



MEMORANDUM

To: Burlington Development Review Board
Mary O’Neil, Principal Planner
Scott Gustin, Principal Planner & Asst. Administrative Officer

From: Joe Weith, Senior Project Manager

Date: April 4, 2023

Re: Howard Center - Sketch Plan Review – Project Narrative

Howard Center is proposing to redevelop their property located at 300 Flynn Avenue. This narrative provides a brief description of the project and addresses several key design aspects and regulatory requirements as outlined in the Burlington Comprehensive Development Ordinance (“CDO”).

Project Description

The 300 Flynn Redevelopment project will involve demolition of the existing approximately 24,000 square foot building and construction of a new 3 story, approximately 51,000 square foot building. The current and proposed use of the property is mental health crisis center which is a conditional use in the underlying zoning district.

Howard Center and the project team met with the Ward 5 NPA on December 15, 2022, and the City’s Technical Review Committee on February 9, 2023.

Dimensional Standards and Density

Zoning District: The underlying zoning district is Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU).

Overlay Districts: Design Review Overlay District; Natural Resource Protection including the Riparian and Littoral Conservation Zone along Englesby Brook and the Wetland Conservation Zone for the wetland along Englesby Brook.

Building Setbacks: Proposed building setbacks: 11 feet from Flynn Avenue (10 foot minimum required), 18 feet from Pine Street (10 foot minimum required), 104 feet from the west property line (zero feet minimum required), 164 feet from north property line (zero feet minimum required), and 3.4 feet from southeast property line (zero feet minimum required).

Lot Coverage: The proposed lot coverage is 58% (80% maximum lot coverage allowed).

Building Height: The proposed building height is 36.5 feet as measured from the building's main finish floor elevation (FFE) of the primary facade facing Flynn Avenue (see South Elevation on A3-1.1 for the measurement of building height). Maximum allowable building height in the NMU District is 35 feet. Per Article 5.2.6(c)(6) of the CDO, the applicant requests consideration for a 5% variation in the allowable building height to account for grade changes across the site. An additional 1.5 feet in building height will help the design team with managing the grades as they modulate towards Englesby Brook and will enable the building to better support the fully electric air-based building systems needed to provide the clients and staff with good indoor air quality.

The applicant would appreciate feedback from staff and the DRB on the likelihood of granting the 5% height variation.

Parking

Vehicle Parking: The property is located within the Multi-Modal Mixed Use Parking District. Table 8.1.9-1 of the CDO does not list a maximum off-site parking requirement for mental health crisis centers. The land use category most similar to mental health crisis center for parking purposes is "crisis counseling center", which allows maximum parking of 3 spaces per 1,000 gfa. The programmed use of the building will be a blend of scheduled outpatient services and unscheduled, drop in, as needed services. The latter relates primarily to our crisis services and intake services which will be located at this site with a visitor flow that more closely aligns with the "crisis counseling center" use.

The maximum allowable number of on-site parking spaces is 153 (51,000 sf / 1,000 sf x 3 spaces = 156). The project proposes 106 total on-site parking spaces including 5 ADA accessible spaces, 2 EV charging spaces, and 8 tandem spaces. The total number of proposed parking spaces that count toward the maximum allowed is 99.

Bicycle Parking: Section 8.2.4 of the CDO requires 6 short term and 10 long term bike parking spaces for this project. For short term bike parking, 3 U-racks (6 bike parking spaces) are proposed near the main entrance on Flynn Avenue and one U-rack (2 bike parking spaces) is

proposed near the entrance on Pine Street for a total of 8 short term parking spaces. A minimum of 10 long term bike parking spaces will be accommodated in the basement.

Traffic/Transportation

As shown in the attached ITE Trip Generation table, the project will result in an increase of 63 vehicle trip ends during the weekday AM peak hour and 72 trip ends during the weekday PM peak hour compared to existing conditions. In accordance with VTrans and Burlington Public Works (BPW) policies, a traffic study is not required since the net increase in peak hour trip ends is less than 75. BPW has confirmed that a traffic study will not be required but they suggested further discussion and tracking in the event changes are made that result in the 75 trip end threshold being triggered.

