



June 17, 2025
File No. 250279

Project Narrative

Project: 7 Brew Milwaukee
350 W Layton Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53207

MilBrew Holdings is requesting Plan Commission review and approval for the redevelopment of parcel 5950872000 located at 350 W Layton Avenue in the City of Milwaukee for a 7 Brew drive-thru coffee shop with associated parking. The existing property currently consists of a vacant parcel with drive access connections east and west of the lot. The property is currently zoned LB1 – Commercial Local Business with a Development Incentive Zone (DIZ) overlay – 5th/Layton. City Plan Commission approval is required for this proposal as it relates to the DIZ use list and design standards. Where the overlay is silent, the LB1 zoning continues to apply. A restaurant with drive-through use is allowed per the DIZ, but subject to a public hearing and approval by the City Plan Commission. The applicable DIZ design standards are outlined below and more specifically responded to in a separate Zoning Review Matrix document.

The overall property size is 0.69 acres (29,935 square feet). The redevelopment will contain the 530 square foot coffee shop with outdoor patio, 250 square foot stand-alone cooler building, (2) drive-thru lanes, pass-thru lane and parking. The anticipated number of vehicles per day is 358. All drive-thru queuing will occur on site. 7 Brew will offer a full menu of coffee drinks, energy drinks, Italian sodas, smoothies, shakes, teas and more. 7 Brew staff will take orders from each car individually, using iPads to take orders. They do not utilize a speaker system menu board. Orders will be hand delivered by staff at both lanes.

The City zoning code requires a maximum of 4 parking spaces; the plans are providing 12 parking spaces (including 1 ADA accessible stall). We have reached out to the Department of Neighborhood Services' (DNS) Permit and Development Center to obtain a referral letter for the parking over the maximum. The number of parking stalls for this restaurant with drive-thru use is dictated by the zoning code, and Board of Zoning Appeals approval is being sought in order to exceed the maximum allowed number of spaces. As part of the BOZA application, our intent is to have DPW-approved permeable paving along the south parking area, along the primary street (Layton Avenue). The existing impervious area on site is 3,869 S.F. (0.09 acres) and the proposed impervious area is 20,773 S.F. (0.48 acres).

Vehicles are expected to arrive at the site from the south, at the Layton Avenue entrance. To exit the site, a sign will be added at the drive through exit for vehicles to exit left (eastbound) through the Golden Corral drive. The north drive is still required to allow a connection point for delivery and emergency vehicle access. This drive will have a one way drive pavement marking along with a no entry/delivery vehicle only sign. These access points allow for efficient vehicle movement to and from the site to prevent vehicle use of the north access point. All connected public accesses through the site will be constructed as ADA compliant routes.

There is no “front door” to the building, as customers are not allowed inside the building. While the business model is centered around a drive-thru coffee and beverage shop, there is a patron walk-up door on the coffee shop facing east that is provided for non-vehicular customers underneath the canopy structure. A direct connection from the public walk along Layton Avenue to the walk-up door is being provided via a 5’ wide concrete walk that passes through the drive aisles. The concrete walk will help motorists distinguish between the crosswalk and the drive-thru lanes. The walk-up door for non-vehicular customers will be available during all hours of operation. Non-vehicular customers are treated the same way as customers in the drive-thru lanes. Customers will walk up to the “walk-up” door where an employee will meet them at the door, take their order with an iPad, and hand deliver the order. Orders are taken at Lane 1, Lane 2, and the walk-up door.

In addition to the pedestrian connection through the drive-thru lanes, this project will meet the DIZ principles and standards for pedestrian and bicycle accommodation. Underneath the canopy structure of the building there are (2) picnic tables and (4) bike racks provided to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. To improve site safety, light poles and canopy lighting will be provided at appropriate foot candles with minimal light trespass and directed inward toward the development. Enhanced site landscaping is being provided as an additional site amenity.

Site landscaping will exceed the DIZ and base zoning standards. The LB1 zoning requires the landscaping edge along the frontage to be a minimum of 10’ in width. This development will exceed the requirements by providing a minimum landscaping width of 18.63’ along Layton Avenue. The plans provide a combination of ornamental and native plant species for perimeter and interior landscaping. Additional perennial/ornamental grasses are being provided along Layton Avenue to further enhance the landscaping along the street edge and match the development to the west. The landscape plan demonstrates that the landscape islands meet the DIZ requirements with respect to minimum quantity and types of plantings within them. Landscape calculations are provided on sheet C1.4 (civil landscape and restoration plan) of the civil plan set.

The building design of both the cooler and the main building will be clad fully in a modular brick siding system which meets the DIZ design standards. The building is meeting all other DIZ design standards. The building height is meeting the DIZ design standards. There is an established hierarchy between building elements. The base and top of the coffee shop is modular brick siding, while the middle contains coping metal trim. There are also elements of blue break metal fascia to further establish hierarchy. On the cooler, the front and back elevations contain one type of modular brick, while the north and south elevations have a distinguished look between two types of modular brick. The front façade is orientated to face the primary street, Layton Avenue. The mechanical systems are screened from the right-of-way. Additionally, the front façade is articulated with varying materials, windows, color, texture, and details to meet the DIZ standard.

The property will be transformed into a commercial development that is aesthetically pleasing with high-quality exterior materials on the building along with improved landscaping designed to ensure species resiliency and complimentary style.