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Via electronic submittal

September 13, 2024

Stacy Hersh, Assigned Planner
City of Meridian Planning Division
Community Development Department
33 E. Broadway Avenue, Suite 102
Meridian, Idaho 83642

Re: Appeal / Request for Council Review / Application for Alternative Compliance

Dear Stacy:

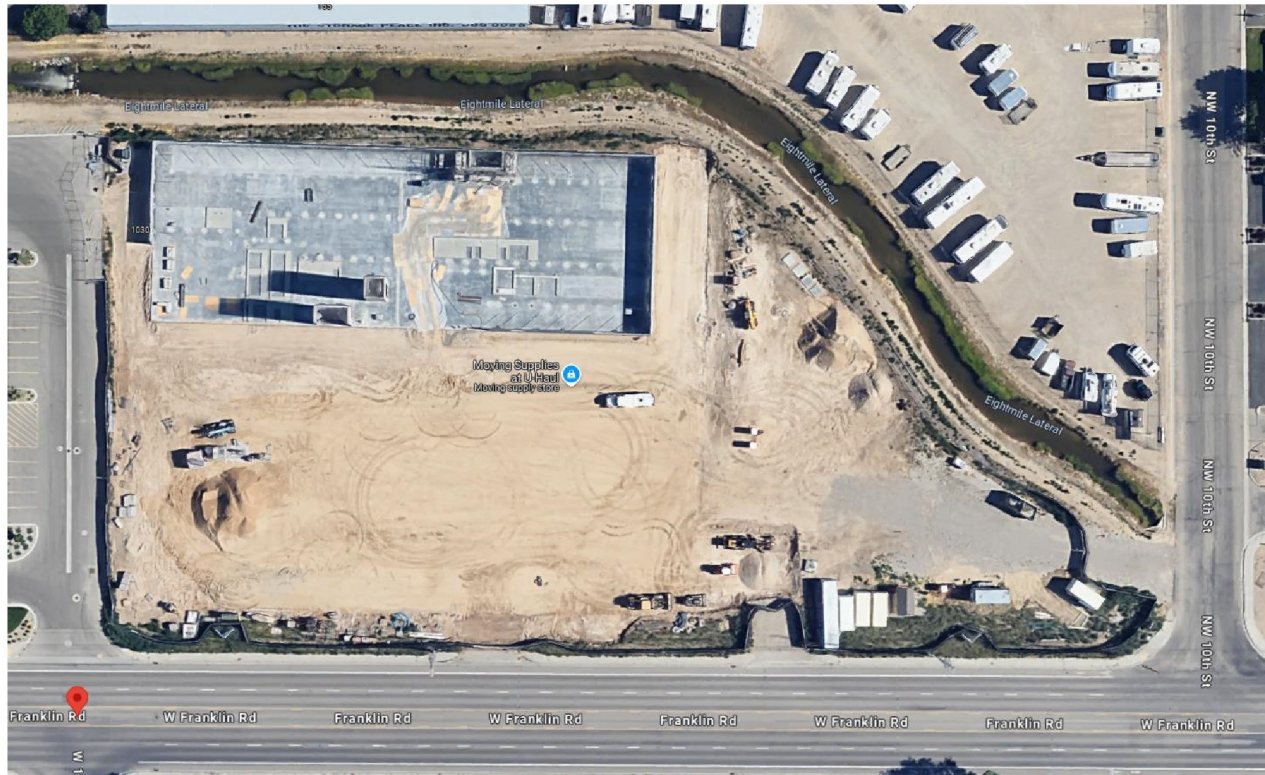
This narrative accompanies the appeal filed today of the Certificate of Zoning Compliance Report (the “**Report**”) associated with Project Number A-20224-0105 U-Haul Franklin Bldg. B & Access (the “**Project**”), located at 1030 W. Franklin Road (the “**Property**”). This appeal requests the City Council to revisit limitations on access at W. Franklin Road based on revised plans and factors that, we believe, justify a change in the City Council’s prior position. The proposal contained below is based on an iterative process through discussions with ACHD and Staff – we invite additional comment and discussions with the City Council if there are other concerns to be addressed.

