



Item: Public Hearing – Resolution 10158 for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to construct a Vehicle repair facility on Lots 1-4, Block 360, Great Falls Original Townsite, Section 12, T20N, R03 E, P.M. MT, Cascade County, MT, addressed as 800 Central Avenue.

From: Gregory Gordos, Planner I, Planning and Community Development

Initiated By: Lithia Real Estate, Inc.

Presented By: Craig Raymond, Director of Planning and Community Development

Action Requested: City Commission adopt Resolution 10158.

Public Hearing:

1. Mayor conducts public hearing, calling three times each for proponents and opponents.
2. Mayor closes public hearing and asks the will of the Commission.

Suggested Motion:

1. Commissioner moves:

“I move that the City Commission (adopt/deny) Resolution 10158.”

2. Mayor requests a second to the motion, Commission discussion, and calls the vote.

Recommendation: Approval of the request with Conditions.

At the conclusion of a public hearing held on July 26, 2016, the Zoning Commission recommended that the City Commission approve the CUP to construct a Vehicle repair facility on the subject property legally described above.

Notice of Public Hearing before the City Commission was published in the *Great Falls Tribune* on July 31, 2016.

Existing Use: Vehicle sales

Proposed Land Use: Vehicle repair and Vehicle sales

Existing Zoning: C-4 Central Business District Core

Background:

The applicant is proposing demolition of the existing showroom located at 800 Central Avenue and replacing it with a larger, more contemporary automotive sales and service facility. Establishing a Vehicle repair use in the C-4 Central Business Core zoning district requires a CUP. The vehicle sales use is permitted in the C-4 zoning district. The proposed new building would be approximately 13,669 square feet. A new curb cut is proposed along Central Avenue. Parcels east of the building would be improved from a gravel lot to provide additional paved parking for customers as well as display vehicles. The proposed building would be larger in size than the existing structure's footprint and include zero-foot setbacks along both Central and 8th Street, as well as a corner main entrance at the intersection.

Conditional Use Permit Request:

The applicant, Lithia Motors, is seeking to relocate their existing Subaru franchise from 26 9th Street South (just southeast of the site) to the subject property at 800 Central Avenue. The existing historic structure on the subject property is a showroom that was built in 1928, and it is a Contributing building to the Central Business Historic District, as recognized through the National Register of Historic Places (National Park Service). The last significant remodel occurred in 1992.

The applicant is proposing demolition and new construction in order to accommodate vehicle repair and sales activity in a single structure. The applicant asserts that the existing building cannot be preserved due to "significant amount of structural damage and costly repairs required". Planning staff and the former City-County Historic Preservation Officer, Ellen Sievert, toured the facility on April 28, 2016, and verified that there is structural damage to the existing facility.

The vehicle repair area for the new building would be located at the rear (south end) of the site with access off of Central Alley South. The proposed showroom is located at the corner of Central Avenue and 8th Street South with entrances at the corner and on the northeast edge of the building facing the parking lot. The proposed building is a single-story structure, with corporate logo signage proposed along the cornice facing Central Avenue.

Representatives from the City's Public Works, Park and Recreation, Police, and Fire Departments have been involved in the review process for this application. All comments made by the above parties have been addressed by the applicant or in the conditions of approval.

Zoning Analysis:

The subject property is located amongst a mix of one and two-story commercial structures built up to the sidewalk. Street trees and period lighting (light poles) are a consistent visual character up and down Central Avenue. Historic structures such as the Masonic Temple building are on the same block, but many Contributing buildings have been demolished on the 800 Block of Central Avenue since the early 2000's. These demolitions have resulted in some properties that contain parking lots and display lots for automobile sales. Vehicle sales are permitted in the C-4 zoning district, whereas Vehicle repair is permitted in this zoning district only through the conditional use process. A Vehicle repair land use owned by Lithia Motors already exists in close proximity to the subject property (26 9th Street South) and operates as a legal nonconforming use.

Although staff and several members of the Zoning Commission had significant concerns about the proposed building architecture, evaluation of the proposed use is a completely separate question. Staff finds the proposed use is compatible with the existing, adjacent uses due to the following reasons:

- 1) Presence of existing vehicle repair and vehicle sales within several blocks of the property.
- 2) Location of the property east of the 700 block of Central Avenue. Along this section of Central, the character of the C-4 zoning district changes from one dominated by multi-story buildings filling out the street block to a mix of building heights as well as a sprinkling of surface parking lots. In areas east of the 700 block, vehicle repair activities are more compatible.
- 3) Previous use within the existing structure of vehicle repair activity.

While an automobile dealership is better suited for C-2 General Commercial zoning districts, the use is permitted in the C-4 district and it is common and expected for vehicle sales use operations to contain on-site repair functions. The proposed building form provides pedestrian orientation for the main entrance and has zero setbacks (sits along the public sidewalk for both Central Avenue and 8th Street South) as proposed. The orientation of the existing building meets the approximate setbacks of the adjacent buildings. The proposal is viewed by staff as an appropriate building form for a commercial use and matches the general building footprint of the building that is proposed to be demolished.

The building design, however, as presented by staff in the meeting of the Design Review Board (DRB) on July 11, 2016, will likely prove difficult to adapt to any other land use other than vehicle sales or vehicle repair in the future. The choice of materials and color reflects the needs of the proposed tenant, Lithia Subaru, and does not match the existing masonry structures in the Central Business Historic District.

Because the proposed building is not consistent with the Contributing buildings in the National Register District, staff recommended denial of proposal at the Design Review Board meeting. After lengthy discussion, the DRB approved the architectural design of the building.

Parking and Traffic Analysis:

A Vehicle repair facility is considered a Motor vehicle maintenance and service shop in regards to non-accessible parking requirements detailed in Exhibit 36-1 of the Official Code for the City of Great Falls (OCCGF). This requires 2 parking spaces per service area or work bays plus 1 space per employee per shift. The proposed site plan shows 6 work bays, thus requiring 12 non-accessible parking spaces, plus employee parking. One ADA accessible parking space is also required. On-street parking is currently provided on Central Avenue and 8th Street South.

