



CITY OF DULUTH

Planning Division

411 W 1st St, Rm 208 * Duluth, Minnesota 55802-1197

Phone: 218/730.5580 Fax: 218/723-3559

STAFF REPORT

File Number	PL 15-185	Contact	Steven Robertson, 218-730-5295	
Application Type	Variance, Off-Street Parking Requirements	Planning Commission Date	January 12, 2016	
Deadline for Action	Application Date	December 15, 2015	60 Days	February 13, 2016
	Date Extension Letter Mailed	December 18, 2015	120 Days	April 13, 2016
Location of Subject	4216/4218 Grand Avenue			
Applicant	Marvin Development IV, LLC	Contact		
Agent	Border Foods	Contact	Barb Schneider	
Legal Description	Parcel Numbers: 010-3610-08240, 08250, 08241			
Site Visit Date	January 4, 2016	Sign Notice Date	December 28, 2015	
Neighbor Letter Date	December 18, 2015	Number of Letters Sent	38	

Proposal

The applicant is proposing to construct a one story, 2,083 square foot restaurant, with one drive through window. The UDC allows a maximum of 21 off-street parking spaces; the applicant is seeking a variance to provide 3 additional parking spaces over the maximum.

	Current Zoning	Existing Land Use	Future Land Use Map Designation
Subject	MU-B	Commercial	Neighborhood Commercial
North	MU-N/R-1	Commercial	Neigh Comm/Traditional Residential
South	MU-B	Business Park	Neigh Comm/General Mixed Use
East	MU-B	Medical	Neigh Comm/General Mixed Use
West	MU-N	Residential/Commerical	Neighborhood Commercial

Summary of Code Requirements (reference section with a brief description):

Sec. 50-37.9.C. - General Variance Criteria. See attachment setting forth standards related to General Variance Criteria.

Sec. 50-37.9.G.3 - Exceeding required parking spaces. Variances from the maximum parking limits provided for in 50-2.4 shall not exceed 200 percent of the minimum requirement provided in table 50-24.1.

Comprehensive Plan Findings (Governing Principle and/or Policies) and Current History (if applicable):

--Future Land Use - Neighborhood Commercial. Small- to moderate scale commercial, serving primarily the adjacent neighborhood(s). May include specialty retail; community gathering businesses such as coffee shops or lower intensity entertainment; offices; studios or housing above retail (storefront retail with vertical mixed use). Typically situated in or adjacent to residential neighborhoods. May transition to neighborhood mixed use.

-This property is zoned MU-B. The Future Land Use Designation indicates that a rezoning to MU-N would be appropriate. Restaurants with a gross square footage of 5,000 sq ft are allowed with a special use permit; drive-throughs are allowed in the MU-N district, but with reduced hours of operation. When the UDC became effective in November 2010, drive-through restaurants were not allowed in the MU-N district, but code has since changed to allow them with certain development standards.

-In 2014, the City amended the UDC (ordinance 10340) to increase the off-street parking space requirement for restaurants from 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet to 6.5 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area. This was at the recommendation of City staff following a parking space usage study conducted in August 2014 (included with this memo).

Discussion (use numbered or bullet points; summarize and attach department, agency and citizen comments):

--Proposal: The applicant is proposing to construct a one story, 2,083 square foot restaurant, with one drive through window.

--Issue/Item for Review: The code requires 6.5 off-street parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area. Based on the square footage, the development would be required to provide at least 14 parking spaces, and would be allowed to provide up to 21 parking spaces. The developer is seeking a variance to exceed the maximum parking limit and provide 24 parking spaces. Variances are granted or denied by the Planning Commission.

1) In the Variance Application Supplemental Form (attached with staff report) the applicant states that "there are no exceptional characteristics related to the property itself. The request for a variance is due to our experience in the number of parking spaces necessary to serve a restaurant of this site and type".

2A) Staff conclude that the property does not contain exceptional topographic conditions, does not contain wetlands or excessive or exposed bedrock, does not have steep slopes, and is not exceptionally narrow or shallow.

2B) Staff do not believe special circumstances exist on this property that warrant this variance.

2C) The relief requested by the applicant is not necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of the continuing property right.

2D) The relief, if granted, would not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property owners.

2E) The relief, if granted, would may impair the intent of this Chapter. The UDC adopted maximum parking standards based on the 2006 Comprehensive Plan (Principle #10, Take Sustainable Actions). Site design that minimizes impact on the natural environment by reducing impervious surfaces where possible (such as reducing, or limiting the increase of stormwater runoff), is one of the reasons that the City adopted off-street parking maximums in the 2010 UDC.

3) The draft site plans included with this application do not reflect required landscaping (street frontage landscaping and 30% tree canopy coverage). It should be noted that the requirement for 10%/15% interior parking lot landscaping only applies to parking lots that have at least 25 parking spaces. Also note that per 50-37.1.L.5, the Land Use Supervisor may administratively approve one additional parking space over the maximum allowed in 50-24. If this variance were denied, the LUS could still administratively approve an additional off-street parking space, up to a total of 22.

