



ideas that work

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1251 West Montgomery Avenue
Statement of Justification
Site Plan Application (Level 2)

I. Introduction

Johnson Development, Associates, Inc., (the “Applicant”), has significant experience developing self-storage facilities in the mid-Atlantic region. The Applicant is contract purchaser of a portion of the property located at 1251 West Montgomery Avenue (the “Property”) and is pursuing Site Plan approval to develop a self-storage facility on the Property. The Property is currently owned by Rockville Motel Associates, LLC (the “Owner”), which has authorized the Applicant to pursue the proposed development. In accordance with the City of Rockville Zoning Ordinance, the Applicant is seeking approval of a Level 2 Site Plan to accommodate the development of a 900 to 1,000-unit self-storage facility, containing approximately 115,875 square feet (the “Project”).

II. Property Description

The Property is part of underlying Record Lot 19 (the “Record Lot”), which is comprised of Ownership Lots 19A and 19B. Ownership Lot 19A (1249 West Montgomery Avenue), containing 170,050 square feet of land area, is improved with the Best Western Hotel. Ownership Lot 19B, located to the east of Ownership Lot 19A, contains 137,082 square feet. The Property includes approximately 96,458 square feet of Ownership Lot 19B. The balance of Ownership Lot 19B will be resubdivided into Ownership Lot 19C.¹

The Property is zoned Mixed Use Employment (“MXE”) and is currently improved with parking spaces serving the hotel.

III. Project Description

The Project involves a 115,875 square foot, 900 to 1,000 unit self-storage facility, to be located on the vacant Ownership Lot 19B. The southern half of the building will be five stories, while the northern half will be only two stories. The eastern façade of the building will include five “stair stepped” setbacks intended to break up the mass of the building and add visual interest. The building will be contemporary in nature, and the façade will include a combination of brick, masonry and glass. The building style mixes contemporary and transitional elements, and the scale of the building is broken down with vertical elements that create interest at the pedestrian level. The bottom floors will be clad with a split-faced masonry water table and base, with the top floors clad with a drainable “stucco-like” system. Vertical elements consist of

¹ An Ownership Lot application to reconfigure Lots 19A and 19B is being filed contemporaneously with the subject Site Plan application.

horizontal fiber cement board and corrugated metal siding. The entry of the building will be clad in cement board with a warm “wood-look” finish. The building will also include glass elements to display the lobby and guest spaces and brightly colored storage unit doors on the interior.

From an operations standpoint, there will be approximately two-to-three employees in the lobby and work areas. The building entrances will have controlled access for guests with leased units. Rental units will be accessible to guests with a gate code between 6:00 A.M. and 10:00 P.M., and offices will be open from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., with a facility manager on site and available if a guest requires assistance.

The Project will include a total of 15 parking spaces to be located along the northern boundary of the Property. Access to the Property will be provided from both the shared access easement located along the northern Property line which serves as both a secondary access point to the recently approved commercial development to the north and as hotel egress, and from the hotel driveway that wraps in front of the hotel site and along the southern boundary of the Property.

Importantly, the 194 parking spaces located on Ownership 19A are more than adequate to serve the hotel, which has an overall parking requirement of 193 spaces.

Approximately 38 percent of the Record Lot will be devoted to open space, thus surpassing the MXE Zone requirement of 20 percent. The public use space requirement will be provided in the way of approximately 5,100 s.f. at the entrance, as shown in the attached green space exhibit. In terms of landscaping, the site will include ornamental landscaping, as described below, as well as tree plantings.

The project will provide building signage, a pole sign, and a monument sign, all in accordance with Article 18 of the Zoning Ordinance. The current signage provided by the hotel will not change.

IV. Civil Engineering

A Natural Resources Inventory was approved by the City of Rockville on approved on October 17, 2016. A Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan is proposed based on the establishment of a Forest Conservation Easement over the forested area along the southern boundary of the Record Lot, to cover an area equal to 15 percent of the land area of the Record Lot. In addition, the Site Plan includes afforestation, providing approximately .47 acres (20,473 s.f.) of tree cover. The Applicant will also be preserving approximately .91 acres (39,639 s.f.) of existing forest; the Applicant will receive a credit of 4,623 s.f. for preserving existing trees. The planting requirement for the site is 15,850 s.f., and the Project will exceed this requirement with 16,000 s.f., including 19 shade trees and 6 ornamental plantings.

