



**FILE:** PA02-0104

**DATE:** November 25, 2002  
**TO:** File/Record/Applicant  
**FROM:** Thomas B. Mathews, Director, Planning and Development Services Department  
**SUBJECT:** Planning Application PA01-0104 for Site Development Permit  
**APPLICANT:** DMB Ladera, LLC, Rancho Mission Viejo Co. and Westar Associates.

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**I. NATURE OF PROJECT:**

The applicant requests approval of a Site Development Permit to allow the construction of a shopping center within a 15.1 gross acre site (14.5 net acres) southwesterly of the intersection of Antonio and Crown Valley Parkways (25602 Crown Valley Parkway). The proposed shopping center would consist of 13 new buildings (building area labeled Buildings A through L, with Building I already constructed) with 155,985 square feet of floor area and parking spaces for 824 vehicles (as updated in the 9/28/02 by the applicant's parking consultant Linscott, Law & Greenspan). The majority of the project site is vacant and has been previously graded per rough grading permit GA990021.

This center may be marketed by the title "Mercantile West", and the Urban Activity Center (Ladera Planning Area 6) retail project (PA01-0128/PA01-0031) located southeasterly of the intersection of Antonio and Crown Valley Parkways may be marketed as "Mercantile East". The breakdown of proposed Mercantile West shopping center uses are as shown below and in the chart that follows:

- (1) 155,985 square feet of total building area.
- (2) 131,985 square feet proposed for general retail use.
- (3) A maximum of 24,000 square feet is proposed for restaurant/food uses. Included in that total for parking calculation purposes is 2,100 square feet of outdoor seating area adjacent to Building I.
- (4) Wide sidewalks in front of Buildings D, E, F, G and H provide a seating and table area for lunch, coffee or just resting for any visitor to the shopping center and enhancing the "home town" theme of this project and the nearby Mercantile East project.

BUILDING	PROPOSED USE	SQUARE FEET	NOTES
A	General Retail/Drug Store	20,000	A and B are one building
B	General Retail/Shops	7,000	All general retail shops may have one or more tenants
B-1	General Retail/Shops	4,675	B-1 through E are one building
C	General Retail/Food Market	48,000	
D-1	General Retail/Shops	4,675	
D	General Retail/Shops	6,835	Building D through H share a common seating area
E	General Retail/Shops	6,075	
F	General Retail/Shops	4,425	Includes 400 square feet of mezzanine area
G	Restaurant	6,300	May have one or more tenants
H	General Retail/Shops	7,000	
I	Restaurant	5,400 + 2,100 sq. ft. of patio dining	Existing building, previously approved as the Ladera PC information center
J	General Retail/Shops	7,000	
K	General Retail/Shops and Restaurant	7,000	Up to 3,500 square feet of the building may be used for restaurant use
L	General Retail/Shops and Restaurant	19,100	Up to 6,700 square feet of the building may be used for restaurant use

It should be noted that all square footages shown above and on the site plan are consistent with the Ladera Planned Community (PC) definition of "Floor Area, Gross" as defined on page 32 of the PC Program Text that excludes mechanical rooms for the purpose of calculating off-street parking requirements. Therefore, the actual architectural drawings for all buildings may actually provide for slightly larger square footage area calculations than are indicated on this site plan approval. Therefore, all future building permit applications and architectural shall include the total gross floor area per the Uniform Building Code and a second figure as defined by the Ladera PC Text and consistent with this planning application.

The unifying architectural theme of the Mercantile West shopping center is that of a shopping district which has grown over time, with the emphasis on the Art Deco period of the 1930s. This architectural theme is related to, and complementary with, the Mercantile East retail center (UAC Retail PA01-0128) located easterly of Antonio Parkway. The unique aspect of this center is 1st Street extended, the portion of the center adjacent to Buildings D, E, F, G and H. The applicant indicates that this area has been designed as a throw back to the era of shopping streets with angled parking serving individual storefronts. The wide sidewalks and adjacency to the Town Green should make this area conducive to pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and several shared seating areas are planned to serve those who wish to rest, eat an ice cream cone and people-watch before resuming their stroll.

Parking for this proposal is regulated by Section 7-9-145 "Off-street parking" of the Orange County Zoning Code. By adhering to Zoning Code Section 7-9-145.6(a)(31) "Shopping Centers", the parking requirements for this proposal would be 780 parking stalls (155,985 SF at 5 per 1,000 square feet). By adhering to the more stringent calculation whereby food uses would be calculated at a rate of 1 space per 100 square feet, the parking requirements for this proposal would be 900 parking stalls (131,985 SF at 1 space per 200 square feet plus 24,000 square feet at 1 space per 100 square feet). The proposal provides for a total of 824 parking stalls. This number is based on a parking study prepared by Linscott, Law & Greenspan dated September 28, 2002 which determined at the worst case demand (1 pm weekdays) of 794 off-street spaces, per an hourly parking accumulation demand formula for retail centers found in the publication *Shared Parking* by the Urban Land Institute, 1983, and applying a five percent adjustment to account for bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Thus a 30-space weekday surplus is forecast. This study was review by staff in Subdivision and Services Division/Traffic Review Section and found to be adequate for the proposal and in compliance with Zoning Code Section 7-9-145.6 for shopping center parking requirements.

