

Norwalk Planning & Zoning Commission

125 East Avenue
Norwalk, Connecticut



MEMORANDUM

January 28, 2022

TO: Planning & Zoning Commission - Louis Schulman, Chairman
FROM: Bryan Baker, Principal Planner
RE: [#2022-04 SP – Servers Storage Networking LLC – 26 Pearl Street – Proposed light manufacturing use within existing building](#)

APPLICANT/OWNERS NAME/ADDRESS:

PROPERTY ADDRESS/DBL: 26 Pearl Street/District 5, Block 42, Lot 23

ZONING: Business #2

LOT AREA:

EXISTING CONDITIONS: 26 Pearl Street currently is occupied by an approximately 49,500sf building which had previously been occupied by Planet Fitness. Prior to Planet Fitness being the primary tenant, the building did have light manufacturing tenants. Many of the adjacent uses in the area are industrial, despite being in the Business #2 zone, including warehouses, contractor's offices, etc. The site has about 145 parking spaces available and is in the aquifer protection area.

PROPOSED CONDITIONS: The applicant is proposing to add a new use within the building for their company called "Servers Storage Networking LLC," which we would consider to be a light manufacturing use. According to the applicant, Servers Storage Networking LLC (SSN), the company stores computer components where they are either installed into or removed from servers and then distributed to their customers. SSN will occupy about 21,000sf of the total square footage of the building. The applicant has stated that they have 20 full-time employees that will work at the site during regular business hours (8:00am-6:00pm Monday-Friday) and expect a total of three package trucks entering and three package trucks existing the site each