

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division
Site Plan Review
BZZ-4502

Date: August 24, 2009

Applicant: TruStone Financial Federal Credit Union

Address of Property: 2815, 2827, 2823 and 2827 Lyndale Avenue S

Contact Person and Phone: Mark Bigelbach (651) 470-7844

Planning Staff and Phone: Kimberly Holien (612) 673-2402

Date Application Deemed Complete: July 23, 2009

End of 60 Day Decision Period: September 21, 2009

Ward: 6 **Neighborhood Organization:** Whittier Alliance

Existing Zoning: C2 Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District

Proposed Zoning: Not applicable for this application.

Zoning Plate Number: 10

Legal Description: Not applicable for this application.

Proposed Use: Financial institution with a drive-through

Concurrent Review:

Site Plan Review: For 4,595 square foot building.

Applicable zoning code provisions: Chapter 530, Site Plan Review; Chapter 548, Commercial Districts

Background: TruStone Financial Federal Credit Union has submitted an application for site plan review for a new 4,595 square foot financial institution at 2815, 2827, 2823 and 2827 Lyndale Avenue S. The site is zoned C2 and is currently vacant. The proposal includes a single story building with a drive-through lane. Site plan review is required for any new principal, non-residential building and any building with a drive-through facility. Drive-through facilities are permitted for financial institutions in the C2 District. The site is bordered by a gas station to the north, a multiple-family residential building to the south, single and multiple-family residential uses to the east and an auto repair use to the west.

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Staff has not received any official correspondence on the proposed application from the Whittier Alliance prior to the printing of this report. Any correspondence received will be forwarded on to the Planning Commission for consideration.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Findings as required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code for the 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.

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- 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 530.20 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.

Conformance with above requirements:

The applicant is proposing a 4,595 square foot building that is 20 feet in height. The building is located up to the property line on the west side of the site, fronting on Lyndale Avenue S. The primary building entrance fronts onto the public sidewalk adjacent to Lyndale Avenue. This entrance is clearly defined with glass coverage and a reduced roof height. This entrance vestibule has a second door that opens to the east, toward the onsite parking lot. The parking area is located on the south side of the building with a drive-through lane and drive-up ATM on the north side of the building. Outdoor ATMs are permitted in a drive-through facility accessory to a bank, as indicated in section 537.110 of the zoning ordinance.

The building is proposed to be constructed primarily of EIFS with accent stone along the foundation and at the corners. In the past the City has typically not considered EIFS a durable material. Per Chapter 530 of the Zoning Ordinance, durable materials include masonry, brick, stone, stucco, metal, wood and glass. The use of EIFS would require alternative compliance to allow a non-durable material. Staff does not recommend granting alternative compliance and recommends that an alternate material be used consistent with Section 530.120 of the Zoning Ordinance. In the southwest corner of the principal building, the site plan and elevations show a non-structural column containing an illuminated logo. This column detracts from the building entrance and pedestrian access to site, also separating the bicycle parking from the public sidewalk. Staff recommends that this column be removed to allow more efficient pedestrian access and interaction with the public street and sidewalk. In the event that this column is approved, it may be considered a monument sign for which a variance would be required to exceed the maximum sign height and area in the C2 district.

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While the building functions as a single-story building, for the purposes of site plan review and determining the gross floor area of the building it is two stories, given that the first floor exceeds a height of 14 feet for 48 feet of the building width. The resulting gross floor area is 9,107 square feet. The applicant is requesting alternative compliance for the requirement prohibiting blank, uninterrupted walls that do not include windows, entries, recesses, or projections, or other architectural elements in excess of 25 feet. Specifically, alternative compliance is requested to allow a blank wall 47 feet long on the east elevation and a blank wall 31 feet long on the south elevation. Staff does not recommend granting alternative compliance for either location. The floor plans show a mechanical room and employee lounge on the east elevation and a meeting room and security office on the south elevation. Staff recommends that architectural detail including vertical elements such as stone columns, recesses or other elements be added to these elevations. Staff also recommends that additional window coverage be included on these elevations. Alternative compliance to allow blank walls in excess of 25 feet is also requested for each elevation on the second story of the building. Staff finds that alternative compliance may be appropriate for the second story. The building essentially functions as a single story building and the height of the second story is limited in a manner that may not be conducive to additional architectural features.

