

FILE NO.: Z-4411-L

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NAME: Pleasant Ridge Towne Center Revised Long-form PCD

LOCATION: Located on the Southwest corner of Cantrell Road and  
Woodland Heights Road

DEVELOPER:

Lew Schickel  
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: Redesign the driveways and Cantrell Road, Open the "rear entrance" and add additional parking along the south side of Buildings 600 - 800

VARIANCES/WAIVERS REQUESTED: None requested.

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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. That approval included the condition that "no rear entrance/access will be installed without Board of Directors action."

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.

A subsequent revision to the previously approved PCD allowed the creation of an additional lease parcel to the site. The lease parcel/building footprint is located between the existing Chick-fil-A restaurant and the proposed Chipotles Mexican Grill. The building did not increase the square footage of the overall development beyond the approved 315,000 square feet. Also the original PCD approved 15,000 square feet in two buildings within the out-lot area. The total square footage for the three buildings will be less than the approved 15,000 square feet.

The revised PCD indicated a maximum 6,000 square foot building with a drive-thru along the west side. The developer was approved 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.

A. PROPOSAL/REQUEST/APPLICANT'S STATEMENT:

The developer is proposing to amend the previously approved PCD in four areas. The revisions consist of driveway realignment and openings in three areas and to add additional parking in the southeastern portion of the site. The revisions are as follows:

1. Construct a new driveway opposite the main entrance adjacent to Chipolte's Mexican Grill and the Shell Station. The new driveway will create a four (4) way intersection at the existing traffic signal. The existing driveway serving

the Cantrell West office building just to the east of the new driveway location will be eliminated. The future driveway serving the proposed office building at the northwest corner of the proposed driveway will take access to Cantrell Road as indicated and eliminate a proposed driveway apron located further to the west to serve this office use.

2. Eliminate the existing median at the current driveway that aligns with Southridge Drive. This will create a full four (4) way intersection and eliminate the confusion for drivers at this entrance to the shopping center. It will decrease the traffic at the main entrance to the east and allow patrons from Walton Heights direct access between their neighborhood and the shopping center.
3. Open a new driveway at the rear of the shopping center that would align with Woodland Heights Road adjacent to the Easter Seals facility and Christ the King Church and School complex. This would allow cars access to and from the shopping center without looping the site on either Fairview Road or Woodland Heights Road to the east.
4. Add parking along the southeast property line behind current buildings 600, 700 and 800. This will create additional employee parking and free up parking at the front entrances of the stores for patrons.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The site is developed with a shopping center with two out-parcels located along Cantrell Road. The western most out-parcel is a Chick-fil-A restaurant and the eastern most out-parcel is currently under construction for a Chipotle's Mexican Grill. 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.

C. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS:

As of this writing, staff has not received any comment from area resident. All property owners located within 200-feet of the site, all residents, who could be identified, located within 300 feet of the site, the Pleasant Forest Property Owners Association, the Pleasant Valley Property Owners Association and the Walton Height Property Owners Association were notified of the public hearing.

D. ENGINEERING COMMENTS:

PUBLIC WORKS CONDITIONS:

1. Due to the lack of alignment of the Woodland Height Road/Fairview Road/Pleasant Ridge driveway intersection, a round-a-bout should be constructed at the Woodland Height Road/Fairview Road/Pleasant Ridge driveway.

2. Provide the expected number of left turn movements from the Pleasant Ridge development onto Cantrell Road during peak hour.
3. The entrance into the Pleasant Ridge development off Cantrell Road must be channelized to reduce the number of conflicts.
4. Obtain permits for improvements within State Highway right-of-way from AHTD, District VI.
5. Street Improvement plans shall include signage and striping. Traffic Engineering must approve completed plans prior to construction.
6. Coordinate design of traffic signal upgrade with proposed street improvements. Plans to be forwarded to Traffic Engineering for approval.
7. On site striping and signage plans should be forwarded to Public Works, Traffic Engineering for approval with the site development package.

E. UTILITIES AND FIRE DEPARTMENT/COUNTY PLANNING:

Wastewater: Sewer available to this project.