4) At the time that this staff report was written, two comments were received on this application. One comment was received from the City's Parking Department supporting additional off-street parking spaces. The other comment was from an adjoining property owner (attached with staff report) expressing concern about adequate off-street parking spaces and if liquor would be served by the restaurant.

Staff Recommendation (include Planning Commission findings, i.e., recommend to approve):

Based on the above findings, Staff recommends that Planning Commission deny the variance for the following reasons:

1) The application has not demonstrated that the requirements of the city's zoning code would result in practical difficulties to the property owner.

2) The application has not demonstrated that special circumstances or conditions exist on the property.

3) The application has not demonstrated that the relief is necessary for the continuing preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right.

Note that per UDC Section 50-37.1.N, approved variances lapse if the project or activity authorized by the permit or variance is not begun within 1 year.

Attachments (aerial photo with zoning; future land use map; site plan; copies of correspondence)

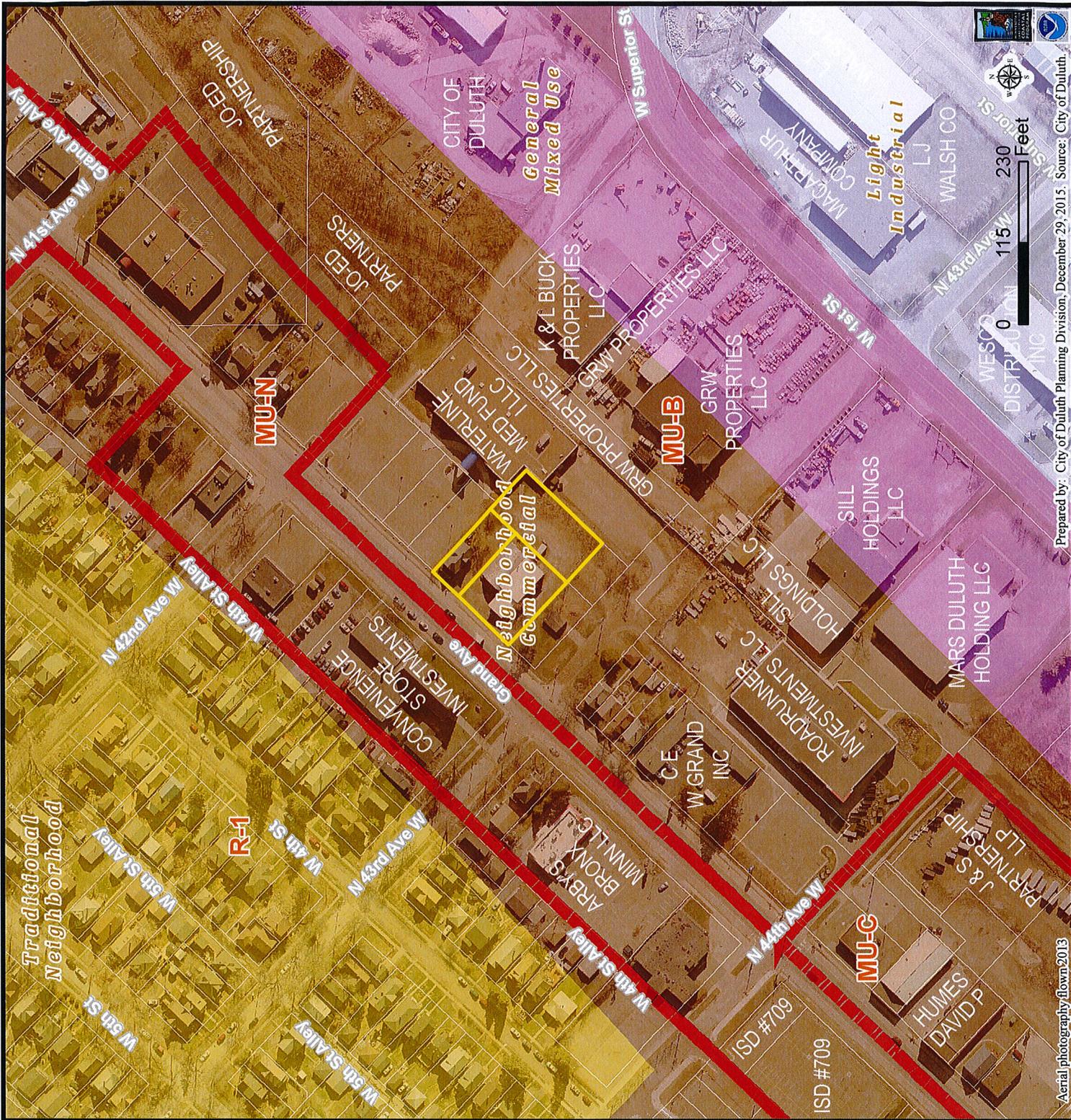


City Planning
 PL 15-185
 4216/4218 Grand Avenue

Legend

- Zoning Boundaries**
- Zoning Boundaries
- Future Land Use**
- Preservation
- Recreation
- Rural Residential
- Low-density Neighborhood
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Urban Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Neighborhood Mixed Use
- General Mixed Use
- Central Business Secondary
- Central Business Primary
- Auto Oriented Commercial
- Large-scale Commercial
- Business Park
- Tourism/Entertainment District
- Medical District
- Institutional
- Commercial Waterfront
- Industrial Waterfront
- Light Industrial
- General Industrial
- Transportation and Utilities

