

September 3, 2024

Parker Smith
M-NCPPC – Planning Department
2425 Reddie Drive, Floor 14
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Parklawn Self Storage
Local Map Amendment H-154
MHG Project No. 2023.193.21

Dear Parker Smith,

The following is a point-by-point response letter to the comments provided on August 12, 2024, by The Montgomery County Staff for the Parklawn Self Storage Local Map Amendment, application number H-154.

Planning, Lead Reviewer – Parker Smith

1. Add a section in the SOJ regarding the Forest Conservation Plan. Make sure you reference the name and plan number of the associated FCP.

Response: The Land Use Report has been updated to include the Forest Conservation Plan number in Section II.D.i. The Land Use Report indicates that the site has a Forest Conservation requirement of 0.35 acres of afforestation. The site is a redevelopment of the property and has no existing forest and no sensitive environmental features, therefore the 0.35 acres of required afforestation is to be met via off-site forest bank, if available. If a forest bank is not available, the requirement will be met via a fee in lieu payment. Three specimen trees in Fair to Poor condition are proposed to be removed and mitigated with 30" of on-site replacement trees met via 10 trees at 3" caliper.

2. Provide details of how the amenity open space will be designed and landscaped.

Response: A conceptual landscape plan showing how amenity open space will be detailed has been provided. The design of the amenity open space will be finalized at the time of Site Plan.

Planning, Transportation – Richard Brockmeyer

Circulation Plan

3. Consider providing a continuously accessible pedestrian route from the property frontage to the back of the property. The current plans provide a disconnected pedestrian route.

Response: Direct Accessible pedestrian access is provided from the public right-of-way to the new leasing office. The topography of the site makes it infeasible to provide continuous pedestrian access to the rear of the property. However, this pedestrian route is also not necessary for this type of facility. There are several parking and loading spaces provided along the side and rear of the building, which provide patrons direct vehicle access to the building to load and unload items. Patrons who have access to this parking area will naturally use the interior building corridors should they need to access the leasing office.

4. Please coordinate with MCDOT to determine if the concrete bus pad for the bus stop is sufficient.

Response: This has been coordinated with Wayne Miller and the project is providing a 7' x 22" concrete bus pad, which is MCDOTs typical size.

5. This circulation figure does not appear to show the bend in the side path to avoid the existing utility pole. Please have figures represent the proposed design.

Response: The circulation plan has been updated.

Floating Zone Plan

6. Per the White Flint 2 Design Guidelines, there should be a 7' wide street buffer. The plans show only a 6' street buffer.

Response: 7' wide street buffer is now provided.

7. It appears that for the sidepath to avoid an existing pole, the sidepath is proposed to bend toward the travel lanes, which results in no street buffer for this segment. To allow for a sufficient street buffer and improve comfort for pedestrians and bicycles, please consider relocating the pole. If this cannot be accommodated, please modify the design so if the sidepath needs to bend it does so toward the site, and not the roadway, to allow for a sufficient buffer.

Response: The relocation of the existing utility pole is cost prohibitive because it would require the installation of three new poles due to multiple electric voltages, extensive low voltage infrastructure, and an overhead crossing of Parklawn to service nearby residential apartments. Richter & Associates has prepared an analysis to indicate the additional infrastructure that would be required, which has been included with our response letter. However, the Applicant is proposing to accommodate the realignment of the side path on interior of the site (i.e. positioning it behind the existing pole), with the use of sidewalk guys. This solution requires approval of the utility. Sidewalk guys are commonly utilized in space constrained installations to provide pedestrian clearance or meet other space requirements.

8. Per the Complete Streets Design Guide (page 141), where sidewalks or sidepaths cross a driveway, the Clear Zone should be clearly delineated across the driveway and maintain the grade, slope, and material of the adjacent sidewalk/sidepath through the driveway. Please identify how this design is met at the driveway.

Response: The side path and driveway crossing have been revised and maintain slope, grade and material of the side path through the driveway.