Background

The Project in question is located on a site that houses two buildings. Building A was previously approved and will be open to the public for self-storage purposes. Building B (which is subject to this application) will be a warehouse for storing U-Box containers and, as a result, will be limited to U-Haul employees. The site is oddly shaped and includes a triangular taper on the eastern side of the property precluding any direct access onto 10th Street.

This matter was previously considered approximately eighteen months ago. A bit of history is likely helpful. At that time, a full access with no limitations was proposed on Franklin Rd. ACHD reviewed the access and approved it on July 5, 2022 (the “**2022 ACHD Report**”). The 2022 ACHD Report states on pages 4 and 5 that ACHD policy generally prohibits direct access onto principal arterials; however, for a number of reasons, a temporary full access was approved, with ACHD staff concluding: “... **staff recognizes the need for additional access to the site for circulation and secondary emergency access.**”

In part, this conclusion was based on the use but also the configuration of the site. As noted above, the parcel tapers on the east side with a canal along its border.



Based upon this configuration, there is no way to connect to 10th Street with adequate distance from the intersection. Without an access on Franklin Road, all traffic must flow west to 12th Street across the entirety of the site, meaning there is no way to separate the public self-storage and U-box uses.

The need for secondary access was acknowledged throughout the prior application process. However, staff was unwilling to consider anything beyond emergency access with a gate 30' from W. Franklin Road (in violation of ACHD policy). Council denied U-Haul's appeal and request for access in early 2023. The denial was based upon a standard, full access with none of the modifications now proposed.

The Present Application

U-Haul has since worked with the site and evaluated if Building B can (or should) be constructed if civilian traffic to Building A is required to mix with large truck traffic serving Building B. U-Haul believes this will cause a safety issue that threatens the viability of Building B.

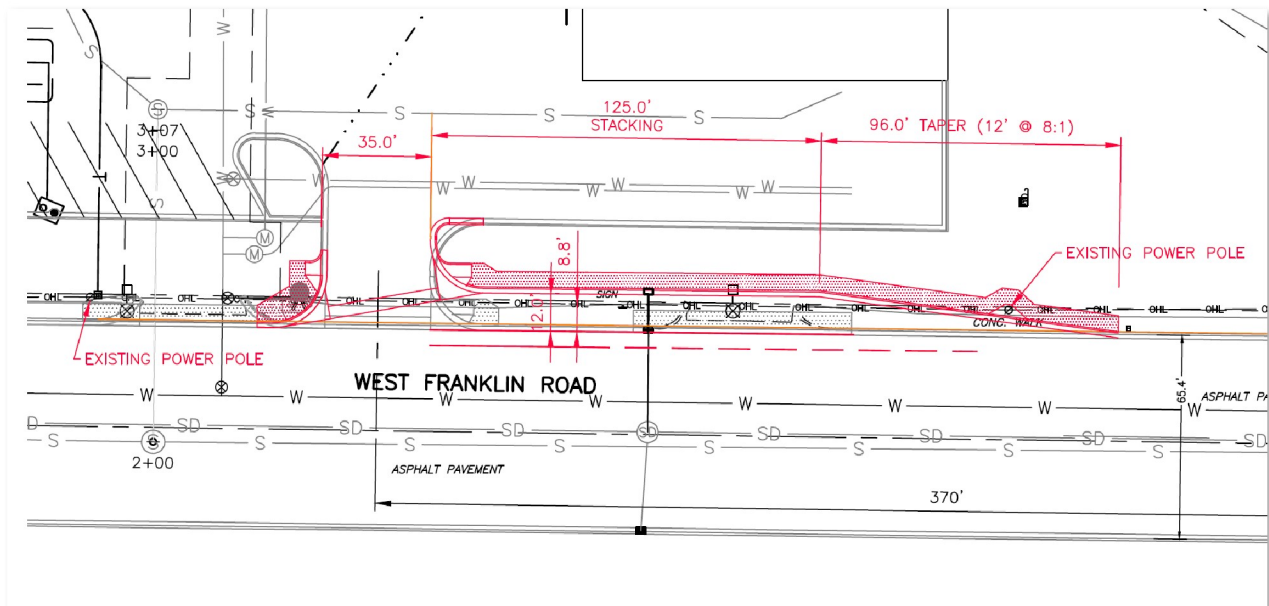
In order to justify a change in the Council's position, the present Project makes several modifications to the prior proposal. First, **U-Haul is not proposing an unrestricted access.** The access on Franklin Road would be utilized only for Building B (the U-Box building), which is accessed only by U-Haul employees and affiliated personnel. It is not open to the public and the general public will not be using the Franklin Road access.

