



REAL ESTATE

\$200M Parkside at Shelby Farms clears first hurdle



A rendering submitted to the Shelby County Land Use Control Board shows the proposed Parkside at Shelby Farms development, which would include apartments and commercial uses.

By Thomas Bailey Jr. of The Commercial Appeal

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The proposed, \$200 million Parkside at Shelby Farms cleared the first of many hurdles Thursday by gaining the heavily conditioned approval of the Land Use Control Board.

The board approved a planned development that would “activate” the now-quiet, north edge of vast Shelby Farms Park with 1,200 apartments in 21 buildings, plus 50,000 square feet of retail and 80,000 square feet of offices. The area is now zoned for single-family homes.

The planning board voted unanimously in favor of the 55-acre project stretching from the northwest corner of Mullins Station and Whitten roads.

But the City Council still must approve Parkside's outline plan and the County Commission still must approve the crossing of Shelby Farms Greenline by Parkside's main private drive off Mullins Station road.

Also, construction cannot start before local officials get the results of a traffic study on Parkside's effects on the already congested traffic in the area.

And because the project is so large, DB Development must divide the work into three or four phases. Planning officials will review and must approve construction details for each phase.

All the conditions so far have been agreed to by the developers, Bob Turner and Doug Windham of DB Development.

Faced with opposition from neighboring residents in single-family houses, the developers have already changed the plan to leave a 100-foot-wide buffer of mature trees between the apartments and the subdivisions.

They've also agreed to a condition to improve, in Phase 1, the already pressured intersection of Mullins Station and Whitten roads. Turn lanes, signals and other measures would be used to upgrade the junction, Turner said.

Their land planning professional, Brenda Solomito Basar, also announced to the board that the three largest buildings lining the Greenline and Mullins Station will be just six stories tall instead of nine, the maximum allowed.

But neighbor and opponent Lisa Royar, who was overcome with emotion in speaking to the board, was not appeased by the compromises and conditions.

"No. If it's rezoned it doesn't matter what the conditions are," Royar said. "If it's higher than two stories and you are bringing in extra commercial traffic, and commercial business and commercial lighting, and given the

different views from the park looking back (at Parkside) and from our houses looking to it, we're opposed to it.

"Leave it as single-family homes and develop it out that way," she said.

The Shelby County engineer and public works offices are strongly opposed to one facet of the project: having Parkside's main entry/exit drive off Mullins Station cross Shelby Farms Greenline.

Bob Evans of the county engineer office told the board during executive session that a goal of the rails-to-trail greenline, formerly the CSX Railroad, is not to cross roads. "We have enough crossings already; we don't need another," he said.

The crossing of the greenline by a private drive must be approved by the Shelby County Commission.

Turner, one of the developers, said later that the crossing would be engineered with speed bumps to slow traffic, and would have bollards to keep motorized vehicles off the paved trail.

"This is a huge economic development bit to Memphis. Puts a lot of people to work, brings a lot of tax dollars in... The county agreement that is in place allows these crossings to be approved... We've been talking to them about it. They know about this project and we've got a very favorable review so far."



The people who lead the 4,500-acre Shelby Farms are in favor of the Parkside development as long as it is a quality development, Shelby Farms Park Conservancy executive director Laura Morris told the board.

“We believe that mixed-use, high quality development on the edges of Shelby Farms Park can be a benefit to both the area and park, if done well,” she said.

“... People will want to live close to Shelby Farms Park, but to be clear, bad development will have quite the opposite impact,” she said.

The park conservancy has concerns about any apartment buildings being as high as nine or 10 stories and about traffic congestion. Park leaders also want to know how the developers are funding the project so they can “feel confident it’s finished as planned,” Morris said.

The conservancy asked for the right to review the developers’ site plans and “sign off” on them before the plans are approved. The developers later agreed to show park leaders their plans.

An animated rendering created by Allen & Hoshall shows how the developer intends for the large, mixed-use project to relate to Shelby Farms,

the Shelby Farms Greenline, the future Shelby Farms Parkway, and the surrounding residential subdivisions.



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