Traffic Statement

9. There appears to be incorrect information included for the existing land use. The table label states that ITE Land use code 151 (Mini-warehouse) was used for the analysis, but this does not match the existing use, which is labeled as existing office. Additionally, the data contained in the existing use trip generation table does not reflect the trip generation for either a mini warehouse use or an office use. Please provide an updated trip generation table that correctly identifies the existing land use. Please adjust trip generation results as needed. I don't believe this will change the finding that the project will generate less than 50 person trips, but this update is needed to clearly demonstrate this.

Response: The traffic statement has been updated to reflect the correct existing land use.

Planning, Master Plan – Erin Fowler

10. The Subject Property falls within the 2018 *White Flint 2 Sector Plan*, and specifically within the Parklawn South District. This District is characterized by its variety of industrial uses, including automotive repair and services, self-storage, catering, and other contractors. The Sector Plan emphasizes the importance of these industrial uses to provide based needs for County residents and opportunities for different forms of employment for the area (p. 46).

Response: Comment acknowledged.

11. Page 48 of the Sector Plan recommended the two office buildings located on Parklawn Drive (11900 – the Subject Property – and 11820 Parklawn Drive) be rezoned from I-L 1.0 H-50 to the EOF 0.75 H-100 zone to make the existing commercial use conform to the zoning.

Response: Comment acknowledged.

12. The Sector Plan created an overlay zone to ensure the light industrial uses in the area were retained, and the Subject Property is bordered to the southeast by a self-storage facility. Given the Sector Plan's vision for the area and surrounding properties, the proposal is generally in conformance with the Sector Plan.

Response: Comment acknowledged.

Planning, Design – Natasha Fahim

13. Activation along Parklawn Drive: As proposed, the Self-storage facility creates no active uses along Parklawn Drive; there is almost no interaction between the ground floor and the pedestrian realm along the sidewalk beside the small office room at the corner. To help activate the frontage along Parklawn Drive, Staff encourages the applicant to explore the possibility of incorporating retail, residential, artist studios, or more active industrial uses along the ground floor with direct access to the public sidewalk.

Response: The proposed industrial use of the Property as a self-storage facility is fully consistent with the Sector Plan and the light-industrial district within which it is located. Ground floor retail does not work with the proposed building program. However, the Applicant has incorporated other strategies to enhance the pedestrian realm along the street frontage. The self-storage office has been located along the street façade and incorporates increased heights of glazing to provide visual activation. Canopy systems are proposed along the facade at various locations to provide pedestrian scaled architectural features along the street facade. The proposed visual amenity/mural also helps to activate and enliven this street frontage. In addition, enhancements have been proposed along the public sidewalk to further enhance the pedestrian realm.

14. Façade along Parklawn Drive: Staff appreciates incorporating an artistic mural in the middle of the façade along Parklawn Drive to help screen large blank walls in the main elevation. Staff suggests enlarging the proposed mural to cover the entire middle panel to help break the large blank walls along Parklawn Drive.

Response: Applicant has provided a maximum mural area of 1,300 square feet as noted on P-200 that is bound within the "framed" area provided by the proposed architectural features. The applicant is not providing this mural as "public art" but rather just a visual amenity of the project. As such, while the location of the mural will be depicted on the subsequent Site Plan, the final design of the mural may change without requiring a Site Plan Amendment.

15. Amenity open space: As proposed, no public amenity has been offered within the required 10% amenity open space. Staff recommends providing a double row of large trees along the sidewalk with seating and special landscaping features along Park Lawn Drive to help activate the public realm and provide meaningful amenity open space at the sidewalk area. Additionally, Staff suggests using heavy landscaping features at the northern and rear parts of the site to reduce the noise from the railroad cars.

Response: A conceptual landscape plan showing how amenity open space will be detailed has been provided. The amenity open space design will be finalized at the time of Site Plan.

16. Sustainability features: Staff strongly suggests exploring the integration of solar panels on the large flat roof of this facility (and/or as part of the southern elevation design) to help meet the County's sustainability goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035.

