



Staff Report
General Development/Group Development Plan
Aldermanic District: 2
County Commission District: 2
MPC File No. 16-000500
February 23, 2016

The Shoppes of Wicklow Farms

1675 East Victory Drive

Zoning District: B-C

11.018 Acres

PIN 2-0078-12-003 through 006, 008, 012, 013, 016 and 017; PIN 2-0084-01-003 through 009; and, PIN 2-0084-02-001 through 006 and 008 through 013 (28 parcels)

Paulson Mitchell, Inc., Engineer – Michael Letson

ARS Ventures, LLC, Owner

Attorney Robert McCorkle, Agent

Gary Plumbley, MPC Project Planner

Report Status: Initial Report

Nature of Request

The petitioner is requesting approval of a General Development/Group Development Plan for a proposed commercial retail development located on the south side of East Victory Drive between Dixie Avenue and Wicklow Street within a B-C (Community Business) zoning classification. No variances have been requested by the petitioner.

Findings

1. **Notification:** A notification letter was sent on Wednesday, February 3, 2016 to all property owners located within 300 feet of the petitioned site. Notification letters were also sent to the Live Oak Neighborhood Association and the Parkside Neighborhood Association.
2. **Zoning:** The subject site was rezoned by City Council from B-H (Highway Business), R-6 Single Family Residential, and PD-N (Planned Development Non-Conforming) to its current B-C classification on December 10, 2015 (File Number 15-005157-ZA).
3. **Site:** Of the 28 separate parcels that comprise the subject site, 11 are vacant; four are occupied by a restaurant and banquet facility with off-street parking; two are occupied by a commercial paint and body shop; five are occupied by a horse boarding, riding academy, and equestrian facility; and, the remaining six are occupied by single family residential structures. All of the structures on the entire site will be razed to accommodate the proposed retail center. The land uses and zoning districts surrounding the subject property include:

Location

North

Land Use

East Victory Drive

Zoning



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	Antique Shop	PUD-IS-B [1]
	Undeveloped Parcels	R-6
	Single Family Residential	R-6
South	Kerry Street	
	Police Training Facility	R-6
	Telecommunications Tower site	R-6
	Horse Pasture	C-A [2]
	Recreation Field (Salvation Army)	R-I-P [3]
East	Dixie Avenue	
	Telecommunications Tower Site	B-H
	Single Family Residential	B-H and R-6
	Undeveloped Parcels	R-6
	Shopping Center	B-H
West	Wicklow Street	
	Retail Commercial (shoe store)	B-H
	Commercial (sauce manufacturing)	B-H
	Single Family Residential	R-6
	Residential Four-Family Unit	R-4 [4]

- [1] PUD-IS-B Planned Unit Development Institutional
- [2] C-A Agricultural Conservation
- [3] R-I-P Residential Institutional Professional
- [4] R-4 Four Family Residential

4. **Proposed Structures:** The petitioner is proposing to construct a retail center on the 11.018 acre site. The proposed development will consist of three attached and semi-attached structures on the southern portion of the site near Kerry Street and three smaller detached structures on the northern portion of the site near East Victory Drive. The three larger structures will be the anchor tenants, which have yet to be identified, and will vary in size from 25,000 square feet to 30,000 square feet with a cumulative total of 84,896 square feet. However, because these structures are attached, the size of each structure could be modified as needed provided the total area is maintained.

The three freestanding structures on the northern portion of the site will vary in size from 5,000 square feet to 12,900 square feet with a cumulative area of 30,400 square feet. These structures will be split into individual bays and occupied by various retail uses. No tenants have been identified for these structures by the developer.

5. **Transportation Network:** The property has frontage along East Victory Drive, Dixie Avenue, Wicklow Street, and Dixie Avenue. East Victory Drive is a paved five lane divided road with a 100 foot right-of-way and is classified as an arterial roadway. The remaining three streets are paved two lane roads and are classified as minor roads. Dixie Avenue has a 50 foot right-of-way and Wicklow Street and Kerry Street have a 40 foot right-of-way. The Georgia Department



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of Transportation Traffic Count Map dated 2014 identified a daily average of 28,900 vehicles on East Victory Drive along the subject site. Because Dixie Avenue, Wicklow Road, and Kerry Street are minor streets, there is no traffic count information available.

6. **Access:** The proposed retail center will have two curb cuts on East Victory Drive and three curb cuts on both Dixie Avenue and Wicklow Street. No curb cuts are proposed on Kerry Street. The curb cuts on Victory Drive will be right-in and right-out only with no median break. These cuts will also include a deceleration lane and an acceleration lane on East Victory Drive. The southernmost curb cut on both Dixie Avenue and Wicklow Street will be a bi-directional cut and will primarily serve the truck traffic servicing the major anchors. The remaining two curb cuts on both Dixie Avenue and Wicklow Street will each be designed to accommodate a dedicated lane for entry into the center, right turn, and left turn onto the adjacent street.

The drive aisles that line up with the three curb cuts on both Dixie Avenue and Wicklow Street will not have any off-street parking. Also, the drive aisles will extend across the entire site and will function more as a street than a drive aisle. The north/south drive aisles serving the primary parking area will connect with the northernmost two east/west drive aisles.