The proposed parking lot would provide 14 parking spaces in addition to on-street parking. Given the urban character of the Great Falls downtown (Central Business Historic District), parking can easily be accommodated by on-street, metered parking surrounding the site. As proposed by the applicant, a curb cut would be added in the center of Central Avenue to allow customer vehicles to enter and exit the vehicle bay east of the building. This access is restricted to entrances only, with the flow of vehicles then exiting onto Central Alley South. Parking may

also be accessed off of Central Alley South. The curb cut must be approved by the City Engineer. The applicant has stated that if this access approval is granted, an existing access point on Central Avenue near the 9th Street intersection will be removed so there is no net increase in access points for the business. This commitment is a Condition of Approval in the report.

Streets and Utilities:

Road conditions along both Central Avenue and 8th Street South are downtown/urban in character, with curb, gutter, and public sidewalk existing on all lot frontages. Conditions of the existing sidewalk vary, and curb conditions are poor. Stormwater facilities (storm drains) exist at the intersection of the street, and additional catch basins are proposed in the proposed parking lot to feed into the existing stormwater system. Public Works staff recommends that the full curb, gutter, and sidewalks be replaced by the applicant. The Design Review Board approval also requires that the sidewalks match the streetscape (stamped red concrete, tree grates, etc.) that currently exists on Central Avenue. Additional comments by the Public Works Department include:

- 1) *We have no objection to the designated loading zone on 8th Street South.*
- 2) *There are several sections of sidewalk and adjoining curb on Central Avenue and 8th Street South that need to be replaced.*
- 3) *Being the site is located in the Central Business District, a formal storm drainage design report and plan will not be required. The drainage improvements (inlets, piping and connection to City's existing storm drain) are satisfactory. An approved precast concrete manhole or inlet shall be utilized to connect to the City's storm drain.*
- 4) *The abandonment of an existing driveway and installation of new of driveway on Central Avenue shall include replacement of the curb and gutter. The cross section of the new curb and gutter shall match the existing curb. The new driveway shall conform to City standards (other than cross section of the curb).*

As proposed by the applicant, a portion of 8th Street South would be converted from on-street parking to a loading zone for repair parts to be transported into the building. An existing curb cut would be utilized exclusively for dolly moving carts transporting goods and would not allow vehicle access. This on-street loading zone requires approval by both the Director of Planning and Community Development and the City Engineer.

Neighborhood Council Input:

The subject property is located in Neighborhood Council #7. To date, staff has received no public comments regarding the project.

Review Criteria:

17.16.36.040 - Basis of decision.

The Zoning Commission's recommendation and the City Commission's decision shall at a minimum consider the following criteria:

1. *The conditional use is consistent with the City's Growth Policy and applicable neighborhood plans, if any.*

The proposed application is generally consistent with the City's growth policy. In terms of the *2013 Growth Policy Update*, the proposed project will continue efforts to expand, retain, and attract new businesses to Great Falls. This project supports Environmental and several Physical portions of the Growth Policy. However, previous staff reports have found that the proposed application is not consistent with portions of PHY4.5 - Historic Preservation. The proposal would demolish a historically significant structure.

Policies that support this project include:

Environmental – Urban Form

Env3.7.8 Encourage entrepreneurship and free market innovation.

Physical - Land Use

Phy4.1.5 Encourage or incentivize the redevelopment or adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized properties so as to maximize the City's existing infrastructure.

Phy4.2.3 Support actions that bring properties into conformance into the City's Land Development Code requirements over time.

Phy4.2.4 Promote retail locations that are safe, attractive, and accessible.

The Growth Policy identifies that Great Falls embodies balanced, compatible growth, while at the same time encourages the development of underutilized or vacant land.

Great Falls is separated into nine Neighborhood Councils. There are no adopted Neighborhood Plans for any of the Councils within the City. The subject property is located in Neighborhood Council #7.

2. The establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to, or endanger the health, safety, morals, comfort or general welfare.

The CUP allows the City to place appropriate conditions on specific projects to help mitigate or reduce the total off-site nuisances a project may have on the surrounding properties and environment. The conditions listed under the Conditions of Approval in this report apply specific measures to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public; in this case, requiring the approval of new curb cuts by the City Engineer and repairing curb and gutter in the public right-of-way. It is not anticipated that the proposed development will have an adverse impact on the surrounding properties or to the public given that the building as proposed will have a similar footprint to the existing building at 800 Central Avenue downtown.

3. The conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood.

Establishing a commercial use (automotive repair) on the same lot and similar footprint that previously held an automotive repair use and currently contains vehicle sales will not impair property values. It is also not anticipated that the project will be injurious to the use and enjoyment of property in the immediate vicinity. Neighboring uses are also owned by Lithia and relate to automotive sales, with the exception of the Hobby Land store. Once completed, the land use will be a compatible addition to the Central Avenue mixed use corridor east of the 700 block where like uses currently exist. Creating access to the lot from both Central Avenue and Central Alley South, as well as the creation of additional customer parking spaces, will minimally impact

on-street parking for neighboring businesses.

3. The conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.

The proposed project will not impede the normal and ordinary development and improvement of surrounding properties. If approved, the demolition of the existing building will temporarily impact businesses in terms of noise, dust, and other disruptions. However improvements to the eastern portion of the site (proposed for display parking and customer parking) will add sod, trees, and other landscaping where an unimproved lot currently exists. Adjacent property owners (Hobby Land) have been notified about the project. The addition of boulevard trees and the extension of the downtown streetscape improvements will greatly improve public-realm aesthetics.

5. Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or necessary facilities have been or are being provided.

The proposed project will be accessed off of Central Avenue as well as Central Alley South. A curb cut shall be removed further east on Central Avenue in order to add the new access, as approved by the City Engineer. Drainage shall be improved from existing conditions through the addition of catch basins in the proposed parking lot to capture stormwater (see Exhibit D).

Adequate services and infrastructure exist to operate the proposed project since it takes advantage of redeveloping a property located in an established neighborhood, the Central Business Historic District or downtown.

6. Adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.

The addition of fourteen (14) designated parking spaces plus one (1) ADA accessible parking space will ensure that customers have adequate and designated places to park for not only the project site, but the entire Lithia Motors campus. On-street parking would continue to be available and adequate to address spillover parking demands despite losing metered spaces for a loading zone on 8th Street. Staff finds that patrons entering the showroom on foot have clear, safe access at the intersection of Central Avenue and 8th Street South. It is anticipated that the establishment of the Vehicle repair use will create minimal traffic and parking, particularly when compared to the current use as Vehicle sales.

