



STAFF REPORT
WEST ALLIS PLAN COMMISSION
Tuesday, February 28, 2018
6:00 PM

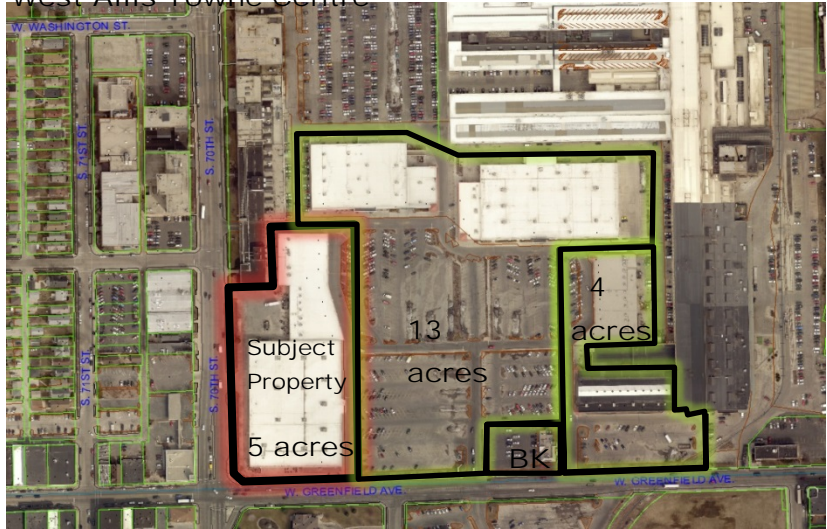
ROOM 220 – CITY HALL – 7525 W. GREENFIELD AVE.

- 2. Revised Site, Landscaping and Architectural Plans for proposed site and building changes to a portion of the West Allis Towne Centre located at 6822-6900 W. Greenfield Ave. submitted by Ross Gallentine of Ramco Gershenson, property owner (Tax Key No. 439-0001-007).

Overview and Zoning

With the vacancy of the Kmart tenant space, Ramco-Gershenson Inc., the applicant/property owner, is proposing to re-tenant an approximate 86,000-sf portion of the building located at 6900 W. Greenfield Ave. The former Kmart tenant space is proposed to be divided up into 3 parts/tenant spaces (including Hobby Lobby and two other retail spaces).

West Allis Towne Centre



The site is part of the West Allis Towne Centre

development, which in total consists of approximately 22.5 acres over 4 parcels of land. The Kmart space, the subject property of this review, is located at the corner of S. 70 St. and W. Greenfield Ave. and is situated upon about 5 acres of land.

Last month the Plan Commission denied Ramco-Gershenson’s site, landscaping and architectural proposal, to re-tenant the former Kmart space, on the basis that their proposed exterior building alterations and site changes didn’t meet the City Zoning Ordinance’s - Site and Building Design Standards or the Site, Landscaping and Architectural review Guidelines. The previous plans lack of windows, expression of blank walls, an external loading dock and trash receptacles facing street frontage was of primary concern.

Revised Plans have been submitted which staff feels are a significant improvement toward addressing the City’s site, landscaping and architectural design concerns. Staff is reviewing the plans and a summary of the updates is offered in the following pages.

The staff recommendation and specific conditions of approval will be offered at the Plan Commission meeting.

What’s changed since last month?

