

**Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning  
Division**

Variances and Site Plan Review

BZZ-3618

Preliminary and Final Plat

PL-216

Vacation 1529

**Date:** July 30, 2007

**Applicant:** BRB Development, LLC, Attn: Larry Smith, 800 N. Frontage Road,  
Northfield, IL 60093, (847) 446-7872

**Addresses of Property:** 1389 Industrial Boulevard

**Project Name:** The Lock Up Self Storage

**Contact Person and Phone:** Gray Plant Mooty, Peter Beck, 500 IDS Center, 80 South  
Eighth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402-3796, (612) 632-3001

**Planning Staff and Phone:** Becca Farrar, (612) 673-3594

**Date Application Deemed Complete:** June 19, 2007

**End of 60-Day Decision Period:** August 17, 2007

**End of 120-Day Decision Period:** On July 19, 2007, Staff sent the applicant a letter  
extending the decision period to no later than October 16, 2007.

**Ward:** 1 **Neighborhood Organization:** Mid City Industrial Area

**Existing Zoning:** I1 (Light Industrial) District

**Proposed Zoning:** Not applicable for this application.

**Zoning Plate Number:** 11

**Lot area:** 54,761 or 1.26 acres

**Legal Description:** Not applicable for this application.

**Proposed Use:** A 106,868 square foot self-storage facility.

**Concurrent Review:**

- Variance of the off-street parking and loading requirement.

- Variance to allow wall signs at a height taller than the maximum permitted height of 24 feet in the I1 (Light Industrial) district to 33 feet on the north and west facing elevations
- Site Plan Review for a 106,868 square foot self-storage facility in the I1 district.
- Preliminary and Final Plat.
- Vacation of platted drainage and utility easements.

**Applicable zoning code provisions:** Article IX, Variances, Chapter 530 Site Plan Review, Chapter 598, Land Subdivision Regulations.

**Background:** The applicant proposes to construct a new 4-story, 106,868 square foot self-storage facility on the vacant property located at the intersection of Industrial Boulevard and I-35W, at 1389 Industrial Boulevard. The property is currently zoned I1 which permits self-storage facilities. The applicant is proposing the following variances which include: (1) Variance of the off-street parking requirement from 64 to 13 spaces; (2) Variance of the on-site loading requirement from 3 large spaces to 2 large spaces; (3) Variance to allow wall signs at a height taller than the maximum permitted height of 24 feet in the I1 (Light Industrial) district to 33 feet on the north and west facing elevations. Site plan review is also required as is a preliminary and final plat, and vacation of drainage and utility easements which run through the center of the subject parcel.

The proposed self-storage facility would house approximately 850 interior and exterior accessed storage units, two interior loading bays, a sales office and restrooms. The structure will be serviced by an over-sized passenger elevator and two interior staircases. As proposed the project would be accessed via a private street on the east side of the site which connects to Industrial Boulevard via a second private street due south of the Minnesota Dental Association building. The project would have access drives along the east and south sides of the site with the proposed 13 parking stalls located adjacent to the east property line. The two off-street loading spaces located inside of the building can accommodate up to 4 cars or moving trucks. The proposed loading bays would be located next to the office in the southeast corner of the proposed structure.

The property is located in the Mid City Industrial Area and therefore, is not technically located within the parameters of an active neighborhood group. The notice was sent to the adjacent neighborhood group, Northeast Park Neighborhood Association. Staff has not received any correspondence from that neighborhood group or any neighborhood letters on the applications prior to the printing of this report.

**VARIANCE** – (1) Variance of the off-street parking and loading requirement; (2) Variance to allow wall signs at a height taller than the maximum permitted height of 24 feet in the I1 (Light Industrial) district to 33 feet on the north and west facing elevations.

**Findings as Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code for the Variances:**

1. **The property cannot be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed**

**and strict adherence to the regulations of this zoning ordinance would cause undue hardship.**

**Variance of the off-street parking requirement:** The property could be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed, however, strict adherence to the regulations of the zoning code would cause undue hardship as the size of the proposed facility would need to be reduced and parking would need to be provided beyond what is needed on site. The proposed use on site requires a total of 64 off-street parking spaces. Therefore, the applicant is requesting a variance of the off-street parking requirement from 64 parking spaces to 13 parking spaces. The applicant has demonstrated through an approvable TDM that the proposed use does not generate the need for as much parking as is required by Chapter 541 of the Zoning Code. Further, the site is well served by transit.

**Variance of the off-street loading requirement:** The property could be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed; however, strict adherence to the regulations of the zoning code would cause undue hardship. The applicant has demonstrated through an approvable TDM that providing two large interior loading spaces is adequate for the proposed development. Mandating an additional large loading space would be requiring more space dedicated to loading than what is needed on the site.