7. The conditional use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may, in each instance, be modified by the City Commission.

Through the issuance and approval of a CUP, the Conditions of Approval stated herein shall move the subject property much closer to compliance with the Land Development Code than existing conditions. For instance, the installation of boulevard trees meets the code requirements of Title 44-Landscaping. Parking requirements for Motor vehicle maintenance and service shops meet the code requirements of Title 36-Parking.

Improvements:

The applicant has agreed, through Conditions of Approval associated with Design Review Board, to improve the visual character of the public streets frontages by adding boulevard trees along both 8th Street Southwest and Central Avenue, including red stamped concrete and tree grates consistent with the Central Avenue streetscape. Grass sod would buffer the public sidewalk and the parking area. The trees would be planted at a rate of one per thirty five feet, per City standard. Fourteen trees are proposed on the Site Plan, but per Design Review Board Conditions of Approval, at least two more trees are required. An updated Landscape Plan shall be submitted to Planning and Community Development prior to any building permit being issued.

Recommendation:

The Zoning Commission recommends that the City Commission approve the Conditional Use Permit of the subject property located Lots 1-4, Block 360, Great Falls Original Townsite, Section 12, T20N, R03 E, P.M. MT, Cascade County, MT, the Findings of Fact and Conditions of Approval located in the staff report.

Conditions of Approval:

1. **General Code Compliance.** The proposed project shall be developed consistent with the conditions in this report, and all codes and ordinances of the City of Great Falls, the State of Montana, and all other applicable regulatory agencies.

General

2. **Approved Plans and Conditions.** Failure to build and/or operate the conditional use in accord with the approved plans and these conditions of approval is a violation of the OCCGF, subject to the penalties provided for such violations and/or to civil process to compel the correction of violations.
3. **Modifications.** It is understood that minor changes are often necessary during the development and operation of a conditional use. The Administrator is hereby authorized to permit minor changes, as provided below.
4. **Revised Plans.** Before making changes, the applicant must submit revised plans to the Administrator for review. Failure to do this before the proposed change is made is a violation of the OCCGF. The Administrator shall respond to all proposed changes within five (5) business days.
5. **Dimensional Changes.** Based on a review of the revised plans, the Administrator may permit minor dimensional changes provided that they do not result in a violation of the Conditions of Approval or the OCCGF.
6. **Public Works Changes.** Minor changes in the location and specifications of the required public improvements may be permitted. Revised plans showing such changes must be referred to and accepted by the Director of Public Works before being permitted by the Administrator.

7. **Substantial Change.** Substantial changes are not permitted. A new public review and permitting process will be required for such changes. ‘Substantial Change’ is defined here in order to clarify the contrasting term, ‘Minor Change.’ A substantial change changes the permitted use; the location or extent of the area proposed to be cleared, graded, or otherwise disturbed by more than 4,000 square feet (a smaller change in the area that will be cleared, graded, or otherwise disturbed may be treated as a minor dimensional change); the location, extent, or design of any required public improvement, except where a minor change is approved by the Director of Public Works and the Administrator; the approved number of lots, buildings, structures or units; or the size of any lot, building, or structure by more than 10% (a smaller change in the size of a lot, building, or structure may be treated as a minor dimensional change).
8. **Changes in Use.** Conditional uses are regulated as such because the use presents the possibility of significant impacts on the community. Therefore, changes in conditional uses must be strictly limited.
A significant change in the type or level of activity, including changes in the number of employees or operating hours, or changes in the types of materials present on the site, may void the conditional use permit. Proposed changes should be reviewed with the Administrator, who may require that the permit be amended following the same public process used for its adoption.

Planning

9. **Expiration.** The conditional use permit shall expire one (1) year after the date of issuance, if a Certificate of Occupancy has not been issued. The Administrator may extend the expiration date by up to one year if substantial work is ongoing. The Administrator may issue a Conditional Certificate of Occupancy that is valid for no more than one year if the only condition(s) remaining to be fulfilled involve landscaping that cannot be successfully established until the weather permits.
10. **Abandonment.** If a conditional use ceases to operate for more than six (6) months, the conditional use permit is void.
11. **General Code Compliance.** The proposed project shall be developed consistent with the conditions of approval adopted by the City Commission, and all codes and ordinances of the City of Great Falls, the State of Montana, and all other applicable regulatory agencies, to the greatest extent possible.
12. **Aggregation of Lots.** The applicant shall aggregate the four lots that are shown within the project site into a single lot. Planning and Community Development staff shall approve the Amended Plat administratively and at a fee to be provided to the City.

Building

13. **Building Plans.** The Applicant shall provide a full set of building plans that includes, but is not limited to, architectural plans to the Administrator for review and approval, prior to the issuance of zoning and building permits.

Fire

14. **Building Plans:** The Applicant shall provide a full set of building plans for review and approval by the Great Falls Fire Department before zoning or building permits are issued by the Administrator.

Public Works

15. **Civil Plans.** The Applicant shall provide a half size set of civil plans for review and approval by the Director of Public Works before zoning or building permits are issued by the Administrator. The Applicant will provide a full set of as-built plans to the Director of Public Works within 90 days after completion of the approved work.
16. **Water and Sewer.** Being the site is located in the Central Business District, a formal storm drainage design report and plan will not be required. The drainage improvements (inlets, piping and connection to City's existing storm drain) are satisfactory. An approved precast concrete manhole or inlet shall be utilized to connect to the City's storm drain.
17. **Initial Compliance On and Off Site Civil:** The Applicant shall submit for review to the Director of Public Works any plans, specification and design report for any proposed on/off site public utilities not previously reviewed by Public Works and/or the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. Also, the site civil plans shall be submitted to the Director of Public Works for review.
18. **Curb and Gutter:** The Developer shall be responsible for the installation and cost of new street curb and gutter abutting 8th Street and Central Avenue where abutting the subject property. The abandonment of an existing driveway near the intersection of 9th Street and installation of the new driveway on Central Avenue shall include replacement of the curb and gutter. The cross section of the new curb and gutter shall match the existing curb. The new driveway shall conform to City standards (other than cross section of the curb).
19. **Loading Areas:** The applicant shall submit for approval the dimensions of the proposed loading zone on 8th Street South where City parking meters exist to date.
20. **Curb Cut:** The curb cut as proposed on Central Avenue shall be approved by the City as required under OCCGF 17.32.150. Prior to the installation of a driveway curb cut or other access point onto a public street or right-of-way, the developer or owner shall obtain approval from the Montana Department of Transportation, Cascade County, or from the City. The City Engineer may require site driveway plans prior to approval and the start of construction on any driveway accessing any public street or right of way within the City. Curb cuts shall be located at the discretion and by the approval of the City Engineer to ensure traffic safety and the character of the neighborhood is maintained.

