

**Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning
Division
Site Plan Review
BZZ 4029**

Date: June 2, 2008

Applicant: Digigraphics/Photos, Inc.

Addresses of Property: 2639 Minnehaha Avenue

Project Name: Building Addition for Digigraphics/Photos, Inc.

Contact Person and Phone: Scott Wiestling, (651) 690-5525

Planning Staff and Phone: Shanna Sether, (612) 673-2307

Date Application Deemed Complete: May 9, 2008

End of 60-Day Decision Period: July 7, 2008

Ward: 9 **Neighborhood Organization:** Longfellow Community Council

Existing Zoning: I1 Light Industrial District

Proposed Zoning: Not applicable for this application.

Zoning Plate Number: 27

Proposed Use: Addition to an existing printing and publishing use

Site Plan Review: in order to allow for a 15,988 square foot addition to an existing building to a printing and publishing use.

Applicable zoning code provisions: Chapter 550, Industrial Districts, Chapter 530 Site Plan Review and Chapter 541 Off-Street Parking and Loading

Development Plan: The site plan shows the existing and proposed development.

Background: The existing building was constructed in 1994. The subject property includes an accessory parking lot with approximately 75 parking spaces and 23,930 square foot building. The current use of the building at 2639 Minnehaha Avenue is production and processing of printing and publishing materials, which is a permitted use in the I1 Light Industrial District. The applicant is proposing to construct a 15,988 square foot addition to the existing building to allow for additional warehousing space. Any addition to a non-residential building that increases its gross floor area by 1,000 square

feet or more requires site plan review. When the building addition faces a public street, sidewalk or pathway, the site plan review must be reviewed by the City Planning Commission. The proposed addition will be visible from the Midtown Greenway to the east, adjacent to the Soo Line Railroad. In addition, Public Works, police and fire departments have reviewed the site plan through the preliminary development review process. Their comments are attached to the staff report.

As of writing this staff report, staff has not received any correspondence from the neighborhood organization. Staff will forward comments, if any are received, at the City Planning Commission meeting.

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 the 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 530.120 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 existing structure is setback approximately 95 feet and there is an existing parking lot with bicycle parking and a tree-lined landscaped yard between the building and Minnehaha Avenue and the Midtown Greenway. The location of the building and parking area were previously approved in 1994; the site was not subject to site plan review at that time.

The proposed addition is to the rear of the building and will be used for warehousing space. The existing exterior materials of the structure are painted rock faced concrete block with a painted accent band. The exterior materials of the addition are also proposed to be painted rock faced concrete block and painted accent band to match the existing building.

There are three principal entrances that face the front lot line along Minnehaha Avenue; the main entry on the northwest corner of the building is clearly defined with exiting signage above it.

The proposed addition facades do include blank walls, exceeding twenty five (25) feet in length along the west, north and east elevations. The applicant is requesting alternative compliance. Staff believes it would be impractical to require these elevations to meet these requirements as the proposed building addition will match the existing building and be used for warehousing space. The building addition faces other industrial uses in the area and the Midtown Greenway to the southeast. The applicant has provided a dense screen of trees between the southeast elevation and Midtown Greenway that will create visual interest in lieu of providing additional architectural detail.

The building addition is required to provide a minimum of thirty (30) percent glazing of the walls on the first floor that face east towards the Midtown Greenway. The applicant is not proposing to add any windows to this facade and has instead requested alternative compliance due to the impracticality of providing windows in a warehouse. The city planning commission may approve alternative compliance to this provision provided that the security of the surrounding area is considered and that any adverse effects are mitigated throughout the use of wall enhancements or architectural features, including display windows, which create visual interest. The zoning code relaxes this provision for industrial uses on walls that face an on-site parking lot, provided that the parking lot is not located between the building and a public pathway. The area between the Midtown Greenway to the east and the building addition will be used for the loading area. The existing building exceeds the 30% window requirement along Minnehaha Avenue and the Midtown Greenway towards the front for the structure. Staff believes it would be impractical to require this elevation to meet the 30% window requirement. The applicant has provided a dense screen of trees between the southeast elevation and Midtown Greenway that will create visual interest in lieu of providing additional windows in this portion of the building addition.

The existing and proposed roof is flat.

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:

The applicant has not provided a well-lit walkway connecting the building entrance to the public sidewalk and Midtown Greenway; therefore the applicant has requested alternative compliance. Staff believes that there is an opportunity to provide a four-foot walkway through the center of the parking area, adjacent to the 10'4" access aisle out the sidewalk and Midtown Greenway adjacent to Minnehaha Avenue.

There are no transit shelters on or immediately adjacent to the site. There are Metro Transit stops nearby at 25th Street East and Minnehaha Avenue and 25th Street East and 27th Avenue South.