The window requirements of the site plan chapter call for 30 percent window coverage on the first floors facing the street and 10 percent on the second floors facing the street or on-site parking lot. For the west elevation, facing Lyndale Avenue S, nearly 53 percent window coverage is proposed for the first floor. The south elevation, facing the on-site parking lot, contains 22 percent window coverage. The second story of the building does not contain any windows, requiring alternative compliance. Again, the building essentially functions as a single story building and staff does not believe there would be any benefit to providing windows on this second story. As such, staff recommends granting alternative compliance.

First floor or ground floor windows shall be required to have clear or lightly tinted glass and 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

The structure has a flat roof similar to other structures in the area.

No parking garages are proposed for 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.

Conformance with above requirements:

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Two entrances are located within a common vestibule in the southwest corner of the building, opening onto the parking area to the south of the building and to the public sidewalk on Lyndale Avenue S. The entrances are connected to the parking facility by a walkway that is approximately seven feet in width. This sidewalk extends to the west side of the site to connect with the public sidewalk, where it is reduced to a width of 4.5 feet. This sidewalk width complies with the standards of Chapter 530.

There are no transit shelters on the site. Traffic going into the drive-through lane will circulate around the east side of the site, parallel to the residential uses across the alley. A 7-foot landscaped yard and a retaining wall are located between the drive lane and the alley to mitigate any effect the traffic may have on these residential uses.

The site has two access points extending east from Lyndale Avenue South. Traffic exiting the site via the curb cut on the north will only have the option to make a right-hand turn. A drive-through lane and a drive-up ATM lane are located on the north side of the building. The drive-through lane and ATM lane are each nine feet in width. A one-way drive aisle at a width of 12 feet provides access around the drive-through facilities. Public Works and the Fire Department have reviewed the site plan for access and circulation and find them acceptable as outlined in the PDR report (please see attached report). The site plan does not include vehicular access to and from the adjacent alley.

The parking area is accessed by a driveway that is 22 feet in width. As stated above, a one-way drive also circulates around the building to provide access to the drive through lane. This one-way drive aisle has a minimum width of 12 feet.

As described below, the site does not meet the minimum landscaped yard requirements. With the modifications detailed below, the site should be designed to minimize impervious surfaces. All areas that are not covered by buildings, pedestrian access, and paved areas necessary for parking, loading, and the associated maneuvering are pervious surfaces used for landscaping.

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**

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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.

Conformance with above requirements:

The lot area is 18,938 square feet and the footprint of the building is 4,595 square feet. Therefore, the net lot area is 14,343 square feet, of which 20 percent (2,869 square feet) is required to be landscaped. The site requires 6 canopy trees and 29 shrubs to satisfy the minimum planting requirement.

The applicant is proposing a total landscaped area of approximately 2,509 square feet (17.5 percent of the unoccupied area) with 4 on-site, deciduous canopy trees, 4 on-site evergreen trees and 24 shrubs. Additional perennials are proposed throughout the site. There are 12 additional shrubs and two additional canopy trees proposed within the public right-of-way along Lyndale Avenue S. The trees proposed on-site are all located along the west property line. Alternative compliance is requested to allow a deviation from the minimum landscape area requirement and the minimum number of shrub plantings. Staff does not recommend alternative compliance for this requirement, as reasonable modifications can be made to the site plan to achieve the minimum landscaped area and the minimum number of required plantings on-site. Specifically, staff recommends increasing the width of the landscaped yard between the drive-through/loading area and the property to the north. The landscaped yard in this location is proposed at a width of only 2 feet. Staff recommends that this yard be increased to a minimum width of 5 feet to provide adequate space for the proposed plantings to grow and thrive.

In addition to the minimum planting requirements, the site plan is required to show all parking stalls within 50 feet of a canopy tree. Several parking stalls in both the north and south rows of parking are further than 50 feet from an on-site canopy tree. Staff does not recommend granting alternative compliance for this requirement. Removing the column referenced above may create additional space for a landscaped area on the west end of the north row of parking stalls. In any case, the site plan shall be required to be amended in a manner that places all parking spaces within 50 feet of an on-site canopy tree.

