

KENT360°



many voices, one Kent

Kent City Manager Dave Ruller

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New Sheetz Coming To Kent?

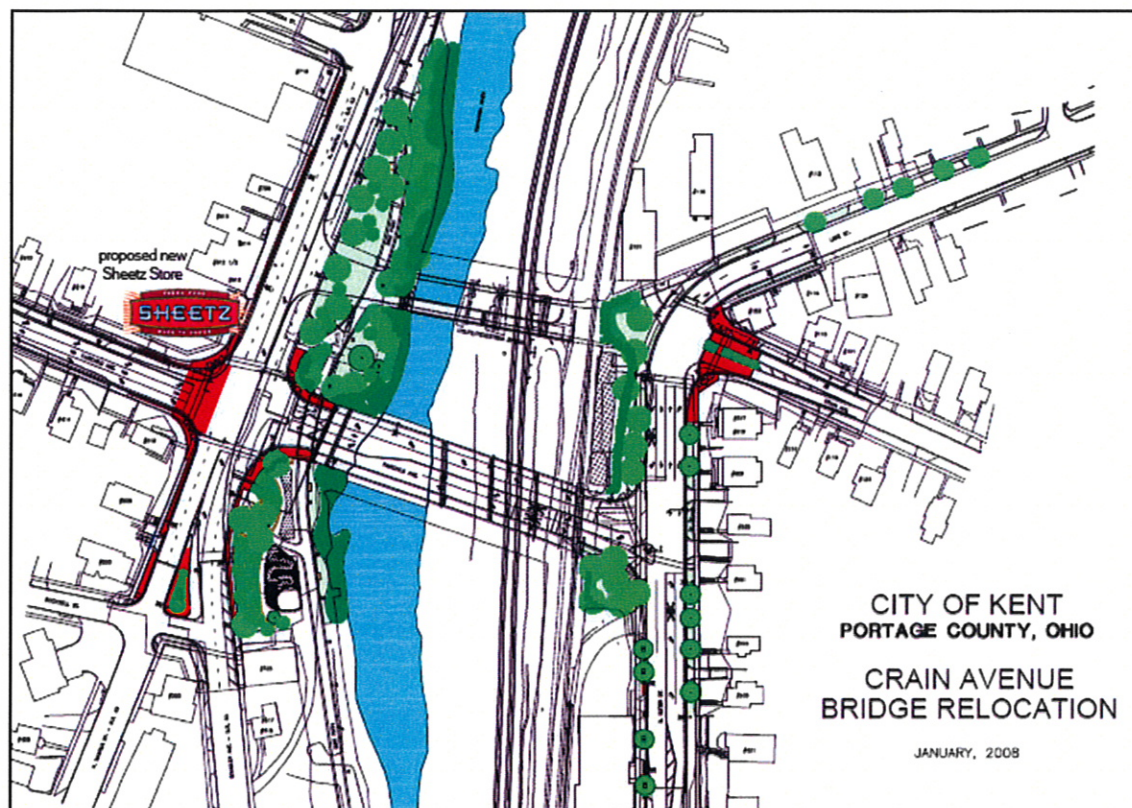
AUGUST 28, 2008

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I've been getting a fair number of questions about the recent proposal by Sheetz to buy the Crocks property at the corner of Fairchild Avenue and SR 43 so I thought I'd see if I could summarize the status of the project from the City's perspective.

First off, I will admit that the new Crain/Fairchild Avenue bridge makes it a little trickier to evaluate this proposal because it's yet to be seen exactly how all of the new traffic patterns will play out with the new relocated bridge and signal changes. Still, the property owners certainly have every right to not want to wait if they think they've got a good deal on the table so with that in mind we have done our best to make comments based on both existing and new bridge conditions.

Here's a plan view of the proposed Sheetz store and the new bridge project:



Here's what's happened so far.

Earlier this month the Sheetz folks took some preliminary plans in to show the citizens on the City's Architectural Review Board what they were thinking in terms of building styling and architectural treatments. The Architectural Review Board has no formal voting role over the project but they did offer comments in support of the company's efforts to soften the exterior to blend better with the character of the residential neighborhood.