Acknowledgement

21. **Acceptance of Conditions.** No zoning or building permit shall be issued until the applicant acknowledges in writing that it has received, understands, and agrees to comply with these conditions of approval.


Alternatives: If there are justifiable reasons to do so, the City Commission could deny the requested action to the extent allowed in City Code and State Statute.

Attachments:

Exhibit A – Application
Exhibit B - Aerial Map
Exhibit C - Zoning Map
Exhibit D - Site Photography
Exhibit E – Project Description
Exhibit F – Exterior Elevations
Exhibit G – Site Plan
Exhibit H – Landscape Plan
Exhibit I – Resolution 10158

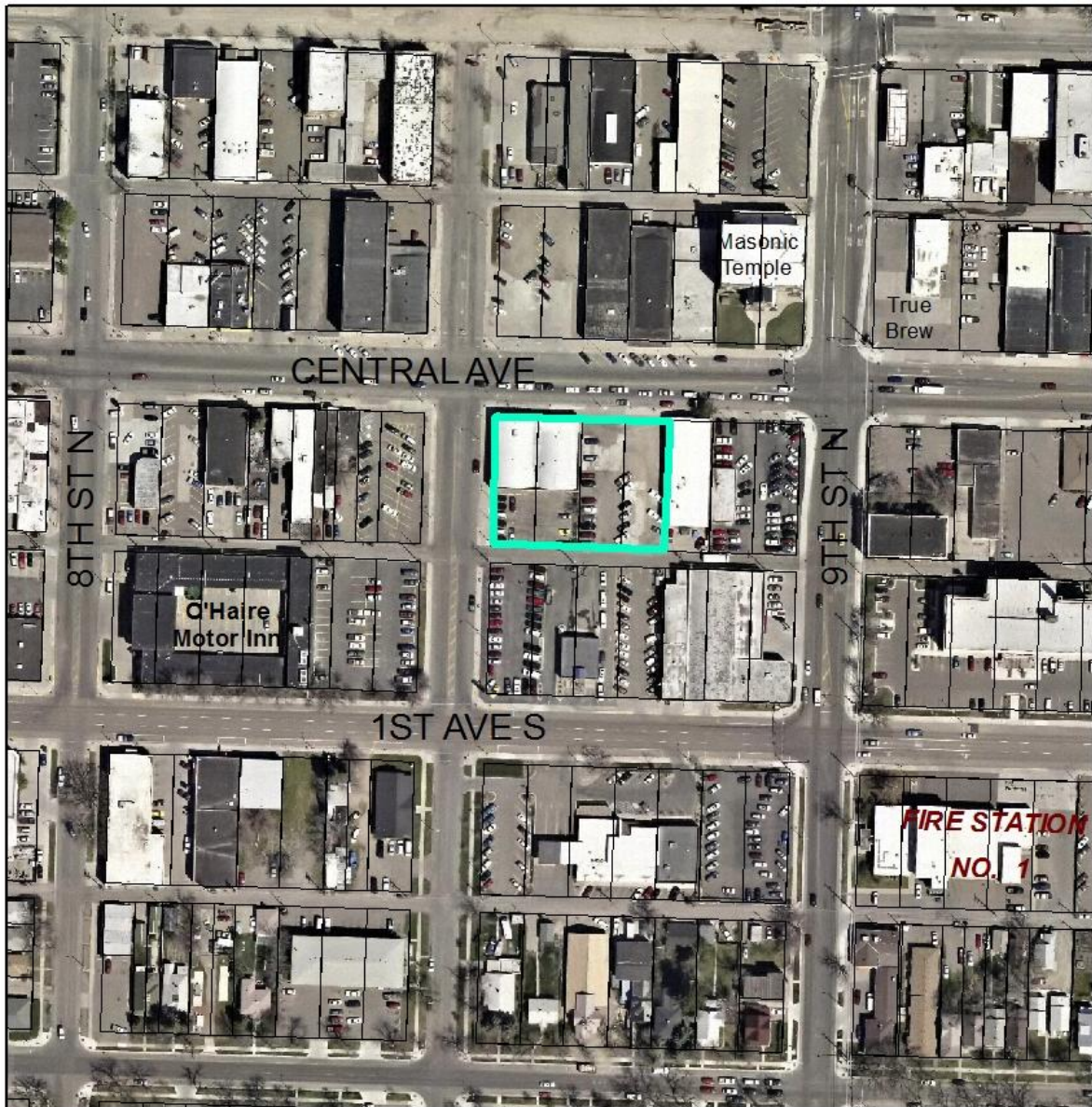
Cc: Jim Rearden, Public Works Director
Dave Dobbs, City Engineer
Patty Cadwell, Neighborhood Council Coordinator
Tim Montgomery, CSHQA tim.montgomery@CSHQA.com
Jim Otradosky, CSHQA jim.otradosky@cshqa.com
Eric Iversen, Lithia Real Estate, Inc. EIversen@lithia.com
Douglas R. Oswood, Oswood Construction Company droswood@hotmail.com

