



MEMORANDUM

CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK
PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
245 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 304, WATERTOWN, NY 13601
PHONE: 315-785-7741 – FAX: 315-785-7829

TO: Planning Board Members

FROM: Michael A. Lumbis, Planning and Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Site Plan Approval – 145 Clinton Street

DATE: September 2, 2021

Request: Site Plan Review for the construction of a two-story 14,000 square foot building and associated site improvements at 145 Clinton Street, Parcel Number 10-07-110.000

Applicant: Patrick J. Scordo, P.E. of GYMO, DPC and Lundy Construction, LLC, on behalf of Watertown Savings Bank

Proposed Use: Watertown Savings Bank Lending Center

Property Owner: Watertown Savings Bank

Submitted:	
Property Survey: Yes	Preliminary Architectural Drawings: Yes
Site Plan: Yes	Preliminary Site Engineering Plans: Yes
Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan: Yes	Construction Time Schedule: Yes
Landscaping and Grading Plan: Yes	Description of Uses, Hours & Traffic Volume: Yes

SEQRA: Unlisted

Jefferson County 239-m Review: Yes

Zoning Information:	
District: Downtown	Maximum Lot Coverage: 100 percent
Setback Requirements: F: 0', S: 0', R: 0'	Buffer Zones Required: No

Project Overview: The applicant is proposing to construct a new 14,000 square foot Lending Center (two 7,000 SF stories) connecting with the existing Watertown Savings Bank (WSB) via a pedestrian sky bridge.

The project includes parking, a Corporate Plaza, a Memorial Park, and a new through driveway between Clinton and Mullin streets.

The project also includes a 4,200 SF storage building that contains a ±2,850 square foot mezzanine, with a driveway connecting to Mullin Street.

To allow construction of these facilities, the existing 11,741 square foot office building at 111 Clinton Street as well as a 700 square foot garage in the rear of the parcel will be demolished.

Another project component is to subdivide a portion of 155 Clinton Street, Parcel Number 10-07-109.000 and assemble it with the 145 and 111 Clinton Street parcels.

The applicant has also submitted a request to change the approved zoning classification of 111 and 145 Clinton Street, Respective Parcel Numbers 10-07-110.000 and 10-07-112.000 from Limited Business to Downtown. The Planning Board reviewed the zone change request at the August 3, 2021, meeting and recommended that the City Council approve the zone change as requested. A Public Hearing has been set for the request for Monday, September 20, 2021, at 7:15pm.

Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation: The current bank location has 126 existing parking spaces, and the Lending Center project will add an additional 44. There is no minimum number of parking spaces required in the Downtown District.

Vehicular access to the site on the Clinton Street side will be via two existing access drives on the WSB property. Additionally, an existing curb cut on the subdivided portion of 155 Clinton St., (which will be added to the WSB property) will be utilized as a third access. The plans note that this access drive will be shared between the two properties. On the Mullin Street side, access to the site will be via two existing access drives on the WSB property as well as the shared through-drive from Clinton Street.

Section 310-57 of the Zoning Ordinance states that in its evaluation of site plans, “The Planning Board shall review the site plan and supporting data and take into consideration the following:”

- A. Harmonious Relationship between proposed uses and existing adjacent uses.
- B. Maximum safety of vehicular circulation between the site and the street.
- C. Adequacy of interior circulation, parking and loading facilities with particular attention to pedestrian safety.
- D. Adequacy of landscaping and setbacks to achieve compatibility with and protection of adjacent uses.

Regarding items B and C above, the proposed configuration of the parking lot will create dangerous backing movements of vehicles exiting the accessible spaces located on the north side of the new Lending Center building with vehicles entering the site via the middle access drive. Vehicles backing out of those spaces would be in direct conflict with vehicles entering the site from Clinton Street. In the event of situation where a vehicle is backing up at the same time as two or more vehicles are entering the site, traffic conflicts could occur in the street as well. The Planning Board should consider requiring the applicant to eliminate the middle access drive from Clinton Street to eliminate the direct conflict with vehicle backing movements from the handicap parking spaces in front of the building or eliminate the parking spaces directly across from the access drive.

The City’s adopted Complete Streets policy, which directs that the surface transportation network should meet the needs of all users, states that “privately constructed streets, parking lots and connecting pathways shall also adhere to this policy.” The proposed site plan configuration does not have a pedestrian aisle or

sidewalk access from the main sidewalk to the building which means that anyone travelling to the bank on foot must walk through the drive aisle and parking lot, in direct conflict with vehicles. The Planning Board should consider requiring the applicant to install a sidewalk and/or striped walkway across the parking lot to connect the building and the main sidewalk for improved pedestrian safety.

Landscaping and Buffers: The applicant proposes landscaping with shrubs on the north side of the new building, similar to what is in front of the existing WSB building. Additionally, the Corporate Plaza area adjacent to and under the pedestrian sky bridge and the Memorial Park will be landscaped with shrubs, pavers, benches, tables, and other amenities. Trees will be planted along Clinton Street and in some of the traffic islands. Non-developed areas will be reclaimed as lawn.

An existing 24" +/- Northern Catalpa tree, located at the northwest corner of the site, is proposed to be saved during construction. This particular tree is one of the largest of its kind in the City and the species is fairly unique to the area and the applicant should be commended for proposing to save it during the project. While the site grading plan calls out tree protection for the tree, there is no tree protection detail shown on the detail sheets. It is recommended that a tree protection detail be provided on the plans and that extra care be taken to ensure that it be installed and maintained by the contractor throughout the duration of construction to limit the impact to the ground surface in the area surrounding the tree.