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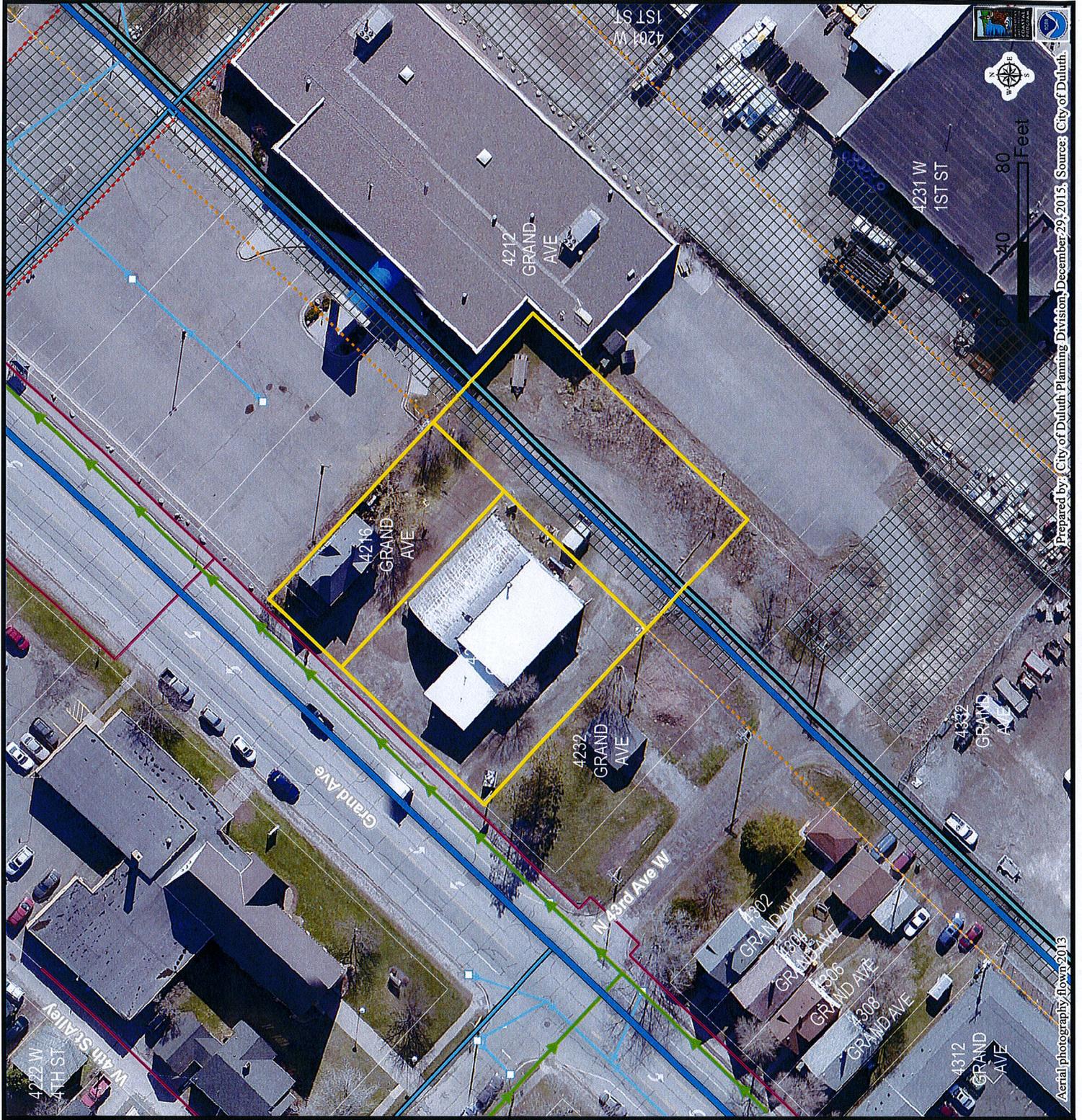


Aerial photography flown 2013

Prepared by: City of Duluth Planning Division, December 29, 2015. Source: City of Duluth.



City Planning
 PL 15-185
 4216/4218 Grand Avenue



Aerial photography: Downr 2013

Prepared by: City of Duluth Planning Division, December 29, 2015, Source: City of Duluth.

