

Memorandum

DATE: May 25, 2011
TO: Urban Design Commission
FROM: Heather Stouder, Planner
SUBJECT: 4716 Verona Road (U-Haul)

Before the Urban Design Commission is a proposal to convert the vacant Cub Foods site at 4716 Verona Road to a U-Haul warehousing, storage, and trucking facility. This change requires a rezoning from PUD(GDP)(SIP) to Amended PUD(GDP)(SIP) for the property, and thus, must be reviewed by the UDC for a recommendation to the Plan Commission.

Staff appreciates recent revisions to the proposal, especially the maintenance of the southern portion of the parking lot as a potential site for future development. This provides for more efficient use of the property and better parameters for U-Haul's parking and storage needs on the site. Also, it will better match the original PUD(GDP), which identifies an additional site for future development near this location. Also appreciated is the additional landscaping proposed along the western property line as a low screening feature between the property and the bike path.

On the whole, staff believes that the proposed use is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan recommendation for "General Commercial" uses in this area, and recognizes that while other uses might make better use of the site, this would be an improvement over the existing vacancy, and would reutilize the existing building in the process. Importantly, the applicant will need to demonstrate to the UDC, Plan Commission and Common Council that the criteria for Planned Unit Development zoning can be met with the proposal.

Staff is still reviewing the proposal, but with regard to design details, here are a few additional suggested revisions that the UDC may consider during their review:

- Ensure that the unusable portion of the property (shown in blue on the submittal) is visible from the frontage road for its entire width. This will involve moving at least some of the proposed exterior storage buildings and removing part of the proposed parking area adjacent to the frontage road. The exterior storage buildings could perhaps be reconfigured in an "L" shape to better define this corner of the usable portion of the property, with no loss of exterior storage units.
- Orange overhead doors should be removed from the eastern elevation of the exterior storage buildings so that overhead doors are unseen from the frontage road. (With the grass strip shown adjacent to them on the plans, staff assumes these are not functional doors.) From staff's perspective, the placement of the exterior storage units on this portion of the property is a strength only if they can be effective as screening elements for the staging/storage area behind them.
- For the proposed canopy structure, staff recommends durable building materials consistent with others existing and proposed for the site.

Staff looks forward to seeing the Urban Design Commission comments on this proposal.

Cc: Steven Cover, Director, Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development
Brad Murphy, Director, Planning Division
Brian Solomon, District 10 Alder