



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Planning Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Urbana Zoning Board of Appeals
FROM: Marcus Ricci, AICP, Planner II
DATE: December 11, 2020
SUBJECT: ZBA-2020-C-04: A request by James Langer, on behalf of Serionix, Inc., for a Conditional Use Permit to allow an air filter manufacturing business to operate at 302 North Broadway Avenue in the B-4, Central Business District.

Introduction

James Langer requests a conditional use permit to operate an air filter assembly facility at 302 North Broadway in the B-4, Central Business, Zoning District. The most similar use in Table V-1 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance is “Surgical, Medical, Dental and Mortuary Instruments and Supplies Manufacturing,” which is allowed in the B-4 zoning district with a conditional use permit. Mr. Langer plans to sign a lease contract with the building’s owner, Mike Hosier dba MCDJ, LLC, contingent upon zoning approval by the City.

The Urbana Zoning Board of Appeals must review the conditional use permit application and hold a public hearing. It may vote to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application. Staff recommends the Board approve the proposed conditional use permit.

Land Use and Zoning

The 95,000-square-foot property lies east of North Broadway Avenue between East University Avenue and East Water Street (Exhibit A). It is bounded on the north by Courtesy Road (vacated) and the Boneyard Creek and on the south by the Norfolk-Southern railroad. There are two buildings on the property totaling 50,000 square feet. The applicant proposes to lease approximately 16,000 square feet of the 28,000 square-foot west building; this space is currently leased by Habitat for Humanity. This portion of the property includes 29 parking spaces, enough to serve 29,000 square feet of industrial-use property. The other tenant of this building is Champaign-Urbana Adventures in Time and Space. The site was occupied from the 1930s until 2003 by Gill Athletics, a manufacturer of sports equipment.

Nearby uses include Medical Service Equipment and Broadway Food Hall (west), Boost Mobile and Courtesy Cleaning (north), Courtesy Motel and The Point Fencing Club & School (east), and Save-A-Lot grocery (south). The property has been zoned B-4, Central Business, since 2018 (Exhibit B).¹ It was zoned D - Light Industrial in 1940, I-1 - Light Industrial from 1950-1978, IN - Industrial from 1979-2013, and IN-1 - Light Industrial/Office from 2013-2018.² The 2005 Comprehensive Plan designates the site with a future land use of “Central Business” (Exhibit C) The following table identifies the current land use, zoning, and future land use designations of the area.

¹ Plan Case 2329-M-18 rezoned this property and three properties along Green Street to B-4, Central Business.

² In 1979, the two Light and Heavy Industrial zoning districts were merged into a single industrial zoning district. In 2013, this single industrial zoning district was split back out into IN-1 Light Industrial/Office, and IN-2 Heavy Industrial.

Table 1. Zoning and Land Use

Location	Zoning	Existing Land Use	Future Land Use
Site	B-4, Central Business	Warehouse	Central Business
North	B-4, Central Business	Retail, Service	Central Business
South	B-4, Central Business	Railroad, Grocery	Central Business
East	B-3, General Business	Group Fitness, Motel	Central Business
West	B-4, Central Business	Retail, Food Hall	Central Business

Discussion

In accordance with Zoning Ordinance Section V-1.B., the Zoning Administrator has determined that the proposed use is most similar to a “Surgical, Medical, Dental and Mortuary Instruments and Supplies Manufacturing” which is a permitted use in the B-4 zoning district. The conditional use permit procedures are meant to ensure that the proposed use is consistent with the intentions of the B-4 zoning district:

The B-4, Central Business District is intended to provide an area for the focus of the city, in which the full range of commercial and business uses may locate in a limited area of high intensity uses, with the appropriate forms of physical development at a high density.

The applicant currently operates from a smaller, 4,000-square-foot suite in the Lincoln Commerce Centre office building at 730 Killarney Street, Urbana, which has no space for significant expansion. The applicant is currently subletting additional storage space from a neighboring tenant in the building. Activities at this facility include assembly of finished air filters, storage of air filter components, associated office and financial activities, and a limited amount of research.

Proposed Use

The business focuses on producing higher-end air filters. Staff visited the current assembly facility on December 9, 2020. The current manufacturing process relies on hand assembly of filter media and cardboard frames using a residential-grade glue spraygun. No heavy machinery is used, so noise is minimal. Little waste is produced, and no noxious fumes are generated.