**Variance to allow wall signs at a height taller than the maximum permitted height:** The property could be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed; however, strict adherence to the regulations of the zoning code would cause undue hardship. Due to the proposed location of the structure and its proximity to the elevated interstate highway (I-35W), Planning Staff believes that allowing one elevated sign on the north elevation is necessary for visibility purposes. However, allowing an additional elevated sign along the west elevation adjacent to Industrial Boulevard would not be necessary and should be required to conform to the permitted sign height in the I1 district.

**2. The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land for which the variance is sought and have not been created by any persons presently having an interest in the property. Economic considerations alone shall not constitute an undue hardship if reasonable use for the property exists under the terms of the ordinance.**

**Variance of the off-street parking requirement:** The circumstances could be considered unique to the parcel of land as the applicant is attempting to minimize the amount of unnecessary parking on the site. While it is likely that the site could fully accommodate the required amount of parking with modifications to the proposed structure, Staff believes that relaxing the off-street parking requirement due to the demonstrated need illustrated by the applicant from 64 to 13 spaces is a reasonable request.

**Variance of the off-street loading requirement:** The circumstances could be considered unique to the parcel of land. The applicant is providing interior loading bays instead of exterior loading bays and while the site could fully accommodate the required

number of loading spaces, Staff believes that relaxing the off-street loading requirement due to the demonstrated need illustrated by the applicant from 3 large to 2 large is a reasonable request.

**Variance to allow wall signs at a height taller than the maximum permitted height:**

The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land as the subject site is located directly adjacent to an elevated interstate highway on the north side of the site. The proposal to allow two wall signs at a height taller than the maximum permitted height of 24 feet to 33 feet on the north and west facing elevations is being requested in order to allow visibility from Interstate 35W which is 25 feet higher than the subject property. Planning Staff believes that granting the variance for wall signage on the north elevation is a reasonable request; however, based on the configuration of the ramp off of Interstate 35W, Staff does not believe the request is reasonable for the west facing elevation and shall recommend that any signage on the west elevation comply with the sign height regulations.

**3. The granting of the variance will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity.**

**Variance of the off-street parking requirement:** Granting the variance to allow a reduction in the on-site parking requirement would likely be in keeping with the spirit and the intent of the ordinance. Further, granting the variance for the proposed development would likely not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. It is Staff's position that an adequate amount of parking is being provided on site based on information from the applicant. Based on the functionality of the proposed use and the expectation that only a small number of users would be present at any given time, Staff believes that granting such a large parking variance would indeed be meeting the intent of the ordinance. Additionally, should there ever be a situation resulting in spillover parking, it should not be an issue partly because there is no parking allowed on Industrial Boulevard.

**Variance of the off-street loading requirement:** Granting the variance to allow a reduction in the off-street loading requirement would likely be in keeping with the spirit and the intent of the ordinance. Further, granting the variance for the proposed development would likely not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. It is Staff's position that an adequate amount of loading spaces is being provided on site based on information from the applicant.

**Variance to allow wall signs at a height taller than the maximum permitted height:**

Granting the variance to allow a wall sign on the north elevation adjacent to Interstate 35W would likely be in keeping with the spirit and the intent of the ordinance. Further, granting the variance for the signage would likely not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. It is Staff's position that the variance should be permitted to allow a taller wall sign on the

north elevation, however, the proposed wall sign along the west elevation adjacent to Industrial Boulevard should comply with the code regulations.

**4. The proposed variance will not substantially increase the congestion of the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.**

**Variance of the off-street parking requirement:** Staff believes that the granting of the on-site parking variance would likely have little additional impact on the congestion of area streets or fire safety, nor would the proposed variance be detrimental to welfare or public safety. The applicant has demonstrated through an approvable TDM that the proposed use does not generate the need for as much parking as is required by Chapter 541 of the Zoning Code. Further, the site is well served by transit.

**Variance of the off-street loading requirement:** Staff believes that the granting of the on-site loading variance would likely have little additional impact on the congestion of area streets or fire safety, nor would the proposed variance be detrimental to welfare or public safety.

**Variance to allow wall signs at a height taller than the maximum permitted height:** Staff believes that the granting of the sign height variance along the north elevation would likely have little additional impact on the congestion of area streets or fire safety, nor would the proposed variance be detrimental to welfare or public safety.

