

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division
Conditional Use Permit, Variance
BZZ-2219

Date: March 28, 2005

Applicant: Minneapolis Public Library Board of Trustees

Address of Property: 2727 Lake Street East

Project Name: East Lake Community Library

Contact Person and Phone: Nina Biddle, 612/630-6298

Planning Staff and Phone: Fred Neet, 612/673-3242

Date Application Deemed Complete: February 23, 2005

End of 60-Day Decision Period: April, 24, 2005

Ward: 9 Neighborhood Organization: Longfellow Community Council

Existing Zoning: C1

Zoning Plate Number: 27

Proposed Use: community library

Concurrent Review: Conditional Use Permit modification to expand the existing library and a Variance to reduce parking requirements from 32 to 27 spaces (existing).

Applicable zoning code provisions: Chapter 525, Article VII, Conditional Use Permits; Chapter 525, Article IX Variances, specifically Section 525.520(7) “to reduce...parking requirements...provided the proposed use or building serves pedestrian or transit-oriented trade....”

Background: The Minneapolis Public Library Board received a conditional use permit (C359) for the East Lake Library in the B3C district in 1974. It now applies to expand the library by 3200 square feet to 15,000 square feet and provide enhanced interior and exterior spaces, an environmentally sound and sustainable building, improved entrances and parking lot, a Business and Career Center, additional seating, and replacement of the 1976 mechanical system components for energy-efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.

Lake Street is a Commercial Corridor, and the East Lake Library is within the Hi-Lake LRT Station Area (until recently an Auto-Oriented Shopping Center). Storefronts including retail are to the north, zoned C2 and C4, retail is to the west, zoned C2, a church zoned C1 is to the south,

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division
BZZ-2219

a 24-unit apartment building zoned C2 is to the east, and a bank zoned C2 is to the northwest. The storefront parcels to the north received conditional use permits for a currency exchange in 1993 (C-1510) and for a pawnshop in 1997 (C-1887). The parcel to the east was rezoned from B3S to R6 in 1975 (P-233).

Bus service on Lake Street is typically every 10 minutes. The elevated Hi-Lake LRT station is 4 blocks to the west.

Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code:

The Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division has analyzed the application and from the findings above concludes that the establishment, maintenance, or operation of the proposed conditional use:

1. Will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort or general welfare.

An expanded, improved community library should promote public comfort and welfare, and should not be averse to public health or safety. The Public Works, Fire, and Police Departments have reviewed the plans and provided preliminary approval.

2. Will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the vicinity and will not impede the normal or orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.

The proposed expansion and redesign of the community library should provide enhanced service to visitors and residents and improve property values within the dynamic area.

3. Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, necessary facilities or other measures, have been or will be provided.

Public infrastructure is adequate, as reviewed by the Public Works Department.

4. Adequate measures have been or will be provided to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.

The proposed expansion and design of the community library has been coordinated with 2005-06 Lake Street improvements. Street access (curb cut) to the rear parking lot remains essentially the same. The number of parking spaces remain the same but with improved handicapped access and additional bicycle racks.

5. Is consistent with the following applicable policies of the comprehensive plan.

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division
BZZ-2219

- 4.1 Minneapolis will encourage reinvestment along major urban corridors as a way of promoting growth in all neighborhoods.**

The library investment on East Lake Street improves the corridor and should increase its benefit to the surrounding residential and commercial neighborhoods.

- 4.3 Minneapolis will support development in Commercial Corridors where it enhances the street's character, improves its ability to accommodate automobile traffic and foster pedestrian movement, and expands the range of goods and services offered.**

The redesign is a physical improvement; libraries attract pedestrians, not only from adjacent neighborhoods but also from nearby businesses and institutions; the library expansion will increase services.

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

Libraries are an essential service; residents and employees in the area can receive employment assistance/information at libraries; the building is being remodeled, and its physical appearance improved.

- 4.17 Minneapolis will encourage both a density and mix of land uses in Transit Station Areas (TSAs) that both support ridership for transit as well as benefit from its users.**

Libraries are not available at all TSAs; both transit and library users benefit from the other.

- 4.18 Minneapolis will require design standards for TSAs that are oriented to the pedestrian and bicyclist and that enforce traditional urban form.**

The remodeled library will be welcoming to pedestrians, provide 14 bicycle racks, and better reinforce the street wall.

- 4.19 Minneapolis recognizes that parking is a necessary part of the urban environment, but will limit the amount, location and design of parking in TSAs in order to encourage and support walking, bicycling, and transit use. Parking shall not be increased, is located in the block's interior, and bicycle racks are provided.**

- 5.6 Minneapolis will support a strong library system with excellent services, programs and collections to meet a variety of informational and educational needs.**

Services are to be increased.

- 5.7 Minneapolis will expand access to digital information and communications technology.**

Libraries provide these services to the public.

- 9.8 Minneapolis will maintain and strengthen the character of the city's various residential areas.**

The library's redesign better complements the area, including the apartment building to the east.

- 9.11 Minneapolis will support urban design standards that emphasize a traditional urban form in commercial areas.**

The street wall will be reinforced and parking located to the rear.

- 9.12 Minneapolis will promote design solutions for automobile parking facilities that reflect principles of traditional urban form.**

The parking lot is to the rear of the lot and in the interior of the block.

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division
BZZ-2219

- 9.16 **Minneapolis will encourage new development to use human scale design features and incorporate sunlight, privacy, and view elements into building and site designs.**

Building height is limited to 27 feet, a structural canopy provided adjacent to the sidewalk, and glass is the primary material along Lake Street.

- 9.17 **Minneapolis will build on recent initiatives to use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles when designing all projects that impact the public realm, including open spaces and parks, on publicly owned and private land.**

As reviewed by the Police Department, extensive use of glass affords views from and into the building, vegetative screens above 3 feet high are avoided, and sidewalks are provided all around the building.

Required Findings for a Variance to reduce parking requirements from 32 to 27.

- 1. The property cannot be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed and strict adherence to the regulations of this zoning ordinance would cause undue hardship.**

An expanded library with increased services is the existing and reasonable use for the property. Space is not available for additional parking, and existing parking is reconfigured to improve accessibility, and is not reduced.

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

Site and building configuration prevent expansion of parking. Available parking is maximized.

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

Parking availability within the Hi-Lake LRT Station area is minimized, promoting public transit, pedestrian and bicycle movement. The parking area continues to be located to the rear of surrounding uses, and interior to the block, protecting the residential neighborhood. 14 bicycle parking spaces are provided.

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

The proposed site plan has been reviewed by the Public Works, Fire, and Police Departments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division for the conditional use permit:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the conditional use permit to expand the library at 2727 Lake Street East, subject to the following conditions

1. the projecting sign shall not extend above the roof of the wall to which it is attached,
- and 2. the projecting sign shall not be higher than 24 feet above the ground.

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 parking requirements from 42 to 27 spaces for the library at 2727 Lake Street East subject to the following condition:

1. Fourteen (14) bicycle parking spaces shall be provided on the site. The bicycle parking may be located in the public right-of-way with permission of the city engineer.

Attachments:

- Statement of use
- Correspondence
- Zoning map
- Plans
- Photos