Entergy: No comment received.

Center-Point Energy: No comment received.

AT & T: No comment received.

Central Arkansas Water: All Central Arkansas Water requirements in effect at the time of request for water service must be met. If there are facilities that need to be adjusted and/or relocated, contact Central Arkansas water. That work would be done at the expense of the Developer. Contact central Arkansas Water if additional fire protection or metered water service is required or regarding the size and location of the water meter. Due to the nature of the facility, installation of an approved reduced pressure zone backflow preventer assembly (RPZ) is required on the domestic water service. This assembly must be installed prior to the first point of use. Central Arkansas Water requires that upon the installation of the RPZA, successful tests of the assembly must be completed by a Certified Assembly Tester licensed by the State of Arkansas and approved by Central Arkansas Water. The test results must be sent to Central Arkansas Water's Cross Connection Section within ten (10) days of installation and annually thereafter. Contact the Cross Connection Section at 377-1226 if you would like to discuss backflow prevention requirements for this project.

Fire Department: Place fire hydrants per code. Maintain at least a 20-foot wide access. Install a Knox box and properly place the address on the building. Contact the Little Rock Fire Department for additional information.

County Planning: No comment.

CATA: Approved as submitted. The site is located on CATA Bus Route #25 – the Highway 10 Express Route.

Parks and Recreation: No comment received.

F. ISSUES/TECHNICAL/DESIGN:

Planning Division: This request is located in the River Mountain Planning District. The Land Use Plan shows Commercial and Mixed Use for this property. The commercial category includes a broad range of retail and wholesale sales of products, personal and professional services, and general business activities. Commercial activities vary in type and scale, depending on the trade area that they serve. The applicant has requested to revise the previously approved Planned Commercial Development to allow modifications to two driveway locations along Cantrell Road including eliminating the existing median of the drive aligning with Southridge Drive to allow the creation of a four-way intersection, to redesign the drive located adjacent to the Shell Station and to allow a “rear entrance” to be opened accessing Woodland Heights Road.

Master Street Plan: Cantrell Road is a Principal Arterial. The primary function of a Principal Arterial is to serve through traffic and to connect major traffic generators or activity centers within urbanized areas. Entrances and exits should be limited to minimize negative effects of traffic and pedestrians on Cantrell Road since it is a Principal Arterial. Woodland Heights Road is a Local Street. The primary function of a Local Street is to provide access to adjacent properties. Local Streets which are abutted by non-residential zoning/use or more intensive zoning than duplexes are considered as “Commercial Streets”. These streets have a design standard the same as a Collector. These streets may require dedication of right-of-way and may require street improvements for entrances and exits to the site.

Bicycle Plan: There are no bike routes shown in the immediate vicinity.

Landscape:

1. Site plan must comply with the City’s landscape and buffer ordinance requirements.
2. The proposed new parking along the southeast corner of the site does not comply with the City’s Buffer and Landscape Ordinances. The plan show a perimeter landscape strip of only two (2) feet. The landscape ordinance requires a minimum landscape strip of nine (9) feet in this area. A variance from this standard will require approval by the City Beautiful Commission prior to the issuance of a building permit.
3. All existing vegetation, fencing, dumpster enclosures, and paving must be in good condition or replaced.

4. An automatic irrigation system to water landscaped areas will be required.
5. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, it will be necessary to provide an approved landscape plan stamped with the seal of a Registered Landscape Architect.

G. SUBDIVISION COMMITTEE COMMENT: (June 23, 2011)

The applicant was present. Staff presented the item and noted the site plan needed to be cleaned up to indicate the previously approved snow cone stand and to eliminate notes that are no longer relevant since the development has occurred. Staff requested more information on the proposed parking located on the southern perimeter of the site.

Public Works and Landscape comments were discussed. Staff commented that a round-a-bout should be constructed at the Woodland Height Road/Fairview Road/Pleasant Ridge driveway due to the lack of alignment of the intersection. It was noted that the plan appeared to show grading for the southern parking lot occurring off site. It was noted that the landscaping appeared to be deficient on this area.