Legend

- Trout Stream (GPS)
- Other Stream (GPS)
- Water Distribution System**
- 30 - 60" Water Pipe
- 16 - 24" Water Pipe
- 4 - 6" Water Pipe
- Sanitary Sewer Collection System**
- Sanitary Sewer Collector
- Sanitary Sewer Interceptor
- Sanitary Sewer Forced Main
- Storage Basin
- Pump Station
- Gas Distribution Main**
- 8" - 16" Gas Pipes
- 4" - 6" Gas Pipes
- 0" - 4" Gas Pipes
- Storm Sewer Collection System**
- Storm Sewer Pipe
- Storm Sewer Catch Basin
- Vacated ROW
- Easement Type**
- Utility Easement
- Other Easement

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City of Duluth
Planning and Construction Services

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Variance Application Supplemental Form

In order to submit a complete variance application, please explain how your request meets all of the below variance criteria. This is information that is required by the zoning code and that is necessary for Planning Commission review.

List the UDC Section you are seeking relief from (example: "50-14.5 – front yard setback in an R-1"):

UDC Section 50-24 - Minimum Parking Requirements

Is the applicant proposing to use the property in a reasonable manner? Yes No

Please explain the applicant's use of the property, and how the relief requested is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right and not merely to serve as a convenience to the applicant: Applicant intends to develop the property as a Taco Bell restaurant with a drive-through. Applicant has developed numerous Taco Bells of the same size in Minnesota and other midwestern states under site plans which provide for 30 parking spaces; however, Sec. 50-24.2 imposes a limit of $6.5/1000 = 14$ spaces, less than half the number we generally provide to fully serve our guests. Sec. 50-24.4 allows a maximum of 21 spaces (150% of 14), and Sec. 50-37.9 (G) would allow a variance of 28 spaces (200%); Applicant requests a total of 24 spaces, somewhat less than our standard of 30 spaces for a store of this size. A variance of 24 spaces will allow more room to accommodate guests and find on-site parking since parking is not permitted on Grand Avenue.

Is the need for relief due to circumstances unique to this property? Yes No

Please explain how these circumstances are due to exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of the applicant's property, or because of exceptional topographic or other conditions related to the property:

There are no exceptional characteristics related to the property itself. The request for a variance is due to our experience in the number of parking spaces necessary to serve a restaurant of this size and type.

Will granting this variance alter the essential character of the area? Yes No

Explain how this property fits the character of the neighboring area, and how the special circumstances or conditions applying to the building or land in question are peculiar to such property or immediately adjoining property, and do not apply generally to other land or buildings in the vicinity:

Granting a variance permitting 24 vs. 14 parking spaces will not alter the character of the area of Grand Avenue where the property is located, which consists of both retail and commercial buildings, many of which have parking lots of greater size than what we are proposing.

Is this request consistent with the intent of the UDC and Comprehensive Plan? Yes No

Explain how the UDC and Comprehensive Plan support this request: The development of the property as a restaurant will provide food services to both commercial and residential uses adjacent to the Property on Grand Avenue, and the request to grant the right to construct additional parking spaces will support this use and reduce the risk that restaurant guests will seek to park off-site when visiting the restaurant.

Explain how the special circumstances or conditions that create the need for relief were NOT directly or indirectly created by the action or inaction of the property owner or applicant:

Applicant did not by its own action or inaction create the need for this variance; the Taco Bell restaurant that we seek to develop generates a certain volume of guest vehicles in our experience, and we seek the variance to make sure that those guest vehicles will have adequate parking on-site so that adjoining streets or lots are not impacted.

Will the variance impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property or unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets or the danger of fire or imperil the public safety or unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within the surrounding areas or in any other respect impair the health, safety or public welfare of the inhabitants of the city? Yes No

Please explain: The requested variance to allow for 24 on-site parking spaces will not adversely impact adjacent property, may decrease congestion in public streets by decreasing the likelihood that guests will be required to find street parking, and will not impact either property values or impair health, safety or public welfare.

Does the relief allow any type of sign that is not allowed in the zone district where the property is located? Yes No

