

Community Planning and Economic Development Department

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 14, 2013

TO: City Planning Commission -Committee of the Whole Meeting

FROM: Aaron Hanauer – Senior Planner

SUBJECT: 1977 West River Road North

The DC Group, which is located at 1977 West River Road (also known as 15 West Broadway) provides uninterruptible power supply (UPS) service and critical backup supply to clients throughout the United States and Canada. The applicant, who has been at this location for 29 years, has outgrown their current facility and looking to expand at their current location.

The subject site is uniquely shaped as it follows the curvilinear shape of West River Road. The lot is 57,049 square feet (1.31 acres). Currently, the site contains an existing warehouse building built in the 1970s that is approximately 25,000 square feet. The building is setback from the street and has a surface parking lot (providing parking for approximately 40 vehicles) between the building and West River Road.

The primary zoning of the lot is I1/ Light Industrial District. The site is also within the MR/Miss River Critical Area Overlay, PO/ Pedestrian Oriented Overlay, and the SH/ Shoreland Overlay Districts. The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth designates this site as general commercial on the future land use map. The recently updated Above the Falls Small Area Plan provides additional guidance for the site and the area. The subject site is within the Broadway Riverfront Subarea. The small area plan describes this subarea as the “gateway to West Broadway.” The recommendation for this subarea includes the encouragement of development of this area with “high density mixed use development, including commercial, light industrial, and/or office uses.”

The applicant is proposing to tear down 9,000 square feet of the existing building and complete an addition that will result in a building with a total floor area of 43,000 square feet. The two-level office/warehouse addition would be built out towards West River Road. The proposed flat roof building would be clad with composite metal panels (silver, bronze, and green) on the primary elevations and precast concrete panels (textured and smooth) on the secondary elevations. Large contiguous glazing areas are proposed on the West River Road North and West Broadway elevations. A pedestrian entrance would be located on the West River Road North

elevation. The first level of the building will primarily be warehouse and service area for computer equipment. The second floor would contain offices, conference rooms, and a roof deck facing the Mississippi River.

A two-level structured parking facility, that would accommodate 80 vehicles, is also part of the expansion plans. The applicant is proposing that the parking structure be placed behind the building wall along West River Road North and be built partially into the ground. As part of the development, the applicant is proposing to maintain one access point for vehicles and delivery trucks at the south end of West River Road North. However, the applicant is proposing to increase the width of the curb cut from approximately 25 feet to 27 feet. The applicant has been working closely with Public Works to allow for this modification and to allow maneuvering to take place on West River Road North. To help reduce traffic conflicts, the applicant is proposing to have most deliveries happen early in the day. The subject property currently does not have a sidewalk along West River Road North. As part of the project the applicant would install one.

Applications: Based on a review of the proposed development, the site plan review is the only application that has been identified to this point.

CPED staff would like to introduce the project to the Planning Commission and discuss any issues before going to a public hearing. In addition to any aspects of the project the commissioners would like to discuss, staff would like input on the following aspects of the site plan review:

1. Fenestration, in particular the proposed windows within the warehouse areas of the project.
2. Material use, in particular the concrete panels along the secondary elevations
3. The proposal's compliance with the Above the Falls Small Area Plan and appearance of the building as a Gateway to West Broadway.
4. Landscaping, although details are limited at this point, input and recommendations for project landscaping.