

December 17, 2020

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City of Aurora – Planning Department
15151 E Alameda Pkwy #4600
Aurora, CO 80012

RE: Letter of Introduction – Self Storage at Citadel
Site Plan and Conditional Use Approval Criteria

General Information:

ZONING	Mixed Use – Corridor (MU-C)
PROJECT ADDRESS	14909 East 14 th Place
SITE AREA	61,606 SF
BUILDING AREA	32,618 SF
STRUCTURE HEIGHT	40'-0" AFG
# OF UNITS	727
PARKING FIELD	17 Stalls on-site + 5 stalls in adjacent tract
ADA PARKING	1 Stall
BICYCLE PARKING	4 Spaces (2 U-racks)

Requested Adjustment to Master Plan Design Guidelines:

Building Transparency Requirement of 50%

The intent of the ground floor transparency requirement is to increase the visibility of active uses. Because this is a storage facility, there will be little to no activity except for the office space. Clear glazing is provided at the office space to meet the requirement. Where storage units are located and there will be little to no activity, spandrel glazing is used to serve the design intent and add visual interest and pedestrian scale to the building adjacent site areas or street frontages.

Project Discussion:

The proposal consists of the development of a new self-storage facility located at 14909 E. 14th Place. The proposed building will employ a 32,086 square foot footprint to include both indoor, climate-controlled storage and outside, overhead-door access storage. The site will be well landscaped and will include the following: a fully enclosed trash building, gated access for pedestrians and vehicles, security fencing around the eastern portion of the site, and parking for 19 vehicles, one of which will be designed and signed for ADA accessibility. Existing North Altura Boulevard (Private), bordering the site to the east, will serve as the primary vehicle access point to the site providing customer access to the lobby area. By virtue of North Altura Blvd being one-way towards the north, this access point will be right-in/right-out only. North





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Altura Blvd is a private street within the Citadel on Colfax Master Plan that provides full motion access to the public right-of-way at East Colfax Avenue. A secondary, full-motion vehicle access to the secured eastern portion of the site is provided to East 14th Place (Private). East 14th Place provides a connection to the public R.O.W. at North Sable Boulevard. Each vehicle and pedestrian access/egress gate will be provided with key card access to the secure portions of the development.

The current site plan features three pedestrian connections to the existing sidewalk on North Altura Blvd. The first provides a connection to the facility's front parking area and one of two lobby entrances. The second, further south, is a direct connection to double doors that enter the lobby. The third pedestrian connection is provided further south and allows for emergency egress from within the building. A secondary pedestrian connection has been provided at the curb cut to East 14th Place, this connection allows for pedestrians to exit the site through a man gate adjacent to the corner of the building

This storage facility expects to employ 2-3 people for a maximum shift.

The proposed self-storage facility is in character with the Master Planned development and will enrich the city's vision for mixed-use development along the existing vehicle-oriented Colfax Avenue thoroughfare. The use will provide a needed service to the existing residents within the area as well as the expected buildout of nearby multi-family developments. The self-storage use intends to comply with master plan guidelines, and city codes and will add both architectural and mixed-use interest along the Colfax Avenue corridor. Building exterior architecture has been carefully considered and coordinated to comply with the overall center guidelines. The material palette has been selected from the available materials listed in the design guideline and appropriate distributions of material types are detailed in the tables on the exterior elevations. Any rooftop units and/or ground mounted utility appurtenances will be screened per the city's requirements. The requested sign package is shown on the submitted set of drawings with building.

Construction for the facility will be done in a single phase and take approximately ~8 months, with a typical progression of construction activities. These activities, some of which would run concurrently, include site preparation and limited grading, building construction of, paving and striping and landscaping.

Operational statement:

The self-storage use will be open for customer access to their space 7 days a week, from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM. Office hours will be staffed from approximately 8 AM to 6 PM daily. The proposed development has been designed to be lit appropriately. After construction is complete and the facility is operating the site will be meticulously maintained. It is expected that the facility will be staffed by approximately 2-3 employees per shift.