The access and curb cuts exist and should not increase traffic impacts. The loading for the building will continue to be accessed from the southwest curb cut along Minnehaha Avenue.

There are no public alleys adjacent to the site.

The site plan shows a significant increase in the amount of impervious surface, due to the building addition. The site is over one acre and the applicant has submitted a stormwater management plan and is working with Public Works to meet their standards.

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.**

Conformance with above requirements:

The zoning code requires that at least 20 percent of the site not occupied by buildings be landscaped. The lot area is 122,797 square feet and the proposed building footprint is 39,908 square feet. The lot area minus the building footprints therefore consists of approximately 82,889 square feet. At least 20 percent of the net site area (16,578 square feet) must be landscaped and the applicant is providing 48,245 square feet, which equals 58.2 percent of the net site area.

The zoning code requires at least one canopy tree for each 500 square feet of required green space and at least one shrub for each 100 square feet of required green space. In addition, not less than one (1) tree shall be provided for each twenty-five linear feet or fraction thereof of parking lot frontage. The tree and shrub requirement for this site is 33 and 166 respectively. The applicant has shown 52 trees, 24 of which are canopy trees and 13 shrubs. The applicant has requested alternative compliance to the number of canopy trees, by instead providing a range of existing and proposed deciduous tree species and existing conifers. Staff believes that the proposed trees are more consistent with the character of the property and the area and is recommending that the planning commission grant alternative compliance. The applicant has also requested alternative compliance to providing the required number of shrubs by instead providing a denser screen of trees between the proposed addition and the Midtown Greenway. Staff believes that the site area is large enough to provide the required number of shrubs on the property.

A seven-foot landscaped yard is required along the southwest and the southeast property lines due to adjacency to a public street and pathway. The existing site plan shows an average of approximately 15 foot landscaped yard adjacent to Minnehaha; the average was calculated along the curvature of the road. The applicant is proposing a seven-foot landscaped yard along the southeast property line adjacent to the Soo Line Railroad and Midtown Greenway.

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 the parking lot shall have a minimum width of seven (7) feet in any direction. The proposed plan shows all of the parking spaces located within fifty feet from the center of an on-site deciduous tree.

Screening of the parking area is required along the southwest property line, adjacent to Minnehaha Avenue and along the southeast property line, adjacent to the Soo Line Railroad and the Midtown Greenway, not less than six feet in height and 95% opaque. The applicant has not proposed any screening of the parking area along Minnehaha Avenue or the Midtown Greenway and is therefore requesting alternative compliance. Staff is recommending that the applicant provide screening consisting of either a masonry wall, fence, berm or hedge, three feet in height and not less than 60% opaque to effectively screen the parking and loading areas along all property lines adjacent to Minnehaha Avenue and the Midtown Greenway.

Turf, native grasses or other perennial flowering plants, vines, mulch, shrubs or trees shall cover all areas that are not paved or landscaped.

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.**

Curbing is currently provided along the parking areas and drive aisles, where required. With the construction onsite, staff is encouraging the applicant to provide alternative methods for onsite storm water management, such as plant selection that can tolerate wet and dry conditions, rain gardens, directing drainage from impervious areas to the green space.

The building should not impede any views of important elements of the city.

The building should not significantly shadow the adjacent streets or properties.

Wind currents should not be major concern.

The site design provides natural surveillance and visibility to allow views into the area. The proposal controls and guides to movement on the site with clearly defined walkways and distinguishes between public and non-public spaces.

The existing structures are neither historic nor eligible for historic designation.

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 site is zoned I1 Light Industrial District. Production and processing of printing and publishing materials is a permitted use in the I1 District.

Parking: The parking requirement of a production and processing use in the I1 Light Industrial District is 1 space per 300 sq. ft. of GFA up to 4,000 sq. ft., but not more than 4 spaces, + 1 space per 1,000 sq. ft. of GFA from 4,000 sq. ft. to 20,000 sq. ft. + 1 space per 2,000 sq. ft. of GFA in excess of 20,000 sq. ft. Therefore, the parking requirement is 30 off-street parking spaces. The site plan shows an existing parking lot containing 75 off-street spaces.

Maximum Floor Area: The lot area is 122,797 square feet. The maximum FAR allowed in the I1 District is 2.7. The building has a total of 82,889 square feet, which is an FAR of .675.

Height: Building height in the I1 district is limited to four stories or 56 feet, whichever is less. The building is considered two stories, based on the height in feet, which is approximately 21.5 feet at the tallest point.

Minimum Lot Area: There is not a minimum lot area requirement in the I1 Light Industrial District for production and processing of printing and publishing materials.

