

The proposed parking lot would be in the interior of the block, and the majority of the parking spaces would be shielded from view from the surrounding streets.

The applicant also proposes to reconfigure and expand the parking lot at St. Patrick's Parish, providing the church with a net increase of four spaces.

Subdivision and Assemblage: The parcel boundaries depicted on the applicant's site plan are different from the parcel boundaries identified on the submitted survey. The applicant is proposing a series of subdivisions and assemblages that would involve COR acquiring some segments of land from St. Patrick's as well as St. Patrick's acquiring some segments of land from COR. The proposed parcel boundaries that would result are the basis for all of the parking and setback calculations on the proposed site plan.

The applicant must provide documentation from St. Patrick's Parish communicating the Parish's intent to commit to these changes. In addition, the applicant must obtain written permission from St. Patrick's Parish to apply for Site Plan Approval on behalf of the Parish for all work to be performed on Parish property.

The applicant must also apply for and receive Subdivision Approval at a future Planning Board meeting, as well as file deeds for the subsequent assemblages by way of metes and bounds descriptions with the County Clerk.

Further references to "the site" all refer to the resultant parcels after the proposed subdivisions and assemblages.

Parking and Vehicle Circulation: The applicant proposes an interior parking lot with five vehicular access points, one from each of the surrounding streets, except for Massey Street S, where the applicant proposes two access points. Three of the five access points would be on the resultant COR-owned parcel after the proposed subdivision and the other two would be on the resultant St. Patrick's-owned parcel. The lot would essentially function as one large, collective parking lot for all of the uses on both properties, although different clusters of parking spaces would be on different parcels.

The site plan, as proposed, exceeds the parking requirement by 23 spaces. However, in order to provide all the interior parking as depicted, the applicant is proposing shorter setbacks than the Commercial District allows for the two office buildings and three residential buildings. The applicant is seeking two setback variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for these shorter setbacks. The ZBA will hear both requests on June 15, although it will likely not act on either request until its meeting on July 20.

Setbacks, Buffers and Landscaping: The Zoning Ordinance requires a 20-foot front yard setback and a five-foot side yard setback in the Commercial District. Since the site encompasses almost an entire block, except for a small parcel at the corner of Arsenal Street and Sherman Street, there are no rear parcel boundaries on the site. Any parcel boundary with one of the four adjacent streets is considered a front yard, and any interior parcel boundary is considered a side yard.

As discussed in the Parking and Vehicle Circulation section above, five of the proposed buildings do not meet the 20-foot setback requirement for a Commercial District, and the applicant is seeking to vary these requirements.

Section 310-59 of the Zoning Ordinance states that in an Industrial or Commercial District, each use shall have a strip of land at least 15 feet in width in any required front yard and at least five feet in width in any required rear and side yards, which shall be maintained as a landscaped area.

If the ZBA varies the setback requirement to zero feet on Arsenal Street, then there would no longer be a required front yard on this part of the site, where the applicant is proposing office buildings, and the landscaping requirement would no longer apply.

For the proposed residential buildings fronting on Stone Street and Massey Street S, the applicant is requesting that the setback requirement be varied to eight feet on Stone Street and 10.5 feet on Massey Street S. Thus, there would

still be a required front yard, and the applicant must provide some landscaping. The applicant is proposing a series of shrubs and shade trees for both of these frontages.

A 15-foot landscaped strip is also required between the parking lot to the north of St. Patrick's and Massey Street. Parking is not allowed within the landscaped strip; therefore, the three parking spaces shown north of the church shall be removed from the plans.

Architecture and Urban Design: While the proposed residential buildings are 192 feet in length, the applicant is proposing to design their exteriors to give the appearance of separate row houses, as depicted in the elevation drawings. From an urban design perspective, this will alleviate the visual feel of a superblock, and preserve a more neighborhood-scale aesthetic.

While the applicant proposes uniform frontages for the 175-foot long office buildings on Arsenal Street, the applicant does propose design features, such as large windows and waist-high decorative masonry, which would avoid presenting a plain, harsh exterior to the street and would create a more pleasant visual feel.

The applicant upholds this aesthetic quality on all four sides of the block by locating the proposed parking in the interior of the site, shielding it almost entirely from the view of passing motorists and pedestrians.

In addition, the site plan depicts nine places where proposed interior sidewalks would connect to City sidewalks. This emphasis on pedestrian connectivity is laudable and is clearly in line with the downtown focus of the development as a whole.

The short setbacks are also intended to maximize the urban, downtown ambiance of the development, and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment around the site. In particular, the proposal to front the office buildings on the sidewalk is intended to create an active building frontage on Arsenal Street that is oriented towards pedestrians.

Long-Range Transportation Planning: The City Engineering Department is currently studying the need for additional travel lanes on Arsenal Street and anticipates potentially widening Arsenal Street in the future. Since the existing Jefferson County Human Services building across the Street fronts on the sidewalk already, the space for this future expansion must come on the south side of the street.

To enable the City to widen the street in the future, the Engineering Department requests that the proposed office buildings be set back 20 feet from Arsenal Street. The City Planning Department feels that the applicant's proposal to front the office buildings on the sidewalk is consistent with a downtown environment and this proposal should be preserved.

