



STAFF REPORT

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
Village Green Municipal Building, Council Chambers
47 Hall Street
Wednesday, May 26, 2021
7:00 P.M.

1. SKETCH PLAN REVIEW

Applicant: Christian Brothers Automotive
Location: 285 W Olentangy St
Existing Zoning: PC – Planned Commercial District
Request: Review of a Sketch Plan for a new automotive development on a ±1.5 acre site.

Aerial Site Image: <https://goo.gl/maps/iwsZDKkqSqxwq9dbA>

Project Background

This is a new submission for the property at 285 West Olentangy Street. The site was previously approved for a retail center planned, by Dr. Khaksarfard who developed Armita Plaza, with Ford & Associates Architects. The Final Development Plan was adopted by City Council in 2017, and has since expired. Staff met with the Christian Brothers Automotive group and their engineers in early May to discuss a potential new development for the site.

Proposal Overview

The applicant is proposing a commercial project on a vacant lot located at the southeast corner of West Olentangy Street and Murphy Parkway. The proposal is for a Christian Brothers Automotive branch, with a 5,980 square foot building nine bays for motor vehicle repair station and 34 parking spaces, and associated site improvements. Access to the site is proposed from two existing curb cuts, one off Murphy Parkway and a right-in/right-out off West Olentangy Street which is a shared drive aisle with the property to the east. An eight-foot asphalt bike path is proposed along the West Olentangy Street frontage to connect with the trail system on adjacent properties.

Ordinance Review

In accordance with the requirements of Codified Ordinance 1143.11(a), the Commission shall review the Sketch Plan with the Owner and provide the Owner with comments during the meeting, it being understood that no statement by officials of the City shall be binding upon either. This submission is informal and for the purpose of establishing communication and discussing the concept for developing the tract. No formal action will be taken on the Sketch Plan. Further reviews by the Commission will be for a Preliminary and Final Development Plan, which may be combined.

Comprehensive Plan Consistency

This site is designated as Mixed Use Village Center in the Land Use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Stated in the plan, "Within this area a variety of uses and activities are encouraged to support a vibrant, walkable village center." Staff is concerned that this area of West Olentangy may be saturated in terms of auto service uses. Auto Assets is located on the northwest corner of the same intersection, as well as the Germain Collision Center. Eight other automotive service centers are located along Olentangy Street between the CSX railroad and Sawmill Parkway.

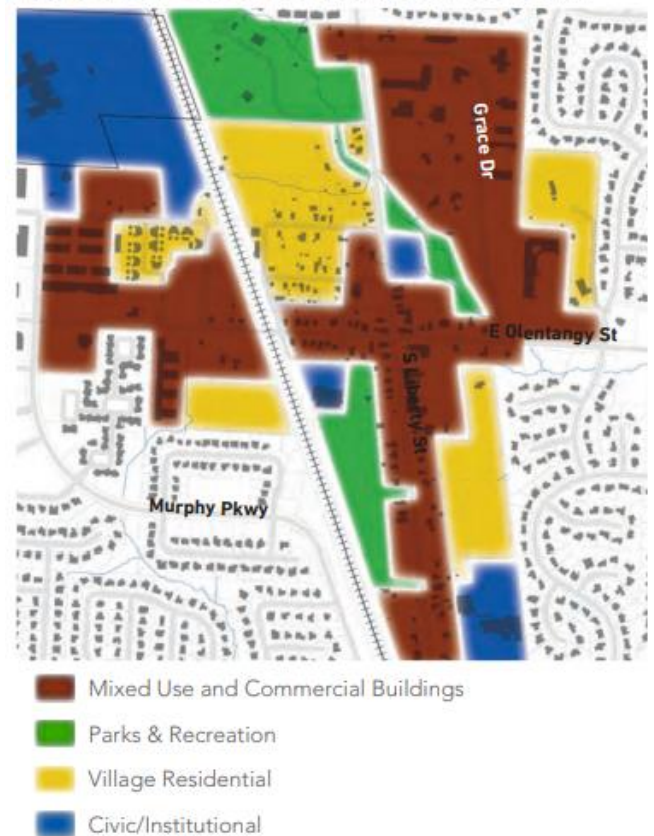
Applicable Development Guidelines for the Mixed Use Village Center:

- Commercial and mixed-use buildings should be located adjacent to the public sidewalk with prominent main entrances and storefront windows. Outdoor patio spaces are encouraged.

