

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division
Variance and Site Plan Review
BZZ – 5507

Date: April 23, 2012

Applicant: Ed Engle and Harold Engle, Ambassador Press

Address of Property: 1400 Washington Avenue North

Project Name: Ambassador Press

Contact Person and Phone: Dan Cayemberg, Trossen Wright Plutowski Architects, (763) 533-7171

Planning Staff and Phone: Janelle Widmeier, (612) 673-3156

Date Application Deemed Complete: March 13, 2012

End of 60-Day Decision Period: May 12, 2012

Ward: 5 Neighborhood Organization: Northside Resident Redevelopment Council

Existing Zoning: I2 Medium Industrial District

Proposed Zoning: Not applicable for this application

Zoning Plate Number: 13

Legal Description: Not applicable for this application

Proposed Use: Light industrial use—printing press

Concurrent Review:

- Variance to reduce the minimum parking requirement from 51 to 40 spaces.
- Site plan review to allow a 13,650 square foot building addition.

Applicable zoning code provisions: Chapter 525, Article IX Variances, specifically section 525.520 (6) To vary the applicable minimum and maximum number of required off-street parking, stacking or loading spaces; and Chapter 530 Site Plan Review.

Background: The applicant is proposing a 13,650 square foot addition to Ambassador Press located at the property of 1400 Washington Avenue North. The company runs a printing press. The subject site occupies the block bound by Washington Avenue North, 15th Avenue North, 2nd Street North, and 14th Avenue North. The proposed site changes are limited to the east side of the site. The addition would be located at the northeast corner of the site adjacent to the intersection of 15th Avenue and 2nd Street. The loading area and functions would remain at the southeast corner of the site. With construction of the addition, some surface parking, landscaping and a rain garden will be eliminated. The number of parking spaces would be reduced from 70 to 40. With the proposed building addition,

the minimum parking requirement for the use is 51 spaces. Therefore a variance is required to reduce the minimum parking requirement. A site plan review is required for a building addition over 1,000 square feet in area.

This is the second addition proposed to this building. The original structure was built in 1997. In 2004, City approvals were obtained to expand the building to the north. At the time, the zoning code did not require site plan review for additions less than 20,000 square feet in area. However, the project was reviewed for compliance with the parking lot landscaping, screening and curbing requirements of 2004. Because most of the areas around the parking lot were already landscaped and were not being disturbed as part of the addition, those areas were not required to be altered at that time.

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

VARIANCE: To reduce the minimum parking requirement for the commercial uses from 51 to 40 spaces.

Findings as required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code:

- 1. Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone.**

The minimum parking requirement for light industrial uses is equal to one space per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area (GFA) up to 20,000 square feet plus one space per 2,000 square feet of GFA in excess of 20,000 square feet. The proposed floor area is 82,922 square feet. Therefore a minimum of 51 spaces are required. Forty parking spaces would be provided. The applicant has indicated that the parking demand for the use fluctuates due to full-time and temporary staffing numbers. At this time, there are 67 full-time employees working a minimum of two 8-hour shifts per day. During busier times, the number of shifts and employees increases. The site is also located in close proximity to alternate modes of transportation. There are bus stops for two bus routes within 1 ½ blocks of the subject site. On-street bicycle lanes are located on 2nd Street.

- 2. The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.**

The purpose of parking regulations is to provide for the parking needs of uses and structures and to enhance the compatibility between parking areas and their surroundings. The applicant has indicated that the proposed amount of parking will be sufficient to accommodate full-time staff and customers. They also noted that many employees, especially those who are temporary, live in Minneapolis. The site is also located in close proximity to alternate modes of transportation. There are bus stops for two bus routes within 1 ½ blocks of the subject site. On-street bicycle lanes are located on 2nd Street. No bicycle parking is available on-site. Providing bicycle parking that complies with the short-term and long-term standards of section 541.180 of the zoning code would provide a convenient alternative to driving for some employees. If 13 bicycle spaces are provided, the minimum parking requirement would be reduced by 5 spaces through the bicycle incentive

authorized by the zoning code. Encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan. Staff is recommending that the planning commission require the applicant to provide at least 13 bicycle spaces, of which at least 6 would be long-term.

- 3. The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.**

The site is located in a predominantly industrial area that is envisioned to remain industrial. With multiple alternative transportation options available in the immediate area and adoption of the staff recommendation, granting of the variance should not increase congestion in the area or effect surrounding properties. It would also not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.

SITE PLAN REVIEW:

Findings as Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code:

- 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.

