

Principal Points Statement
665-667 and 669 Grand Street (Block 17301, Lots 4 & 5)
Jersey City, Hudson County, New Jersey

An application has been filed for the above noted property with the Jersey City Planning Board for Preliminary and Final Site Plan approval; and approval of a bulk “c” deviations for minimum lot area, minimum parking requirements, curb cut on Grand Street, surface parking exterior to the principal building, and minimum drive aisle width. The subject property is located within the Mixed Use-E/Residential (MU-E/R) Zone of the Morris Canal Redevelopment Plan.

The subject property is identified as Lots 4 and 5 on Block 17301 and is located midblock between Johnston Avenue and Communipaw Avenue. The subject property has a total of approximately 147 feet of frontage on Grand Street and a total lot area of approximately 12,342 square feet. Lot 4 is currently developed with a 1-story industrial building and Lot 5 is currently vacant.

The purpose of this application is to develop the property with a new 4-story, mixed-use building with ground floor retail and 23 residential units above. The ground floor will consist of a 1,459-square-foot retail space and 2,677-square-foot retail space, residential lobby, and bicycle storage room. The project proposes a driveway interior to the building that will provide access from Grand Street to the 7-space surface parking area in the rear yard of the property. The 2nd and 3rd floors will each consist of eight units made up of seven 1-bedroom and one 2-bedroom unit. The 4th floor will consist of seven units made up of four 1-bedroom units and three 2-bedroom units. In total the 23 units will have a unit breakdown of eighteen 1-bedroom units with an average of approximately 832 square feet and five 2-bedroom units with an average of approximately 1,116 square feet. The project is also proposing a rooftop amenity deck.

The requested bulk “c” deviations can be granted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70.c.(2), wherein the benefits of the proposed project would substantially outweigh any detriments. The proposed project will replace an existing nonconforming industrial building along with developing a vacant lot with a new permitted mixed-use, retail and residential building along Grand Street.

The proposed project will consolidate Lots 4 and 5 into one lot. Lot 4 has an existing nonconforming lot area of 3,790 square feet and Lot 5 has an existing nonconforming lot area of 8,552 square feet. The proposed lot consolidation will create a lot with a total area of 12,342 square feet where a minimum lot area of 20,000 square feet is required. The proposed lot consolidation will bring the property into closer conformity with minimum lot area requirement. The proposed 12,342-square-foot lot after lot consolidation will be sufficient size for the proposed mixed-use building providing for active ground floor uses and surface parking in the rear yard. The

proposed project is compliant with all yard and coverage bulk requirements and will also comply with the Green Area Ratio (GAR) Standards.

The Redevelopment Plan has conflicting parking requirements.¹ The project is proposing 7 parking spaces where a minimum total of 25 spaces are required based on the greatest total parking requirement. This includes the requirement of 0.9 spaces per unit or 21 spaces for the proposed 23 units and the requirement of 1 space per 1,000 square feet of gross retail floor area or 4 spaces for the proposed 4,224 square feet of retail. The proposed 7 spaces would meet the lesser parking requirements of the Redevelopment Plan where 0.9 spaces per two-bedroom unit or 5 spaces for the proposed 5 two-bedroom units and 0 spaces would be required for the 4,224 square feet of retail. The project is also proposing to locate the parking spaces in a surface parking area in the rear yard exterior to the principal building where parking is required to be located interior to the principal building. The MU-E/R Zone of the Redevelopment Plan requires specific uses to front onto Grand Street, which includes ground floor retail sales of goods and services. The project is proposing the parking to be in a surface parking area in the rear yard in order to maximize the amount of retail fronting onto Grand Street and minimize the interruption of the intended active streetscape. The extended retail is also more consistent with the purpose of the mixed-use district than a ground floor parking garage. The surface parking area in the rear yard will be surrounded with vegetation and a new 6-foot-high vinyl fence along all property lines. In addition, a new shade tree will be planted in the rear yard. Therefore, the surface parking area will be screened from view on all sides to minimize any adverse impacts including headlight glare on adjacent properties.

The project is proposing a bicycle room with 12 bicycle parking spaces meeting the minimum requirement. Furthermore, the proposed bicycle parking is consistent with Jersey City Bicycle Master Plan that proposes a protected bike lane along Grand Street. In addition, the subject property is approximately 0.5 miles from the Garfield Avenue Light Rail Station, is 200 feet from the Grand Street at State Street NJ Transit bus stop and is approximately 0.2 miles from the Communipaw Avenue at Grand Street bus stop. The connection to the bicycle network and public transportation reduces the automobile dependency for future residents of the building. There are also other neighborhood commercial services along Grand Street and Communipaw Avenue. In addition, Berry Lane Park is approximately 0.4 miles from the subject property. The proximity to these neighborhood services further supports a reduced automobile dependency.

