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June 13, 2017

VIA FACSIMILE: 601- 420- 3334
Mayor Gary Rhoads
2101 Airport Road
Flowood, MS 39232-0069

Re: Access Road at Dogwood and OakRidge Subdivisions

Dear Mayor Rhoads:

Thank you for providing me with a copy of your letter of June 12 to Melinda McGrath at MDOT concerning the above matter. Please allow me to submit a brief response on behalf of the OakRidge Property Owners' Association Board of Directors.

We have no doubt of Your Honor's concern for the safety of OakRidge and Dogwood residents, and we are appreciative of that fact. We respectfully submit, however, that requiring the hundreds of residents of OakRidge and Dogwood who exit our neighborhoods on a daily basis to turn right and then merge across two to three lanes of traffic for the purpose of making a u-turn to go west on Lakeland Drive will increase, rather than reduce, the prospect of traffic accidents. In addition to the hazards of multiple lane changes, it is not difficult to envision a circumstance in which multiple vehicles would be stacked in the turn lane attempting to make the u-turn, potentially backing up into Lakeland Drive itself.

As someone who utilizes our existing median cross-over for westbound turns on a daily basis, I can tell you that the traffic lights at Dogwood Festival Boulevard and further east at Luckney Road are timed such that we have ample opportunities to safely cross at the existing median cross-over. We submit that our existing cross-over is no less safe than the right turn/u-turn alternative. We thus hope that you will reconsider your request to MDOT to block our existing cross-over for that purpose.

Since you have not been privy to our communications with MDOT concerning the proposed frontage road, please permit me to update you on the status of that matter. As necessary under the restrictive covenants and bylaws which govern our Association, we conducted a special meeting of the OakRidge property owners on Sunday, March 26, 2017, for the purpose of determining our Association's position on making the requested conveyances to MDOT to permit construction of the proposed frontage road. The result of this meeting is that our neighborhood agreed to make the conveyances, subject to a limited number of conditions.

EXHIBIT

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That agreement was communicated to counsel for MDOT, Mr. Don McLemore, on March 28, 2017. Having had no response to our March 28 communication, I emailed Mr. McLemore on April 20 to inquire about the status of the matter. Mr. McLemore advised at this time that he had communicated our proposal to MDOT but had received no instructions or communication from MDOT concerning its position. We have thus attempted to communicate and negotiate in good faith with MDOT concerning the frontage road issue, and would have remained willing to do so; however, I was advised by Mr. McLemore this afternoon that MDOT does not intend to proceed with the frontage road project.

Mayor Rhoads, I think I can speak for all of our owners in saying that we are delighted to be residents of Flowood. We appreciate all that you do and have done for the City. We do not want our existing median cross-over to be reconfigured in a manner which precludes our ability to turn left into the westbound lane of Lakeland Drive. We have used that cross-over for more than ten years (since the inception of our neighborhood) with relatively few safety problems. We believe the decision to route outgoing traffic to the east to merge across Lakeland to make a u-turn will increase traffic risks to our residents, those of Dogwood, and to members of the public who are traveling east on Lakeland Drive. Certainly, the right turn option remains available to those who want to use it. But based on the feedback I have received since yesterday (and before), our residents want to be able to use our existing cross-over to go west on Lakeland Drive.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request that you reconsider the decision to block our cross-over as stated in your June 12 letter to MDOT. At a minimum, we and affected residents of Dogwood should have an opportunity to be heard concerning this decision before it is finalized. We would be glad to meet with you at your convenience, to appear before the City Council, or to take whatever other steps are necessary to communicate our views.

We appreciate your attention to this correspondence and to our concerns.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Walter J. Brand", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Walter J. Brand
President, Board of Directors
OakRidge Property Owners' Association, Inc.

WJB/tg

cc: Ms. Melinda McGrath, P.E. Executive Director, Mississippi Department of Transportation –
via email
Dogwood Homeowners Association
Individual OakRidge property owners – via email
Mr. Don McLemore – via email
Mr. Kirk McDaniel – via email
Mr. Lem Adams – via email