day (Fedex, UPS, Amazon, etc.) and five larger trucks per week. Distribution and office are accessory to the primary use of light manufacturing. Per the [Norwalk Zoning Regulations](#), any new manufacturing uses are permitted via a special permit in the Business #2 zone.

Per the standards for special permits, the Commission may attach reasonable conditions and safeguards as it deems necessary to protect the general health, safety, welfare and property values of the neighborhood, including but not limited to, requiring additional screening of lights and parking areas, limiting the hours of operation, requiring the redesign of buildings, and similar types of safeguards and conditions. A Special Permit may be granted after determination by the Commission that the proposed use or structure is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of these regulations and after consideration of the following conditions where applicable:

a) The density of use and bulk of buildings

- a. The proposed light manufacturing use appears to be similar to many of the surrounding uses, which are mostly industrial, but
- b. In terms of bulk of buildings, no new structures are proposed to be built.

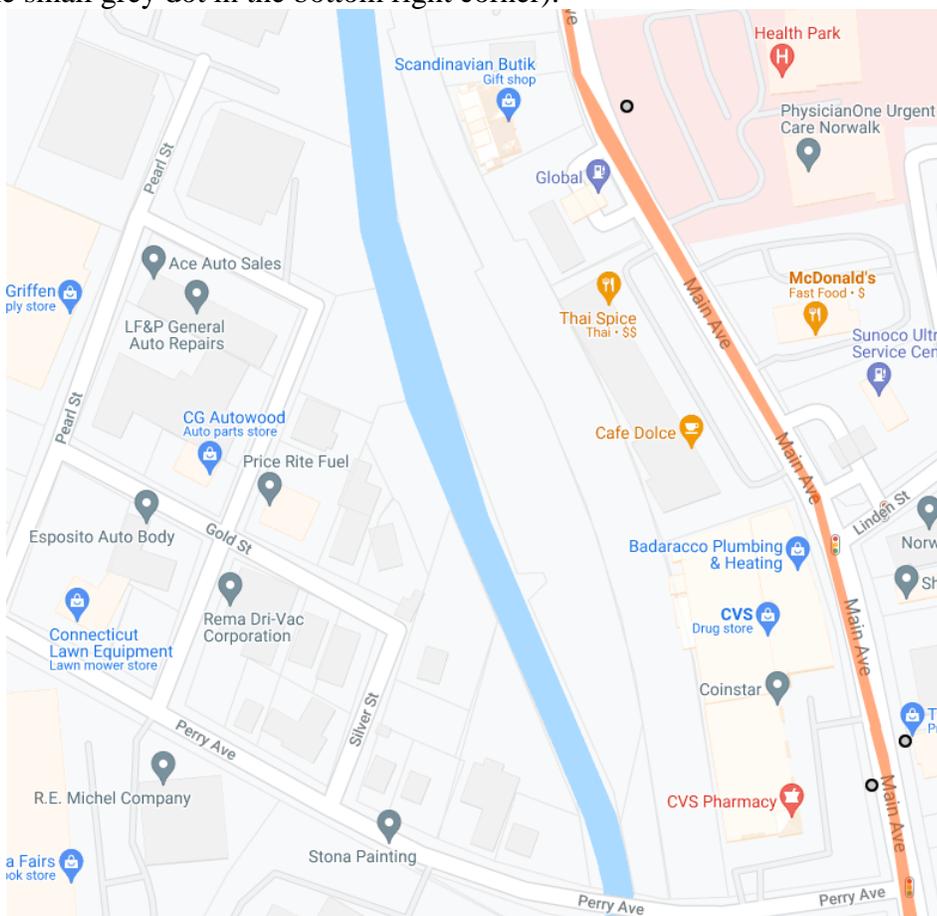
b) **“Stable traffic flow” shall mean that site-generated traffic shall not adversely affect pedestrian or vehicular safety, conflict with the pattern of highway circulation or increase traffic congestion to a level of service (LOS) considered unacceptable by the Commission. The Commission shall not approve developments which fail to maintain a stable traffic flow unless provision has been made for the improvement of inadequate conditions**

