

# CONSENT CALENDAR

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DOWNTOWN REVIEW BOARD AGENDA  
JULY 1, 2020

STAFF: MATTHEW FITZSIMMONS

FILE NO:  
AR DP 20-00306 – QUASI-JUDICIAL

PROJECT: ENT - 123 S. WEBER

APPLICANT: ENT CREDIT UNION

OWNER: MOUNTAIN BELL FEDERAL CREDIT UNION



### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

1. Project Description: This project proposes to renovate a 4,800 square foot existing Ent Credit Union building, located at 123 South Weber Street. This project requires a Minor Improvement Plan with an associated Warrant for glazing: 40% where 60% is required (Form-Based Code Section 2.4.7). In addition to these two applications, a Waiver of Replat will consolidate three parcels into one lot for zoning purposes. Waiver of Replats are administratively reviewed and will be approved concurrently with the other application. The site is zoned FBZ-CEN (Form-Based Zone – Central), and is 0.62 acres (27,125 square feet) in size.
2. Applicant's Project Statement: **(FIGURE 1)**
3. Planning & Development Department's Recommendation: **Approval of the application with technical modifications.**

### **BACKGROUND:**

1. Site Addresses: 123 South Weber Street
2. Existing Zoning/Land Use: FBZ-CEN (Form-Based Zone – Central) / Credit union building and parking lot **(FIGURE 2)**
3. Surrounding Zoning/Land Use:  
North: FBZ-CEN (Form-Based Zone – Central) / Office and Commercial Uses  
South: FBZ-CEN (Form-Based Zone – Central) + FBZ-T1 (Form-Based Zone – Transition Sector 1) / Office and Commercial Uses  
East: FBZ-CEN (Form-Based Zone – Central) / Commercial and Residential  
West: FBZ-CEN (Form-Based Zone – Central) / Commercial and Office
4. Comprehensive Plan/Plan COS: Unique Places: Downtown / Neighborhood Center
5. Annexation: Town of Colorado Springs, 1872
6. Master Plan/Designated Master Plan Land Use: Experience Downtown Master Plan (2016) / Activity Center Mixed-Use
7. Subdivisions: Town of Colorado Springs, 1872
8. Zoning Enforcement Action: None
9. Physical Characteristics: The 27,125 square foot site is level with one 4,800 square foot existing building on the east side of Weber St. This site also includes 314 E. Cucharas Street, which is currently used for surface parking and will be converted into an ATM drive through.

### **STAKEHOLDER PROCESS AND INVOLVEMENT:**

One hundred and fourteen postcards were sent to the surrounding property owners within a 1,000-foot buffer to notify them of the project submittal. That notification provided information regarding the proposed project and instructions for how to submit comments. Staff did not receive any formal comments from any stakeholder regarding this project. In addition, all applicable City agencies and departments reviewed and commented on the project. All concerns and comments on the part of the City have been incorporated into the plan or are listed in the technical modifications section at the conclusion of this report. Another posting and additional postcards will announce the public hearing prior to the Downtown Review Board meeting.

### **ANALYSIS OF REVIEW CRITERIA AND MAJOR ISSUES**

The proposed project is located in the middle of the block on the east side of South Weber Street, between East Colorado Avenue and East Cucharas Street. The surrounding land uses are primarily office, commercial, and residential (ECO 333 Apartments). All the surrounding properties are within the Form-Based Zone, but are not all part of the same sector. The two nearby zone sectors include: Transition Sector 1 and the Corridor Sector.

The plan **(FIGURE 3)** proposes to update the current single-story commercial bank building to better suit the needs of the credit union and its customers. The project also includes two drive-up ATM kiosks on the connected property that is currently addressed 314 East Cucharas Street. Ent utilizes the alleyway to the east of Weber Street as well as two driveways off of South Weber Street on the northern and southern portion of the property for vehicle access.

Since this project includes a significant remodeling of the building façade, interior space remodeling, and multiple changes to the parking lot, but does not significantly increase the square footage of the building, the Applicant was only required to apply for a Minor Improvement Plan to document the proposed changes. However, the proposed renovations do not meet the 60% glazing standard required by the Form-Based Code for a shopfront façade. Therefore, a Warrant for glazing is incorporated into the Minor Improvement Plan and can only be approved by the Downtown Review Board.

The Minor Improvement Plan highlights other noteworthy changes to the site. Parking and vehicular circulation have to change significantly in the rear of the property. One of the biggest changes is the removal of parking on the property that is currently addressed 314 East Cucharas Street. This land is now designed to be integrated with the site by adding two drive through ATM kiosks that are accessed from the north and exit into the alley towards East Cucharas Street. These kiosks replace the original drive through teller lanes on the north side of the building. In addition, the general traffic circulation has been altered so that vehicles can no longer drive directly behind the building to exit on the north side of the property onto South Weber Street. Vehicles must now proceed east almost to the alleyway before circling around and returning to South Weber Street. This allows the center aisle of parking, including the ADA stalls, to have a safer passage to the bank, without having to cross active traffic lanes. The plan proposes to decrease the overall parking count from approximately 45 off-street stalls to 32. Since the property is within the FBZ Central Sector, it is parking exempt, allowing the owners to adjust the parking count to suit their actual needs.

