



Planning Commission Work Session Staff Report

May 24, 2006
Item 6.d.

SUBJECT: PDR-529 and PUD-81-25-7M, Pleasanton Gateway

APPLICANT: Regency Centers (Don MacKenzie and Pete Knoedler)

**PROPERTY
OWNER:** Frank Auf der Maur

PURPOSE: Work session to review and receive comments on an application to allow the construction of a Home Depot store and garden center, a Longs Drugs with drive-through, three multi-tenant retail buildings, and one drive-through restaurant, totaling approximately 193,481 square feet in floor area located on a vacant 14.7-acre site in the Stanley Business Park.

**GENERAL
PLAN:** Retail/Highway/Service Commercial, Business and professional Offices.

ZONING: PUD-C (Planned Unit Development – Commercial) District.

LOCATION: 3450 Stanley Boulevard (Southeast Corner of Stanley Boulevard and Bernal Avenue).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location Map
2. Exhibit “B”, dated “Received May 11, 2006”, including Cover Sheet, Site Plan “A” (before street improvements, Site Plan “B” (with street improvements), Preliminary Landscape Plan, On-/Off-Site Renderings, and Building Elevations.
3. Planning Commission Work Session staff report dated January 11, 2006.
4. Minutes of the January 11th work session meeting.
5. Letter from Home Depot to Pete Knoedler, dated April 19, 2006.
6. E-mails received from interested parties.

I. BACKGROUND

The Planning Commission reviewed a previous version of the proposed project at its work session held on January 11, 2006. The staff report and meeting minutes are attached. Since the work session meeting, the applicants have worked with staff and Larry Cannon of the Cannon Design Group on the building and site design of the proposal now presented to the Planning Commission.

The revised proposal includes a 193,481 square-foot retail center anchored by Home Depot and Longs Drugs. The site plan shows the planned street dedication and widening for Bernal Avenue and Stanley Boulevard on the project site to accommodate the additional left- and right-turn lanes needed to mitigate traffic congestion at the Stanley Boulevard/Bernal Avenue/Valley Avenue intersection. The proposed mitigation will widen Stanley Boulevard from eight- to ten-lanes and will widen Bernal Avenue from six- to eight-lanes. No changes on Valley Avenue are proposed.

II. SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SURROUNDING AREA

Please refer to the “***SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SURROUNDING AREA***” section of the previous Planning Commission staff report.

III. PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION

Minutes of the January 11th Planning Commission work session meeting are attached. Msrs. Pete Knoedler, representing Regency Centers, and Greg George and Patrick McGoy, representing Home Depot, were present to answer questions.

Messrs. Robert Russman, Michael Regal, and Ed Arndt spoke for the Congregation Beth Emek. The Congregation’s concerns include:

- Mitigate noise impacts from the Home Depot, including deliveries, to maintain the contemplative aspect of their sanctuary;
- Mitigate traffic on Bernal Avenue, which has become dangerous;
- Maintain Nevada Court as a court with no access to/from the project;
- Trash abatement and security;
- Provide adequate landscaping to screen the project from Nevada Court; and,
- Install a traffic signal on the Nevada Court/Bernal Avenue intersection.

Homeowners speaking on the proposal included Mssrs. Brian Schwartz, Chris Beratlis, David Bouchard, Deborah Madnick, Donald Adams, Frank Doljack, Dan Dunlevy, Darryl Alexander, Drew Williams, John Peterson, Kelly Fasman, and Michael Regal. Their comments and concerns include:

- Traffic impacts of the proposed use will aggravate the congestion already on Stanley Boulevard and Bernal Avenue;
- This may be too large a store for this location;
- The proposal requires careful examination;
- Inappropriate use;
- Will put smaller businesses in the nearby vicinity out of business;
- The proposed project should feature a Pleasanton design style;
- The proposal is a cohesive retail unit instead of a series of unrelated stores;
- A Home Depot at this location may actually reduce cross town traffic from the nearby residential areas to the Home Depot on Johnson Drive;
- Prefer a Home Depot at this location due to its variety of hardware and contractor materials and low prices; and,
- Will generate sales tax revenue in the City for the City that would otherwise go elsewhere and will pay its impact fees.

The Planning Commission directed staff and the applicants to:

- Significantly improve the architecture to blend with Pleasanton's character;
- Delete the loop road;
- Expressed concern regarding Saturday morning deliveries which may interfere with the synagogue's services;
- Delete the gas station;
- Move the Home Depot building 100-feet farther to the north away from Nevada Court thereby creating a greenbelt between the retail center and the Congregation Beth Emek;
- Modify the corner tower elements of the Stores Buildings;
- Address noise impacts resulting from moving seasonal items in/out of the Home Depot store; and,
- Stated that traffic is the major issue for this proposal.