The larger facility would allow the applicant to increase production levels of their current lines of air filters. Process upgrades are planned including using some pneumatically-driven machinery. Some assembly steps would still be performed by hand. Noise, waste, and odor levels should remain low or nonexistent. The applicant wants to increase research and development activities which will also allow them to expand their target audience to more-specialized sectors including medical and aerospace (Exhibit D - Application). The property’s former use as a light manufacturing facility makes this an ideal site for the proposed use:

- easy access to major thoroughfares for materials delivery and product collection
- sufficient parking for employees
- large, flexible, open spaces provide for storage and assembly
- multiple overhead doors and dock bays for easy delivery and collection

The applicant proposes to start with a single day shift of six to ten employees. As the operation scales up, this shift would be offset into early morning and late morning shifts to optimize efficiency, which would also distribute employee traffic across a longer timeframe. A later shift may be added with around four employees. The building would be renovated with improvements to the HVAC system; upgrades to the bathrooms, offices and conference spaces; and modernizations to the overall aesthetics of the building. Roughly half of

the space would be used for storage of materials and finished product, one-quarter for assembly activities, and the remaining space would be split between engineering/prototyping and office work (Exhibit D – Floorplan).

Requirements for a Conditional Use Permit

According to § VII-2 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, an application for a Conditional Use Permit shall demonstrate the following requirements shown in italics.

1. That the proposed use is conducive to the public convenience at that location.

The proposed air filter manufacturing facility is conducive to the public convenience at this location because of its access to major thoroughfares for employee and delivery traffic, and to bicycle lanes and mass transit for employee traffic. This site has hosted industrial and assembly manufacturing since the 1930s, and is well-integrated into the fabric of the downtown business district. The proposed use will not require any new or expanded infrastructure, minimizing inconvenience to neighboring businesses. There is sufficient parking for employees. No additional parking will be required.

2. That the proposed use is designed, located, and to be operated so that it will not be unreasonably injurious or detrimental to the district in which it shall be located, or otherwise injurious to the public welfare.

The proposed air filter manufacturing facility will not be injurious or detrimental to the B-4 district, or to the public welfare. Staff levels are projected to start at less than 10 and increase to less than 20; this is much less than the 60 employees Gill Athletics employed at its peak. Later shifts would be offset to decrease traffic. Product components themselves are not noxious, and the assembly process results in little noise or waste and no noxious fumes. Semi-trailer and parcel truck deliveries are anticipated monthly or bimonthly. Daily pickups are by smaller services like US Postal Service and FedEx.

3. That the proposed use conforms to the applicable regulations and standards of, and preserves the essential character of, the district in which it shall be located, except where such regulations and standards are modified by § VII-3.

The existing building complies with the development regulations of the B-4 district. The proposed air filter manufacturing activities would comply with the regulations of the B-4 district. No expansion is planned to the building; all renovations would be to the building's interior. The proposed air filter manufacturer would be relatively quiet and generate little traffic, preserving the essential character of the district.

Consideration

According to Zoning Ordinance § XII-2, the Zoning Board of Appeals shall determine whether the reasons set forth in the application, and the evidence adduced during the public hearing, justify the granting of the conditional use permit, and whether the proposed use will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Ordinance, and will not be unreasonably injurious or detrimental to the district in which it shall be located, or otherwise injurious or detrimental to the public welfare.

In addition, the Zoning Board of Appeals may also impose such additional conditions and requirements on the operation of the proposed use as are appropriate or necessary for the public health, safety, and welfare, and to carry out the purposes of the ordinance, including but not limited to the following:

1. Regulate the location, extent, and intensity of such use;
2. Require the screening of such use by means of fences walls or vegetation;
3. Stipulate a required minimum lot size;
4. Regulate vehicular access and volume;

5. Require conformance to health, safety, and sanitation requirements as necessary;
6. Increase the required yards; and
7. Any other conditions deemed necessary to affect the purposes of this ordinance.

Summary of Findings

1. James Langer proposes to operate an air filter manufacturing facility at 302 North Broadway in the B-4, Central Business, Zoning District.
2. The Urbana Zoning Ordinance allows Surgical, Medical, Dental and Mortuary Instruments and Supplies Manufacturing in the B-4 zoning district with a conditional use permit.
3. The proposed use is conducive to the public convenience because the site has good access to major thoroughfares, bicycle lanes, and mass transit to accommodate light employee and delivery traffic, without the burden of long-term traffic increases generated by other central business uses.
4. The proposed use would not be a detriment to the B-4 district or the public welfare because it would be a lower-intensity industrial use than the former operation that occupied the site for 70 years. It would generate little traffic, noise, and no noxious odors.
5. The proposed use is consistent with the applicable regulations and standards of, and preserves the essential character of, the B-4 district, as it would use the existing conforming building and would be a quiet, low-traffic, low-intensity industrial use that would integrate well in the downtown business district.