The project then moved on to the Planning Commission which began its review of the proposed Sheetz Gas Station on Tuesday evening (August 19, 2008). Sheetz noted that is proposing to locate a new store on the northwest corner of the intersection of Fairchild Avenue and North Mantua Street. Sheetz intends to acquire all of the property on that intersection reaching west to the public alley and north to the H-W Industries property line.

The store itself will consist of a new 4,997 square foot building sitting near the west property line of the site facing North Mantua Street. Six gas pump islands covered by a canopy will sit between the new store and North Mantua Street. Driveways will be provided onto both North Mantua Street and Fairchild Avenue. The driveway on North Mantua Street will be limited so that no left turns in or out of that driveway are permitted. A total of 33 parking spaces will be provided on the site.

During the Planning Commission meeting on August 19, 2008, the Commission heard a presentation by the project representatives for Sheetz. After the Sheetz presentation, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to take public comment on the project. Some nearby residents and business owners expressed opposition to the project in general.

There were also recommendations from the public suggesting that more landscaping be added to the site and that the Commission evaluate the project further for potential noise from the speakers used at the pumps and possibly changing the color scheme for the canopy over the pumps.

There is a gas company building adjacent the site in which gas equipment sits and it is being proposed to remain as is with Sheetz building adjacent to it. It actually sits on its own small lot and Sheetz is not purchasing it.

There is also a public alley behind the property and as a public alley it can be used by Sheetz customers. Our Planning Director advises that as much as we might want to minimize its use, we can't prevent it. Access must remain open, however, very early in the discussions with Sheetz, we advised them of our concern that people may want to

use the alley as a short cut.

If you haven't been back there the alley is very substandard. To this end, and in an attempt allow any alley traffic to flow in coordination with the Sheetz traffic, we asked Sheetz to design an interface with the alley that would discourage its use by gas station customers. They have provided such and it has been through staff review. The property west of the alley on Fairchild does use the alley for access. I could see the day where the City may have to make some improvements to the alley. Vacating it is an alternative but at this point it does not seem to be advisable.

The Planning Commission, at the request of Sheetz, did not take action on the project and will continue its review of the project at its next meeting on September 2, 2008. As currently designed, the project also requires several zoning variances and Sheetz will have to appear separately in front of the Board of Zoning Appeals to have their request for the variances heard. At this point in time, no date has been set for the project's appearance before the Board of Zoning Appeals.

This is not a project that will be reviewed by City Council – it stays in the hands of the Kent citizens appointed to the respect Commissions and Boards. City staff have had a number of technical review meetings where we spent a fair amount of time addressing the scale issues, traffic circulation, and neighborhood impacts. Again, staff has an advisory role but in the end it will be up to the respective citizen boards to make the decision.

I have always found Sheetz to be a good corporate neighbor and I think thus far they have tried to modify their standard building to be a better fit with the proposed neighborhood location. Have they gone far enough? That will be up to the citizens to decide. But it is important to keep in mind that they anticipate this store to bring between 40 and 50 new jobs to Kent and while those are not necessarily high-end salaries, every new job counts and I don't want to dismiss the value of any new jobs to our tax base.