A landscaped yard at least seven feet wide with plantings at least three feet in height and 60 percent opaque is required between the parking lot and drive through lanes and Lyndale Avenue S. The applicant is requesting alternative compliance for this provision to allow for a landscaped yard approximately three feet in width between the south portion of the parking area and the public right-of-way, with additional landscaped area located within the right-of-way. Alternative compliance is also requested for the landscaped yard between the north row of parking stalls and the public right-of-way. A sidewalk is located in this location as well as a non-structural column extending out from the building. Staff has recommended that this column be removed, which will increase the visibility of the parking spaces from Lyndale Avenue and allow for better pedestrian access and more green space. Staff recommends granting alternative compliance for this requirement to allow for the pedestrian connection

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provided by the proposed sidewalk. However, staff recommends that a planting area at least three feet in width be provided between the north row of parking stalls and the public right-of-way.

A landscaped yard seven feet in width is also required between the parking lot and the residential use to the south. A green area at a width of 6'9" is proposed between the parking lot and the south property line. No plantings are proposed in this location. Staff does not recommend alternative compliance for this location. The site plan shall be revised to show a landscaped yard at least 7 feet in width, including the required trees and shrubs, and screening at least 95 percent opaque for the length of the parking lot.

The site also borders residential uses across the alley to the east. The access to the drive-through lane runs along the east property line. The applicant is proposing a 7-foot landscaped yard in this location. Due to the grade on the site, a block retaining wall is proposed along the property line at a maximum height of 6 feet.

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.

Conformance with above requirements:

Curbing is shown around the surface parking area. An infiltration basin is proposed in the southwest corner of the site, adjacent to the south row of parking stalls.

The building does not block important views of the city, shadow public spaces or adjacent properties, and will not significantly generate wind currents at ground level.

The plan meets the CPTED guidelines. The site is well lit and designed with opportunities for people to observe adjacent spaces and public sidewalks.

Landscaping, sidewalks and building features are designed to clearly direct pedestrian movements. A 7-foot concrete sidewalk is proposed on the south side of the building, between the building and the parking area. This sidewalk extends west, connecting with the public sidewalk along Lyndale Avenue S. A sidewalk connection is also proposed from the building entrance to the public sidewalk.

The site is currently vacant and does not contain any historic structures.

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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 a permitted use in the C2 Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District.

Off-Street Parking and Loading:

Minimum automobile parking requirement:

The minimum vehicle parking requirement for a bank or financial institution is one space for each 500 square feet of gross floor area in excess of 4,000 square feet, or a minimum of 4 spaces. For purposes of determining the gross floor area as it relates to the parking requirements, gross floor area is determined as the sum of the gross horizontal areas of the several floors of the building, or portion thereof, devoted to such use, including accessory storage areas located within selling or working space such as counters, racks, or closets, and any basement floor area devoted to retailing activities, the production or processing of goods, or offices. The gross floor area of the use in terms of the parking requirement is 4,595 square feet, requiring 4 parking spaces. The site plan illustrates 13 parking stalls, including two handicap accessible spaces, satisfying the minimum requirement.

Maximum vehicle parking requirement:

The maximum vehicle parking requirement for the proposed uses is one space per 200 square feet of gross floor area, or 23 spaces. With the 13 spaces provided, the site plan is in conformance with the maximum vehicle parking requirement.

Minimum bicycle parking requirement:

Minimum bicycle parking requirements are also applicable for the use. The minimum bicycle parking requirement for a bank or financial institution is three short-term spaces. The applicant is providing six bicycle parking spaces approximately 20 feet from the building entrance. This is a convenient and visible area.

Loading:

Banks and financial institutions have a low loading requirement, requiring one small loading space. However, the building is less than 10,000 square feet, the minimum size for which a loading space is required. To satisfy the loading requirement, the use is instead required to provide adequate shipping and receiving facilities, accessible by motor vehicle on the same zoning lot. The site plan illustrates a loading area on the north side of the site, within the 12-foot passing lane adjacent to the drive-through.