Options

The Zoning Board of Appeals has the following options in case ZBA-2020-C-04:

1. **Approve** the conditional use as submitted; or
2. **Approve the conditional use along with any additional conditions and requirements** as are appropriate or necessary for the public health, safety, and welfare, and to carry out the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance; or
3. **Deny** the conditional use as submitted.

Staff Recommendation

Based on the evidence presented in the discussion above, and without the benefit of considering additional evidence that may be presented at the public hearing, staff recommends that the Zoning Board of Appeals **APPROVE** the proposed conditional use permit in case ZBA-2020-C-04.

Exhibits: A: Location & Land Use Map
 B: Zoning Map
 C: Future Land Use Map
 D: Application
 E: Site Photos

cc: James Langer, Serionix – Applicant / Contract Tenant
 Mike Hosier, MCDJ, LLC – Property Owner

Exhibit A - Location & Land Use



Case: ZBA-2020-C-04
 Subject: Light Manufacturing Conditional Use Permit
 Location: 302 North Broadway
 Applicant: James Langer for Serionix, Inc.

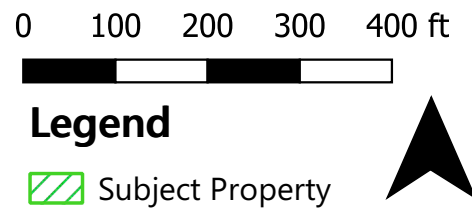
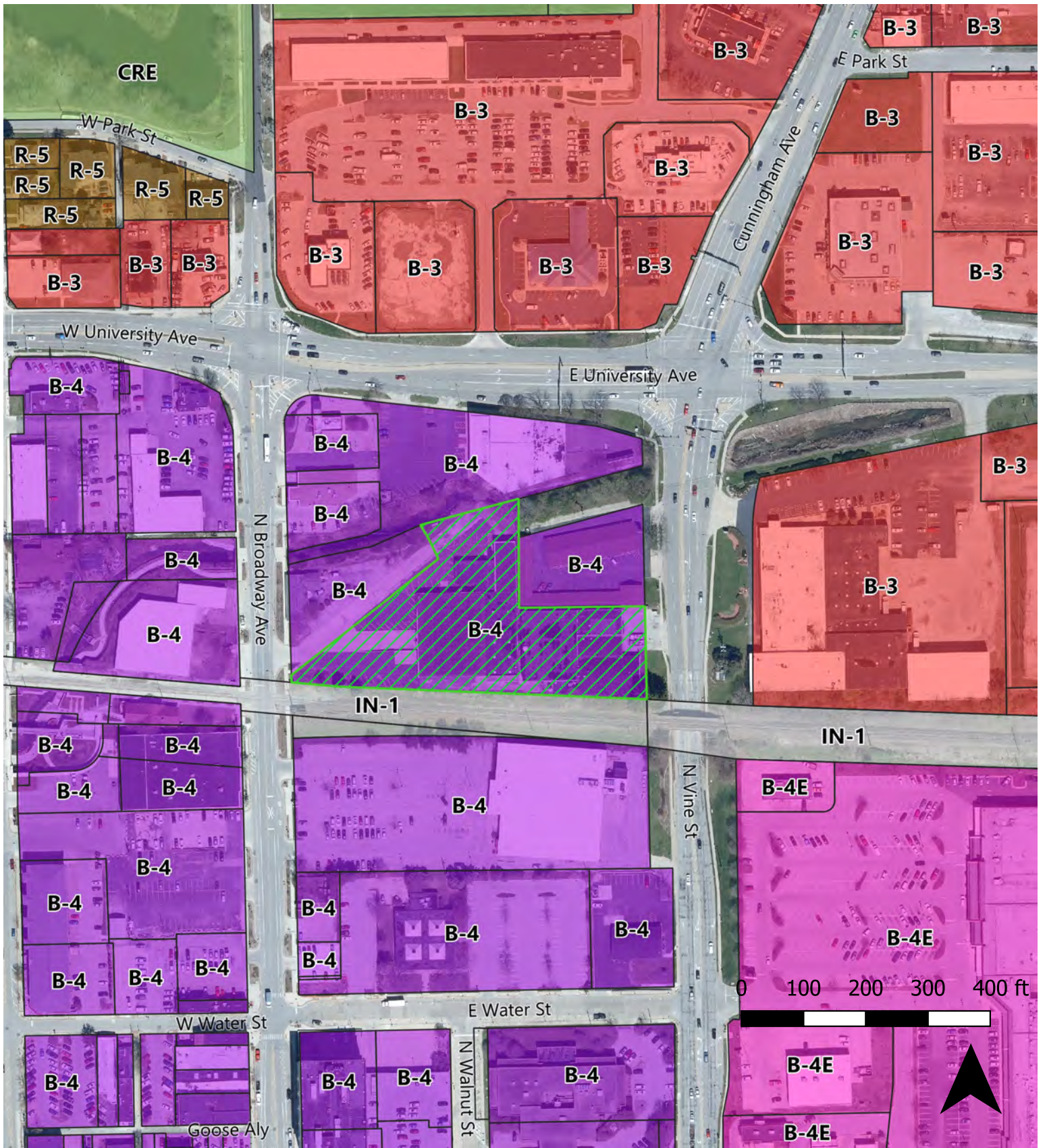


