

NORWALK ZONING COMMISSION  
125 East Avenue  
Norwalk, CT 06851

## Memorandum

**August 31, 2021**

**To: Zoning Commission:**

**From: Steve Kleppin, Planning & Zoning Director**

**Re: #2021-18 R/SPR/CAM – 25 Van Zant Street Condominium - 25 Van Zant Street**

As you will recall the current submittal consists of a text amendment and a CAM/Site Plan Application to allow trade schools to operate at the subject location.

### Proposed Text Amendment

The applicant has indicated they have no concerns with staff's recommendation to add a definition of "trade or vocational school as indicated below.

The applicant's proposed text amendments is as follows:

*Colleges, universities and schools, including business and trade/vocational schools, and studios" as a permitted principal use in the Industrial No. 1 Zone.*

The existing regulations defining *colleges* and *universities*, as well as *schools*.

*COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY: A public or private institution of higher education offering a two-year or four-year degree program of study which is accredited by the State of Connecticut Board of Governors for Higher Education, as per the Connecticut General Statutes.[Added effective 12-27-2002]*

*SCHOOL: A public or private elementary or secondary school meeting all requirements of the compulsory education laws of the State of Connecticut. [Added effective 7-15-1976]*

As agreed to by the applicant, staff has recommended that a definition of trade/vocational school be added. The following is a draft for your consideration:

**TRADE OR VOCATIONAL SCHOOL: A post-secondary, public or private institution, designed to give students the technical skills to prepare them for a specific occupation. Examples of the program offerings include but are not limited to: medical programs like nursing, dental hygiene or medical assisting, automotive technician services, welding, plumbing, electrical, HVAC.**

The text amendments have been referred to Harbor Management, CT DEEP and the Planning Commission. All three bodies have indicated "approval of the proposed amendment.

## Site Plan Application

The outstanding issues related to the Site Plan Application are summarized below:

### *Proposed Use:*

Confirmation that the residual space, not identified on the floor plans, is non-rentable space.

### *Site Plan Issues:*

Staff had questions whether the parking lot lighting was adequate for pedestrian safety. The applicant has provided a lighting plan in response to that question, but there is no summary document providing any context to the plan. The plan shows parking lot light levels on the north, west and east that comply with City standards regarding light levels at the property line, but show high levels on Van Zant Street. There is no indication if those lights are originating at the property or from other sources. Further context should be provided by the applicant when the public hearing occurs.

No comment has been received from DPW regarding drainage. This is pending and anticipated to be received shortly.

### *Traffic & Parking:*

TMP will be submitting their comments under separate cover. In addition, the Commission asked for clarification regarding any easements CT DOT has that could affect indicated parking. The applicant has indicated that this has been clarified but no information has been received to date. As summarized previously, staff raised the following questions and concerns:

#### TRAFFIC

1. Traffic data obtained was collected in 2016. Understanding the pandemic altered traffic patterns and peoples driving habits, is that timeframe appropriate?
2. The traffic report appears to indicate that the Level of Service (LoS) at several intersections at peak periods may decline as a result of this project. The report indicates the analysis was very conservative in nature and that existing uses were not factored into the analysis, which could help their numerical analysis. This will be further evaluated by TMP.

#### PARKING

The applicant has indicated that the site contains 300 striped spaces, while peak demand, taking into account mass transportation credits is 298 spaces. Staff has provided some of the parking requirements based on the uses as identified by the applicant:

- WFT – 150,000
- Manufacturing – 5,800 (1/300 SF = 20 spaces)
- Warehousing – 18,800 (1/5,000 SF + 1/employee= 7-8 spaces)
- Office – 40,300 (1/370 SF = 108 spaces)
- 1 Story Building?
- School? – 3,800

- Café – 2,600 (1/45 SF of active area. Active area unknown.)
- Church – 1,400 (1 space/5 seats. Number of seats unknown.)
- Unlisted/Vacant – 7,000

The traffic and parking report indicates that a cumulative zoning total would require 379 spaces. Staff conducted additional research regarding parking requirements for vocational schools. Our research of other communities yielded the following:

<b>Example Location</b>	<b>Parking Standard</b>
Gibbs College (Norwalk)	1 space per 4 students, 1.5 spaces per staff; Based on total enrollment and can be revised to reduce # based on # of students & staff at any time
Shelton	1 parking space per 200 sq ft of zoning square footage
Enfield	1 space per student, 1 space per faculty member
Rocky Hill	No parking standard for vocational schools, instead considered “other use”, where commission determines parking standard based on applicant submission
Waterbury	Have a Business & Trade Schools use/parking standard in their zoning – 0.2 spaces per student, faculty, and employees
East Hartford	Their regulations suggest a breakdown by use within the building – 5 spaces per teaching station, 1 space per 250 sq ft of office/business space; However, they do not use the standard anymore and instead commission approves/denies based off applicant proposal
New London	Parking Standard for trade school or university – 1 parking space for every 3 employees, 1 space for every 10 students residing on campus & 1 space for every 5 students not residing on campus; Alternatively, commission can approve the following, if requested: 1 space per faculty + 0.75 spaces per student

Staff had a conversation with the owner of Porter & Chester Institute who operates several facilities in CT and MA. He indicated their parking ratio target is 4 spaces per 1,000 SF but would prefer 6 spaces per 1,000 SF. Apparently, their facilities aren’t located as close to mass transit as the proposed site is.

The applicant indicated they have a revised parking analysis, but this has not been submitted to date.

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**END**