Dwelling Units per Acre: There are no existing or proposed dwelling units.

Yard Requirements: The subject site is zoned I1, along with the surrounding properties; therefore there are not yard requirements.

Specific Development Standards: N/A

Hours of Operation: Hours of operation open to the public allowed under the I1 zoning are 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Signs: The applicants have an existing sign above the main entrance on the northwest corner of the building, which is in compliance with Chapter 543. All new signage is required to meet the requirements of the code.

Refuse screening: The applicant is providing a new trash enclosure along the southeast wall of the building addition. The trash enclosure will be painted rock faced concrete block as the existing building and proposed building addition with steel enclosure gates and hardware.

Mechanical equipment: Any mechanical equipment shall comply with Chapter 535 of the zoning code including:

535.70. Screening of mechanical equipment. (a) *In general.* All mechanical equipment installed on or adjacent to structures shall be arranged so as to minimize visual impact using one (1) of the following methods. All screening shall be kept in good repair and in a proper state of maintenance.

- (1) *Screened by another structure.* Mechanical equipment installed on or adjacent to a structure may be screened by a fence, wall or similar structure. Such screening structure shall comply with the following standards:
 - a. The required screening shall be permanently attached to the structure or the ground and shall conform to all applicable building code requirements.
 - b. The required screening shall be constructed with materials that are architecturally compatible with the structure.
 - c. Off-premise advertising signs and billboards shall not be considered required screening.
- (2) *Screened by vegetation.* Mechanical equipment installed adjacent to the structure served may be screened by hedges, bushes or similar vegetation.
- (3) *Screened by the structure it serves.* Mechanical equipment on or adjacent to a structure may be screened by a parapet or wall of sufficient height, built as an integral part of the structure.
- (4) *Designed as an integral part of the structure.* If screening is impractical, mechanical equipment may be designed so that it is balanced and integrated with respect to the design of the building.

(b) *Exceptions.* The following mechanical equipment shall be exempt from the screening requirements of this section:

- (1) Minor equipment not exceeding one (1) foot in height.
- (2) Mechanical equipment accessory to a single or two-family dwelling.
- (3) Mechanical equipment located in an I2 or I3 District not less than three hundred (300) feet from a residence or office residence district.

Lighting: The applicant is proposing new wallpack lighting units on the walls. The lighting units shall be shielded, in addition to complying with Chapter 535 and Chapter 541 of the zoning code including:

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 arranged so as not to directly or indirectly cause illumination or glare in excess of one-half (1/2) footcandle measured at the closest property line of any permitted or conditional residential use, and five (5) 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.

MINNEAPOLIS PLAN: According to the principles and polices outlined in *The Minneapolis Plan*, the following apply to this proposal:

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

Implementation Steps

Identify appropriate areas for the retention and expansion of existing industry and the development of new industry in specific industrial and business park opportunity areas.

Promote light industrial uses as the preferred use of industrial land, but discourage warehouse or distribution uses in areas where truck traffic will negatively impact residential neighborhoods.

Industrial/Business Park Opportunity Areas

Industrial/Business Park Opportunity Areas are identified by the following criteria:

- Immediate access to regional freeway network
- Restricted residential land use presence within immediate adjoining parcels of Industrial/ Business Park Opportunity Areas
- Location preference to higher job density, light industrial uses

9.33 Minneapolis will support the existing economic base by providing adequate land and infrastructure to make city sites attractive to businesses willing to invest in high job density, low impact, and light industrial activity.

Implementation Steps

Identify appropriate areas for the retention and expansion of existing industry and the development of new industry in specific Industrial/Business Park Opportunity Areas.

Promote light industrial uses as the preferred use of industrial land, but discourage warehouse or distribution uses in areas where truck traffic will negatively impact residential neighborhoods.

Continue to protect a healthy physical environment that is attractive for private investment and compatible with neighborhoods.

SEWARD AND LONGFELLOW GREENWAY AREA LAND USE AND PRE-DEVELOPMENT STUDY:

The subject property is identified as Light Industrial on the Future Land Use map. And as an area for Industrial Park Reforestation

INDUSTRIAL LAND USE AND EMPLOYMENT POLICY PLAN:

The subject property is within Employment District 6 – Seward/Hiawatha. The proposed use is Light Industrial and the proposed expansion should not conflict residential uses in the general area.

The Planning Division believes that the proposed use is in conformance with the above policies of the small area plans and comprehensive plan. The applicant is proposing to expand an existing light industrial use within Employment District 6. With the recommended and proposed site plan improvements, staff believes that the use will be more compatible with the surrounding land uses.