In order to ensure this is the case, we have undertaken two significant modifications to the site plan:

- **Along Franklin Road, U-Haul is proposing a deceleration lane with appropriate signage that will restrict use of the Franklin Road access to U-Box traffic only.** The general public will use the 12th Ave. access only.

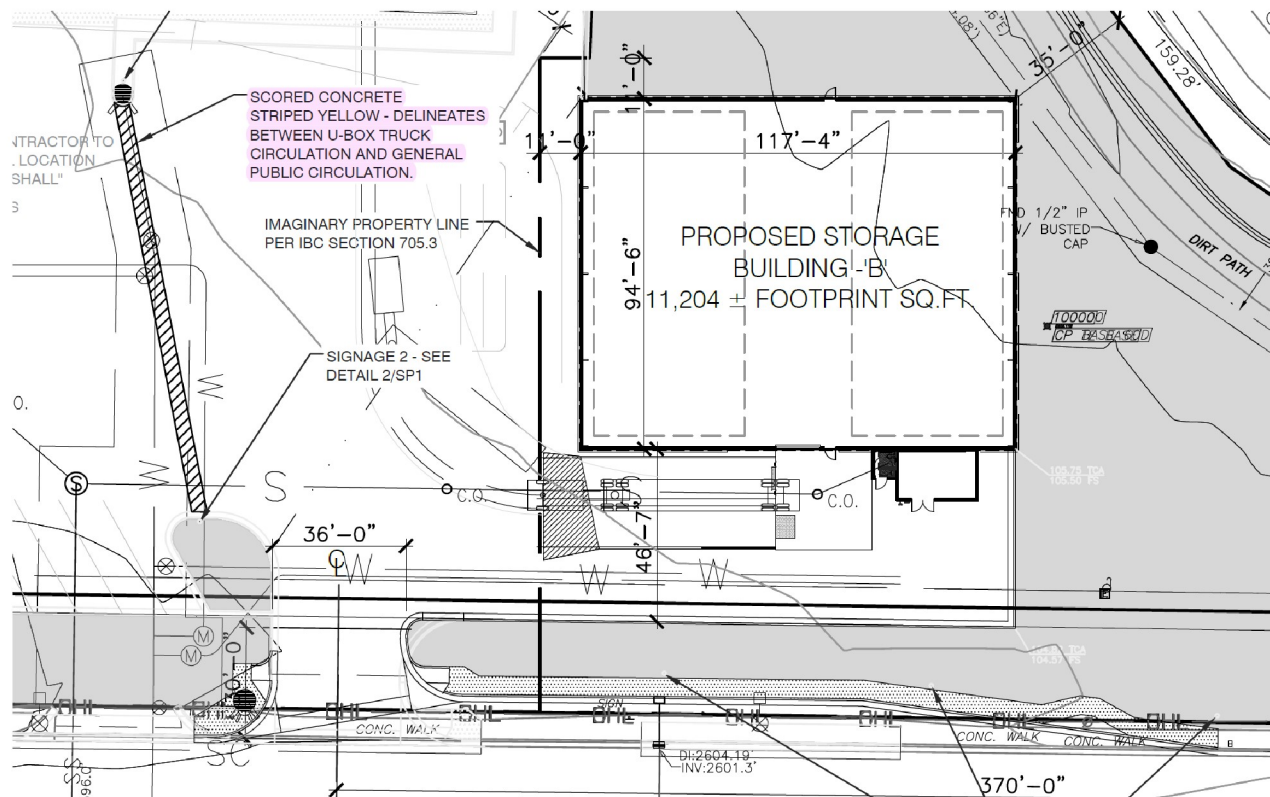
We have explored several ways to ensure the Franklin Road access would not be used by the general public, including a gate that would allow U-Box truck access only. However, ACHD policy does not allow gates within 50' of their right-of-way. ACHD staff indicated they would not bend on this position, so this proposal was abandoned as it would place a gate too far into the site.