- Staff comment: The required setback is 60 feet from the West Olentangy Street right-of-way per the zoning code, while the proposal meets this setback requirement, the established development pattern for new structures indicates a prominent presence closer to the street. The wide drive aisle along the West Olentangy Street frontage limits the building location closer to the street, and Staff recommends the applicant study the proposed circulation pattern to potentially eliminate this drive aisle. The Fire Department will need to be consulted.

Although the main building entrance is clearly defined, it is located on the east elevation and therefore not prominent from the street frontage. Additionally, the proposed north elevation makes little attempt to simulate the appearance of a front presence.

Exhibit 2.3: Mixed Use Village Center Detail



- New development should be designed to create an interconnected public street network that will provide alternative routes to downtown businesses and eliminate the need for left turns at the Four Corners intersection.
 - Staff comment: This guideline is met. This development will not create traffic in the Four Corners intersection, and is located along an alternate route.
- Shared and interconnected parking areas should be provided behind commercial buildings. Parking lots should be physically linked together or accessible from public alleys.
 - This guideline is met. A shared access drive/alley exists between this site and the Best Friends Veterinary Hospital property to the east.
- All streets should have tree-lined sidewalks, decorative street lamps and other pedestrian-oriented streetscape amenities.
 - Staff comment: The applicant is proposing an eight-foot wide bike path along the West Olentangy Street frontage. The applicant should add fencing to create a consistent streetscape and meet zoning requirements.
- High quality materials and architectural detailing is critical to ensure new development contributes to the village character.
 - Staff comment: The materials meet the code requirement for natural materials. However, the north and south facades do not include the desired architectural elements. The applicant should work to make the north façade more inviting, as it will be very visible from West Olentangy Street. Additionally, the proposed architecture and material choices, particularly, seem to stand out from the surrounding character of the newer buildings to the west and northwest.

Staff Comments

This property is zoned as Planned Commercial District, as regulated by [Section 1143.15](#) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Powell. Auto service stations and automotive repair are permitted uses for this zoning district. Applicable supplemental regulations for district must be noted, including:

- 1143.15(b)(3) “Service areas, loading docks, and off-street parking/waiting stalls for all drive-in or drive-through businesses shall be located at the rear of the primary structure and shall be screened from view from surrounding streets and properties by walls, fences, or shrubbery.”
- 1143.15(b)(7) “Where non-residential building facades are visible from a residence, residential zone, residential area of a planned district, church site, public and/or private parkland, and/or public road, these facades shall be of natural materials: cement fiber, wood, brick, stone, or rough-split block.”
- 1143.15(b)(10) “All parking areas are to be interior to building groups, or behind three-or-four rail natural split-rail fences, or three-or-four rail, white or black board fences, or otherwise hidden by earth mounding, screen walls, or dense shrubbery from sight from adjacent sites and from nearby public roads, and designed and located from minimum impact on adjacent residential areas.”

The architectural elevations indicate wall mounted signs, which appear to exceed the permitted square footage. The applicant should work with Staff to determine appropriate sign type and size as part of the Preliminary Development Plan.

Staff Recommendation

According to the Zoning Code, “the Commission shall review the Sketch Plan with the owner and provide the owner with comments during the meeting, it being understood that no statement by officials of the City shall be binding upon either. This submission is informal and for the purpose of establishing communication and discussing the concept for developing the tract. No formal action will be taken on the Sketch Plan”.

Staff recommends the Commission provide the applicant with comments regarding the following questions and any other topics the Commission wishes to discuss:

- 1) Does the proposal adhere sufficiently to the Comprehensive Plan, in terms of proposed building location, site circulation, and pedestrian-oriented streetscape elements?
- 2) Does the Commission support the proposed architectural character and building materials?
- 3) Would the Commission allow a divergence for the signs shown on the elevations?
- 4) Other comments by the Commission.