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, 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.**

- Blank walls exceeding twenty-five (25) feet

The proposed addition facades do include blank walls, exceeding twenty five (25) feet in length along the west, north and east elevations. The applicant is requesting alternative compliance. Staff believes it would be impractical to require these elevations to meet these requirements as the proposed building addition will match the existing building and be used for warehousing space. The building addition faces other industrial uses in the area and the Midtown Greenway to the southeast. The applicant has provided a dense screen of trees between the southeast elevation and Midtown Greenway that will create visual interest in lieu of providing additional architectural detail.

- Thirty (30) percent window requirements

The building addition is required to provide a minimum of thirty (30) percent glazing of the walls on the first floor that face east towards the Midtown Greenway. The applicant is not proposing to add any windows to this facade and has instead requested alternative compliance due to the impracticality of providing windows in a warehouse. The city planning commission may approve alternative compliance to this provision provided that the security of the surrounding area is considered and that any adverse effects are mitigated throughout the use of wall enhancements or architectural features, including display windows, which create visual interest. The zoning code relaxes this provision for industrial uses on walls that face an on-site parking lot, provided

that the parking lot is not located between the building and a public pathway. The area between the Midtown Greenway to the east and the building addition will be used for the loading area. The existing building exceeds the 30% window requirement along Minnehaha Avenue and the Midtown Greenway towards the front for the structure. Staff believes it would be impractical to require this elevation to meet the 30% window requirement. The applicant has provided a dense screen of trees between the southeast elevation and Midtown Greenway that will create visual interest in lieu of providing additional windows in this portion of the building addition.

- A well-lit walkway connecting the building to the public sidewalk

The applicant has not provided a well-lit walkway connecting the building entrance to the public sidewalk and Midtown Greenway; therefore the applicant has requested alternative compliance. Staff believes that there is an opportunity to provide a four-foot walkway through the center of the parking area, adjacent to the 10'4" access aisle out the sidewalk and Midtown Greenway adjacent to Minnehaha Avenue.

- Not less than one canopy tree for each 500 square feet of required landscaping

The zoning code requires at least one canopy tree for each 500 square feet of required green space. In addition, not less than one (1) tree shall be provided for each twenty-five linear feet or fraction thereof of parking lot frontage. The canopy tree requirement for this site is 33. The applicant has shown 52 trees, 24 of which are canopy trees. The applicant has requested alternative compliance to the number of canopy trees, by instead providing a range of existing and proposed deciduous tree species and existing conifers. Staff believes that the proposed trees are more consistent with the character of the property and the area and is recommending that the planning commission grant alternative compliance.

- Not less than one shrub for each 100 square feet of required landscaping

The zoning code requires at least one shrub for each 100 square feet of required green space. The shrub requirement for this site is 166. The applicant has shown 13 shrubs. The applicant has requested alternative compliance to providing the required number of shrubs by instead providing a denser screen of trees between the proposed addition and the Midtown Greenway. Staff believes that the site area is large enough to provide the required number of shrubs on the property.

- Parking area screening

Screening of the parking area is required along the southwest property line, adjacent to Minnehaha Avenue and along the southeast property line, adjacent to the Soo Line Railroad and the Midtown Greenway, not less than six feet in height

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and 95% opaque. The applicant has not proposed any screening of the parking area along Minnehaha Avenue or the Midtown Greenway and is therefore requesting alternative compliance. Staff is recommending that the applicant provide screening consisting of either a masonry wall, fence, berm or hedge, three feet in height and not less than 60% opaque to effectively screen the parking and loading areas along all property lines adjacent to Minnehaha Avenue and the Midtown Greenway.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

The 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 an addition of approximately 15,988 square feet to an existing industrial building located in the I1 District; subject to the following conditions:

1. CPED Planning staff review and approval of the final site, elevations and landscaping plans.
2. All site improvements shall be completed by June 2, 2009, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for noncompliance.
3. At least 166 shrubs shall be provided as required by section 530.160 of the zoning code. The applicant is encouraged to plant native grasses and perennials in addition to the required trees and shrubs.
4. The site plan shall provide screening consisting of either a masonry wall, fence, berm or hedge, three feet in height and not less than 60% opaque, to effectively screen the parking and loading areas along all property lines adjacent to Minnehaha Avenue and the Midtown Greenway, as required by section 530.170(c) of the zoning code.
5. The applicant shall provide a clear and well-lit walkway connecting a building entrance to the public sidewalk, at least four feet in width, as required by section 530.130 of the zoning code.

Attachments:

1. PDR report
2. Written descriptions and findings submitted by the applicant
3. April 16, 2008, letter to Longfellow Community Council and CM Schiff
4. Zoning map
5. Architectural plans