**543.420. Approval criteria.** Adjustments to the number, type, height, area or location of allowed signs on property located in an OR2 or OR3 District or a commercial, downtown or industrial district may be approved if the following criteria are met:

**1. The sign adjustment will not significantly increase or lead to sign clutter in the area or result in a sign that is inconsistent with the purpose of the zoning district in which the property is located.**

The variance to allow wall signs at a height taller than the maximum permitted height of 24 feet in the I1 (Light Industrial) district to 33 feet on the north and west facing elevations should not result in sign clutter or result in a sign that is inconsistent with the purpose of the zoning district in which the property is located. Due to the proposed location of the structure and its proximity to the elevated interstate highway (I-35W), Planning Staff believes that allowing one elevated sign on the north elevation is necessary for visibility purposes. However, allowing an additional elevated sign along the west elevation adjacent to Industrial Boulevard would not be necessary and should be required to conform to the permitted sign height in the I1 district.

**2. The sign adjustment will allow a sign of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or that is more consistent with the architecture and design of the site.**

The proposed wall signs would not necessarily result in a sign of exceptional design or style that would enhance the area, however the proposed wall sign would blend well with the architecture and design of the proposed structure while providing necessary visibility for the proposed development.

## **SITE PLAN REVIEW**

### **Required Findings for Site Plan Review**

- A. The site plan conforms to all applicable standards of Chapter 530, Site Plan Review. (See Section A Below for Evaluation.)**
- B. The site plan conforms to all applicable regulations of the zoning ordinance and is consistent with applicable policies of the comprehensive plan and applicable small area plans adopted by the city council. (See Section B Below for Evaluation.)**

### **Section A: Conformance with Chapter 530 of Zoning Code**

#### **BUILDING PLACEMENT AND DESIGN:**

- Placement of the building shall reinforce the street wall, maximize natural surveillance and visibility, and facilitate pedestrian access and circulation.
- First floor of the building shall be located not more than eight (8) feet from the front lot line (except in C3S District or where a greater yard is required by the zoning ordinance). If located on corner lot, the building wall abutting each street shall be subject to this requirement.
- The area between the building and the lot line shall include amenities.
- The building shall be oriented so that at least one (1) principal entrance faces the public street. In the case of a corner lot, the principal entrance shall face the front lot line.
- Except in the C3S District, on-site accessory parking facilities shall be located to the rear or interior of the site, within the principal building served, or entirely below grade.
- For new construction, the building walls shall provide architectural detail and shall contain windows as required by Chapter 530 in order to create visual interest and to increase security of adjacent outdoor spaces by maximizing natural surveillance and visibility.
- In larger buildings, architectural elements, including recesses or projections, windows and entries, shall be emphasized to divide the building into smaller identifiable sections.
- Blank, uninterrupted walls that do not include windows, entries, recesses or projections, or other architectural elements, shall not exceed twenty five (25) feet in length.
- Exterior materials shall be durable, including but not limited to masonry, brick, stone, stucco, wood, metal, and glass.
- The exterior materials and appearance of the rear and side walls of any building shall be similar to and compatible with the front of the building.

- **The use of plain face concrete block as an exterior material shall be prohibited fronting along a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or adjacent to a residence or office residence district.**
- **Entrances and windows:**
- **Residential uses:**
  - **Principal entrances shall be clearly defined and emphasized through the use of architectural features such as porches and roofs or other details that express the importance of the entrance. Multiple entrances shall be encouraged. Twenty (20) percent of the walls on the first floor and ten (10) percent of the walls on each floor above the first that face a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or on-site parking lot, shall be windows as follows:**
    - a. **Windows shall be vertical in proportion.**
    - b. **Windows shall be distributed in a more or less even manner.**
  - **Nonresidential uses:**

**Principal entrances shall be clearly defined and emphasized through the use of architectural features such as roofs or other details that express the importance of the entrance. Multiple entrances shall be encouraged. Thirty (30) percent of the walls on the first floor and ten (10) percent of the walls on each floor above the first that face a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or on-site parking lot, shall be windows as follows:**

    - a. **Windows shall be vertical in proportion.**
    - b. **Windows shall be distributed in a more or less even manner.**
    - c. **The bottom of any window used to satisfy the ground floor window requirement may not be more than four (4) feet above the adjacent grade.**
    - d. **First floor or ground floor windows shall have clear or lightly tinted glass with a visible light transmittance ratio of 0.6 or higher.**
    - e. **First floor or ground floor windows shall allow views into and out of the building at eye level. Shelving, mechanical equipment or other similar fixtures shall not block views into and out of the building in the area between four (4) and seven (7) feet above the adjacent grade. However, window area in excess of the minimum required area shall not be required to allow views into and out of the building.**
    - f. **Industrial uses in Table 550-1, Principal Industrial Uses in the Industrial Districts, may provide less than thirty (30) percent windows on the walls that face an on-site parking lot, provided the parking lot is not located between the building and a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway.**