We then moved to a deceleration lane concept. This was not a simple matter due to the proximity to 10th Ave., which does not provide enough room for the typical 125' of stacking and 125' of taper. Prior to submittal of the present application, we worked with ACHD to obtain approval of a deceleration lane with the standard stacking distance and 96' of taper (see below).



The deceleration lane, as one would imagine, pushes road right-of-way into the site, which due to the narrow dimensions of the site on the east side, means there is no longer 25 feet available for a landscape buffer. Accordingly, we will be requesting alternative compliance based on the proposed deceleration lane, and will be providing **enhanced landscaping in the area against 10th Street** for a park-like atmosphere against that intersection.

- **Internal to the site**, we have provided an internal, roll-over barrier that will separate the uses. The barrier will include a scored and yellow striped painted section of concrete at the middle of the site. Signage will also be provided interior to the site to ensure the public self-storage and the employee-only U-haul box uses do not mix. A close-up of our plan drawings is shown below.



With these modifications, we are confident that we can safely separate the public and employee uses of Building A and Building B.

We reviewed the Proposal with City Staff prior to submittal to explore what options might be available. The response was, essentially, that Staff could not take a position different than Council's decision in 2023 despite the above-described modifications to the site. As a result, we were not surprised when the Report concluded that we must seek Council Review of the secondary access and an application for alternative compliance to permit the reduced landscape buffer along the deceleration lane.

After the Report was issued, ACHD issued its decision on the Project (the **"2024 ACHD Report"**). Once again, ACHD approved the temporary full access. We appreciated ACHD's comments and hope that the Council will take those comments into consideration when this comes up for discussion at hearing.

Conclusion

We respectfully request that the City Council revisit its prior decision and approve a full access on Franklin Road with the changes and safeguards proposed, including the deceleration lane, signage, and internal roll-over barrier. A full access for U-Haul trucks only will allow a separation that will enhance safety at the site while not impacting the functionality of Franklin Road, which is a conclusion that ACHD has now reached twice. The deceleration lane has been added along with signage – factors that did not exist previously and which justify a change in the Council position.

We think it is also important to consider the type of traffic that is anticipated to use this access. The Franklin Rd. access is not proposed to be open to the general public and the U-Box use will be quite minimal. With regard to the self-storage, U-Haul has determined that a typical 80,000sf U-Haul Center generates 31 trips per weekday and 53 trips per day during the weekend in a facility that is open from 7am to 7pm. By comparison, a 3,000sf fast food restaurant would generate 3,161 trips per weekday and 3,430 per day on the weekend with 18-24 hours per day of operation. The U-Box use will be far lower than even a self-storage facility. **In other words, the Franklin Road access – which is limited to U-Box deliveries only – would be used only a handful of times per day.** This is, by no means, opening the flood gates. The actual access use onto Franklin Road will be minimal.

Finally, we also note that the current Report and the City-mandated configuration of an emergency gate violate ACHD policy and must be modified in any event. The 2024 ACHD Report confirmed ACHD's policy that gates are not allowed within fifty (50) feet of the edge of pavement. The current City requirement is for a gate approximately thirty (30) feet from edge of pavement. At the very least, the current City requirement must be revisited because it violates ACHD policy. While we are making these changes, the deceleration lane and signage proposed represent a meaningful and effective compromise that we hope the Council will recognize and approve.

We respectfully request that this appeal be granted and a Council waiver be granted. If there are additional factors that the Council would like to see incorporated into these plans, we would invite that discussion at hearing. We are hoping for a win-win outcome for the City and U-Haul at this location.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Hethe Clark', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

T. Hethe Clark