To accommodate both outcomes, Staff recommends that the applicant install new sidewalk 20 feet back from the south edge of Arsenal Street, leaving a grassed area between the street edge and the sidewalk, and front the office buildings on this sidewalk with a zero-foot setback as proposed. The applicant is currently proposing to install new sidewalk over the same footprint as the existing sidewalk on the south side of Arsenal Street.

This would result in the loss of some interior parking that would bring the site below the minimum number of spaces that the Zoning Ordinance requires for Commercial Districts. A solution to this would be to extend the boundary of the Downtown Core Overlay by one block to the west so that it encompasses the site. The Downtown Core Overlay forgives any off-street parking requirements for all properties within its boundaries.

Installing the new sidewalk 20 feet back from the edge of Arsenal Street would also remove the applicant's need to obtain a setback variance for the office buildings, as they would meet the setback requirement for the Commercial District and still be able to front on the sidewalk. This solution would require the applicant to grant a pedestrian easement for public use of the sidewalk across private property, but the functionality would remain the same.

Hours of Operation and Shared Parking: The applicant provides proposed hours of operation for the proposed office buildings as 7:30 am to 5 pm on Monday-Friday. This is logical, as an office use will primarily be a weekday trip generator, which is opposite from St. Patrick's Parish, which is primarily a weekend trip generator.

The site plan as proposed, which depicts these two uses sharing an internal parking lot that is divided by a parcel boundary, still meets the individual parking requirements for both the office buildings and the church on their resultant parcels. However, the trip generation for the two uses would likely only ever overlap on Catholic Holy Days of Obligation that happen to fall on business days, such as Ascension Thursday or All Saints Day. Since such dates are rare (at most five in any given calendar year), it is likely that the site, as proposed, actually exceeds its realistic parking needs.

Traffic Volume: Engineering Staff recommends that the applicant perform a traffic impact analysis and submit the analysis to the City and to the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) for review. The applicant has provided an estimate of the increase in trip generation as compared to the former Mercy Hospital use. These numbers, as provided, assume the reported increase is not significant.

Under most situations, staff could agree with the above assumptions, however, in this case, the intersections and adjacent roads appear to be at capacity during peak hours already, and even the smallest increase could be a detriment to travel conditions. This study should examine the impact of trips originating from the site of the proposed development on the surrounding streets in addition to destination traffic.

The applicant shall also provide the City Engineering Department with correspondence from NYSDOT that either approves the project as proposed or indicates that NYSDOT determined that a review was not necessary. The applicant shall copy the City on all correspondence with NYSDOT.

The applicant should submit a Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan that shows the turning movements of a delivery refuse vehicle as well as a City fire truck entering and exiting the property. The applicant may contact the City Engineering Office for details on the required Fire Truck if necessary. In addition, the applicant should add traffic arrows to each existing and proposed driveway to indicate traffic flow.

In addition, the north entrance into the site from Massey Street will not be allowed as shown. The entrance shall be revised to either a Right-in/Right-out, or Right-out only. Revisions to the driveway onto Arsenal Street may also be required.

SEQR: In the applicant's response to Question B of the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) Full Environmental Assessment Form (EAF), the applicant should add the following Government Entities from whom approvals are required: the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) for funding approval, NYSDOT for traffic approval, New York State Department of Health (DOH) for water approval and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for sanitary and storm-sewer approvals.

In the applicant's answer to Question C.2.a., the applicant indicates that a municipality-adopted comprehensive land use plan includes the site where the proposed action would be located, and indicates in his answer to Question C.2.b. that the plan does not include specific recommendations for the site where the proposed action would be located. The City of Watertown's Land Use Plan, which was adopted in 1987, specifically recommends health services as the use for the majority of the site, with the remainder (the frontage on Arsenal Street) recommended for commercial use. The applicant should change the answer to Question C.2.b. from "no" to "yes."

In the applicant's response to Question C.4.d., the applicant should add the Veterans Memorial Riverwalk and Whitewater Park as parks that serve the project site, as they are both within walking distance of the site.

The applicant did not provide an answer to Question D.2.q. The applicant should provide an answer to this question.

In the applicant's response to Question E.1.d., the applicant indicates there are facilities serving children, the elderly or people with disabilities within 1500 feet of the project site. This is inaccurate, as the Jefferson County Human Services Building is located directly across Arsenal Street, and the Northern Regional Center for Independent Living is located on Court Street. In addition, there is a licensed day care center in the Dulles State Office Building. The applicant should change the answer to this question from "no" to "yes" and identify these facilities.

The applicant indicates in his response to Question E.3.f. that the project site, or a portion of it, is located in or adjacent to an area designated as sensitive for archeological sites on the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) archeological site inventory. The applicant should provide a letter from the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) that determines whether the proposed project has the potential to affect any archeological resources.

Lighting: The photometrics plan depicts light spillage of greater than 0.5-foot candles extending across a parcel boundary, which is prohibited by the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant shall revise the lighting plan to keep spillage onto adjacent properties below 0.5-foot candles.

