BEFORE THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

Application of Public Storage, Inc.
Square 4273, Lots 3 and 4
1600-18 Bladensburg Road, N.E.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH BURDEN OF PROOF

I. Background:

The Subject Property is located on the west side of Bladensburg Road, N.E., south of Montana Avenue, north of Mt. Olivet Road, and adjacent to Mount Olivet Cemetery. The Subject Property is zoned C-M-1 and is currently being utilized as a used-car lot.

The Applicant wishes to remove all existing improvements and construct a 3-story self-storage facility on the Subject Property. The Applicant seeks variances from 11 DCMR §§2101.1 and 2201.1 to decrease the number of required parking spaces and decrease the number of required loading berths.

The Applicant will establish through its Statement of the Applicant to be filed no fewer than fourteen days prior to the hearing on the subject application, as well as through testimony and evidence at the public hearing, that the subject application meets the burden of proof for the granting of the requested variances. In sum, the use is classified for zoning purposes as a "warehouse" but is not a typical warehouse operation. It will be a self-storage facility with individual storage rooms ranging from 5 ft. x 5 ft. to 10 ft. x 30 ft., for personal storage of household or business goods. Through its experience with similar facilities around the country, the Applicant will show that the amount of parking that is actually needed for the facility is much less than the zoning requirement, and the loading area provided is sufficient to meet the needs of patrons using the storage facility. A preliminary summary of how the application meets the required burden of proof follows.

II. Burden of Proof:

In order to obtain approval of the requested variance, the Applicant must show that: 1) the subject property is affected by an extraordinary or exceptional situation or condition; 2) strict application of the Zoning Regulations will result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulty to the Applicant; and 3) relief can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent, purpose and integrity of the zone plan as embodied in the Zoning Regulations and Map. The Applicant proposes to meet its burden as follows:

BZA
Case No. 17165
Exhibit No. 5

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17165
EXHIBIT NO. 5

A. Extraordinary or Exceptional Condition:

The Subject Property is triangular in shape, with approximately 333 feet of frontage along Bladensburg Road to the east, and with the other two sides measuring approximately 234 feet on the north side, and 351 feet on the west side. Bounding the Subject Property are Mount Olivet Cemetery to the west, Bladensburg Road to the east, and a commercial taxicab establishment to the north. Thus, the Applicant has no opportunity to acquire additional land to square off the Subject Property in order to make it more efficient in terms of site plan and building layout.

The Applicant intends to construct its storage facility on the northern-most section of the site, which is the deepest part of the site and can accommodate a more regular building footprint. The remaining southern portion of the site will be utilized for parking and loading. However, due to the configuration of this portion of the site, such area is insufficient to provide the required number of parking spaces or the number of loading berths.

B. Strict Application Would Result in a Practical Difficulty to the Owner:

Based upon the shape and configuration of the property, the strict application of the Zoning Regulations would impose a practical difficulty on the Applicant. The Applicant proposes to construct a self-storage facility measuring 80,121 square feet of gross floor area (2.13 FAR). This is well below the maximum permitted density on the site. The self-storage facility is classified for zoning purposes as a "warehouse". A warehouse of this size requires 27 parking spaces, plus one 30 ft. loading berth, with a 100 sq. ft. loading platform, and a 55 ft. loading berth, with a 200 sq. ft. loading platform. Due to the irregular shape of the open area at the south of the building, it is not possible to include all of the required parking and all of the required loading in this area. This area of the site is bounded by Bladensburg Road and Mt. Olivet Cemetery, and it is not possible for the Applicant to expand this portion of the site in order to accommodate all of the required parking and loading. In order to comply with the requirements to the maximum extent possible, the Applicant has included 11 full-size parking spaces, including one handicapped space.

C. No Detriment to the Public Good Nor Impairment to the Intent, Purpose and Integrity of the Zone Plan:

Relief from the strict application of the parking and loading regulations can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good, and without substantially impairing the intent, purpose or integrity of the zone plan. A self-storage facility, while classified as a warehouse for zoning purposes, does not operate like a typical warehouse. The number of parking and loading spaces required for a self-storage facility is far less than for a typical industrial warehouse. The building will include 556 individual storage units on three floors. All units are accessed via corridors measuring 5 ft. wide. Eighty-five percent (85%) of those storage units measure anywhere between 5 ft. x 5 ft. and 10 ft. x 15 ft., which is smaller than a typical one-car garage. The remaining fifteen percent (15%) of the storage units measure between 10 ft. x 20 ft. and 10 ft. x 30 ft. Thus, there is no large open storage area requiring large trucks.

The number of parking spaces required by the Zoning Regulations is not necessary for this establishment since patrons of the storage facility typically do not frequent the facility more than a few times a year. Applicant also has statistics from its other facilities, in similar areas, which indicate that the provision of 11 parking spaces at a facility of this size is more than adequate to meet the needs of patrons of the storage facility. Because the parking supply will be sufficient to meet the parking demand at this site, the proposal is consistent with the intent, purpose and integrity of the zone plan.

Moreover, the loading berth provided by the Applicant is sufficient for the intended use of the Subject Property. Unlike typical warehouse buildings in industrial zones, the proposed self-storage facility will primarily be utilized by individuals needing to store small, personal household or business items in the storage units. Experience has shown that people who store their belongings in the small storage units typically use small vehicles which do not necessitate the size and quantity of loading berths required. These patrons generally use cars, station wagons, SUVs or small vans, and not the large trucks envisioned by the Zoning Regulations. If a larger vehicle is used, there is an area on site which conforms to the size requirement for a service/delivery loading space, for the parking and unloading of such vehicles.

1500603_v5