Here's some of the images to give you another prospective of the proposal

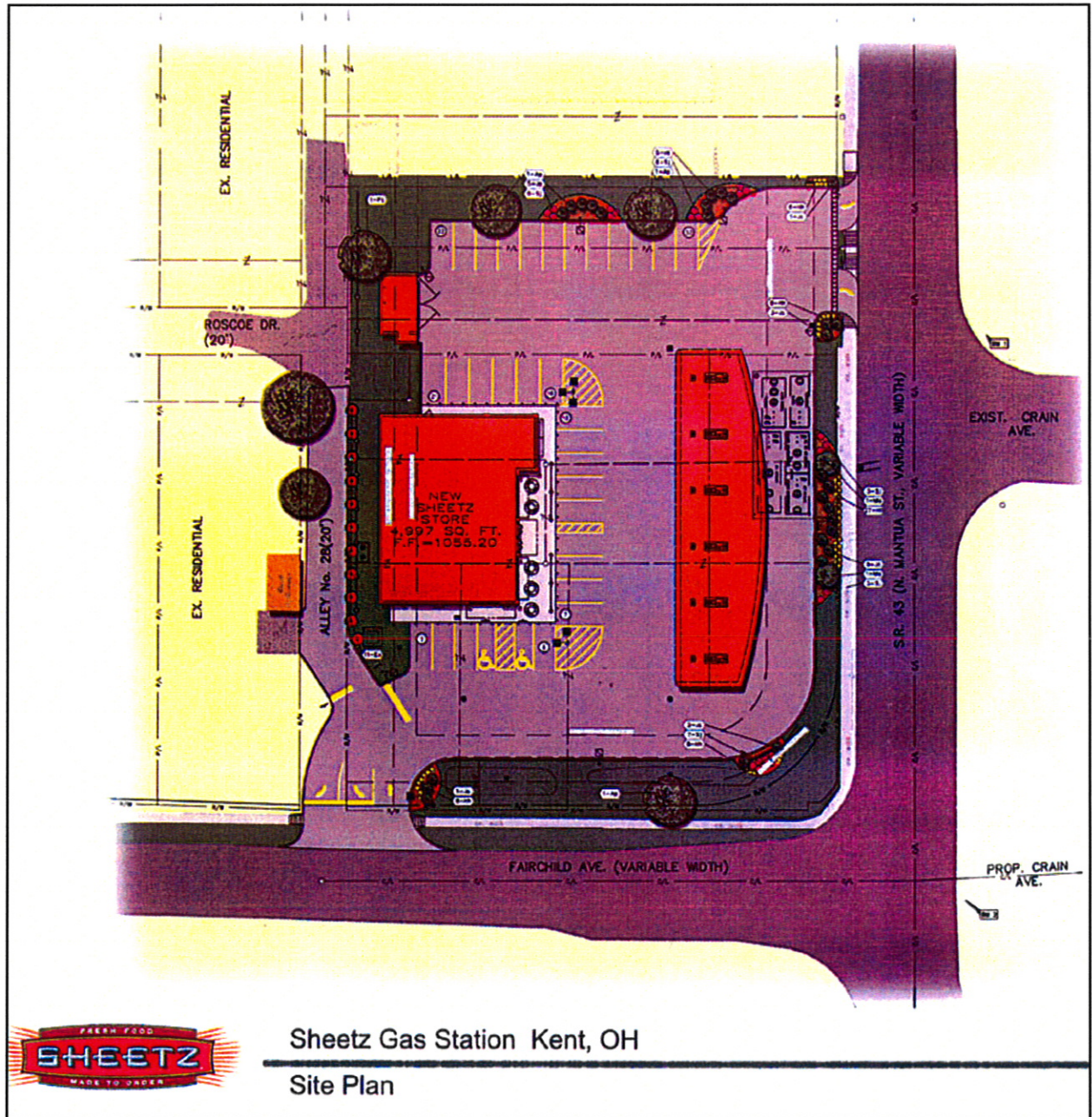
Standard Sheetz Store



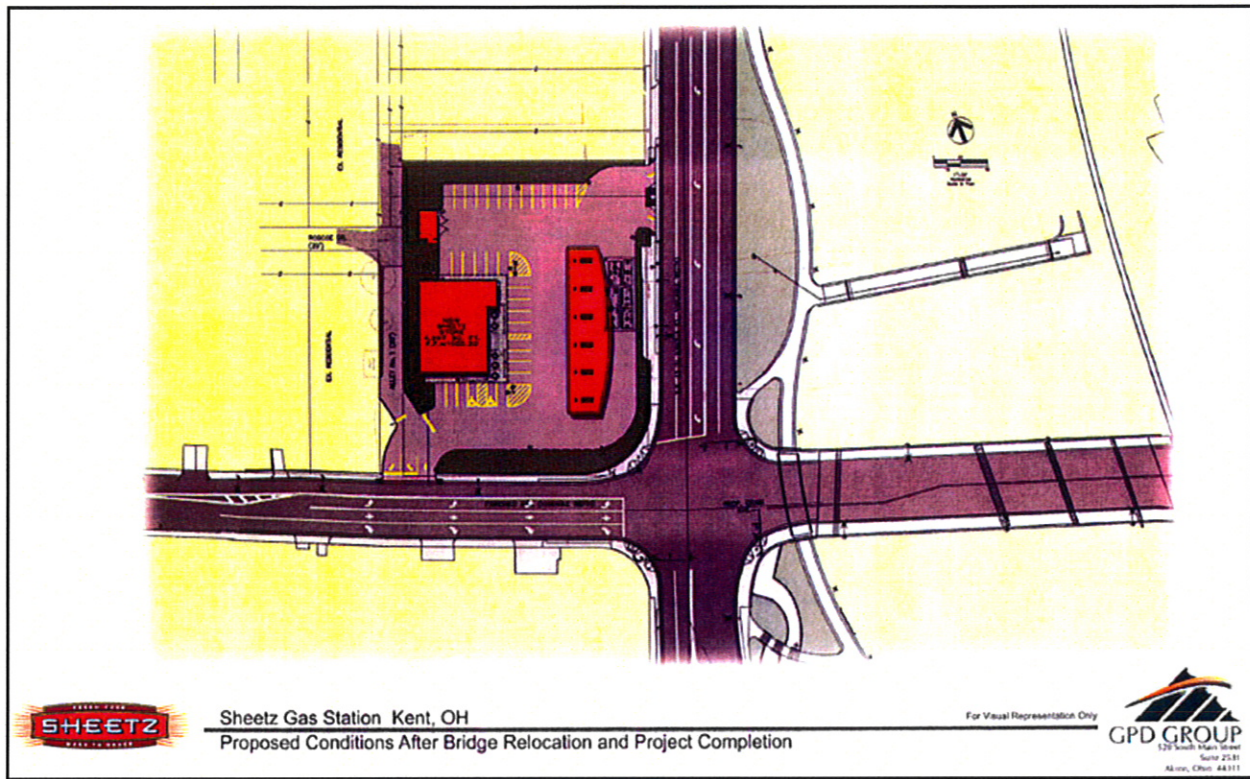
Modified Kent Sheetz Store and Ground Mounted Sign



Sheetz Site Plan (existing conditions)



Sheetz Site Plan (new bridge configuration)



If you have comments on this project we encourage the public to address their concerns directly to the Commissioner's in writing or through our Planning Department rather than to them individually. This helps them avoid ex-parte communications which can be problematic if there is some type of legal action filed after their decision is made.

KENT CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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Also filed in: Economic Development

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Excessive SPAM has forced us to suspend posting comments on the blog but I still want to hear from you so please email your comments to me at RullerD@kent-ohio.org. Sorry for the inconvenience.

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Contact me: Dave Ruller: RullerD@kent-ohio.org

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CITY OF KENT, OHIO

PLANNING COMMISSION

August 26, 2008

Dave Ruller, City Manager
City of Kent
215 East Summit Street
Kent, Ohio 44240



RE: Land Use Discussion & Review with City Council

Dear Mr. Ruller:

As a result of discussion by the Planning Commission during a work session at the conclusion of its business agenda on August 19th, 2008, Commission members respectfully invite and request the Council Land Use Committee's attendance at the September 16th, 2008 Planning Commission meeting at 7:00 p.m. in Kent Council Chambers. The purpose of a joint public meeting is to initiate a general discussion on current and future land use patterns within Kent, their relation to planning documents, including, but not limited to the Bicentennial Plan, the Zoning Code and the Thoroughfare Plan among others and determine what future course of action our respective organizations, singly and mutually, desire to take on behalf of Kent residents and property owners.

The Planning Commission anticipates conducting this discussion during its work session at the conclusion of the regular business agenda on September 16th.

We look forward to seeing you.

