

April 27, 2016

Planning Commission
Northfield Township
8350 Main St
Whitmore Lake, MI 48189

Subject: Arvin Sango North American Technical Center, Jomar Drive/E. North Territorial Rd.; Site Plan Review #1; Plans Dated 04/13/2016 and received 4/15/16

Dear Commissioners:

Arvin Sango, Inc. proposes to construct an approximately 37,590 sq. ft. testing, analysis and design facility for automotive exhaust systems. The 6.10 acre site (per the Alta survey) is located in the Jomar Technology Park at the northeast corner of North Territorial Rd. and Jomar Dr. Two future additions are labelled on the site plan, a 5,759 sq. ft. addition on the west side of the facility and an 8,642 sq. ft. addition to the east side of the facility. We have generally included the additions in our review; however detailed site plans will be required before they may be constructed.



COMMENTS

Our comments that follow are based upon the requirements of the Northfield Township Zoning Ordinance, observation of the site and principles of good planning.

- 1. Use.** The property is zoned RTM, Research/Technology/Manufacturing District. This district is intended to promote and encourage uses which support research, technology and manufacturing. Industrial research, development, and testing laboratories are permitted uses. Permitted accessory uses include *“prototype or pilot processing, manufacturing and/or assembly” if strictly incidental and subordinate to an activity permitted and located in the RTM district, and if such use does not occupy more than 25% of the total floor area of the permitted use.* The Township is currently considering an amendment that would increase the allowed amount of floor area for these accessory uses to be up to 49%. A detailed description of the use and operations proposed to be conducted on the site, including identifying the percentage of the building/floor area to be used for prototype or pilot processing, manufacturing or assembly (if any).
- 2. Dimensional Requirements.** The minimum lot area in the RTM district is 5 acres, and the site is 6.1 acres. The proposed building meets or exceeds the minimum required setbacks and is less than the maximum permitted building height.
- 3. Access and Circulation.** The site will have two driveways at Jomar Drive; there will be no direct access from N. Territorial Road. The layout of the proposed detention pond on the west side of the lot prevents the curb cuts from lining up with the driveway across Jomar Drive. According to the Institute of Transportation Engineers’ Trip Generation Manual, 9th Edition, a research and development use of this size and with 30 employees would generate 13 trips during the a.m. peak hour, and the estimated traffic generated falls below the threshold to require a traffic study. While the low traffic volumes expected should minimize traffic conflicts, if feasible, we would recommend that one of the site’s driveways line up with the curb cut on the opposite side of Jomar Drive to reduce potential traffic turning conflicts.

The south driveway serves the employee and visitor parking lots. The location of this driveway conflicts with the entrance island in Jomar Drive since the island in the road blocks straight traffic flow and effectively limits turns at the south driveway to right in, right out. We recommend the south driveway be relocated or combined with the north driveway into a single drive, shifting it to the north to avoid the island. If some or all of the main parking lot were relocated to the west (Jomar Drive) side of the building, there would be greater flexibility for the driveway to be located to avoid conflicts with the entrance island. An added benefit would be that the stormwater basin that must be relocated out of the N. Territorial Rd. ROW could be better accommodated.

- 4. Parking.** Research and testing laboratories, and manufacturing and processing operations, require one parking space for each 1.5 employees on maximum shift. The plan states that Arvin Sango will initially have 15 employees, requiring 23 parking spaces. The plan notes that the intent is to ultimately have 30 employees during the maximum shift, requiring 45 spaces. 45 car parking spaces and five motorcycles parking spaces are provided.

- 5. Outdoor Equipment and Screening.** Outdoor storage is prohibited both by the RTM District regulations and the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions for Jomar Technology Park, and none is indicated on the plan.

A fenced “utility yard” is proposed on the north side of the building. It would contain two 1,000-gallon fuel tanks, several dry coolers, a generator and a transformer, surrounded by fencing. Sheet MP4-102 shows a generator in the utility yard; if this is proposed, the generator must be added to Sheet S.3 Site Plan and noise control specifications submitted. Any required permits and spillage protection must be noted on the plan. The type, height and details of the fence must be provided on the plan, and it must be sufficient to screen the tanks and equipment from view.

Dumpster enclosure details must also be included and conform to Ordinance requirements [Section 36-701(3)].

- 6. Stormwater Management.** Stormwater ponds are proposed on all sides of the site. The pond that parallels N. Territorial Rd. and some of its landscaping project into the road right-of-way. We recommend that the pond be reconfigured to be out of the road right-of way, which is under the jurisdiction of the Washtenaw County Road Commission. (See comment 3. above.)
- 7. Natural Features.** The site is in an approved technology park, and appears to have been used for a farm dwelling and associated buildings before the technology park was built. The Topographic/Demo Plan sheet identifies existing natural features on the site. The site is flat, with two small pockets of wetlands, a brush line along the east and scattered trees (several of which appear to be evergreens planted in the past).

