



PERSPECTIVE  
DESIGN, INC.  
11525 W. North Avenue  
Wauwatosa, WI 53226  
Tel (414) 302-1780 Fax (414) 302-1781

Golden Corral Restaurant – 306 (AKA 300) West Layton Avenue

Layton Plaza Development Incentive Zone (DIZ) Overlay

Project Overview and Request for Deviation from Performance Standards

The purpose of this document is to provide a statement as to the nature of the proposed development within the Layton Plaza (5<sup>th</sup> / Layton) Development Incentive Zone (DIZ), as well as to describe the development's conformity with the overlay's design (performance) standards and outline the intent of requested deviations from the performance or design standards.

Due to the presence of the DIZ, only zoning items which are not identified in the D.I.Z. guidelines are subject to the underlying zoning ordinances. Variances related to the underlying zoning are subject to review by the Board of Zoning Appeals. Refer to page 6 of this letter for those items that have been identified as being outside the scope of the Layton Plaza D.I.Z., and as subject to the underlying zoning ordinances, have been submitted to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

The proposed development at 306 (AKA 300) W. Layton Av. features a stand-alone Golden Corral Restaurant building. Golden Corral functions as more than just a restaurant, however. It serves as a place for the community to gather for special events, including gatherings for local senior and youth groups, schools, sports teams, military veterans, corporate events, and church organizations. The restaurant features a banquet room able to accommodate groups of up to fifty people. This Golden Corral restaurant is a franchised unit that will be locally owned and operated by longtime Milwaukee area residents and restaurant operators.

The Layton Plaza DIZ is currently divided into two parcels, one vacant and one with an existing hotel development. The existing hotel development is located at the rear (north side) of the D.I.Z. and is accessed via a driveway on 5<sup>th</sup> St. The vacant front (south) parcel is proposed to be subdivided into two separately owned parcels (a Certified Survey Map has been submitted), with the proposed Golden Corral development being located on the eastern parcel (306 W. Layton Av.). The remaining parcel located at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Layton will remain with its current owner to be developed in the future. The proposed 12,225 square foot Golden Corral Restaurant building is oriented to the east side of the site with the parking lot to the west. The site is accessed via a driveway on W. Layton Av. and a drive across the vacant corner parcel connecting to 5<sup>th</sup> Street. All three parcels will be connected via a pedestrian walkway that extends to Layton Av. In addition to the pedestrian-friendly nature of the development, a number of sustainable design elements have been incorporated, including enhanced landscaping, bicycle parking, a rain garden for storm water bio-filtration, and approximately 35 percent of the proposed parking stalls paved with a Turfstone green permeable paver system.

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Though the three parcels that comprise the Layton Plaza D.I.Z. will ultimately be developed at different times by different owners, the proposed Golden Corral development meets the intent and purpose of the overlay zone.

The building is oriented in a way that enhances the pedestrian experience. By locating parking on the side of the building, toward the interior of the D.I.Z., the building can be moved closer to the street, relating more closely to the physical character of the neighborhood and configuration of existing neighboring buildings. The Golden Corral building configuration allows for an outdoor pedestrian patio instead of parking between the building and Layton Av. with a direct pedestrian connection between the public sidewalk and the building entrance. In regard to access, circulation and parking, the proposed development creates a balanced circulation system that accommodates vehicular traffic from 5th Street and Layton Av., pedestrian traffic from both Layton Av. and the existing hotel, and bicycle traffic.

Based on the size and nature of the neighboring future development, it is anticipated that a cross-parking agreement will be executed to allow for a portion of the Golden Corral lot to accommodate shared parking. Landscape islands are provided in the parking area to protect the pedestrian walkway and define vehicular circulation. Site landscaping will coordinate with the building design, enhance the pedestrian experience, and provide an aesthetically pleasing buffer between the street and the parking area. The landscaping along Layton Av. is pushed up to the property line to define the street edge and frames the main driveway into the site. Additional landscaping is used to define the pedestrian connection between the public sidewalk and the building entrance as well as the pedestrian patio.

The Golden Corral building itself relates to the character of the neighborhood in terms of scale, use, and architectural design. The most architecturally significant facades in terms of materials, articulation and fenestration face toward Layton Av. and toward the west (5<sup>th</sup> Street, the pedestrian connection to Layton Av., the pedestrian walkway to the hotel / future corner development, and the parking lot). Building materials and colors convey a modern commercial aesthetic and a beige / earth tone color scheme with bold accent colors, similar to many of the neighboring businesses. Building and monument signage will be of a similar type to the existing neighboring businesses.

**The following specific design standards apply to this development and will be met:**

**Building Frontage:** The front setback from Layton Av. shall be a maximum of 75 feet.

The building setback from Layton Av. is approximately 50 feet, falling within the maximum requirement. This setback is consistent with neighboring parcels and provides space for landscaping and a pedestrian patio between the building and Layton Av.

