

To: Auburn Planning Board
From: Megan McLaughlin, City Planner II & Audrey Knight, AICP, City Planner/Urban Development Coordinator
Re: 671 Washington Street North (PID 189-011), Proposed Construction of a 8,700 Square Foot Storage Unit Addition to Existing 3,200 Square Foot Storage Facility in the General Business Zoning District.
Date: August 13, 2019

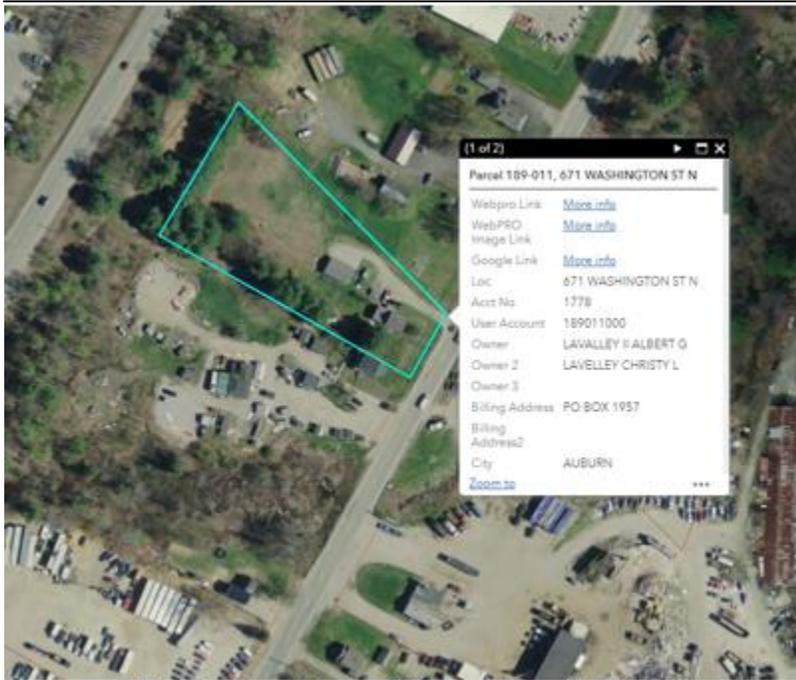


Figure 1: Current Aerial of 671 Washington Street North

I. PROPOSAL – Christy and Al LaValley on behalf of LA Self Storage LLC are applying for a Special Exception/Site Plan Review Amendment in accordance with Sec. 60-45 to construct 40 additional storage units, of 8,700 square feet (*see figure 1*). A building permit was issued on December 21, 2017 for one 16 unit storage building that occupies 3,200 square feet of the western portion of the site.

Storage buildings are permissible in the General Business Zoning District as a “warehouse” type of use. However, any new building in the General Business District which will occupy an area of 5,000 square feet or more is required to be reviewed by the Planning Board as a Special Exception. Cumulatively, the storage

unit buildings would occupy 11,900 square feet and offer 56 rental storage units.

Staff conducted a Development Review meeting with various City departments to discuss the proposal and also visited the site to review some of the comments/concerns. There were a few discussion items that came up which are bulleted in the Department Review below.

II. DEPARTMENT REVIEW –

- a. *Police* – The Police Department had concerns about safety with the lighting schedule. The same lighting that is used on the existing storage units is proposed for the new units. It is proposed to be shut off at night. One recommendation the PD had was to use motion sensor lighting. At the site visit, the Applicant stated that they do have motion sensor lights on the back of the garage shown on the site plan which face the storage units. They also have security cameras that are motion sensor facing the storage units.
- b. *Auburn Water and Sewer* – No comments.

- c. *Fire Department* – The Fire Department had concerns about emergency access and turning radius in the back of the site. The Applicant will be working with the FD to ensure they meet the requirements.
- d. *Engineering* – The Engineering Department had concerns about the proposed proximity of the driveways coming from the adjacent parcel. The Site Plan (*Figure 2*), shows three driveways: A gravel drive serving the existing single-family home (which the applicants are using as a residential rental); a crushed stone drive they are currently using to serve the storage units, and a third paved drive is serving their main business office for the rentals and storage units, as well as another residence they are currently occupying.

