

**AGENDA REPORT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
May 6, 2021**

SUMMARY

A request by AMERCO Real Estate Company (Contract Purchaser), for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a self-service storage facility over 14 feet in height, located at 900 I-70 Drive Southwest. The existing U-Haul retail and storage facility uses, to the east, are intended to be expanded onto the subject site which is currently improved with the America's Rest Inn. **(Case #127-2021)**

DISCUSSION

The applicant is seeking approval of a conditional use permit on the subject property to allow a self-service storage facility to exceed 14-feet in height pursuant to the provisions of Section 29-3.3(w) (Use-Specific Standards) of the UDC. In addition to complying with the requirements of Section 29-3.3(w) any redevelopment of the site will also be subject to the provisions of Section 29-4.6(c) (Design Guidelines and Standards). The site is located south of the intersection of Business Loop 70 and I-70 Drive Southwest, immediately west of the existing U-Haul facility. The applicant intends to demolish the existing hotel on the subject site and create additional self-service storage and retail space to be operated as an expansion of the adjoining U-Haul facility.

The subject property is zoned M-C (Mixed-Use Corridor) and consists of two lots. Redevelopment of the site will require a platting action given the proposed new construction is shown over the existing property line. Consolidation with the adjoining U-Haul facility was discussed during staff review; however, given the adjoining parcel is zoned I-G (General Industrial) this would create a "split" zoned parcel which is typically discouraged due to variations in certain dimensional requirements.

Self-service storage facilities are a permitted use in the M-C and I-G districts, given compliance with the use-specific standards of Section 29-3.3(w). These provisions generally restrict certain operational characteristics of such facilities by prohibiting storage of hazardous materials, retail sales, and the service or repair of vehicles, appliances and equipment. Furthermore, the use-specific standards limit building height to 14 feet unless separate dimensional and appearance standards are met which include a minimum 100' setback from any residential zone or use, restrictions on construction materials and colors, and additional screening and street tree standards.

As noted above, construction of such facilities would also be subject to the UDC's general design standards and guidelines articulated in Section 29-4.6(c). These standards were created to address "bulk" and "appearance" matters of newly constructed structures within any zoning district subject to several minor exceptions. It should be noted that granting of relief from the provisions of Section 29-4.6(c) is a matter outside the purview of the Planning Commission as part of the requested CUP. The granting of relief from the provisions within Section 29-4.6(c) is a matter that would need to be considered by the Board of Adjustment as a "variance" subject to submission of a separate application specifying what section and for what reason such relief is needed. As of writing this report no such request has been submitted and it is believed the applicant intends on fully complying with the use-specific standards of 29-3.3(w) and those of 29-4.6(c).

Section 29-3.3(w)(2) requires the approval of a conditional use permit for any storage building located in the M-C district that is proposed to be over 14 feet in height. The section details the procedural steps for approval of the CUP and permits the Commission to consider contextual uses and building forms as well as authorizes the Commission to impose any additional conditions or restrictions that would assure compatibility. The general design criteria provided for in Section 29-3.3(w)(1)(vi) may be used as a baseline or waived if the applicant shows special circumstances unique to the property.

It should be noted that the attached site plan shows multiple building being constructed on the site. The applicant's response to staff review comments regarding the scope of the requested CUP indicated that they only were seeking CUP approval for the proposed 3-story, approximate 29,468 square foot self-storage building shown generally within the center of the site on the attached site plan and represented in the attached architectural elevations. The applicant's response confirmed that the buildings south of the 3-story structure were to be less than 14-feet tall. Any proposed additional conditions or waiver of requirements imposed by 29-3.3(w)(1)(vi) would apply to only the proposed construction of the 3-story structure not the remaining site improvements.

The proposed 3-story structure is set back over 100 feet from the residentially zoned and used properties to the south; therefore, it is deemed to comply with the separation requirements of Section 29-3.3(w). It should be noted that the submitted architectural elevations have not been formally evaluated for compliance with the standards stated in Sections 29-3.3(w) or 29-4.6(c). To perform such a review, additional calculations relating to the percentages of façade treatments would be necessary. Provision of these calculation is believed premature at this time given the acceptance of the land use has yet to be determined. Review of the elevations; however, does reveal that the proposed construction is generally compliant; however, minor technical corrections such as entry door architectural emphasis is still lacking.