The circulation component of this proposal is consistent with the Master Access Plan for Planning Areas 2 and 6, which have previously been reviewed and approved by PDS (Traffic Review) and PFRD (Traffic Engineering). Five ingress/egress points serve the Mercantile West site, including:

1. "Right in/Right out" at Antonio along the southerly project boundary
2. "Left/Right in, Right out" a Antonio between Crown Valley and Windmill/Terrace
3. "Right in/Right out" at Crown Valley between Antonio and Sienna
4. "Right in/Right out" at Sienna between Crown Valley and Mercantile
5. Full four-way intersection at Mercantile and First

On April 7, 1998, the Planning Commission approved Area Plan AP98-03 for Planning Areas 1, 2 and 7 of the Ladera PC (Planning Application PA97-0174). This Area Plan established six sub areas of Planning Area 2. Sub-Area 2-F (the subject site) was established for 16.6 gross acres (12 net acres) of Neighborhood Center uses. The Ladera Planned Community Statistical Table and the Planning Areas 2 & 7 Area Plan (PA97-0174) both allow 25 net acres of Neighborhood Center uses within Planning Area 2. By combining the existing Bridgepark Plaza retail center in Planning Sub-Area 2-A (10.112 net acres per PA99-0082 and Tract 15827 and LLA 2001-016, and 108,455 square feet per CP00-0021) and the proposed Mercantile West retail center in Planning Sub-Area 2-F (14.5 net acres per Tract 15884, and 155,985 square feet per proposed PA02-0108), the total net area is 24.612 acres, which is less than the 25 acre PC Statistical Table and Area Plan PA97-0174 limits. The combined square footage of the two retail centers would be approximately 264,440 square feet, well within the 275,000 square feet of retail center uses allowed by the PC Statistical Table. Rancho Mission Viejo and DMB Ladera have committed that this is the last development proposal within Ladera Ranch that will propose retail commercial uses. The developers of the Ladera PC will not be proposing to locate

the remaining 10,600+ square feet (the difference between the 275,000 square foot PC limit and the proposed 264,400 approved or proposed) elsewhere within Ladera Ranch.

The shopping center plan pays special attention to the interface between the grocery (Building "C") and the adjacent existing "planned concept" alley-loaded single-family detached homes westerly of Mercantile Way (Tract 15888, PA99-0133). The view from these homes could potentially be dominated by the architectural massing of the market's frontage. To help mitigate this situation, the plans call for planters and 3 to 6 feet high retaining/screen walls between the parking areas for Buildings A, B and C and the adjoining residential areas, which will allow for landscaping and trees at two levels. In addition, the parking lot and trash enclosures have been screened from Mercantile Way and the surrounding homes by a berm and landscaping. Separate ingress and egress to this lot has been provided so that trash trucks and delivery trucks won't need to back up to exit, reducing the "beeping" noise necessitated by such a maneuver. Also, an important change from an early plan had a connection between the parking area west of Building "C" and the southerly Antonio Parkway entrance. This might have allowed for cut-through traffic to enter the residential portions of Planning Sub-Area 2-D via this "back door" entry and might also have allowed delivery trucks heading north on Antonio Parkway to cut-through the residential neighborhood to find their way back to east bound Crown Valley Parkway and the left turn pocket heading north on Antonio Parkway. The current plan shows this potential "cut-through" truck traffic pattern has been eliminated.

The proposed commercial center conforms to all applicable development standards of the Ladera PC Program Text, Section VI Neighborhood Center regulations. The proposed retail center includes architectural features (primarily the facades of Buildings B, C and L) in excess of 35-foot height limit, as allowed by Ladera PC Program Text section VI.F.3. General locations for project identification and individual stores' monument signage have been identified on the site plan for informational purposes only. A condition of approval is included which would require a Sign Program prior to installation of any permanent signs. Also included in the plan submittal are landscape and grading plans. The landscaping plan is conceptual in nature and depicts the proposed plant palette and the extensive hardscape features (brick, stamped concrete, seating areas, etc.), particularly in the vicinity of Buildings D, E, F, G and H. The major landscaping effort is in the parking areas and the site perimeter. The site has been previously rough graded, but the project proposal makes slight modifications, including several retaining walls.

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**II. REFERENCE:** (Authority for Administrative action is given by what ordinance, regulation, etc.) Orange County Zoning Code and 7-9-150 "Discretionary Permits and Procedures" and the Ladera Planned Community Program Text applicable to the proposal.

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**III. ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION:**

The proposed project is covered by Final EIR 555, previously certified on October 17, 1995. Prior to project approval, this EIR was found adequate to satisfy the requirements of CEQA by the Director. Appendix A contains the required CEQA Finding.

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**IV. CERTIFICATION:**

I hereby certify that the subject proposal has been Conditionally Approved as noted below.

Thomas B. Mathews, Director  
Planning and Development Services Department

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Chad G. Brown, Chief  
CPSD/Site Planning Section

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**ATTACHMENTS:**

Appendix A - Findings

Appendix B - Conditions of Approval

**APPEAL PROCEDURE**

Any interested person may appeal the decision of the Director on this permit to the Orange County Planning Commission within 15 calendar days of the decision upon submittal of required documents and a filing fee of \$760.00 filed at the Development Processing Center, 300 N. Flower St., Santa Ana. If you challenge the action taken on this proposal in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this report, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning and Development Services Dept.