a. The applicant has requested that the Commission waive the requirement for a traffic study. Given the previous use of the building as being a commercial gym which is likely a higher traffic generator than the proposed light manufacturing use, Staff agrees that a traffic study is not necessary. If the Commission agrees that a traffic study is not needed at this time, a public hearing can be scheduled for the February 16, 2022 meeting. If the Commission decides that a traffic study should be provided, the applicant must provide the study before the public hearing can be scheduled.

c) **Availability of mass transit facilities and provision of sidewalks, with a minimum clearance of five (5) feet without obstructions**

a. The property is in a unique area where it is situated at the end of Pearl Street and has minimal frontage on the street. There are no sidewalks on Pearl Street and given the properties location in relation to the street, constructing sidewalks along this property does not seem feasible.

b. The nearest bus stop is located on Main Avenue as shown on the map below (indicated by the small grey dot in the bottom right corner):

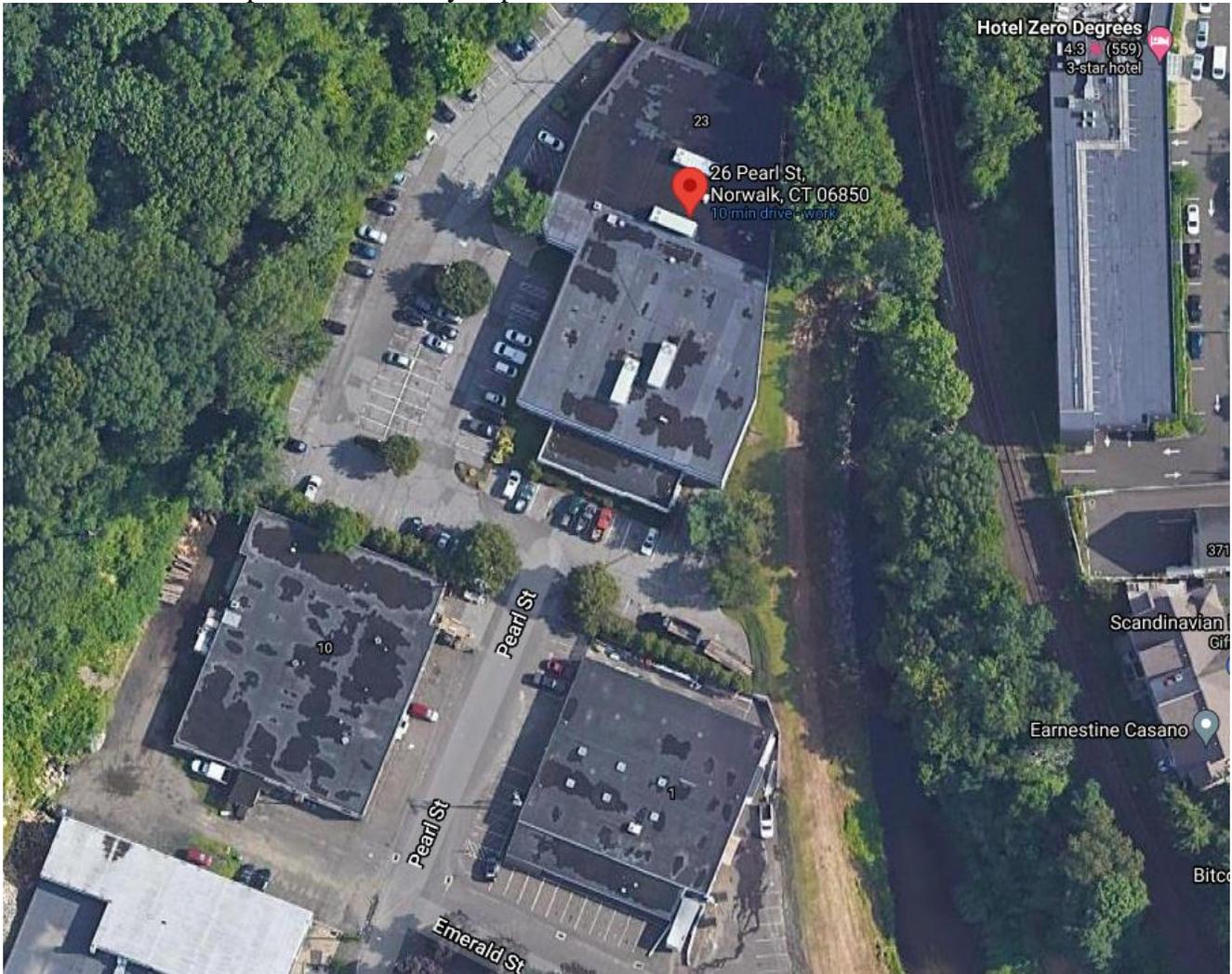


d) **Availability and compatibility of utilities**

a. The site will utilize city water and sewer which is under review by Norwalk WPCA, South Norwalk Electric and Water (SNEW) and Eversource. Should the Commission approve the project, each department’s approval will be required before a zoning permit can be issued.

e) Adverse impacts from noise, odor, fumes, dust and artificial lighting

- a. The largest generator of any noise, odor and fumes will be caused by delivery trucks entering and exiting the site. As stated by the applicant, they expect about six delivery trucks per day and five larger trucks entering and exiting the site per week. The direct neighbors of the property are a warehouse use and a contractor's office use, so immediate neighbors are not anticipated to adversely impacted.



f) Signs of size and design that are in harmony with the neighborhood

- a. Any signage must comply with the Norwalk Zoning Regulations.