**Minimum window area shall be measured as indicated in section 531.20 of the zoning code.**

- **The form and pitch of roof lines shall be similar to surrounding buildings.**
- **Parking Garages: The exterior design shall ensure that sloped floors do not dominate the appearance of the walls and that vehicles are screened from view. At least thirty (30) percent of the first floor building wall that faces a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway shall be occupied by active uses, or shall be designed with architectural detail or windows, including display windows, that create visual interest.**

The proposed structure is not located within 8 feet of the property line along Industrial Boulevard as there is an existing 15 foot drainage and utility easement which contains improvements. Alternative compliance is necessary. Planning Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in this circumstance as it would not be practical to require the proposed development to conform with this requirement. The building as proposed does not have a principal entrance on the west

elevation facing the public street. The principal entrance and proposed office are located at the rear or on the east side of the site. As currently shown, there is an emergency exit located along the west elevation as well as a door which would provide access for the fire department. Alternative compliance would be required. Planning Staff has attempted to work with the applicant on this requirement since the project was initially submitted. Even with the improved material palette for the exterior of the building as well as landscaping beyond what is required by Chapter 530, Planning Staff does not believe that there is an appropriate tradeoff for the lack of a principal entrance along Industrial Boulevard. Planning Staff has encouraged the applicant to work on the configuration and layout of the proposed structure in order to locate the office and interior loading spaces on the southwest corner of the building. The applicant contends that the property owner to the south has specified that they do not want the loading adjacent to the interior side yard. However, Planning Staff believes that there is potential that there could be less of an impact from the interior loading spaces as compared to the proposal to include numerous individual storage bays along the interior side yard. Planning Staff will recommend that the Planning Commission require that the building be reoriented with a principal entrance to the office facing Industrial Boulevard. Further relocation of the principal entry and office will facilitate pedestrian access and circulation. The building in its current configuration does not reinforce the street wall or maximize natural surveillance as there are no windows facing Industrial Boulevard and the building is setback from the property line. The area between the proposed structure and the public street will be landscaped.

The proposed structure would not incorporate windows at the first floor. At least 30% of the first floor façade that faces a public street or sidewalk shall be windows. The proposed structure has 0% windows on the first floor façade facing Industrial Boulevard. Alternative compliance would be necessary. Planning Staff believes that the proposed west elevation should be modified to meet a portion of the requirement and that allowing an elevation in a new building to have no windows adjacent to a public street regardless of the proposed use is inconsistent with City policies and standards that are in place to ensure that new development does not “turn its back” to the public street. Having no windows is not meeting the intent of the provision and Staff believes it would not be practical to grant alternative compliance in this circumstance. A reorientation of the proposed structure would allow for close compliance with this provision. Additionally, Planning Staff believes that some leniency in regard to the interpretation of the provision has been granted for the north side of the site as technically, the north side is adjacent to an interstate highway. Strict interpretation of the provision would mandate meeting minimum window areas on the north elevation as well. Further leniency is allowed in that industrial uses may provide less than thirty (30) percent windows on the walls that face an on-site parking lot, provided the parking lot is not located between the building and a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway. The east elevation currently has 128 square feet of clear windows which is approximately 11%. The proposed structure does not meet the 10% window requirement on upper floors facing the public street or on site parking lot as the proposed glass is spandrel. Alternative compliance would be necessary. Planning Staff would deem it practical to grant alternative compliance in this

circumstance. There are no windows to evaluate adjacent to the public street. The windows are vertical in proportion but are not distributed in a more or less even manner on the first floor, however are more or less evenly distributed on the upper floors. Alternative compliance would be necessary. Planning Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in this specific circumstance. There are blank, uninterrupted walls greater than 25 feet in width on the north and west building elevations that do not include windows, entries, recesses or projections, or other architectural elements. Alternative compliance would be necessary. Planning Staff will recommend that the Planning Commission require compliance with this standard.

The exterior materials would be compatible on all sides of the proposed building. The applicant is proposing that the exterior of the structure be composed of pre-cast concrete panels both with a smooth finish and face brick patterned formliner with integration of metal elements and a steel frame canopy.

The existing and proposed building form and pitch of the roof line is compatible with the area. The proposed roof line would be flat, and a 4-story building would be compatible with other structures in the area.

All proposed parking for the development would be provided in a 13-space surface parking lot located on the east side of the site.