On behalf of the Planning Commission,

William Anderson, Chair

cc: Planning Commissioners

ec: Linda Copley, Clerk of Council
Gary Locke, Community Development Director
Jennifer Barone, Development Engineer
Heather Phile, Development Planner

Dominion East Ohio
1201 East 55th Street, Cleveland, OH 44103
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 5759
Cleveland, OH 44101-0759
Web Address: www.dom.com

Robert W. Varley
Managing Director, State & Local Affairs



August 15, 2008

Dear Public Official:

As you know, Dominion East Ohio (DEO) has filed a request for a \$75 million base rate increase for gas delivery service and other tariff changes with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO). This request, subject to PUCO review and approval, is the company's first such request in 14 years. Issues being discussed would improve meter reading, enhance the safety and reliability of our pipeline system and increase weatherization assistance for low-income customers.

The PUCO is conducting a second round of public hearings throughout our service area. You already may have received calls from constituents concerning various aspects of our rate increase request. Please allow me to clarify some of the key facts about Dominion East Ohio's filing, to provide a better understanding of these issues:

- If approved by the PUCO, the total average residential monthly bill would increase by less than \$4.50, or 4 percent, per month.
- Some customer groups have claimed that the company's base rate increase request is unnecessary. That is not accurate. Many of the company's operating costs have risen substantially since 1994, even though we have become more efficient. Also, DEO has invested more than \$800 million in pipelines, meters and other assets since our last base rate case. The changes in all of those expenses, in relation to revenues, have led to the point where we must now seek our first base rate increase since 1994.
- Some have criticized the PUCO staff recommendation to increase the monthly service charge to \$17.50 per month. This recommendation changes Dominion's fixed cost recovery from a volumetric method to a straight monthly charge to reflect the fact that Dominion's expenses in such areas as billing, meter reading and maintaining its pipelines, are the same from month to month and do not vary with usage.

Here are a few other key elements of Dominion East Ohio's filing:

- As part of its request, Dominion East Ohio is proposing to install automated meter reading equipment (AMR) for all of its customers over a 5-year period, which will provide actual meter readings each month. The installation of automated metering will benefit customers, enhancing service by eliminating estimated bills and improving budget billing calculations.
- The company also proposes to spend over \$6 million dollars per year for conservation programs targeted to low-income customers.
- In addition to the base rate case discussion, Dominion East Ohio has also filed an application requesting approval for a proposed Pipeline Infrastructure Replacement (PIR) program. The cost of this program will exceed \$2.6 billion in current dollars and will be spread out over 25 years based on

the expected service life of the replaced pipelines. The initial charge to residential customers is estimated to be about \$1.12 per month, beginning in November 2009, with annual adjustments of not more than \$1.00 per month thereafter.

- In this program, DEO proposes replacing nearly 20%, or 4,100 miles, of its pipeline system over 25 years. Besides improving the safety and reliability of the company's system, the program also would pump over \$2.6 billion into Northeast Ohio's economy over the life of the program and generate or maintain more than 3,000 jobs. State and local government revenues also would increase by a total of \$321 million dollars over the 25-year project life.
- Customers would benefit directly from another part of the PIR program, in which DEO would assume responsibility for the service lines that run from the curb to the customer's meter. Customers currently own those service lines and are responsible for the costs for any needed repairs or replacement, which could be hundreds of dollars.

We realize that our customers have seen natural gas commodity costs increase considerably during the past 14 years. The gas commodity is 75 to 80 percent of a customer's bill, but Ohio law prohibits DEO from earning a profit on it. We are required to pass along those costs on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Although higher natural gas commodity costs have led to higher gas bills, these costs are distinct from the base delivery rate, which recovers the company's ongoing costs of doing business and a return on its investment in assets used to provide service.

We are committed to helping our customers cope with these higher costs by promoting the availability of Ohio's Home Energy Assistance Program, the Percentage of Income Payment Plan and other forms of assistance. For a complete listing of programs and information, go to dom.com, keyword, **Ohio Rate Case**.

In the meantime, if you have questions or require additional information, please contact me at Robert.W.Varley@dom.com, or (216) 736-6207, or contact your local affairs representative – Rose Dziak at Rose.P.Dziak@dom.com, or (216) 736-6201; or Ty McBee at Ty.C.McBee@dom.com, or (216) 736-6213; Tracy Stevens at Tracy.W.Stevens@dom.com or (330) 478-3104; or Peggy Ehora at Peggy.A.Ehora@dom.com or (419) 226-4866.

Sincerely,