Customer access will be controlled via keypad/keycard access at both vehicle gates. Customer walkup access will be keypad/keycard controlled via a man gate adjacent to the front parking area. A man gate adjacent to the vehicle access to East 14th Place will allow egress, but no ingress. The entire secure area of the site will be protected via a 6' tall, black tube steel fence. Exterior entrance and exit points will be video monitored; the interior storage units will also be video monitored.



There is no delivery dock or designated delivery parking bay required on the premises as deliveries are made via van or passenger vehicles.

Site Plan Approval Criteria Justification:

1. *Consistency with comprehensive plan. The proposed site plan is consistent with the provisions of the comprehensive plan, the City Code, and plans and policies adopted by city council that apply to the affected area.*

The proposed development is consistent with the provisions of the comprehensive plan, the City Code, and plans and policies adopted by city council that apply to the affected area. The current zoning designation for the property is MU-C, a self-storage use is defined as a conditionally permitted use. The approach to landscape buffers, generally speaking, is to oblige the city expected urban nature of the development. Reduction in landscape buffer widths are provided using the tools in the code that allow exchanges for adjacent design elements. The applicant has worked with city staff and leadership to confirm the approach in mitigation measures that allow the buffers as detailed below.

The north and east landscape buffer widths have been reduced to 5' in width. The use of fences allows the buffer width to be reduced to 5' when adjacent to non-residential properties (per table 4.7-2 in the UDO).

The south landscape buffer width has been reduced to 10' in width. The use of enhanced architecture and more specifically the use of a wainscot elements in lieu of a low wall allows the buffer width to be reduced to 10'.

Per the governing master plan, the western frontage of the site borders a street that has been constructed as an Urban Street. Note 5 in Table 4.7-2 of the UDO allows for no landscape buffers. To complete the intent to provide an enhanced pedestrian experience, the west buffer includes pedestrian amenities (benches and patterned paved gathering areas).

2. *Impact on existing city infrastructure and public improvements. The proposed development does not result in undue or unnecessary burdens on the city's existing infrastructure and public improvements, or that arrangements are made to mitigate such impacts.*

The impact on the existing city infrastructure and public improvements, as they relate to the proposed project, should be considered expected load. This is because the utility and public connections that will serve the facility were planned for within the approved Master Plan. Utility design is complete per stated City of Aurora guidelines and practices.

3. *Density. If the density is different from those of adjacent properties, specific steps are to be taken to achieve compatibility. For residential site plans abutting residential zones of lower density, the development shall provide for transitions in density and building height to protect the character of the lower-density residential areas.*

Proposed density of 1.52 FAR complies with the standards set forth in MU-C and is appropriate for the size of the parcel (1.41 Acres).



4. *Protection and appropriate use of environmental features and topography to enhance the development. New development shall be designed, where reasonable, to preserve and protect the water quality and wildlife habitat of riparian corridors, wetlands, and floodplains affected by the proposed development. Open space and natural areas shall be preserved, where reasonable, and integrated into developed areas to provide visual diversity in the landscape and to define neighborhood and community character. The design and placement of buildings on a site incorporate and protect view corridors. Where reasonable, the design of the development shall maintain the approximate topographic form of major ridgelines, swales, and landforms.*

The proposed project shall remain consistent with the intended uses specified in the approved master plan. The site has been designed so that operations of the facility are located away from the native ditch areas, located within the building itself or at the building envelope. The expected 40' maximum building height is accommodated by its "tucked in" location away from Colfax (two lots and a drainage ditch removed). No obstruction of view corridors down Colfax Avenue is expected.

5. *Landscaped area. All site plans shall conform to adopted landscaping standards or guidelines adopted by city council. Certain portions of the city may be designated for special design treatments and standards.*

The proposed project conforms to the adopted landscaping standards as well as the approved master plan and the Citadel design guidelines adopted by city council.

