

March 8, 2016

Sarah Schafer  
BOISE CITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
150 N. Capitol Boulevard, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Boise, Idaho 83702

**Re: DRH16-00339**

Dear Ms. Schafer,

KC Gardner Company, L.C., ("**Gardner Company**") is the Operations Manager of BVGC Parcel B, LLC ("**Applicant**"), which is the owner of the real property commonly known as Parcel B. We will refer to it as either "**Parcel B**" or the "**Site**" hereafter. Previously, Gardner Company obtained approval of a project review approval for development of Parcel B as DRH15-00339 for 1101-1199 Front Street. We are now submitting an application for development of Parcel B, which will initially include a parking garage, an office building, a retail building, parking areas, and certain additional streetscape improvements. The modifications to the design of the Site are in response to market demand and additional suggestions we received regarding Downtown's parking needs.

#### **A. Site And Project Description**

Before addressing the specific Design Review requirements, we want to provide some background about the Site and our proposal for its development.

##### **1. Site History**

A detailed history of Parcel B is set forth in the submittal package for DRH15-00339. We will recap certain information regarding its history. Parcel B is generally rectangular, its dimensions are approximately 680 feet by 320 feet, and it is slightly larger than five (5) acres in area. Parcel B has never been subdivided and was formerly occupied by railroad tracks and related facilities. Moreover, 12<sup>th</sup> Street was never extended through the Site, unlike 11<sup>th</sup> Street and 13<sup>th</sup> Street, which formed the eastern and western boundaries of the Site crossing the tracks at signalized crossings.

The adjoining property to the south of Parcel B across Myrtle Street was not platted, designed, or developed with a continuation of 12<sup>th</sup> Street either. Properties across Myrtle Street to the south have developed as mid-rise residential and office buildings, with one office building centered on 12<sup>th</sup> Street. ITD has designed Front Street and Myrtle Street as a high speed one-way couplet to serve commuter traffic. Parcel B is the exit and the entrance to the Connector and the Interstate Highway System.

In evaluating how to best place the various buildings on the Site we have acknowledged the desire of Boise City and CCDC to avoid a superblock that the buildings be aligned roughly with 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Broad Street. With the development of JUMP and the Simplot Headquarters to the east across 11<sup>th</sup> Street, interrupting Broad Street, we have anticipated a future need to encourage pedestrian travel along the Broad Street axis as an alternative to the Front – Myrtle Couplet, which is a significant impediment to non-vehicular traffic downtown Boise.

## 2. Project Elements

This Application proposes the development of the following:

- A six story office building consisting of five floors plus mechanical penthouse occupying 145,000 square feet ("**Office Building**") located on the southwest quadrant of the Site;
- A parking garage with four floors of parking providing approximately 600 parking stalls ("**Parking Garage**") located on the northeastern quadrant of the Site, configured to the north of the drive aligned with the Simplot garage across 11<sup>th</sup> Street to the east;
- A 10,000 square feet office and retail space on the first floor of the parking garage, fronting on the sidewalk on 11<sup>th</sup> Street;
- A retail building occupying 5,000 square feet ("**Retail Building**") located on the southeast quadrant of the Site, with exterior patio space and adjoining parking facilities;
- Internal service drives and pedestrian areas which will be constructed with a flat profile and a variety of materials to encourage pedestrian and bicycle traffic within the Site, to slow traffic through the Site, and to facilitate commercial operations within the Site;
- A sixteen foot wide pedestrian zone around the project perimeter which includes sidewalks, furnishing areas, and landscaping in various dimensions; and

- A pad in the northwest quadrant of the Site that could permit a future development of multi-story residential or commercial component.

## **B. Scope of Design and Philosophy of Project**

In proposing a development plan for Parcel B, we have looked to the River Street-Myrtle Street Master Plan and Blueprint Boise to guide the development of the Site. We have also reviewed and incorporated as appropriate elements of the Downtown Boise Design Review Guidelines, and Downtown Boise Streetscape Standards and Specifications. This application meets the demand that we have identified in our initial due diligence evaluation of Parcel B that will accompany the completion of City Center Plaza, the expansion of the District's convention and meeting facilities, and the completion of Simplot's World Headquarters and Jack's Urban Meeting Place. The modifications that are contained in this Application from those set forth in DRH15-00339 are in part a response to concerns previously voiced regarding the proximity of the proposed parking garage to Downtown and the number of new stalls needed in Downtown.

## **C. Design Considerations**

To address the conditions and the elements identified above, we have identified the following considerations.

