



Department of City Development
City Plan Commission
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

Lafayette L. Crump
Commissioner

Vanessa L. Koster
Deputy Commissioner

Ald. Chambers
2nd Ald. District

CITY PLAN COMMISSION
ZONING REPORT

File No: [240534](#)

Location: A vacant development site along the south end of 4100 North 56th Street, on the east side of North 56th Street extended, north of West Capitol Drive

Applicant/
Owner: Laureate Group LLC (Owner), ACS Architects (Applicant)

Current
Zoning: Regional Business (RB2); located in the Midtown Center Development Incentive Zone ([DIZ](#)) overlay

Proposal: This file refers to the proposed development of a new commercial building on the site identified as “Building E,” which is located in Area A of the Midtown Center DIZ. The DIZ overlay was established in 2000 and subsequently amended in 2004 and 2006. It entails a permitted use list as well as design standards for building placement and design, signage, and other items. Where the overlay zone is silent, the base (RO2) zoning rules continue to apply.

The proposed 15,000 sf building will be constructed for a single retail tenant. The building will utilize existing parking areas that were part of the original site improvements. The entry to the building will be along the west side of the building, facing 56th Street. Deliveries and trash collection will occur on the east (rear) side of the building.

DIZ Analysis: **Uses:** A retail tenant plans to occupy the new building. General retail is a permitted use in the DIZ overlay.

Design Standards: The overlay’s site and building design standards are meant to ensure that new buildings, and alterations and additions to existing buildings are high quality with respect to materials, articulation, fenestration, and modulation. The overlay zone is broken down into 3 areas, and this site is within Area A. Staff has reviewed the development proposal alongside the DIZ’s Area A design standards and

determined that it is consistent with the standards relating to building placement and design, height, materials, glazing, landscaping, lighting, and site improvements. Within Area A, variety is encouraged among building designs. The DIZ allows Staff to review and approve signage provided it meets the overlay standards, and includes an exception to the maximum allowed building wall signage for an individual tenant that occupies a space greater than 5,000 sf. Signage exceeding the maximum square footage is considered on a case-by-case basis. Conceptual building wall signage is shown on the elevations. The signage is artistic in nature and contributes to the overall high quality aesthetic of the building.

The table at the end of this staff report provides a more detailed review of the proposal as it relates to specific DIZ overlay standards.

Adjacent Land Use:

This site is part of the Midtown Center shopping mall, whose properties are zoned as Regional Business (RB2). Outside of the shopping center, properties to the west include residential homes that are zoned Multi-Family Residential (RM1), Two-Family Residential (RT2), and Single-Family Residential (RS6). Commercial properties located along W. Capitol Drive (to the south) are in the Local Business (LB2) zoning district.

Consistency with Area Plan:

The site is located in the West Side Area Plan boundaries. The West Side plan was adopted in 2009 and makes specific recommendations for the Midtown Center District. Specific to Midtown Center, the West Side plan encourages infill development and pedestrian connections that extend Midtown Center's "Town Square" approach to unify the businesses in the shopping center. The West Side Plan also recommends enhancing landscaping and encouraging compatible architectural styles to create an identity for the Midtown area. Therefore, the West Side Plan's recommendations are consistent with the Midtown DIZ, and the proposed development is not in conflict with the West Side Plan.

Previous City Plan Action:

10/2000 – City Plan Commission recommended approval of a substitute ordinance to establish a Development Incentive Zone (DIZ) for land located on the North Side of West Capitol Drive and East of North 60th Street, in the 2nd Aldermanic District. (FN [000708](#))

03/2004 – City Plan Commission recommended approval of an ordinance amending a Development Incentive Zone known as Midtown Center for land located on the North Side of West Capitol Drive and East of North 60th Street, in the 2nd Aldermanic District. (FN [040068](#))

09/2006 – City Plan Commission recommended approval of an ordinance amending a Development Incentive Zone known as Midtown Center, located north of West Capitol Drive and southwest of West Fond du Lac Avenue, in the 2nd Aldermanic