Staff noted comments from the other reporting departments and agencies suggesting the applicant contact them individually for additional clarification. There was no further discussion of the item. The Committee then forwarded the item to the full Commission for final action.

H. ANALYSIS:

The applicant did submit a cleaned-up site plan. The outstanding issues still remain. The proposed new parking along the southeast perimeter is still in violation of the minimum standards of the Landscape Ordinance. Apparently, no change has been made to the Woodland Height Road/Fairview Road/Pleasant Ridge Driveway. The lack of alignment is still a concern.

Staff is not supportive of the proposed changes to the driveways on the Cantrell Road frontage due to the negative impact those changes will have on the traffic on the congested arterial street.

Staff is not supportive of the proposed rear entrance due two concerns. When the development was approved under Ordinance 19,233, it was clear that rear access was a concern; so much so that the Ordinance included a provision that no rear access would be permitted without specific Board approval. Secondly, the lack of alignment in the intersection is of concern to the Traffic Engineer and Public Works.

I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the application.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(JULY 14, 2011)

The applicant was present. There were several persons present, both in support and in opposition. One letter of support and several letters of opposition had been received by staff and given to the commissioners. Commissioner Dillon recused on the item.

Dana Carney, of the Planning Staff, presented the item and a recommendation of denial. City Traffic Engineer Bill Henry addressed the commission and discussed the history of traffic and driveway issues related to the site. He stated the site had been well-studied and there had been a lot of traffic analysis done on and around the site. He said changes had been made to the driveways in the past to increase traffic capacity on Highway 10. Mr. Henry stated the changes proposed by the applicant would significantly reduce the capacity of traffic on Highway 10 and would “lock-up” traffic on the street. He stated the City also did not support the proposed rear entrance. He said the design was dangerous as proposed and he saw no need for the driveway as the site had plenty of other access.

Philip Kaplan, attorney representing the applicant, addressed the commission. He stated there had been much skepticism when the development was proposed in 2004 and that the skepticism has disappeared. He spoke of the positive qualities of the development and how much the site provided in the way sales and property taxes. He stated it was the traffic engineers’ responsibility to work with developers and asked the commission to imagine if the City’s westward growth had not occurred. Mr. Kaplan said allowing the change to the Highway 10 driveway on the east would result in the elimination of two driveways on the north side of the street. He noted other four-way intersections providing access to a private site on Highway 10. He said the proposed changes to the western driveway would result in a safer condition since many people ignore the left turn prohibition at the driveway anyway. He said the driveway worked fine when it was a full-access driveway, before the City made the driveway be changed to a right-in/right-out only. Mr. Kaplan said the applicant had stated in 2004 that he would come back prior to opening the rear driveway; that he had not stated there would never be a rear driveway. He said messages texted in about the rear driveway ran 157-12 in support. Mr. Kaplan said the rear driveway would not create new traffic, that the traffic was already there. Mr. Kaplan recalled the opposition to the initial development and asked who would be opposed now.

Keith Wingfield, of 6 Tory Court, spoke on behalf of Christ the King Church. He said the Church supported the rear driveway because they were interested in pursuing the abandonment of Woodland Heights, which bisects the Church’s ownership. He said as a residential home builder, he thought the shopping center was beneficial to the neighborhood.

Tom Vaughan, of 11300 Cantrell Rd., indicated his support for the application.

Linda Stauffer, of 13106 Pleasant Forest Drive, spoke in opposition. She said the Center had created traffic problems on Cantrell which, in turn, caused an increase in traffic on Pleasant Forest. She stated she was opposed to allowing the rear entrance. Ms. Stauffer said the neighborhood expected that the rear entrance would not be opened. She said the Center may have provided increased value to the City but she asked at what cost.

Ruth Bell, of the League of Women Voters, spoke in opposition to each aspect of the applicant's proposal.

Craig Williams, of 11902 Pleasant Forest Dr., spoke in opposition. He recalled the 2004 process and said the developer had agreed at the time not to have a rear entrance to the Center. He said the neighbors had concerns about traffic at the time and to open the rear entrance would cause more traffic to come through the neighborhood. Mr. Williams said the Center had an occupancy rate of 90% so the lack of a rear entrance was apparently not a problem. He said Easter Seals was neutral on the subject, not coming out in support. He asked the commission to support staff and keep the rear entrance closed.