**1. Mixed-Use Nature of the Project.** A mixed-use project will enliven this area throughout the day replacing an existing, underutilized dirt parking lot. This approach is in furtherance of (a) the mixed use designation for the Site on the future land use map for the Downtown Planning Area and (b) DT-CCN 1.2 encouraging the development of "a vibrant mix of uses in Downtown which encourage 24-hour activity" as set forth in Blueprint Boise, p. DT-9. This is also consistent with the goals of the River Street-Myrtle Street Master Plan, pp. 34-36. Additionally, we agree that a larger parking garage is necessary not only to serve the Site, but also meet future needs in this area of Downtown. The River Street-Myrtle Street Master Plan anticipates by identifying a need for future public parking facilities in the immediate vicinity of Parcel B. River Street-Myrtle Street Master Plan, pp. 53-60, 65-67.

**2. Internal Service Drives.** As noted above, 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Broad Street never extended through the Site. We are proposing that we align a north-south internal service drive with 12<sup>th</sup> Street. The east-west internal service drive we are proposing be aligned on the east with the location of the parking garage access to the Simplot Headquarters parking facility that was previously approved by Boise City and ACHD. From that point the drive travels west to a location that is in the middle of the block on 13<sup>th</sup> Street. This is in furtherance of (a) DT-CCN 1.4(b) to respect the traditional pattern of lots within blocks to avoid "superblocks"; (b) DT-CCN 1.4(a) to bring the buildings to the street orienting them towards the public sidewalks; (c) DT-CCN 1.5 to avoid strip commercial development; (d) DT-PKG 1 to utilize a mixture of

public parking garages, together with on street parking opportunities, to minimize the size of surface parking lots and to create pedestrian oriented spaces; and (e) DT-C 2.1 to embrace the traditional street grid or facilitating elements that approximate the traditional street grid as set forth in Blueprint Boise, p. DT-9, 11, and 14.

**3. Pedestrian Considerations.** The decision to extend the Interstate Highway System into downtown Boise via the Connector and the creation of the Front – Myrtle Couplet has a significant impact on pedestrian and bicycle traffic patterns in downtown Boise. They are a physical obstacle to non-vehicular traffic.

We are proposing a sixteen foot wide sidewalk and streetscape design around the perimeter of the Site consistent with current standards, with various enhancements at the exterior corners. We are also encouraging pedestrian and bicycle traffic to traverse through the middle of Parcel B, and to connect with the Pioneer Corridor as a buffer to the Front – Myrtle Couplet. This is in furtherance of (a) DT-CCN 1.6(a) to provide a physical and psychological connection to adjoining neighborhoods, (b) DT-CCN 1.6(b) to provide walking and bicycle connections between Downtown and adjoining neighborhoods as set forth in Blueprint Boise, and (c) DT-C 2.5 to improve the pedestrian experience on these streets, pp. DT-9 and 14. The pedestrian facilities for the Project are as follows:

- A 16' pedestrian zone along Front Street, consisting of an 8' landscaped buffer with trees spaced every 25', and an 8' sidewalk, consistent with prior Simplot approvals;
- A minimum of a 16' pedestrian zone along Myrtle Street consisting of an 8' landscaped buffer, an 8' sidewalk, and trees alternating on both sides of the sidewalk;
- A 16' pedestrian zone along both 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Streets consisting of a 4' zone for trees and street furnishings and a 12' sidewalk;
- Enhanced landscaping and pedestrian plaza facilities located at the corners of Front Street and 13<sup>th</sup> Street, and Myrtle Street and 13<sup>th</sup> Street;
- Enhanced garage pedestrian entrance at Front Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street;
- Enhancements at the corner of 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Myrtle Street connecting to the Pioneer Corridor, utilizing the same treatments and patterns found in that facility to provide a connection that is a minimum of 25' wide; and
- Interior pedestrian and landscaping improvements to facilitate pedestrian transit through the interior of the Site.

We are proposing that the improvements facing Front Street and Myrtle Street be constructed consistent with the approved plans for DRH15-00339. These

improvements are consistent with the streetscape improvements proposed and approved to the east in conjunction with Simplot's headquarters and JUMP.

