

**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES – October 19, 2022**

**CPC ITEMS:**

1. The **Parks and Parkways** representative made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the September 21, 2022 meeting, which was seconded by the **Department of Public Works** representative and unanimously adopted.
2. **Consideration:** Design Review 048/22 – Design review for a mini warehouse with over 40,000 square feet in area on a thru-lot with over 100 feet of frontage in a CT Corridor Transformation Design Overlay District. (BW)

The proposal is to expand an existing U-Haul facility that is located on Chef Menteur Hwy, three blocks away from Downman Rd. The large 6.5-acre site is a thru-lot that measures approximately 384 along Chef Menteur Street and is approximately 713 feet deep. The auto-oriented use is consistent with the permitted uses within its C-3 Heavy Commercial District and the expansion is permitted by-right. However, the staff suggests design modifications to bring the site into compliance with the CT Corridor Transformation overlay design standards that are applied to the site to ensure a well-designed and functional public realm. The proposal is considered to have a significant impact to the public realm due to its building area exceeding 40,000 sq ft in GFA, its thru-lot condition, as well as having over 100 ft of frontage in a CT Corridor Transformation Design Overlay District.

The existing U-Haul Center is an approximately 25,000 sq. ft. single-story structure that is constructed of cmu and metal paneling. The structure is setback approximately 60 ft from Chef Menteur Hwy with a parking area in front of the building. The front of the site is entirely paved and only has a continuous wheelstop separating the vehicle parking area from the public sidewalk. There are 2 curb cuts on either side of the U-Haul Center.

The western portion of the site is developed with a series of three narrow and deep single-story cmu mini-warehouse structures. The structures measure approximately 9,237 sq ft, 7,736 sq ft, and 22,052 sq ft in area. The structures are setback approximately 24 ft and are accessible by vehicles by a roll over curb from Chef Menteur Highway. Back out into traffic.

The applicants propose two phases of construction – phase I would include a new single-story 16,850 sq. ft. mini-warehouse that faces Old Gentilly Road and phase II that would include a new four-story 74,340 sq. ft. mini-warehouse that also faces Old Gentilly Road. The staff consulted with the Department of Safety and Permits re: **Article 15, Section 15.3.B Building Design Standards**, that requires building transparency on the primary street. For this thru-lot, both Chef Menteur Highway and Old Gentilly Road are subject to the front yard requirements, but the primary street is Chef Menteur Highway, so the new structures that front on Old Gentilly Road would not be subject to the transparency requirements. The CPA representative suggested modifying the architectural elevations to provide a cohesive design of the existing and new structures. For example, edit the number of design elements. The existing building typology includes gold/beige diamond patterning and earth tones whereas the new building is stark white/beige.

The site is subject to the CT Corridor Transformation Design Overlay District standards found in **Article 18**. The below standards are not met.

1. Development should promote pedestrian-friendly and bicycle-friendly environments. / **not met** –

As part of the expansion, staff encourages the addition of a bicycle parking pursuant to **Article 22**. Additionally, Compliance with **Article 23**, including planting shade trees and adding a front landscape yard, would help to delineate pedestrian/bicycle spaces from vehicular spaces as well as create an environment more attractive to pedestrian use.

2. Planned developments and developments at designated major intersections should include a well-designed and functional public realm, which provides publicly accessible amenities. / **not met** - .

3. Parking should not be the dominant visual element of the site along the primary frontage. Parking should be designed as smaller multiple parking lots separated by landscape and buildings, or placement behind buildings. / **not met** –

Parking lot compliance should be brought into compliance with **Article 23**. Adding a front landscape yard and parkway trees per the recommendation of CPC and Parkways staff would help to the visual dominance of the parking along the primary frontage.

5. Compact, transit-ready neighborhood centers with walkable environments should be created where future “bus rapid transit” stops are expected. / **not met** –

There is a proposed BRT station in planned near this site and compliance with the aforementioned parking standards would help to create a more functional pedestrian environment and orient the facility to the primary frontage.

The PKWYS representative requested that the applicant revise the landscape plans to comply with **Article 23, Section 23.11 Parkway Trees** that requires 1 shade tree spaced at 40 feet or 1 ornamental tree at 25 feet spacing on both Chef Menteur Highway and Old Gentilly Road, subject to Parks and Parkways approval. Due to the existing overhead power lines, ornamental trees could be used along Chef Menteur Highway. Parkway trees may be clustered or spaced differently as necessary.

**Article 23, Section 23.7 Parking Lot Landscape** states that when a new principal building is constructed, existing parking lots must be brought into compliance when able to be accommodated on the site. **Article 23** requires a front landscape yard. The CPC representative suggested relocating the parking to the interior of the site and providing a front landscape yard.

The **PKWYS** representative made a motion for **APPROVAL** subject to modifications that were discussed which was seconded by the **DPW** representative and unanimously adopted.

*Provisos*

1. Modify architectural elevations to create a cohesive building design for the existing and new structures.
2. Provide parkway trees on Chef Menteur Hwy and Old Gentilly Rd, subject to review by PKWYS.
3. Provide clear delineation between pedestrian and vehicular pathways both at the public sidewalk and within the site. Meet the 20 percent permeability requirement by removing concrete and creating landscaped areas within the site that show the distinction between vehicular and pedestrian spaces. Remove concrete at rollover curb and create a landscape area.
4. Create a landscape yard between the U-Haul Center and Chef Menteur and relocate parking to the interior of the site.

**NON-CPC ITEMS:**

3. **Consideration**: Design Review 046/22 – site improvements at Woldenberg Park.

This request was previously considered at the September DAC meeting and the committee requested updated plans to show how the proposed site improvements tie into the overall context and also requested that the pollinator garden be located adjacent to its interior exhibit. The applicant provided the contextual plans and made a slight modification to extend the pollinator garden near its interior location. The committee stated that they have no further comments, other than suggesting the relocation the palm trees and also including

signage to relate the site to the ferry terminal, French quarter, Crescent Park and the bicycle network.

The **HDLC** representative made a motion for approval that was seconded by the **PKWYS** representative and unanimously adopted.