


CITY OF SEDRO-WOOLLEY
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
325 Metcalf Street
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284
Phone (360) 855-0771
Fax (360) 855-0733

TRANSMITTAL & REPORT MEMORANDUM

HEARING DATE: September 8, 2020

TO: Sedro-Woolley Hearing Examiner

RE: File # CUP-2020-032 – Conditional Use Permit – Skagit Self Storage Expansion

FROM: 
Katherine Weir, Assistant Planner

GENERAL INFORMATION:

APPLICATION DATE: February 5, 2020

APPLICATION COMPLETE: February 25, 2020

RECOMMENDATION: Staff Recommends **Approval with Conditions**

PROJECT NAME: Skagit Self Storage Expansion

SITE LOCATION: 1320 East Moore Street, parcel #s P39548 and P133765

PROPERTY OWNER: Campbell 1 LLC
1320 E Moore St
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284

PROJECT PROPONENT: Skagit Self-Storage
ATTN: Lance Campbell
1320 E Moore St
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The City has received a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application for a proposal to expand the existing Skagit Self Storage Facility. The existing storage facility was approved through the conditional use permit process in 2016, and an addendum to the original conditional use

permit in 2017. The proposed expansion application (submitted on February 6, 2020) originally included new driveways, an additional access road with a gate, landscaping and roughly 95,000 square feet of new fully enclosed storage facilities, some of which will be large enough to accommodate recreational vehicles and boats. The applicant chose to alter the initial plan to provide more small-scale storage units instead of larger units. The updated proposed expansion application (submitted on July 7, 2020) includes a new layout that decreases the building footprint coverage to roughly 89,000 square feet but maintains similar overall lot coverage to the original layout. The undeveloped 5-acre site on which the expansion is proposed is located on the north side of State Route 20, behind the existing Skagit Self Storage facility.

Site Address:	1320 East Moore Street
Parcel ID Nos.	P39548 and P133765
Zoning District:	Mixed Commercial

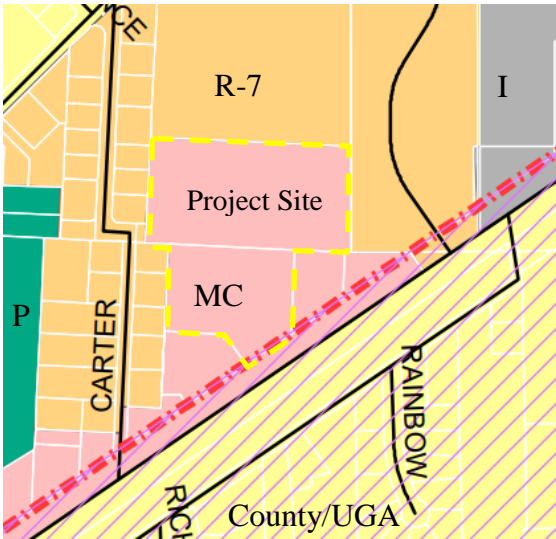
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS, ZONING DESIGNATIONS AND EXISTING LAND USES OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREAS:

Area	Land Use Designation	Zoning	Existing Use
Project Site	Mixed Commercial	Mixed Commercial	Undeveloped
North	Residential	Residential 7	Undeveloped
South of total site	County, Urban Growth Area	UGA- Residential 5	Single family residential
South of expansion site	Mixed Commercial	Mixed Commercial	Existing self-storage facility to which the expansion is attached
East	Residential	Residential 7	Mobile home park
West	Residential	Residential 7	Single family residential

Mixed Commercial (MC) Zoning Regulations:			
Minimum lot size:	No Minimum Lot Size	Lot width at building line:	N/A
Front Setback:	20 feet	Lot width at road frontage:	20 feet
Rear Setback:	10 feet	Maximum building height:	35 feet/ 60 feet
Side Setback:	10 feet	Maximum building coverage:	N/A

PUBLIC UTILITIES AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY:

Water:	Skagit County PUD #1	Cable TV:	Comcast
Sewer:	City of Sedro-Woolley	Police:	City of Sedro-Woolley
Garbage:	City of Sedro-Woolley	Fire:	City of Sedro-Woolley
Storm Water:	City of Sedro-Woolley	School:	Sedro-Woolley School District
Telephone:	Verizon	Hospital:	Peace Health United
Electricity:	Puget Sound Energy	Gas:	Cascade Natural Gas



