City of New Bedford
Department of City Planning
133 William Street · Room 303 · New Bedford, Massachusetts 02740
Telephone: (508) 979.1488 · Facsimile: (508) 979.1576

MAYOR
JON MITCHELL

PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE	PLANNING BOARD MEETING
March 15, 2021	March 17, 2021

Case #21-11: **SITE PLAN REVIEW**
969 Shawmut Avenue
Map: 121, Lot: 63

Owner/ Applicant: True Storage New Bedford, LLC
670 North Commercial Street
Manchester, NH 03101

Front of 969 Shawmut Avenue
Looking northwest from property line at Shawmut Avenue.

Overview

Request by applicant for Site Plan Review for the conversion of an existing warehouse into a climate controlled self-storage facility at 969 Shawmut Avenue (Map: 121, Lot: 63), a 3.5-acre site in an Industrial B zoned district. Owner/Applicant: True Storage New Bedford, LLC (670 North Commercial Street, Manchester, NH 03101).

Existing Conditions

The site is 3.5± acre parcel in an Industrial B zoned district. The site has approximately 602 feet of frontage on Shawmut Avenue. On site is brick and steel siding building, which is 75,076 square feet and most recently was occupied by a processing facility for recyclables. The building's use as an active recycling facility is evident in wear to the two dozen loading bays along the eastern side and the buildup of crushed glass and other recyclables along the perimeter of the building.

With exception of a landscaped area in the southeast corner of the site, pavement extends from the east and north edges of the building to the street. Some of this pavement is pitted and in disrepair. Behind the building is a wooded slope that extends to the western and southern property lines.

Directly abutting the site to the south is LePage & Son Roofing and a residential property at 207 Hathaway Road. Abutting to the west is a residential property at 223 Hathaway Road. The north-bound lane of Route 140 abuts to the north. Directly across Shawmut Avenue to the east is a retail plaza containing a Price Rite grocery store, a McDonalds, and an auto part store. The surrounding neighborhood is primarily commercial to the east, industrial to the north, residential to the west and a mix of commercial and residential to the south.

North side of 969 Shawmut Avenue.
Looking southwest from northern property line.

Proposed Conditions

The applicant proposes to convert the existing building to a climate-controlled self-storage facility. The proposed changes involve interior renovations to create the storage areas and climate control system, renovations to the building's façade, and various site improvements including sidewalks, curbing, parking, and landscaping.

The applicant does not propose any changes to the footprint of the building. Exterior building improvements will include cosmetic upgrades to the building façade including the infill of some existing loading dock doors, new windows, and exterior painting of existing metal siding. Three (3) drive-up steel canopies are proposed for the eastern exterior over loading zones. **The Board should inquire as to the height of these canopies and condition that plans be revised to include their dimensions.** New overheard steel doors will be installed beneath the canopies. In total, there are eleven (11) overhead bay doors proposed, with ten (10) on the east side of the building and one (1) on the north. All existing loading dock type entrances will either be replaced with a new overhead door or be filled in with a new section of wall. A new main entrance vestibule will be constructed on east side of the building near the southeast corner of the building. A similar vestibule is proposed for the northeast corner.

The interior of the building would be renovated to accommodate a leasing office and the storage areas. Additionally, the proposed renovations include security features, such as swipe card or keycard door access, surveillance cameras at entry points and hallways, and a security partnership with the NBPD that allow for emergency access.

The applicant proposes creating a new 5' wide concrete sidewalk along Shawmut Avenue to replace the existing pavement that extends from the eastern side of the building to the street. All existing pavement will be removed and replaced with landscaped areas, new driveway entrances, or parking/loading areas.

Operations

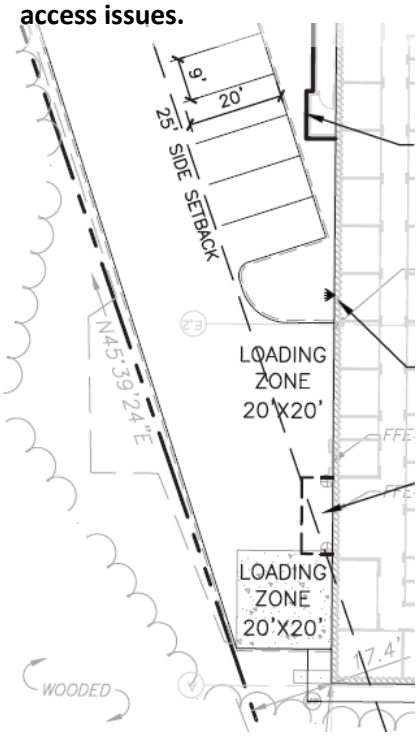
The proposed hours of operation are 9 AM to 9 PM, seven days a week. There will be 4 employees on site during this time and an estimated 15 customers over the course of the day. Employees will monitor the security system described above. The applicant anticipates monthly deliveries will arrive between 9 AM and 6 PM.