Marlena Grunewald, of 11325 Rocky Valley Dr., noted her opposition and deferred to the Pleasant Valley POA representative.

Gina Bass, Director of the Pleasant Valley POA, spoke in opposition. She said most of her neighborhood's concerns at the time the Center was originally approved were traffic-related. She questioned why the applicant was even coming back to the commission. She questioned the "texted" numbers quoted by the applicant. Ms. Bass stated a survey indicated 84% of the Pleasant Valley residents wanted the rear driveway kept closed. She asked the commission to support staff and keep the rear entrance closed.

Brandon Mazander, of 12306 Pleasant Forest Dr., spoke in opposition.

Ray Rodgers, of 12219 Pleasant Forest Dr., spoke of his concerns about traffic on his street. He said the developer had agreed in 2004 not to have the rear entrance. Mr. Rodgers said the Center had five (5) entrances. He asked the commission to "do the right thing" and reject the applicant's proposal.

Dale Emmerling, of 10701 Crestdale Ln., spoke of traffic problems in the area and voiced his opposition to opening the rear entrance.

Gary Jefferson, of 10 Shawbridge, recalled the past opposition to the development by Pleasant Valley residents. He said the developer had agreed to not have the rear entrance. He said he was opposed to opening that entrance.

Jeff Yates, of 66 El Dorado Dr., complemented the Center but stated he too had concerns about traffic and opening the rear driveway. He said compounding the problem wouldn't make it right. He said traffic in the overall area was a problem and

would continue to get worse. He said a comprehensive State and City response was needed to address the larger issue of traffic problems in the area. He asked the commission to deny the application.

Jim Beechboard, of 3224 Shenandoah Valley, stated he too remembered the 2004 discussions and he respectfully disagreed with Mr. Kaplan's memory of events. He said there was an expectation that the rear driveway would not be opened.

Mr. Kaplan reiterated that the applicant had never committed to never having the rear driveway. He said the applicant could not fix traffic problems in the overall area. He said making the proposed changes in the driveways onto Cantrell Rd. would help traffic on that street. He asked the commission to approve the application.

In response to a question from Commissioner Brock, Traffic Engineer Bill Henry stated the traffic count on Pleasant Forest Drive was 6,000 vehicles per day. He said the City had tried to slow traffic on the street. Mr. Henry said the count on Cantrell Road was in the range of 40,000-50,000 vehicles per day, which was 25% over the road's capacity.

Commissioner Nunnley asked Mr. Henry about Mr. Kaplan's comments about the western driveway onto Cantrell. Mr. Henry said AHTD had erected signage telling motorists not to make a left turn but some people just don't obey the law. Commissioner Nunnley asked if the problem was more prevalent due to a design flaw. Mr. Henry responded that the problem wasn't as prevalent as Mr. Kaplan made it out to be.

Commissioner Rector asked if it wouldn't help to have two opportunities to make a left turn in to the site. Mr. Henry responded that making the entrances full service would result in having to give extra time at the driveways to allow vehicles to enter and exit the site, thus slowing traffic on Cantrell.

In response to a question from Commissioner Laha, Mr. Henry said the State (AHTD) regulated traffic from a private drive onto a state highway (Highway 10).

In response to a question from Commissioner Nunnley, Mr. Henry reiterated his contention that allowing the two full service drives, as proposed by the applicant, would result in backing up traffic on Cantrell Road, both east and west bound. He said the proposal would result in a serious congestion issue.

Chairman Ferstl asked if staff would support one or the other driveway changes on the Cantrell Road driveways, as opposed to both as requested by the applicant. Mr. Henry responded that staff could not support either change as they would each affect traffic on Cantrell and reduce the traffic capacity of the street.

Commissioner Changose asked Mr. Henry if it was his opinion that both driveway changes proposed by the applicant for the Cantrell Road driveways would slow traffic on Highway 10. Mr. Henry responded yes.