Exhibit B - Current Zoning

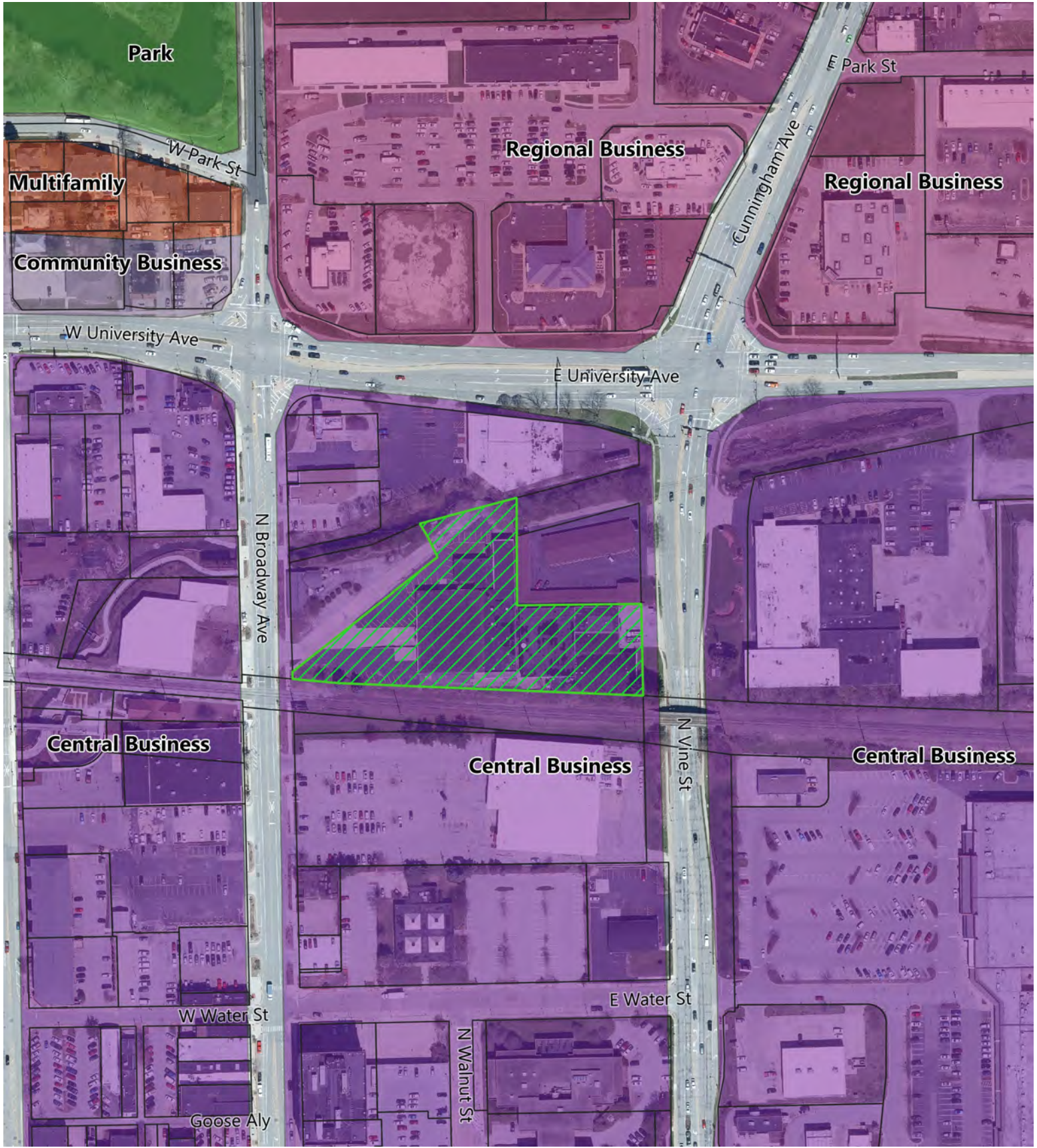


Case: ZBA-2020-C-04
 Subject: Light Manufacturing Conditional Use Permit
 Location: 302 North Broadway
 Applicant: James Langer for Serionix, Inc.

Legend

- Subject Property
- B-3
- B-4
- B-4E
- CRE
- IN-1

Exhibit C - Future Land Use



Case: ZBA-2020-C-04
Subject: Light Manufacturing Conditional Use Permit
Location: 302 North Broadway
Applicant: James Langer for Serionix, Inc.

0 100 200 300 400 ft



Legend

 Subject Property



Exhibit D - Application



Application for Conditional Use Permit

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The application fee must accompany the application when submitted for processing. Please refer to the City's website at <http://www.urbanaininois.us/fees> for the current fee associated with this application. **The Applicant is also responsible for paying the cost of legal publication fees.** Estimated costs for these fees usually run between \$75.00 and \$225.00. The applicant will be billed separately by the News-Gazette.

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE - FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Request Filed _____ ZBA Case No. _____
Fee Paid - Check No. _____ Amount _____ Date _____

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT is requested in conformity with the powers vested in the Zoning Board of Appeals to permit the following use or construction purpose:

"Surgical, Medical, Dental and Mortuary Instruments and Supplies Manufacturing" on the property described below, and in conformity with the plans in the permit application.

1. APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of Applicant(s): James Langer, Serionix, Inc. President Phone: 651-503-3930

Address (*street/city/state/zip code*): 730 Killarney Street, Urbana, IL 61801

Email Address: jlanger@serionix.com