g) Adequacy of yards and open space, screening and buffering

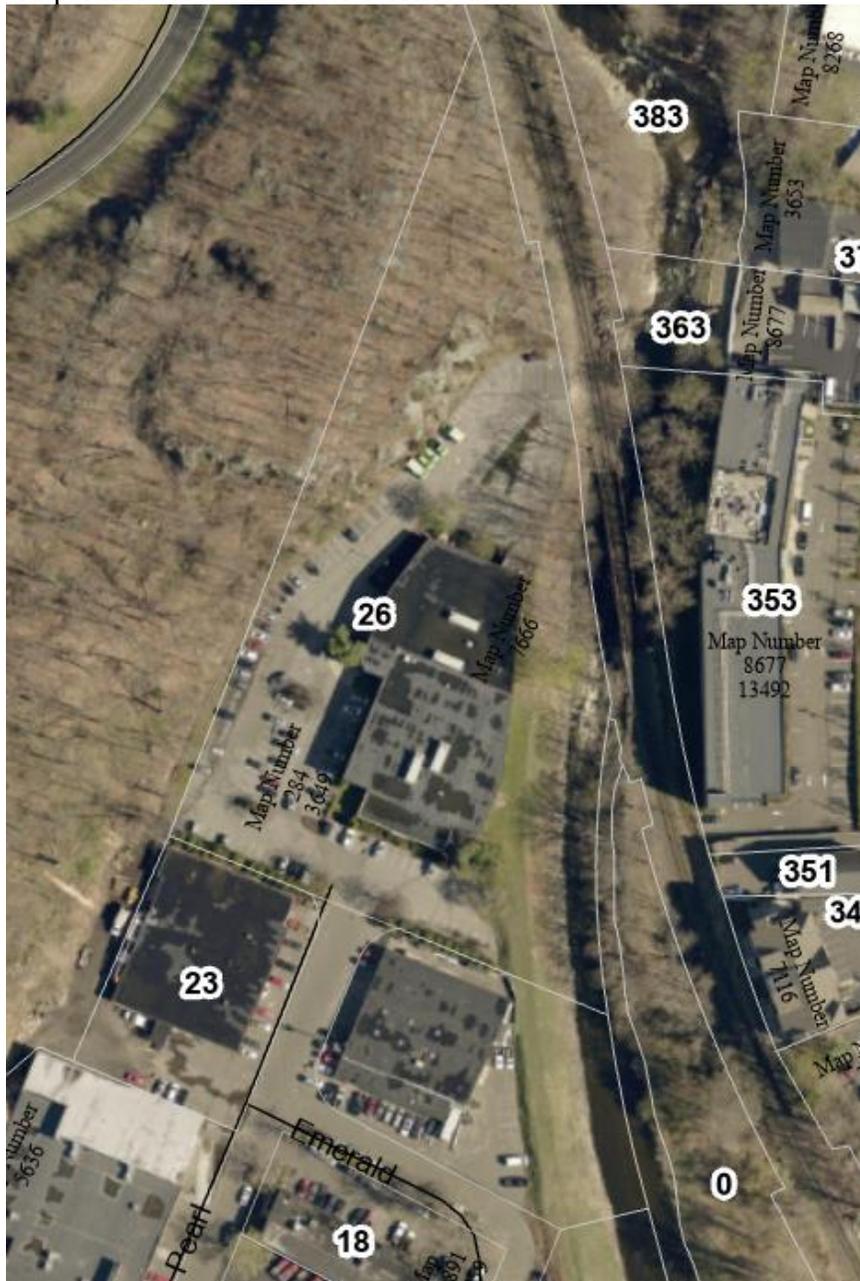
- a. The applicant is not proposing to construct any additional structures or change any of the existing landscaping on the site.

h) Impact on neighborhood properties, as compared to uses and structures permitted as a matter of right

- a. The Business #2 zone allows many uses as-of-right, including offices, research and development facilities and the expansion of existing manufacturing uses to name a few. Because SSN would be considered a new manufacturer, a special permit is required, but would appear to have a similar, if not, lesser impact on the neighborhood properties than the industrial use neighbors.

i) Existing land use in the area

- a. The surrounding uses are mostly industrial, despite being in the Business #2 zone. For example, 100 Pearl Street has received permits for both warehouse and auto repair uses in the past, 18 Pearl Street has received permits for an auto repair use and 1 Emerald Street has received permits for a contractor's office use.



j) Proximity of community facilities

- a. No community facilities are in the immediate vicinity.

k) Compliance with the Zoning Code and Plan of Conservation and Development

- a. 26 Pearl Street is shown as “Light Industrial” on the Future Land Use map that is included in the [Plan of Conservation and Development](#).



Light Industrial

- l) Conservation of wetlands, watercourses and other ecologically viable lands**
 - a. No exterior changes are proposed to the site or additional buildings proposed to be constructed.
- m) No zoning violation exists on the property**
 - a. No zoning violations exist on the property.

STAFF COMMENTS: Because the proposed use of light manufacturing requires a special permit, a public hearing is required. The Commission should determine whether a traffic study for the proposed use should be conducted prior to scheduling the public hearing date. Staff finds that the proposed use is consistent with the POCD as well as the findings in the recently completed [Industrial Zones Study](#).



Mixed-Use Heavy Industrial/Comm. (I-2)

Mixed-Use Light Industrial/Comm.