District to modify the site layout for Area A. (FN [060622](#))

Previous Common

Council Action:

11/28/2000 – Common Council approved a substitute ordinance to establish a Development Incentive Zone (DIZ) for land located on the North Side of West Capitol Drive and East of North 60th Street, in the 2nd Aldermanic District. (FN [000708](#))

4/22/2004 – Common Council approved an ordinance amending a Development Incentive Zone known as Midtown Center for land located on the North Side of West Capitol Drive and East of North 60th Street, in the 2nd Aldermanic District. (FN [040068](#))

10/24/2006 – Common Council approved an ordinance amending a Development Incentive Zone known as Midtown Center, located north of West Capitol Drive and southwest of West Fond du Lac Avenue, in the 2nd Aldermanic District to modify the site layout for Area A. (FN [060622](#))

Recommendation:

Since the proposed plans for a new commercial building are consistent with the Midtown Center DIZ standards and the recommendations of the West Side Plan, staff recommends approval of the subject file.

DIZ Design Standards Table

Standard	Midtown Center Area A (standards here ; site plan here)	Applicant Analysis of Proposal
Uses	General retail – allowable use	
Building Placement (complies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate buildings to define street edges and corners. • Relate to the physical character and scale of the neighborhood. • Type 1 frontage requires all of the street frontage to be occupied with buildings except for drive openings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building is placed to align with the adjacent “Ashley Stewart” building across 56th St. and the same distance from 56th St. as shown in the DIZ map, adjacent to the utility easement. • There are no side or rear yards as part of the development.
Building Design (complies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define street edges and corners. • Relate to the physical character and scale of the neighborhood. • Establish hierarchy between building elements. • Maximum height of a building is 50’. Entry features and lower elements integrated with the building may exceed 50’ in height. • Variety in each building design throughout Area A is encouraged. • Front facades shall be oriented to N. 56th St. extended, FDL Av. and W. Capitol Drive, excluding outlots. • Along N. 56th St. extended from a point 450’ north of W. Capitol Dr. to W. Hope St. extended, buildings must have a storefront window system with vision glass at the first level. A sign band area and/or canopies with signage must be provided. • Building entrances shall be clearly identifiable and visible from streets and easily accessible and inviting to pedestrians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24’ parapet height with accented building heights around the entire building, meeting the minimum height of the RO2 (base) zoning district. • South corner of the building will have a 30’ tall tower element, under the DIZ-established max height of 50’. • The building will be all masonry with accents in height and color of the masonry. • The entry will have a flat canopy over it and all other windows will have sloped awning style canopies. • The main entry will face 56th Street where all windows will go down to street level, or just above. • The ADA parking will be added along 56th Street. • The parapet will have accent lighting integrated into it to wash the building with light.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blank, unarticulated walls facing streets are not permitted, except for service areas. Modulate facades that are visible from the public streets with articulated bays, windows and openings, varying color and texture, and/or other architectural details that relate to the human scale. • Use lighting to enhance the architecture of the building as well as provide security and visual appeal. 	
<p>Building Materials (complies)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All storefront walls visible from N. 56th St. extended and W. Capitol Dr. must contain the most architecturally significant materials and fenestration. Significant building materials include decorative masonry and block, brick, cut stone, glass, architectural-finished metal cladding and architectural precast concrete panels. EIFS cannot be used on the base of the building up to 10’. • Screen rooftop mechanical equipment from pedestrian view at the property line and exceeds 8 cubic feet in area with materials and color that are compatible with the structure. • Glazing on the first floor of commercial buildings and entrances must be transparent, vision glass. Low-E glass with no tinting may be used. Opaque glazing cannot be substituted for vision glass where vision glass is required, but may be used in other areas as an architectural element if it is compatible with the overall design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The building will be all masonry with accents using brick patterns on all elevations. • Façade of the building and entry will be facing 56th St. and will be 60% glass (clear/tempered/laminated) at the street level on the main facade. This exceeds the RO2 zoning requirement. • All windows facing 56th street will extend to the floor, or slightly above to allow for accents to highlight the displays. • There will be windows with clear glazing on the north and south façade to activate those sides of the buildings as they face other parking areas. • The building parapet will be high enough to screen all roof equipment. • The tenant will provide displays at their windows but will not block them from views into the store.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample materials must be submitted for review as requested. 	
Access, Parking and Circulation (complies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a balanced circulation system that accommodates mobility choices. • Enhance linkages to surrounding uses, especially public services and amenities. • Minimize the number of curb cuts and width of driveways. • Align new driveways with driveways across streets where possible. • Provide direct pedestrian connections between public sidewalks/bus stops and all building entrances. • Provide direct pedestrian connections from parking areas to building entrances. Crosswalks should be delineated in a different material. • Provide secure areas for bicycle parking near entrances. • Locate parking areas to the rear of a building or mid-block instead of at corners where possible. • Provide shared parking where possible. • Provide on-street parking on N. 56th Street extended. • New public streets or private streets with public access easements must connect to the adjacent neighborhood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing driveways, parking lots and pedestrian accommodations will be maintained. • ADA parking stalls will be at the front of the building facing 56th St. similar to the other buildings. • Bicycle racks complying with site standard requirements as well as a bench and trash container will all be provided at this part of the site.
Landscaping (complies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In interior parking lot areas, provide curbed islands with landscaping to visually divide the lot. At a minimum, 1 tree per every 15 spaces must be provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscaping is designed to match the rest of the center. Landscaping within the parking areas is not being altered from the existing condition.
Lighting (complies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting within parking areas must be designated and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site lighting will remain as currently designed.