#### **ACCESS AND CIRCULATION:**

- **Clear and well-lighted walkways of at least four (4) feet in width shall connect building entrances to the adjacent public sidewalk and to any parking facilities located on the site.**
- **Transit shelters shall be well lighted, weather protected and shall be placed in locations that promote security.**
- **Vehicular access and circulation shall be designed to minimize conflicts with pedestrian traffic and surrounding residential uses.**
- **Traffic shall be directed to minimize impact upon residential properties and shall be subject to section 530.150 (b) related to alley access.**
- **Site plans shall minimize the use of impervious surfaces.**

The applicant is not proposing to construct a public sidewalk adjacent to Industrial Boulevard, however a partial connection is proposed to be established with the sidewalk located to the south of the site which would link to a walkway around the building to the office and principal entry located at the rear or east side of the site. Due to the layout and proposed configuration of the on site parking spaces, not all would have direct access to a walkway. Planning Staff shall recommend that a direct walkway be provided between a new public sidewalk and a building entrance along Industrial Boulevard.

There are no transit shelters within the development, however the site is located along a bus line.

The proposed development has been designed to minimize conflicts with pedestrian traffic and there would not be any impacts on residential properties as there are none adjacent.

There are no public alleys adjacent to the site.

The site has been somewhat designed to minimize the use of impervious surfaces through the use of landscaping throughout the site as the proposal meets the 20% requirement. Approximately, 41,091 square feet square feet (75%) are proposed to be impervious surfaces including walkways, parking and driveways.

### **LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING:**

- **The composition and location of landscaped areas shall complement the scale of the development and its surroundings.**
  - Not less than twenty (20) percent of the site not occupied by buildings, including all required landscaped yards, shall be landscaped as specified in section 530.160 (a).
- **Required screening shall be six (6) feet in height, unless otherwise specified, except in required front yards where such screening shall be three (3) feet in height.**
- **Except as otherwise provided, required screening shall be at least ninety-five (95) percent opaque throughout the year. Screening shall be satisfied by one or a combination of the following:**
  - A decorative fence.
  - A masonry wall.
  - A hedge.
- **Parking and loading facilities located along a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway shall comply with section 530.170 (b), including providing landscape yards along a public street, public sidewalk or public pathway and abutting or across an alley from a residence or office residence district, or any permitted or conditional residential use.**
- **The corners of parking lots where rows of parking spaces leave areas unavailable for parking or vehicular circulation shall be landscaped as specified for a required landscaped yard. Such spaces may include architectural features such as benches, kiosks or bicycle parking.**
- **In parking lots of ten (10) spaces or more, no parking space shall be located more than fifty (50) feet from the center of an on-site deciduous tree. Tree islands located within the interior of a parking lot shall have a minimum width of seven (7) feet in any direction.**
- **All other areas not governed by sections 530.160 and 530.170 and not occupied by buildings, parking and loading facilities or driveways, shall be covered with turf grass, native grasses or other perennial flowering plants, vines, mulch, shrubs or trees.**
- **Installation and maintenance of all landscape materials shall comply with the standards outlined in section 530.210.**
- **The city planning commission may approve the substitution or reduction of landscaped plant materials, landscaped area or other landscaping or screening standards, subject to section 530.80, as provided in section 530.220.**

The proposal meets the 20% landscape requirement. The total site area is 54,761 square feet or 1.26 acres and the proposed building footprint on the site would be a total of 26,717 square feet. A total of 5,609 square feet of landscaping would be necessary to meet the 20% requirement. The applicant is providing approximately 14,362 square feet

in planted yards or approximately 51% of the site not occupied by buildings. The zoning code requires that there be at least 12 trees and 57 shrubs. The applicant is proposing to provide 28 trees and 145 shrubs. The proposal is exceeding the minimum landscape quantity requirements.

There are no true yards required for the proposed development, however, a landscaped yard and screening is required between the driveway/loading areas and Industrial Boulevard. The proposed landscape plan appears to be in conformance with those requirements. Additionally, in parking lots of ten (10) spaces or more, no parking space shall be located more than fifty (50) feet from the center of an on-site deciduous tree. Tree islands located within the interior of a parking lot shall have a minimum width of seven (7) feet in any direction. The proposal is in conformance with these requirements.

#### **ADDITIONAL STANDARDS:**

- **All parking lots and driveways shall be designed with wheel stops or discontinuous curbing to provide on-site retention and filtration of stormwater. Where on-site retention and filtration is not practical, the parking lot shall be defined by six (6) inch by six (6) inch continuous concrete curb.**
- **To the extent practical, site plans shall minimize the blocking of views of important elements of the city.**
- **To the extent practical, buildings shall be located and arranged to minimize shadowing on public spaces and adjacent properties.**
- **To the extent practical, buildings shall be located and arranged to minimize the generation of wind currents at ground level.**
- **Site plans shall include crime prevention design elements as specified in section 530.260 related to:**
  - **Natural surveillance and visibility**
  - **Lighting levels**
  - **Territorial reinforcement and space delineation**
  - **Natural access control**
- **To the extent practical, site plans shall include the rehabilitation and integration of locally designated historic structures or structures that have been determined to be eligible to be locally designated. Where rehabilitation is not feasible, the development shall include the reuse of significant features of historic buildings.**

All parking is being provided in a surface parking lot which is accessed via a private street on the east side of the site which connects to Industrial Boulevard via a second private street due south of the Minnesota Dental Association building. The project would have access drives along the east and south sides of the site with the proposed 13 parking stalls located adjacent to the east property line. The water drainage on site would need to be designed so as not to drain onto any adjacent lots. As currently configured, the applicant is proposing curbing throughout the site. Planning Staff would recommend that if feasible the applicant should consider on-site retention as applicable.

