



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

9th Ald. District

**CITY PLAN COMMISSION
ZONING REPORT**

Ordinance File No. [220628](#)

Location: 8120 West Brown Deer Road

**Applicant/
Owner:** Menard, Inc.

**Current
Zoning:** Regional Business (RB1)

**Proposed
Zoning:** Industrial Light (IL1)

Proposal: This file relates to the change in zoning from Regional Business, RB1, to Industrial Light, IL1, for the property located at 8120 West Brown Deer Road, on the north side of West Brown Deer Road, east of North 85th Street, in the 9th Aldermanic District.

This zoning change was requested by Menard, Inc. to allow the expansion of self-storage on the site, which is a Special Use in the IL1 zoning district. The applicant owns two properties in this area (including the adjacent Menard's home improvement retail store at 8110 W. Brown Deer Road), and is seeking to rezone the subject site (a former Pick N' Save grocery store) at 8120 W. Brown Deer Road to IL1. The Menard's store will remain zoned as Regional Business (RB1).

Menard's previously applied for, and was granted a use variance for self-storage at the subject site in 2017 to permit self-storage within the existing former Pick N' Save building. As noted below in the BOZA history section of this report, DCD supported this request as a short-term use of this site to prevent a potential long-term vacancy and with the understanding that this interim use may allow the owner to expand its home improvement retail store (or uses associated with it) onto the subject site in the future. BOZA granted that use variance. Earlier this year, Menard's applied again to BOZA to expand the self-storage on the site by constructing storage lockers on the perimeter of the former Pick N' Save parking lot as well as to utilize portions of the parking lot for light and heavy motor vehicle outdoor storage. This proposal required a use variance, two (2) special use approvals, and four (4) dimensional variances. While the Granville Advisory

Committee supported the proposal, the Granville Business Improvement District (BID #48), former 9th District Alderwoman Chantia Lewis, and DCD stated objections to the plans, and BOZA denied these requests, finding they did not meet the applicable BOZA criteria for approval.

Adjacent Land Use:

This site is directly adjacent to the former Northridge Mall, which located to the northeast. Properties on each side of the site are zoned as Regional Business (RB1). There are some residential uses to the west, including properties zoned as Multi-Family Residential (RM1), Two-Family Residential (RT1), and Single-Family Residential (RS4). Some nearby properties to the southwest and one to the east of the site are zoned as Light Industrial (IL1).

Consistency with Area Plan:

This site is in the Northwest Side Area Plan Area (2007). The Northwest Side Area Plan was amended in 2017 by the Granville Strategic Action Plan & Land Use Study, which contained detailed recommendations for the areas surrounding the former Northridge Mall and the Brown Deer Road corridor. Recommendations from the Industrial Land Analysis that was adopted as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan in 2021 are also relevant to the review of this proposal. The Area Plan specifies the goals and priorities for this area as job creation, redeveloping and reinvesting in the commercial corridors, and activating and revitalizing the former Northridge Mall. The former Northridge Mall is the Granville area's most prominent redevelopment site and the reuse of the land is critical for the overall future of the area and repositioning the Brown Deer Road corridor.

The Granville Strategic Action Plan and Land Use Plan details that a more holistic redevelopment should be reconsidered and pursued for the former Northridge Mall site and the surrounding corridor. The market study conducted as part of the Plan indicates that significant physical changes are needed along Brown Deer Road to reverse the disinvestment and increasing vacancies that have occurred during the last decade. This includes changing some of the land uses along the corridor to address current market trends.

The Industrial Land Analysis recommends introducing new controls on self-storage uses citywide. Since 2017, self-service storage has been prohibited in all of the City's local business (LB) and regional business (RB) districts. Storage uses are noted as problematic in commercial areas because these uses may consume large amounts of land, but do not complement or spur commercial activity in commercial districts, or job creation in industrial districts. New construction of self-storage facilities is discouraged, and the Industrial Land Analysis identifies a number of circumstances where self-storage may be appropriate in industrial districts. These include:

- If the first floor is activated with another use, such as office or retail,
- If the storage use is proposed for an existing building that is not suitable for modern manufacturing (or office/residential uses in a district where those uses are permitted), or
- If the self-storage use will preserve the building, particularly a historically significant building, for another potential use in the future.