The applicant deleted the loop road from the present proposal, replaced the gas station with a Long's Drugs, and significantly revised and changed the proposed building designs reflecting the Planning Commission's direction.

IV. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The revised project features the following:

- A Home Depot building materials store with 106,432 square feet of floor area and a 34,760 square-foot garden center. Its loading/service area will be placed behind the building, near its southeast corner, adjoining PG&E substation property. Its main building height will be 26-feet. Store entrances and other architectural features will vary in height from 31-feet to 42-feet. The estimated operating hours will be from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Attached is letter from Home Depot explaining its operating concepts for this store.
- A Longs Drugs store with 15,789 square feet of floor area. Its loading/service area will be placed behind the building, facing the adjoining PG&E substation property, and potentially visible to Stanley Boulevard. Its building height will vary from 25 feet to 31 feet. The proposed Longs will include a drive-through lane on its north side facing Stanley Boulevard. Except for fast-food restaurants, staff believes that this will be the first drive-through retail use for Pleasanton.
- Three satellite stores buildings with 11,500 square feet (Stores “A”), 10,000 square feet (Stores “B”), and 10,000 square feet (Stores “C”) of floor area, respectively. Their building heights will generally vary from 26- to 29-feet at the ridge to 41-feet at the cupolas. Neither tenants nor operating hours have been identified for these buildings. The applicants will modify the Stanley Business Park PUD development plan to include the permitted and condition uses of the C-N (Neighborhood Commercial) District. Please refer to the previous Planning Commission staff report and attachments for a description of the permitted/conditional uses of the Stanley Business Park and the City’s Neighborhood Commercial District.
- One 5,000 square foot, drive-through restaurant. No restaurant operator has been identified.
- A total of 702 parking spaces will be provided. As calculated by staff, the overall parking ratio is one parking space per 276 square feet of building area, which includes the garden center. (Note: The parking ratio stated on the site plan does not include the garden center.)
- An elevated plaza area with a fountain is shown facing the southeast corner of Stanley Boulevard and Bernal Avenue.
- A pedestrian sidewalk will be provided from the Home Depot’s main entrance to the southeast corner of the main driveway entrance with Bernal Avenue.

- Bio-retention swales/retention will be located in the parking areas and in the perimeter landscape areas facing Stanley Boulevard and Bernal Avenue. The recently completed Fairlands Investment service station is an example of a retail use with perimeter bio-retention swales.

V. DISCUSSION

Traffic

The proposed site plan shows the planned lane configurations for the east and west legs of the Stanley Boulevard/Valley Avenue/Bernal Avenue intersection. Staff believes preliminarily that these improvements will mitigate the levels-of-service at this intersection to Pleasanton General Plan standards. However, implementing these measures means widening the east leg of Stanley Boulevard from eight- to ten-lanes and widening Bernal Avenue at the south leg of the intersection from six- to eight-lanes.

Because the proposal now shows the intersection improvements that will likely mitigate its impacts, staff believes that the environmental review for this application can be addressed with an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. The applicant will pay the City's Traffic Impact Fee to mitigate impacts to other intersections. A traffic analysis addressing levels-of-service for the Stanley Boulevard/Valley Avenue/Bernal Avenue intersection and other City intersections is being prepared for this development. The traffic analysis will also review as an option the previous loop road.

Site Design

Two site plans are provided showing the site before/after widening Stanley Boulevard and Bernal Avenue. With the completed street widening, the landscape setbacks on Stanley Boulevard will vary from 22-feet at the project sign, to 32-feet by Longs, and to 40-feet by the Stores "A" building. The landscape setbacks on Bernal Avenue will vary from 30-feet at the project sign to 35-feet at the Stores "B" building.

The landscape separations on Nevada Court vary from 15-feet at the street to 10-feet at the cul-de-sac bulb. The landscape separations from the Congregation Beth Emek property vary from 40-feet to 65-feet, reflecting the request of the Congregation. No access is provided between the project and Nevada Court. Representatives of the Congregation Beth Emek have reviewed the new site plan, have indicated their support including the landscape separations, and requested a substantial landscape barrier along the project's east side to screen the Home Depot parking/driveway/service areas.

A plaza area is located on the Bernal Avenue/Stanley Boulevard street corner, a significant number of parking lot trees are provided, and a sidewalk connection is provided between Bernal Avenue and the Home Depot store. The corner area for the plaza may have to be used for a detention basin to meet the urban stormwater runoff requirements for this development. This question will be resolved before the public hearing.

