adjustment is being requested to address a unique feature of the site or to achieve a unique design character, and will not have the effect of decreasing or eliminating installation of improvements or site features required of other similarly situated developments; and

The typical design for a Diventures facility emphasizes the natatorium space and incorporates materials, fenestration, colors, and signage in a mural that utilizes the majority of the wall surface area along the building side fronting West Vawter School Road. This is unique to Diventures as it provides the only site signage for the business. Based on addressing and accessing of the site along with the use of the mural, moving the entry door towards Capital Drive meets the intent of Section 29-4.6(c)(1).

5. The design adjustment will not create adverse impacts on public health and safety.

Based on discussions with city staff and the fire department, it is anticipated that the Diventures lot will be addressed off of Capital Drive. With both parties in agreement on that topic, it would provide a means for locating the lot directly by the Fire Department.

¹ Per Section 29-5.2 (b) Subdivision of Land Procedures General Provisions
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Case #: 78-2024	Submission Date: 2/6/24	Planner Assigned: PRZ
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DESIGN EXCEPTION NARRATIVE - SECTION 29-4.3(b)

If a design adjustment is requested, the Director or Commission may recommend approval of the design adjustment if it determines that the following criteria have been met, and the Council shall consider these criteria in making a decision on the requested design adjustment¹:

Please explain how the requested design adjustment complies with each of the below criteria:

1. The design adjustment is consistent with the City's adopted comprehensive Plan and with any policy guidance issued to the Department by Council;

Based on the "Columbia Imagined" future land use plan and the Copperstone Corner development, the increase in commercial development is anticipated and desired for this area. Diventures is a retail and aquatic center that meets those development expectations.

2. The design adjustment will not create significant adverse impacts on any lands abutting the proposed plat, or to the owners or occupants of those lands;

Increasing the maximum allowed on-site parking spaces for Diventures will not create any adverse impacts on neighboring property owners. All additional parking to take place will happen entirely within the Diventures lot. It will also reduce the possibility of traffic backing out on to Capital Drive when higher volume of visitors are present during business hours.

3. The design adjustment will not make it significantly more difficult or dangerous for automobiles, bicycles, or pedestrians to circulate in and through the development than if the Subdivision Standards of Section 29-5.1 were met;

Allowing for the design exception to increase the allowed on-site parking to 67 total stalls will not create any type of significant risk. Sufficient widths for drive aisles throughout the site are still achievable. The increase of on-site parking will also reduce the possibility of traffic backing out on to Capital Drive when higher volume of visitors are present during business hours creating less than ideal traffic conditions on the shared travel-ways.

4. The design adjustment is being requested to address a unique feature of the site or to achieve a unique design character, and will not have the effect of decreasing or eliminating installation of improvements or site features required of other similarly situated developments; and

The increase in parking is unique to Diventures largely due to the fact that more than half of the business for Diventures is in swimming lessons. The business model accounts for 12 teaching stations and as many as 48 students coming and 48 students leaving every half hour for classes. Sufficient widths for drive aisles throughout the site are still achievable and all additional parking stalls meet minimum parking stall sizes.

5. The design adjustment will not create adverse impacts on public health and safety.

Allowing for the design exception to increase the off-street parking to 67 total stalls, all located within the Diventures lot, it would eliminate the need of on-street parking. With children being a large portion of visitors to Diventures, increased on-site parking would allow for a buffer between this high volume of pedestrian traffic and vehicles traveling at increased speeds along a public travel-way. It has also been expressed during neighborhood meetings regarding the Copperstone Corner development, that on-street parking may bleed into surrounding areas with other recent developments.

¹ Per Section 29-5.2 (b) Subdivision of Land Procedures General Provisions
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