ANALYSIS

1. Application Process:

- a. On November 27, 2019 the city held a required pre-application meeting for the Skagit Self Storage Expansion with the project applicant and their hired consultant, Ravnik and Associates.
- b. On February 5, 2020, the City received the applicant’s original conditional use permit application (**Exhibit B**) and site plan (**Exhibit C**). After requesting and receiving additional materials the City determined the application was complete on February 24, 2020.
- c. On February 28, 2020, the City issued a Notice of Application and SEPA Comment Period (**Exhibit D**) utilizing the optional DNS process per WAC 197-11-355.
- d. On May 18, 2020, the Planning Department issued a SEPA Threshold Determination of Mitigated Non-significance (**Exhibit E**) with the following mitigation measures:

- i. Shield vehicle lights and any other exterior lighting from the residential properties; and
 - ii. Construction shall comply with all local, state and federal regulations, including Sedro-Woolley Municipal Code Title 13.36 Stormwater Management Standards; Title 13.40 Stormwater Facilities Maintenance; Title 15.40 Public Works Construction Standards; Title 17 Zoning; Sedro-Woolley Public Works Design Standards and the Sedro-Woolley Comprehensive Plan.
 - iii. Comply with Northwest Clean Air Agency Regulations during construction activities;
 - iv. Any water discharged to the City stormwater system as a result of this project must be approved by and comply with conditions of the Public Works Department;
 - v. Provide a temporary erosion and sedimentation control plan for approval by the city engineer; and
 - vi. All construction traffic shall use temporary construction access as approved by the Public Works Department.
- e. On July 2, 2020 the applicant submitted an updated application packet (**Exhibit F**) with the intention of altering the original proposal.
- f. On August 4, 2020 the applicant submitted an updated site plan (**Exhibit G**) showing the new layout of the proposal.
- g. Planning staff determined that a new SEPA notice and determination were not necessary for the updated plans, as the overall lot coverage had only been slightly decreased.
- h. A public hearing before the Sedro-Woolley Hearing Examiner was scheduled for September 8, 2020 via Zoom. Notice of the meeting was issued to the public and interested parties.

CONCLUSION: The application meets the procedural requirements for Type III applications established in Chapter 2.90 SWMC.

2. Public Notification, Meeting and Comment:

- a. The Notice of Application and SEPA Comment Period (**Exhibit C**) was issued on February 28, 2020 and the comment period ended on March 13, 2020. The city published the notice in the Skagit Valley Herald on February 28, 2020. Notices were mailed on February 27, 2020 to all residents and property owners within 500 feet of the subject property and the notice was posted on the subject site on February 26, 2020.

- b. Three comments were received during the SEPA Comment Period: One neighbor commented that he was opposed to the development (**Exhibit H**). Another neighbor commented about some preferences for the development in relation to his adjacent property (**Exhibit I**). The Planning Department also received a letter from a local construction company, BYK Construction Inc. (**Exhibit J**) regarding concerns of the proposed layout and screening requirements.
- c. On May 18, 2020 the Planning Department issued a SEPA Threshold Determination of Mitigated Non-significance (**Exhibit E**) that was published in the Skagit Valley Herald on May 18, 2020, mailed to all property owners and residents within 500 feet of the subject property, and posted on the subject site.
- d. The City issued a Notice of Public Hearing (**Exhibit K**) for the proposed Skagit Self Storage Expansion on August 25, 2020. The notice was posted on the subject site on August 20, 2020, published in the legal notices section of the Skagit Valley Herald on August 25, 2020 as well as mailed to all parties of interest and residents and property owners within 500 feet of the property on August 24, 2020.

CONCLUSION: The city has met the noticing requirements for Type III applications established in 2.90 SWMC.

3. Comprehensive Plan:

- a. The Sedro-Woolley Comprehensive Plan identifies this area as Mixed Commercial (MC). The intent of the MC zone is to allow a compatible mix of commercial and residential development with standards intended to present an attractive and welcoming appearance to visitors at the entrances to the city and at selected nodes along major roads.
- b. Specific goals and policies from the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan that are relevant and applicable to this proposal include the following:
 - i. Policy LU1.5: Buffer commercial and industrial land uses when they abut residential development.
 - ii. Policy LU1.6: Provide for limited commercial development catering to auto-oriented customers and tourists along State Route 20, outside the central business district.