In order to soften the vehicular impact to the site and the neighboring properties, additional landscaping will be added to a variety of areas including: directly below the building's façade off South Weber Street, the northern drive lane where the drive through lanes were eliminated, on all sides of the ATM kiosks and drive lanes, and behind the building where the driveway originally cut around the building.

### **Warrant:**

According to the application, the proposed building cannot meet the glazing requirements due to the constraints of the current structure's configuration and the credit union's security concerns. The existing legal, non-conforming building does not meet the Form-Based Code's shopfront glazing requirements because of the internal configuration of the building interior. Please refer to the project statement and site plan for a more detailed description of the proposed establishment (**FIGURE 1&3**).

Even though the design does not meet the shopfront façade standards for glazing, Staff finds that the building meets the spirit of the code. By updating the façade, landscape, and the interior space of the property, the Applicant will put a fresh and more inviting face on an understated bank building. This newly renovated structure will integrate better with a quickly evolving Downtown and more effectively reflect the importance of the credit union to the community of Colorado Springs.

Any project that requires relief from a form-based standard must gain approval of a Warrant by the Downtown Review Board. Warrants are reviewed using the five criteria found in Section 5.4 of the Form-Based Code. The criteria are:

1. Is the requested Warrant consistent with the intent of the Form-Based Code?
2. Is the requested Warrant, as well as the project as a whole, consistent with Section 4 – Design Guidelines of the form-based code?
3. Is the requested Warrant reasonable due to the proposed project's exceptional civic or environmental design?
4. Is the requested Warrant consistent with the Downtown Master Plan?
5. Is the requested Warrant consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan?

### **Supporting Plans:**

The Experience Downtown Master Plan and the City's Comprehensive Plan both include more high-level guidance for economic development, infill investment, and pedestrian experience / walkability. However, neither specifically address appropriate glazing percentages for downtown storefronts.

The Experience Downtown Masterplan's Future Land Use map shows this area as an "Activity Center Mixed Use." This use should "integrate a range of complementary and mutually supporting uses and activities." These uses should be "pedestrian-orientated" and "include good connections and transitions to surrounding neighborhoods and districts." Staff believes the renovation of Ent Credit Union's downtown branch will bring the goal of this master plan a little closer to fruition.

The following goals, policies and strategies from Colorado Springs' comprehensive plan, PlanCOS, support the approval of Ent's Minor Improvement Plan with an associated glazing Warrant application. Staff did not find anything in PlanCOS that did not support this project as it is proposed:

- **Policy UP-2.A:** Support infill and land use investment throughout the mature and developed areas of the city.
- **Strategy UP-2.A-1:** Encourage the development or redevelopment of vacant properties in the core area of the city by using a combination of incentives, rezoning, and creative design solutions.
- **Strategy UP-2.A-4:** Actively support ongoing and potential infill projects, employ problem-solving approaches and continue to implement process improvements in support of infill and redevelopment.
- **Policy UP-3.A:** Proactively participate and invest in the development of Downtown as the city's premier urban activity center.
- **Goal UP-4:** Strengthen our overall community identity and better serve the needs of residents and businesses within our large metropolitan area by developing active, unique, and connected centers and corridors.
- **Strategy TE-1.A-3:** Prioritize Downtown redevelopment to establish it as the region's employment center, hub of commerce, governing, innovation, tourism, entertainment, art and culture.

After careful consideration, Staff has determined that the required criteria have been met. Once the technical modifications described below are addressed, the plan can be approved.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

##### **AR DP 20-00306 – Ent – 123 S. Weber**

**Approve** the proposed Minor Improvement Plan with associated Warrant for glazing based on the findings that the Warrant criteria found in Section 5.4 of the Downtown Colorado Springs Form-Based Code will be met once the following technical modifications are made:

##### **Technical Modifications to the Minor Improvement Plan:**

1. Update tabular data to reflect Form-Based Zone's terminology.
2. Update the parking requirements to indicate that the Central Sector is parking exempt.
3. Include a short project description on the site plan describing the Minor Improvement Plan and the Warrant.
4. Include a trash enclosure on the site plan.
5. Update the plan to address the landscape items in Staff's initial review letter including: screening along E. Cucharras, tree protection sheet improvements, and irrigation details.
6. Update the plan to place bike racks in front of the building.
7. Update the plan to address the City Surveyor's minor comments.