The drive-through lanes facing Stanley Boulevard and Bernal Avenue will be buffered with walls, berms, and building features shown on Sheet A3. The separation between the Stores “A” and “B” buildings was increased to provide a visual link from the plaza to the northwest corner of the Home Depot/Stores “C” buildings. No proposal is provided to screen the Long’s loading/service area from Stanley Boulevard. Although not shown on the site plan, site amenities including trellises, furniture, etc., will be provided.

Discussion Points

- 1. Should the applicant eliminate the five parking spaces between the Home Depot/Stores “C” buildings to improve this area’s use as a pedestrian space/patio area?*
- 2. Is the Planning Commission satisfied with the measures shown on the plans to screen/buffer the view of the drive-through lanes from Stanley Boulevard and Bernal Avenue? Is the landscaping along the street frontages in general adequate?*
- 3. What measures should the applicants use to screen the Long’s Drugs service areas from view, e.g., walls, landscaping, etc.?*
- 4. Staff believes that the landscape treatments facing Nevada Court will have to be significantly changed to screen Home Depot’s parking/driveway areas from view.*

Building Design

At its work session, the Planning Commission directed the applicants to “significantly improve the architecture to blend with Pleasanton’s character”. For this gateway entrance to the City, Pleasanton’s design character may be represented by the Fire Station No. 1, Fairlands service station, and Congregation Beth Emek building designs. Staff stated that the Home Depot building design must de-emphasize Home Depot’s “basic box structure”. The applicants and their design consultants have worked with staff and Larry Cannon to work out the building designs.

Staff believes the applicant has successfully implemented the Planning Commission’s direction with the proposed building designs. They are attractive, achieve a high level of visual quality, and would work well with the designs of the existing commercial buildings. The revised building designs for this project incorporate the following design elements:

- Heavy stone wainscots, sloped roofs, horizontal siding, and heavy shingle roof materials.
- Detailing including gooseneck-style lamps, decorative retaining walls, gas-lamp style light fixtures, trellises, roof dormers, awnings, and cupolas.
- Significant variation of the building volumes replicating the “main-street” appearance of individual store buildings.
- The Home Depot’s building design follows an integrated approach of roof, covered colonnade, entrances, and wall features and treatments so that the building “reads” as a visual whole from all sides.

A material/color board will be presented to the Planning Commission at the work session. The proposed building designs will be reviewed by Larry Cannon. Mr. Cannon will be present at the work session.

Discussion Points

5. *Is the Planning Commission satisfied with the overall building designs of the proposed project including the elevations of the satellite buildings facing Bernal Avenue and Stanley Boulevard?*
6. *(Refer to Sheet A2, “View to Stores “C” and Home Depot.) Should the applicant add roof eaves to the corner building matching the other buildings in the development?*
7. *Should a darker orange color be used on the Home Depot’s roll-up doors?*
8. *(Refer to Sheet A3, “View to Stores “A” and “B” looking north.) Should sidewalls be added to the building false front on Stores “A” matching the design treatment of the building end elevation on Stores “B”?*

Parking

Based upon the City’s parking standards for retail uses alone, 645 parking spaces would be required for 193,481 square feet of floor area; 702 parking spaces are proposed creating a surplus of 57 parking spaces. Staff notes that only 70 parking spaces – 10% of proposed parking – will be compact-size parking spaces. Hence, the parking area is designed for full-size vehicles the type of vehicles typically parked at a home improvement center.

Staff incorporated the garden center’s area into its parking calculation. The applicants questioned factoring the garden center’s area into its parking calculation. However, based upon observations of the Home Depot stores in Livermore, San Ramon, and Pleasanton, staff believes that the garden center can function as a stand-alone use and, therefore, that its area should be incorporated into the parking calculation.

Staff believes that adequate parking will be available to meet the City's requirements for all of the proposed and desired uses – retail, restaurant/cafés, etc. – and the amount of floor area designated for these uses. Although restaurant/cafés can have high parking demands based upon their seating, staff believes that the proposed parking ratio, one space per 276 square feet, and the fact that shopping center parking is shared jointly among tenants, will result in sufficient parking for the center.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public notices for the second work session were sent to property owners within the standard 1,000-foot noticing radius of the subject property and living within the California Reflections, Danbury Park, Heritage Valley, Jensen Tract, Shadow Cliffs, and Vintage Hills developments. As of the writing of this staff report, staff has not received any verbal or written comments.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission review the proposal, hear all public testimony, and respond with specific direction on the proposal.

Staff Planner: Marion Pavan, (925) 931-5610, mpavan@ci.pleasanton.ca.us