7. **Unopen Right-of-Way:** In addition to the previously identified streets, there is an existing unopen public road right-of-way located in the middle portion of the subject site and extending in a north-south direction from East Victory Drive to Kerry Street. The unopen right-of-way, Munster Street, was paved and used as part of a former restaurant's off-street parking lot. In addition, it is used to provide access to a commercial site south of the restaurant site. The restaurant site and the commercial site will be included as part of the unified development and the petitioner does not intend to utilize the unopen right-of-way in conjunction with the development of the commercial center. Based on this finding, the petitioner has petitioned the Mayor and Aldermen to quit claim the unopen Munster Street right-of-way.
8. **Parking:** The required parking for the proposed shopping center is 537 spaces based on the requirement of one space for every 200 square feet of 107,217 square feet of leasable area. The proposed development will have 555 off-street spaces including 18 handicap spaces, 104 compact spaces, and 433 standard spaces. Developments are allowed to have up to 20 percent of the parking designed as compact spaces. The proposed development will have 18.7 percent of the total parking designated as handicap spaces. All of the proposed off-street parking will be 90-degree parking with the exception of 28 spaces located on the main entrance drive from East Victory Drive which will be parallel spaces.
9. **Public Services and Facilities:** The subject site is served by the Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department, City of Savannah fire protection and by the City of Savannah water and sanitary sewer.
10. **Chatham Area Transit:** The subject site is served by the Chatham Area Transit System, route number 12 Henry Street. This route is located on East Victory Drive and extends along the entire width of the subject site.
11. **Drainage:** The stormwater generated by the additional development will be accommodated by a



proposed detention pond to be located on the southern portion of the site adjacent to Kerry Street. The detention pond will begin near Dixie Street and will extend in a westerly direction over approximately two thirds of the width of the site. A drainage plan must be approved by the City Engineer in conjunction with the Specific Development Plan.

12. **Greenspace:** The required greenspace for the proposed development is 2.2 acres (95,986 square feet) based on the requirement of 20 percent of the 11.018 acre site. The proposed development will have 2.27 acres (97,736 square feet) of green space which is 20.33 percent of the total site.
13. **Dumpster:** A double dumpster pad enclosure will be located adjacent to the structure identified as Retail A and a single dumpster pad enclosure will be located adjacent to the structure identified as Retail B. This should accommodate the needs of the three freestanding structures located on the northern portion of the site. However, no dumpster pad enclosures or compactors are shown on the southern portion of the site behind the primary anchor stores. The site plan must be revised to show the required enclosures for these structures.
14. **Traffic Impact:** A detailed traffic impact study was prepared and submitted to the City department of traffic engineering and the MPC staff for review and approval to possibly include off-site improvements. Based on the study results, level of service conditions for the future with project build out are expected to remain within an acceptable range for the expectation of the intersections of Wallin Street and US 80/victory Drive and Victory Manor Place/Dixie Avenue and US 80/ Victory Drive. The study analyzes some remediation at those intersections. The city has submitted several comments regarding the traffic study that will need to be addressed by the engineering firm before the study is approved. Issues such as turning movements as potential conflicts, queue lengths and details of proposed remediation must be addressed in conjunction with approval of a Specific Development Plan.

Independent of the traffic impact study, some initial assessments have been made regarding the traffic that would be generated by the proposed development. Based on the square footage of the proposed shopping center, the trips expected to be generated by the proposed development are approximately 7,221 weekday trips and 9,806 Saturday trips. The developer anticipates that 30 percent of the trips to the proposed development will be pass by trips already in the area. Based on this assumption, the number of new weekday trips will be 5,055 and the number of new Saturday trips will be 6,864.

15. **Sidewalks:** The petitioner has provided sidewalks within the site to accommodate pedestrian movement. The primary sidewalk will extend from East Victory Drive down the center of the site to the drive aisle that parallels the structures on the southern portion of the site. A sidewalk will also extend along the front of the structures on the rear portion of the site and extend from Dixie Avenue to Wicklow Street and around the three freestanding structures on the northern portion of the site near East Victory Drive. No sidewalks are proposed to be constructed along any of the abutting streets at this time. However, this issue may be addressed in conjunction with a Specific Development Plan.



16. **Signage:** The proposed General Development Plan identifies freestanding signs to be located at the entrance on East Victory Drive, Wicklow Street, and Dixie Avenue. The signs will be monument style signs. The specific location, type and details of the proposed signage will be addressed in conjunction with a Specific Development Plan.
17. **Buffers:** A vegetative hedge not less than three feet in height or a privacy fence not less than three feet in height (Type G buffer) is required adjacent to the portion of all off-street parking lots where vehicle lights can shine on adjacent properties and rights-of-way. A Type G buffer will not be required where a Type C buffer will be established.