**4. Pioneer Corridor.** At the southeast corner of the Site, we are proposing enhanced streetscape and hardscape elements to reflect the elements of the Pioneer Corridor at the southwest corner of Myrtle Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street, and to provide a visible connection to that facility and to JUMP's connection to Broad Street. This ties together the pedestrian elements of Parcel B as well as the Pioneer Corridor and then connecting them to the Simplot facilities to the east. By integrating elements of the Pioneer Corridor on the southeast corner of the Site, we are further extending and enhancing this element to and through the Simplot project, and on into downtown Boise. This is an important connection to facilitate the Pioneer Corridor crossing Myrtle Street. This is in furtherance of (a) DT-C 1.6 to enhance the pedestrian network downtown; and (b) DT-C 2.7, the Pioneer Corridor specifically upon the occurrence of development as set forth in Blueprint Boise, pp. DT-13 and 14. This is also consistent with the goals of the River Street-Myrtle Street Master Plan, pp. 30-33, 37, 48-53, 65-67, to enhance the Pioneer Corridor as a transportation, recreation, and park facility connecting downtown to the Boise River. Moreover, in recognition of the design elements associated with this corner in particular, we have followed the elements identified in Section 3.4.2 of the Boise Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines by incorporating the appropriate elements from those guidelines at that location.

**5. Massing and Size.** There are specific modifications from the plan approved in DRH15-00339. The Parking Garage has been relocated to the northeast quadrant of the Site. We moved the parking structure to the east side of the Site so that it would shorten the walk to the Downtown. This permitted us to incorporate ground floor commercial and retail within the garage along 11<sup>th</sup> Street across from the Simplot Headquarters where there is greater likelihood for successful absorption of the space. Although the parking garage now has a longer north south dimension, by placing it across from the Simplot Headquarters, its mass has less impact.

On the southeast quadrant, we have placed the Retail Building with patio space that more directly engages with the Pioneer Corridor and the plaza improvements immediately to the east between Simplot's building and JUMP. The Office Building on the southwest quadrant is of a size and height comparable to the existing improvements to the south of the Site across Myrtle.

This is in furtherance of (a) DT-CCN 1.4 regarding urban building forms, and (b) DT-C 2.1 as discussed above by approximating the traditional street grid with the visual continuation of 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Broad Street as set forth in Blueprint Boise, pp. DT-9, 11, and 14. This is also consistent with the goals of the River Street-Myrtle Street Master Plan, pp. 41-44, 65-67, locating the tallest structures along Front Street while having lower buildings adjacent to Myrtle Street.

We believe that the new design retains the appropriate intensity of uses while reducing the overall height of several of the elements and providing a better integration

of the connection of the Pioneer Corridor and JUMP at the intersection of 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Myrtle Street.

#### **D. Application of Design Review Standards**

The applicable design review standards are set forth in Boise City Code Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d). We will address of these standards as follows:

**1. Site Design Requirements.** Pursuant to Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(i) of the Boise City Code, the design review committee is required to make specific findings regarding site design. The specific site design requirements will be addressed as follows.

**(a) Traffic Impact.** Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(i)(A) of the Boise City Code states that in evaluating design, “traffic impact is minimized and the pedestrians and cyclists have been provided for through the use of sidewalks, pathways, landscaping, and safe parking lot design.” As depicted on the site plan, we have internalized all of the parking and drive areas on the Site. With access points on 11<sup>th</sup> Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Street, and the service drive aligned with 12<sup>th</sup> Street, there are multiple alternative points of ingress and egress to the Site. In conjunction with the existing Front – Myrtle Couplet, this approach to access to the buildings and to the parking garage will provide sufficient alternative means of access depending upon the time of day and the then traffic peak hour. With respect to the interior drive aisles in the Site as noted above, efforts have been made to ensure that the east–west access drive is compatible with and does not overwhelm the pedestrian facilities. The jog in this drive at the north-south service drive and the enhanced pedestrian facilities will slow vehicular traffic within the Site. This access drive and the adjoining pedestrian facilities are designed to encourage pedestrian travel through the Site.

**(b) Landscaping, Stabilization, and Screening.** Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(i)(B) of the Boise City Code states that in evaluating design “landscaping screens buffer adjacent uses, and screen or conceal unsightly areas.” Appropriate screening and landscaping improvements have been proposed to minimize the external visual impact that service facilities may have on adjoining properties.

**(c) Grading and Drainage.** Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(i)(C) of the Boise City Code states that in evaluating design “on-site grading and drainage have been designed so as to minimize off-site impact.” Based upon our initial geotechnical evaluation of the Site and design all grading and drainage will be undertaken to minimize off-site impact.

**(d) Signage.** Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(i)(D) of the Boise City Code states that in evaluating design signage should provide for business identification, minimize clutter, and comply with the sign regulations. All signage for the project will comply with Boise City Code. We will submit the required sign applications in the future when we are able to identify the tenants for this project.