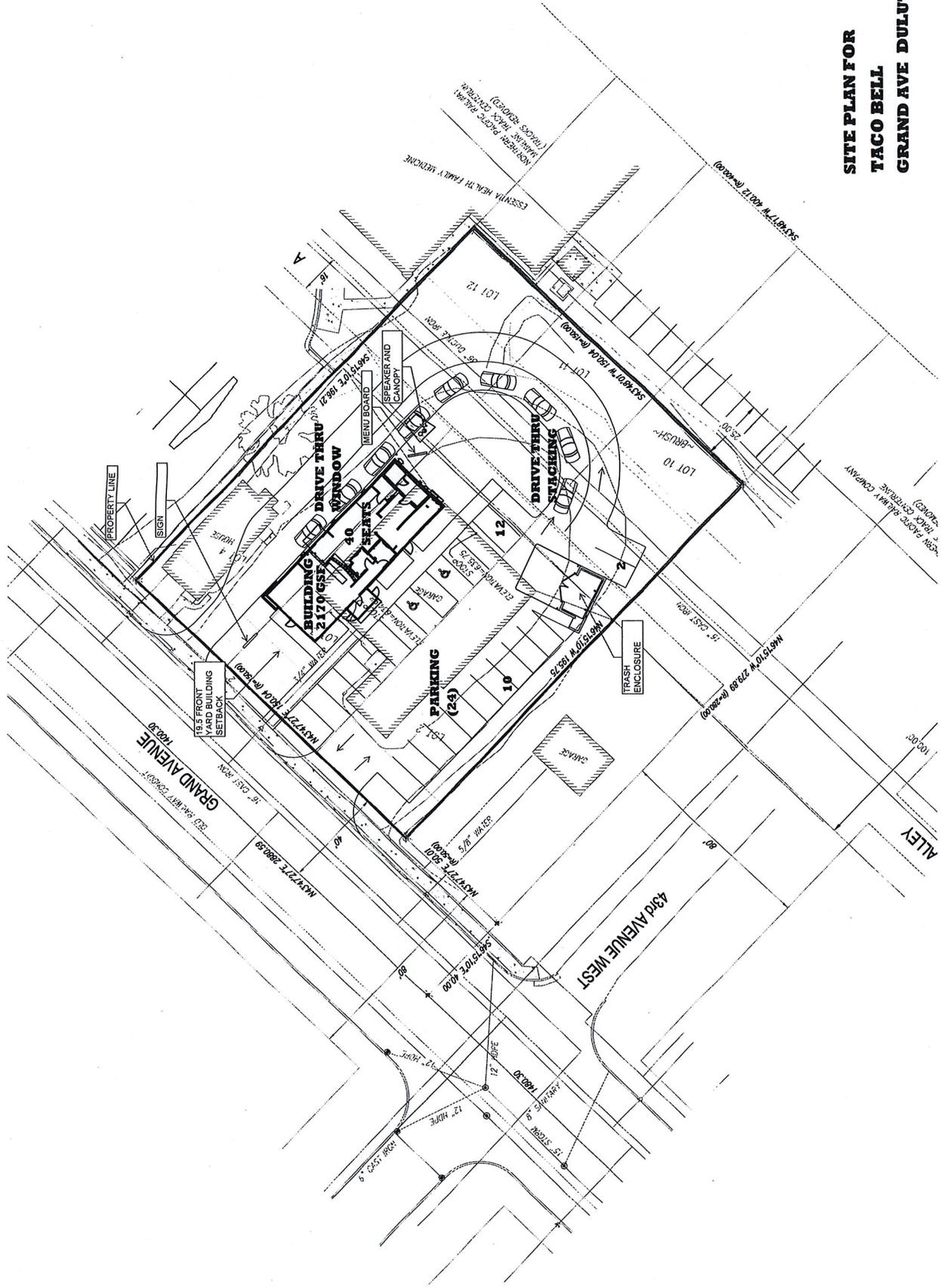
Does your variance request need to meet any of the specific criteria in UDC Section 50-37.9, subsections D through M? Yes No

Discuss what subsections are applicable and how this request meets those: Sec. 50-37.9, subsection G .3.

provides that "Variances from the maximum parking limits provided in 50-24.4 shall not exceed 200% of the minimum parking requirement provided in Table 50-24.1." Applicant is requesting 24 spaces, somewhat less than the 28 spaces which Section 50-37.9 would allow (i.e., 200% of the Table 50-24.1 requirement of 6.5/1000 parking spaces, or 14 spaces for a restaurant of 2,170 square feet).

UDC Section 50.37.9 does not appear to list any specific criteria for granting a variance from the maximum parking limits for a non-residential district.

**SITE PLAN FOR
TACO BELL
GRAND AVE DULUTH MN**





Language from UDC: 50-37.9 Variances

C. General variance criteria.

Unless different or inconsistent criteria or limitations are stated in subsections D through M below for the specific type of variance being requested, the planning commission shall approve an application for a variance, or approve it with conditions, if it finds that the proposed variance meets the following criteria. If there is a direct conflict between a provision or criteria in subsections D through M below and the general criteria in this subsection C, the provisions in subsections D through M shall govern:

1. Because of the exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of the applicant's property, or because of exceptional topographic or other conditions related to the property, the strict application of the requirements of this Chapter would result in peculiar and practical difficulties or exceptional or undue hardship to the property owner;
2. The special circumstances or conditions that create the need for relief were not directly or indirectly created by the action or inaction of the property owner or applicant;
3. The special circumstances or conditions applying to the building or land in question are peculiar to such property or immediately adjoining property, and do not apply generally to other land or buildings in the vicinity;
4. The relief is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right and not merely to serve as a convenience to the applicant;
5. The relief will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property or unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets or the danger of fire or imperil the public safety or unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within the surrounding areas or in any other respect impair the health, safety or public welfare of the inhabitants of the city;
6. The relief may be granted without substantially impairing the intent of this Chapter and the official zoning map;
7. The relief does not allow any type of sign that is not allowed in the zone district where the property is located, pursuant to Section 50-27;
8. The relief complies with any additional limitations or criteria applicable to that variance in subsections D through M below;

Steven Robertson

From: Bill Roberts <broberts@alproperties.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2015 3:11 PM
To: Steven Robertson
Subject: Public Hearing 4216/4218 Grand Avenue

Steve,

I am in receipt of your letter dated December 18, 2015. The letter did not explain what type of restaurant is being proposed, sit down, fast food, breakfast, dinner, etc. What will the hours of operation be, alcohol served? If I understand your letter correctly, Marvin Development is asking for more parking than what is allowed by current zoning regulations. We are fine with them providing additional parking than current zoning ordinance allows. Our concern is less parking than the restaurant would need. This would cause patrons to park in the Essentia Health Clinic lot, causing problems for the patients that visit the clinic.

