

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMUNICATION
APRIL 5, 2016 AGENDA**

Subject:	Action Required:	Approved By:
<p>An ordinance establishing a Planned Zoning District titled Joe T Robinson Revised Long-Form POD, located at 21001 – 21501 Highway 10 (Z-7626-B)</p> <p>Submitted By:</p> <p>Planning & Development Department</p>	<p>√ Ordinance Resolution Approval Information Report</p>	<p>Bruce T. Moore City Manager</p>
<p>SYNOPSIS</p>	<p>The request is to revise the previously-approved POD, Planned Office Development, to allow for a multi-phased construction plan for the Pulaski County Special School District, including the construction of a new middle school, baseball and softball fields and additions to the existing middle and high school buildings.</p>	
<p>FISCAL IMPACT</p>	<p>None.</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION</p>	<p>Staff recommends approval of the requested POD zoning. The Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the POD zoning by a vote of 10 ayes, 0 nays and 1 absent.</p>	
<p>BACKGROUND</p>	<p>The school site is located outside the City limits but within the City’s zoning jurisdiction. The school was constructed many years prior to the City extending zoning to the area. The Little Rock Planning Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit for this site on May 6, 2004. The approval allowed for phased construction of a baseball field, a softball field, a gymnasium and additional parking. Phase I consisted of a baseball field, ten (10) parking spaces and a maintenance access drive.</p>	

**BACKGROUND
CONTINUED**

Phase II consisted of a softball field. Phase III, anticipated in two (2) to five (5) years from the approval, consisted of a gymnasium and an eighty (80)-space parking lot. The baseball field and gymnasium were to replace facilities located on property owned by Deltic Timber. The ball fields were to be fenced and lighted and would include spectator seating areas. The lighting would be directed onto the fields. An architect had not yet designed the Phase III gymnasium so specifics of building material were not available. The height of the building was limited to forty-five (45) feet. The gymnasium and Phase III parking were to be constructed to the Highway 10 Design Overlay District standards for setbacks and buffers. The ball fields and gymnasium were anticipated to be used seven days per week from 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM. The facilities would be available for use by groups other than the Joe T Robinson School students.

Ordinance No. 20,065-X, adopted by the Little Rock Board of Directors on February 3, 2009, rezoned the site from R-2, Single-Family District, to POD, Planned Office Development, to allow the existing school to place a new drive inconsistent with the typical standards established by the Highway 10 Design Overlay District (DOD). According to the applicant the property experienced significant congestion within the site and on Highway 10 during peak traffic hours. The applicant stated the congestion was due to bus and vehicular traffic using a common driveway to access the site and several turning conflicts on Highway 10. Construction of the new driveway and parking lot were intended to allow for the separation of bus and vehicular traffic by a new concrete plaza adjacent to the proposed building addition. These improvements were intended to alleviate congestion by improving circulation within the property and eliminating turning conflicts and vehicle stacking on Highway 10. The request included the construction of a new parking lot and a small building addition. The previous phases of the approved Conditional Use Permit, which were not completed at the time of the POD approval, continued to be a part of the approval request. The drive has not been constructed.

The applicant is now requesting to revise the previously approved POD, Planned Office Development, for the property located at 21001 and 21501 HWY 10. The property was rezoned to POD in 2009 to resolve a drive spacing variance within the Highway 10 DOD.

**BACKGROUND
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The proposed (fifth) driveway was never constructed. The applicant is resubmitting the request to acquire approval for construction of a new middle school building, new indoor practice facility for athletics, additional parking areas, improved bus and vehicle drives, new basketball and softball fields and potential future expansions to buildings and parking.

The applicant is requesting variances as follows:

1. Reconstruct existing eastern driveway to include two exit lanes and maintain the existing location that is less than 150 feet from the eastern boundary.
2. Reconstruct existing western driveway to include a median to separate an entry lane and two (2) exit lanes that exceeds the maximum driveway width of forty (40) feet.
3. Allow screening of new trash containers with part masonry wall and part evergreen plant screening, in lieu of full opaque fencing and gates.

The need for the project is not due to a school closing or otherwise transferring of students. The construction of the new middle school, repurposing the existing middle school and other future expansions shown are all about enhancing the Joe T. Robinson School facilities and providing for student population growth. It is hoped that the new middle school will help attract more students to public school where this population is steadily diminishing and going to the private school options. The additional space provided by the new buildings and shifting of the high school freshmen to their own building will increase the campus capacity in each student focus area. While there is no certainty of what the actual growth may be the school is providing for a potential increase in capacity of 200 to 500 students that could be served on the campus. At the same time the school is making proactive improvements to prevent traffic issues with bus loading space and vehicle loading/stack space. The school is also enhancing parking capacity for students, parents, faculty, staff and events. The long term plan with initial improvements in the first phase of work and future expansions playing out over the next six (6) to eight (8) years.

**BACKGROUND
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The applicant notes that Robinson High School and Robinson Middle School are the only operating public high school and public middle schools north of Colonel Glenn Road and west of Interstate 430. The applicant states the need for better public schools options goes hand in hand with this expanding area of Western Little Rock.

The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed POD request at its February 25, 2016, meeting and there were no registered objectors present. All property owners located within 200 feet of the site along with the Duquesne Place Property Owners Association were notified of the Public Hearing. Please see the attached Planning Commission minute record and site plan for the applicant's specific development proposal and the staff analysis and recommendation.