Property interest of Applicant(s) (*Owner, Contract Buyer, etc.*): Tenant

2. OWNER INFORMATION

Name of Owner(s): MCDJ, LLC attn: Mike Hosier

Phone: 217-369-0018

Address (*street/city/state/zip code*): 307 S. Neil, Champaign, IL 61820

Email Address: mike@rrentals.biz

Is this property owned by a Land Trust? Yes No

If yes, please attach a list of all individuals holding an interest in said Trust.

3. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Location of Subject Site: 302 N. Broadway, Urbana, IL 61801

PIN # of Location: 91-21-08-460-003

Lot Size: 2.17 acres

Current Zoning Designation: B4

Exhibit D - Application

Current Land Use (*vacant, residence, grocery, factory, etc:*

Proposed Land Use:

Legal Description (*If additional space is needed, please submit on separate sheet of paper*):

Lot 1 in Assessor's Sub of Part of the Southwest ¼ of the Southeast ¼ of Section 8-19-9, Champaign County, Illinois

4. CONSULTANT INFORMATION

Name of Architect(s): Andrew Fell

Phone: 217-363-2890

Address: 515 N. Hickory, Champaign, IL 61820

Email Address: andrewfell@comcast.net

Name of Engineers(s):

Phone:

Address (*street/city/state/zip code*): Email Address:

Name of Surveyor(s):

Address (*street/city/state/zip code*): Email Address:

Phone:

Name of Professional Site Planner(s): Address (*street/city/state/zip code*): Email Address:

Name of Attorney(s):

Phone:

Address (*street/city/state/zip code*): Email Address:

Phone:

5. REASONS FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

Explain how the proposed use is conducive to the public convenience at the location of the property.

See attached.

Exhibit D - Application

Explain how the proposed use is designed, located and proposed to be operated, so that it will not be unreasonably injurious or detrimental to the district in which it shall be located, or otherwise injurious or detrimental to the public welfare.