- c. Specific goals and policies from the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan that are relevant and applicable to this proposal include the following:
 - i. Policy E1.3: Identify and promote sites which can be developed for a variety of local employment projects. Promote development of business and industrial parks, office and professional centers, and specialized commercial and entertainment centers.
 - ii. Policy E1.4: Work with property owners to determine the effective development capacity of sites having employment center possibilities.
- d. Staff finds that the proposed expansion of the current use does not meet the intent of the MC zone as described in the Comprehensive Plan. Nor does the expansion fully meet the capacity of the sites employment center possibilities. The project site is a 5-acre parcel zoned Mixed Commercial along a major traffic corridor. An existing access road serves the site through an easement and includes utility stubs that have the capacity for a larger, more intensive development.

A self-storage facility expansion over this parcel, utilizing the high-capacity access road as a minor alternate access point will not create many new jobs, nor would it present an attractive and welcoming appearance at the entrance to the city.

Staff finds that these concerns are somewhat alleviated by the fact that the proposed expansion will be behind the existing Skagit Self-Storage facility. The exiting self-storage facility interferes with the sight to the 5-acre parcel from State Route 20. Commercial uses traditionally prefer to be visible from the nearby road; the 5-acre parcel is not clearly visible from the road because of the exiting self-storage facility.

To address the concerns about the project presenting an attractive and welcoming appearance at the entrance to the city, additional screening can be incorporated on the street facing side of the facility. The existing screening on the front of the building and the east side of the facility did not accomplish full screening of the facility in the time since the landscaping was installed roughly 2.5 years ago. Also, no screening was provided on the east side of the facility. See photo(s) below. To assure the complete Self Storage project provides a welcoming appearance at the entrance to the city, staff recommends conditions to require the installation of landscaping screening on the east side of the existing building, on the eastern 20 feet of the north side of the existing easternmost building, and along the northern face of the proposed eastern portion of the project (see figure below). The landscape screening shall be eighty percent sight-obscuring at time of planting and one hundred percent within two years.

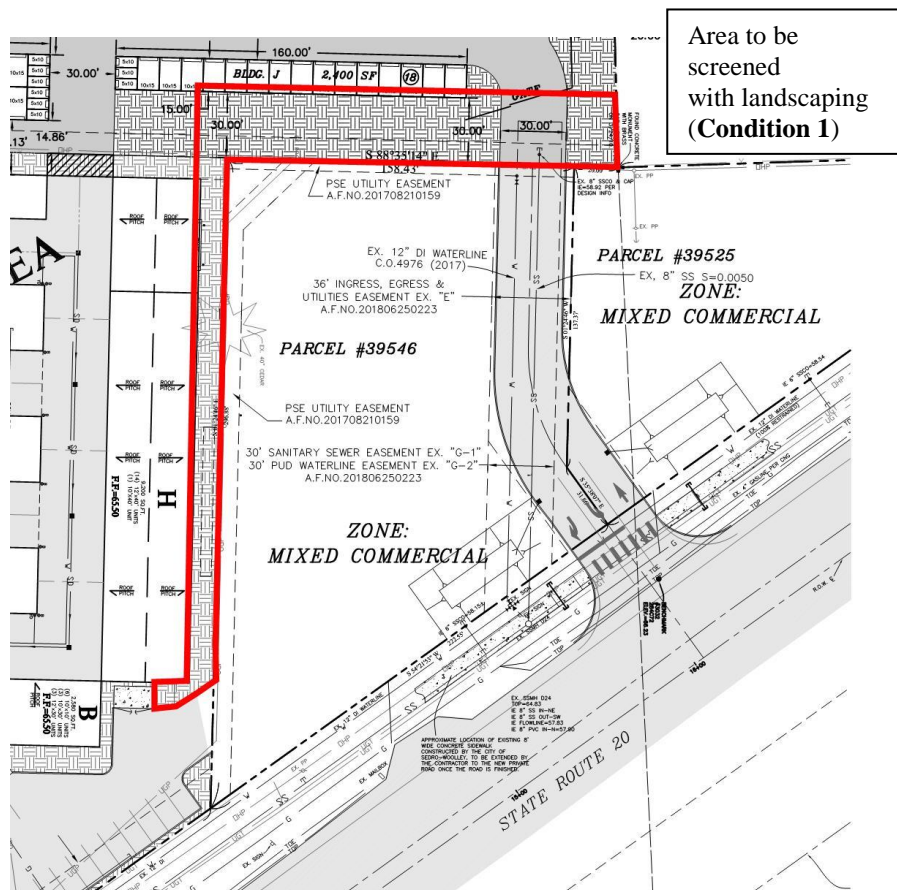
The landscape screening shall extend a minimum of six feet above ground surface. The intent is to screen the entire side of the buildings nearest the screening, thus the chosen landscaping materials shall be suitable to grow to the necessary height to screen the buildings (**Condition 1**).



