



Meeting Summary May 9, 2018

Attendance

Panel Members: Don Taylor, Chair (excused)
Bob Gorman, Vice Chair
Fred Marino
Sujit Mishra (excused)
Larry Quarrick
Juan Rodriguez
Julie Wilson (excused)

DPZ Staff: George Saliba and Yvette Zhou

1. **Call to Order** – DAP Vice Chair Bob Gorman opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

2. **Review of Plan #18-09: CubeSmart Self Storage, 6300 Washington Blvd., Elkridge, MD**

Owner/Developer: Charles and William Phelps/Dougal & Associates

Architect: RPH Architecture

Engineer: KCI Technologies, Inc.

Background

The 1.75-acre site, zoned M-1 (Manufacturing: Light), is located at 6300 Washington Blvd on the corner of Route 1 and Montgomery Road. M-1 zoning permits a mix of manufacturing, warehousing, and business uses and has less restrictive design requirements than CAC, CE, and TOD zoning designations along Route 1. Applicable requirements from the *Route 1 Manual* include right-of-way and streetscape improvements.

Applicant Presentation

The applicant gave a multimedia overview of the project. Adjacent properties include fueling stations, fast food restaurants, and a bank. A nursery/landscape supply store is located directly behind the property. The existing manufacturing building will be demolished and a new CubeSmart self-storage facility constructed in its place. The site is flat along the Route 1 frontage but rises 35-40' in elevation towards the rear. While the plan lists the building as being five stories, there are only three stories above grade at the front of the property and about 1.5 stories above grade at the rear of the property with what is essentially a two-story basement below grade.

The CubeSmart building consists of a masonry base along the Route 1 elevation and the parking lot elevation. Insulated metal panel comprises the remainder of the façade up to the parapet. A storefront with fenestration and a covered entry is located at the northeast corner of the building and serves as the entrance to the office. A secondary decorative storefront with fenestration and a raised parapet

provides visual interest at the southeast corner of the property at Route 1 and Montgomery Road. A ground mounted monument sign is proposed along the front of the property.

A ten-foot-wide shared-use path will be constructed along the Route 1 frontage. No sidewalk is proposed along Montgomery Road due to steep grades. Evergreen and shade trees will be planted along the Route 1 and Montgomery Road. Two micro bioretention facilities will be located along the front of the site and planted with appropriate wetland species. Access off Washington Blvd. will be consolidated, with only one driveway. A retaining wall will be constructed at the rear of the property to mitigate the steep slope. A black chain link fence will be installed along the retaining wall. A black mechanical gate will control access to the loading area. No dumpster enclosure is included on the site plan as this facility is intended to be a carry-in/carry-out facility.

Staff Comments

The DAP is reviewing the project because it is within the Route 1 corridor and subject to *Route 1 Manual*. Staff asked the DAP to evaluate and make recommendations on site design, streetscape, landscape, architecture, lighting, signage, fencing, trash and recycle pick-up and site circulation and connectivity. Written comments from the public have been provided to the panel and applicant.

DAP Questions and Comments

Architecture

The DAP noted that many of the written comments from the public expressed concern about the height of a five-story building at this location. The DAP noted for the record that only three stories are above grade which may ease some community concerns.

The DAP questioned the extensive use of red in the exterior building materials and commented that it appears excessive and out of place. The DAP recommended red accent strips, instead of what is currently proposed, as more appropriate and consistent with the Route 1 Manual.

The DAP acknowledged that making a storage facility attractive can be a challenge due to the utilitarian nature of the use and lack of opportunities for fenestration. The DAP referenced examples of other CubeSmart facilities around the country that employ a softer color palette, ribbed metal panels to provide texture, and more subtle use of the company's signature red color.

The DAP commented that the masonry proposed for the building base is gray as are the metal panels and this gives the building a warehouse look. The DAP encouraged the applicant to use materials, colors, and design elements to make the building look more like an office building and less like a warehouse.

The DAP asked why the parapet at the southeastern corner is four feet higher than the northeastern corner of the building. The applicant responded that this parapet height provides architectural presence at the corner of Route 1 and Montgomery Road. The DAP encouraged the applicant to reduce the parapet height.

The DAP asked if the window wall systems at the northeastern and southeastern corners of the building will include back lighting at night. The applicant responded yes. The applicant also noted that the glass will not be reflective as shown in the renderings. The DAP reiterated the importance of including back lighting to give the building a warmer presence at night.

Site Design

The DAP asked whether a sidewalk along Montgomery Road is feasible. The applicant responded that the steep grades make this very difficult and it is doubtful the sidewalk could meet ADA standards. The

DAP acknowledged the steep grades but encouraged the applicant to strongly consider a sidewalk along Montgomery Road to help with pedestrian connections.

The DAP asked why streetlights are not included as part of the streetscape improvements. The applicant responded that they are working with SHA on ROW improvements. The DAP encouraged the applicant to further examine installing streetlights along the Route 1 frontage in accordance with the Route 1 Manual.

The DAP encouraged the applicant to add another layer of landscaping closer to the perimeter of the building to help soften the structure. This landscape layer should consist of ornamental trees such as crape myrtles, or columnar beech, maple or similar species to help the building look more like an office site and less like a warehouse.

The DAP noted there will be 1,500sf of office space in addition to the storage activities and this will produce trash. The DAP questioned whether the volume of trash would be as light as the applicant anticipated. The applicant responded that trash will be stored in 50 gallon drums inside the building. Any required trash pick-up will be collected privately.

The DAP asked the applicant to examine the parking spaces adjacent to the island containing the mechanical gate to make sure there is enough space for cars to safely maneuver.

The DAP noted the micro bioretention facilities are at a higher elevation than the finished floor elevation of the building and warned there could be water seepage issues. The applicant responded that geotechnical studies have been conducted and the design team has taken this issue into consideration.

DAP Motions for Recommendations

DAP Vice Chair Bob Gorman made the following motion:

1. The applicant carry the sidewalk along the Route 1 frontage all the way to the curb at the entrance drive instead of leaving a small grass strip which is likely to become a mud pit. Also, the applicant provide a crosswalk across this entrance drive. Seconded by DAP member Fred Marino.

Vote: 4-0 to approve

DAP member Fred Marino made the following motion:

2. The applicant employ a softer, more appropriate color palette. The signature red should be less prominent and better integrated into the overall color scheme. The extensive use of gray should be re-examined so the building looks less like a warehouse. Seconded by DAP Vice Chair Bob Gorman.

Vote: 4-0 to approve

DAP member Larry Quarrick made the following motion:

3. The applicant plant a secondary, ornamental layer of landscape around the building perimeter on the south and east elevations to soften the structure. Seconded by DAP Vice Chair Bob Gorman.

Vote: 4-0 to approve

DAP member Fred Marino made the following motion:

4. The applicant carefully examine installing sidewalk the length of the property's frontage along Montgomery Road. Seconded by DAP Vice Chair Bob Gorman.

Vote: 4-0 to approve

DAP member Juan Rodriguez made the following motion:

5. The applicant review the parking lot in relation to the island and make sure the parking maneuvers work. Seconded by DAP member Fred Marino.

Vote: 4-0 to approve

3. Other Business and Informational Items

Elections for Chair and Vice Chair were postponed until the next meeting.

4. Call to Adjourn

DAP Vice Chair Bob Gorman adjourned the meeting at 7:49p.m.