Please provide me with information on whether there will be liquor served and what type of restaurant is being proposed.



PROPERTIES

Bill Roberts

broberts@alproperties.com

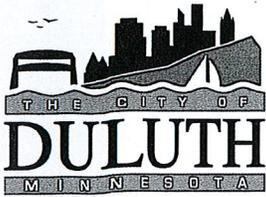
11 East Superior Street

Suite 500

Duluth, MN 55802

Cell 218-393-1540

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TO: Charles Froseth, Land Use Supervisor
FROM: Rachel Phelps, Planning Intern
Jenn Reed Moses, Planner II
DATE: September 2, 2014
RE: UDC Requirements for Off-Street Parking for Banks, Restaurants, Grocery Stores, and Coffee shops

Duluth currently implements a minimum parking requirement for all businesses. Recent meetings with business owners have sparked interest in parking requirement changes. Meeting attendees have suggested allowing an increase in off-street parking for their businesses to accommodate peak times of the day.

The current UDC's minimum off-street parking requirements are based on the total gross square footage of the building and may be adjusted to 30% less or 50% more as needed. Research was conducted to determine actual parking usage in Duluth for banks, restaurants, coffee shops, and grocery stores during peak business hours.

Methods

Parking space statistics were gathered throughout several weeks of site visits at specific hours throughout the week. Each business type's time was based on potential peak business times. Staff visited the lot and counted the number of cars in the lot at a given point in time. These numbers were then calculated into ratios of ***parking spaces per 1,000 square feet***, both to match UDC parking requirements and to enable comparisons between businesses of different sizes.

Current Regulations

The City of Duluth's current minimum and maximum parking were put into effect on the adoption date of the updated UDC in 2010. Current regulations are based upon the total gross square footage of the facility in which the business resides. Each building use, whether it is a coffee shop or grocery store, has a parking space minimum (See Table 1). These requirements may be adjusted to 30% less or 50% more.

Table 1: Off-Street Parking Spaces Required

Use	Requirement Minimum	Requirement Maximum
Bank	2.5 per 1,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area	3.75 per 1,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area
Restaurant	5 per 1,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area.	7.5 per 1,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area.
Grocery Store	3 per 1,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area.	4.5 per 1,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area

FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS

Observations show that existing fast food parking lots, with the exception of McDonald's, are larger than the observed maximum requirements. For half the restaurants, observed use falls within the UDC limits and could handle a decrease. For the other half, observed use is slightly over the UDC maximums, except for Culver's where usage greatly exceeds maximum.

Name	Total Ft ²	Existing Parking	UDC Requirements		Observed	Suggested Parking Requirement Adjustment
			Minimum Required	Maximum Allowed		
Arby's	4,083	40	20	26-30	14	Possible Decrease
Burger King	2,756	28	12	21	8-11	Possible Decrease
Culver's	4,399	73	22	33	30-51	Increase
McDonald's (21 st Ave E.)	5,026	35	25	38	21-37	Sufficient
Subway (Grand Ave)	2,480	38	12	18	2-8	Possible Decrease*
Subway (Kenwood)	1,997	29	10	15	10-18	Possible Increase
Taco Bell (Miller Hill)	1,944	36	10	15	7-21	Possible Increase

*Mid-day observation occurred at 1:15 and are likely higher at a slightly earlier time

Calculated as a ratio of parking spaces per 1,000 square foot, the parking usage can be compared between restaurants and against the UDC requirements:

	Parking Per 1,000 sq ft	
	UDC	Parking Being Used
Arby's	5.0 - 7.5	3.4 - 3.4
Burger King	5.0 - 7.5	2.9 - 4.0
Culver's	5.0 - 7.5	6.8 - 11.6
McDonald's (21 st Ave E.)	5.0 - 7.5	4.2 - 7.4
Subway (Grand Ave)	5.0 - 7.5	5.0 - 9.0
Subway (Kenwood)	5.0 - 7.5	0.8 - 3.2
Taco Bell (Miller Hill)	5.0 - 7.5	3.6 - 10.8

SIT DOWN RESTAURANTS

Observations show insufficient parking, causing overflow and crowded lots for Olive Garden, Grizzly's, Panera, and Red Lobster. Texas Road House has extra parking spaces, as does Valentini's which uses the extra spots from the Surgery Center for their evening dinner hours.