**(e) Utilities.** Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(i)(E) of the Boise City Code states that in evaluating design that the size and location of utility systems do not detract from the design of the buildings. Currently, there are above ground utilities along 13<sup>th</sup> Street, which will be relocated and placed underground with the development of the project. Additionally, and as noted above, all utility and service requirements will be appropriately located and screened within the project.

**(f) Exterior Material.** Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(ii)(D) of the Boise City Code states that in evaluating the project architecture, that the exterior materials should complement surrounding development in terms of color and relief. The exterior material treatments are discussed in more detail below. Efforts have been taken to utilize materials that are consistent with existing development while not being redundant or derivative.

**(g) Proximity to Residential Property.** Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(ii)(E) of the Boise City Code states that in evaluating the project architecture, impacts should be minimized on adjoining residential use, including those across a street or an alley. This is an urban setting located within the C-5 zone. Although there are residential apartments and condominiums in the immediate vicinity of the Site, we believe that the impact of the project on such residential units is minimal because they are south of Myrtle Street. The closest residential development is an urban five story condominium building located to the southwest of the Site at the southeast corner of Myrtle Street and 13<sup>th</sup> Street.

**2. Structure Design.** Pursuant to Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(ii) of the Boise City Code, the design review committee is required to make specific findings regarding the architectural design of the buildings. The specific structural design requirements will be addressed as follows.

**(a) Building Mass.** Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(ii)(A) of the Boise City Code states that in evaluating the project architecture, "building mass should be consistent with development in the immediate area." The height of the Office Building is as follows: the top of the parapet is seventy six (76) feet above ground level and the roofs of the stair towers are eighty four (84) feet above ground level. The height of the Retail Building is as follows: the top of the parapet is twenty four (24) feet above ground level. The height of the Parking Garage is as follows: the top of the railing is thirty seven (37) feet above ground level and the roofs of the stair towers are forty eight (48) feet above ground level. The structures immediately to the south of Parcel B are currently four to six story commercial and residential buildings which are generally set back from Myrtle Street behind surface parking lots. To the east, the Simplot facilities are located at the sidewalk and will be approximately six to nine stories in height. To the north are a variety of surface parking lots and low rise existing structures. Some of these may redevelop in the future but are separated from the Site by Front Street.

**(b) Building Façades.** Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(ii)(B) of the Boise City Code states that in evaluating the project architecture, that the height to

width relationship is compatible and consistent with architecture in the area. As noted above and as discussed in more detail below, the building facades within the project are compatible with existing development.

**(c) Openings in the Façades.** Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(ii)(C) of the Boise City Code states that in evaluating the project architecture, façade openings “shall be consistent with the architecture in the area.” To the extent possible, we have attempted to ensure that the street elevation is of an appropriate mass and scale and that the floors above have adequate articulation to provide visual relief.

**(d) Exterior Material.** Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(ii)(D) of the Boise City Code states that in evaluating the project architecture, that the exterior materials should complement surrounding development in terms of color and relief. The exterior material treatments are discussed in more detail below. Efforts have been taken to utilize materials that are consistent with existing development while not being redundant or derivative.

**(e) Proximity to Residential Property.** Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(ii)(E) of the Boise City Code states that in evaluating the project architecture, impacts should be minimized on adjoining residential use, including those across a street or an alley. This is an urban setting located within the C-5 zone. While there are residential apartments and condominiums in the immediate vicinity of the Site, we do not believe that the impact of the project on such residential units is material. In fact, the closest residential development is an urban five story condominium building located to the southwest of the Site across Myrtle Street.

**3. Consistency with Adopted Plans and Design Guidelines.** Pursuant to Section 11-03-04.12.C(7)(d)(iii) of the Boise City Code, the design review committee is required to make specific findings regarding the consistency of the project with plans and design guidelines previously adopted by Boise City.

**(a) Application to Office and Retail Buildings.** In developing the design of the Office Building and the Retail Building, the following design elements have been specifically addressed.

**(i) High Visibility Street Corners and Gateway Sites.** Consistent with the provisions of Sections 3.4.2 and 3.5 of the Boise Downtown Design Standards, special attention has been afforded to the exterior corners of the Site. With the changes in proposed uses at the site, we have been able to provide significantly more space at the corners of 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Myrtle Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Myrtle Street, and 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Front Street for enhanced pedestrian areas and enhanced streetscape.