6. *Internal efficiency of design. The proposed design of the site plan achieves internal efficiency for its users, including safe and convenient pedestrian access to common areas for recreation and other services, facilities, and amenities provided by the development. The proposed design shall provide for safe and convenient access for service and maintenance personnel performing routine duties related to but not limited to mail delivery and pick-up, utility meter reading, and other services.*

The proposed site plan limits vehicle access to one location of North Altura Blvd and one off East 14th Place. One point of entry/exit allows for safe and convenient access for service and maintenance personnel performing routine duties related to but not limited to mail delivery and pick-up, utility meter reading, and other services. Dedicated pedestrian walkways within and adjacent to the site and direct pedestrian connections to building front entrances provide for safe pedestrian/vehicle interaction.

7. *Control of nuisance impacts. The proposed development controls nuisance impacts on itself and surrounding land uses including heat and glare, traffic congestion, noise, arrangement of signs and lighting, features to prevent littering and accumulation of trash, the amount and quality of storm drainage, the provision of adequate light and air, compatible screening of rooftop mechanical units, and other factors deemed to affect public health, safety and general welfare.*

The site plan has been designed to mitigate any real or perceived nuisance impacts to any and all surrounding land uses. An adequately sized parking field capable of accommodating 19 vehicles outside of the secured perimeter will allow customers to access the facility without backing into the adjacent private street network. Further, a traffic compliance letter has been produced in conjunction with this application and it concludes that the proposed



traffic volumes generated by the proposed project will not adversely impact the expected level of service provided within this overall development and along this particular portion of Colfax Avenue.

All proposed mechanical equipment will be fully screened by the building parapet wall, and the site lighting has been designed to avoid impacting any neighboring uses, or public/private roadways.

Heat and glare, noise, arrangement of signs, and refuse accumulation/containment were also considered when producing the site design. All of which are controlled, and will not adversely affect public health, safety and general welfare.

8. *Urban design, building architecture, and landscape architecture. The site plan shall establish a high quality of design, demonstrate how compatibility with adjacent development and surrounding urban design elements will be achieved as well as internal consistency of design, and satisfy the city's adopted design standards and/or guidelines. The relationship between mass and space shall be combined and integrated to produce aesthetic and functional buildings and landscapes.*

This self-storage building has been designed to have 360-degree architecture, with the focus being placed on the west and north elevations (North Altura frontage and customer use/access area). The south elevation, being tight against the 14th Place frontage, includes horizontal and vertical articulation in the building face and rooflines to provide additional visual interest. Corners of the building are highlighted with complimentary, but alternate materials that create tower type elements complete with corniced rooflines and pedestrian scale awnings. On the more hidden east elevation, the same varied material palette and corner treatments are utilized to provide consistency throughout the design.

The exterior architecture of the building provides subtle massing shifts on all sides of the building, to reduce bulk, and create interest and variety. As previously stated, our colors and materials (and our meticulous building maintenance) allow our structures to remain evergreen. Drawing from a high-quality palette of materials in compliance with that required in design guidelines.

Lastly, the site landscape drives a few areas of sustainability. The planting approach, in limiting the use of water, planning for successional growth, and focusing on management versus maintenance, provides long range landscape resilience.

9. *Adequacy, accessibility, and connectivity of traffic and circulation plans. The design and efficiency, and connectivity of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation systems, linkages to open space and trails, availability of resident and guest parking, loading spaces, convenience of location, and access to public transit facilities shall be adequate and functional.*

As previously stated, The proposed site plan limits vehicle access to one location on North Altura Blvd and one location on East 14th Place. Limiting points of entry/exit allows for safe and convenient access for service and maintenance personnel performing routine duties related to but not limited to mail delivery and pick-up, utility meter reading, and other services. Dedicated pedestrian walkways within and adjacent to the site provide for safe pedestrian/vehicle interaction and ease of connection to the public realm.



