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Planning & Urban Development Department

Jeff Levine, Director

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November 8, 2012

TruChoice Federal Credit Union
272 Park Avenue
PO Box 10659
Portland, ME 04102

Jim Seymour
Sebago Technics
75 John Roberts Road, Suite 1A
South Portland, ME 04106

RE: Staff Review Comments for Level II Preliminary Site Plan

Project Name: TruChoice Federal Credit Union Improvements
Address: 272 Park Avenue
Applicant: TruChoice Federal Credit Union
Planner: Nell Donaldson

Project ID: 2012-606
CBL: 65-E-4

Dear Mr. Seymour:

Thank you for submitting an application for improvements proposed at the TruChoice Credit Union at 272 Park Avenue. This proposal is being reviewed as a preliminary plan subject to the Site Plan Ordinance, Article V of the Land Use Code. This letter outlines preliminary staff comments and requests further information.

Staff Review Comments for Level II Preliminary Plan

Zoning

The Zoning Administrator has confirmed that the proposal meets all the requirements of the R-P zone, *This is an existing use and structure within the R-P Zone. The Credit Union is considered to be professional offices under zoning and is allowed. Drive-thrus are not restricted in the R-P Zone. The new work entails relocating a detached shed and bumping out a 219 square foot vestibule at the front of the building. The drive-thru lanes are being expanded.*

The proposed work is meeting the underlying R-P zone requirements.

Separate permits are required for any new signage.

1. Transportation Standards

a. Impact on Surrounding Street Systems

The city's consulting traffic engineer, Tom Errico, concurs that the traffic impacts on the surrounding streets are likely to represent minimal changes.

I have reviewed the traffic assessment and find the methods and conclusions to be acceptable. The project is not expected to have a significant impact on traffic conditions in the area.

b. Access and Circulation

Mr. Errico has also reviewed the vehicular access to the site in terms of driveway clearance. He notes,
The driveway on Park Avenue does not meet the City's standard for corner clearance. Based upon site conditions and crash history, I support a waiver from the standard.

A formal waiver request should be included in the revised submittal.

Mr. Errico has also reviewed the vehicular access in terms of driveway width. He writes,
The driveway on Forest Street will be 31 feet wide. Given drive-through and egress vehicle needs, I find this width to be acceptable.

The driveway on Park Avenue will be widened to approximately 24 feet. While the City does not have maximum width standards for one-way driveways, it is my recommendation that the driveway not be widened.

It is understood that, in light of this comment, the intent is to reduce the proposed Park Avenue driveway width by four feet. Additional comments from Mr. Errico on this matter will be provided.

It should be noted that, per Section 14-526(a)2.a(iii) of the city's ordinance, drive throughs are not to extend nearer than 25 feet to the street line. The city acknowledges the existing nature of the drive through and the positioning of the drive-through as a means of mitigating queuing on Park Avenue. However, a formal waiver request should be submitted.

It is the city's understanding that the proposed improvements, particularly the addition of a drive through lane, are intended to mitigate an existing stacking problem on the site. However, there are questions regarding the site's capacity to accommodate the additional lane. Mr. Errico, consulting traffic engineer, provides the following comments:

The middle drive-through lane is only 8-feet wide. The applicant shall provide information that supports that this narrow width will function acceptably.

The width of the combined new drive-through lane and egress lane is approximately 18 feet wide. I'm concerned that vehicles will not be able to exit the site if large vehicles are occupying the drive-through lane.

The width of the entry lanes approaching the drive-through lanes is approximately 22 feet. It appears that this location will constrain traffic flow as it will serve access to the three drive-through lanes and vehicles exiting the site. The applicant shall provide some information on how traffic will be managed.

It is noted that responses to these comments have been submitted via email. As above, additional comments from Mr. Errico on this matter will be provided.

As noted in our prior telephone conversation, there are some concerns regarding pedestrian movement on the site, particularly with respect to ADA. In terms of pedestrian improvements, Mr. Errico notes,

The sidewalk ramp at the corner of the Park Avenue and Forest Street is non-compliant from an alignment perspective and does not provide a detectible warning panel. MaineDOT and the City have plans to upgrade the ramp next year and therefore no action is required.

The proposed project is relocating the handicapped parking space and will require handicapped customers to circuitously access the building via the public sidewalk system. The applicant should provide documentation that this condition meets ADA requirements.

Sight distance between vehicles exiting the site and pedestrians on the Forest Street sidewalk is limited, particularly to the north. The applicant should consider strategies that will help to warn both vehicles and pedestrians of the possible conflict.

As above, it is noted that your office has provided comments and suggested modifications in response. Mr. Errico's comments on these will be provided.

David Senus, consulting civil engineer, adds,

The following details should be provided in accordance with the City of Portland Technical Manual for all work within the City Right-of-Way:

- 1. ADA Pedestrian Ramps (modified as necessary to match design layout)*
- 2. Sidewalk Ramp Detectable Warning Panel*

c. Public Transit Access

There is a bus stop located at the entrance to the site. The proposed driveway changes on Park Avenue would affect both this bus stop and the adjacent parking spaces. In the revised submittal, should the driveway width remain as proposed or similar, additional information on impacts to public transit and on-street parking should be provided.

d. Parking

The application includes a reduction in the parking on the site from 20 to 15 spaces. There are some concerns with respect to the design of the rear parking area. Tom Errico notes,

The aisle width for the rear 10 parking spaces is 29 feet and exceeds the City's maximum width standard. The applicant should provide documentation in support of a technical waiver.