The wetlands noted are labelled “unregulated wetlands” and thus are not at the threshold where the Zoning Ordinance would require a Natural Features Impact Assessment. Although brush along the east lot line is proposed to be removed, it appears that approximately 10 trees in this area will be preserved. Five trees in other locations are proposed to be removed. The variety and size of the trees to be preserved and those requested to be removed must be identified on the plan. If any of the trees to be removed qualify as landmark trees, a Natural Features Impact Statement must be provided. The project involves development of the entire site.

- 8. Landscaping.** The Zoning Ordinance requires 1 canopy tree per 8 parking spaces. There are 45 proposed parking spaces, requiring 6 canopy trees. Six red maple trees are proposed around the parking lot, meeting the minimum requirement. Additional trees, shrubs and perennials are proposed around the site. Underground irrigation will be provided for all landscaping.

Balance Technology Inc., located across Jomar Drive from the proposed development, has planted trees along its N. Territorial Road frontage. Because of space constraints, similar frontage trees may not be practical, but we encourage the applicant to install additional clusters of naturalized shrubs to soften the appearance of the pond and the parking lot behind it, from the road. When the pond location is adjusted, space for frontage trees may be possible. Existing and proposed topography, and proposed planting dates must be added to the landscape plan.

9. Lighting. Exterior lighting may not exceed 16 feet in height in parking lots with fewer than 100 spaces, so the proposed 25 foot high pole-mounted lights must be shortened to conform. The proposed fixtures are downcast LED lights. The photometric plan complies.

10. Building Facades/ Floor Plans. The main building entrance faces N. Territorial Road. The entrance feature uses silver metallic colored metal panels. The remainder of the building is comprised of white precast concrete panels. The elevations visible from the roads contain windows to break up the appearance of the building. A double blue accent stripe is present along the top of the building. The building renderings illustrate the entrance feature projecting from the main building face but the site plan's building footprint shows the same wall with a flat face. This discrepancy must be corrected. We recommend that the entrance be designed with more depth to create greater variety and interest on the long south façade.

The rendering of the back of the building should be revised to show and dimension the proposed fence that screens the tanks and equipment. Please note whether there will be any rooftop mechanical equipment, and if there will be any, provide and dimension screening. The gross and usable floor area must be noted on the plan. The color and materials for all exterior façade elements must be labelled on the plan, including the windows and doors. Samples of the proposed façade materials and colors should be presented to the Planning Commission for approval.

11. Signs. Two wall signs are proposed. Sec. 36-793 allows only one wall sign for a business, thus 1 of the wall signs will have to be removed. The dimensions and details of the sign should be provided.

RECOMMENDATION

Most of the items noted above are relatively minor, therefore, subject to the applicant addressing relocation of the storm basin out of the N. Territorial Road ROW and adjusting the south driveway to avoid conflict with the Jomar Drive entrance island to the satisfaction of the Planning Commission, we could recommend that the Planning Commission grant site plan approval. Site plan approval should be subject to the following items being addressed on revised and dated plans:

1. Detailed description of the use, including the gross and usable floor area of the building and percentage of the building to be used for prototype manufacturing, processing or assembly, confirming compliance with the Ordinance;
2. Relocation of the storm pond out of the N. Territorial Rd. ROW;
3. Relocation of the south driveway or consolidation of it into one with the north driveway, to allow two-way traffic movement, better line-up with the drive across the street, and eliminate the turning conflict;
4. Details for the dumpster enclosure, screen fence and generator specifications and location;
5. The type and size of the trees to be removed must be identified on the plan. If any of the trees to be removed qualify as landmark trees, a Natural Features Impact Statement must be provided.
6. Provide additional landscaping along N. Territorial Road;

7. Existing and proposed topography, and proposed planting dates on the landscape plan;
8. Reduce the height of light poles to 16 feet;
9. Building façade items must be addressed as follows:
 - a. Revise building entrance so the footprint and elevations match, and revise to create additional relief on the façade;
 - b. Revise the rear elevation to include the fence, add fence dimensions and details;
 - c. Label the color of all façade elements including windows and doors;
 - d. Note whether there will be any rooftop mechanical equipment, and if there will be any, provide and dimension screening.
 - e. Façade material and color samples should be presented to the Planning Commission for approval.
10. Removal of 1 wall sign, and note sign dimensions and details on the site plan in conformance to the Ordinance; and
11. Approval of the Township engineer; provision of permits and spill protection for the above ground tanks; and approval of all agencies with jurisdiction.

Respectfully submitted,

McKENNA ASSOCIATES



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Senior Vice President