

February 10, 2020

Mr. David Sablan, Planner II  
Mr. Allen Tai, Planning Services Manager  
City of Alameda  
Community Development Department  
2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 190  
Alameda, California 94501-4477

RE: Project Number: PREPLN19-0001 Project Address: 2390 Mariner Square Drive - City of Alameda Planning Board March 9, 2020 Agenda.

Project Description:

Banner NorCal Developer, LLC (“Banner”) is proposing to develop the currently vacant 1.24-acre lot located at the northeast corner of Mariner Square Drive and Marina Village Parkway into a new, institutional grade, fully enclosed, climate-controlled self-storage facility. The project will include a building of approximately 111,000 gross square feet (of which approximately 800 square feet will be designated for the front office), five parking stalls (one of which will be ADA compliant), and two interior loading docks.

After conducting due diligence, Banner believes that the parcel is only 35% developable due to several preexisting conditions that burden the property. Not only is the parcel located within a Flood Hazard Zone, but the site is also encumbered with an easement for the Posey Tube and several East Bay Municipal Utility District (“EBMUD”) easements. The confluence of the water main easement, sewer main easement, gas line easement, and Posey tube easement drastically limit the buildable area on the site. According to the terms of the easement agreements, trees may not be planted, and permanent structures may not be built in the easement areas. Therefore, the portions of the site that fall within the easement areas may only be used for light landscaping. Banner has been diligently working with Caltrans, EBMUD, and FEMA to design our facility in compliance with the constraints required by the terms of the easements and local building code requirements. The attachments to this letter will show the modifications that address the design and building concerns expressed by the City of Alameda, Caltrans, and EBMUD.

The site is located in an industrial district and is currently being used for miscellaneous outdoor storage. Coinciding with the development of the site, the property will be cleaned up and converted to a commercial space. Banner’s self-storage facilities are NOT typical class C, single-story, drive-up facilities; the proposed project will reflect a high-quality design that meets the standards of the community. Our building will be a highly secure, fully enclosed, institutional quality, climate-controlled facility. Loading and access to units will be interior to the gated site or inside the building itself (two interior loading bays). The proposed project features a decorative screen along Mariner Square Drive that will shield the outdoor parking area from pedestrian and commuter view. Self-storage facilities typically generate low amounts of traffic with minimal impact to the surrounding community.

The site falls within the Mariner Square MU2 General Plan, Assumed Development Increment, Specified Mixed Use Sites and is located in the City of Alameda’s M2 zone. Self-storage is a permitted use under M2 zoning. Although the General Plan does not specifically mention self-storage as a use, the plan notes residential, assisted senior living, office, and industrial institutional maritime uses. Banner’s affiliates include experienced multifamily and senior living developers, who have a successful track record of developing projects nationwide. As much as our multifamily and senior living affiliates would have liked to utilize this site for multifamily or senior housing development, the site was not developable for either use due to the aforementioned constraints. We are also partnering with another major multifamily developer located in Alameda who agreed that, due to the site’s constraints, construction of multifamily properties would not be feasible. However, we both agree this is a great site for climate-controlled self-storage.

Banner incorporated the City of Alameda’s comments into the Use Permit, Design Review, and Parking Reduction Applications for the proposed Banner storage facility at 2390 Mariner Square Drive based on the feedback and comments received from the following events and meetings with the City of Alameda:

- The City of Alameda Services Project Application PLN19-0477 letter dated November 7, 2019

- In person meeting with City of Alameda Planning Services (David Sablan and Allen Tai) on November 2, 2019
- Follow-up Design Conference Call with the City of Alameda Planning Services (David Sablan) on December 4, 2019
- Individual and separate in-person meetings with the majority of the Planning Board Members on November 21, 2019 and December 12, 2019
- In person design review in addition to Civil Resubmittal on December 12, 2019 with David Sablan
- Email from the City of Alameda Planning Services (Allen Tai) dated December 19, 2019
- Community Outreach Meeting on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and follow up conversations with adjacent property ownership and tenants
- Planning Board Meeting Study Session on January 27, 2020
- Meeting with David Sablan and Allen Tai on January 28, 2020
- Follow-up email feedback from Planning Board Member, February 2, 2020
- Follow-up email and phone conversations with David Sablan and Allen Tai on February 3, 2020 and February 5, 2020

#### **Planning Board Comments from 1.27.2020 Study Session:**

The following comments are not application completeness items, but rather address the project's design, in addition to compliance with applicable rules, regulations, and policies. During the January 27, 2020 Planning Board Study Session, the City staff requested the Planning Board members for feedback on the building's architectural design, the design of the decorative screen wall, and the proposed landscaping.