The omission of fully compliant architectural plans is not viewed, by staff, as a fatal flaw in the Commission's or Council's decision-making process. Prior to expending resources on final architectural design, the applicant desires to be assured that the CUP is acceptable. Should approval of the CUP be considered appropriate, staff would support a conditional approval based on the submission of compliant architectural plans being reviewed and approved prior to the issuance of any building permits.

As noted, the smaller "mini buildings" shown on southern end of the site plan are, according to the applicant, are to be less than 14-feet in height. As such, these structures are not required to be approved by the Commission as part of the requested CUP. They; however, are subject to the general design standards and guidelines of Section 29-4.6(c) – specifically the provisions that address "roof shape". It would appear from the site plan provided that the proposed southernmost structures are setback from the property line the required 20-feet from the adjoining residential property. Within this 20-feet, a Level 3 screening buffer would be required which consists of an 8-foot tall screening device and a 10-foot landscape buffer.

An additional observation related to the submitted site plan is that it indicates a 25-foot right of way exists south of the subject property between the site and the adjoining residential neighborhood. This notation is inaccurate. Per review of the City's records this right of way has been previously vacated. The land area previously dedicated for roadway purposes was returned to the adjoining parcels to the south pursuant to City policy. Given there is no adjoining right of way on the southern boundary of the subject site any possible façade design requirements of Section 29-4.6(c) have been render inapplicable. The only provision of Section 29-4.6(c) applicable to the southern structures is that which deals with "roof shape".

Pursuant to the use-specific standards of Section 29-3.3(w), a request to authorize the construction of a self-service storage facility greater than 14-feet in height must be evaluated by the Planning and Zoning Commission subject to the following six criteria identified in Section 29-6.4(m)(2) of the UDC. Following a recommendation by the Commission, the City Council may approve the CUP with any conditions deemed necessary to carry out the provisions and intent of the UDC. Below is staff's summary of the application's compliance with the six CUP criteria:

1. The proposed conditional use complies with all standards and provisions in this chapter applicable to the base and overlay zone district where the property is located.

The proposed storage facility is generally a permitted use in the M-C district. The submitted site plan illustrates compliance with the dimensional requirements for the district as it relates to structure placement. The placement of the largest structure on the site, for which the CUP is required, has considered the adjoining land uses and attempted to mitigate possible impacts.

While full compliance with the architectural standards associated with the subject use have not been provided this omission is not believed to be fatal in rendering a decision on the “appropriateness” of the proposed use. Architectural compliance can be achieved prior to the issuance of a building permit for site improvements subject to a CUP approval condition.

2. The proposed conditional use is consistent with the city's adopted comprehensive plan.

The subject site is identified as being located within a Commercial District per the Columbia Imagined Future Land Use Plan. The Commercial District is intended for a variety of local and regional retail and personal services uses, as well as offices, businesses, and high-density residential. Neighboring properties to the south are identified as Residential Districts. While self-storage facilities are typically considered more industrial in nature they are an acceptable use within the Commercial District especially when negative impacts can be mitigated. The proposed use-specific and general design standards and guidelines were developed to address their negative impacts and the CUP process was created to allow review of site-specific conditions affording an applicant/property owner the opportunity to seek greater height.

The location of self-storage facilities within close proximity to residential developments or highly accessible locations for the general public's use is believed consistent with the objectives of integrating uses within built environment. Additionally, such facilities can be seen as providing buffering from more intense uses surround such sites; thereby, creating an opportunity creating more livable neighborhoods.

Staff believes, the proposed site plan and the orientation of the site improvements affords the opportunity to offer a service that is consistent with the surrounding land use environment and general objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

3. The proposed conditional use will be in conformance with the character of the adjacent area, within the same zoning district, in which it is located. In making such a determination, consideration may be given to the location, type and height of buildings or structures and the type and extent of landscaping and screening on the site.