Comprehensive Plan: The future land use plan in the Comprehensive Plan envisions this area of the city as downtown, so this proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. One of the recommendations in the Plan for the Downtown area is to increase walkability and encourage development that enhances pedestrian safety, including "and ensuring parking areas (including ingress and egress from parking areas) do not intrude into the pedestrian realm". This is support for the elimination of the middle access drive or parking spaces across from it and to create a pedestrian connection from the sidewalk.

SEQR: Part 1 of the Short Environmental Assessment For has been completed by the applicant. The City Council, as Lead Agency, will complete Parts 2 and 3 of the Short Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) and will make a determination of significance.

Engineering Comments: The Engineering Department has reviewed the plans and has the following comments:

1. The applicant's Professional Engineer has demonstrated in the engineering report that the development proposed will not increase the flows to the municipal system by utilizing an underground system. The increased runoff due to the increased impervious area will be absorbed by the system. The Engineering Department has reviewed the calculations and concurs with the Engineer's evaluation.
2. The Engineering Department has reviewed the potential for increased traffic due to the expansion. Given its existing use and the data provided by the consultant, the increase in trips will be minimal and will not cause any detriment to traffic flow on Clinton Street or the adjacent roads.
3. A full evaluation of the final Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will need to be performed by the Engineering Department prior to issuance of any permits for the project. Project construction cannot commence until the SWPPP approval is granted.
4. The Engineering department sees no technical objections to preceding with site plan approval based on the submittal.

Lighting: Lighting for the site will be consistent with the current lighting plan for the existing Watertown Savings Bank building. Light will be generated by ground mounted LED fixtures along with LED roof mounted lights located along the new Lending Center and Storage Building. The photometric plan shows the light will be contained on-site and there will be no light spillage onto adjacent parcels.

Permits: The applicant must obtain the following permits and other documentation, minimally, prior to construction: Building Permit, Demolition Permit, Sanitary Sewer Connection Permit, and a Water Supply Permit and Zoning Compliance Certificate.

Other: This project requires review by the Jefferson County Planning Board, pursuant to General Municipal Law, Section 239-m. The County Planning Board reviewed the application at its August 31, 2021, meeting. The attached letter from the Jefferson County Planning Department provides a summary of their comments on the project.

Summary:

1. The Planning Board should consider requiring the applicant to eliminate the middle access drive from Clinton Street to eliminate the direct conflict with vehicle backing movements from the handicap parking spaces in front of the building or eliminate the parking spaces directly across from the access drive.
2. The Planning Board should consider requiring the applicant to install a sidewalk and/or striped walkway across the parking lot to connect the building and the main sidewalk for improved pedestrian safety.
3. It is recommended that a tree protection detail be provided on the plans and that extra care be taken to ensure that the tree protection is installed and maintained by the contractor throughout the duration of construction to limit the impact to the ground surface in the area surrounding the 24” tree proposed to be saved.
4. The applicant must complete and submit a final Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan to be reviewed and approved by the City Engineer prior to construction.
5. The applicant must obtain the following permits, minimally, prior to construction: Demolition Permit, Building Permit, Sanitary Sewer Connection Permit, Water Supply Permit, General City Permit, Sidewalk Permit, and a Zoning Compliance Certificate.

cc: City Council Members
Michael Delaney, City Engineer
Patrick Scordo, P.E., GYMO, DPC, 18969 US Route 11, Watertown, NY 13601
Lundy Construction, LLC, 18841 US Route 11, Watertown, NY 13601



Department of Planning
175 Arsenal Street
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Michael J. Bourcy
Director of Planning

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September 1, 2021

Jennifer Voss, Senior Planner
City of Watertown
245 Washington Street
Watertown, NY 13601

Re: Watertown Savings Bank, Site Plan Review for the lending center, JCDP File # C 6 - 21

Dear Jen,

The Jefferson County Planning Board was unable to establish a quorum for its August 31, 2021 meeting. Pursuant to General Municipal Law, Section 239m the Board has thirty days to respond to a referral. The County Planning Board will not reconvene before the thirty day time period ends, therefore the local board is free to make its final decision.

Despite the lack of quorum, the Board would like to forward staff review comments for informational purposes.

The local board should request a pedestrian connection to the main entrance or entrances from the public sidewalk, pursuant to Article IX, Section 310-57, paragraph C. of the City Zoning Ordinance. Projects within downtown areas should provide easy access for pedestrians. This is even more important during the winter months when pedestrians cannot cross grass covered areas during excessive snowfall events. While there will be a sidewalk connection along the western driveway entrance, another pedestrian connection should be provided either in the center of the site across from the city parking lot or along the eastern driveway access closer to the nearby hotel and residential areas downtown.

The local board should consider closing the middle entrance (closest to the skywalk) to limit the number of vehicular street conflict points on Clinton Street. The two other entrances shown on the site plan should provide an adequate level of access to both the bank and the lending center. Limiting the number of entrances and utilizing shared entrances will allow safer traffic flow.

The proposed maintenance garage should include windows along Mullin Street to be visually compatible with the residences and offices in the area, consistent with Section 310-57, paragraph A.

General Municipal Law, Section 239m requires the local board to notify the County of its action on this matter within thirty (30) days after taking a final action.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Andy R. Nevin, AICP
Senior Planner