	<p>located to prevent glare onto adjoining properties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighting poles within parking areas may not exceed 25' in height. It is preferred that lighting poles along public ROW are 12' in height but may not exceed 18'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The building canopy at the entry as well as the entire top of the wall will have lighting to wash the building and provide ambient light around the entire building.
Site Improvements (complies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate site elements to define street edges and corners. Coordinate landscaping and site improvements with building features. Enhance the pedestrian experience. Relate to the physical character and scale of the neighborhood. Along the east side of N. 56th Street extended from a point 450' north of W. Capitol Drive to W. Hope Av. extended, provide pedestrian seating and trash receptacles. Locate or screen dumpsters and service areas where they are not visible from the public street. Screen outdoor storage areas. Screen service and loading areas with wing walls or landscaping. Enclose and screen dumpsters and recycling units with a board on board or masonry enclosure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seating, trash and bike racks will be provided along the 56th St. façade. CMU dumpster enclosure will be provided at the NW corner of the building. Parapet will screen the roof top equipment. Loading for the store will take place at the back door from the ramp that is adjacent to the trash enclosure.
Signage (intends to comply)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site signage: Up to 2 monument signs in Area A, preferably at entrances to the project. At least one of the signs must provide an overall development name with up to 3 tenant names. Building signage: Relate to the physical character and scale of the neighborhood; enliven street frontages to enhance the pedestrian experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building signage is by tenant, shown in concept on the renderings. This exceeds the typical 3' in height, 100 sf max signage parameters allowed by the DIZ; however, the DIZ allows this to be exceeded on a case-by-case basis if the tenant space exceeds 5,000 sf. DIZ allows staff review of compliant signage. Site signage will remain as currently designed, but this tenant will have their name added to ½ of one of the monument panels.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building signage shall not exceed 3' in height or 100 sf in area per business.• Tenants exceeding 5000 sf (as this will) may have additional signage area and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.• Internally illuminated box signs are prohibited unless they are recessed into the building and an integral part of the building design.• Individual pin-set metal letters that are back-lit are most desirable. Internally illuminated individual letters are acceptable if raceways are not visible. | |
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