The City's CPTED officer had no comments on the proposed plan as the plan met the requirements for Police Safety.

Staff would not expect the proposal to result in significant blocking of views, shadowing of public space or adjacent properties. Additionally, Staff would not expect the proposed building to have significant impacts on light, wind and air in relation to the surrounding area.

**Section B: Conformance with All Applicable Zoning Code Provisions and Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and Applicable Small Area Plans Adopted by the City Council**

**ZONING CODE** - The proposed use is permitted in the I1 District.

With the approval of the variances, site plan review, preliminary and final plat, and vacation of drainage and utility easements this development would meet the requirements of the I1 zoning district.

The applicant has also confirmed that the proposed use shall conform to the permitted hours of operation; therefore, there will not be 24-hour public access to the facility. A conditional use permit would be required for 24-hour public access.

**Parking and Loading:** According to Chapter 541 of the zoning code, the proposed use on site requires a total of 64 off-street parking spaces as 1 space per 300 square feet of gross floor area of office, sales or display area in excess of 4,000 square feet (minimum of 4 spaces) plus 1 space per 3,000 square feet of gross floor area of warehousing up to 30,000 square feet plus 1 space per 5,000 square feet of gross floor area of warehousing over 30,000 square feet.. The applicant is requesting a variance of the off-street parking requirement from 64 parking spaces to 13 parking spaces.

**Dumpster screening:** Section 535.80. Refuse storage containers shall be enclosed on all four (4) sides by screening compatible with the principal structure not less than two (2) feet higher than the refuse container or shall be otherwise effectively screened from the street, adjacent residential uses located in a residence or office residence district and adjacent permitted or conditional residential uses. Dumpsters are being provided in the interior loading area within the proposed structure.

**Signs:** Any additional signage is required to meet the requirements of the code. A variance is being requested for the proposed wall sign heights on the north and west elevations of the proposed building.

**Lighting:** The applicant is proposing to install light fixtures at all entires. All lighting will need to be downcast and shielded to avoid undue glare. All lighting shall comply with Chapters 535 and 541.

**Maximum Floor Area:** The maximum F.A.R. for all structures in the I1 District is the gross floor area of the building which is 106,868 square feet divided by the area of the lot which is 54,761 square feet. The outcome is 1.95 which is less than the maximum of 2.7 that is permitted in the I1 District.

**Minimum Lot Area:** Not applicable for the proposed development. There is no minimum lot area requirement for self service storage uses located in the industrial districts.

**Dwelling Units per Acre:** Not applicable for the proposed development.

**Height:** Maximum building height for principal structures located in the I1 District is 4 stories or 56 feet, whichever is less. The maximum allowable floor height is 14 feet. The structure would comply as it is proposed at 4 stories or 41 feet.

**Yard Requirements:** Not applicable for the proposed development.

**Building coverage:** Not applicable for the proposed development.

**Impervious surface area:** Not applicable for the proposed development.

### **MINNEAPOLIS PLAN**

According to the *Minneapolis Plan*, the site is designated as a light industrial use. According to the Principles and Policies outlined in the *Minneapolis Plan*, the following apply to this proposal:

**Policy 9.23:** Minneapolis will continue to provide a wide range of goods and services for city residents, to promote employment opportunities, to encourage the use and adaptive reuse of existing commercial buildings, and to maintain and improve compatibility with surrounding areas.

**Policy 9.26:** Minneapolis will prioritize growth in light industrial land uses to increase the tax base and create jobs for city residents.

**Policy 4.4:** Minneapolis will continue to provide a wide range of goods and services for city residents, to promote employment opportunities, to encourage the use and adaptive reuse of existing commercial buildings, and to maintain and improve compatibility with surrounding areas.

The applicant proposes to construct a 106,868 square foot self service storage building in the I1 district. This development is in conformance with the above noted policies of the comprehensive plan.