Commissioner Nunnley asked Mr. Kaplan, if the concession was made in the original application to not have the rear driveway, why was it being reconsidered now. Mr. Kaplan responded that concessions are made politically, if it appears it will take a concession to get approval, as long as the concession is made with the proviso that it may be reconsidered in the future. He said the concession was necessary at the time, but it was not intended to be in perpetuity.

Commissioner Nunnley asked Mr. Kaplan why he should vote for the changes. Mr. Kaplan responded because they make sense.

Commissioner Nunnley said his concern was the integrity of the neighborhood. He asked Mr. Kaplan if there was one of the proposed changes he could chose to ask for over the others. Mr. Kaplan responded that he could not. Mr. Kaplan stated the traffic engineer employed by the applicant disagreed with the City's traffic engineer's assessment of the issue.

Commissioner Rector told Mr. Kaplan that the applicant had made a compromise to gain the original approval and a deal is a deal. He said the other side doesn't agree to any change.

A motion was made to approve the application, including all staff comments and conditions except that of denial. The vote was 0 ayes, 9 noes, 1 recusing (Dillon) and 1 absent. The motion failed.

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STAFF UPDATE:

The Little Rock Planning Commission reviewed a proposed amendment to the Pleasant Ridge Towne Center PCD at their July 14, 2011, public hearing. The amendment to the PCD was to add a rear entrance, reduce the landscape strip between this property and property owned by the Catholic Church to allow for additional parking and to modify two driveway locations/entrances along Cantrell Road. The Commission did not support the request and recommended denial.

This item was on the Little Rock Board of Directors agenda on December 13, 2011, as an appeal of the Planning Commission's recommendation of denial. The applicant amended the request prior to the Board of Directors hearing the appeal. The amended request removed the rear entrance and the reduction in the landscape strip for additional parking. The Board of Directors determined this was a significant change from the item as presented to the Planning Commission and referred the item back to the Planning Commission.

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PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(JANUARY 5, 2012)

Mr. Joe White of White-Daters and Associates, Mr. Phil Kaplan and Mr. Ernie Peters were present representing the applicant. There was one registered objector present.

Staff presented the item with a recommendation of denial. Staff stated Public Works staff had modeled the existing traffic volumes in the corridor and had used the traffic volumes provided by the applicant. Staff stated during the PM peak traffic was congested but did continue to function. Staff stated when there was an accident this could create a problem with traffic back-ups. Staff stated the 2011 accident rates were at .4 per million vehicles. Staff stated at the intersection of Chenal and Bowman the rate was 1.5 and at University and Cantrell the rate was 1. Staff stated the role of an arterial was to move vehicles through a corridor and the secondary function was to serve the adjacent businesses. Staff stated the existing driveway locations served to allow the traffic to flow through the area and allow the businesses to be served. Staff stated signal spacing was typically allowed at ½ mile spacing but there were four traffic lights within less than ½ mile in this area. Staff stated there were 53,000 vehicles per day traveling this section of Cantrell Road. Staff stated this volume was nearing freeway volume levels. Staff stated increasing access did not come for free. Staff stated the changing of the signals would impact traffic on Cantrell Road. Staff stated when reviewing traffic flows it was important to not look at one area but to look at the corridor as a whole. Staff stated the original plan submitted included intersections as proposed by the applicant but was modified based on staff concerns to the current configuration. Staff stated the current configuration was what was approved in the original plan and was currently working. Staff stated Cantrell Road was overcapacity. Staff stated with the changes the congestion would increase which would result in a decreased capacity.

Phil Kaplan addressed the Commission on the merits of the request. He stated the continuous issues had been removed from the request and the objector now was the City's Traffic Engineer. He stated the modifications to the traffic signals would assist traffic flows in the area. He stated the problem was not at the Shopping Center but at I-430 and Cantrell Road and Rodney Parham and Cantrell Road. He stated there had been two letters of support provided to the Commission. He stated these letters were from residents of Walton Heights. He stated the letters outlined traffic and safety concerns of the residents of Walton Heights. He stated in addition one of the letters outlined how the Walton Heights/Candlewood Property Owners Association was set up and that the Association was not representative of the entire neighborhoods desires. He stated with the revisions a future driveway on the north side of Cantrell Road proposed to serve an office building would be eliminated. He stated the completion of the AHTD Traffic Study was five to six years away. He stated the proposal would improve access in the area which was a benefit to the public and the residents of Walton Heights.

