

Karl,

Here are my comments on the Beltline SAP application for 1605 Howell Mill Road (Jimmy John's restaurant). There was a mix-up with my notification and I do not know the case number. I received site plans from the applicant, but the application package was apparently sent to the zoning contact in NPU-C.

- (1) The use and scale of the project are appropriate to the site and to the area. The drive-through window is undesirable, but obviously has numerous precedents in the area and is permissible under the extant zoning.
- (2) The site plan appears to show a very large incursion of the paved parking into the required transitional yard. In the southeast corner of the lot this appears to be only a few feet from the western edge of the undeveloped alley easement rather than the required 15 feet (as five feet of the easement would count as a portion of the 20-foot transitional yard). Worse still, the dumpster appears to be located in the transitional yard. The eastern bound of the pavement should be shifted westward to provide the required yard and the developer should meet with the property owner to his east in order to work out a mutually agreeable plan for the landscaping in the transitional yard and the location of the required screening fence. This was how the developer of the auto-parts store handled the transitional yard and it seemed to work out well. The dumpster should be relocated to be next to the Advance Auto Parts dumpster.
- (3) The site plan shows the removal of all trees on and near this site including at least five boundary trees that are outside of the designated buildable area and at least two trees that appear to be located in the required transitional yard. The largest of these is a 34" specimen Oak tree in the southwest corner of the site that provides shade and screening for the supportive housing residence to the south. The property owner to the south has an equal interest in the trees along the property line and their removal should not be permitted without his permission at the least. A reconfiguration of the lot as described in item 4, below, should permit the preservation of most of these trees. I am copying Micheal Franklin and Jorge Rivera on these comments as this is an issue of relevance to the Arborists' office, which will need to review the application for this building permit.
- (4) The site plan shows two curb cuts. The more northerly of these is nearly adjacent to the curb cut for the Advance Auto Parts next door. This curb cut should be eliminated and replaced with inter-parcel access just to the east of the auto-parts store's business identification sign. This would not require the removal of any significant amount of the retaining wall that separates the lots. It would give restaurant patrons access to the traffic light at the intersection with Holmes Street and thereby relieve congestion that would otherwise be caused on Howell Mill by their turning movements. It would also allow the restaurant building to be shifted northward to preserve the trees along the southern property line mentioned above. It should be noted that traffic is very bad in this area already, and it is important that it not be made significantly worse by new developments. The Berkeley Park Neighborhood Association has proposed a partial closure of Holmes just to the east of the auto-parts store's driveway. That should be done regardless of this project, but will obviously be more necessary when Holmes becomes a tempting

shortcut through the residential core of Berkeley Park for traffic exiting the new restaurant that is southbound or eastbound.

- (5) There is no street furniture indicated other than a bicycle rack. A bench would be nice. A provision for outdoor dining on the west side of the building would be a good idea. I feel confident that, in order to accommodate either outdoor dining or tree preservation, the neighborhood would support an exception to the required minimum parking for this project, as we have supported such things in the past. There appears to be an excess of parking at the auto-parts store next door that could pick up some of the overflow and there are large parking lots across the street that already pick up the overflow parking for the nearby Flip restaurant.
- (6) Stormwater detention appears to be a major issue that the developers are grappling with, as they plan to turn a site that is entirely pervious into one that will be entirely impervious. Viewed holistically, the trees which they are planning to destroy on the site may well be a greater benefit for the infiltration of storm water than the proposed detention facilities would be as the roots of these trees penetrate well into the subsoil. Some consideration of this should be given by relaxing detention requirements if some of these trees are preserved.
- (7) The site plan appears to show the front of the building above the level of the adjacent sidewalk. Lowering this, even if it is only the front foyer of the building that is lowered, would make a more inviting street frontage.
- (8) When the sidewalk in front of this building is brought up to the overlay standard, there will be an abrupt transition of its width at the northern termination of the stone wall to the south. The developer should meet with the property owner to his south (he will need to do this to discuss the trees anyway) to work out a mutually agreeable, aesthetically pleasing termination to this wall that will smooth the width transition as much as possible.