The Applicant prefers to keep the gravel drive to the single-family rental home as a separate and distinct access. The curb-cut for the crushed stone drive was serving a demolished single-family home that was originally on a separate lot (referred to as 665 Washington Street North – black dotted area in *Figure 2* below). In June of 2016, 665 Washington Street North was combined with 661 Washington Street North which is shown as the second parcel on the Site Plan. These actions typically require the access to be removed.

The City's Access Management Ordinance requires 230 feet between curb cuts on a 45MPH roadway (Sec.60-800). The applicant is currently using three curb-cuts to serve their mixed-use development in the General Business zone, with distances of approximately 65' between the two former residential drives, and approximately 90' from the paved combination office and residential use, for a combined distance of roughly 175'. The frontage of both properties is roughly 415', with the larger parcel occupying roughly 320' of frontage.

The Applicant would need to request a modification from Sec. 60-800(a) – Curb Cut and Driveway Spacing for either scenario, per Sec.60-806 (see attached ordinance language). For safety reasons, the Engineering Department does not recommend this modification be granted. The existing paved drive on Parcel #2 (*Figure 2*) could be extended to access the storage units and would only require a reduction of the standard by 50 feet.

- e. *Public Services* – No Comments.
- f. *Economic and Community Development* –The city has not adopted design, land use or density standards for the mix of uses allowed in the General Business and Industrial zones, so a cohesive design or common scheme of development that would look at overall circulation, landscaping, access and set-backs as well as other site plan features is reviewed and discussed through the Site Plan, Special Exception, parking standards and Access Management provisions.

While the City does not have standards for parking for storage units, standards do exist for the similar use “Warehouse” which is 1 space per 1,200 square feet of gross leasable area. This would require about 10 parking spaces. Planning Staff does not feel parking is necessary for this use, however, we do recommend there be a designated “loading area” shown on the plan. There appears to be 25-26 feet between the buildings so there is space to designate a driving aisle and a space for people to park to unload.

When we met on site with the Applicant, we also discussed the use of reclaim instead of gravel for the area accessing all units to help with fugitive dust. The existing paved drive that serves their main office is approximately 30' in width, with a curb-cut opening of 36', a sufficient width to serve the expanded commercial use. The drive serving the residential rental is roughly 15' with a curb-cut opening on Washington of about 20'. The old residential drive being proposed to serve the storage unit complex is roughly 16' in width.