Stacking spaces:

Bank teller lanes require a minimum of 4 stacking spaces, measured from the teller window. The site plan illustrates the four required stacking spaces at a width of 9 feet. The automated teller machine (ATM) requires a minimum of 3 stacking spaces. The site plan shows 3 stacking spaces.

Maximum Floor Area: The maximum FAR in the C2 District is 1.7. The subject site is 18,938 square feet in area. The applicant is proposing a 4,595 square foot building that is 20 feet in height. While the building functions as a single-story building, for the purposes of site plan review and determining the gross floor area of the building it is two stories, given that the first floor exceeds a height of 14 feet for 48 feet of the building width. The resulting gross floor area is 9,107 square feet, for an FAR of .48.

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Building Height: Building height in the C2 District is limited to 4 stories or 56 feet, whichever is less. The proposed building is two stories, 20 feet in height, within the parameters allowed.

Minimum Lot Area: Retail sales and service uses with drive-through facilities, including banks, have a minimum lot area requirement of 12,000 square feet in the C2 District. The site is 18,938 square feet, in compliance with this requirement.

Dwelling Units per Acre: There are no residential units proposed.

Yard Requirements: The property to the south contains residential uses, requiring a side yard setback of 7 feet for the proposed two-story building. The proposed parking lot requires a setback of 5 feet from this south property line. The parking area and the proposed building are both in compliance with the setback requirements.

Specific Development Standards: No specific development standards are applicable for this use.

Hours of Open to the Public: In the C2 District, uses may be open to the public during the following hours: Sunday through Thursday from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. The proposed use will comply with the required hours open to the public.

Signs: Signs are subject to 531 and 543 of the Zoning Code. All new signs are required to meet the requirements of Chapter 543 of the zoning code and permits are required from the Zoning Office. The elevations show two wall signs, one each on the west and south building walls. These are both primary building walls. The use is allowed one square foot of signage per one foot of primary building wall if a freestanding sign is on the same zoning lot. If there is no freestanding sign on the same zoning lot, 1.5 square feet of signage for each one foot of primary building wall.

For the west elevation, a sign up to 100 square feet is allowed. The applicant is proposing a wall sign approximately 52 square feet in area on this elevation. On the south elevation, facing the on-site parking lot, a sign up to 140 square feet is permitted. The applicant is proposing a 66 square foot on this elevation.

As previously stated, the applicant is proposing a column on the south side of the building, attached to the entrance vestibule that contains an illuminated logo. Staff is recommending that this column be removed to enhance pedestrian access and visibility and increase the amount of on-site green space. In the event that this column is approved, it may be considered a monument sign for which a variance would be required to exceed the maximum sign height and area in the C2 district.

Refuse storage: Section 535.80. Refuse storage containers are required to 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. The refuse containers in the northeast corner of the site are screened from the street and adjacent residential uses with 6-foot high enclosure, as required by code.

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Lighting: All lighting shall comply with Chapters 535 and 541 including the following standards:

535.590. Lighting. (a) In general. No use or structure shall be operated or occupied as to create light or glare in such an amount or to such a degree or intensity as to constitute a hazardous condition, or as to unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of property by any person of normal sensitivities, or otherwise as to create a public nuisance. (b) Specific standards. All uses shall comply with the following standards except as otherwise provided in this section:

- (1) Lighting fixtures shall be effectively shielded and arranged so as to not directly or indirectly cause illumination or glare in excess of one-half footcandle measured at the closest property line of any permitted or conditional residential use, and five footcandles measured at the street curb line or nonresidential property line nearest the light source.
- (2) Lighting fixtures shall not exceed two thousand (2,000) lumens (equivalent to a one hundred fifty (150) watt incandescent bulb) unless of a cutoff type that shields the light source from an observer at the closest property line of any permitted or conditional residential use.
- (3) Lighting shall not create a sensation of brightness that is substantially greater than ambient lighting conditions as to cause annoyance, discomfort or decreased visual performance or visibility to a person of normal sensitivities when viewed from any permitted or conditional residential use.
- (4) Lighting shall not create a hazard for vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
- (5) Lighting of building facades or roofs shall be located, aimed and shielded so that light is directed only onto the facade or roof.