East side of the existing building as seen from SR 20 (E Moore St). No landscaping screening.



Front and eastern side of existing building as seen from SR 20 (E Moore St). Not fully screened.



The CUP application and addendum for the existing facility, CUPs 2016-030 and 2017-281 (**Exhibits L and M**) were found to be in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan based on factors such as project scale and a retail component. The original hearing examiner decisions found that the location of the storage facility away from the road, leaving the space along the street frontage reserved for commercial, combined with the modest scale of the first storage facility, allowed the storage facility to conform to the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff finds that the circumstances of the current proposal to expand the existing storage facility differ slightly from the first two hearing examiner conclusions. There will still be retail space on the adjacent lots along the street frontage, but the scale can no longer be considered modest. However as the existing facility obscures the sight of the proposed expansion, staff finds that the expansion, as conditioned, to a no longer modest scale of the facility will not interfere significantly with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

CONCLUSION: The proposal does not strictly conform to the Sedro-Woolley Comprehensive Plan, though there are unique circumstances regarding the visibility of the parcel. The proposal as conditioned will not interfere significantly with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

4. Specific Criteria: Titles 17.20, 17.56, 15.44, 17.36, 17.50 and 17.65 SWMC establish the requirements and criteria relevant for approving this application and are reviewed as follows:

a. 17.20 SWMC Mixed Commercial:

- i. Setbacks to residential (R-5, R-7 and R-15) zones: front setbacks on an arterial street shall be a minimum of twenty feet. On a nonarterial street, front setbacks shall be a minimum of ten feet. Side setbacks shall be a minimum of thirty-five feet, which may be reduced to twenty feet if building step-backs as required by the design standards and guidelines are incorporated into the site design pursuant to Chapter 15.44 SWMC. Rear setbacks shall be a minimum of twenty feet.
- ii. The applicant provided a site plan (**Exhibit G**) that shows 20 foot side and rear setbacks from the adjacent residential uses. The reduced side setback is allowed if the building incorporates step-backs as required by the design standards and guidelines. With single story, industrial-style storage buildings, step-backs are not a feasible option. Staff finds that complying with the full setback of 35 feet for the side setbacks would be more appropriate for the proposed use (**Condition 2**). The rear setback of 20 feet meets requirements.

b. 17.56 SWMC Conditional Use Permits:

- i. The criteria for conditional use permits are as follows: conforms to the comprehensive plan; is compatible with the surrounding area, that is, causes no unreasonable adverse impacts; and is well-planned in all respects so as to be an asset to the community.
- ii. The applicant provided a description of how their proposal meets the above criteria in their responses to the questions on the updated CUP application form (**Exhibit F**).
- iii. As discussed in section 3 of this report, the proposal does not conform to the comprehensive plan. Additionally, the hearing examiner decisions for the original storage facility (CUP-2016-030 **Exhibit L**) and the amended CUP (CUP 2017-281 **Exhibit M**) were based on somewhat different circumstances, including project scale. An additional 5 acres of storage units would make the scale of the facility no longer modest. However as concluded in section 3, the unique visibility circumstances combined with the conditions for approval will mitigate these concerns to an acceptable level.