Exhibit A: Application Form

CITY OF GREAT FALLS PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPT. P.O. BOX 5021, GREAT FALLS, MT, 59403-5021 406.455.8415 • WWW.GREATFALLSMT.NET	Submittal Date: _____ Application Number: _____ Paid (Official Use ONLY): <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Annexation: \$500 <input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary Plat, Major: \$1,500 + \$50/lot <input type="checkbox"/> Revised Preliminary Plat: \$1,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Final Plat, Major: \$1,500 + \$25/lot <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Subdivision: \$1,250 <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Plat, Administrative: \$200 <input type="checkbox"/> Amended Plat, Non-administrative: \$1,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning Map Amendment: \$2,000 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conditional Use Permit: \$1,500 <input type="checkbox"/> Planned Unit Development: \$2,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Vacate Public Right-of-Way: \$1,250 <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing Notice
<h3 style="margin: 0;">DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION</h3>	
<u>Lithia Great Falls Subaru</u> Name of Project / Development:	
<u>Lithia Real Estate, Inc.</u> Owner Name:	
<u>150 N. Bartlett St. Medford, OR 97501</u> Mailing Address:	
<u>Eric Iversen (541)770-3116</u> Phone:	<u>EIversen@lithia.com</u> Email:
<u>CSHQA, Jim Otradosky</u> Representative Name:	
<u>200 Broad St. Boise, ID 83702</u> Mailing Address:	
<u>(208)343-4635</u> Phone:	<u>jim.otradosky@cshqa.com</u> Email:
PROPERTY DESCRIPTION / LOCATION:	
<u>Lots 001 thru 004</u> Mark/Lot:	<u>S12</u> Section:
<u>T20N/BLOCK 360</u> Township/Block:	<u>R 03 E</u> Range/Addition:
<u>800 Central Ave., Great Falls, MT 59401</u> Street Address:	
ZONING:	
<u>C-4</u> Current:	<u>C-4</u> Proposed:
LAND USE:	
<u>AUTOMOTIVE SALES</u> Current:	<u>AUTOMOTIVE SALES AND SERVICE</u> Proposed:
I (We), the undersigned, understand that the filing fee accompanying this application is not refundable. I (We) further understand that the fee pays for the cost of processing, and the fee does not constitute a payment for approval of the application. I (We) further understand that public hearing notice requirements and associated costs for land development projects are my (our) responsibility. I (We) further understand that other fees may be applicable per City Ordinances. I (We) also attest that the above information is true and correct to the best of my (our) knowledge.	
 Property Owner's Signature:	<u>6/7/16</u> Date:
By John D. Maulin on behalf of James M. Otradosky Representative's Signature:	
<u>john.maulin@cshqa.com/208.343.4635</u> Date:	

Form Updated: 05.01.2014

Exhibit B: Aerial Map



-  800 Central Ave
-  Tracts of Land



Exhibit C: Zoning Map



Legend

- 800 Central Ave
- Tracts of Land
- right-of-way
- ZONING**
- R-3 Single-family High Density
- R-5 Multi-family Medium Density
- R-6 Multi-family High Density
- R-9 Mixed Residential
- C-1 Neighborhood Commercial
- C-4 Central Business Core
- C-5 Central Business Periphery
- POS Parks and Open Space

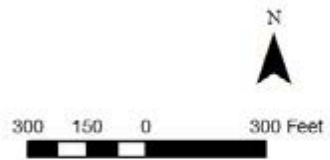


Exhibit D - Site Photos



LOOKING SOUTHEAST ALONG INTERSECTION OF CENTRAL AVENUE AND 8TH STREET SOUTH



VIEW EAST TOWARDS EXISTING PARKING LOT; PROPOSED BUILDING WOULD OCCUPY MOST OF THE LOT

Exhibit D - Site Photos (continued)



VIEW SOUTHWEST TOWARDS SHOWROOM AND CURRENT
PARKING/STORAGE LOT



VIEW OF THE PARKING LOT SOUTH OF THE EXISTING BUILDING

Exhibit E – Project Narrative



200 Broad St • Boise, ID 83702

O: (208) 343-4635

F: (208) 343-1858

June 8, 2016

City of Great Falls
Planning and Community Development Department
P.O. Box 5021
Great Falls, Montana 59403-5021

Re: Project Narrative
Design Review Board and Conditional Use Applications
Lithia Subaru of Great Falls
800 Central Avenue, Great Falls, Montana 59401
Project No. 16001

Dear Planning Staff,

On behalf of our client, Lithia Motors, and in accordance with submittal requirements for Design Review Board and Conditional Use Applications, please accept this project narrative describing the proposed development of a new automotive sales and service facility to be located at 800 Central Avenue. This letter supports the efforts presented during our informal pre-application conference call held March 4, 2016.

The proposed site is located on the southeast corner of Eighth Street South and Central Avenue and currently contains a mixture of vacant land and a building Lithia Motors obtained as part of their recent purchase of Bennett Motors. The vacant portions are currently paved and used for vehicle display and parking, without landscape improvements. To the east of the building, the area is primarily asphalt paving and bears evidence of foundations from previous building(s). The area south of the building to the alley is primarily concrete that we understand to be the floor of a building that was previously located in this area of the site. The basement of this previous building remains below the concrete in this area and connects to the basement of the existing building. The main floor of the existing building is currently used as a sales area for Lithia Motors, however, the basement is unused. This is due to significant water damage, much of which appears to be attributed to the exposed slab area where the adjoining building to the south was removed without further weatherproofing or protection to that area. There is standing water in many areas of the basement which has resulted in significant spalling of the concrete and rusting of the exposed steel reinforcing. There also appears to be damage at the base of several concrete columns that are located in standing water and which have required axillary shoring of these elements.

Initially, we looked at schemes to both renovate and expand the existing building or replace it with a new facility. Our studies found the existing building layout uncondusive to an efficient floor plan for a modern dealership facility. Additionally, the overriding factor that led to the decision to replace the existing building is the significant amount of structural damage and costly repairs required, due to the ongoing water issues. This makes the renovation/addition scheme much less feasible than removal of the existing structure and replacing it with a new facility.

The proposed design calls for construction of a new single story (13,669 square foot) automotive sales and service facility to house Lithia's Great Falls Subaru dealership. The front portion of the building will be placed directly behind the sidewalk and will contain the showroom, with its main entry located at the corner of Eighth Street South and Central Avenue, allowing customer access from either street. An

people who listen – design that speaks

www.cshqa.com

EQ/AA/M/Vets/Disabled

Exhibit E – Project Narrative (continued)

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enclosed service drive will be located on the east side of the building and service components will be located on the south side of the building, allowing access from both the eastern portion of the lot and the alley from the south. The parts receiving-area is located off of the Eighth Street South side of the building, adjacent to an existing curb cut which will be retained to assist in the delivery of parts.