The connection to the existing public and private network for vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic, as well as available parking in excess of the code required minimum demonstrate conformance with the finding as stated above.

- 10. Street standards. Public and private streets included in the site plan shall conform with city street standards.*

No public or private streets are proposed as a part of this application.

- 11. Past Performance. The city council and the planning commission are authorized to consider the past performance of an applicant in their consideration of any site plan. The planning commission or city council may deny any approval of a site plan if the applicant or developer thereof is determined to be in violation of any requirements, conditions or representations on a prior development.*

Neither Galloway nor our client are aware of any current or past violations of any requirements, conditions, or representation relative to this development or ongoing operations.

Conditional Use Approval Criteria Justification:

- 1. The compatibility of the proposed use with existing and planned uses on abutting properties;*

Proposed development of self-storage use is consistent with proposed commercial uses within this overall, master planned development and is also in line with the uses indicated within the approved planning area #6.

- 2. Any increase in density or intensity of the proposed use that will affect the compatibility of the use with existing and planned uses in the surrounding area;*

The proposed self-storage use has a footprint of 32,086 GSF, totaling to a 1.52 FAR on the site. Although self-storage uses typically provide for a dense development, the relative intensity of the use is very light considering the decidedly low planned traffic and utility loads to the city's infrastructure. The density and intensity is consistent with the approved master plan as this area of the Citadel is contemplated for a mixed-use development.

- 3. The proposed use will not change the predominant character of the surrounding area;*

The predominant character of this area off Colfax Avenue and its surrounding area is highly diverse with a considerable amount of adjacent residential development. A self-storage use will provide a needed commodity to the residents of Aurora, including the expected/future multi-family uses immediately adjacent to the south of this proposed development.

- 4. The ability to mitigate adverse and undesirable impacts to the surrounding area, including but not limited to visual impacts, air emissions, noise, vibrations, glare, heat odors, water pollution, electromagnetic interference, and other nuisance effects;*

The proposed development will mitigate impacts to the surrounding area using good site design which will include parking in excess of code requirements, orientation of the storage



activities that are shielded by the building's position on site, efficient operations, and regular maintenance activities designed to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses.

5. Amount of traffic generated and capacity and design of roadways to handle anticipated traffic;

The Self-storage use, calculated per the ITE, provides considerably low vehicle trip generation to the site and its surrounding roadway infrastructure. The traffic compliance letter submitted with this application details the lessened traffic load as compared to the originally approved traffic study.

6. The effect on infrastructure including water, wastewater, stormwater, utilities, and streets;

While the master plan was being processed for approvals, the utility and street infrastructure was designed with uses such as this in mind. The expectation is that the net effect on the existing infrastructure will be less than what was contemplated in the initial design and approvals for a mixed-use development. The effect on dry utility infrastructure is further mitigated by the proposed development utilizing solar panels to offset the expected power load.

7. The incorporation and integration of architectural and landscape features to mitigate impacts from the proposed use;

Proposed development will include a new building, parking lot, and associated landscaping improvements per current code. Design of proposed self-storage facility will include 360-degree architecture with focus on "entry" type features located on west elevation and the northwest corner of the building where the customer entrances into the office/lobby are located. In addition, tower features will also serve to bring visual interest to all four sides of the building. Massing shifts on all sides of the building help to reduce and modulate bulk resulting in visual interest and variety for customers and passersby. A canopy element on the north elevation is included at the secured entrance to the indoor storage areas to help concentrate customer operations on the most hidden locations on site.

8. The city council, planning commission, or planning director are authorized to consider the past performance of an applicant in their consideration of any conditional use. The planning commission, city council, or planning director may use as a basis for denial whether the applicant or developer is determined to be in violation of any requirements, conditions, or representations on a prior development.

Neither Galloway nor our client are aware of any current or past violations of any requirements, conditions, or representation relative to this development or ongoing operations.





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