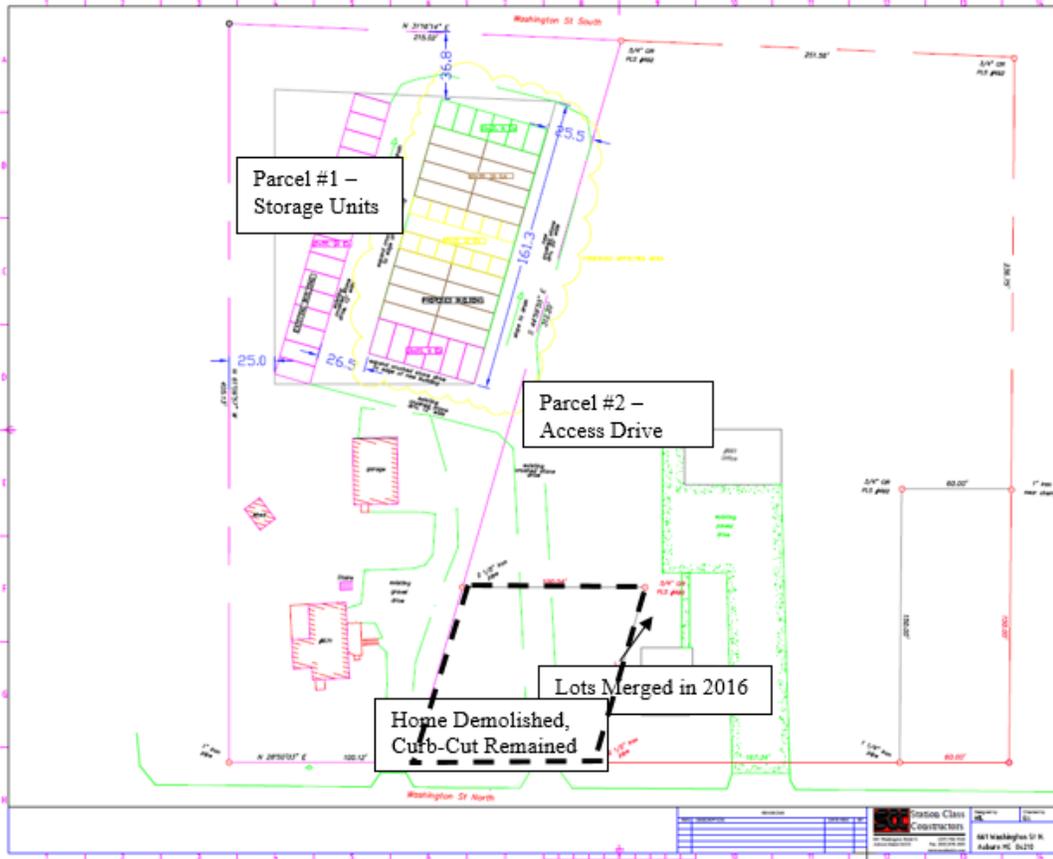


Figure 2: Site Plan: 671 Washington Street North

Further considerations of the proposed reduction to the spacing requirements for curb-cuts need to also include additional Access Management provisions (Sec. 60-799, 60-804 and 60-802). A grant of curb-cut spacing modifications needs to address safe site distance, Sec. 60-799. For this low to medium driveway volume an unobstructed site distance of 450' is required. Additional policies and ordinances under this Article call for shared driveways whenever possible (Sec. 60-804), and when a proposed development includes two or more uses, direct access to an arterial to any single place of business shall be prohibited (Sec. 60-802, Access to planned developments). The relevant sections of the ordinance are attached.

III. **PLANNING BOARD ACTION** – The proposed project requires review and findings for approval of Sections 60-1277 and 60-1336, and associated ordinances:

A. Site Plan Review, Section 60-1277: The board shall require evidence of the following:

1. *Does the site plan protect adjacent areas against detrimental or offensive uses on the site by provision of adequate surface water drainage, buffers against artificial and reflected light, sight, sound, dust and vibration; and preservation of light and air?*

Planning Staff has a concern about the use of gravel for the driveway and recommends the Applicant use 3-4 inch reclaim with a 15 foot paved driveway apron.

2. *Is the convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site and in relation to adjacent areas adequately addressed?*

Planning Staff recommends the Applicant work with the Fire Department to address site access/maneuverability.

3. *Are the proposed methods of disposal for wastes adequately addressed?*

Dumpsters should be placed on-site or provisions and recommendations made regarding outdoor storage. The large number of storage units may generate the unwanted build-up of outdoor disposal of items no longer wanted or unable to fit in units.

4. *Does the site plan provide adequate protection of environmental features on the site and adjacent areas?*

They are staying under the one acre of disturbance/impervious threshold.

B. Special Exception, Section 60-1336: The board shall require evidence of the following:

1. *That the special exception sought fulfills the specific requirements, if any, set forth in the zoning ordinance relative to such exception.*

There are no **specific** requirements for storage units or mixed use within the GB zoning district for the Special Exception sought.

2. *That the special exception sought will neither create nor aggravate a traffic hazard, a fire hazard or any other safety hazard.*

An overall circulation plan for the combined uses and ultimate development is not part of the existing application. As discussed above, Engineering has concerns about the proximity of the two curb cuts. The Applicant is working with the FD on turning radius for the trucks.

3. *That the special exception sought will not block or hamper the master development plan pattern of highway circulation or of planned major public or semipublic land acquisition.*

See comments above regarding access management of State and Federal routes 4, 100 and 202.

4. *That the exception sought will not alter the essential characteristics of the neighborhood and will not tend to depreciate the value of property adjoining and neighboring the property under application.*

This is a mixed-use area with neighboring auto repair, recycling and other assorted commercial uses. The expanded scale of the project would transition from a subordinate small-scale storage complex hidden behind an older residential home, to the more dominate use of the site.

