



To: Plan Commission

From: Daniel Ritter, AICP, Community and Economic Development Director
Ronald Mentzer, Community and Economic Development Consultant

Date: September 11, 2025

Re: 16825 Churnovic Lane, Amazon Sortation Facility - Variation City Code and Zoning Ordinance Variation Requests – Plan Commission Case # V-25-2-9-1

Project Details

Project:	MDW5 Yard Connection
Applicant:	Amazon.com
Requests:	A City Code Variation for increased driveway width on Lidice Parkway and a Zoning Variation for a reduction in parking lot landscape islands.
Location:	16825 Churnovic Lane (the “Subject Property”)

Site Details

Lot Size:	Approximately 26.63 acres
Existing Zoning:	M-1 Limited Manufacturing District
Existing Improvements:	440,000 sq. ft. office/warehouse building, 539 space parking lot, and 118 semi-trailer parking spaces

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use Summary

	Land Use	Comp Plan	Zoning
Subject Parcel	Office/Warehouse	Light Industrial	M-1
North	Municipal Water Tower and Townhomes	Single-family Attached and Utilities	R-3 and M-1
South	Office/Warehouse Bldg.	Light Industrial	M-1
East	Vacant and Truck Terminal	Commercial and Light Industrial	M-1
West	Office/Warehouse/Industrial Bldg.	Light Industrial	M-1

Attachments

Application documents submitted by Applicant include:

- 6/03/2025 Application for Development/Variations
- 8/25/2025 Applicant response to Zoning Ordinance Standards for Variations
- 7/18/2025 Final Engineering Plans (includes Landscape Plans)
- 7/21/2025 Project Narrative
- 6/30/2025 Traffic Memorandum

Application Background and Project Summary

The Subject Property was originally developed as a speculative industrial/warehouse facility in 2016. The property was subsequently leased to the Applicant in 2017. The Applicant has been utilizing the facility for one of its midwest package sorting facilities since taking occupancy of the building in 2017.

At this time, the Applicant is proposing to implement a variety of site modifications that are collectively designed to reduce truck traffic and queueing on the surrounding public road network and make it safer for employees to walk between the building and parking areas on the site. Key proposed site modifications include:

1. Removal of the employee parking along the south end of the existing building and relocation of the existing guard shack driveway at the southeast corner of the property slightly to the east. These modifications allow Amazon trucks to circulate between the dock doors east and west sides of the building without using the adjacent public roadway network.
2. Adding new parking, sidewalk, crosswalk, signage, speed bump, and striping improvements in the existing northern employee parking lot to improve safety for employees walking between their vehicles and the building.

Summary of Requested Variations

To implement the above summarized site modifications, the Applicant is requesting City approval of the following variations:

1. **Increased Driveway Width:** A variation from Section 15.040 of the City of Crest Hill City Code that allows the proposed relocated southwest driveway onto Lidice Parkway to be approximately 71 feet wide. This section of the City Code establishes the maximum width of commercial driveways at 30 feet. The existing driveway at this location is approximately 80 feet in width and is considered a non-conforming condition. To reconstruct this driveway at a new location and comply with code, it needs to be constructed with a width of 30 feet or less.
2. **Reduced Parking Lot Landscaping:** A variation from Section 11.6-2 of the City of Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance that allows the existing required internal parking lot landscape islands in the north parking lot to be replaced with pedestrian sidewalk improvements. According to Section 11.6-2 of the Zoning Ordinance, a landscape island is required at the end of each row of parking and at a ratio of one landscape island for every 20 parking spaces. The Applicant proposes to replace eight existing landscape islands in the northern parking lot with pedestrian sidewalk islands.

Staff Analysis

Overall, staff believes the Applicant's proposed parking lot, site circulation, driveway, and landscaping improvements will enhance on-site pedestrian safety, improve on-site truck circulation, and reduce the amount of Amazon related truck traffic on the adjacent roadways. Staff is of the opinion that the variation requests are reasonable and acceptable given the underlying zoning of the property, history of the site improvements, and the character of the Applicant's site and the adjacent business park.

Staff feedback on specific aspects of the Applicant's proposed project:

Parking Requirements: The proposed project involves the elimination and relocation of 124 existing parking spaces along the south end of the existing building. 32 of these parking spaces will be replaced as part of the proposed northern parking lot improvements. Sheet C2.0 includes detailed "Required" and "Proposed" parking calculations for the site. Staff has reviewed these calculations and determined that the total number of proposed parking spaces on the site, post-project implementation, satisfies applicable Zoning Ordinance parking requirements. Based on the three-shift schedule the Applicant utilizes at this facility, staff believes the 447 parking spaces that will exist on the site post project implementation are sufficient to satisfy the parking needs of the facility.