See attached.

Explain how the proposed use conforms to the applicable regulations and standards of, and preserves the essential character of, the district in which it shall be located (except where such regulations and standards may be modified by Section VII-3 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, 1979).


See attached.

NOTE: If additional space is needed to accurately answer any question, please attach extra pages to the application.

By submitting this application, you are granting permission for City staff to post on the property a temporary yard sign announcing the public hearing to be held for your request.

CERTIFICATION BY THE APPLICANT

I certify all the information contained in this application form or any attachment(s), document(s) or plan(s) submitted herewith are true to the best of my knowledge and belief, and that I am either the property owner or authorized to make this application on the owner's behalf.



Applicant's Signature

15 November 2020

Date

Exhibit D - Application

Explain how the proposed use is conducive to the public convenience at the location of the property.

With air filtration being a growing, green, recession-proof industry, we expect to make a long-term contribution to the vibrancy and vitality of the area, including creation of more than 50 full-time jobs near the heart of downtown Urbana.

This location is particularly beneficial for our use due to its current design including two dock doors and multiple overhead doors which provide easy access for routine deliveries and pickup, its proximity to mass transit providing a non-driving option for employees, and generally as a former manufacturing site the layout is conducive to warehousing and light assembly.

Our plan is to run a single operating shift from 8-5 initially with 6-10 employees onsite, and as the operation scales up we intend to offset shifts (e.g. 6:30-3:00 and 9:00-5:30) to optimize operational efficiency, which will also have the benefit of reducing burden on local traffic. We do not expect freight deliveries after regular business hours, but will eventually run a second shift with a lightweight crew (likely 4 or less employees). While not being overly burdensome to local traffic, we expect employment at the location to improve safety and vitality of this particular area of the city.

Explain how the proposed use is designed, located and proposed to be operated, so that it will not be unreasonably injurious or detrimental to the district in which it shall be located, or otherwise injurious or detrimental to the public welfare.

We propose to use this space in the following manner:

- 1) 55% warehouse for raw materials and finished goods*
- 2) 25% assembly of air filters from raw materials*
- 3) 10% office*
- 4) 10% mixed-use engineering/prototyping*

In establishing our operation, we anticipate investment in facility improvements including HVAC, building out bathrooms, office and conference space, and modernizing the aesthetics of the interior space (please see figures 1-3 for overview of current operation at 730 W Killarney, facility in current state at 302 N Broadway, and proposed facility improvement).

New technology development is a key aspect of our business, and although much of the current business is focused on residential air filtration, we expect to expand into higher-end markets including medical and aerospace, where our technology will provide a significant edge over incumbent products.

Exhibit D - Application

Given the nature our end-product, filter assembly is a relatively clean and quiet operation, with very minimal waste streams. Our highest volume inputs include filter media, glue, and cardboard frames, and we anticipate routine (weekly to bimonthly) LTL and full-truck deliveries of raw and finished goods. Since it does not use heavy machinery we expect noise to be minimal, and no aspect of the operation is expected to produce noticeable odors.

Our direct-fulfillment model relies on daily pickup from carriers including USPS and FedEx. We do not intend to set up retail sales at this location.

Explain how the proposed use conforms to the applicable regulations and standards of, and preserves the essential character of, the district in which it shall be located (except where such regulations and standards may be modified by Section VII-3 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, 1979).

Our operation is quiet and clean and is expected to create minimal waste streams, with no environmental emissions. As creators of a modern, green, pet-focused consumer brand in Colorfil, we intend to reflect our values and core brand promise in our engagement with employees and the community. If provided the opportunity to execute our growth plan at this location, we expect the culture/vibe/character of our operation to more closely reflect our immediate neighbors (CU Adventure and Broadway Food Hall) than it would a typical air filter manufacturing facility.

Given the facility has historically been used for manufacturing and warehousing, our proposed use is not expected to well within precedent for this location.

Exhibit D - Application



Figure 1. Photos of current operation including filter assembly, pick/pack distribution, and warehousing of raw materials such as filter media and cardboard boxes and frames.