The site is in a designated industrial employment area according to the City's Industrial Land Use and Employment Policy Plan, which was adopted on November 3, 2006. The

plan was adopted to provide the City with a clear policy direction for industrial land uses and industrial sector employment within the City of Minneapolis. This plan designates employment districts to provide geographic boundaries to Industrial Business Park Opportunity Areas (IBPOA) within the City of Minneapolis. The specific geographic boundaries clarify that industrial is the priority land use and uses that impede industrial businesses should not be permitted. The proposed use of the site as a self service storage facility is a specific industrial land use and as such is in conformance with the adopted plan.

### **ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE**

**The Planning Commission may approve alternatives to any site plan review requirement upon finding any of the following:**

- **The alternative meets the intent of the site plan chapter and the site plan includes amenities or improvements that address any adverse effects of the alternative. Site amenities may include but are not limited to additional open space, additional landscaping and screening, green roof, decorative pavers, ornamental metal fencing, architectural enhancements transit facilities, bicycle facilities, preservation of natural resources, restoration of previously damaged natural environment, rehabilitation of existing structures that have been locally designated or have been determined to be eligible to be locally designated as historic structures, and design which is similar in form, scale and materials to existing structures on the site and to surrounding development.**
- **Strict adherence to the requirements is impractical because of site location or conditions and the proposed alternative meets the intent of this chapter.**
- **The proposed alternative is consistent with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the city council and meets the intent of this chapter.**

Alternative compliance is requested by the applicant to meet the following standards:

- **Building located within 8 feet of the front lot line:** The proposed structure is not located within 8 feet of the property line along Industrial Boulevard as there is an existing 15 foot drainage and utility easement which contains improvements. Alternative compliance is necessary. Planning Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in this circumstance as it would not be practical to require the proposed development to conform with this requirement.
- **Principal entrance facing a public street:** The building as proposed does not have a principal entrance on the west elevation facing the public street. The principal entrance and proposed office are located at the rear or on the east side of the site. As currently shown, there is an emergency exit located along the west elevation as well as a door which would

provide access for the fire department. Alternative compliance would be required. Planning Staff has attempted to work with the applicant on this requirement since the project was initially submitted. Even with the improved material palette for the exterior of the building as well as landscaping beyond what is required by Chapter 530, Planning Staff does not believe that there is an appropriate tradeoff for the lack of a principal entrance along Industrial Boulevard. Planning Staff has encouraged the applicant to work on the configuration and layout of the proposed structure in order to locate the office and interior loading spaces on the southwest corner of the building. The applicant contends that the property owner to the south has specified that they do not want the loading adjacent to the interior side yard. However, Planning Staff believes that there is potential that there could be less of an impact from the interior loading spaces as compared to the proposal to include numerous individual storage bays along the interior side yard. Planning Staff will recommend that the Planning Commission require that the building be reoriented with a principal entrance to the office facing Industrial Boulevard. Further relocation of the principal entry and office will facilitate pedestrian access and circulation.

- **30% window requirement facing a public street:** The proposed structure would not incorporate windows at the first floor. At least 30% of the first floor façade that faces a public street or sidewalk shall be windows. The proposed structure has 0% windows on the first floor façade facing Industrial Boulevard. Alternative compliance would be necessary. Planning Staff believes that the proposed west elevation should be modified to meet a portion of the requirement and that allowing an elevation in a new building to have no windows adjacent to a public street regardless of the proposed use is unacceptable. Having no windows is not meeting the intent of the provision and Staff believes it would not be practical to grant alternative compliance in this circumstance. A reorientation of the proposed structure would allow for close compliance with this provision. Additionally, Planning Staff believes that some leniency in regard to the interpretation of the provision has been granted for the north side of the site as technically, the north side is adjacent to an interstate highway. Strict interpretation of the provision would mandate meeting minimum window areas on the north elevation as well.
- **10% window requirement on upper floors facing the public street:** The proposed structure does not meet the 10% window requirement on upper floors facing the public street or on site parking lot as the proposed glass is spandrel. Alternative compliance would be necessary. Planning Staff would deem it practical to grant alternative compliance in this circumstance.

- **Windows vertical in proportion and distributed in a more or less even manner:** There are no windows to evaluate adjacent to the public street. The windows are vertical in proportion but are not distributed in a more or less even manner on the first floor, however are more or less evenly distributed on the upper floors. Alternative compliance would be necessary. Planning Staff would recommend that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in this specific circumstance.
- **Blank, uninterrupted walls greater than 25 feet in width:** There are blank, uninterrupted walls greater than 25 feet in width on the north and west building elevations that do not include windows, entries, recesses or projections, or other architectural elements. Alternative compliance would be necessary. Planning Staff will recommend that the Planning Commission require compliance with this standard.

