

# Streets of Brentwood clears first hurdle

Brentwood commissioners will take next step in January

3:27 AM, Nov 14, 2012



A rendering of the proposed Streets of Brentwood shows several buildings of mixed-use development on the corner of Franklin Road and Maryland Way.

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The Tennessean

**BRENTWOOD** — Although a mixed-use development proposed for the southwest corner of Franklin Road and Maryland Way passed its first hurdle, The Streets of Brentwood has a long way to go before shoveling the first spade of dirt.

A rezoning request was unanimously approved on first reading this week, but questions from city commissioners and several nearby residents swirled over traffic concerns, the size of the buffer zone and where the city's town center should be located.

The 17-acre site is now zoned for office space only. Developers GBT Realty Corp. and H.G. Hill Realty Co. want Town Center zoning to allow for a 970,000-square-foot mixed-use project with retail and restaurants, an 11-screen CineBistro movie theater, a hotel, office space and 250-300 leased condo units.

Two residential lots in the Meadowlake subdivision back up to the property on the south end.

“We think that a mixed-use development in so many ways does so much more for the city in a revenue standpoint and traffic, but also in creating a very exciting environment here,” said developer spokesman Michael Hindman of H. Michael Hindman Architects.

### **Not anticipated**

Commissioners Regina Smithson and Anne Dunn said their positive vote didn't guarantee future support.

Smithson lamented the scale of the project, which includes a parking garage as well as underground parking below several buildings.

“You could get more of a buffer zone if you scoot the whole project over towards Maryland Way. (You'd get) not quite as much square footage but you'd get more than the office space,” she said.

Dunn said she didn't expect the tract to fall in the town center zoning district, originally centered north of Church Street East and east of Franklin Road, when the board approved the commercial area several years ago. Town Center zoning requires no buffer.

“When (Town Center zoning) was first created, it was not envisioned as being beside any residential so there was no buffer put in ... I think we were remiss in not requiring a buffer if it abuts residential zoning,” she said.

Developers have agreed to put a 50-foot buffer between the development and its nearest residential neighbors.

### **Traffic worries**

Probably the biggest issue is traffic and the potential for making it worse.

A main thoroughfare proposed through The Streets of Brentwood would create another route connecting Maryland Way and Franklin Road, with signalized intersections at Eastpark Drive and Chadwick Drive. Plans also include taking out the H.G. Hill shopping center access near Starbucks immediately to the south of the proposed development

and creating a new access point with traffic signal across Franklin Road at Executive Center Drive.

“One of the great advantages to this site is the way the accessibility works out. We feel it gives a number of access points that spread the traffic out between the various garages and also among the various routes of traffic in and out of the sites,” said Bob Murphy of RPM Transportation Consultants.

The property includes the now-demolished Murray Ohio headquarters building and the Tennessee Baptist Convention Center, which is now under contract for purchase.

Meadowlake neighbor Brad Cole said he was “not opposed to the project” but wanted concerns addressed over the cleanliness and security, light pollution, a gate to block delivery trucks entering the site through Williamsburg Circle during off hours and the need for a more in-depth traffic study. He also wanted a 150-foot buffer between the commercial and residential areas.

The approval process will take a break for the winter holidays and resume in January with a planning commission recommendation, public hearing and final reading.

If approved, the earliest construction could happen on the project is next summer, Hindman said.