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- 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, windows, and active functions:
 - 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.
 - g. In multiple tenant buildings, each individual ground level tenant space that faces a public street, public sidewalk, public pathway, or on-site parking lot shall comply with the minimum window requirements of this section.

Minimum window area shall be measured as indicated in section 530.120 of the zoning code.
- Ground floor active functions:

Except for industrial uses in Table 550-1, Principal Industrial Uses in the Industrial Districts, the first floor or ground level of buildings shall be designed to accommodate active functions by ensuring that parking, loading, storage, or mechanical equipment rooms are limited to no more than thirty (30) percent of the linear building frontage along each wall facing a public street, public sidewalk, or public pathway.
- 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. In addition to compliance with minimum window requirements, principal and accessory parking garages shall comply with provisions requiring active functions on the ground floor. In the downtown districts, the more restrictive parking garage provisions of Chapter 549, Downtown Districts, shall apply.

Conformance with above requirements:

- The building addition would be set back 9 feet from 15th Avenue, 9 feet from 2nd Street and 126 feet from 14th Avenue. Alternative compliance is requested to allow the building to be set back more than 8 feet from lot lines adjacent to a street.

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- Landscaping would be provided between the building and 15th Avenue and 2nd Street, except where a driveway is proposed. The existing and reconstructed parking and loading area would be located between the building and 14th Avenue. Alternative compliance is requested along 14th Avenue.
- The existing principal entrance at the southwest corner of the building faces the parking lot. A new principal entrance is not proposed.
- The existing parking area is located between the building and 14th Avenue.
- On the addition, windows and doors would be incorporated to break the building into smaller identifiable sections.
- The addition is two stories in height. Both stories are subject to the blank wall standard. The first story of the addition would have blank, uninterrupted walls without architectural elements exceeding 25 feet in width on the north and east walls. The second story of the addition would have blank, uninterrupted walls without architectural elements exceeding 25 feet in width on all three sides. Alternative compliance is requested for these walls.
- The proposed exterior materials of the addition would be precast concrete random rib wall panels to match the existing walls. The proposed material is durable.
- All sides of the building would be compatible and similar to each other.
- Plain face concrete block would not be used as a primary exterior building material.
- The existing principal entrance is recessed, sheltered and flanked by windows to emphasize its importance. A new principal entrance is not proposed.
- Each exterior wall of the addition faces a street and is therefore subject to the minimum window requirements. On the north and south addition walls, 168 square feet of windows are required. On the east addition wall, 468 square feet of windows are required. Measured between two and ten feet above the adjacent grade, no windows are proposed that allow views into and out of the building. Alternative compliance is requested for the window requirements.
- A flat roof is proposed. The existing building has a flat roof. Most of the nonresidential buildings in the area also have flat roofs.

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:

- A walkway exceeding four feet in width connects the existing entrance to the parking area and public sidewalk.
- There are no transit shelters on or immediately adjacent to the site.
- No residential uses are located in the immediate area. Three curb cuts exist on the site. The two located on 14th Avenue will remain unchanged. The curb cut on 15th Avenue will be reduced from 23 to 12 feet in width. A fourth curb cut will be added on 2nd Street that is proposed to be 35 feet wide. Although the number of curb cuts would increase, the new curb cut is needed to prevent trucks from maneuvering in the public right-of-way, which should prevent conflicts with pedestrians.
- The site plan minimizes the use of impervious surfaces in the parking and loading areas.

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 a least 20 percent of the site not occupied by buildings be landscaped. The lot area of the site is approximately 111,483 square feet. The building footprint would be approximately 72,948 square feet. The lot area minus the building footprint therefore consists of approximately 38,535 square feet. At least 20 percent of the net site area (7,707 square feet) must be landscaped. Approximately 14,375 square feet of the site would be landscaped. That is equal to 37.3 percent of the net lot 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. The tree and shrub requirement for this site is 16 and 77 respectively. A total of 30 canopy trees, 7 coniferous trees and 145 shrubs would be provided on-site.**
- **The existing parking and loading area is adjacent to Washington Avenue, 14th Avenue and 2nd Street. An on-site 7 foot wide landscaped yard is required adjacent to each street. The existing landscaped yards adjacent to Washington Avenue and 14th Avenue are 9 feet or greater in width. The landscaped yard adjacent to 2nd Street would be 5.5 feet wide. Alternative compliance is requested.**
- **Screening of the parking area from the adjacent streets is required to be 3 feet in height and 60 percent opaque. The required screening is provided along Washington Avenue. No screening is provided along 14th Avenue. Shrubs are planted along 2nd Street, but they do not comply with the screening requirements. The applicant is requesting alternative compliance.**