**Pedestrian Accommodations:** Provide direct pedestrian connections between the public sidewalks/bus stops and building entrances and differentiate pedestrian and vehicular areas with crosswalks from parking areas to building entrances. Crosswalks must be delineated in different color, material, and/or texture than parking areas.

Direct pedestrian access is provided between the public sidewalk on Layton Av. (Where the existing bus stop is located), the building entrance, the parking area, and the neighboring hotel development. There is a pedestrian walkway that is protected by landscape islands that extends across the center of the parking lot to the building entrance. This central walkway will be a

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concrete sidewalk, providing a different material, color and texture from the adjacent asphalt or Turfstone parking area.

**Driveways:** Along Layton Av., two curb cuts are allowed. Along 5<sup>th</sup> St., one curb cut is allowed. The maximum drive aisle width is thirty feet.

One curb cut is proposed on Layton Av. and one curb cut is proposed on 5<sup>th</sup> St. No proposed drive aisle exceeds thirty feet in width.

**Parking Areas:** Locate parking areas mid-block instead of at corners. At interior parking areas, provide curbed islands with landscaping to visually divide the parking lot and provide pedestrian safety. At minimum, 2 trees at each curb island are required along the primary frontage.

Parking is located off the corner, mid-block and set up for future cross-access / shared use with the undeveloped corner parcel. Curbed landscape islands are provided in the parking area to protect the pedestrian walkway and define vehicular circulation. Larger parking lot islands are located closer to Layton Av. and two trees are provided in each of these islands.

**Dumpster Screening:** Locate Dumpsters and service areas where they are not visible from the public street. Enclose and screen dumpsters and recycling units with a masonry enclosure, if visible from the street, or an opaque enclosure. Locate compactors to the rear of the building and provide an opaque enclosure so they are not visible from the public street.

The compactor enclosure and delivery area are located at the back of the site, behind the building and are not visible from Layton Av. An opaque painted composite wood enclosure will screen the compactor and the enclosure will be further screened with landscaping.

**Lighting:** Light poles within parking areas may not exceed 25 feet in height. Light poles along drive aisles and pedestrian areas may not exceed 12 feet in height.

Proposed light poles in the parking area will be 22 feet tall on a three foot concrete base yielding an overall height of 25 feet. The pedestrian walkway will be lit using bollard lights.

**Maximum Building Height:** Maximum building height shall be 40 feet. Entry features and tower elements may exceed 40 feet in height.

The proposed building height is 27 feet at the entry features and tower elements. The main building height is approximately 22 feet.

**Facades:** Variety in each building design is encouraged. Building entrances shall be clearly identified and visible from the streets and easily accessible and inviting to pedestrians. Black, unarticulated walls facing primary frontage and streets are not permitted. Modulate facades with articulated bays, windows and openings, varying color and texture and/or architectural details that relate to the human scale. Use lighting to enhance the architecture of the building and development as well as provide security.

The entry tower faces west toward the parking area and the entry itself is located on the side of the entry tower with the doors facing Layton Avenue. The entry is clearly identifiable from the street and easily accessible and inviting to pedestrians via a direct sidewalk connection between Layton Av. and the building entry. Additionally, there is a pedestrian walkway that is protected by landscape islands that extends across the parking lot from the building entrance and connects to the existing hotel development to the north. The façades oriented to Layton Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street contain multiple levels of articulation in both depth and height, as well as a strong variation in finish materials. Numerous windows and decorative building mounted light fixtures are provided along both facades. Wall-mounted security lighting is provided around the perimeter of the building.

**Materials:** All facades along the primary frontage, Layton Av. and 5<sup>th</sup> St. must contain the most architecturally significant materials and fenestration. Screen rooftop equipment from pedestrian view at the property line with materials and color that are compatible with the building. Glazing on the first floor of commercial buildings must be transparent.

The façades oriented to Layton Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street contain the most architecturally significant materials and fenestration. These materials include brick, clear glass, prefinished metal canopies, and various types of architectural fiber cement wall panels. The façades oriented to Layton Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street contain multiple levels of articulation in both depth and height, as well as a strong variation in finish materials. The building design includes a tall parapet wall at the building perimeter which will screen the rooftop equipment from pedestrian view. All glazing at the ground level will be clear vision glazing.

**Monument Signage:** Up to two monument-style signs are permitted, preferable at entrances to the project on Layton Av. and 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Monument signs cannot exceed 27 feet in height. Monument signs must be incorporated into a masonry base that coordinates with the building materials. The overall area of each sign may not exceed 200 square feet on each side. Billboards and pylon signs are not permitted.

One 14 foot tall monument sign adjacent to the entrance drive on Layton Av. is proposed. The proposed sign includes a masonry base which matches the brick used on the building. The sign area of the “Golden Corral Buffet & Grill” corporate text is approximately 35 square feet and the changeable copy portion of the sign is approximately 28 square feet, yielding a total signage area of 63 square feet per side.