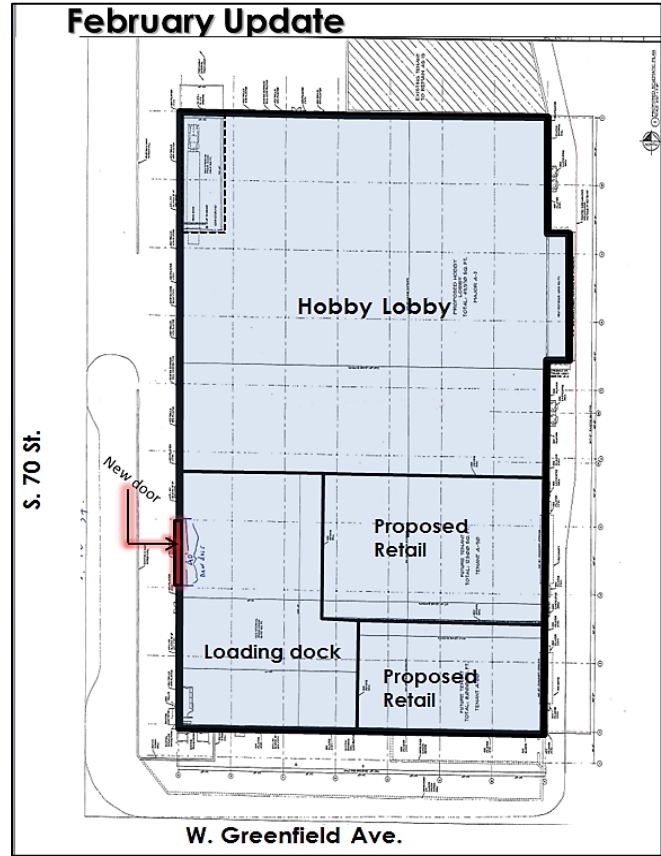
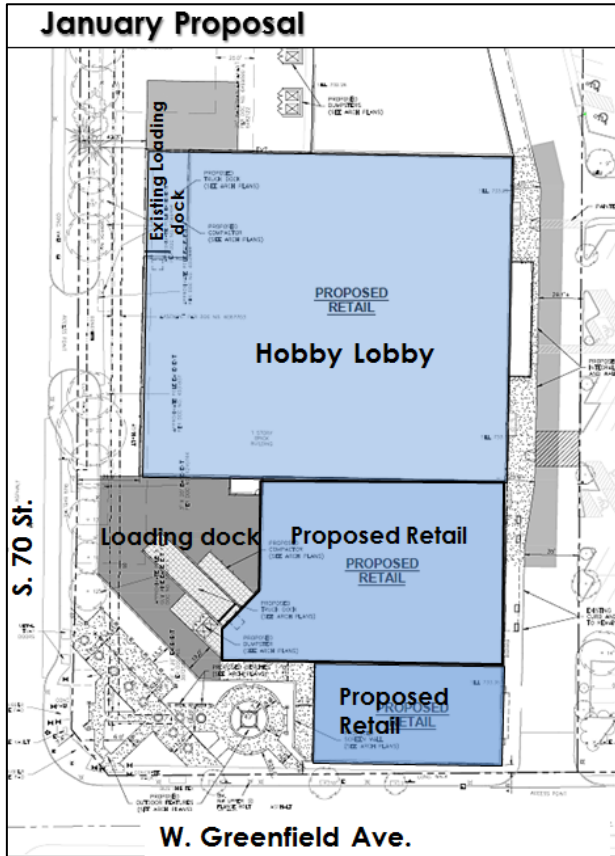
The following comparison is offered. The applicant has worked with staff to modify their plans:

Last Month (January Proposal)
Demo 12,000sf of building

This month (February Update)
Maintaining existing building footprint

External loading dock (west)
 Landscape plaza at corner
 Architectural and site updates

Internal loading dock (inside building)
 Landscape plaza along W. Greenfield Ave.
 Revised Architectural and site updates



Surrounding context

Given the urban context of this area, it is very walkable setting along both W. Greenfield Ave. and S. 70 St. The area is serviced by public transit (including Milwaukee County Transit and Bublr bicycle share) and is located near many large corporate, institutional and retail commercial uses nearby within a short walk.

Neighboring uses within this area include: Downtown West Allis, Milwaukee Area Technical College west campus, West Allis West Milwaukee Scholl District administration offices, Summit Place Office complex, West Allis Center (East Office building), Toshiba, Pick n Save, Landmark Apartments, Aurora medical clinic (under construction) and Six Points Redevelopment area.

Zoning

The Towne Centre is zoned C-3, Community Commercial, which permits retail uses. Therefore this isn't a use approval, but rather a site, landscaping and architectural plan review of the proposed site changes, new construction, and modifications to the property.

The applicant's proposal seeks Plan Commission approval to obtain necessary building permits to commence exterior site changes and exterior building modifications toward re-tenanting the building.

In accordance with sec. 12.13 of the Revised Municipal Code the proposed changes require The Plan Commission shall have the power to approve, approve with conditions, or reject a

site or architectural plan on the basis of the requirements specified in section 12.13 and in accordance with the Site, Landscaping and Architectural review guidelines. Appeals. Any person aggrieved by a decision of the Plan Commission under this section may appeal that decision to the Common Council.

Site, Landscaping and Architectural Design Requirements and Guidelines

The City promotes 4-sided architectural design. The previous lack of windows, blank walls, external loading docks and trash receptacles facing street frontage was of primary concern on the last proposal that was denied in January.

The Ramco-Gershenson Revised Proposal

A summary of the applicant’s site, landscaping and architectural proposal is discussed below.