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- Screening of the loading area from 14th Avenue is required to be 6 feet in height and 60 percent opaque. Screening that complies with these requirements does not exist. The applicant is requesting alternative compliance.
- Along 2nd Street, one tree for every 25 feet of street frontage is required. Along 2nd Street, the trees are spaced approximately every 30 feet. No trees are provided between the parking area and Washington Avenue. The applicant is requesting alternative compliance.
- Areas unavailable for parking or needed for access and maneuvering would be landscaped.
- Fourteen of the parking spaces would not be located within 50 feet of an on-site deciduous tree. The applicant is requesting alternative compliance.
- The remainder of the landscaped area would be covered with sod and mulch. The plan indicates that rock mulch will be used in the disturbed planting areas. Wood mulch has been used in other planting areas on the site. Rock mulch has proven problematic in the past when it migrates to the public right-of-way. Staff is recommending that the planning commission not allow rock mulch to be used where planting areas are disturbed.

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:

- Continuous concrete curbing would be provided adjacent to the landscaped areas. The existing grades slope toward a catch basin in the loading area making filtration through discontinuous curbing impractical.
- The building addition should not impede any views of important elements of the city.
- The shadowing affects should not be significant.
- Wind currents should not be a major concern.
- The site design provides controls and guides movement on the site, and distinguishes between public and non-public spaces with landscaping on all sides of the site. The applicant is proposing lighting above the loading doors.
- The existing building is not designated or eligible for 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 I2. In the I2 district, light industrial uses, including sign production, are permitted.

Parking and Loading:

Minimum automobile parking requirement: The minimum parking requirement for light industrial uses is equal to one space per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area (GFA) up to 20,000 square feet plus one space per 2,000 square feet of GFA in excess of 20,000 square feet. The proposed floor area is 82,922 square feet. Therefore a minimum of 51 spaces are required. The applicant would provide 40 spaces. At least two of those spaces must be accessible. Two accessible spaces would be provided. A variance is required to reduce the minimum parking requirement.

Maximum automobile parking requirement: The maximum parking requirement for light industrial uses is equal to one space per 200 square feet of GFA up to 20,000 sq. ft. plus one space per 1,000 square feet of GFA in excess of 20,000 square feet. With a proposed GFA of 82,922 square feet, the maximum requirement is 163 spaces.

Bicycle parking requirement: Light industrial uses do not have a minimum bicycle parking requirement. No bicycle spaces are proposed.

Loading: For a light industrial use with 60,001 to 100,000 square feet of GFA, three large loading spaces are required. Five large loading spaces are proposed.

Maximum Floor Area: The maximum FAR allowed in the I2 District is 2.7. The lot area is 111,483 square feet. The building would have a total of 82,922 square feet, which is an FAR of 0.74.

Building Height: The maximum height allowed in the I2 district is 4 stories¹ or 56 feet, whichever is less. The building addition would be two stories and 25.5 feet in height.

Yard Requirements: In the I1 district, yards are not required unless adjacent to a residence or office residence district or permitted or conditional residential use. The site is not adjacent to any residential uses or residence or office residence districts.

Specific Development Standards: Not applicable.

Signs: The applicant has indicated that no new signage is proposed. Any new signage will require Zoning Office review, approval, and permits.

Refuse screening: Refuse storage containers are required to be effectively screened from streets and

¹ 520.160 Definitions: *Story.* That portion of a building included between the upper surface of any floor and the upper surface of the floor next above, or fourteen (14) feet, whichever is less, except that the topmost story shall be that portion of a building included between the upper surface of the topmost floor and the ceiling or roof above. Where a portion of a building included between the upper surface of any floor and the upper surface of the floor next above exceeds fourteen (14) feet in height, each fourteen (14) feet or fraction thereof is considered a story except that the first story may be up to twenty (20) feet in height for all buildings other than single and two-family dwellings and multiple-family dwellings having three (3) or four (4) dwelling units.

residences by screening compatible with the principal structure and not less than two feet higher than the refuse container. The site plan indicates that the refuse container will be located in the loading area. No screening is indicated. Screening needs to be provided to screen the refuse container from 2nd Street North and 14th Avenue North.

Screening of mechanical equipment: Mechanical equipment must be screened as required by section 535.70 (below).

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: Existing and proposed lighting must comply 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.

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(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: The *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* designates the future land use for this site as industrial. The site is located in the North Washington Jobs Park Industrial Employment District. According to the principles and polices outlined in the plan, the following apply to this proposal:

From the Land Use Chapter:

Policy 1.3: Ensure that development plans incorporate appropriate transportation access and facilities, particularly for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit.