Comprehensive Plan:

In the *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*, the site is identified as mixed use on the future land use map. Mixed use may include either a mix of retail, office or residential uses within a building or within a district. The site fronts on Lyndale Avenue S, which is identified as a commercial corridor in this location. According to the principals and policies outlined in the plan, the following apply to this proposal:

Policy 1.4: Develop and maintain strong and successful commercial and mixed use areas with a wide range of character and functions to serve the needs of current and future users.

- 1.4.1 Support a variety of commercial districts and corridors of varying size, intensity of development, mix of uses, and market served.
- 1.4.2 Promote standards that help make commercial districts and corridors desirable, viable, and distinctly urban, including: diversity of activity, safety for pedestrians, access to desirable goods and amenities, attractive streetscape elements, density and variety of uses to encourage walking, and architectural elements to add interest at the pedestrian level.

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Policy 1.10: Support development along Commercial Corridors that enhances the street's character, fosters pedestrian movement, expands the range of goods and services available, and improves the ability to accommodate automobile traffic.

- 1.10.1 Support a mix of uses – such as retail sales, office, institutional, high-density residential and clean low impact light industrial – where compatible with the existing and desired character.
- 1.10.2 Encourage commercial development, including active uses on the ground floor, where Commercial Corridors intersect with other designated corridors.

The proposed use would provide a commercial service along a commercial corridor. The building is located up to the property line, providing an urban design that interacts with the public street and sidewalk. In that regard, staff finds that the proposed use is consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

SMALL AREA PLANS ADOPTED BY COUNCIL:

This site is located within the boundaries of the Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan, approved on June 26, 2009. Among other things, this plan focuses on maintaining and growing an independent and diverse business mix, and promoting a clean, safe, pedestrian friendly urban environment. As it relates to the subject site, one relevant recommendation from this small area plan includes expanding the boundary of the existing Activity Center at the intersection of Lyndale and Lake Street to 28th Street, including the subject site. Activity Center policies more specifically encourage mixed-use development and discourage auto oriented uses, such as the proposed drive through facility. Activity centers, as well as commercial corridors, recommend a minimum building height of two stories.

A second relevant recommendation of the small area plan is to expand the Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District to coincide with the recommended Activity Center boundary. The purpose of this overlay district is to preserve and encourage the pedestrian character of commercial areas by promoting street life and activity. This is done by regulating building orientation and design and by prohibiting certain high impact and automobile-oriented uses. Specifically, if the Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District were applied, the proposed drive-through would not be permitted.

To summarize, the Lyn-Lake Small Area plan focuses on creating a pedestrian oriented environment on and around the subject site. The plan makes recommendations for an Activity Center and a Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District on the site, both of which discourage the proposed drive-through. However, with the existing zoning on the site, the use and the drive-through are permitted. With the exception of the drive-through lane, the building is designed in accordance with the policies of the Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District. The building is proposed up to the property line, interacting with the public street and sidewalk. The primary building entrance opens onto the public sidewalk. The first floor facing Lyndale Avenue S has more than 40 percent window coverage, as recommended in Section 551.120, and an awning is proposed for the entire length of the building. The proposed building design is therefore consistent with the policies of the Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan, again with the exception of the drive-through. The use is a commercial use proposed in an area identified as mixed-use, coinciding with the recommendation to provide a range of goods and services for the surrounding area.

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The site is also within the boundaries of the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan. That plan calls for commercial development (with a preference for mixed-use) fronting Lyndale Avenue South between West 28th Street, including the subject site. The proposed bank is a commercial use, consistent with the direction of this small area 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.**

The applicant is requesting alternative compliance for a number of items in Chapter 530. First, alternative compliance is requested to allow EIFS on the exterior of the building in lieu of a durable material. Staff does not recommend granting alternative compliance and recommends that an alternate material be used consistent with Section 530.120 of the Zoning Ordinance. Alternative compliance is also requested for the requirement prohibiting blank, uninterrupted walls that do not include windows, entries, recesses, or projections, or other architectural elements in excess of 25 feet. Specifically, alternative compliance is requested to allow a blank wall 47 feet long on the east elevation and a blank wall 31 feet long on the south elevation. Staff does not recommend granting alternative compliance for either location. Alternative compliance to allow blank walls in excess of 25 feet is also requested for each elevation on the second story of the building. Staff finds that alternative compliance may be appropriate for the second story. The building essentially functions as a single story building and height of the second story is limited in a manner that may not be conducive to additional architectural features. For this same reason, staff recommends granting alternative compliance for the second-story window requirements.