Stormwater management will be addressed by runoff routing through Environmental Site Design (“ESD”) facilities to capture 1.92” of the total required target rainfall amount (or “PE”). The overflow from these facilities and the remainder of the site will be routed via either over-land flow or on-site storm drain system to the existing site storm drain system. The plan proposes four micro-bioretenion facilities for stormwater management — two to treat rooftop runoff and two to treat runoff from impervious surfaces. Typical micro-bioretenion includes 6”

of freeboard, 12” ponding depth, 4’ of bioretention media, 6” of sand bed, and 15” of stone. Run-off will drain from the roof via drains plumbed through the building and then will filter through media and into the 6” perforated underdrain, eventually outfalling into the storm drain system. Overflow inlets are proposed within each micro-bioretention facilities to direct the larger storms into the storm drain.

Public water and sewer service will be provided by WSSC with their facilities located in West Montgomery Avenue. Electric service from PEPCO will be brought to the project and will run through one transformer, which will be pad-mounted and located next to the proposed dumpster and within the same screening enclosure as the dumpster.

V. Compliance with the Mixed Use Employment Zone Development Standards

The density of development in the MXE Zone is determined by compliance with the various development standards set forth in Section 25.13.05, the additional design guidelines of Section 25.13.06, and the special design regulations of Section 25.13.07 for mixed use zones. The Project complies with the applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, as described below.

A. Section 25.13.05 – Development Standards

1. *Subsection 25.13.05a – Build to Line*

Not Applicable.

2. *Subsection 25.13.05b – Development Standards*

a. Subsection 25.13.05b(1)

The Project complies with the applicable development standards for the MXE Zone set forth in Section 25.13.05.b:

	Required/Permitted	Proposed
Maximum Height (in feet)	120'	65'
Total Open Area Required	20%	38%
Public Use Space Required w/in Open Area	5%	5%
Setbacks Abutting Public Right-of-Way	None	450' feet from West Montgomery Avenue 10 feet from I-270
Side Setback Abutting Residential	25' or ½ height of building, whichever is greater	N/A
Side Setback Abutting Non-Residential Land	None; 10' min. if provided	52 feet from south side 83 feet from north side

	Required/Permitted	Proposed
Rear Setback Abutting Residential	25' or ½ height of building, whichever is greater	N/A
Rear Setback Abutting Non-Residential Land	None; 10' min. if provided	N/A

b. Subsection 25.13.05b(2)

Based on the surrounding uses, the layback slope requirements set forth in subsection (d) are not applicable.

3. *Subsection 25.13.05c – Other Standards and Requirements for New Development*

Summary of Requirement	Proposed
Conversion of Space – commercial space is encouraged to be designed to allow for conversion to residential space [Section 25.13.05.c.1]	Not feasible, given the self-storage use of the building
Entryways – Requirements pertaining to residential buildings [Section 25.13.05.c.2]	N/A – Building is commercial
Access areas of a building intended for non-residential uses must not have any access to areas of the building used for residential purposes [Section 25.13.05c.3]	N/A – No residential provided
MPDUs – Residential development must comply with MPDU requirements [Section 25.13.05c.4]	N/A – No residential provided
Public Use Space – must be provided consistent with Section 25.17.01 [Section 25.13.c.5]	5% (4,813 square feet) of public use space in accordance with Article 17 will be provided.
Floor Area Limitation – 65,000 s.f. limitation on retail tenant space on ground floor	N/A – Building contains only small area of accessory office space

B. Section 25.13.06 – Additional Design Guidelines

	Summary of Requirement	Proposed
<u>Aesthetic and Visual Characteristics for All Zones</u>		
Facades and Exterior Walls Including Sides & Backs [Section 25.13.06.b.1]	Avoid massive scale and uniform and impersonal appearance. Building walls greater than 100 feet should include projections, recessions and other treatments.	Eastern façade includes 5 “stair stepped” setbacks. All facades include projections and recessions, vertical and horizontal architectural elements

	Summary of Requirement	Proposed
		and cornices.
	Occupy at least 60 percent of street frontage with windows, arcades and awnings. Architectural treatment similar to front façade must be provided to the sides and rear.	Use of building precludes 60 percent windows. However, building includes 3 separate glass corner elements extending from grade to top of two-story and five story elements.
	Provide architectural features that contribute to the visual interest at the pedestrian scale.	Vertical and horizontal architectural treatment, glass, varying materials.
Roofs [Section 25.13.06.b.2]	Provide variations in rooflines. Roof features should complement the architectural and visual character of adjoining neighborhoods.	Building includes a 2-story and 5-story component. Height variations exist within each component.
Materials & Colors [Section 25.13.06.b.3]	Utilize building materials and colors compatible with those in adjoining neighborhoods.	Design coordinated with Research Boulevard development to the north, and includes neutral colors with a warm-to-cool pallet of gray tones for masonry and accents of wood-like fiber cement board to promote compatibility.
Items Allowed Not Facing A Public Street [Section 25.13.06.b.4]	The following items are allowed either on sides not facing a public street or in the rear yard: (a) window and wall air conditioners; (b) electric utility meters; (c) air conditioning compressors; and (d) irrigation and pool pumps.	The building design complies with the requirements.
Entryways [Section 25.13.06.b.5]	Provide highly visible entryways.	Entrance includes two-story glass corner element
Screening of Mechanical Equipment [Section 25.13.06.b.6]	Screen mechanical equipment to mitigate noise and views.	Where possible, mechanical equipment will be centralized on the roof and screened from view. Screening for the Project's transformer will be a continuation of the screening for the proposed dumpster.

