



# The City of Grove City, Ohio

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Planning Commission Staff Report  
Council Chambers  
January 2, 2018 1:30pm

- 1. APPLICATION: Stringtown Road Apartments | Development Plan**
- Project Number: 201710250035
- Location: 2384 Stringtown Road (040-005711, 040-005652, and 040-007782)
- Proposal: A development plan for 138 apartments
- Applicant: Mark Catalano, Fairway Realty/Metropolitan Holdings, 3100 Tremont Road, Suite 200, Columbus, OH 43221

**Relevant Code Section(s):**

- 1135.14 Zoning Districts and Regulations – Planned Unit Development District

**Project Summary**

The applicant is requesting approval of a development plan for a new multi-family residential development containing 138 apartments in four (4) buildings. This project would be a redevelopment of the Star Cinema site at the terminus of Parkmead Drive. The buildings will be three-stories and the overall density of the site is proposed to be 21 dwelling units per acre.

A preliminary development plan for the site was approved by City Council on October 16<sup>th</sup> showing a similar layout as the currently proposed final development plan. The site is currently zoned C-2; however, a rezoning application was recommended for approval by Planning Commission on November 17<sup>th</sup> to rezone the site to PUD-R. This rezoning will have its second reading at City Council on January 16<sup>th</sup>. The rezoning application included a zoning text to set the standards and regulations for development on the site and the proposed development plan is in general conformance with the proposed zoning text.

The proposed redevelopment is, in the opinion of staff, the first piece to redeveloping the area into the mixed-use area shown on future land use plans. The applicant has indicated they have been in discussion with adjacent property owners for other potential redevelopment opportunities that could be incorporated into the proposed development as part of a later phase.

**Site Plan**

The 6.57-acre site is proposed to be accessed from Parkmead Drive from the east and from the K-Mart site to the west. An existing 30' drive along the west property line will remain to provide access for truck deliveries to the adjacent Kmart and access to some proposed garage spaces. A 26' drive is proposed as a private extension of Parkmead Drive along the southern portion of the property to access the development. Most internal drives through the development are proposed to be 24', with a 26' wide drive adjacent to proposed garages. These widths are in compliance with the proposed zoning text. A note on plans states that all curbing will be 18" straight curbing; however, the zoning text permits intermittent openings in the curbing along the Parkmead Drive extension to allow drainage to the swale on the south side of the proposed drive.

A stipulation was included as part of the recommendation of approval from Planning Commission for the rezoning of the property, stating that the site shall be designed in a manner that allows for its future integration and connectivity with surrounding uses / buildings. Although points of access

and connectivity are shown from the extension of Parkmead Drive and from the Kmart site to the west, there is a public right-of-way, Edwards Drive, that stubs into this site that staff would like to see utilized for some form of future connectivity. Staff is currently looking at the Stringtown Road area identified on future land use maps as mixed-use to develop general principles on how the area could best be redeveloped. The current site layout would not allow a roadway connection and while some form of pedestrian crossing would be possible, plans do not show any intent to integrate into the area to the north or east. As the recommended stipulation on the rezoning application states, staff believes this development should be designed in a manner that allows for its future integration and connectivity with surrounding uses and/or buildings.

The four residential buildings are primarily located around the perimeter of the site and along the extended drive from Parkmead Drive. A Clubhouse and pool are proposed in the southeast corner of the site, with mailboxes located adjacent to the Clubhouse, and a trash compactor located in the center of the site. Two (2) garages are proposed along the western portion of the site as well.

A total of 138 dwelling units are proposed on the site for an overall density of 21.0 dwelling units per acre. Although the proposed density is over the maximum permitted density of eight (8) dwelling units per acre for standard (A-1) multi-family residential developments, staff believes the proposed density is appropriate for the site given the more urban context. Staff is supportive of higher density developments in mixed-use, walkable areas, such as the recently developed Broadway Station Apartments in the Town Center which features a density of approximately 35 dwelling units per acre. Future land use plans show this property within a mixed-use area, and the apartment complex directly adjacent to the north (The Grove Apartments) on Sonora Drive has a density of 16 dwelling units per acre.