The new building is being scaled to be similar to other buildings in the adjoining downtown area with a parapet height ranging from twenty three feet, nine and one-half inches to twenty seven feet, three and one-half inches (23'-9 ½" to 27'-3 ½") in height. The street elevations have been articulated to provide for a pleasing pattern of solid pilaster elements and window fenestration. Vertically, the building is zoned into a base, middle and top. The base is proposed to be rendered in integrally colored concrete. This also serves to protect the walls from damage when snow is removed in the winter. The Mid portion of the walls consist of either clear glazing (primarily at the showroom) and stucco, with articulated pilasters proposed to be clad in a porcelain tile product, with a joint pattern similar to that used on many of the downtown terracotta building facades. A stone feature is also located on the front façade to break up the showroom windows and also serves as the chimney wall for the showroom fireplace element. The upper portion is clad in metal wall panels (on the front portion of the building) and stucco fascia (on the Eighth street side of the building), with an articulated metal coping/cornice profile in pre-finished metal. Primary building entries are protected by steel canopy structures, with angled strut supports that tie back to the wall above. The alley and some areas on the back of the east elevation, away from most public and customer traffic, are clad with stucco-textured pre-finished insulated panels.

As noted above, the building is located right behind the sidewalk on both street frontages, supporting pedestrian traffic and maintaining the building edge as seen elsewhere downtown. The service drive has been located to the east and sits back from the street to minimize the visual impact of its glazed overhead doors. This also allows for the proposed mid-block entrance, as discussed during our pre-application conference. The drive is being proposed as ingress only, minimizing the potential of pedestrian/vehicle conflict of vehicles entering the street. Also discussed, this curb cut is being proposed in exchange for the existing curb cut (located at the current Lithia Hyundai lot at the corner of Central Avenue and Ninth Street South), which is located quite near the corner and provides for both ingress and egress, allowing a much higher potential for both vehicle/pedestrian or vehicle/vehicle conflict at the proposed mid-block location.

Directly east of the service drive area is customer parking and vehicle display with landscape plantings (per the zoning ordinance). New street trees are also being proposed in the new sidewalk areas fronting both Central Avenue and Eighth Street South. As noted above, the existing curb on Eighth Street South is being shown to remain to assist in the delivery of parts. As such, we are also requesting the reclassification of the two parking spaces adjacent to this curb cut to a loading zone, to allow delivery trucks to park directly adjacent to the parts receiving- area and be located out of the active traffic lane of Eighth Street South.

While current C-4 zoning requires a Conditional Use Permit for Vehicle Repair, this use is consistent with the on-going and continuous use of other portions of the block currently occupied by the Lithia repair facility(contained within the structure at Ninth Street South and First Avenue South). We would also like to point out that the historic use of the site supports this use. The existing building was, as we understand, built as an automotive repair school with the vehicle repair portion located in the basement of the building. The site then transitioned to automotive dealership and repair uses, first being occupied by the Chevrolet Dealership (before it relocated to the edge of town) and then by Bennett Motors. At some

Exhibit E – Project Narrative (continued)

City of Great Falls
Page 3
June 8, 2016

point following this transition, the lower level was not utilized. Again, most likely due to the on-going water issues.

Not only do we believe our submittal meets the criteria and submittal requirements for Design Review and Conditional Use approvals, but it will also enhance the surrounding existing development both architecturally and visually. It will be one more building that will serve as an infill project addition to reinforce the existing fabric of downtown Great Falls.

Should you have any questions or have a need for further information regarding this project, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

CSHQA

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John D. Maulin".

By John D. Maulin on behalf of James M. Otradosky

Jim Otradosky, AIA, LEED AP BD+C

JO:pk

Exhibit F – Exterior Elevations

PRELIMINARY
NOT FOR
CONSTRUCTION

JOHN B. MESSNER ARCHITECT
131 BRONCK STREET
GREAT FALLS, NY 11931
TEL: (516) 833-5600
WWW.CMH6A.COM

CSH6A

LITHIA GREAT FALLS SUBARU
800 CENTRAL AVE.
GREAT FALLS, NY

**CUP/DR
SUBMITTAL**

DATE	DESCRIPTION
10/01/2009	ISSUED
11/04/2009	REVISED

**EXTERIOR
ELEVATIONS**

A4.0
ORIGINAL SHEET SIZE
36" X 30"