	Summary of Requirement	Proposed
<u>Site Design and Relationship to Surrounding Community</u>		
Vehicular Access [Section 23.13.06.c.1]	Provide safety and protection to adjacent residential uses	N/A
Buffers [Section 25.13.06.c.2]	Provide visual and noise buffers to adjacent residential uses	N/A
Outdoor Sales and Storage [Section 25.13.06.c.3]	Certain restrictions imposed outdoor sales	N/A
Trash recycling, screening [Section 25.13.06.c.4.b.]	Trash recycling outside of building must be secured and screened [confirm relevant]	To be provided in enclosure in northeast corner of the Property
Parking Lots [Section 25.13.06.c.5.a.]	Provide safe, convenient and efficient access. Use landscaping to define parking areas	Project provides safe and efficient access to parking, storage and loading. Parking area is bordered on north, south and east by landscaping. The parking lot will have an area of 4,633 s.f., and will provide the minimum landscaping requirement of 5%, or 232 s.f.
Pedestrian and Bicycle Flows [Section 25.13.06.c.6.]	Provide for pedestrian accessibility; 6' wide sidewalks should be provided from public ROW to entrance; provide sidewalks along length of building adjoining parking lot.	Sidewalks internal to the street and 5 ft. wide, in line with existing conditions for the hotel.
Central Features and Community Spaces [Section 25.13.06.c.7.]	Pedestrian scale features, private inviting entrances and parking lot locations. Special design features should define circulation paths and outdoor spaces	Entrance designed to emphasize main focal point of building. Special outdoor design features include benches along the public open space to provide resting and meeting points for guests.
Delivery and Loading Spaces, Hours of Operation [Section 25.13.06.c.8.]	Design in accordance with Article 16;	Two loading areas for customers to be provided along north and south façades.
Noise Abatement [Section 25.13.06.c.10.]	Use must comply with noise regulations;	Project will comply with noise restrictions
Outdoor lighting [Section 25.13.06.c.11.]	Provide in accordance with the Landscape, screening and	Satisfied. The Project will not include any new light poles and

	Summary of Requirement	Proposed
	lighting manual	will instead utilize the two existing poles on site.
Landscaping [Section 25.13.06.c.12.]	Provide in accordance with the Landscape, screening and lighting manual	Satisfied. The Project will include 316 s.f. of internal landscaping. Perimeter parking landscaping will be on north side, with a length of 81 ft. Three shade trees are required and will be provided, and the Project will provide 32 shrubs, above the 31 required.

C. 25.13.07c - Special Design Regulations for MXE Zone

Section	Summary	Proposed
Building Location [Section 25.13.07c.1]	When recommended in the Plan, buildings should be located close to the front property line or at the build-to line.	N/A
Uses by Floor [Section 25.13.07c.2]	Ground floor may contain retail and other uses along major pedestrian spines.	Entire building devoted to self-storage.
Façade [Section 25.13.07c.3]	Buildings should provide expression line above first floor and a defined cornice at the top of the façade wall.	Defined cornice provided and all facades include an expression line.
Sidewalks	Where sidewalks required, must be in accordance with Article 17.	The proposed sidewalks will tie into the existing sidewalk network of associated with the hotel.
Parking	Comply with Article 16. Most parking should be located to the side or rear of the buildings.	17 spaces required and 18 spaces provided. Parking is provided along the north side of the building.

VIII. Findings

The Project satisfies the required Site Plan findings set forth in Section 25.07.01 of the Zoning Ordinance in that the Project will not:

- A. Adversely affect the health or safety of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the proposed development

The Property is ideally located for the proposed self-storage facility. The closest residence is located more than 680 feet from the Property, across I-270 and the closest residences on the west side of I-270 are the townhouses located almost 900 feet from the Property. The Self-storage facilities by their very nature generate a low amount of traffic. The Project will generate only 10 A.M. and 10 P.M. peak hour trips and thus there will be no adverse health or safety affects from the use. The building will be constructed in accordance with the City's Green Building Code and thus there will be no adverse environmental effects. Because the primary use of the Property is simply storage, there is very little activity associated with the use that could adversely affect persons in proximity to the Property.

