



CITY OF NORWALK
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To: Norwalk Planning and Zoning

From: James Travers, Director Transportation, Mobility & Parking
Garrett Bolella, P.E., PTOE, Assistant Director, Transportation

Date: August 31, 2021

Subject: TMP Traffic Impact & Assessment: 25 Van Zant Street, Norwalk

Memorandum

The Transportation, Mobility and Parking (TMP) Department has completed a review of the following documents related to the proposed mixed-use development to be located at 25 Van Zant Street:

- Zoning Location Survey of Property prepared for 25 Van Zant Street by Arcamone Land Surveyors LLC, dated November 5, 2019;
- Landscape Plan prepared for 25 Van Zant Street by Environmental Land Solutions, LLC, dated July 9, 2021;
- Landscaping and Site Plan prepared for 25 Van Zant Street prepared by D Barr Architectural Drafting, LLC, submitted May 6, 2021;
- Traffic and Parking Impact Study prepared by Fuss & O'Neil dated April 12, 2021; and,
- Response Memorandums provided by the Applicant (most recently dated July 10, 2021).

It is our understanding that the current proposal involves the conversion of the existing 256,000 square-foot commercial building into a 150,000 square-foot workforce training center with supporting offices, storage, and daycare facilities. The Traffic and Parking Impact Study evaluates the potential impacts associated with the proposed conversion of the site as well as the surrounding area.

Based on a review of the aforementioned documents submitted, TMP has general concerns about proposed parking layout, both vehicular and pedestrian Site access and the Site's impact to the adjacent neighborhood. The Applicant should address the following concerns (as outlined in this memorandum) to ensure the proposed development is harmonious with the adjacent neighborhood.

Parking

1. Given that the proposed parking supply only slightly exceeds the anticipated parking demand; a specific tenant has not yet been identified; and, parking demand is anticipated to vary significantly based on a prospective tenant's individual operating plan (type of training provided, space per student needs, etc.) **TMP recommends that the Applicant consider the following:**
 - a. Exploring alternative pavement marking and striping plans to increase parking capacity (while maintaining access for CTDOT) within the 144 space, asphalt parking area accessible via Fort Point Street. It is our understanding that there is an easement in favor of the CTDOT for access to the rear of this parcel.
 - b. Providing an overflow parking plan as there is no on-street parking readily available within the vicinity of the workforce training center and the Norwalk Traffic Authority (NTA) will have to adopt new parking regulations on Van Zant and/or Osborne Avenue to ensure patrons of the mixed use development do not adversely impact parking within the neighborhood. The Applicant shall be required to pay for the installation of additional parking restrictions on Van Zant Street and/or Osborne Avenue subject to the NTA's approval.
2. The Landscape and Site Plan (SP-1.0) should include counts of the parking stalls within each individual aisle/bay in order for TMP to verify final parking counts.
3. There appear to be inconsistencies between the total counts of parking stalls on the plan sets provided. For example, the Landscape and Site Plan (SP-1.0) illustrates 13 parking stalls on the "Upper Parking Area" along the (MNRS) while the Zoning Location Survey illustrates only 10 parking stalls in this area and the Right-of-Way Survey depicts 20 parking spaces. **The Applicant shall revise all plans accordingly so they are consistent and accurately reflect the total number of parking spaces feasible/proposed.**
4. **The Landscape and Site Plans should be updated to include Wayfinding Signage** to assist patrons of the workforce training center, office, storage and daycare uses in locating parking and reduce circulating traffic around the Site (to the extent possible).
5. A guide rail shall be provided along the easterly boundary of the parking lot on Osborne Avenue where there is a retaining wall and a significant change in grade between the parking lot and roadway.
6. TMP strongly recommends the Applicant consolidate their existing parking areas to improve internal circulation, access to parking spaces, and mitigate impacts to Osborne Avenue. The Applicant should revise the Site plans to create one continuous parking facility, with one (1) access drive to Osborne Avenue (equally spaced between the Metro North Railroad Bridge and Van Zant Street), for the following reasons:

- a. The existing configuration of several individual, separate parking areas is anticipated to increase circulating traffic on public right-of-way as parking lots fill up and drivers search for vacant spots;
- b. As they exist, the 17 stall parking area served by Site Driveway 4 and the 20 stall parking area served by Site Driveway 5 do not have a dedicated turn-around for drivers should the lots be full;
- c. The high number of curb cuts on Osborne Avenue create conflicts between entering and exiting traffic and through traffic on Osborne Avenue;
- d. The northerly Osborne Avenue access drive (Site Driveway 1) proposes two-way traffic operations despite the driveway being a sub-standard width today (just 16 feet wide). Furthermore, there are concerns about existing sight lines to the north, which appear to be limited by the existing retaining wall that is proposed to remain;
- e. Loading appears to be better accommodated within the westerly parking lot (off of Fort Point Street) as loading activities can be contained on-site. The current configuration of the easterly loading dock (Site Driveway 2) requires heavy vehicles to back-in which is anticipated to adversely impact traffic operations on Osborne Avenue. As part of the Walk Bridge project, the Osborne Avenue Metro North Railroad Bridge will be replaced. This is anticipated to improve traffic operations on Osborne Avenue. Additionally, the provision of this driveway adversely impacts pedestrian circulation across the parking lot. If the loading dock is occupied there is no way for pedestrians to internally circulate the parking lot as the staircases will be blocked. Any loading shall not impact the public right-of-way. If this loading stall is critical to site operations the Applicant should consider an alternative parking lot arrangement which mitigates impacts to Osborne Avenue.
- f. The southerly Osborne Avenue access drive (Site Driveway 5) is located less than 35 feet north of the intersection of Van Zant Street. The TAIS Queue Length Summary for the Weekday Morning and Weekday Afternoon peak hours indicates that this driveway will be obstructed by queuing during both peak hours.

Traffic Impact and Access Analysis (TAIS)

7. The Traffic Study notes that the site provides excellent access to Metro North which will encourage the use of alternative modes of travel to the Site and lower traffic and parking demand on Site. The Applicant takes a 20 percent transit and ride sharing credit for the development. **However, TMP notes several challenges to transit and ridesharing trips which must be overcome to accommodate these modes and recommends the Applicant be required to complete the following:**

- a. Provision of Pedestrian Crossing (crosswalk, curb ramps, pavement markings) at Osborne Avenue and Rowan Street;
- b. Closure of multiple curb cuts along the Site frontage on Osborne Avenue and improvement of sidewalks to City of Norwalk Department of Public Works standards from the limits of the Walk Bridge Project to Van Zant Street;
- c. Improvement of sidewalks on Van Zant Street along the entire Site frontage to City Standards (further noted in bullet 8); and,
- d. Provision of a dedicated rideshare spaces in the parking areas and covered waiting areas as parking is a significant distance from the Main Entrance and Pick-up/Drop-off activity should not occur on Van Zant Street.

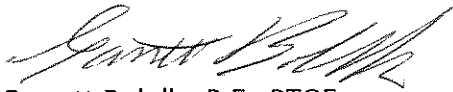
Site Plans and Landscaping

8. Given the volume and composition of traffic on Van Zant Street and very limited shoulder width adjacent to the northerly curb, **TMP recommends that the Applicant revise the Site and Landscaping plan to include a four (4) foot amenity area (planted with street trees) adjacent the curb.** The amenity area should extend along the Site frontage, from the six (6) existing off-street parking spaces on Van Zant to its intersection with Osborne Avenue. The proposed native pea gravel surface between the building and sidewalk should be reduced to accommodate the additional right-of-way needed for an amenity area and City Standard sidewalk (the existing brick paver sidewalk is non-compliant at 3.5 feet today). The planted amenity area would buffer pedestrians from traffic and serve as place making and traffic calming for vehicles. The Applicant shall provide an easement for access and maintenance of the City Standard sidewalk. Lastly, the Applicant should increase the intensity of the street tree planting along the façade of the building and should include street tree plantings between the southerly parking area and sidewalk.
9. Given that the Applicant will need to reconfigure the easterly parking lot(s), TMP suggests that the landscaping currently separating the parking areas and preventing internal circulation of vehicles be provided along the back of sidewalk on Osborne Avenue. The landscaping area should also be planted with street trees similar to Van Zant Street. Additionally, this will serve to screen easterly parking areas from the neighborhood.

Conclusions

Please note this review is based on all documents submitted to date. TMP reserves the right to comment on forthcoming revised/updated Site plans to ensure that the proposed Workforce Training Center and ancillary uses do not adversely impact the adjacent transportation system and are harmonious with the neighborhood.

Sincerely,



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Assistant Director

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