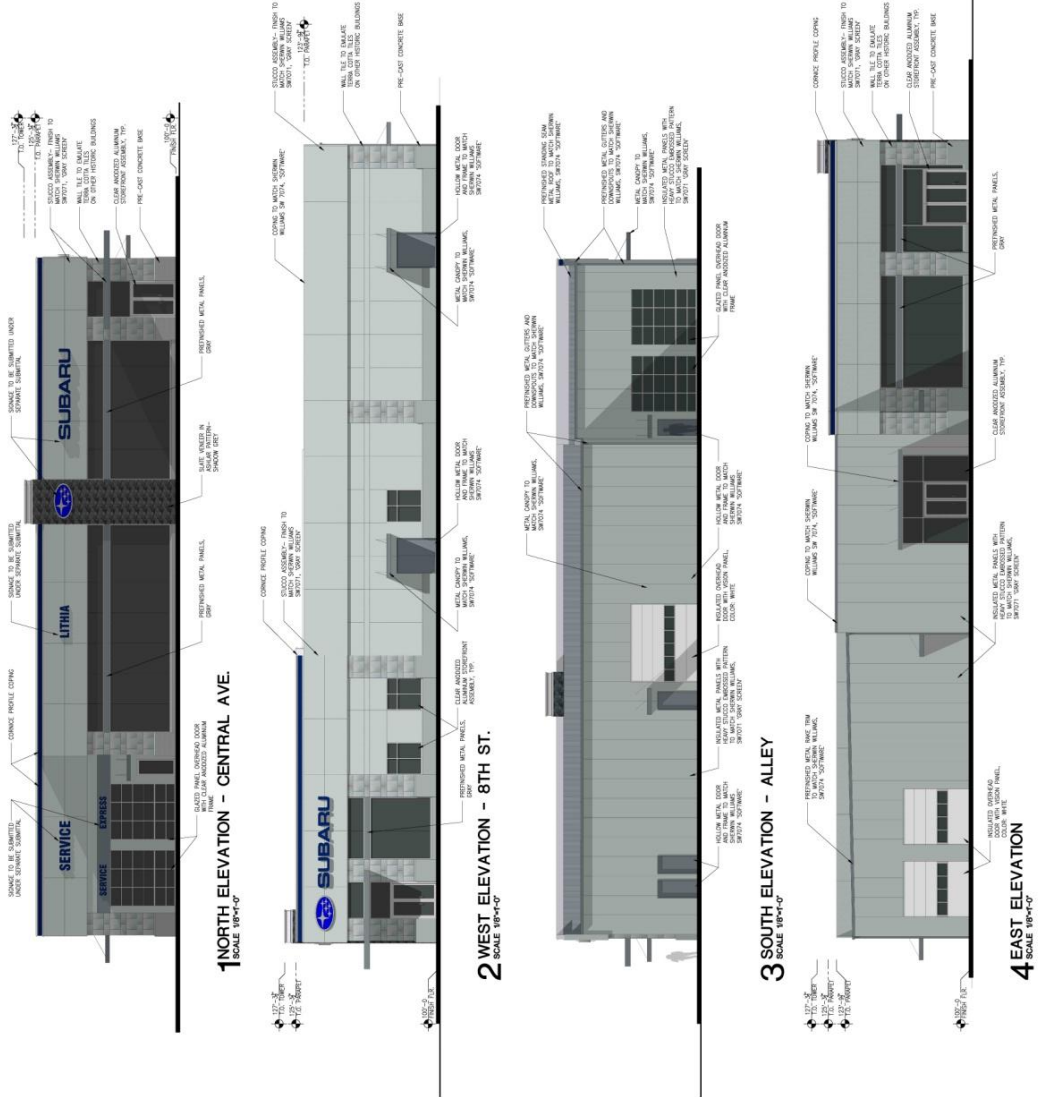


Exhibit H – Landscape Plan

**PRELIMINARY
NOT FOR
CONSTRUCTION**

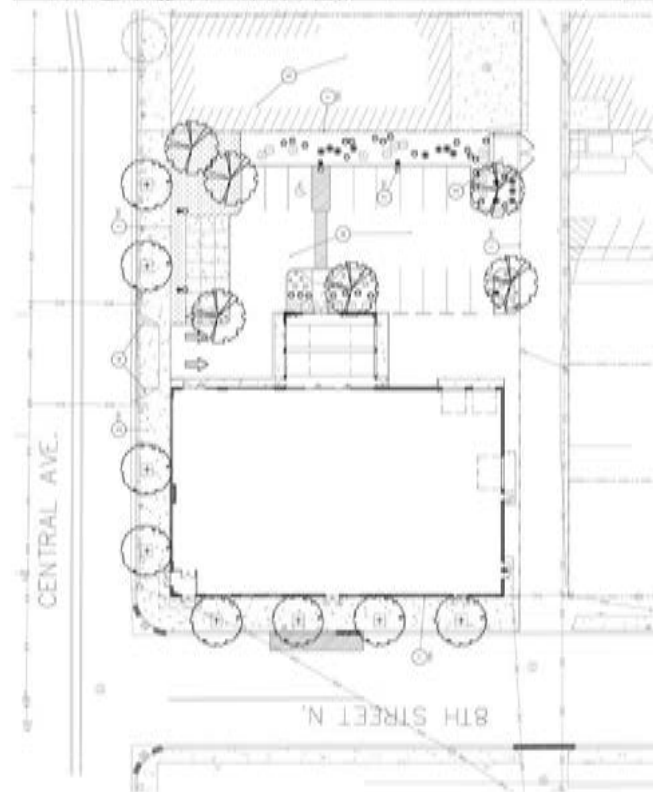
CSHA
800 CENTRAL AVE.
LITHIA GREAT FALLS SUBARU
GREAT FALLS, MT

**CUP/DR
SUBMITTAL**

DATE	NOV 11 2010
SCALE	AS SHOWN

**LANDSCAPE
PLAN**
L10
COURTESY: 2010 11 10
2010 11 10

LANDSCAPE SCHEDULE	
NO.	PLANT NAME
1	Red Pine
2	White Pine
3	Blue Spruce
4	Black Spruce
5	Aspen
6	Poplar
7	Willow
8	Alder
9	Birch
10	Maple
11	Oak
12	Pine
13	Spruce
14	Fir
15	Juniper
16	Cedar
17	Yew



GENERAL NOTES

1. ALL PLANTING SHALL BE DONE BY THE CONTRACTOR. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ANY OTHER AGENCIES THAT MAY APPLY. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ANY OTHER AGENCIES THAT MAY APPLY.

IRRIGATION NOTES

1. THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM SHALL BE DESIGNED BY THE CONTRACTOR. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ANY OTHER AGENCIES THAT MAY APPLY.

SHEET NOTES

- 1. REVIEW ALL
- 2. REVIEW COMMENTS BY DATE
- 3. NOA RECEIVED
- 4. APPROVED FOR CONSTRUCTION
- 5. CONSTRUCTION SHALL BEGIN 15 DAYS AFTER RECEIVED
- 6. CONTRACT SHALL BE IN FULL
- 7. ALL WORK SHALL BE DONE

RESOLUTION 10158

A RESOLUTION APPROVING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF A VEHICLE REPAIR FACILITY ON THE PROPERTY ADDRESSED AS 800 CENTRAL AVENUE, AND LEGALLY DESCRIBED AS LOTS 1-4, BLOCK 360, GREAT FALLS ORIGINAL TOWNSITE, SECTION 12 TOWNSHIP 20 NORTH, RANGE 3 EAST, P.M MT, CASCADE COUNTY, MONTANA.

WHEREAS, Lithia Real Estate, Inc. owners, have petitioned the City of Great Falls for a Conditional Use Permit to allow for the construction of a Vehicle repair facility on the property addressed as 800 Central Avenue and legally described Lots 1-4, Block 360, Great Falls Original Townsite, Section 12, T20N, R03 E, P.M. MT, Cascade County, Montana; and

WHEREAS, the subject property is presently zoned C-4 Central Business Core wherein the operation of a Vehicle repair facility is permitted upon processing and approval of a Conditional Use Permit; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Conditional Use Permit, for the construction of a Vehicle repair facility on said property, meets the Basis of Decision requirements in the Official Code of the City of Great Falls (OCCGF) Section 17.16.36.040; and

WHEREAS, the Great Falls Zoning Commission conducted a public hearing on July 26, 2016, to consider said Conditional Use Permit application, and at the conclusion of said hearing passed a motion recommending a Conditional Use Permit be granted for the property legally described as Lots 1-4, Block 360, Great Falls Original Townsite, Section 12, T20N, R03 E, P.M. MT, Cascade County, Montana, to allow for the construction of an Vehicle repair facility on a portion of the site, subject to the following conditions:

1. **General Code Compliance:** The proposed project shall be developed consistent with the conditions in this report, and all codes and ordinances of the OCCGF, the State of Montana, and all other applicable regulatory agencies.
2. **Approved Plans and Conditions:** Failure to build and/or operate the conditional use in accord with the approved plans and these conditions of approval is a violation of the OCCGF, subject to the penalties provided for such violations, and/or to civil process to compel the correction of violations.
3. **Modifications:** It is understood that minor changes are often necessary during the development and operation of a conditional use. The Administrator is hereby authorized to permit minor changes, as provided below.