Based on the number of units proposed in the development, 6.18 acres of open space is required on site per Code Section 1101.09. Plans show roughly, 1.7 acres of open space; however much of this is within the floodplain along the north and east property lines. A clubhouse with community spaces and amenities, a pool, fire pit, and outdoor grilling area offers additional recreational space for residents. Given the urban context of the site, similar to the Broadway Station Apartments in the Town Center, the walkable environment and surrounding commercial development will also act as the amenity for residents. In order to determine the appropriateness of open space on the site, staff examined a number of other communities' open space dedication requirements and found that the proposed open space for this development would meet the requirements in Hilliard and Westerville which require a percentage of the gross land area be dedicated, and the Bridge Street District in Dublin which requires only 200 square feet of open space per dwelling unit.

	Minimum Open Space Dedication Requirement	What Would Be Required for Stringtown Road Apartment Project	Does the Proposed Stringtown Road Apartments Meet the Open Space Requirement
Grove City	$(\text{[# units} \times \text{Census Average HH size}] \times 1,000) / 20$	6.18 acres	No
Hilliard	20% of gross land area containing residential units	1.3 acres	Yes
Westerville	20% of total site	1.3 acres	Yes
Bridge Street (Dublin)	200 SF per dwelling unit	0.63 acres (27,600 SF)	Yes

Sidewalks four (4) feet in width will also be provided throughout the site and along the north side of Parkmead Drive. Most sidewalks are located adjacent to parking areas with no bufferyard or landscape separation. Although the zoning text states that sidewalks shall be a minimum of four

(4) in width, staff believes sidewalks adjacent to parking spaces should be widened to five (5) feet or parking blocks should be installed within parking spaces when adjacent to a sidewalk to prevent vehicles from blocking portions of the sidewalk and inhibiting proper access per ADA requirements.

A number of outstanding issues remain related to utilities and stormwater management for the proposed development. The stormwater report and utility plans note the use of an underground detention system with the final outlet draining to an existing ditch that runs along the eastern portion of the site. The landscape plan shows a detention basin north of the clubhouse pool that is not reflected in the other plan sheets. Staff would not be supportive of the use of dry basins for this development. Additionally, a portion of the sidewalk around the center residential building may encroach into the FEMA Flood Hazard Area on the site, which will require a Special Flood Hazard Area Development Permit from the Building Division. Questions have also been raised regarding a number of easements and existing utilities on the site that will need to be addressed as part of the site improvement plan (engineer plan) review.

#### Landscaping

A landscape plan has been submitted which shows various plantings around the site including preserving the existing tree line along the north and east property lines. Each apartment building will be landscaped with a few Columnar Ginkgo and Sweet Bay Magnolia trees, as well as a combination of shrubs, grasses, and groundcovers. The proposed clubhouse will be screened to the east with 30 Techny Arborvitae shrubs and then landscaped on the other sides with a combination of two (2) Sweet Bay Magnolia trees, shrubs, grasses, and groundcovers. The northern portion of Parkmead Drive will be landscaped with six (6) Shademaster Honeylocust trees, and 10 Eastern White Pine trees (7-8' in height at installation) are proposed south of the drive. Landscape islands will contain Gro-Low Fragrant Sumac shrubs and, with the exception of one (1) that is missing a tree, will have either a Bloodgood London Plane Tree or a Shademaster Honey Locust tree. The dog park in the center of the site will be landscaped with one (1) Appalachian Red Redbud tree, one (1) Tulip tree, and two (2) Northern Red Oak trees. The trash compactor will be screened with eight (8) Low-Gro Fragrant Sumac shrubs and 17 Techny Arborvitae shrubs. Additional perimeter screening on the east side of the site includes six (6) additional trees, a White Willow, an Appalachian Red Redbud, a Norway Spruce, and three (3) Eastern White Pines.

Code states that two (2) trees are required per dwelling unit for a total of 276 trees required; however, only 95 new trees are proposed on the site. Staff is supportive of granting a deviation to reduce the amount of required trees due to the amount of trees to be preserved on the property within the existing stream corridor; however, plans should indicate what steps will be taken to ensure the integrity of the trees that are to remain on site during and after construction.

There are also a number of outstanding issues with the submitted landscape plan that will need to be addressed. The proposed ground-mounted A/C units are to be screened with creeping thyme. This does not meet the Code requirement that all services structures be screened with a continuous 100 percent opaque landscape hedge, solid fence, wall, or earthen mound. If a stormwater pond is to be utilized, trees will also be required around its perimeter at a rate of one (1) tree for every 50 lineal feet of pond perimeter. Additionally, one (1) parking lot landscape island does not contain the required landscaping.