Traffic and Circulation Study: The Applicant prepared and submitted a detailed traffic and circulation study for the proposed project. The City Engineer has reviewed the study and concurs with the following key study conclusions:

- The proposed site access changes are not expected to materially impact the study network.
- With the proposed access changes, site-generated truck traffic will circulate on-site, thereby minimizing truck traffic on Enterprise Boulevard.
- No off-site intersection improvements are necessary as a result of the proposed project.

The Lockport Fire Protection District has reviewed the application documents for this project and has no objections to the approval and implementation of the proposed site access, circulation, and parking lot revisions.

Landscaping: The proposed project requires the removal of 35 existing trees and the addition of 6,875 square feet of additional impervious area on the site. The proposed landscape plans for the project reflect the proposed installation of 106 new trees. The majority of the new trees will be planted in and around the existing and proposed parking lot improvements located at the north end of the building. Staff believes the proposed location, quantity, and species of trees around the north parking lot improvements materially enhance how these parking improvements are buffered from nearby residential properties and adjacent public streets.

Variation Approval Standards and Findings

Section 12.6-2 of the Zoning Ordinance states the Plan Commission shall recommend, and the City Council shall grant a variation only when it shall have been determined, and recorded in writing, that all of the following standards are complied with. Staff findings are identified in bold italic font. The Applicant has also included its responses to these standards in the supporting application materials distributed to the Plan Commission for this case.

1. That the property in question cannot yield a reasonable return if permitted to be used only under the conditions allowed by the regulations in that zone.

The requested variations involve proposed site improvements designed to improve pedestrian safety and truck circulation on the Applicant's site and reduce unnecessary truck traffic on adjacent public roadways. Approval of the variations required to implement these improvements ensures the property can continue to operate efficiently and safely and yield a reasonable return.

2. That the plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances.

In combination, the configuration of the existing building, site, and adjacent roadway improvements, the nature of the Applicant's business, its three-shift operations schedule, and the significant amount of semi-trailer truck traffic it generates collectively represent unique circumstances that warrant the approval of the requested variations.

3. That the variation, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.
The existing driveway the Applicant is proposing to relocate at the southeast corner of the site is wider than the proposed new driveway. Therefore, the impact of a wider driveway width has on the character of the area has already been established and appears to be negligible. Furthermore, the proposed width of the relocated driveway is representative of the other commercial/truck access drives found throughout the Crest Hill Industrial Park.

The elimination and replacement of eight existing landscape islands in the northern parking lot with approximately 40 new deciduous and evergreen trees planted around the site perimeter is expected to enhance the overall character of the site when viewed from the adjacent public street network and the residential neighborhood to the north.

In addition, Section 12.6-2 of the Zoning Ordinance further suggests the Plan Commission supplement the above standards by taking into consideration the extent to which the facts listed on Exhibit A have been established by the evidence presented during the public hearing process and further support the approval of the Applicant's requests.

Staff Recommendation

Based on the findings reflected in this staff report, Staff recommends:

The Plan Commission recommends City Council conditional approval of variations from Sections 15.040 of the City of Crest Hill City Code and 11.6-2 of the City of Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance that allows (i) the proposed relocated Lidice Parkway driveway to be approximately 71-feet wide and (ii) eight existing required internal parking lot landscape islands in the north parking lot to be replaced with pedestrian sidewalk improvements subject to the project being implemented in substantial conformance with the application documents referenced in the September 11, 2025, Plan Commission Staff Report for Case # V-25-2-9-1.

Exhibit A

Supplemental Variation Approval Facts to Consider Per Zoning Ordinance Section 12.6-2

1. *That the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical condition of the specific property involved will result in a particular hardship upon the owner, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, if the strict letter of the regulations were carried out.*
2. *The conditions upon which the petition for a variation is based are unique to the property owner for which the variation is sought and are not applicable, generally, to the other property within the same zoning classification.*
3. *That the alleged difficulty or hardship is caused by the Ordinance and has not been created by any person presently having an interest in the property.*
4. *That the proposed variation will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property or substantially increase congestion in the public streets or increase the danger of fire, or endanger the public safety, or substantially diminish or impair property values within the adjacent neighborhood.*
5. *That the variation does not permit a use otherwise excluded from the particular zone except for uses authorized by the Plan Commission, subject to the approval of the City Council, as “similar and compatible uses.”*
6. *That the variation granted is the minimum adjustment necessary for the reasonable use of the land.*
7. *That the granting of any variation is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Zoning Ordinance, and will not be injurious to the neighborhood, be detrimental to the public welfare, alter the essential character of the locality, or be in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan for development of the City.*
8. *That, for reasons fully set forth in the recommendations of the Plan Commission, and the report of the City Council, the aforesaid circumstances or conditions are such that the strict application of the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance deprives the applicant of any reasonable use of his land. Mere loss in value shall not justify a variation; there must be a deprivation of beneficial use of land.*