- iv. The area of the expansion is surrounded on all sides but the southernmost side by residential. The conditions for approval for this proposal will mitigate concerns of the proposed use's incompatibility with the surrounding residential uses.
 - v. The applicant has stated in their response on the application form that this expansion will be an asset to the community as many people do not have adequate storage at their homes and may have need of small scale storage units as a result of the impact on the economy from COVID-19. Staff finds that this is a reasonable argument. Additionally, the proposal as conditioned is well planned because the expansion area will be behind the existing facility, not plainly visible from State Route 20 (East Moore Street).
- c. 15.44 SWMC Design Review:
- i. Per the Sedro-Woolley Design Standards and Guidelines, Chapter 4, Additional Standards for the Mixed Commercial Zone, screening of the blank walls will be required. This can be accomplished through a variety of options outlined in the Design Standards Manual, including landscaping with columnar tree varieties. The proposal will be required to meet these standards (**Condition 3**).
 - ii. The Planning Department has taken into consideration the comments from BYK Construction, Inc. (**Exhibit J**) and determined that an additional design requirement should be required to mitigate the proposed use's incompatibility with the surrounding residential uses. BYK requested that the taller of the proposed buildings be in the center of the project to mitigate the visual impacts on the surrounding residential units. Planning staff finds that a layout with the shortest buildings on the perimeter is an appropriate additional design requirement (**Condition 4**).
- d. 17.36 SWMC Parking
- i. The applicant provided a site plan (**Exhibit G**) that demonstrates that the proposal meets the standards of this chapter including the required number of parking spaces for the proposed use.
- e. 17.50 SWMC Landscaping
- i. Development in the Mixed Commercial zone shall provide landscaping over 15% of the total site and meet the requirements in 17.50 SWMC. The

applicant has demonstrated on their site plan (**Exhibit G**) that the site will meet the 15% landscaping requirement. A full landscaping plan is a required component of the construction plans associated with the building permit application (**Condition 5**).

f. 17.65 SWMC Regulations for Critical Areas

- i. A wetland reconnaissance report (**Exhibit N**) was submitted as part of the application materials. This report, dated October 13 2019 and written by Bob Whitefield states that there are no wetland indicators on the site. Chapter 17.65 SWMC states that no further report is required if no critical areas are determined to exist on site.

CONCLUSION: The application as conditioned meets the review criteria set forth in SWMC that apply to this proposal.

5. State Environmental Policy Act Review

- a. The applicant submitted and the City reviewed a SEPA Checklist (**Exhibit O**). Notice of Application and SEPA Comment Period (**Exhibit D**) was issued on February 28, 2020 and the comment period ended on March 13, 2020. The City issued a MDNS (**Exhibit E**) on May 18, 2020.
- b. The City received three comments (**Exhibits H, I, and J**) during the public comment period. No appeals of the MDNS were submitted.

CONCLUSION: The application as conditioned meets the SEPA standards identified in the State Environmental Policy Act (WAC 197-11).

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Permit No. 2020-032 is hereby **recommended for APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:**

1. Landscaping screening shall be required on the east side of the existing building, on the eastern 20 feet of the north side of the existing easternmost building, and along the northern face of the proposed eastern portion of the project. The landscape screening shall be eighty percent sight-obscuring at time of planting and one hundred percent within two years. The landscape screening shall extend a minimum of six feet above ground surface. The intent is to screen the entire side of the buildings nearest the screening, thus the chosen landscaping materials shall be suitable to grow to the necessary height to screen the buildings.

2. Comply with the 35 foot side setbacks from the adjacent residential properties per the bulk restrictions in forth in SWMC 17.20.020.
3. Comply with the Sedro-Woolley Design Standards and Guidelines, Chapter 4, Additional Standards for the Mixed Commercial Zone for screening blank walls.
4. Arrange the buildings on the construction site plan to have the shortest buildings on the perimeter to mitigate the storage facility's incompatibility with the surrounding uses.
5. Provide a landscape plan that meets the requirements of Chapter 17.50 SWMC and these conditions at time of building application.
6. Comply with the mitigation requirements set forth by the MDNS.
7. No outside storage shall be allowed at the storage facility.

EXHIBITS

- A. Staff Report
- B. Original Conditional Use Permit Application #CUP-2020-032
- C. Original Site Plan
- D. Notice of Application and SEPA Comment Period
- E. SEPA MDNS
- F. Updated Application Packet
- G. Updated Site Plan
- H. Comment Letter – Younkin
- I. Comment Letter – Lundstrum
- J. Comment Letter – BYK Construction, Inc.
- K. Notice of Public Hearing
- L. CUP-2016- 030 HE Decision
- M. CUP-2017- 281 HE Decision
- N. Wetland Reconnaissance
- O. SEPA Checklist