

Docket Item #13  
SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2007-0110

Planning Commission Meeting  
December 4, 2007

**ISSUE:** Consideration of a request for a special use permit for a temporary sales/information trailer.

**STAFF:** Jeffrey Farner, Development, Division Chief  
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**APPLICANT:** Van Metre Residential Investments LLC  
by M. Catharine Puskar, attorney

**LOCATION:** 1023 Duke Street

**ZONE:** CL/Commercial Low

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SUP#2007-0110  
1023 Duke Street  
Temporary Sales Trailer



## I. OVERVIEW

### A. REQUEST

The applicant is requesting a special use permit for the operation of a temporary sales and information trailer located at 1023 Duke Street. The sales trailer is intended for the 58 unit residential development that is currently under construction 2 blocks west at 1300 Duke Street. The project at 1300 Duke Street was approved by the Planning Commission in January 2006 under DSP # 2005-0016 and a condition of approval permitted a temporary sales trailer subject to the approval of the Director of Planning and Zoning. However, given that the proposed location for the sales trailer is not on site or immediately adjacent to the site, the proposal requires approval of a special use permit.

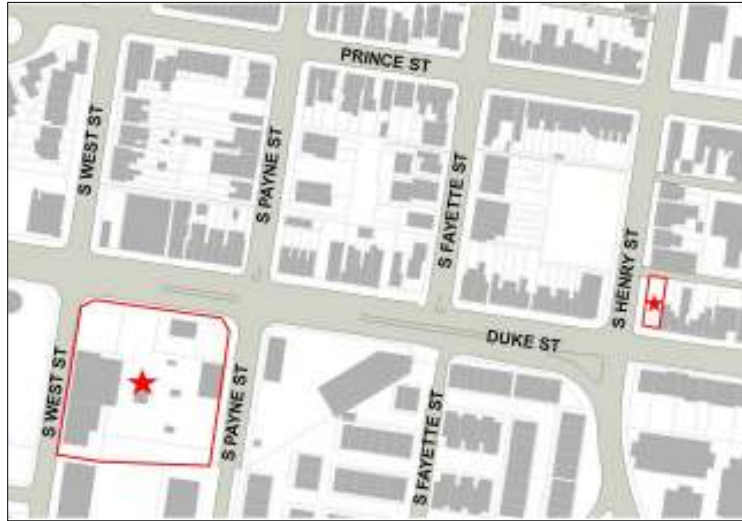


Figure 1: Location of Development Site and Proposed Trailer Site

Generally, sales trailers are placed on the site or in close proximity to the development it supports. With the 1300 Duke Street project, the underground garage encompasses most of the site, which means construction activity is occurring on the entire property and no room is available for a sales trailer to be located on site. West of the site across West Street is the Shiloh Baptist Church and parking lot. This site has already received approval for a parking reduction, leaving no additional parking spaces available for a temporary trailer and customer parking. East of the site across Payne Street is the Fannon Oil property, which still operates as an oil distributor. Locating a trailer on the adjoining property is not feasible given the nature of the site and business. The applicant has stated that they have explored locating the sales office within office space in the area for the temporary sales use, but have been unsuccessful in finding an appropriate location that would meet their needs. Therefore, they are requesting approval of a temporary trailer at the northeast corner of Duke Street and South Henry Street.

### B. SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposed site for the temporary sales trailer is one lot of record with approximately 32 feet of frontage on Duke Street and 88 feet of frontage on South Henry Street, for a total lot area of 2,743 sq. ft. The site is currently owned by Coal Yard, LLC and is a vacant lot. The property owner has agreed to allow Van



Metre the use of the property to operate the temporary sales trailer. Access to the property is from an existing curb cut for an alley off of South Henry Street at the north end of the site (Makeley Alley).

The surrounding area is occupied by a mix of residential, office, and commercial uses. To the north, across the alley, to the west, across South Henry Street, and to the south, across Duke Street are office and commercial uses. Immediately east of the site is a residential use, with office use interspersed through the remainder of the block.

**C. PROPOSAL**

The proposed trailer anticipated to be on the site approximately 1 ½ years. The proposed temporary sales trailer will be used daily as a sales office by one or two Van Metre employees, providing potential homeowners with information on the project.

Hours of Operation:	Daily – 10:00AM - 7:00PM
Number of Customers:	5-10 per day
Employees:	1 Monday – Friday, 2 Saturday – Sunday
Noise:	Noise generated will be general office noise that will be confined within the trailer. The only exterior noise will be vehicles arriving and exiting the property.
Trash/Litter:	Office paper will be generated - approximately one cubic yard per week. Trash will be collected once per week.

## II. STAFF ANALYSIS

### A. CIRCULATION

The proposed site for the temporary sales trailer is in an area that has several circulation constraints. South Henry Street, which is the street the site is accessed from, is a one-way street going south. Driving east on Duke Street past the development site, a driver will not be able to make a left turn at South Henry to get to the trailer. Additionally, Prince Street, which is one street north of Duke Street, is also one way going east. A driver coming from the south will have to cross Prince Street, turn left onto King Street and left again onto South Henry Street.



