



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

2nd Ald. District
Ald. Chambers

**CITY PLAN COMMISSION
ZONING REPORT**

File No. [230708](#)

Location: 6100 and 6200 N. 84th Street

**Applicant/
Owner:** Black Mountain Energy Storage (applicant)

**Current
Zoning:** Single-Family Residential (RS4) and Site Plan Review Overlay Zone (SPROZ) known as Church for Balm of Gilead. Portions of the site are also within a Shoreland-Wetland Overlay.

Proposal: This 32-acre site is zoned Single-Family Residential (RS4) and within a Site Plan Review Overlay Zone (SPROZ) known as Church for Balm of Gilead, which was established in 1998 and had anticipated residential development on this site. The SPROZ contains site placement and design standards, but does not regulate use. Development has not occurred on this site, and the applicant, Black Mountain Energy Storage, is proposing to construct a battery storage facility, which has been classified by the Dept. of Neighborhood Services as an outdoor substation/distribution equipment. This use is permitted in the RS4 zoning district. City Plan Commission approval is necessary for the elements of the proposal as they relate to the SPROZ standards. All other facets of this proposal must meet the RS4 zoning requirements or Board of Zoning Appeals approval will also be necessary. Portions of the site are also within a Shoreland-Wetland Overlay Zone, and are required to follow the regulations outlined in the zoning code relating to this. The applicant has stated that a Wetland Delineation & Determination study has been completed for this location, and a preliminary hydrology review has been conducted, but a full study has not yet been commissioned.

Black Mountain Energy Storage intends to purchase the subject site from Christian Faith Fellowship Church of God In Christ, Inc. and develop a 300-Megawatt Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). The facility, to be known as American Pharoah BESS, will be a utility scale project intentionally located adjacent to the WE Energies 138 Kilovolt substation. On-site construction will take 12-14 months.

The facility will be set back on the site from N. 84th Street and the residential properties to the north, while staying outside of the wetlands. The facility will be screened in accordance with the SPROZ and zoning code requirements, and will include stormwater detention. The site will be lit with 30' tall light poles and LED lights with cutoff fixtures. A lighting plan has been provided to show the site illumination at the property lines. There will be a substation on the northeast portion of the facility that will have connectivity to the WE Energies Granville Substation and the rest of the transmission grid. The rest of the facility will encompass approximately 112 metal batter storage system units that will be installed at the site mounted on concrete pads. The enclosures will not exceed 40 feet in length, 8 feet in width and 8 feet in height.

The applicant has stated that the noise level generated from this facility (particularly the HVAC component to each of the battery containment units and inverters to convert the power) is approximately 70dBA. At the time of the drafting of this staff report, the applicant has said that a noise study is underway to determine the anticipated noise level at the property lines. The applicant expects this study to be completed by the City Plan Commission meeting. If the conclusion of the noise study warrants it, the applicant will take extra noise reduction measures as necessary. Measures could include Durisol noise barriers (or approved equivalent) in place of wood fencing around the perimeter of the facility to reduce noise along the northern and western boundaries adjacent to residential areas. Another option is a Parklane mechanical gravity barrier around select battery enclosures to reduce noise internal to the site.

SPROZ Standards:

The applicant has included compliance tables in their narrative exhibit demonstrating how their proposal meets the applicable SPROZ and RS4 zoning standards. Specific to the SPROZ, the following elements are applicable:

Site Plan Review Overlay District Design Guidelines for FN 980290

Design Guideline	Design Detail
1. The design of all parking areas shall be consistent with established traffic engineering standards.	Not Applicable/Met
2. All residential uses shall provide a landscape buffer adjacent to industrial districts per Code requirements.	Not Applicable/Met
3. A front setback of at least 120 feet shall be provided adjacent to North 84th Street. This setback area should have landscaping that includes trees, shrubs, and ground cover; decorative metal or masonry fencing, and signs; but as a minimum shall provide trees meeting Code size requirements, planted one per 40 lineal feet and ground cover.	Met: The Site Plan and Landscape Plan show a 120 ft. front setback adjacent to North 84th Street. The front setback area has landscaping that includes trees, shrubs, and ground cover to a depth of 25'. Beyond the 25', the landscape plan notes to save as much existing vegetation as possible. The front setback area has no signs.
4. All parking areas shall have areas devoted to interior landscaping with trees, shrubs, and ground cover.	Not Applicable/Met
5. Each building may have one monument sign with a maximum height of 5 feet.	Not Applicable/Met
6. Site illumination shall meet Code requirements and be designed and	Met: Site illumination meets Code requirements and is designed and located in a manner that will not cause glare.
located in a manner that will not cause glare.	WillSport GTX High Output LED Lighting WS-GT4 Type V Square 30'H for internal light poles and WS-GT4 Type IV 30'H for perimeter light poles (or approved equal) will be used. The lights around the perimeter will have the house side shield installed to limit the amount of light shown towards any neighbors
7. All buildings on the site shall have common architectural elements and physical orientations.	Not Applicable/Met
8. Site access shall not exceed three driveways and must receive all appropriate municipal approvals.	Met: One driveway will be used for site access.
9. All physical improvements and alterations required to meet these guidelines shall be completed within 6 months of the issuance of an occupancy permit.	Met: All physical improvements and alterations will be completed within 6 months of the issuance of an occupancy permit.

Adjacent Land Use:

Four-family residential buildings are to the north and west of this site (zoned Multi-Family Residential, RM1). A WE-Energies substation is to the east, and a railroad and industrial uses are to the south, zoned Industrial Light, IL1.

**Consistency with
Area Plan:**

The proposed project is within the Northwest Side Area Plan area. The Northwest Side Area Plan was adopted in 2007 and amended in 2017. The parcel is located within the Industrial District (“I”), which is characterized by lands that abut the east-west rail line in the southern portion of the Northwest Side Area. Several large parcels remain vacant and available for future development. Infill and property improvements are desired for underutilized, vacant, and potentially contaminated sites (p.95) with consideration of buffering industrial properties from adjacent properties with landscaping and or fencing (p. 103).

The City of Milwaukee’s Climate & Equity Plan was recently adopted as part of the City’s Comprehensive Plan in 2023. “Greening the Electric Grid” is identified as one of the “10 Big Ideas,” where piloting new technologies like battery storage and microgrids are encouraged to protect properties and the people they serve from grid outages ([available online](#)).

The proposed project at 6100 N. 84th Street is consistent with the Northwest Side Area Plan and the Climate & Equity Plan.

**Previous City
Plan Commission**

Action:

6/1998 – City Plan Commission recommended approval of the establishment of a Site Plan Review Overlay Zone and its design standards for land located east of North 84th Street between West Bende Avenue and West Florist Avenue in the 15th Aldermanic District (now the 2nd Aldermanic District). (File Nos. 980289 and 980290)

**Previous Common
Council Action:**

7/24/2998 – Common Council approved the establishment of a Site Plan Review Overlay Zone and its design standards for land located east of North 84th Street between West Bende Avenue and West Florist Avenue in the 15th Aldermanic District (now the 2nd Aldermanic District). (File Nos. 980289 and 980290)

Staff

Recommendation:

The elements of this proposal that relate to the Site Plan Review Overlay Zone include landscaping, setbacks, lighting, and site access. All other aspects of this proposal are required to meet the base (RS4) zoning standards and applicable sections of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances. The applicable SPROZ standards have been met, and as such, staff recommends that the City Plan Commission approves this file conditioned on:

- Prior to permit issuance, applicant will submit a report from a qualified professional that identifies the specific sound mitigation measures that the applicant will incorporate into the final site design, including identifying any landscaping and screening elements subject to the standards of this overlay, and an updated noise assessment that confirms that the selected mitigation measures will result in the project being operated in compliance with City of Milwaukee noise limits.