

FILE NO.: Z-8278-B

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NAME: The District at Midtown – Revised Long – Form PCD (Lot 15)

LOCATION: 500 South University Avenue

DEVELOPER:

Midtown Doctors Building, LLC  
500 South University Avenue  
Little Rock AR 72205

OWNER/AUTHORIZED AGENT:

Midtown Doctors Building, LLC (Owner)  
Terry Watson – AIA (Agent)  
Cromwell Architects  
1300 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Little Rock AR 72202  
(501) 372-2900

SURVEYOR/ENGINEER:

Terry Watson – AIA (Agent)  
Cromwell Architects  
1300 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Little Rock AR 72202  
(501) 372-2900

AREA: 7.21 acres                      NUMBER OF LOTS: 1                      FT. NEW STREET: 0 LF

WARD: 3                                      PLANNING DISTRICT: 3                      CENSUS TRACT: 21.03

CURRENT ZONING:                      PCD

VARIANCE/WAIVERS:                      None requested.

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A.     PROPOSAL/REQUEST/APPLICANT'S STATEMENT:

The applicant proposes to revise the existing PCD to allow for installation of three (3) new 480 square foot wall signs upon the north, east, and south facades of the existing parking deck building.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The parking deck currently has existing sign structure on the top level along with a wall mounted sign structure at the proposed location of the new signage at the northeast corner and south façade of the parking deck.

The existing parking deck structure is located at the southwest corner of University Avenue and Midtown Avenue within the Midtown Design Overlay District. The parking structure is approximately three (3) levels and has facades fronting University Avenue, Midtown Avenue, and District Avenue. The north, east, and south façades currently have existing sign mounting frame systems anchored to the facades which are proposed to mount the new signage.

C. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS:

All owners of property located within 200 feet of the site and all neighborhood associations registered with the City of Little Rock were notified of the public hearing.

D. ENGINEERING COMMENTS: No comment.

E. UTILITIES/FIRE DEPARTMENT/PARKS/COUNTY PLANNING:

Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority: No comments received.

Entergy: No comments received.

CenterPoint Energy: No comments received.

AT & T: No comments received.

Central Arkansas Water: No objections.

Fire Department:

**Maintain Access:**

**Fire Hydrants.**

Maintain fire apparatus access roads at fire hydrant locations as per Appendix D of the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Vol. 1 **Section D103.1 Access road width with a hydrant.** Where a fire hydrant is located on a fire apparatus access road, the minimum road width shall be 26 feet, exclusive of shoulders.

**Grade**

Maintain fire apparatus access roads as per Appendix D of the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Vol. 1 **Section D103.2 Grade. Fire apparatus access roads shall not exceed 10 percent in grade except as approved by the fire chief. If the grade exceeds 10 percent, approval will be denied and the applicant must submit request to be reviewed by Fire Chief for Approval.**

**Loading**

Maintain fire apparatus access road design as per Appendix D of the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Vol. 1 **Section D102.1 Access and loading.** Facilities, buildings or portions of buildings hereafter constructed shall be accessible to fire department apparatus by way of an approved fire apparatus access road with an asphalt, concrete or other approved driving surface capable of supporting the imposed load of fire apparatus weighing at least 75,000 pounds.

**Commercial and Industrial Developments – 2 means of access. –**

Maintain fire apparatus access roads as per Appendix D of the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Vol. 1.

**Section D104.1 Buildings exceeding three stories or 30 feet in height.** Building or facilities exceeding 30 feet or three stories in height shall have at least two means of fire apparatus access for each structure.

**Section D104.2 Building exceeding 62,000 square feet in area.** Buildings or facilities having a gross building area of more than 62,000 square feet shall be provide with two separate and approved fire apparatus access roads.

**Exception:** Projects having a gross building area of up to 124,000 square feet that have a single approved fire apparatus access road when all building are equipped throughout with approved automatic sprinkler systems.

**D104.3 Remoteness.** Where two fire apparatus access roads are required, they shall be placed a distance apart equal to not less than one half of the length of the maximum overall diagonal dimension of the lot or area to be served, measured in a straight line between accesses.

**30' Tall Buildings - Maintain aerial fire apparatus access roads as per Appendix D of the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code Vol. 1 Section D105.1 – D105.4**

**D105.1 Where Required.** Where the vertical distance between the grade plane and the highest roof surface exceed 30', approved aerial fire apparatus access roads shall be provided. For the purposes of this section the highest roof surfaces shall be determined by measurement to the eave of a pitched roof, the intersection of a roof to the exterior wall, or the top of the parapet walls, whichever is greater.

**D105.2 Width.** Aerial fire apparatus access roads shall have a minimum unobstructed width of 26', exclusive of shoulders, in the immediate vicinity of the building or portion thereof.

**D105.3 Proximity to building.** At least one of the required access routes meeting this condition shall be located within a minimum of 15 feet and a maximum of 30 feet from the building, and shall be positioned parallel to one entire side of the building. The side of the building on which the aerial fire apparatus access road is positioned shall be approved by the fire code official.