4. Revised Plans: Before making changes, the applicant must submit revised plans to the Administrator for review. Failure to do this before the proposed change is made is a violation of the OCCGF. The Administrator shall respond to all proposed changes within five (5) business days.
5. Dimensional Changes: Based on a review of the revised plans, the Administrator may permit minor dimensional changes provided that they do not result in a violation of the Conditions of Approval or the OCCGF.
6. Public Works Changes: Minor changes in the location and specifications of the required public improvements may be permitted. Revised plans showing such changes must be referred to and accepted by the Director of Public Works before being permitted by the Administrator.
7. Substantial Change: Substantial changes are not permitted. A new public review and permitting process will be required for such changes. 'Substantial Change' is defined here in order to clarify the contrasting term, 'Minor Change.' A substantial change, changes the permitted use, the location or extent of the area proposed to be cleared, graded, or otherwise disturbed by more than 4,000 square feet (a smaller change in the area that will be cleared, graded, or otherwise disturbed may be treated as a minor dimensional change); the location, extent, or design of any required public improvement, except where a minor change is approved by the Director of Public Works and the Administrator; the approved number of lots, buildings, structures or units; or the size of any lot, building, or structure by more than 10% (a smaller change in the size of a lot, building, or structure may be treated as a minor dimensional change).
8. Changes in Use: Conditional uses are regulated as such because the use presents the possibility of significant impacts on the community. Therefore, changes in conditional uses must be strictly limited.
A significant change in the type or level of activity, including changes in the number of employees or operating hours, or changes in the types of materials present on the site, may void the conditional use permit. Proposed changes should be reviewed with the Administrator, who may require that the permit be amended following the same public process used for its adoption.
9. Expiration: The conditional use permit shall expire one (1) year after the date of issuance, if a Certificate of Occupancy has not been issued. The Administrator may extend the expiration date by up to one year, if substantial work is ongoing. The Administrator may issue a Conditional Certificate of Occupancy that is valid for no more than one year, if the only condition(s) remaining to be fulfilled involve landscaping that cannot be successfully established until the weather permits.
10. Abandonment: If a conditional use ceases to operate for more than six (6) months, the conditional use permit is void.
11. General Code Compliance: The proposed project shall be developed consistent with the conditions of approval adopted by the City Commission, and all codes and ordinances of the City of Great Falls, the State of Montana, and all other applicable regulatory agencies, to the greatest extent possible.
12. Aggregation of Lots: The applicant shall aggregate the four lots that are shown

- within the project site into a single lot. Planning and Community Development staff shall approve the Amended Plat administratively and at a fee to be provided to the City.
13. Building Plans: The Applicant shall provide a full set of building plans that includes, but is not limited to, architectural plans to the Administrator for review and approval, prior to the issuance of zoning and building permits.
 14. Building Plans: The Applicant shall provide a full set of building plans for review and approval by the Great Falls Fire Department before zoning or building permits are issued by the Administrator.
 15. Civil Plans: The Applicant shall provide a half size set of civil plans for review and approval by the Director of Public Works before zoning or building permits are issued by the Administrator. The Applicant will provide a full set of as-built plans to the Director of Public Works within 90 days after completion of the approved work.
 16. Water and Sewer: Being the site is located in the Central Business District, a formal storm drainage design report and plan will not be required. The drainage improvements (inlets, piping and connection to City's existing storm drain) are satisfactory. An approved precast concrete manhole or inlet shall be utilized to connect to the City's storm drain.
 17. Initial Compliance On and Off Site Civil: The Applicant shall submit for review to the Director of Public Works any plans, specification and design report for any proposed on/off site public utilities not previously reviewed by Public Works and/or the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. Also, the site civil plans shall be submitted to the Director of Public Works for review.
 18. Curb and Gutter: The Developer shall be responsible for the installation and cost of new street curb and gutter abutting 8th Street and Central Avenue where abutting the subject property. The abandonment of an existing driveway near the intersection of 9th Street and installation of the new driveway on Central Avenue shall include replacement of the curb and gutter. The cross section of the new curb and gutter shall match the existing curb. The new driveway shall conform to City standards (other than cross section of the curb).
 19. Loading Areas: The applicant shall submit for approval the dimensions of the proposed loading zone on 8th Street where City parking meters exist to date.
 20. Curb Cut: The curb cut as proposed on Central Avenue shall be approved by the City as required under OCCGF 17.32.150. Prior to the installation of a driveway curb cut or other access point onto a public street or right-of-way, the developer or owner shall obtain approval from the Montana Department of Transportation, Cascade County, or from the City. The City Engineer may require site driveway plans prior to approval and the start of construction on any driveway accessing any public street or right of way within the City. Curb cuts shall be located at the discretion, and by the approval of, the City Engineer to ensure traffic safety and the character of the neighborhood is maintained.
 21. Acceptance of Conditions: No zoning or building permit shall be issued until the applicant acknowledges in writing that it has received, understands, and agrees to

comply with these conditions of approval.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS, MONTANA:**

That a Conditional Use Permit be granted at the property legally described as Lots 1-4, Block 360, Great Falls Original Townsite, Section 12, T20N, R03 E, P.M. MT, Cascade County, Montana to allow for the establishment of a Vehicle repair facility, conditioned upon the owner complying with the said conditions; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY SAID CITY COMMISSION that this Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its passage and approval.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Commission of the City of Great Falls, Montana, on August 16, 2016.

Bob Kelly, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lisa Kunz, City Clerk

(SEAL OF CITY)

APPROVED FOR LEGAL CONTENT:

Sara R. Sexe, City Attorney