Response: Solar panels are not currently proposed. However, the proposed building and use incorporates numerous energy efficiencies to help to promote the County's sustainability initiatives. The building's lighting systems use all LED fixtures with all non-emergency fixtures connected to motion sensors and timers. This ensures power for lighting loads are kept to a minimum compared with other uses. HVAC systems designed for self-storage use are also sustainably designed. Self-storage HVAC systems save energy consumption by having a larger set point range than any other use thus resulting in fewer cooling cycles on warm days and fewer warming cycles on cold days. Additionally, the thermal envelope is designed incredibly tight with very few opportunities for heat loss/ gains while primary loading entries are equipped with air curtains to minimize air exchange with the exterior. Lastly, the proposed roofing system achieves a high SRI value for a flat roof which mitigates the heat island effect.

MCDOT – Deepak Somarajan

17. All proposed street sections and frontage improvements along the existing roadway shall meet the Complete Street Guidelines.

Response: Comment acknowledged.

18. Parklawn Drive:

- It is classified as a Town Center Blvd with a proposed right-of-way of 80 ft. and 4- travel lanes.
- The bicycle master plan proposes a sidepath along the frontage. The applicant shall be responsible for installing a path that is at least 10 feet wide.

Response: The applicant is proposing a 10' wide asphalt side path with a 7' street buffer.

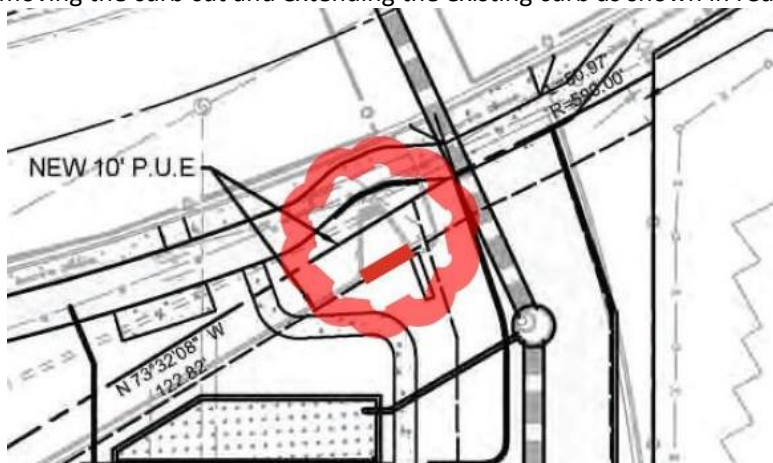
19. Provide a roadway cross-section.

Response: A roadway cross-section has been provided.

20. We recommend relocating the utility pole along Parklawn Drive and straightening the sidepath.

Response: See detailed response comment #7 above, which is subject to utility approval of the sidewalk guys.

21. The existing inlet is in the right-of-way and should be relocated into private property by removing the curb cut and extending the existing curb as shown in red below.



Response: The existing drainage structure has been replaced with a new trench drain structure.

22. Submit a completed, executed MCDOT Sight Distances Evaluation certification form, for all existing and proposed site entrances onto County-maintained roads, for our review and approval. Please refer the new sight distance form: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dir/Resources/Files/SightDistanceForm.pdf>.

Response: Sight distance evaluation has been provided.

23. Recommend switching the Sanitary and Storm drain layout.

Response: The design team met with MCDOT and MCDPS R/W on Wednesday August 14, 2024, and Wednesday August 28, 2024 to review the proposed storm drain alignment and the challenges with locating the new storm drain on the western side of the new self-storage building. Based on those meetings the design team was able to redesign the storm drain alignment and make the connection to the existing public storm drains system on the south side of Parklawn Drive, in front of the applicant's property, eliminating the need to cross Parklawn Drive and connect to the existing 72" storm drain on the north side of Parklawn Drive with a junction box structure. Additionally, the design team is looking at options to ensure the Vertical Pivot Gate operator will be outside of the required storm drain easement and will continue to coordinate with MCDOT and MCDPS R/W during the Site Plan review process.

24. How deep is the 54-inch pipe? The SD easement should be per the Storm Drainage Manual Sections 1.3.2.1 and 1.3.2.2. The width of the easement depends on the depth and size of the pipe.