**D105.4 Obstructions.** Overhead utility and power lines shall not be located over the aerial fire apparatus access road or between the aerial fire apparatus road and the building. Other obstructions shall be permitted to be placed with the approval of the fire code official.

**Fire Hydrants**

**Locate Fire Hydrants as per Appendix C of the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code.** Section C101 – C105, in conjunction with Central Arkansas Water (Daniel Tull 501-377-1245) and the Little Rock Fire Marshal's Office (Capt. Tony Rhodes 501-918-3757, or Fire Marshal Derek N. Ingram 501-918-3756 Number and Distribution of Fire Hydrants as per Table C105.1.

Parks and Recreation: No comments received.

County Planning: No comments received.

F. **BUILDING CODES/LANDSCAPE:**

Building Code: No comment.

Landscape: No comment.

G. **TRANSPORTATION/PLANNING:**

Rock Region Metro: No comments received.

Planning Division:

The request is in the West Little Rock District. The Land Use Plan shows Mixed Use (MX) for the requested area. The Mixed Use (MX) category provides for a mixture of residential, office and commercial uses to occur. A Planned Zoning District is required if the use is entirely office or commercial or if the use is a mixture of the three. The application is to revise an existing PCD (Planned Commercial Development) District to approval of a new sign on the site (Lot 15). This site is within the Midtown Design Overlay District.

Surrounding the application area, the Land Use Plan shows Mixed Use (MX) to the south, north, and west of the site. Public Institutional (PI) land use is shown to the northeast (across University Avenue) of the application area. Across University Avenue to the east is shown for Park/Open Space (PK/OS). The Mixed Use (MX) category provides for a mixture of residential, office and commercial uses to occur. A Planned Zoning District is required if the use is entirely office or commercial or if the use is a mixture of the three. This area to the north is the Park Avenue mixed use development. To the south and west is 'The District at Midtown' development (which is still mostly undeveloped). This development is proposed as a mixed office and commercial development. The Public Institutional (PI) category includes public and quasi-public facilities that provide a variety of services to the community such as schools, libraries, fire stations, churches, utility substations, and hospitals. This is the site of the St. Vincent's Hospital campus. The Park/Open Space (PK/OS) category includes all public parks, recreation facilities, greenbelts, flood plains, and other designated open space and recreational land. This is a City park - War Memorial Park.

Master Street Plan: To the east is University Avenue and it is shown as a Principal Arterial on the Master Street Plan. To the north is Midtown Avenue and it is a Local Street on the Master Street Plan. A Principal Arterial is to serve through traffic and to connect major traffic generators or activity centers within the urbanized area. Entrances and exits should be limited to minimize negative effects of traffic and pedestrians on University Avenue since it is a Principal Arterial. The primary function of Local Streets is to provide access to adjacent properties. Local Streets that are abutted by non-residential zoning/use or more intensive zoning than duplexes are considered as "Commercial Streets". These streets may require dedication of right-of-way and may require street improvements for entrances and exits to the site.

Bicycle Plan: There is a Class III Bike Route shown on Midtown Avenue. Bike Routes require no additional right-of-way, but either a sign or pavement marking to identify and direct the route.

H. ANALYSIS:

The applicant proposes to revise the existing PCD zoning to allow for installation of three (3) new 480 square foot wall signs upon the north, east, and south facades of the existing parking deck building at 500 South University Avenue.

The applicant proposes to install three (3) new 480 square foot wall signs on the existing parking deck structure. The proposed wall signs will be placed on the North, South, and East parking deck facades. The proposed signage will include the names of tenants located on the property. The applicant previously installed the sign frames in anticipation of the future sign placement.

The applicant provided the following information with respect to the request for wall signage:

“In order to provide greater exposure to the tenants we would like to install individual tenant signs on three sides of the detached parking deck along University Avenue. Two tenants have agreed to have their signs displayed and the owners would like to have spaces available for four additional signs to offer other current or future tenants. Once the tenant has agreed to display their sign the same sign would be repeated at each of the three proposed locations on the parking deck.”

The proposed wall signs on the north and south parking deck facades will occupy approximately 12.5 percent of each façade area. The proposed sign on the east façade will occupy approximately 5.9 percent of the total east façade area. The City’s Zoning Ordinance typically allows wall signage to occupy up to 10 percent of a building façade area.

Staff is supportive of the Revised PCD to allow wall signs on the existing parking deck. Staff views the request as reasonable. The property is located in an area of heavy commercial uses and zoning along South University Avenue, between West Markham Street and I-630. The proposed wall signs will occupy a relatively small area of the parking deck’s overall north, south, and east facades. Staff believes the proposed signage will have no adverse impact on the general area. Any future signage located on the property must comply with the Midtown Design Overlay District standards.

I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the revised PCD, subject to compliance with the comments and conditions outlined in paragraph E, and the staff analysis, and the agenda staff report.

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PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(DECEMBER 9, 2021)

The applicant was present. There were no persons present registered in support or opposition. Staff presented the item and a recommendation of approval as outlined in the “staff recommendation” above. There was no further discussion. The item was placed on the Consent Agenda and approved as recommended by staff, including all staff comments and conditions. The vote was 9 ayes, 0 nays and 2 absent.