1.3.2 Ensure the provision of high quality transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access to and within designated land use features.

Policy 1.14: Maintain Industrial Employment Districts to provide appropriate locations for industrial land uses.

From the Urban Design Chapter:

Policy 10.12: Design industrial uses with appropriate transitions and other design features which minimize negative impacts on surrounding residential uses.

10.12.1 Provide appropriate physical transition and separation using green space, fencing, setbacks or orientation between industrial uses and other surrounding uses.

10.12.5 Promote quality design and building orientation of industrial development that is appropriate with the surrounding neighborhoods.

Policy 10.18: Reduce the visual impact of automobile parking facilities.

10.18.1 Require that parking lots meet or exceed the landscaping and screening requirements of the zoning code, especially along transit corridors, adjacent to residential areas, and areas of transition between land uses.

10.18.2 Parking lots should maintain the existing street face in developed areas and establish them in undeveloped areas through the use of fencing, walls, landscaping or a combination thereof along property lines.

Policy 10.19: Landscaping is encouraged in order to complement the scale of the site and its surroundings, enhance the built environment, create and define public and private spaces, buffer and screen, incorporate crime prevention principles, and provide shade, aesthetic appeal, and environmental benefits.

10.19.1 In general, larger, well-placed, contiguous planting areas that create and define public and private spaces shall be preferred to smaller, disconnected areas.

10.19.2 Plant and tree types should complement the surrounding area and should include a variety of species throughout the site that include seasonal interest. Species should be indigenous or proven adaptable to the local climate and should not be invasive on native species.

10.19.3 Landscaped areas should include plant and tree types that address ecological function, including the interception and filtration of stormwater, reduction of the urban heat island effect, and preservation and restoration of natural amenities.

10.19.4 Landscaped areas should be maintained in accordance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, to allow views into and out of the site, to preserve view corridors and to maintain sight lines at vehicular and pedestrian intersections.

The *Above the Falls* plan was adopted in 2000, and shows this area as a light industrial/business park. A goal of the plan is to “improve the area’s overall competitiveness in the region and help to attract high-employment, high-wage light industries and businesses.”

The *Industrial Land Use* study was adopted by the City Council on November 3, 2006, and shows this site as part of an Employment District (District 3 - North Washington Jobs Park), which are areas designated for continued industrial use.

ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE:

The Planning Commission or zoning administrator 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 wall within 8 feet of a street and amenities between the building and a street

The building addition would be set back 9 feet from 15th Avenue, 9 feet from 2nd Street and 126 feet from 14th Avenue. Landscaping is proposed between the building and 15th Avenue and 2nd Street. The existing and reconstructed parking and loading area would be located between the building and 14th

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Avenue. The site has frontage on 4 streets. The addition is proposed to be in line with the existing building wall along 15th Avenue. For these reasons, staff is recommending that the planning commission grant alternative compliance.

Blank walls exceeding 25 feet in width

The addition is two stories in height. Both stories are subject to the blank wall standard. The first story of the addition would have blank, uninterrupted walls without architectural elements exceeding 25 feet in width on the north and east walls. The areas without sufficient architectural detail are 28 to 34 feet wide. The second story of the addition would have blank, uninterrupted walls without architectural elements exceeding 25 feet in width on all three sides. The first story would have a painted pattern and the concrete wall panels are a ribbed texture to match the existing building; however, a painted pattern and the concrete texture do not meet the intent of this standard. The applicant has proposed faux and clear-story windows to break up the east elevation. The applicant has indicated that providing actual windows is a detriment to the printing process. Along 2nd Street, canopy trees are spaced every 30 feet. The amount of trees provided (and to remain) on site exceed the minimum landscaping requirements. With the proposed alternatives, staff is recommending that the planning commission grant alternative compliance.

Minimum window requirements

Each exterior wall of the addition faces a street and is therefore subject to the minimum window requirements. On the north and south addition walls, 168 square feet of windows are required. On the east addition wall, 468 square feet of windows are required. Measured between two and ten feet above the adjacent grade, no windows are proposed that allow views into and out of the building. The applicant has indicated that they are requesting alternative compliance for this requirement for two reasons:

- Windows are a detriment in the printing areas. Printers require controlled light conditions for viewing and printing materials need to be protected from direct sunlight.
- Windows pose a security concern due to vandalism and break-in opportunities on the back side of the building.