Response: The depth of the storm drain pipe varies from roughly 10-feet deep to 14-feet deep. Easement widths calculated per drainage manual at 32' and 30' widths as dictated by the SD depth, except for a section adjacent to the proposed vertical pivot gate. The easement width was reduced to 24-feet, which is the minimum depth required to ensure the gate operator unit would not be impacted but the adjacent storm drain and would be located outside of the proposed easement.

25. The proposed easement, as shown, has private structures such as inlets, gates, booths, etc., that are not allowed per Section 1.3.1.7.b of the County Drainage Design Criteria and Section 49-10 of the County Code. Clearance with other utilities shall be per Section 2.4.4 of the County Drainage Design Criteria.

Response: Comment acknowledged. The design team is looking at options to ensure the Vertical Pivot Gate operator will be outside of the required storm drain easement and will continue to coordinate with MCDOT and MCDPS R/W during the site plan review process. Private storm drain structures have been moved out of the storm drain easement.

26. The existing storm drain system cannot be removed until the replacement has been fully constructed and operational and the easement is recorded.

Response: Comment acknowledged.

27. Times of concentrations in the computations (X28, X13 and X30) need justification and flow path.

Response: The flow path has been added to sheet 1. Structures X13 and X30 have been removed from the computations because of the new storm drain connection point.

28. Provide a plan to specifically show where the impervious areas are removed to justify a one-span existing public system analysis (excluding SWM areas). Otherwise, a three-span analysis is needed.

Response: Impervious surfaces exhibit has been provided. Please note that at the new storm drain point of connection there is both a reduction in design drainage area and flow, additional downstream analysis should not be required.

29. Inlet analysis is needed.

Response: An inlet analysis has been completed.

30. The connection of the proposed system to the existing system in the ROW needs to include an analysis of the existing system and the feasibility of a junction box.

Response: The proposed connection across Parklawn Drive has been eliminated in coordination with MCDOT and MCDPS R/W.

31. A PE sign and seal on the study is required.

Response: The plans have been signed and sealed by a registered PE.

32. The plans should label the existing pipes along Parklawn Drive. The existing pipes that are no longer functioning after the installation of the proposed relocated storm drain pipe, should be removed and LOD adjusted accordingly. In addition, the existing easement should be extinguished.

Response: The existing pipes have labeled. The existing pipe connection is being reused as noted above and the LOD is adequate for any required pipe removal, and the existing easement will be extinguished.

33. Drainage Area Map: Without all contours fully labeled (within and beyond the divides to justify them), the storm drain analysis cannot be reviewed.

Response: The contours are now labeled.

34. Add Qmax to the chart for the 10-year computations.

Response: The Qmax has been added to the applicable rows.

35. The study should also include the inlet computations.

Response: Inlet computations have been added to the drainage study.

36. Submit a storm drain study if any portion of the subject site drains to the Montgomery County public storm drain system. Please refer the storm drain checklist.

Response: A storm drain study has been submitted.

37. Provide a 10-ft wide PUE.

Response: A 10-foot-wide PUE is being provided.

38. Design all access points and alleys to be at-grade with the sidewalk / sidepath, dropping down to street level between the sidewalk / sidepath and roadway.

Response: The access point has been designed accordingly.

39. The applicant is responsible for relocating utilities along existing roads to accommodate the required roadway improvements.

Response: Acknowledged. Regarding the existing pole mounted infrastructure, please see comment #7.

MCDPS – Fire Department Access & Water Supply – Marie LaBaw

40. Applicant shall submit fire department vehicular access and water supply plan.

Response: A fire access plan has been submitted

41. Locate building lobby, FDC(s), and serving hydrant(s).

Response: The FDC is shown on the Fire Access Plan.

42. Indicate building height.

Response: The maximum building height is 55-feet and is indicated on the Fire Access Plan.

43. Driveway apron appears insufficient. Contact Marie LaBaw, DPS for detail.

Response: The commercial driveway entrance is provided in accordance with MD-SHA 630.03. The Fire Access Path including turning and curb radii and pavement widths have been included on the Fire Access Plan.

44. Dimension pavement widths and radii.

Response: Pavement widths and radii have been labeled.

45. Label address street speed limit.

Response: Parklawn Drive speed limit is 30 mph and has been noted on the plan.

