

**NORWALK ZONING COMMISSION**  
125 East Avenue - City Hall  
Norwalk, CT 06851

**MEMORANDUM**

**OCTOBER 1, 2020**

**TO:** Zoning Commission, Louis Schulman, Chairman

**FROM:** Staff (DW)

**RE:** **#6-20SP** – Norden Place KB LLC – 10 Norden Pl – Special permit for proposed new 330,000 sf warehouse and wholesale distribution use in an existing building (replace former Norden Systems space) & related site improvements

**APPLICANT/OWNER:** Norden Place KB LLC (Contract purchaser of new sub-parcel A2)

**ADDRESS/DISTRICT BLOCK LOT:** 10 Norden Place (District 3, Block 17, Lot 40)

**ZONING DESIGNATION:** Restricted Industrial (RI) and Research & Development (R&D) zone

**PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT DESIGNATION:** Light Industrial

**LOT AREA:** Industrial Development Park Total: 75.00 acres

Existing parcels: **8 Norden Place Parcel 1:** 38.36 acres (Avalon East Norwalk)

**10 Norden Place Parcel 2:** 37.20 acres (Manufacturing, office & data center uses)

**EXISTING USES:** Three buildings: 115,098 sf Data Center, 635,460 sf building formerly occupied by Norden Systems industrial/R&D, Tauck Tours, Gibbs College, and storage building next to Data Ctr.

**PROPOSED NEW WAREHOUSE & WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTION USE:** The applicant has submitted a special permit application to replace the former Norden Systems manufacturing, R&D and office space with a new warehouse and wholesale distribution use. While the Restricted Industrial zone permits this use by Special Permit, this site has been designated as an Industrial Development Park and has previously not included this type of independent warehouse use. The special permit application indicates that Norden Place KB LLC is under contract to purchase from Norwalk Center LLC a condominium unit to be created on and over a portion of such real property (the "Property") for warehouse and wholesale distribution use. The application proposes to convert a 330,000 square foot portion of the existing building located on the eastern side of the Building to accommodate the new warehouse and wholesale distribution use, to upgrade the loading docks and adjacent parking and driveways to accommodate the new transport use. The application indicates that a third condominium sub-parcel A2 is to be established which will modify the existing 2 sub-parcel arrangement by subdividing sub-parcel A and creating three sub-parcels A1, A2 and B.

The site plan shows several modifications including a new driveway connecting the loading docks on the north side of the building with the parking lot to the east; new parking and aisle layouts in the east parking lot (C2.02) and new consolidated driveway configuration at the revised entry drive along the southern property boundary. The plans and renderings (A.3.02) show a total of 21 loading doors: 11 on the north side; 8 on the south side and 2 on the east side. A large number of cars (10-15) typically park on the north side of Norden Place; this parking is used by residents of 11 Norden Place and should be retained (or relocated if needed to provide adequate space for truck maneuvers). The applicant was asked to provide more information on warehouse operations including dimensions of loading spaces, truck turning movements to access new loading docks and an analysis of the total number of daily and weekly truck trips.

**LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT:** The staff has recommended that the site plan be revised to provide additional green design features including adding solar panels to reduce energy use, adding bioswales and/or green roofs to improve water quality and reduce sediment of runoff that flows into adjacent wetlands and adding permeable pavers to reduce impervious surfaces particularly for low intensity drives and footpaths. The above measures will mitigate the environmental impacts of the proposed new warehouse and wholesale distribution use that will increase pollutants from the expanded truck traffic in this predominately residential neighborhood.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY:** The applicant has been asked to provide an Environmental Impact Assessment report to evaluate the impacts of the proposed new use on the environment. The report should respond to the following questions: Will trucks be permitted to idle during the loading/unloading process? Are refrigerated trucks planned for this use? A noise study would be required if either of these apply. As of the drafting of this report, this information had not been received.

**OPERATIONS PLAN:** The applicant has been asked to provide an operations plan to provide more detail on the daily operations of the proposed warehouse and wholesale distribution tenant (or tenants if that is the case) including the proposed days and hours of the week when the use will operate; the estimated number of employees and trucks on site; **the estimated number of daily/weekly truck trips** (including during peak periods) envisioned; the type of cargo being

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warehoused and shipped from this facility, whether outside truck deliveries/pick-ups are envisioned or whether this is an in-house operation operated by one tenant, etc. As of the drafting of this report, this information had not been received.

**TRAFFIC REPORT:** A traffic report was submitted by Tighe & Bond that indicates that the additional traffic based on the anticipated number of trips from the proposed new use will not adversely affect the level-of-service at adjacent intersections and can be accommodated without any significant impacts to traffic in the area. The staff review indicates that this report may have underestimated the number of daily truck trips based on the number of loading docks shown and as compared with current on-site uses. The staff has asked for an analysis of the total number of daily and weekly truck trips anticipated by the new use as compared with the total number of daily/weekly truck trips operating to/from this location under current conditions to be provided.

The applicant has also been asked to provide a separate map showing the proposed distribution of truck traffic routes to and from I-95 and to identify a preferred truck access route as well as to provide a list of streets that trucks should use to access I-95 (eg. Strawberry Hill Av, Triangle St, East Av, Route 136, etc) and streets that truck traffic should avoid including local residential streets (eg. Beacon St, Eversley Av, Myrtle St, Raymond Terrace, etc.) which are too narrow for large trucks. The applicant was also asked to confirm heights of MetroNorth RR Bridges along preferred routes to determine ability to access I-95 via Exits 16 or 17. A new consolidated driveway is proposed to accommodate the increased truck traffic associated with this use; the staff has noted that the curbs and sidewalk along Norden Place should be designed to provide a textured crosswalk to allow safe pedestrian passage across the new driveway.