Name	Total Ft ²	Existing Parking	UDC Requirements		Observed	Suggested Parking Requirement
			Minimum Required	Maximum Allowed		
Olive Garden	6,895	72	35	51	52-86	Increase (overflow into Home Depot lot)
Grizzly's*	5,300	40	25	41	39-46	Possible Increase
Red Lobster	11,185	77	55	83	34-74	Sufficient but crowded, esp. during tourist season
Texas Road House	6,892	163	35	51	32-108	Increase
Valentini's Vicino Lago**	5,927	50	30	45	12-53	Possible Increase
Panera***	4,500	28	20	35	28-45	Possible Increase-overflow into empty shared lots. Congested drive-thru.

*shared parking with auto body shop

** shared parking with Lakewalk surgery

*** shared parking with 3 other businesses

Calculated as a ratio of parking spaces per 1,000 square foot, the parking usage can be compared between restaurants and against the UDC requirements:

	Parking Per 1,000 sq ft	
	UDC	Parking Being Used
Olive Garden	5.0 - 7.5	7.5 - 12.5
Grizzly's	5.0 - 7.5	7.4 - 8.7
Red Lobster	5.0 - 7.5	3.0 - 6.6
Texas Road House	5.0 - 7.5	4.6 - 15.7
Valentini's Vicino Lago	5.0 - 7.5	2.0 - 8.9
Panera	5.0 - 7.5	6.2 - 10.0

COFFEE SHOPS

The data shows insufficient and crowded parking for Caribou Coffee and Starbucks which both have shared lots. Caribou Coffee is a special circumstance as it is located in Canal Park which already has tight parking, especially during tourist season. Dunn Bros has crowded lots with patrons parking off-street on London Rd and the neighborhood street of 24th Ave E.

Name	Total Ft ²	Existing Parking	UDC Requirements		Observed	Suggested Parking Requirement
			Minimum Required	Maximum Allowed		
Caribou Coffee (Canal Park)*	1,650	31	8	12	6-26	Increase
Caribou Coffee (Miller Hill)	1,500	29	8	12	3-22	Increase
Starbucks**	1,225	10	6	9	2-7	Sufficient
Dunn Bros	1,176	10	6	9	9-11	Potential Increase

* shared space with ICO and Vitta Pizza

** shared space with 4 other businesses.

Calculated as a ratio of parking spaces per 1,000 square foot, the parking usage can be compared between coffee shops and against the UDC requirements:

	Parking Per 1,000 sq ft	
	UDC	Parking Being Used
Caribou Coffee (Canal Park)*	5.0 - 7.5	3.6 - 15.8
Caribou Coffee (Miller Hill)	5.0 - 7.5	2.0 - 14.7
Starbucks**	5.0 - 7.5	1.6 - 5.7
Dunn Bros	5.0 - 7.5	7.7 - 9.3

GROCERY STORES

With the exception of Whole Foods Co-op, grocery stores' usage is below the UDC required minimums.

Name	Total Ft ²	Existing Parking	UDC Requirements		Observed	Suggested Parking Requirement
			Minimum Required	Maximum Allowed		
Cub Foods	89,698	195	269	403	62-129	Decrease
Mount Royal	45,909	134	138	207	53-112	Decrease
Super One (West Duluth)	66,112	320	198	297	67-110	Decrease
Super One (East Duluth)	24,889	113	75	113	26-65	Decrease
Super One (Arrowhead)	46,644	156	140	210	57-78	Decrease
Super One (Miller Hill)	73,622	165	221	332	62-130	Decrease
Whole Foods Co-op	11,170	72	34	51	28-48	Sufficient

Calculated as a ratio of parking spaces per 1,000 square foot, the parking usage can be compared between grocery stores and against the UDC requirements:

	Parking Per 1,000 sq ft	
	UDC	Parking Being Used
Cub Foods	3.0 - 4.5	0.7 - 1.4
Mount Royal	3.0 - 4.5	1.2 - 2.7
Super One (West Duluth)	3.0 - 4.5	1.0 - 1.7
Super One (East Duluth)	3.0 - 4.5	1.0 - 2.6
Super One (Arrowhead)	3.0 - 4.5	1.2 - 1.7
Super One (Miller Hill)	3.0 - 4.5	0.8 - 1.8
Whole Foods Co-op	3.0 - 4.5	2.5 - 4.3

Analysis of Data

BANKS

Recent conversations with new banks being proposed suggest a trend of smaller buildings with the same amount of customers. This would mean an increase in parking needed per 1,000 sq. ft. Observations show that of the six banks researched, only one bank's parking count falls within the range of the parking regulations. The remaining banks, however, have a parking usage that demonstrates a mix of above and below the UDC range. Universally, the lots themselves are larger than the UDC maximums and larger than actually needed based on these observations.