### **PRELIMINARY AND FINAL PLAT – (PL-213)**

#### **Required Findings:**

- 1. Subdivision is in conformance with the land subdivision regulations including the requirements of section 598.100 relating to protection of natural resources, applicable regulations of the Zoning Code, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.**

The subdivision is in conformance with the design requirements of the land subdivision regulations with the exception of including a public sidewalk adjacent to Industrial Boulevard. Construction of a public sidewalk to match into the existing public sidewalk to the south will be required along the entire frontage of Industrial Boulevard. The site would be a fully developed property should the land use applications be approved.

#### **ZONING CODE**

With the approval of the variances, site plan review, preliminary and final plat, and vacation of drainage and utility easements, this development would meet the applicable requirements of the I1 zoning district.

#### **MINNEAPOLIS PLAN**

See the above listed response in the site plan section.

- 2. Subdivision will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity, nor be detrimental to present and potential surrounding land uses, nor add substantially to congestion in the public streets.**

The plat will create one lot for the proposed development as it is currently platted as a outlot. There are various conditions of approval on the site plan that should address any potential negative impacts of the development.

**3. All land intended for building sites can be used safely without endangering the residents or uses of the subdivision and the surrounding area by peril from floods, erosion, high water table, severe soil conditions, improper drainage, steep slopes, utility easements, rock formations, or other hazard.**

The site is flat and does not present the above hazards.

**4. The lot arrangement is such that there will be no foreseeable difficulties, for reasons of topography or other conditions, in securing building permits and in providing driveway access to buildings on such lots from an approved street. Each lot created through subdivision is suitable in its natural state for the proposed use with minimal alteration.**

The lot being created by this plat presents no foreseeable difficulties for the proposed development. No significant alterations to the land appear necessary.

**5. The subdivision makes adequate provision for storm or surface water runoff, and temporary and permanent erosion control. The stormwater drainage system shall be separate and independent of any sanitary sewer system. All plans shall be designed in accordance with rules, regulations and standards of the city engineer. Facilities intended to be dedicated to the City shall be located in perpetual, unobstructed easements of a width determined to be adequate and necessary by the city engineer. To the extent practicable, the amount of stormwater runoff from the site after development does not exceed the amount occurring prior to development.**

Public Works will review and approve drainage and sanitary system plans before issuance of building permits.

**VACATION (Vacation 1514)** – of the platted drainage and utility easements

**Development Plan:** The site plan for the development is attached.

**Responses from Utilities and Affected Property Owners:** Minneapolis Public Works has reviewed the vacation petition and recommends approval of the request. Prior to the printing of this report, no additional comments or concerns were received from the various utilities.

**Findings:** The CPED Planning Division finds that the area proposed for vacation is not needed for any public purpose, and it is not part of a public transportation corridor, and that it can be vacated.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the variance:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a variance of the on-site parking requirement from 64 to 13 for property located at 1389 Industrial Boulevard.

**Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the variance:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a variance of the off-street loading requirement from 3 large to 2 large for property located at 1389 Industrial Boulevard.

**Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the variance:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a variance to allow wall signs at a height taller than the maximum permitted height of 24 feet in the I1 (Light Industrial) district to 33 feet on the north and west facing elevations for property located at 1389 Industrial Boulevard subject to the following condition:

1. The sign on the west elevation shall comply with the height limitation of 24 feet in the I1 district as stated in Chapter 543 of the Zoning Code.

**Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the site plan review:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development– Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the site plan review application for property located at 1389 Industrial Boulevard subject to the following conditions:

1. Planning Staff review and approval of the final site, elevation and landscaping plans.
2. All site improvements shall be completed by August 31, 2008, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for non-compliance.

3. Modification of the west building elevation to incorporate 20% clear windows and 10% display windows.
4. All ground level windows must be transparent (non-reflective) as required by Section 530.120 of the Zoning Code.
5. Reorientation of the structure to locate the office and interior loading areas at the southwest corner of the proposed building.
6. Incorporation of an operable principal entrance on the west elevation facing Industrial Boulevard and connected to a public sidewalk by a walkway of not less than four feet in width.

**Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the preliminary and final plat:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development– Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the preliminary and final plat application for property located at 1389 Industrial Boulevard subject to the following conditions:

1. Construction of a 5-foot wide sidewalk along the entire frontage of Industrial Boulevard connecting to the existing sidewalk on the south side of the site.

**Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development– Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission and the City Council accept the above findings and **approve** the vacation application for 1389 Industrial Boulevard subject to the following condition:

1. The applicant shall be responsible for the cost of relocating the existing sewer line.

**Attachments:**

1. Statement of use / description of the project
2. Findings – variances
3. Correspondence
4. Zoning map
5. Plans – Site, landscape, elevations, floor plans, preliminary and final plat etc.
6. Photos
7. PDR notes