**(ii) Service Area Location and Design.** Consistent with the provisions of Section 3.6 of the Boise Downtown Design Standards, we will screen



service areas from adjoining roadways and properties. Obviously, all buildings have service facilities, so they are not prohibited, rather they need only be designed and screened consistent with the requirements of the Design Standards.

**(iii) Architectural Character.** Consistent with the provisions of Section 4.1 of the Boise Downtown Design Standards, the building elements of the project on the Site have been designed to promote original and distinctive building designs. We are proposing a modern design for the Office Building, making extensive use of metal panels, masonry, and glass. Additionally, a minimal amount of stucco is being utilized to provide additional contrast and color. The Retail Building utilizes glazing, stone, tile, fiber cement board, and stucco to harmonize with various other elements within the project.

**(iv) Building Massing and Articulation.** Consistent with the requirements of Section 4.2 of the Boise Downtown Design Standards, we have designed the building elements of the project to comply, to the extent possible, with the stated goals of the Boise Downtown Design Standards. We have brought the Office Building to the street. The Retail Building, however, is set back from the intersection of 11<sup>th</sup> and Myrtle to enhance the interstate with the Pioneer Corridor and Simplot projects. Material and design elements are utilized for purposes of providing visual relief along façade and rooflines.

**(v) Building Materials.** We have also sought to provide additional variation through the proposed materials and color. As noted above, design of the Office Building utilizes metal, masonry, and glass, together with a minimal amount of stucco. The Retail Building similarly utilizes metal, masonry, fiber cement board, glass and stucco to provide a variety of textures and colors. The materials comply with the requirements of the Boise Downtown Design Standards and provide visual relief.

**(vi) Blank Wall Treatments.** Along Front Street, Myrtle Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street, we avoid blank walls through the use of glass, variation in materials, and appropriate landscaping. We have appropriately screened them and minimized some of the impacts that were identified in DRH15-00339.

**(b) Application of the Foregoing Elements to the Parking Garage.** Obviously, the configuration of the Parking Garage is limited in this regard due to its operational requirements, but exterior modulation has been accomplished through its exterior skin and design. The basic form of the Parking Garage along its north façade on Front Street has been retained from what was approved in DRH15-00339. The western façade is longer than previously approved but now has a commercial preserve along 11<sup>th</sup> at the sidewalk. To address the elements and configuration of the parking garage, we have undertaken the following.

**(i) Building Massing and Articulation.** For the parking garage, we have sought to minimize the mass of the building in several ways. First, through the use of materials found elsewhere, we propose tying the design and style of

the buildings together. The use of glass, metal, and concrete like that found elsewhere in the proposal and is intended to make it clear that the parking garage is an integrated part of the project. Second, the use of metal screening panels are proposed to be utilized to provide visual screening of the parking areas while also providing greater façade articulation than would occur with just screening. This is consistent with the requirements of Section 4.2 of the Boise Downtown Design Standards

**(ii) High Visibility Street Corners and Gateway Sites.**

In recognition of the visibility of the Parking Garage at the intersection of Front Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street, we have also proposed using glass and metal on the lower floors at this corner to provide greater visual interest and to mirror the elevator lobby on the southwest corner of the Parking Garage. This is consistent with the requirements of Section 3.5 of the Boise Downtown Design Standards

**(iii) Building Materials.** The Parking Garage will utilize architectural concrete, masonry, perforated metal panels, and aluminum framed storefront glazing. To minimize the mass of the building and to provide additional exterior modulation, we have proposed the utilization of perforated metal panels. This provides modulation to the façade and further contrasts the cable rail system on the inside of the structure. This is consistent with the requirements of Section 4.4 of the Boise Downtown Design Standards.

**(iv) Blank Wall Treatments.** We have minimized the amount of concrete along the façades of the Parking Garage to provide visual relief and to avoid expansive blank walls. Along 11<sup>th</sup> Street we have incorporated storefront glass for the commercial component that faces the street on the ground level. We have proposed screening panels at various locations. This is consistent with the requirements of Section 4.6.2 of the Boise Downtown Design Standards

**E. Accompanying Materials**

In support of this Application for a design review approval of the two hotels and parking garage, as well as the overall Site design, we are transmitting this analysis together with the following documents for the various buildings:

Site Plan,

Survey of the Site,

Landscape Plan,

Elevations, Perspectives, and Materials for each Building

Color Photographs of the Site and Project Perspectives

Affidavit of Legal Interest

Sarah Schafer  
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We look forward to presenting the application to the Design Review Committee at the April meeting and look forward to its review of this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Geoffrey M. Wardle', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Geoffrey M. Wardle  
VP Development/General Counsel