#### Parking

The site will contain 222 parking spaces, with 186 open spaces and two (2) garage structures containing an additional 36 parking spaces. The provided parking meets the requirements

outlined in their proposed zoning text of one (1) parking space per bedroom. 201 bedrooms are proposed in the 138 units. All parking lot striping will be white.

Buildings

Four (4) residential apartment buildings are proposed, containing a mix of one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom units. The breakdown for each building is shown in the table below:

Building	Size (Approx. Sq Ft)	Number of Units	One-Bedroom	Two-Bedroom	Three-Bedroom
1	17,800	36	12	12	12
2	14,100	30	6	24	0
3	10,100	36	36	0	0
4	14,900	36	24	12	0

Each of the residential apartment buildings will be three (3) stories at approximately 40 feet in height with open corridors and will be finished in a combination of brick veneer (painted “Stone’s Throw”), horizontal vinyl siding (white), and shake siding (“Greystone”). Gutters and trim will be white and black vinyl shutters will be used for accent. The percentage of materials used on each building varies based on its location on the site.

The façade on Building 1 that faces Parkmead Drive will have increased brick (approximately 60%) along the first floor and extending vertically to the second and third floors on some areas of the building. Each apartment building will feature balconies and patios with black aluminum railings, which will also be utilized as the railings at the end of each open corridor. Each apartment building will also feature Royal Portsmouth shake vinyl siding (“Greystone”) on the gables, white vinyl windows, and black vinyl shutters on the sides of the buildings, and Landmark Certainteed asphalt singles (“Moire Black”) on the pitched roofs.

The clubhouse and garages will be finished similarly to the apartment buildings with the same materials, colors, and pitched roofs finished in the same asphalt shingles. The clubhouse will be one (1) story (25 feet in height) finished primarily in the shake vinyl siding with a brick veneer water table on all sides. Windows on the clubhouse will extend from the water table to the roofline, with some shorter windows on the building’s vestibule and more windows around the front door. Each garage will be one (1) story (18 feet in height) finished in white vinyl siding with some windows placed around the building and shake siding utilized on the gables. One (1) of the garages will have 20 spaces, with nine (9) doors on the west elevation (facing Kmart) and 11 on the east, and be approximately 4,400 square feet in size. The second garage will have 16 spaces, all facing the east and be approximately 3,600 square feet in size.

The mail kiosk will be one (1) story and will be finished primarily in vinyl siding with vertical brick veneer portions and shake vinyl siding on the gables.

The trash enclosure will be 9’6” in height and be finished in brick veneer on all sides with a stone wall cap along the top of the sides. Details were not submitted for the gates. Staff feels that these gates should be solid wood, stained, and be 100% opaque.

Lighting

A photometric plan was submitted that shows lighting throughout the site with most vehicular and pedestrian areas being lit to at least 0.5 footcandles. Some areas fall below the 0.5 footcandles; however, there is no lighting footcandle requirement for residential properties. Lighting specs have also been submitted showing black, downcast LED lights from Lithonia Lighting (D-Series

LED, Size 0). Staff is not supportive of the proposed lighting fixture designs and feels that the design should match that on area developments, such as the Kroger on Stringtown Road.

### Signage

A ground sign is proposed at the entrance of the site. The sign will have two (2) white, aluminum posts, six (6) feet in height with “federal style” caps on top and with the sign faces anchored between. The top face will be 21 square feet in size (7’x3’) and will contain the complex’s name (Stringtown Village Apartments), and the lower face will be three (3) square feet in size (4’7”x8”) and will have the complex’s phone number on it. Both signs will have a black background with “1shot” gold color lettering.

### Analysis

Per Section 1135.14 of the Codified Ordinances of Grove City, Planning Commission is charged with reviewing and evaluating Preliminary and Final Development Plan applications by applying the eight (8) findings.

- (1) **The uses proposed will not be detrimental to present and potential surrounding uses, but will have a beneficial effect which could not be achieved under any other district.**

**Finding Met:** The proposed use will not be detrimental to present and potential surrounding uses, as there are currently other residential areas nearby to the north and commercial areas within safe walking distance to the west and south. Staff is supportive of the proposed residential use of the property as it is a redevelopment of a currently vacant property that will promote mixed use along the Stringtown Road corridor, consistent with future land uses identified for the area. Moreover, this site has poorer visibility from Stringtown Road than other commercial properties along the corridor, making this a challenging site for a commercial use on the property.