Regarding your request for confirmation on this matter, a formal waiver request will be required.

e. Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

N/A

2. Environmental Quality Standards

a. Preservation of Significant Natural Features

There are no known significant natural features on the site.

b. Landscaping and Landscape Preservation

Jeff Tarling, the city's arborist, provides the following comments:

Overall, the proposed landscape plan improves this site and helps this commercial site fit into the mostly residential neighborhood. The plan contains a mix of ornamental shrub and tree planting near Park Avenue area along with two shade trees to the right of the entrance drive.

Landscape Recommendations & Conditions:

- 1. Ash trees, Fraxinus americana - due to the likelihood of 'Emerald Ash Borer' to effect Maine in the years to come, changing the two proposed American Ash trees to the right of the driveway to alternate species is recommended. This might include: Red Maple cultivars, Hornbeam, River Birch...*
- 2. Forest Street edge - along the building near the driveway exit to the doorway, the now crushed stone area should receive some type of "green" landscape treatment. This could be similar to the landscape treatment of the same space near Park Avenue; include woody or herbaceous plants, ornamental grasses. The area to the right of the doorway to the proposed landscape bed could remain as is or be planted as well.*
- 3. The small shed like building in the parking lot should receive some type of exterior siding treatment improvement and / or landscape planting. The landscape planting might be located in the curbed island area on the parking lot side.*

c. Water Quality, Storm Water Management and Erosion Control

David Senus, consulting civil engineer, provides the following comments:

In accordance with Section 5 of the City of Portland Technical Manual, a Level II development project is required to submit a stormwater management plan pursuant to the regulations of Maine DEP Chapter 500 Stormwater Management Rules, including conformance with the Basic, General, and Flooding Standards. The applicability noted in the City's Land Use Ordinance and Technical Manual is intended to supersede the applicability requirements outlined within Maine DEP Chapter 500. We have reviewed the applicability of these standards relative to the proposed project and offer the following comments:

1. *Basic Standards: Plans, notes and details have been provided to address erosion and sediment control requirements, inspection and maintenance requirements, and good housekeeping practices in accordance with Appendix A, B, & C of MaineDEP Chapter 500. The applicant proposes to install a StormSok Catch Basin Filter Insert in one onsite catch basin. This catch basin insert will require ongoing inspection and maintenance to function properly; we request that the applicant submit a basic inspection and maintenance checklist to accompany the manufacturer's recommended maintenance procedures for this insert.*
2. *General Standards: The project will result in a de minimis increase in impervious area of approximately 898 square feet. As such, the project is not required to include any specific stormwater management features for stormwater quality control; however, the Applicant has elected to install a StormSok Catch Basin Filter Insert, manufactured by Fabco, to provide capture and collection of sediment and debris from nearly all of the parking area in order to offset the minimal increase in impervious area. This proposal provides an acceptable means of treatment for the site.*
3. *Flooding Standards: The project will result in a de minimis increase in impervious area of approximately 898 square feet. As such, the project is not required to include any specific stormwater management features to control the rate or quantity of stormwater runoff from the site.*

The applicant proposes to add an ADA accessible parking space with an adjacent access aisle, curb ramp, and sidewalk at the northwest corner of the site. This area is an existing low point with a catch basin that collects drainage from the majority of the drive-lanes and parking areas of the site. The applicant proposes to raise the rim grade of the catch basin by approximately 0.7' and install an ADA compliant grate to allow access over the catch basin. We recommend that the applicant revisit the location of this ADA accessible lane and access route to not fall within a drainage collection location.

4. Public Infrastructure and Community Safety Standards

a. Consistency with Master Plans

The proposed expansion is consistent with the city's master plan.

b. Public Safety and Fire Prevention

The city's Fire Prevention Bureau has no comments on the proposed plan.

c. Availability and Adequate Capacity of Public Utilities

The city's Department of Public Services has no comments on the proposed plan.

5. Site Design Standards

a. Massing, Ventilation and Wind Impact

No comments at this time.

b. Shadows

No comments at this time.

c. Snow and Ice Loading

Proposed snow storage areas should be denoted on the site plan.

d. View Corridors

N/A

e. Historic Resources

N/A

f. Exterior Lighting

Although lighting cut sheets have been provided, there is no accompanying photometric or lighting plan. A photometric plan is required.

g. Noise and Vibration

No comments at this time.

h. Signage and Wayfinding

Tom Errico notes,

The "Do Not Enter" sign at the Forest Street driveway should be replaced with a standard MUTCD sign.

It is understood that it is your intent to replace the signage in this location.

i. Zoning Related Design Standards

N/A

Additional Submittals Required

1. Final site plan to include:
 - a. Distances to property lines
 - b. Proposed snow storage areas
 - c. Trash and recycling areas
 - d. Limits of disturbance
2. Written summary of fire safety compliance
3. References from the existing conditions plan. Note that a formal survey of the site has not been provided.
4. The Planning Authority may request additional information during the continued review of the proposal according to applicable laws, ordinances and regulations.

Planning Staff Recommendation

Based upon the staff review of the preliminary Level II site plan, I recommend that the applicant proceed with submission of a final plan for staff review. Please submit one (1) complete paper set and one (1) digital set of plans and documents to address staff comments. Upon receipt of the revised material, the City of Portland will review the additional plans and information for conformance with applicable ordinances. Please be aware that an application expires within 120 days of the date upon which this written request for additional information was made.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 874-8723 or by email at hcd@portlandmaine.gov.

Sincerely,



Nell Donaldson
Planner

Electronic Distribution

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