¹ The off-street parking and loading requirements of the Redevelopment Plan requires 1 space per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area of office, retail, or other commercial uses. The Mixed-Use Zone has a parking requirement of 0.25 off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit, exempting studio and one-bedroom residential units in structures greater than 3 stories, and 1 space per 1,000 square feet of retail, exempting the first 5,000 square feet of commercial gross floor area for all mixed-use zones. The MU-E zone has a parking requirement of 0.9 spaces per residential dwelling unit. It should also be noted that the maximum parking requirement in all mixed-use zones is 1 space per unit.

The project is proposing a curb cut along Grand Street in order to access the proposed parking area in the rear of the property. The Redevelopment Plan states,

“No curb cuts shall be permitted along Grand Street. Instead, four (4) new access streets shall be constructed. These shall include: Bishop street on the former R-O-W, extensions of State Street and Westervelt Place, and the new circulation alley as described above. All streets shall provide twenty-four (24), unobstructed access and be offered to the City for dedication.” (RDP §XI.D.7.D.2 (pg.43))

The contemplated new access streets do not run on or adjacent to the subject property. The subject property is the only property in the MU-E/R zone with this condition. The MU-E/R zone is also the only Mixed-Use zone in the Redevelopment Plan that contemplates new access streets. The other Mixed-Use zones runs along other portions of Grand Street, Garfield Avenue, Communipaw Avenue, and Johnston Street. The creation of new access streets would allow for access off higher trafficked streets, however, as stated the subject property is not adjacent to any of the contemplated new streets. Therefore, this requested deviation is also related to the parking deviation discussed above where the benefits of the lesser number of proposed parking spaces producing less traffic impacts onto Grand Street would outweigh the detriments. The proposed project will be removing one existing curb cut from Grand Street where two curb cuts currently exist. The proposed 20-foot driveway aisle where 22 feet is required will provide for sufficient vehicular maneuvering while allowing for additional landscaping around the perimeter of the parking area.

The granting of the deviation will advance the purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law and promote the general welfare. Granting the requested deviation will guide the appropriate use and development of the property in a manner that will promote the general welfare consistent with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2.a. through the provision of an appropriate mixed-use building that is consistent with the intent of the Redevelopment Plan. The project is also proposing a density that is consistent with goals of the Redevelopment Plan and therefore promotes the establishment of appropriate population densities and concentrations that will contribute to the well-being of persons, neighborhoods, communities; consistent with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2.e. The proposed project will promote a more desirable visual environment through creative development techniques consistent with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2.i. by developing the current predominant vacant lot along Grand Street with a new mixed-use building that will improve the streetscape.

The granting of the deviation will not result in a substantial detriment to the general welfare. As mentioned, the proposed project will remove an existing nonconforming industrial building along with developing a vacant lot. The proposed project meets the required yard and bulk requirements providing for light, air, and open space. The

proposed project will add four new street trees, landscaping in the rear yard, 1,500 square feet of green roofing, and a stormwater detention basing consistent with the Green Area Ratio requirements.

Granting the deviation will likewise not result in a substantial detriment to the zoning ordinance or zone plan. The proposed project is consistent with the purpose of the MU-E/R Zone which is,

“To create a new residential neighborhood with small scale convenience and comparison shopping catering to neighborhood needs...”

The proposed project promotes the goals of the Redevelopment Plan including,

“Provide opportunities for growth of neighborhood level retail, services and community facilities for the Lafayette neighborhood.”

“Ensure a positive land use impact and maximum benefits from the LRT by encouraging the redevelopment in areas closer to the light-rail transit station as mixed-use and higher intensity development consistent with the principles of “Smart Growth” and the State’s “Transit Village Initiative”; i.e. sustainable economic and social development, including a variety of housing choices, providing pedestrian friendly street and public rights-of-way, minimize automobile use by maximizing the appeal of mass transit, encourage reduced parking and shared use parking solutions, and creating a livable community with convenient access to commercial facilities.”

The proposed project also advances the Jersey City Master Plan by redeveloping the property, which will provide a unique, attractive, and high-quality residential area that will serve existing residents and attract new residents with a wide range of housing and life-style choices.

The Applicant reserves the right to supplement the foregoing reasons with expert testimony at the Planning Board hearing.