Figure 3: Circulation

Staff was initially concerned with the location of the temporary trailer at this intersection and the temptation for a driver to want to make a left into oncoming one-way traffic. However, the applicant anticipates most of their visitors will come from the beltway and they will be directed north on South Patrick Street, west on King Street, and then south on South Henry Street. The applicant will provide very detailed directions and maps on their website, which City Staff will review, to help get visitors to the site. For visitors going east on Duke past the site, the applicant has agreed to have copies of directions and maps for any people that stop at the site looking for more information. Signage will not be permitted on Duke Street or at the portion of the structure closest to the intersection. This will require the applicant to have detailed directions and reduce the potential for a driver to pass the site and want to turn in. In addition, while the existing alley is narrow, the proposed paved parking will widen the alley

### B. PARKING

According to Section 8-200 (A)(18) of the Zoning Ordinance, an office use in Parking District 1 requires one parking space for every 500 square feet. The 768 square foot temporary sales trailer would require a minimum of two off-street parking spaces. The applicant is providing three off-street parking spaces (two standard spaces and one handicap space) to be located to the front of the sales trailer for customers. Two additional off-street



Figure 4: Off-Site Parking Lot

parking spaces across South Henry Street have been reserved during the week and seven spaces are reserved on the weekend. Employees will park in these spaces to make the on-site spaces available to customers. The applicant will add detailed directions to this parking area in the event all three on-site spaces are occupied when an additional customer comes to the trailer.

### C. STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

This corner of the Duke Street/South Henry Street intersection is the only corner without a complete streetscape. There is a brick sidewalk along Duke Street, but no sidewalk is in place along South Henry Street from the corner to the alley entrance. With this application, staff is recommending that the applicant install a brick sidewalk along South Henry Street with street trees. Trees and other landscaping are also recommended along Duke Street in front of the trailer. The installation of this streetscape will continue to benefit the City after the temporary sales trailer is removed.



Figure 5: Lack of Sidewalk on South Henry St.

### D. COMPATIBILITY WITH ADJACENT BUILDINGS

There has been some concern about locating a trailer at the corner of two well traveled roads. However, the applicant is proposing an architectural shell to surround the trailer on three sides (north, south, and west) to screen the view of the trailer. The architectural shell will be designed to be compatible with the buildings on either side of the property.

## III. RECOMENDATION

Staff recommends **approval** of the request for a special use permit for a temporary sales trailer.

STAFF: Faroll Hamer, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;  
Jeffrey Farnar, Development Division Chief; and  
Katy Parker, Urban Planner.

#### IV. CONDITIONS

Staff recommends **approval** subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the following conditions:

1. The special use permit shall only be granted to the applicant or to any corporation in which the applicant has a controlling interest. (P&Z)
2. The hours of operation for the sales trailer shall be limited to between 10:00AM - 7:00PM daily. The applicant shall post the hours of operation at the entrance of the trailer. (P&Z)
3. The temporary sales trailer and the asphalt installed for the parking lot shall be removed prior to issuance of the final occupancy permit for the development project at 1300 Duke Street (approved by DSP 2005-0016). (P&Z)
4. The applicant shall provide a plot plan that includes the following:
  - a. A 14 foot wide brick sidewalk shall be installed from the existing curb cut on South Henry Street and to the existing brick sidewalk on Duke Street. The sidewalk shall consist of 4 ft. x 10 ft. wide tree wells and a 10 ft. wide unobstructed sidewalk. The sidewalks shall be installed prior to certificate of occupancy for the trailer.
  - b. The existing planter boxes on South Henry Street shall be removed.
  - c. The applicant shall plant two 2.5" caliper street trees in standard City tree wells along South Henry Street.
  - d. Additional planting beds shall be installed along the structure facing Duke and South Henry Streets. The beds shall contain ornamental trees, shrubs, and seasonal color to the satisfaction of the Director of RP&CA.
  - e. Areas that are not hardscape or in use as planting beds shall be sodded.
  - f. All landscaping shall be maintained in good condition and replaced as needed.
  - g. The applicant shall be required to control weeds within 12 feet of their front property line in compliance with City Ord. No. 2698, 6/12/82, Sec. 2; Ord. No. 2878, 11/12/83, Sec. 1 (P&Z) (RP&CA)
5. Freestanding signage shall be prohibited. (P&Z)
6. Prior to issuance of an occupancy permit for the temporary trailer, the applicant shall work with P&Z staff to develop detailed maps and directions which shall be posted on the applicant's website and available in the construction trailer at the 1300 Duke Street development site. (P&Z)
7. The applicant shall contact the Community Relations Unit of the Alexandria Police Department at 703 838-4520 regarding a Larceny Awareness program for all employees and a security survey for the trailer as soon as it is in place. (Police)



8. The Director of P&Z shall review the special use permit after it has been operational for six months, and shall docket the matter for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council if (a) there have been documented violations of the permit conditions which were not corrected immediately, constitute repeat violations or which create a direct and immediate adverse zoning impact on the surrounding community; (b) the director has received a request from any person to docket the permit for review, or (c) the director has determined that there are problems with the operation of the use and that new or revised conditions are needed. (P&Z)

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Staff Note: In accordance with section 11-506(c) of the zoning ordinance, construction or operation shall be commenced and diligently and substantially pursued within 18 months of the date of granting of a special use permit by City Council or the special use permit shall become void.



#### IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

##### **Transportation & Environmental Services:**

C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line.

##### **Code Enforcement:**

R-1 The proposed trailer will be located on property belonging to another owner. The applicant shall submit authorization from the property owner permitting the use of the temporary sales trailer on the subject property.

C-1 The proposed construction shall conform with the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code.

C-2 Handicapped accessibility shall be provided to the trailer.

C-3 The trailer shall bear a seal showing compliance with the Virginia Industrialized Building Code.

C-4 A building permit is required for the proposed work. Submit five sets of drawings with the permit application.

##### **Health Department:**

F-1 No comment.