Ernie Peters of Peters and Associates addressed the Commission outlining the traffic study his firm had prepared. He stated the development was mostly built-out with one vacant out-parcel and a few vacant lease spaces. He stated the proposed "T-Intersection" was similar to a number of intersections in the City. He stated this was a major east/west route and the traffic volumes were high. He stated the traffic counts indicated 48,000 to 53,000 vehicles per day in front of the Shopping Center. He stated the congestion was not caused by the three signals at this location but due to the I-430

and the Rodney Parham Cantrell Road intersections. He stated there were a number of proposals being considered and one was to connect Woodland Heights Road to Rodney Parham Road. He stated this would improve connectivity in the area. He stated the left turn conflict with the through traffic interrupted traffic flows. He provided the Commission with 2011 Traffic Volumes and turning movements at the intersections of Cantrell Road and Rodney Parham Road and at Cantrell Road and I-430. He stated the problem was not at the three intersections serving the Shopping Center but at these higher volume intersections. He stated AHTD was currently working on a project, which would allow west bound motorists to access I-430 without having to turn and go south to then go north. He stated a portion of the congestion was caused by left turns and the inability to stack these left turns outside the through lanes. He stated there was currently 420 feet of left turn capacity located in front of the Shopping Center that could not be used because of prohibited striping. He stated with the redesign additional stacking for left turn capacity could be obtained reducing the spill-over into the through lanes.

Mr. Ruth Bell, League of Women Voters, addressed the Commission in opposition of the request. She stated Cantrell Road functioned as a through street but also accommodated stop and go traffic for shopping. She stated it was inefficient to look at these two intersections. She stated it was important to review the corridor from Pleasant Valley to Taylor Loop Road. She stated it was important to look at the big fix. She stated the State, the City and the private section should all work together to develop a long-term solution and not just a quick fix for a short term problem.

Commissioner Finney questioned why the two traffic models differed if both engineers used the same modeling program. Mr. Peters stated there was a large amount of data input and assumptions that went into developing the traffic analysis. He stated signal data was also entered into the model. He stated he could not explain the difference in the results. He stated he felt the request would improve traffic flows in the area as well as access and provide additional time for the side streets. He stated this was not a total fix but a significant improvement for the area.

Public Works staff stated they too could not explain the difference in the results. Staff stated it was true a large amount of data input and a number of assumptions went into the model. Staff stated allowing the extra signal would result in the loss of some green time on Cantrell Road. Staff stated based on their model these seconds lost would create additional congestion in the area.

Chairman Ferstl questioned the time frame for the AHTD study currently underway in this area. Staff stated they could not respond to the time frame for completion. Staff stated the Highway Department had held public meetings to obtain input for area residents. He stated he felt to approve a request prior to the Study being completed would handcuff the City in the future when the Highway Department recommendations were finalized.

Mr. Peters stated there were projects currently funded by AHTD that would improve traffic in the area. He stated the placement of a ramp to allow direct northbound movements for motorist traveling west on Cantrell Road to I-430 would be an improvement. He stated with the current design should additional lanes be added to Cantrell Road in this area the only modification would be to relocate the signal poles. He stated the additional 420 feet of left turn stacking capacity would also improve traffic flows in the area. He stated with the current request all the changes were privately funded.

Commissioner Rector stated the bottleneck was at Rodney Parham Road. He stated the additional 400 feet plus of left turn stacking capacity not being used was a concern. He stated he felt the signals could be timed to allow the left turns at the three signals all at one time and this would not result in additional delays on Cantrell Road. He stated he felt the proposal made sense. He stated once the AHTD study was complete if there were changes the State would make those changes regardless of what the City approved.

A motion was made to approve the request as presented including all staff recommendations and comments except that of denial. The motion failed by a vote of 5 ayes, 2 noes and 4 absent.