For the landscaping requirements, alternative compliance is requested to allow a deviation from the minimum landscape area requirement of 20 percent and the minimum number of shrub plantings. The site plan illustrates 17.5 percent landscaping and 24 shrubs on site. Staff does not recommend alternative compliance for this requirement, as reasonable modifications can be made to the site plan to achieve the minimum landscaped area and the minimum number of required plantings on-site. A landscaped yard at least seven feet wide with plantings at least three feet in height and 60 percent opaque is required between the parking lot and drive through lanes and Lyndale Avenue S. The applicant is requesting alternative compliance for this provision to allow for a landscaped yard approximately three feet in width between the south portion of the parking area and the public right-of-

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way, with additional landscaped area located within the right-of-way. Staff does not recommend granting alternative compliance for this provision.

Alternative compliance is also requested for the landscaped yard between the north row of parking stalls and the public right-of-way. A sidewalk is located in this location as well as a non-structural column extending out from the building. Staff has recommended that this column be removed, which will increase the visibility of the parking spaces from Lyndale Avenue. Staff recommends granting alternative compliance for this requirement to allow for the pedestrian connection provided by the proposed sidewalk. However, staff recommends that a planting area at least three feet in width be provided between the north row of parking stalls and the public right-of-way. Alternative compliance for the required landscaped yard at least seven feet in width between the parking lot and the residential property to the south is also requested. Staff does not recommend alternative compliance for this location. The site plan shall be revised to show a landscaped yard at least 7 feet in width and screening at least 95 percent opaque for the length of the parking lot.

Alternative compliance is requested to allow parking spaces that are more than 50 feet from an on-site canopy tree. Staff does not recommend granting alternative compliance for this provision. The site plan shall be modified to provide additional canopy trees or relocate canopy trees in a manner that complies with this requirement.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

The Community Planning and Economic Development Department - Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the findings above and **approve** the application for site plan review for a new bank with a drive-through for property located at 2815, 2827, 2823 and 2827 Lyndale Avenue S, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) CPED planning staff review and approval of the final site plan, lighting plan, landscaping plan, and signage plan before permits may be issued.
- 2) All site improvements shall be completed by August 24, 2010 (unless extended by the Zoning Administrator) or permits may be revoked for noncompliance.
- 3) In lieu of EIFS an alternate, durable exterior building material shall be used consistent with Section 530.120 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- 4) The column on the south side of the entrance vestibule shall be removed to allow more efficient pedestrian access and increase the amount of on-site green space.
- 5) Windows or architectural details including vertical elements such as stone columns, recesses or other elements shall be added to the south and east elevations to eliminate any blank walls in excess of 25 feet, in accordance with Section 530.120 of the Zoning Ordinance.

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- 6) The site plan shall be revised to include landscaping equivalent to 20 percent of the site not occupied by buildings and a minimum of 29 shrubs shall be provided on site, in accordance with Section 530.160 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- 7) The landscaped yard along the north property line shall be increased to a minimum width of 5 feet to provide adequate space for the proposed plantings in this area and to provide a more significant buffer between the site and the gas station on the adjacent property.
- 8) The site plan shall be amended in a manner that places all parking spaces within 50 feet of an on-site canopy tree, in accordance with Section 530.170 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- 9) A landscaped yard at least three feet in width shall be provided between the north row of parking stalls and the public right-of-way.
- 10) The site plan shall be revised to show a landscaped yard at least 7 feet in width and screening at least 95 percent opaque for the length of the parking lot between the parking lot and the south property line, in compliance with Section 530.170 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Attachments:

1. PDR Report.
2. Correspondence.
3. Statement from applicant.
4. Zoning map.
5. Site plans and elevations.
6. Photos.