In addition to being proposed for a regional business district where self-service storage is prohibited, the current proposed rezoning and uses would not meet the criteria included in the Industrial Land Analysis for circumstances where self-storage would be supported.

Given that this proposal does not lend itself job creation and potentially allows undesirable uses that could be permitted under the IL1 zoning classification that would not contribute to the holistic redevelopment of the former Northridge Mall area, the proposed rezoning to IL1 is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

While one of the scenarios contemplated in the Granville Plan was redevelopment of the former Northridge Mall area as an industrial area, that scenario called for a comprehensive approach to attract job creating modern manufacturing uses to this site as part of a coordinated redevelopment plan that improved circulation, provided added green space, high quality landscaping, and industrial building design and job densities consistent with those achieved in the redevelopment of the Menomonee Valley. The current proposal to rezone this subject parcel to allow for the construction of self-storage lockers is not aligned with those recommendations contained within the Granville Plan.

Previous BOZA

Action:

Earlier in 2022, Menard, Inc. applied to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BOZA) for several variances and special use approvals relating to their proposal to construct additional outdoor storage units on the site and add light motor vehicle and heavy motor vehicle outdoor storage. BOZA denied the variance and special use requests at their June 30, 2022 meeting.

These requests included:

- Use variance – self-service storage (use not permitted in Regional Business, RB1, zoning district)
- Special use – light motor vehicle outdoor storage
- Special use – heavy motor vehicle outdoor storage
- Dimensional variance – front setback
- Dimensional variance – glazing
- Dimensional variance – building materials
- Dimensional variance – fence along street frontage

In testimony to BOZA, DCD staff noted that the criteria for a use variance and special use were not met, and the proposal was not consistent with the recommendations of the Northwest Side Area Plan (2007), Granville Strategic Action Plan & Land Use Study (2017), and the Industrial Land Analysis (2021). The Area Plans specify the goals and priorities for this area as job creation, redeveloping and reinvesting in the commercial corridors, and activating and revitalizing the former Northridge Mall. Self-service storage is in conflict with these goals. Furthermore, this is an area in the city where self-service storage is not permitted.

After weighing the DCD staff recommendation, as well as input from the Granville BID and former alderwoman in opposition to this proposal, BOZA found that the criteria for approval were not met and denied the request for variance and special use approvals.

7/27/2017: Board of Zoning Appeals approved a Use Variance to occupy the former Pick N' Save building as a self-service storage facility as an interim use for a period of 10 years (exp. 7/2027).

6/30/2022: Board of Zoning Appeals denied requests for a Use Variance for self-storage in the parking lot, two (2) Special Use requests for Light Motor Vehicle Storage and Heavy Motor Vehicle Storage, and four (4) Dimensional Variance requests for setback, glazing, building materials, and fencing.

Previous City

Plan Action: None.

Previous Common

Council Action: None.

Staff

Recommendation: While DCD understands the owner's desire to utilize the subject site for expanded self-storage operations, there are several items of concern that arise with the proposal to rezone this site from commercial to industrial and the construction of exterior storage lockers on this site:

1. The proposal is inconsistent with the recommendations of the Northwest Side Plan, the Granville Strategic Action Plan, and the Industrial Land Analysis as described above.
2. While the applicant has indicated a desire to construct self-storage lockers on this site, that proposal would require additional BOZA approvals even if this zoning change is approved. BOZA denied a similar proposal earlier this year, and if the site is rezoned to IL1, and BOZA denies the self-storage proposal again, this rezoning could have unintended consequences of allowing additional uses as of right (such as motor vehicle storage) that would be in conflict with adjacent land uses and the long-term redevelopment goals for the area of the former Northridge Mall.
3. The passive nature of proposed operations on the site, and the absence of job creation. Previous zoning changes in the area from commercial to industrial have been to support specific industrial businesses that were expanding their operations, adaptively reusing existing buildings to prevent long-term vacancy and creating jobs.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Plan Commission recommend that this application be placed on file by the Common Council and not recommended for approval.