Applicant requests confirmation from staff and the DRB that a traffic study will not be required.

The plan shows the existing bus stop on Pine Street being relocated several feet to the south. GMT has approved relocation of the bus stop as proposed.

Stormwater

The proposed stormwater management plan will significantly improve the detention and treatment of stormwater on the site compared to existing conditions. The stormwater management plan involves the installation of practices to both treat and detain runoff from the site to reduce pollutant load and peak flows to Englesby Brook and the surrounding wetland. Stormwater from the building roof and parking areas will be directed to high-flow vegetated filters which will provide water quality treatment. The water will then flow into a system of buried chambers which have a controlled outlet. This system allows for the slow release of stormwater back towards the wetland without increasing peak flows. This proposed system surpasses the plan outlined in the Englesby Brook Flow Restoration Plan.

Natural Resource Protection

As shown on the attached site grading and layout plan, Englesby Brook and an associated Class II wetland encompasses the northern portion of the site. The limits of the wetland were delineated by Gilman & Briggs Environmental and are depicted on the plan. The plan also shows the limits of the state's regulated 50-foot wetland buffer and the City's 100 foot wetland and riparian and littoral conservation zones.

The project reduces the area of impact to the 50' wetland buffer zone, 100' wetland buffer zone, and 100' riparian buffer zone compared to the existing site (see zoning table on the attached plan cover sheet). The tree line will not be significantly altered, and best management practices will be used to prevent erosion and control sedimentation during construction. In addition, the stormwater management system will effectively treat runoff before it enters the wetland/riparian buffer zones and control the release of runoff to protect the existing stream channel.

Attached is a wetland and natural resources evaluation memorandum prepared by Gilman & Briggs. Gilman & Briggs concluded that the project is well designed with better water quality infrastructure than currently exists and there will be no negative impact to the wetland, wetland buffer or natural resource areas.

Architectural Design

The redevelopment project meets the Architectural Design Standards as written in Article 6 of the CDO. The project's massing, height, and scale relate harmoniously with adjacent structures: Flynn Avenue Coop to the west (3 stories), 316 Flynn Avenue to the east (4 stories), and St. Anthony's Church to the north. The proposed low pitch membrane roof is appropriate for the commercial function of the building and relates to existing low pitch roofs nearby: Champlain School, 316 Flynn, and industrial buildings further west on Flynn (208 Flynn, City Market). Cornices and different parapet heights are employed in the design to provide architectural detail and avoid large expanses of undifferentiated roof forms.

Two fully accessible primary entrances invite the user to the building. The main entrance on Flynn Avenue welcomes most visitors and staff, while the Pine Street entrance serves users coming to the community room space on Pine Street. Windows are primarily vertical in nature, with some deviations to create visual interest. The proposed materials (high density fiber cement and metal siding) have a 50+ year expected useful life, and do not require periodic repainting. Each building elevation employs these materials to create depth on the elevation and create an inviting street edge. Plantings along each street edge provide privacy to users as well as performing stormwater function to pre-treat roof water.

Safety and security for staff and clients is of utmost importance to Howard Center. To those ends, parking lot and parking garage lighting will be as bright as possible (while meeting Burlington's lighting limits) to create a safe environment. Emergency vehicle access, including fire truck radii analysis, has been incorporated into the design.

Energy Efficiency/Sustainability

The project will not use any fossil fuels on site. To achieve this, the building will be insulated above code minimums with a goal of meeting the Passive House air sealing requirements. Heating and cooling will be accomplished using geothermal heat pumps. Ventilation is provided using high efficiency balanced ventilation with heat recovery. The central ventilator will be located on the roof and screened from public view. Domestic hot water will utilize air source heat pump technology. The roof has been designed for future rooftop solar. The design team is working with Burlington Electric Department to maximize opportunities for energy efficiency.

Landscaping

The attached landscape planting plan proposes a mix of deciduous trees and evergreens, shrubs, ornamental grasses and perennials. Eight (8) new shade trees are proposed within and around the

Flynn Avenue parking lot. The 8 new trees plus the existing tree along the west property line comply with the City's regulations pertaining to the number of trees and shading requirements for parking lots.