



## Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary

**Z-64-19-4**

### INFORMATION ONLY

<b>Date of VPC Meeting</b>	November 2, 2020
<b>Request From</b>	P-2 TOD-1 (Parking, Interim Transit-Oriented Zoning Overlay District One)
<b>Request To</b>	PUD (Planned Unit Development)
<b>Proposed Use</b>	A self-service storage facility, household moving center, car sharing, and all uses permitted in WU Code T5:7 (commercial and residential)
<b>Location</b>	Approximately 238 feet west of the southwest corner of 3rd Street and Thomas Road

### VPC DISCUSSION:

#### APPLICANT PRESENTATION

**Parul Butala**, representing U-Haul, introduced the case with background and the extent of U-Haul's international headquarters in Midtown Phoenix and the location of the subject site as an extension to this campus. The campus is receiving significant investment with the addition of the Fitness and Conference Center which is under construction in addition to pedestrian pathways and entry enhancements to the U-Haul tower.

The proposed Flagship Store would be a testing location for research and design where innovations could be applied at a small scale first before being applied nationally. U-Haul has many employees from across the country and virtually all come to Midtown for training and this facility would be used for training purposes also.

Moses Eason, representing U-Haul, introduced the site and the proposal. The site is currently zoned P-1 (Parking) and is one of the 11 parking lots used by the Midtown Campus. The Walkable Urban (WU) Code does not permit self-storage uses and therefore, a Planned Unit Development is proposed which generally follows WU Code Standards while adding the proposed use. While the Planned Unit Development process is more extensive, it would allow U-Haul to construct the proposed use and would allow the city the same benefit that it would receive from another WU Code development, including improvements to the Thomas Road streetscape.

The height of the building is 66 feet to the roof deck which is generally consistent with the gradient extending away from Central Avenue which is intended to have the tallest

buildings. In this area, the Haverly is a Toll Brothers project that is currently under construction which will contribute to the urban streetscape. The proposed project is designed to contribute to this urban character with a nod to the existing campus and the mid-century modern design of the U-Haul towers including the color scheme.

Early concerns related to traffic generation, but there will be very little traffic generated from the use. Ingress / egress will be from Thomas Road and the city has requested that left turns onto Thomas be restricted and U-Haul is agreeable to this.

The ground floor along Thomas Road accommodates the vehicle entry and storefront glazing, primarily along the retail showroom. The upper floors will be storage units. U-Haul has found that in dense urban locations, such as Midtown Phoenix, have a strong demand for self-storage uses because dwelling units are small and are developing quickly. The facility will serve a need and, given its location in the U-Haul Corporate Campus, will be sort of a crown jewel.

He then shared images of the Flagship Store in Houston that has been working quite well and is like what is being proposed as an extension of the corporate campus.

#### QUESTIONS FROM COMMITTEE / DISCUSSION

**George** asked what is being proposed on the main floor and if there will be any units accessible from the street frontage. **Eason** responded that the ground floor adjacent to Thomas Road is mostly retail showroom and that there will be no ground floor storage units or roll-up doors. He stated that the next presentation will more clearly depict the streetscape environment that will be created by this project.

**Vice Chair Cothron** asked the following questions:

- How many units are proposed on the site? **Eason** responded that 1,100 are proposed
- What is the projected traffic impact from this use? **Eason** responded that a 30,000 square foot facility would generate between 31 and 53 trips per day.
- About the building materials, what kind of LEED standard is being proposed? **Abigail Ayala**, representing U-Haul, described the materials on the building which include metal panels, CMU block, and storefront glazing. **Butala** added that U-Haul has a strong history of sustainability and has received significant accolades including the achievement of having planted over 800,000 trees. **Eason** added that they have a reuse center on these sites where a tenant may elect to discard a belonging which could then be reused by another tenant or donated. **George** inquired if they would be willing to partner with local charities? **Butala** responded in the affirmative and asked for a list of local charities that may be interested. She described a relationship in Detroit with a charity called Humble Design.

**Procaccini** asked what U-Haul was proposing to make this project special given it is the world campus.

- **Eason** responded that it is special because it is so close to leadership that it will be a point of pride and that it will be used to test innovations. **Procaccini** asked if there was anything proposed here that would be better than facilities elsewhere. **Butala** responded that nothing stands out. **Procaccini** stated that because of the

location in the headquarters campus the fact that the request is a PUD, the request should be exceptional in some way, aesthetically and/or through LEED design.

**Benjamin** asked for detail on the proposed car and truck sharing proposed in the development narrative. **Butala** responded that it is like ZipCar where an individual can rent a car or truck for just a few hours rather than a day. In San Francisco, the a few parking spaces are reserved in different parts of the city where individuals can use an application to unlock the car or truck and then simply return it when finished. **Eason** added that studies reveal that when close to high capacity transit, approximately 50 percent of clients will use transit to access the facility.

**Rodriguez** stated that she is skeptical of the request and that it sounds like everything benefits U-Haul and that nothing benefits the community as a whole; for example, automatic lights primarily serve to reduce electricity consumption for U-Haul. The request falls short of meeting the intent of the Walkable Urban Code and should be better. Further, the traffic slides shared are insufficient.

- **Butala** responded that the project includes an enhanced streetscape along Thomas Road with a wide setback, shade, benches, and that the project will offer a bicycle repair station to the public. **Rodriguez** responded that enhancements are part of the process because U-Haul is asking for additional entitlement and an exception from the Walkable Urban Code. She stated that the proposal does not go far enough in terms of either aesthetics or sustainability. **Eason** responded that the use may not be glamorous but that there is a current and growing need and that these facilities are well-used in urban locations.

**Bryck** echoed the concerns expressed by Vice Chair Cothron and Rodriguez. He urged the group to take a step back to an evaluate what is being requested: the Walkable Urban Code is relatively new and was created after 5 years of planning for ReinventPHX and the applicant is now requesting exceptions to the code that intentionally did not permit self-storage uses because they are not conducive to transit oriented development. He urged the applicant that if they are going to make an end-run around transit oriented development, that the product should be objectively exceptional. He concluded by stating that everything presented benefits U-Haul and that there is little benefit to Midtown Phoenix. The PUD should exceed WU Code to even be considered.

**Eason** and **Butala** thanked the committee for their input.