Parking & Loading

The applicant proposes creating four parking areas for a total of 23 parking spaces, which satisfies the zoning requirement. Seven (7) parking spaces are proposed along the north side of the building. Separate parking areas with five (5), four (4), and seven (7) spaces are proposed in front of the building. The seven (7) space parking area on the east side includes one (1) handicap space and will have two rows of parking space separated by a 22' wide drive aisle. As proposed, all parking areas will be bordered by vertical concrete curbs.

USE	PARKING REQUIREMENTS	LOADING REQUIREMENTS
Businesses engaged in the warehousing and distribution of goods & materials including building & construction contractors, equipment & supplies on premises, motor freight terminal, facilities for storing & servicing of motor vehicles used in conducting a business or public transportation, industrial machinery & equipment, grain, petroleum products & junkyards.	One (1) space per 1500 sq. ft. of gross floor area up to 15,000 sq. ft. Thereafter, one (1) additional space for each 5,000 sq. ft. or portion thereof in excess of 15,000 sq. ft., plus one (1) space for each vehicle utilized in the business.	Two (2) loading spaces for each building containing 10,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area. Thereafter, one (1) additional loading space shall be required for each additional 25,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area or for each fifteen (15) feet of dock, platform or opening in the building where the loading or unloading of commodities is intended to occur, whichever is the greatest.
Parking Calculations		
1 space for every 1,500 SF up to 15,000 SF (10) **+ 1 space for each additional 5,000 SF (12)**		**2 spaces for every 10,000 SF (2)** **+ 1 space for every additional 25,000 SF (2.6)**
Total parking spaces required = 22		**Loading spaces required = 5**
Proposed Parking		
Total parking spaces proposed 23 spaces		**Loading space proposed** 5 spaces

North loading areas by have access issues.



The applicant also proposes five (5) loading spaces. As described above, three (3) canopied loading zones will be created on the east side of the building, which will be accessed by the one-way entrances. There are two (2) loading areas proposed to the west of the parking area on the north side of the building, on either side of the canopy overhead door entrance planned near the northwest corner of the building. **The Board should inquire if customers using trucks will be able to maneuver in and out of the north loading areas.**

No bicycle racks are proposed.

Traffic Impact Study
A traffic impact study is not required unless requested by the Board.

Circulation
The seven (7) space parking area on the north side of the building will have a two-way driveway entrance off Shawmut Avenue of unknown width. The five (5) space parking area near the northeast corner of the building will have a 15' wide one-way entrance off Shawmut Avenue and an exit of unknown width to the two-way driveway on the north of the site. The four (4) space parking area in the front center of the site will have a one-way entrance of unknown width and a separate 15' wide one-way exit to Shawmut Avenue. The seven (7) space parking area near the southeast corner of the building will have a two-way driveway of unknown width off Shawmut Avenue. **The Board should ask for details as to the width of all unknown entrances and exits and condition that plans be updated to include them.**

Plans show that the entrances and exits will be marked with arrows painted on the pavement and "Do Not Enter" signs when appropriate.

The applicant proposes adding a concrete sidewalk along Shawmut Avenue and continuing an existing walkway around the south and west sides of the building. Plans do not appear to show any walkways from the parking area to the

entrances. **The Board may wish to inquire if adding walkways is possible, particularly for the north and southeast parking areas.**

Existing landscaping will be replaced with parking.
Looking south.

Landscaping
The applicant proposes creating new landscaped areas in front of the building and removing an existing landscaped area near current entrance to create a parking area. The landscape plan does not specify species, but calls for deciduous trees, evergreens, flowering trees, shrubs, perennials, groundcover, and wildflowers. The landscape plan also proposes creating lawn areas between the new sidewalk and parking areas on the east side of the building. **The Board should condition that the applicant coordinates with the Planning Department and the Department of Public Infrastructure to select plantings of appropriate size and type.**

Snow Storage & Waste Receptacles
The applicant proposes snow storage areas on the lawns adjacent to the parking areas. Snow storage appears to be adequate for the size of the drive aisles and parking areas. The applicant also notes in their project narrative that excess snow will be removed if it cannot be stored on site.