- (2) **Any exception from Zoning Code (Ordinance C79-74, passed January 20, 1975) requirements is warranted by the design and amenities incorporated in the Development Plan.**

**Finding Met:** While some deviations are needed from code, the proposed development plan is in general conformance with the proposed PUD zoning text for the site (to be voted on by City Council at their January 16<sup>th</sup> meeting).

- (3) **Land surrounding the proposed development can be planned in coordination with the proposed development and that it is compatible in use.**

**Finding Can Be Met:** Surrounding areas can be planned in coordination with this proposed development as it is utilizing existing connectivity of roadways and sidewalks. The proposed development is denser than other surrounding residential uses; however, staff feels that it is appropriate for this area as it is keeping with the mixed-use character identified in future land use maps. A stipulation on the approval of the rezoning was recommended by Planning Commission that this development be designed in a manner that allows for its future integration and connectivity with surrounding uses/buildings. While the proposed site design does not allow for a future road connection to the east, there is a possibility for a pedestrian connection.

- (4) **The proposed change to a Planned Unit Development District is in conformance with the general use intent of the area.**

**Finding Met:** While this property is surrounded mostly with commercial uses, this property is shown within a mixed-use area on future land use maps associated with the draft GroveCity2050 Community Plan.

- (5) **Existing and proposed streets are suitable and adequate to carry anticipated traffic within the proposed district and in the vicinity of the proposed district.**

**Finding Can be Met:** The proposed development will have access from Parkmead Drive and the K-Mart property, both of which have signalized intersections at Stringtown Road. However, documentation of cross-access easements over the southern drive and the K-Mart property are needed to ensure proper access as the site redevelops.

- (6) **Existing and proposed utility services are adequate for the proposed development.**

**Finding Can Be Met:** A few items are needed on the proposed utility plan to show the location of easements and provide clarification on lines utilized and water quality management. Additionally, a number of stormwater items were not included and will need to be addressed with the Site Improvement Plan.

- (7) **Each phase of the proposed development, as it is proposed to be completed contains the required parking spaces, landscape and utility areas necessary for creating and sustaining a desirable and stable environment.**

**Finding Met:** The proposed development contains an appropriate amount of parking and landscaping to create a desirable and stable environment.

- (8) **The proposed Planned Unit Development District and all proposed buildings, parking spaces and landscape and utility areas can be completely developed within seven years of the establishment of the district, unless otherwise provided for by Council.**

**Finding Met:** The proposed project, including building, parking spaces, landscaping, and utilities can be completely developed within seven years.

### **Recommendation**

The Development Department recommends Planning Commission make a recommendation of approval to City Council for the Development Plan with the following stipulations and deviations as noted below.

1. The development shall be designed in a manner that allows for future integration and connectivity with surrounding uses / buildings.
2. Sidewalks shall be five (5) feet wide when adjacent to parking spaces or parking blocks shall be installed for all parking spaces fronting a four (4) foot wide sidewalk.
3. Plans shall state how existing trees to be preserved on the site will be protected during and after construction, per Section 1136.10.
4. Plans shall include a note stating that all service structures will be screened in accordance with Section 1136.08.
5. Shrubs shall be a minimum of 24 inches at the time of planting.

6. At least six (6) trees shall be planted around the perimeter of the detention pond area at least two (2) inches in caliper or six (6) feet in height for evergreens and no more than 20 feet from the bank.
7. General Note #12 on the landscape plan shall be updated to state that only hydro or Penn mulch shall be utilized on the site to germinate grass seed.
8. The three (3) easternmost Shademaster Honeylocust trees along the north side of Parkmead Drive shall be removed from plans as these trees are existing and on a neighboring property.
9. All of the parking islands shall have at least one (1) large or medium class tree at least two (2) inches in caliper.
10. Exterior site lighting shall be decorative downcast, LED matching the character of lighting along Stringtown Road and the Kroger property and Stringtown Road and Hoover.
11. Gates for the trash enclosure shall be solid wood, stained, and be 100% opaque.