The applicant has proposed faux and clear-story windows to break up the east elevation and will use the same ribbed concrete panels that are used on the existing building. In addition to these alternatives, staff is recommending that the applicant provide additional enhanced landscaping with seasonal interest and a variety of plant types in the landscaped areas adjacent to each side of the addition and between the parking area and 2nd Street. Areas around the existing shrubs could accommodate these additional plantings. With these alternatives, staff is recommending that the planning commission grant alternative compliance.

Landscaped yard between the parking and loading area and the street

The existing parking and loading area is adjacent to Washington Avenue, 14th Avenue and 2nd Street. An on-site 7 foot wide landscaped yard is required adjacent to each street. The existing landscaped yards adjacent to Washington Avenue and 14th Avenue are 9 feet or greater in width. The paving to the south of the addition location will be removed during construction. The landscaped yard adjacent to 2nd Street would be 5.5 feet wide. This is the same as the existing landscaped yard width. In 2004, the zoning code only required a 5 foot wide landscaped yard. Creating a 7 foot wide landscaped yard would require removal and replacement of existing concrete curbing. The interior boulevard is 1.5 feet in this location. For these reasons, staff is recommending that the planning commission grant alternative compliance.

Parking lot screening requirements

Screening of the parking area from the adjacent streets is required to be 3 feet in height and 60 percent opaque. The required screening is provided along Washington Avenue. No screening is provided along 14th Avenue. Shrubs planted along 2nd Street do not comply with the screening requirements because the height is less than 3 feet and less than 60 percent opaque. Some of these areas of the parking lot are not proposed to be disturbed. Where shrubs will be replaced, they will need to comply with the screening requirements.

Loading area screening requirements

Screening of the loading area from 14th Avenue is required to be 6 feet in height and 60 percent opaque. Screening that complies with these requirements does not exist. Five deciduous canopy trees with diameters between 8 and 10 inches are located between the loading area and 14th Avenue. A large industrial building with no windows facing the subject site is located on the south side of 14th Avenue. The alternative meets the intent of the ordinance.

One tree for every 25 feet or fraction thereof of parking lot and loading area frontage

Along 2nd Street, one tree for every 25 feet of street frontage is required. Along 2nd Street, the trees are spaced approximately every 30 feet. No trees are provided between the parking area and Washington Avenue. The existing trees along 2nd Street are 8 to 10 inches in diameter. If those trees are removed, staff recommends that the planning commission require the applicant to provide one deciduous canopy tree for every 25 feet of street frontage. There is sufficient room to provide trees in the landscaped areas along Washington Avenue. Staff is recommending that the planning commission require trees in this area.

Location of parking spaces within 50 feet of an on-site deciduous tree

Fourteen of the parking spaces would not be located within 50 feet of an on-site deciduous tree. These spaces are located midblock. No changes are proposed in this area. The nearest trees to these spaces are 6 coniferous trees with trunk diameters of 6 to 11 inches in width. Four of the spaces are within 50 feet of a coniferous tree. The other trees are approximately 55 feet away. Removing the coniferous trees to replace them with deciduous trees would not meet the intent of the ordinance. Therefore staff is recommending that the planning commission grant alternative compliance.

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 variance to reduce the minimum parking requirement from 51 to 40 spaces for the property located at 1400 Washington Avenue North, subject to the following condition:

1. At least 13 bicycle parking spaces that comply with the standards of 541.180 of the zoning code, of which at least 6 are long-term, shall be provided.

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 above findings and **approve** the application for a site plan review to allow a building addition for the property located at 1400 Washington Avenue North, subject to the following conditions:

1. Additional enhanced landscaping with seasonal interest and a variety of plant types shall be provided in the landscaped areas adjacent to each side of the addition and between the parking area and 2nd Street North as an alternative to complying with the window requirements.
2. Where shrubs will be replaced between the parking area and an adjacent street, the replacement shrubs shall comply with the screening requirements of section 530.170 of the zoning code.
3. Not less than one deciduous canopy tree shall be provided for every 25 linear feet or fraction thereof of parking lot frontage along Washington Avenue North as required by section 530.170 of the zoning code. This requirement shall also be met if trees will be replaced between the parking area and 2nd Street North.
4. Rock mulch shall not be used in disturbed planting areas.
5. The refuse storage container shall be screened from 2nd Street North and 14th Avenue North as required by section 535.70 of the zoning code.
6. Mechanical equipment shall be screened as required by section 535.70 of the zoning code.
7. Lighting shall comply with the standards of section 535.590 of the zoning code.
8. CPED Planning staff review and approval of the final site, landscaping, floor and building elevation plans.
9. All site improvements shall be completed by April 23, 2013, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for noncompliance.

Attachments:

1. PDR report
2. Statement of use
3. Zoning map
4. Plans
5. Photos