**We are requesting a deviation from the following items outlined in the Layton Plaza D.I.Z.:**

**Facades:** Front Facades shall be oriented to Layton Avenue.

The proposed entrance tower and the longest façade faces west (toward 5<sup>th</sup> St.). However, the façade oriented to Layton Avenue contains the most architecturally significant materials and fenestration. These materials include brick, glass, prefinished metal canopies, and various types of architectural fiber cement wall panels. The façade facing Layton Av. contains multiple levels of articulation in both depth and height, as well as a strong variation in finish materials. The Golden Corral building configuration allows for an outdoor pedestrian patio and landscaping instead of parking between the building and Layton Avenue. Though the entry tower faces west,

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the entrance itself is located on the side of the entry tower facing Layton Av., is clearly identifiable from the street, and easily accessible and inviting to pedestrians via a direct sidewalk connection between Layton Av. and the building entry.

This configuration provides a more inviting experience between the public sidewalk and building entry as pedestrians do not have to walk across a parking lot to get to the building, meeting the intent of the overlay zone and promoting walkability, open gathering spaces, and pedestrian connection to possible future redevelopment across Layton Av. per the comprehensive plan.

**Facades** Buildings must have a storefront window system with vision glass at the first level. The minimum glazing along the primary frontage is 50 percent for the retail sales based on the lineal frontage of the first floor as indicated in CH 295-605 of the zoning code.

The proposed façade facing the primary frontage (Layton Ave) is 65'-3 ½" long and contains 30 lineal feet of glazing. This equates to 45.9 percent of the lineal frontage being glazed. By virtue of the interior layout and configuration of the restaurant's prototype floor plan, additional windows cannot be located in the central signage "tower" element due to the presence of an employee service space and equipment in that location. The intent of the overlay zone, to relate to the physical character and scale of the neighborhood and enliven building facades to enhance the pedestrian experience is met. The use of a larger number of smaller "punched openings" opposed to a standard retail "storefront" yields a smaller percentage of glazing overall, but the achieves the goal of enhancing the street and building design, as noted in the comprehensive plans. This style of window is more appropriate for a restaurant application than a storefront window system and fits in more properly with the building aesthetics.

**Tenant (Building) Signage:** One Type "A" canopy sign (not exceeding 4 feet in height and not exceeding the length of the canopy) identifying the name of the business is permitted. Type A secondary wall signs not exceeding 3 feet in height and 51 SF in area are permitted. Wall signs shall be integrated into the overall design of the building. Individual logos are permitted with architectural review by owner.

The proposed tenant signage includes two type "A" wall signs, one facing 5<sup>th</sup> St. (West) and one facing Layton Av. (South).

**West Façade Signage:** The "Golden Corral" text is comprised of 3" deep, internally illuminated individual channel letters mounted to a raceway (painted to match the adjacent building materials). The "Buffet & Grill" letters are routed into a fully opaque internally lit aluminum enclosure with a white acrylic face (Only the letters are illuminated). The west facing wall sign (primary, in lieu of canopy sign) is 8'-10" tall including all 3 lines of text and has an overall area of 120 SF. The height of the tallest individual letter is 3'-0" for this sign (Within the 4 foot maximum height) with the overall sign height (including 3 all 3 lines of text) exceeding the maximum by 4'-10".

**South Façade Signage:** The south facing wall sign (secondary) is 8'-0" tall including all 3 lines of text and has an overall area of 110 SF. The height of the tallest individual letter is 3'-0" for this sign (Meeting the 3 foot maximum height) with the overall sign height (including 3 all 3 lines of text) exceeding the maximum by 5'-0". The proposed square footage for the secondary wall sign exceeds the maximum square footage by 59 SF.

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The principles of the overlay zone promote coordinated signage throughout the development. The use of wall signage instead of canopy signage is consistent with this principle as the existing hotel development utilizes two wall signs instead of a wall sign and canopy sign. The proposed signage is scaled appropriately for a stand-alone building of this size and use, and fits aesthetically into the prototype design.

***The following items have been identified by DCD staff as being outside the scope of the Layton Plaza D.I.Z., and as subject to the underlying zoning ordinances, have been submitted to the Board of Zoning Appeals (LMS ID: COM-NEW-17-00009). While these items are not for consideration by the City Plan Commission, they are included below for informational purposes:***

**Variance:** Request to exceed maximum allowable number of parking stalls.

**Variance:** Request to locate some of the trees required for interior parking lot landscaping in alternate locations on the site. The required amount of landscaped surface area will be provided interior to the parking lot; some required trees would be elsewhere on the site.

The above referenced BoZA submittal has been made with the intention of being included on the March 9<sup>th</sup> agenda. Our anticipation is that the outcome of our zoning appeals will be determined prior to the March 13<sup>th</sup> Plan Commission hearing.

Thank you for your time and consideration in the review of this D.I.Z. project submittal and associated deviation request.

Rob Lambert  
Project Manager  
Perspective Design, Inc.  
(414) 302-1780 (x208)  
rlambert@pdi-arch.com