Architecture

East façade (faces parking lot) – Like the former Kmart tenant, this elevation is proposed to be the storefront side for three proposed new retailers.

The east façade features existing brick facia, with new brick pilaster columns added around 3 new storefront entrances for Hobby Lobby and two other future tenants. New retailer entrance portals to each tenant space are also proposed to project from the east elevation and will feature glazing, awnings and an elevated appearance from the rest of the east elevation. Horizontal EIFS banding has been replaced with metal coping and instead of an EIFS storefront above the entry a nichia siding product is proposed for a more contemporary look.



West façade (faces S. 70 St.) – while the backside of the building is proposed to face the street frontages of S. 70 St. and the intersection with W. Greenfield Ave. Staff has worked with Ramco on updating the appearance that faces street frontages. Staff is working on the lighting details with the applicant.

The plans submitted propose to enhance the façade with a similar look to that on the front side of the building (east side). The alterations show new masonry columns, elevated/articulated roofline.

The faux/artificial vegetative panels have been removed and replaced with landscape trellis’s with real plants. Since the new loading dock will be internalized within the building envelope, a garage door has been added within a new 40-ft opening on the west elevation. Staff is working with the applicant on the appropriate style of door. Staff has recommended a glass panel door, but given the size of door needed, other options are also under review.

The new internal loading dock area is proposed would also house any future refuse areas or compactor areas, so as to be out of view as located inside the building.



The Hobby Lobby recessed loading dock will also feature clearstory windows on the NW side of the building.

South Façade (faces W. Greenfield Ave.) – The revised plans have included additional glass which as proposed will be frosted glass. While non-transparent, frosted glass will allow for the transmission of light.

Staff is working on the window and lighting details with the applicant to ensure a contemporary look along the south elevation which will also feature a new landscaping plaza (explained in more detail below).

Metal coping would run along the roofline of the building.



North façade – The north façade faces the West Allis Office Center (East Office building) and a service area for the back of various retail tenants on site. The north façade of the former Kmart building features an existing loading dock door area. The applicant proposes to recess the loading dock within the building envelope to accommodate trailer unloading into the Hobby Lobby store.

The north elevation is brick with new brick pilasters that are proposed to be added. New planter trellis's have been added along the north wall.

Site and Landscaping Plans

Staff will continue to work out remaining details with the applicant, but the proposed site changes since last month are much improved. The following summary of changes to the existing site plan are proposed:

- a) The existing 6-ft brick wall of the Kmart garden center is proposed to be removed and replaced to make way for a new landscaping plaza along the W. Greenfield Ave. frontage on the south side of the building. Demolition of the existing wall and removal of pavement in the existing area will create the space available for the proposed landscaping improvements. A pedestrian walkway will be incorporated within the landscaping plaza and the applicant has also indicated their intent to include a public art sculptural element within the new landscaping area.



- b) Most of the existing 6-ft wall and existing landscaping along S. 70 St. will remain, but the applicant has also proposed additional landscaping infill along this west side of the property.

- c) A new 6-ft brick wall will be continued from the south end of the existing wall on an angle and wrap around the corner of the building. The purpose of the new wall is to hide existing electrical transformers and gas utilities located on the SW corner of the building.

While access to the existing utilities is necessary for maintenance, staff is recommending that the proposed wall be setback from the street frontages to the full extent possible to maintain access to the utilities. 10-ft is required at a minimum. As proposed there is additional space on the west side that could be considered for additional landscaping area.

- d) The existing walkway along the east side of the building will be re-worked to accommodate new projecting storefront entrances. The modified curb location on the east side of the building (to accommodate new store entrances) is proposed. The plans show the new curb and walk extending about 20-ft east of the existing building. The existing curb is about 10-11-ft east of the building.
- e) New landscaping islands are proposed within the existing parking lot area on the east side of the building.
- f) Four new foundation planters are also proposed on the east storefront wall of the building. The two on each side of the Hobby Lobby tenant space have been expanded on size since last month's review.
- g) On the north side of the building, new landscaping islands are proposed along the north property line where it abuts the 1126 S. 70 St. (former East Office building). Also, existing refuse containers within this same area will be screened from view within 4-sided wood slatted enclosures.

Recommendation: Staff is reviewing the revised plan set, and anticipates recommending conditional approval of site, landscaping and architectural plans. The specific conditions of approval will be offered to the applicant in advance of next week's Plan Commission meeting and presented to the Plan Commission at the meeting.