5. *That reasonable provisions have been made for adequate land space, lot width, lot area, stormwater management in accordance with section 60-1301(14) green space, driveway layout, road access, off-street parking, landscaping, building separation, sewage disposal, water supply, fire safety, and where applicable, a plan or contract for perpetual maintenance of all the common green space and clustered off-street parking areas to ensure all such areas will be maintained in a satisfactory manner.*

See discussions above regarding the proximity of curb cuts, FD turning radius for trucks and recommendation on the use of reclaim instead of crushed stone and loading areas.

6. *That the standards imposed are, in all cases, at least as stringent as those elsewhere imposed by the City building code and by the provisions of this chapter.*

This use is allowed in the GB Zone.

7. *That essential city services which will be required for the project are presently available or can be made available without disrupting the city's master development plan.*

No change.

IV. **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS** –The proposal does not meet the cities adopted access management ordinance on a major arterial with speeds 45MPH, that is also a state highway and a primary entryway into the city. Staff recommends shared access from either the existing paved drive or existing residential rental drive that goes straight to the units. This would still require a modification of the 230' distance requirement of 50'. Staff recommends that the Planning Board discuss and consider the following items, in addition to any other items the Board thinks appropriate:

- a. Consider all factors in the two access management modification requests: one of 50'; and two waivers of 165' and 140' for the three entrances option, Findings under Sec.60-806, 60-799, 60-800(a) and/or (b) and 60-802 need to be met.

b. Planning Staff anticipates the Applicant will coordinate with the Fire Department to create an adequate turning radius for the ladder trucks to access and turn around at the site.

c. Planning Staff feels the existing motion-sensor lights and camera on the back of the existing garage should be sufficient to address safety concerns with the new and existing storage units.

d. The PB should discuss the recommendation to use reclaim instead of crushed stone for the access way and driveway (if the two modification options are granted) to reduce dust.

Findings Needed and Associated Motions

1. If the Planning Board votes in favor of the 2 curb-cut modification requests to allow the curb cuts in close proximity, within 65' and 90' of each other instead of 230' each, Planning Staff recommend the Planning Board find that the Site Plan for the proposed development, meets the requirements of Sec. 60-1277, and further that the application meets the requirements of Special Exception Law, Sec. 60-1336, and the associated ordinance standards of all referenced Access Management provisions of Article X, and APPROVE the project application with one condition:

- The access drive shall be comprised of 3-4 inch reclaim with a 15 foot paved driveway apron.

Recommended Motion: *I make a motion to approve the construction of an 8,700 square foot storage unit addition to existing 3,200 square foot storage facility at 671 Washington Street (PID 189-011) in the General Business Zoning District with one condition:*

- *The access drive shall be comprised of 3-4 inch reclaim with a 15 foot paved driveway apron.*

2. If the Planning Board does not vote in favor of the additional drive modification request to allow the curb cuts in close proximity, we recommend the Planning Board find that the Site Plan for the proposed development, meets the requirements of Sec. 60-1277, and further that the application meets the requirements of Special Exception Law, Sec. 60-1336, and all requirements of the ordinance standards of the Access Management provisions of Article X, and APPROVE the project application with one condition. Staff recommends the following condition:

- Access to the storage units shall be shared through either one of the two existing curb cuts associated with the existing mixed uses, and in either case shall be comprised of 3-4 inch reclaim or other high traffic durable material that will not cause fugitive dust.

Recommended Motion: *I make a motion to approve the construction of an 8,700 square foot storage unit addition to existing 3,200 square foot storage facility at 671 Washington Street (PID 189-011) in the General Business Zoning District with two conditions:*

- *Access to the storage units shall be shared through either one of the two existing curb cuts associated with the existing mixed uses, and in either case shall be comprised of 3-4 inch reclaim or other high traffic durable material that will not cause fugitive dust.*

Megan McLaughlin
City Planner II

Audrey Knight, AICP
City Planner/Urban Development Coordinator