Banner NorCal Developer subsequently modified the building's elevations by incorporating the Planning Board's feedback, Planning Staff's comments, and the neighborhood's opinions from our community outreach meeting.

#### **Renderings and Elevations Comments and Revisions:**

1. The assorted sized components of the exterior pattern design feature correspond to the various sized Climate Controlled Self Storage units located in the interior of the building.
2. Per the Planning Board Members request, the checkered pattern has been toned down by removing the sizes that did not correspond to units inside the building; the individual pattern boxes are now larger. Also, the patterns on the first and top floors, as well as the patterns on the second and fourth floors, are now symmetrical.
3. There is a band separating each of the floors that provides a small (bump out) band element, which serves to add depth to the building's design and moves away from a flat look.
4. The building also provides a prominent corner element and glazing that highlights the corner of the building located along Mariner Square Drive and Marina Village Parkway.
5. Based upon collaboration with City Planning Staff and Planning Board Members, all other glazing aside from the prominent corner element has been removed.
6. The step-down parapet along the back side of the building has been removed; however, we kept a slightly higher parapet on the corner element for a focused feature at the intersection.
7. Based upon prior experience with the application of the proposed building materials, it was decided that the vertical siding at the base of the building along the first floor will remain part of the building's design.

#### **Decorative Screen Retaining Wall and Landscape Comments and Revisions:**

1. The screen retaining wall design has been revised so that it is no longer runs along Mariner Square Drive at a consistent setback. The screen wall provides various setbacks that feature lush landscape in the front of the decorative screen retaining wall. Several of the vehicle parking spaces were moved to create these featured landscape setbacks.
2. The decorative screen retaining wall steps back as little as 5 feet and up to a maximum of 10 feet for the

- parking to meet the vehicle circulation and fire requirements.
3. The decorative screen retaining wall's purpose is to 1.) raise the site out of the flood plain 2.) screen the RVs and Boats and 3.) secure the site and parking area.
  4. Based upon research of other comparable self-storage facilities, it was determined that the total height of the decorative landscape retaining wall (9') is the right size and scale to screen and secure the RV/Boat parking without diminishing the design of the site, adjacent properties, and the design of our building.
  5. In addition, it was decided to keep the pattern of the entire screen area consistent in order to keep the design simple and complementary to the adjacent surrounding properties.

**Parking Reduction and Public Improvements Along Mariner Square Drive Comments and Revisions:**

1. We are requesting a parking reduction due to the low traffic impact of Self-Storage use. (Please reference CHS Consultant Group traffic study.)
2. We are also providing 16 temporary screened boat and RV parking spaces.
3. The angled parking along Mariner Square Drive will be changed to parallel parking.
4. We plan on widening the sidewalk and adding a bike path along Mariner Square Drive.
5. We will be removing the abandoned railroad ties on Mariner Square Drive.
6. We will be inserting a new sidewalk along Mariner Square Drive over the abandoned Works Street.
7. We will also be working with City of Alameda City staff on cleaning up the landscape along the abandoned Work Street.

**Sustainable Features Comments and Revisions:**

1. Our building is Solar ready.
2. Please reference sheet A1-6; rooftop materials are reflective of the sun.
3. All our facilities include automatic lighting with sensors that are energy efficient.

**Exterior Light Comments and Revisions:**

1. Please reference sheet A4-2.

**Renderings Comments and Revisions:**

1. We revised the renderings to reflect the grade change in the driveway and parking area.
2. We also added an additional rendering with the reservoir view.

Banner looks forward to meeting with the Planning Board on March 9, 2020 to review the final design. Thank you again for your consideration and review of our application.

Sincerely,



Margo D. Conley  
Vice President, Banner NorCal Developer, LLC

Enclosures:  
Exhibit A – 2.10.2020 Submittal - 2390 Mariner Square