B. Be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood

The Project will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the neighborhood. The Property will be located behind the existing hotel and thus will not be visible from West Montgomery Avenue. Given the low level of traffic to be generated, it is likely that most traveling in this area along West Montgomery Avenue, whether to their residence or place of employment, will not even be aware of the Project. The limited physical activity associated with the use will ensure that the use will not be detrimental to the neighborhood.

C. Overburden existing and programmed public facilities as set forth in Article 20 of this Chapter and as provided in the adopted Adequate Public Facilities Standards

The Project will generate less than 30 peak hour trips. Accordingly, a comprehensive transportation review is not required for the site, rather the application includes an on-site transportation review, which is attached. The Property is served by at least one fire station with a response time within three to ten minutes and by the City of Rockville police station located 1.5 miles from the Property (at 2 West Montgomery), thereby ensuring a prompt response time to the Project in the event of an emergency. The Project will therefore not overburden the public facilities.

D. Adversely affect the natural resources or environment of the City or surrounding areas

The Project will not adversely affect the natural resources or environment of the City or the surrounding areas. The Project is establishing a .91-acre Forest Conservation Easement over the existing forest along the southern boundary of the Record Lot, thus ensuring the preservation of this existing stand of mature forest. In terms of afforestation, the Project will be providing the required fifteen percent tree cover on-site. As discussed in detail above, stormwater management will be addressed by runoff routing through ESD facilities with two micro-bioretenment facilities for rooftop runoff and two for runoff from impervious surfaces.

E. Be in conflict with the Plan

The Project is consistent with the 2002 Approved and Adopted City of Rockville Comprehensive Master Plan (the "Master Plan"). Two overarching goals of the Master Plan are to protect residential areas and to ensure that there are adequate public facilities to support

development. The Property is ideally located to accommodate a self-storage facility; it is more than 680 feet from the closest residence. Thus, it will have no effect on the residential area. In terms of Adequate Public Facilities, the Project has no impact on school capacity and is a very low traffic generator. At the same time however, the proposed use will increase the City's tax base.

The Property is located within Planning Area 15, identified as an employment area. The Plan recognizes the "open, attractive, well landscaped environment" of the Planning Area and the location of the Project behind the hotel will not alter the existing frontage of the Record Lot, which includes an expansive green area. The Master Plan notes the lack of transit options in this area of the City. Given that the nature of the use does not lend itself to public transportation, it is much more suitable to an area such as this where there is limited transit accessibility. Finally, the Master Plan notes that increased traffic in this area due to development will need to be monitored. The use generates a limited number of peak hour trips and therefore does not create any traffic conflicts.

F. Constitute a violation of any provision of this Chapter or other applicable law

The proposed Project complies with the provisions and laws of Rockville governing the development of the Property. As previously detailed, the Project complies with all of the MXE development standards. The Project will comply with the City's Green Building Standards by minimizing the development's impact on the environment, and meeting the new 2015 International Green Construction Code. The Project will also comply with the City's Art in Private Development Ordinance. Finally, in regard to the City's afforestation requirements, the Project will establish a Forest Conservation Easement over 15 percent of the entire Record Lot in compliance with the Forest Conservation law.

G. Be incompatible with the surrounding uses or property

The Project will not be incompatible with the surrounding uses. The closest residential use is more than 680 feet away, across I-270. Moreover, the Property is bordered on the south by forest, to the east by I-270 and to the north by the recently approved commercial retail/office development at 1401, 1405 and 1413 Research Boulevard. The Project has been specifically designed to be compatible with the Research Boulevard development. The Applicant reviewed the elevations of the Research Boulevard development prior to designing the Project and made further changes to the design based on comments from the Research Boulevard applicant following a meeting with them. In addition, given the visibility of the Project from I-270, it was important to the Applicant that the building itself be well designed. To this end, the Project was designed to include a series of setbacks and step backs and horizontal and vertical elements to reduce the mass of the building and provide visual interest.

From a use prospective, the self-storage use is compatible with the surrounding uses. As previously noted, there is very little activity associated with the use and it will not in any way affect the Research Boulevard retail/office development.

IX. Community Outreach

In accordance with the City's requirements, the Applicant held a Pre-Application Meeting ("PAM") on March 10, 2016. However, no one attended that meeting. The Applicant also met with representatives of the Research Boulevard development to review the proposed project and to ensure that the design of the structure would be compatible.

X. Conclusion

The proposed Site Plan provides an opportunity to provide a needed self-storage facility in an ideal location, with no adverse impacts to the surrounding uses.