No waste receptacles are proposed on site. The applicant has indicated that this is a matter of practice for the self-storage company because experience has shown that customers may use dumpster improperly to clean out storage lockers. The applicant has confirmed that they will contract with a private company to have office trash removed. **The Board should ask that the applicant to detail plans for controlling illegal dumping in the wooded areas that surround the site.**

Stormwater
Existing drainage and roof leader system on site will remain. Overflow connections will be cut into the downspouts and leaders will be connected to a drainage manifold. Two infiltration trenches adjacent to the front parking areas are proposed. The applicant has submitted a stormwater management report as part of their application packet, which concludes that the proposed alterations will have minimal impact on drainage. Planning staff defers to the Department of Public Infrastructure regarding compliance with the city stormwater regulations.

Utility pole to removed.
Looking north from Shawmut Avenue.

Utilities
The applicant proposes to remove an electric utility pole on the eastern property line and has indicated in the plans that they will coordinate with Eversource to have it removed.

Site Preparation (Demolition and Erosion Control)
The applicant proposes to sawcut and remove all pavement along the east and north sides of the building, as well as clean and grub existing landscaped areas. Plans indicate that a tubular coir log barrier will be installed along the perimeter of this work. Catch basins will have silt sack filtration systems installed. A construction entrance will be installed at the northeast corner of the site.

Signage
Plans show a ground sign proposed near the street along one of the driveway entrances. The applicant has indicated that signage is still being finalized and advised by Planning staff that they will have to reappear before the Planning Board for ground sign review before installing signage. **The Board should include this as a condition.**

Building elevations show wall signs and indicate that they will be illuminated. **The Board should inquire as to the planned hours of illumination and condition appropriate restrictions if necessary.**

Other signage on site is limited to standard parking signage.

Lighting
The applicant has not submitted a lighting plan. They have indicated that all wall-mounted lighting on site will be replaced with similar fixtures that are "night sky friendly, shielded and directed downward." **The Board may wish to inquire as to the planned hours of illumination of site lighting and condition restrictions if appropriate.**

Existing lighting example.
Looking south from northern property line.

Architectural plans show two types of wall-mounted lighting fixtures:

- WPX LED Wall Pack
- Ostwin Outdoor LED Wall Light Cylinders LCL-01RW Series

The application indicates that, as proposed, the wall-mounted lighting will provide lighting for the parking and therefore, no pole-mounted lighting is proposed. **The Board should consider whether this lighting plan is adequate for the intended use and for their purposes in reaching a decision, if not then they must condition that lighting plan be completed. If the Board conditions requires that additional lighting be added, they should also condition that a revised plan be submitted to the Planning Department for administrative review.**

Architectural Plans
Architectural plans show the existing and proposed conditions. The proposed elevations have been revised to correct the labeling of compass directions, but the existing/demolition elevations have incorrect compass directions assigned to them. **The Board must condition that these plans be revised to show correctly labeled elevations.**

<u>Review Comments</u>
As required under city ordinance, the case submittal documents were distributed to City Clerk, City Solicitor, Health Department, Inspectional Services, Engineering, Public Infrastructure, Conservation Commission, Fire Department and School Department.

No comments were not received as of the publication of this report; any comments received will be made available at the public meeting.

Master Plan Goal

The proposal is consistent with the master plan's goal to expand workforce opportunities and communicates a positive message for business development.

Materials for Consideration

The engineered plan submission is shown as "True Store New Bedford, LLC Commercial Building Conversion" with the latest revision dated 2-12-21, prepared by Allen & Major Associates, Inc of Woburn, MA. The plans are stamped by Michael Malynowski, PE. The plan set includes the following sheets:

- C Cover
- V-101 Existing Conditions
- C-101 Site Preparation Plan
- C-102 Layout & Materials Plan
- C-103 Grading & Drainage Plan
- C-104 Landscape Plan
- C-500 Details
- C-501 Details

The architectural plan submission is shown as "True Store New Bedford" dated 12/20/20, prepared by True Storage New Bedford of Manchester, NH. The plans are stamped by Christopher J. Lewis, RA. The plan set includes the following sheets:

- A0-0A Cover Sheet
- A0-01 Level 01 Architectural Demolition Floor Plan
- A0-02 Overall Exterior Demolition Elevations
- A1-1 Level 01 Overall Floor Plan & Level 02 Overall Roof Plan
- A2-11 Standard Lighting Cut Sheets for Design-Build
- A3-1 Overall Exterior Elevations