Exhibit D - Application

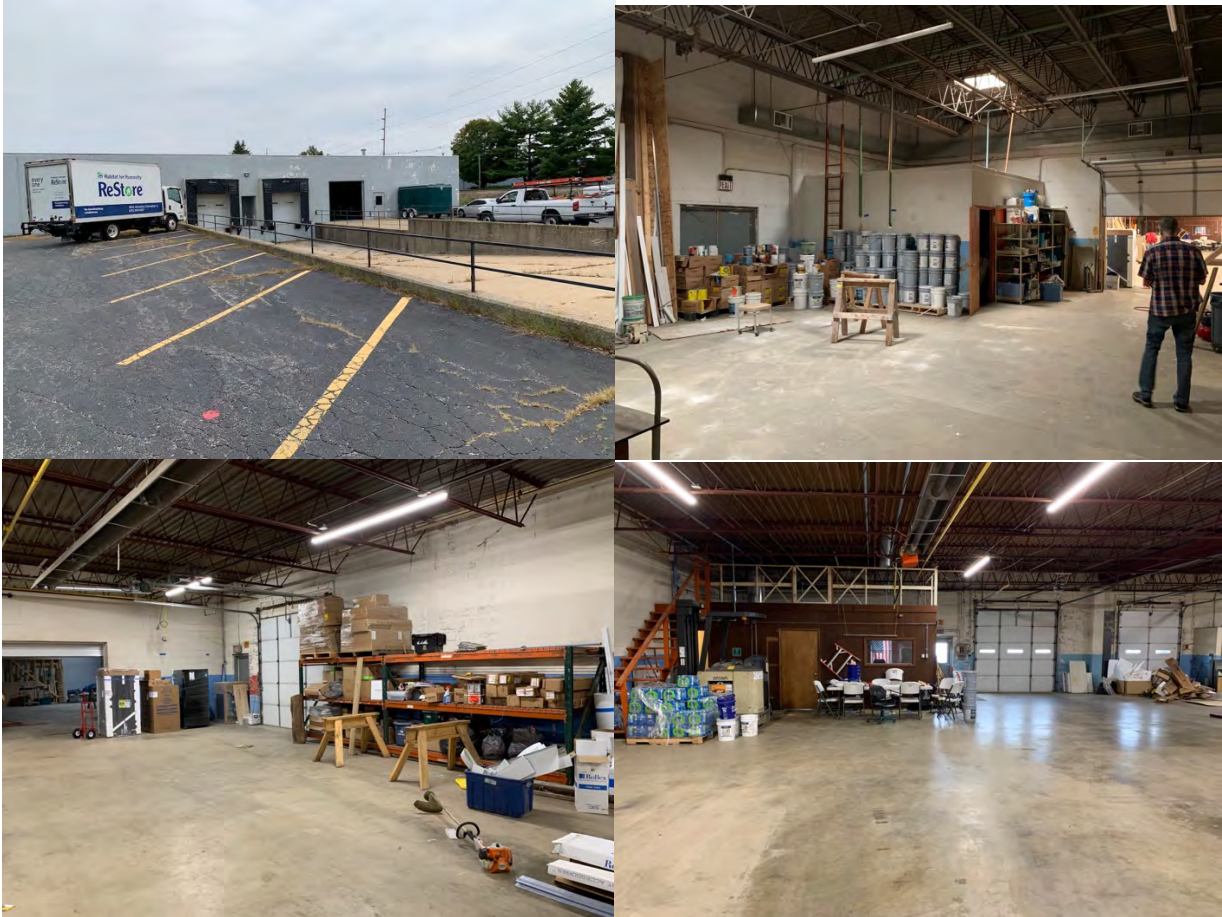


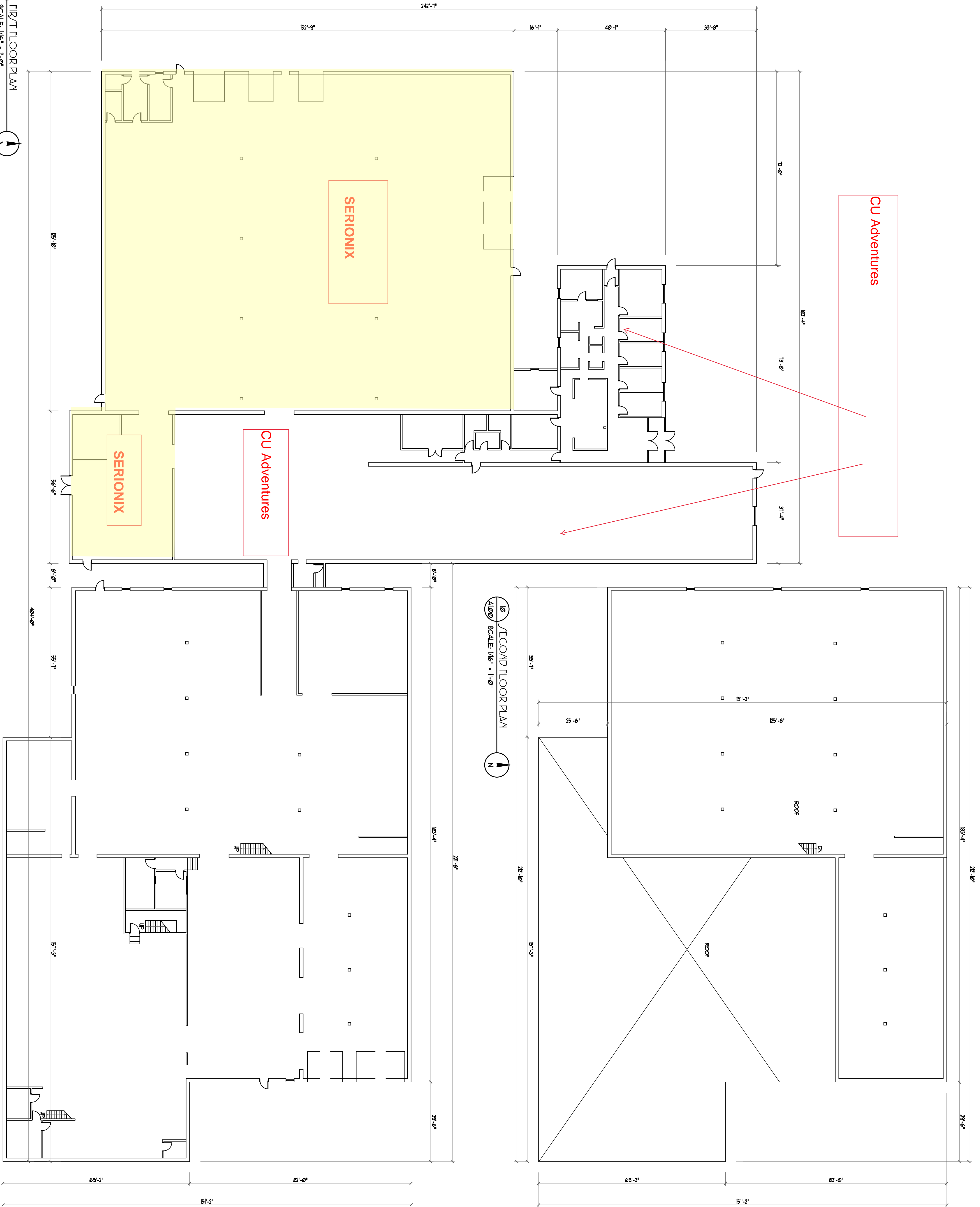
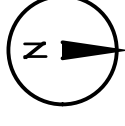
Figure 2. Photos of 302 N Broadway including exterior (showing dock doors and one of three overhead doors), and interior spaces we plan to use for engineering/mechanica/R&D, warehousing, and production.



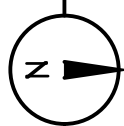
Figure 3. Architect rendering of proposed open mixed-use office concept, providing space for training, break area, office and conference, while opening seamlessly to production and warehouse floor.

Exhibit D - Application - Floor Plan

4
A1.00
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



5
A1.00
SECOND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



A1.00

400 N. BROADWAY AVENUE
INTERIOR RENOVATION

400 N. BROADWAY AVE.
URBANA, IL 61801

These drawings and specifications are the property and copyright of Andrew Fell, Architecture and Design and shall not be used or reproduced except by written agreement with the Architect. Only written dimensions shall be used. Do not scale drawings. Dimensions shall be verified on the job site. Any discrepancy shall be brought to the notice of the Architect prior to the commencement of any work.

ANDREW FELL
ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

515 NORTH HICKORY STREET, SUITE 101
CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS 61820
PHONE: 217.363.2890
WWW.ANDREWFELL.COM
EMAIL: andrewfell@comcast.net

PROJECT #17076

DATE: 25/EPT2017

REV/10/17:

Exhibit E – Site Photos



Figure 1. Looking southeast from Courtesy Road.



Figure 2. Looking northeast from Norfolk Southern railroad.



Figure 3. Looking west from inside.



Figure 4. Looking north from inside