The proposed 3-story building is taller than contextual buildings (existing U-Haul next door is two stories); however, given the increased setbacks from the southern property line, the proposed barrier of smaller structures, and the standard screening and buffering will to reduce the visual impacts of the taller structure. Additionally, the orientation of the building, along the long axis of the lot, minimizes the wall plane area viewable from the roadway as well as the adjoining residential lots. Furthermore, existing vegetation will help screen the longer façade of the structure.

4. Adequate access is provided and is designed to prevent traffic hazards and minimize traffic congestion.

Access is provided from both the Business Loop and I-70 Drive frontages, as well as from the rear of the lot through the neighboring property. **No access is to be taken through the residential neighborhood to the south.** Furthermore, the self-service storage facility will generate relatively little traffic. Existing impacts generated by the hotel would be greatly reduced by the proposed redevelopment.

5. Sufficient infrastructure and services exist to support the proposed use, including, but not limited to, adequate utilities, storm drainage, water, sanitary sewer, electricity, and other infrastructure facilities are provided.

The site is served by all City utilities and was reviewed by various utility staff. There were no concerns expressed with the proposed use or approval of the conditional use permit. The proposed use will have very little demand for utilities.

6. The proposed variance will not cause significant adverse impacts to surrounding properties.

A similar use has functioned on the neighboring property for some time with little or no reported negative impacts. The existing hotel generates a much higher traffic volume and access to the site from the residential neighborhood is restricted. Visual impacts are greatly reduced by the required screening and landscaping, as well as the required 100-foot setback for the 3-story storage facility.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the request seeking authorization for the construction of a self-service storage facility greater than 14-feet in height on property addressed as 900 I-70 Drive Southwest subject to the following:

1. The self-service storage facility shall be constructed in the general location shown on the submitted site plan, dated March 22, 2021, attached hereto.
2. The self-service storage facility shall not exceed 45-feet in total height and shall be constructed in substantial compliance with the architectural renderings, dated April 9, 2021, attached hereto.
3. The self-service storage facility shall not be issued a building permit until a complete architectural plan evaluation has occurred showing compliance with the provision of Section 29-3.3(w) and Section 29-6.4(c), as applicable or otherwise modified by the Board of Adjustment.
4. Site development plans shall not be approved until the subject property upon which construction is proposed has been replatted into a single lot of record.

ATTACHMENTS

- Locator maps
- Preliminary site plan
- Architectural elevations
- Section 29-3.3(w) - Use-specific Standards
- Section 29-6.4(c) – Design Standards and Guidelines

HISTORY

Annexation date	1905
Zoning District	M-C
Land Use Plan designation	Commercial
Previous Subdivision/Legal Lot Status	Lots 2A & 2B, Dowding Subdivision Plat 2

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Area (acres)	3.41
Topography	Flat, slopes up at southern boundary (building height diminished)
Vegetation/Landscaping	Turf/pavement; Some landscaping abutting the structure
Watershed/Drainage	Bear Creek
Existing structures	Existing hotel

UTILITIES & SERVICES

All utilities and services provided by City of Columbia.

ACCESS

I-70 Drive Southwest	
Location	Northwest
Major Roadway Plan	Minor Collector
CIP projects	N/A
Sidewalk	Existing

Business Loop 70	
Location	Northeast
Major Roadway Plan	Major Arterial
CIP projects	N/A
Sidewalk	Existing

PARKS & RECREATION

Neighborhood Parks	Columbia Cosmopolitan Recreation Area, Park Management Center, Worley Street Park, Again Street Park
Trails Plan	N/A
Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan	N/A

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

All property owners within 200 feet and City-recognized neighborhood associations within 1,000 feet of the boundaries of the subject property were notified via an advanced notification postcard which was mailed on April 6, 2021. 12 postcards and property owner letters were sent.

Public Notification Responses	One neighboring resident called to voice support for the CUP due to the negative impacts from existing hotel.
Notified neighborhood association(s)	Worley Street Park, Highland Park, and Parkade NAs
Correspondence received	N/A

Report prepared by Rusty Palmer

Approved by Patrick Zenner