Site Plan Criteria

In considering Site Plan Approval for the proposed project, the Board must find that the plan meets a number of objectives identified in Section 5470 of the City's (c.9) Zoning Ordinance including:

- **Adequate access to each structure for fire and service equipment;**
- **Adequate provision for utilities and stormwater drainage**;
- **Site alteration shall be designed after considering the qualities of the specific location, proposed land use, the design of building form, grading, egress points and other aspects of the development so as to:**
  - Minimize cut/fill volumes, removal of 6" caliper trees and larger, removal of stone walls, displacement of wetland vegetation, extent of stormwater flow increase from the site, soil erosion and the threat of air/water pollution;
  - Maximize pedestrian/vehicular safety to/from the site;
  - Minimize the obstruction of scenic views from publicly accessible locations;
  - Minimize visual intrusion by controlling layout/visibility of parking, storage and outdoor service areas viewed from public ways and residential areas;
  - Minimize glare from vehicle headlights and lighting fixtures;
  - Minimize unreasonable departure from the character, materials and scale of buildings in the vicinity;
  - Minimize contamination of groundwater from on-site wastewater disposal systems or operations on the premises involving the use, storage, handling or containment of solid/liquid wastes and hazardous substances;
  - Ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance;
  - Minimize damage to existing adjacent public ways;
  - Promote orderly and reasonable internal circulation within the site so as to protect public safety.

Staff Recommendations

Site Plan Approval. Having reviewed the submitted materials, planning staff offers the following recommendations for conditions to the Planning Board should it act favorably on the requested site plan approval for the project:

That the following **specific conditions** be applied to this decision:

1. The applicant will not install a ground sign without first applying for a building permit from Inspectional Services and appearing before the Planning Board for ground sign review.
2. **[If determined necessary by the Board]** Wall signs shall be illuminated during the hours set by the Planning Board.
3. **[If determined necessary by the Board]** Site lighting shall be illuminated during the hours set by the Planning Board.
4. Revised plans that show the height of the loading area canopies shall be submitted to the Planning Department for administrative review prior to the issuance of a building permit.
5. Revised plans that show the width of all drive aisles shall be submitted to the Planning Department for administrative review prior to the issuance of a building permit.
6. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall coordinate with the Planning Department and the Department of Public Infrastructure to select plantings of appropriate size and type.
7. **[If determined necessary by the Board]** The applicant must submit a complete lighting plan to the Planning Department for administrative review prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
8. Architectural plans shall be revised so that elevations are labeled with the correct compass direction prior to the issuance of a building permit.

That the following **general conditions** also be applied to this decision:

9. The project shall be completed according to the plans, notes, reports, and specifications submitted for consideration and final approval by the Planning Board.
10. The project shall be undertaken in a manner consistent with any departmental memos received in relation to plan and placed on file for Planning Board consideration. The conditions of such memos shall be considered to be part of these conditions.
11. The applicant shall submit final plan revisions to the Department of City Planning in the following formats: one (1) -11" x 17" Plan Set and one (1) CD or USB with Plan Set in PDF format and shall ensure that these same plans are properly submitted to the Department of Inspectional Services.
12. The applicant shall ensure that a copy of the Notice of Decision, bearing the certification of the New Bedford City Clerk signifying no appeal has been made against the project's approval, be provided for the Department of City Planning case file folder.
13. That the applicant shall ensure a copy of the Notice of Decision bearing the certification of the city of New Bedford City Clerk, signifying no appeal has been made against the project's approval, be recorded at the Registry of Deeds.
14. The applicant shall ensure that a copy recorded decision be provided for the Department of City Planning case file folder.
15. The applicant shall present any proposed modification from the approved plans for consideration to the Director of City Planning for determination as to whether the modified plan must return before this Board for further review.
16. The rights authorized by the granted approval must be exercised by issuance of a Building Permit by the Department of Inspectional Services and acted upon within one year from the date the decision was granted, or they will lapse.
17. The developer and site contractor must schedule a pre-construction meeting with the Department of Public Infrastructure prior to the start of construction.

Materials Provided by the Applicant are available at: *https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/planning/planning-board-agenda-info-2021/*.

969 Shawmut Avenue Map: 121 Lot: 63

NOTE: Property line is approximate; for discussion purposes, only. Aerial map is oriented north.