Utilities and Hydrology: The applicant shall submit a copy of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to the City Engineering Department. The applicant shall also provide the City Engineering Department with correspondence from the DEC that either approves the proposed sanitary sewer design or indicates that the DEC determined that a review was not necessary. The applicant shall copy the City on all correspondence with the DEC.

The applicant shall provide the City Engineering Department with correspondence from the DOH that either approves the proposed water system design or indicates that DOH determined that a review was not necessary. The applicant shall copy the City on all correspondence with the DOH.

The applicant proposes to relocate an existing fire hydrant on Stone Street. The applicant shall coordinate with the City Fire Department and Water Department to determine a proposed new location.

The applicant should also perform a hydrant flow test and provide updated hydraulic calculations to the Engineering Department. There is a 6-inch main on the south side of Arsenal Street. The applicant must prove that this main can provide sufficient capacity. The City's preference would be to connect the two office buildings to the water mains along either Washington Street or Sherman Street and not to open cut across Arsenal Street.

In addition, the proposed drainage areas listed in the Engineering Report do not match the proposed drainage areas in the Summary Table. The applicant should clarify this discrepancy.

Other Engineering Comments: The applicant must use a minimum of 8-inch PVC piping for all sewer mains. The City considers a sewer main to be anything after a manhole and/or where more than one lateral combines. In addition, water services shall include a shutoff at the street margin.

The applicant should coordinate with the Fire Department for the installation of Knox Boxes where required.

The applicant must construct all existing and proposed curb ramps and sidewalks within the City Margin fronting the properties to meet the requirements of Public Right of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).

The applicant should submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) to the DEC and forward the DEC's acknowledgement letter to the City upon receipt.

The applicant should submit cutsheets on the proposed water quality units, as well as a maintenance schedule and an agreement for the upkeep of the water quality unit and underground stormwater detention systems, to the City prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.

The applicant should add a note to the plans stating that existing laterals that are to be abandoned shall be capped and anchored.

The applicant only depicts two proposed snow storage areas on the site. This is insufficient to accommodate major snowfalls on a site of this size. The applicant should clarify how snow removal procedures and snow storage will be sufficient to keep the entire site clear in the winter months.

The applicant should add the following details to the plans:

- Sanitary sewer manhole connection detail
- Storm sewer manhole connection detail
- City sidewalk replacement detail
- City asphalt road replacement detail
- City road with concrete base replacement detail (for Arsenal Street and Stone Street)

Permits: The applicant must obtain the following permits, minimally, prior to demolition and construction: Building Permit, Fence Permit, General City Permit and Sanitary/Storm Sewer Connection Permit.

Miscellaneous: Future submissions may require further comments from Staff.

Summary:

1. The applicant shall provide a letter from St. Patrick's Parish authorizing the applicant to apply for Site Plan Approval on behalf of the Parish for all work to be performed on Parish property and which communicates the Parish's commitment to the proposed land swaps.
2. The applicant shall apply for Subdivision Approval at a future Planning Board meeting and, if granted approval, file deeds for the subsequent assemblages by way of metes and bounds descriptions with the County Clerk.
3. The applicant shall remove the three parking spaces shown north of the church from the plan and provide a 15-foot landscaped buffer between this section of the parking lot and Massey Street South.
4. The applicant shall perform a traffic impact analysis that examines the proposed development's impact on surrounding streets and submit the analysis to the City Engineering Department and to NYSDOT.
5. The applicant shall provide the City Engineering Department with a copy of NYSDOT's response to the traffic impact analysis, indicating NYSDOT's approval of the proposed project or their conclusion that a review was not necessary.
6. The applicant shall provide a Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan that shows the movements of a delivery or refuse vehicle as well as a City fire truck.
7. The applicant shall add traffic arrows to each existing and proposed driveway to indicate traffic flow.
8. The applicant shall revise the north entrance into the site from Massey Street South to either a Right-in/Right-out, or Right-out only.
9. The applicant shall address all SEQR issues identified above.
10. The applicant shall revise the lighting plan to keep spillage onto adjacent properties below 0.5-foot candles.
11. The applicant shall submit a copy of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPP) to the City Engineering Department

12. The applicant shall provide the City Engineering Department with correspondence from the DEC that either approves the proposed sanitary sewer design or indicates that the DEC determined that a review was not necessary.
13. The applicant shall provide the City Engineering Department with correspondence from the DOH that either approves the proposed water system design or indicates that DOH determined that a review was not necessary.
14. The applicant shall coordinate with the City Fire Department and the City Water Department to determine where to relocate the existing fire hydrant on Stone Street.
15. The applicant shall perform a hydrant flow test and submit updated hydraulic calculations to the City Engineering Department.
16. The applicant shall clarify the discrepancy regard the locations of the proposed drainage areas.
17. The applicant must address all concerns listed in the “Other Engineering Comments” section of the June 2, 2016 Planning Office memorandum to the satisfaction of the City Engineering Department prior to the issuance of any permits.
18. The applicant must obtain the following permits, minimally, prior to demolition and construction: Building Permit, Fence Permit and General City Permit and a Sanitary/Storm Sewer Connection Permit.

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