Name	Total Ft ²	Existing Parking	UDC Requirements		Observed	Suggested Parking Requirement Adjustment
			Minimum Required	Maximum Allowed		
Duluth Teachers Credit Union (Trinity Rd.)*	1,085	27	3	4	9-10	Increase
North Shore Bank of Commerce (E. Superior St.)	4,556	45	11	17	1-7	Possible Decrease
U.S. Bank (Arrowhead Rd.)	2,530	26	7	10	4-13	Possible Increase
U.S. Bank (W. Superior St.)	9,270	18	23	34	4-6	Decrease
Wells Fargo (Arrowhead Rd.)	2,400	22	6	9	7-16	Possible Increase
Western Bank (Central Ave.)	5,664	27	13	19	8-10	Possible Decrease

* Shared parking space with Valvoline auto shop.

Calculated to a ratio of parking spaces per 1,000 square foot, the parking usage can be compared between banks and against the UDC requirements:

	Parking Per 1,000 sq ft	
	UDC	Parking Being Used
Duluth Teachers Credit Union (Trinity Rd.)	2.5 - 3.75	8.3 - 9.2
North Shore Bank of Commerce (E. Superior St.)	2.5 - 3.75	0.2 - 1.5
U.S. Bank (Arrowhead Rd.)	2.5 - 3.75	1.6 - 5.1
U.S. Bank (W. Superior St.)	2.5 - 3.75	0.4 - 0.6
Wells Fargo (Arrowhead Rd.)	2.5 - 3.75	2.9 - 6.7
Western Bank (Central Ave.)	2.5 - 3.75	1.4 - 1.8

Conclusions:

Based on the parking observed at the above businesses, we conclude the following:

- It appears that small banks use more parking per 1,000 square feet, but larger banks use less.
- Fast food restaurants demonstrate a wide range of parking usage. Some use far less than current requirements, and some clearly need more parking than the UDC would allow. Based on the size of existing parking lots, it seems that all the fast food restaurants studied are willing to provide more parking than allowed by the UDC.
- Sit down restaurants show a need for an increase in parking maximums.
- Coffee shops clearly show there is a huge demand for parking, with lots of customers at peak times. Coffee shops demonstrate parking ratios higher than other types of restaurants.
- Large grocery stores exhibit oversized parking lots, and observed usage suggests that even the parking minimums are far too high. Small grocery stores have higher parking ratios; for these grocery stores, the current UDC standards appear sufficient to meet parking needs.

Recommendations

In traditional zoning practice, parking minimums are established for various uses, based on typical vehicle demands, to ensure that a proposed development provides adequate parking for its users and minimizes demands on on-street parking. Duluth has long used parking minimums, with a few exceptions – notably the downtown area and Canal Park, which have had exemptions from providing parking because there is sufficient public lots and parking ramps, as well as transit nearby.

In the last couple of decades, parking research has highlighted the need to also establish parking maximums. While providing off-street parking has provided a convenience to many customers, it also has come with its own costs: increased stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces; increased water pollution from oil, salt, and other contaminants; increased public costs for roads to get vehicles to destinations; decreased pedestrian access since buildings are often sited behind large parking lots and require more space in between buildings; and a development pattern that is less dense, more sprawl-like, and contributes to less green space.

Parking requirements should provide a balance – they should support economic development by encouraging parking for customers, but should also minimize unneeded impervious surface. Parking maximums can result in full parking lots that may encourage customers to carpool, take transit, or visit at non-peak times, but should not result in an overall decrease in business.

These parking goals and best practices were considered when developing recommendations based on the observed parking use. Recommendations for the Planning Commission and Planning staff to consider implementing include:

- Increase the minimum requirements for bank parking from 2.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet to 3.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet. This recommended ratio provides a balance between the needs of larger banks versus smaller banks, and makes it more likely that the newer model of small branch banks could locate in Duluth.
- Increase the minimum requirements for fast-food and sit-down restaurants from 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet to 6 spaces per 1,000 square feet. Although not all restaurants demonstrate a need for this much parking, most are already providing parking lots in this range; and, for those that can't, reductions are available for shared parking and locating near a transit line.
- Although coffee shops are not currently defined as a separate use in the UDC, they exhibit higher parking usage than other types of restaurants. If the parking requirements are amended to define coffee shops separate from other restaurants, the recommended parking ratio is 7.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet.
- To reduce the amount of unused impervious surface, the observed parking use suggests that large grocery stores could be reduced from 3.0 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet to 2.5 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet.

- Because of the variable needs demonstrated in most categories that were studied, the existing cap on parking variances (175% of the required minimums) is likely insufficient. If a proposed use can meet the variance standards for practical difficulty or undue hardship, they may be able to demonstrate a legitimate need for parking beyond the 175% cap.
- Future study should investigate:
 - Is there a way to take into account a business's proximity to available on-street parking when calculating parking requirements? For instance, Texas Roadhouse must accommodate all vehicle traffic on-site, where restaurants such as Va Bene or Chester Creek Café have additional parking resources nearby.
 - How can we further encourage sharing of parking lots, such as Valentini's?
 - Are there ways to mitigate the negative consequences of parking lots (stormwater, water quality, pedestrian access, density) that do not involve parking minimums and maximums?

Attachments: Parking Research - Banks, Restaurants, and Grocery Stores; March –August 2014