A 20 foot planted buffer and a privacy fence not less than six feet in height (Type C buffer) is required: Along the western portion of the site beginning at Kerry Street and extending in a northerly direction along Wicklow Street for a distance of approximately 610 feet; along the eastern portion of the site beginning at Kerry Street and extending in a northerly direction along Dixie Avenue for a distance of approximately 550 feet; and, on the southern portion of the site beginning at Dixie Avenue and extending in a westerly direction along Kerry Street for a distance of approximately 165 feet in lieu of a more appropriate method of screening.

18. **Variations:** The proposed General Development Plan/Group Development complies with the development standards as submitted and no variations are requested by the petitioner. However, staff has determined that the entire southern portion of the site adjacent to Kerry Street could be developed more aesthetically pleasing by eliminating the Type C Buffer along the easternmost portion of the site beginning at Dixie Avenue and extending in a westerly direction approximately 165 feet.

The Savannah Zoning Regulations, Section 8-3031 (G) provide that variations from the requirements set forth for General and Specific Development Plans for properties located within a Planned zoning district may be approved by the Metropolitan Planning Commission at the request of the developer on a finding that such variations would:

- (1) Be in keeping with the overall character of the area.
- (2) Would not be contrary to the process and intent of these Regulations.
- (3) Would not be detrimental to existing or proposed surrounding uses.
- (4) Would serve public purposes to a degree equal to or greater than the standards replaced.

The view of the southern portion of the proposed development from Kerry Street and the properties south of Kerry Street will be somewhat unattractive based on the fact that the view will be primarily the rear of the three large buildings which span almost the entire width of the lot. In addition, between the buildings and Kerry Street a stormwater detention pond is proposed that encompasses the majority width of the site. Detention ponds that are located close to a road historically accumulate large amounts of trash in the pond that is unsightly and create maintenance problems. Staff is recommending approval of a variance from providing a Type C buffer adjacent to Kerry Street in conjunction with the following alternative buffering element:



Provide a black vinyl chain link fence not less than six feet in height on the southern portion of the subject site. The fence shall be located not less than five feet north of the southern property line and shall extend from the westernmost right-of-way line of Dixie Avenue to the easternmost right-of-way line of Wicklow Street. In addition, plant a row of Wax Myrtles along the entire width of the southernmost portion of the site. The Wax Myrtles shall be not less than five gallon size and shall be planted along the south side of the black vinyl fence at a spacing not greater than seven feet on-center.

19. **Summary:** The proposed General Development Plan/Group Development Plan as submitted, complies with the development standards as contained within the Savannah Zoning Regulations and if approved, would not violate the intent and purposes of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance or be detrimental to the properties in the general area or the City of Savannah.

Recommendation

The MPC staff recommends **approval** of a variance from providing the required Type C buffer along the southernmost portion of the site beginning at the western right-of-way line of Dixie Avenue and extending in a westerly direction along Kerry Street for a distance of approximately 165 feet. Staff further recommends **approval** of the proposed General Development Plan/Group Development subject to the following conditions:

1. Revise the General Development Plan to show dumpster and compactor pad enclosures in the rear portion of Structures A, B, and C.
2. Revise the General Development Plan to show a black vinyl coated chain link fence not less than 6 feet in height five feet south of the southernmost property line and parallel to Kerry Street along the entire width of the site. In addition, plant a row of Wax Myrtles on the south side and parallel to the black vinyl chain link fence along the entire width of the site. The Wax Myrtles shall be not less than five gallon size plants and shall be spaced not more than seven feet on-center. However, upon a determination by the City Landscape Architect that the limited available area for planting is not sufficient to support Wax Myrtles, an alternative species of plant, as determined by the City Landscape Architect may be required.
3. Approval by the Mayor and Aldermen of the petition to quit claim the unopened right-of-way of Munster Street to the owner of the abutting properties.
4. The subject site consists of 28 separate parcels of land. Based on this finding, a recombination subdivision will be required to create a unified site prior to the issuance of a building permit. Three of the four streets that abut the subject site have a substandard right-of-way width. Because of this, an additional right-of-way dedication for additional right-of-way may be required in conjunction with the minor recombination subdivision. If such dedication is required, the required buffers, setbacks, and greenspace will be reduced by the area to be dedicated and such reduction will not necessitate a variance.
5. Approval by the City of Savannah review departments.



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The following comments will be applicable in conjunction with the review and approval of a Specific Development Plan:

1. Approval of the required traffic study by the City traffic engineer and the MPC. If improvements are required in conjunction with the traffic study, the approval of a Specific Development Plan will be conditioned upon the completion of the required improvements.
2. The privacy fence required in conjunction with a Type C buffer shall be either all masonry construction or be constructed of masonry columns not more than 30 feet on-center with wood or faux wood inserts. Also, the supporting posts between the masonry columns shall be thick gauge galvanized posts.
3. The existing trees on the subject site will be evaluated based on the existing standards of the recently adopted Landscape and Tree Protection Ordinance in conjunction with the approval of a Specific Development Plan.
4. The freestanding signs shown at the entrances on East Victory Drive, Wicklow Street, and Dixie Avenue will be approved in conjunction with Specific Development Plan which could require the deletion of one or more of the proposed signs.
5. All parcels must be recombined into a unified site prior to the issuance of a building permit.