**ENGINEERING STORMWATER REPORT:** A stormwater report was submitted by Tighe & Bond and indicating that site drainage resulting from the site improvements will be retained on site. Surface runoff will be collected in a series of yard drains, catch basins, and roof leaders. The stormwater collection system will utilize a "treatment train" approach and include low impact development systems to remove total suspended solids and reduce peak flow. The report states that the proposed site development will have no adverse impacts to the adjoining property owners or any downstream drainage systems. DPW is currently reviewing the proposed plan. WPCA has requested modifications and the applicant is revising the plans to respond to these comments.

**ZONING LOCATION SURVEY:** The applicant has been asked to provide a zoning location survey for the entire site to show required/proposed setback lines, FAR, building area for all buildings and uses on the site, and to provide a zoning data chart that includes parking calculations for the entire industrial building and for the 2013 Data Center. The ZLS had not been submitted as of the writing of this report.

**LANDSCAPE/LIGHTING PLANS:** The landscape plan shows new deciduous trees along Norden Place in place of the existing evergreen tree buffer. A revised landscape plan should be provided to show that either the existing evergreen buffer is retained or that the replacement plantings shown on the plant list include 10-12 ft evergreen trees to continue this substantial buffer for the residential uses located directly across the street. The planting islands in the eastern parking lot are being revised and the existing trees replaced. The revised islands appear to be undersized and maybe too small to support the new trees as they grow; parking lot islands must be a minimum of 8.5 ft wide X 19 ft long as per Section § 118-1250, paragraph c. Cutoff shields be installed on all lighting to prevent stray light from being emitted off the property and pole heights should be reduced to 14 ft. to reduce any impacts on residential units beyond the property line;

**DEVELOPMENT PARK SIGN PLAN:** This site is approved as an Industrial Development Park to allow larger signs associated with the Industrial Development Park sign regulations; since warehouse and wholesale distribution uses are not included in the Industrial Development Park definition; any new signs will have to comply with normal sign regulations (the existing ground sign at the north driveway is one example of a larger development park sign) or the applicant must submit an amendment to include this use in the existing definition below.

**INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT PARK:** A parcel or parcels of land, a minimum of fifty acres in area, **zoned for industrial, manufacturing, office, college or university, research and development, single- and multi-family residential** with recreational facilities on a parcel containing 25 acres or more, and accessory uses, having or proposing more than one (1) building (whether or not buildings are connected by atrium or other type of common area), which is designed in a unified manner and which has common facilities, such as private interior motor vehicle ways and open space for use by occupants and invitees of the park. [Amended effective 10-26-2001; 12-27-2002; 11-27-2009]

**APPLICATION STATUS:** The applicant submitted plans to DPW, WPCA, TMP, First District Water Dept, Fire Marshal, Health Dept., Third Taxing District and Conservation. Sign-offs have been received from First Water District, Fire Marshal, Building & Health Dept as of the writing of this report. No adverse impacts are anticipated from Conservation, as the development is more than 50' away from inland wetlands. The staff recommended that the

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applicant reach out to neighboring property owners and to the East Norwalk neighborhood prior to the public hearing and a meeting was held on August 25 with the ENNA board.

Link to plans & reports for 10 Norden Place: <https://www.norwalkct.org/2021/10-Norden-Place>

A public hearing is required for this new special permit application.

Additional information is needed prior to scheduling the public hearing on this application.

**STAFF COMMENTS:** The following is a summary of the modifications to the plan needed prior to a public hearing:

- Operations Plan is needed to provide more detail on the proposed new use and to assess the number of employees, the total number of trucks/delivery vehicles to be stored, the amount of truck traffic projected on a daily and weekly basis and to confirm the number/type/size of vehicles to be used
- A Zoning location survey (ZLS) for the entire 10 Norden Place property must be submitted to confirm compliance with zoning; the ZLS should show the size and use of all buildings (GSF), show active square feet devoted to each use to establish parking requirements and to show FAR, setbacks, building area, etc. Confirm that sufficient parking spaces remain available for use by valet parking service for the Data Center in the event of an emergency (see Data Ctr valet parking plan for data center management in the event of a 9/11 type emergency)
- More detailed floor plans are needed to determine how each of the tenants will use their allocated floor area and how the 21 loading doors shown on the elevation views will be allocated and used
- Low impact development/green design features The plans should be revised to add solar panels, bioswales, a green roof and permeable pavers to reduce impervious coverage and improve the quality of stormwater by slowing its flow and allowing absorption to recharge ground water
- Environmental Impact Study is needed to assess potential impacts on environment; a noise study may also be needed to reduce noise from idling trucks and loading activities
- Landscape Plan: Evergreen trees along Norden Place should be retained; if replaced new evergreen trees 10-12 ft in height are needed to screen commercial uses from residential neighborhood; reconfigured planting islands in the eastern parking lot may be too small to support the new trees as they grow; planting islands must be a minimum of 8 ft 6 inches wide X 19 ft long.