

## Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 06/24/2020)

*This report created by the Neighborhood Planner and included with staff reports to City Boards and/or Commissions.*

Logistics	Stakeholders
<b>Project Name/Address:</b> 461 Melwood Ave	<b>Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident):</b>  Oakland Planning & Development Corporation (OPDC) City Planning Staff Applicant
<b>Parcel Number(s):</b> 26-M-56	
<b>ZDR Application Number:</b> BDA-2025-06955	
<b>Meeting Location:</b> Zoom (Virtual)	
<b>Date:</b> October 20, 2025	
<b>Meeting Start Time:</b> 5:30 PM	
<b>Applicant:</b> David Roth/ Henry Wang	<b>Approx. Number of Attendees:</b> 4
<b>Boards and/or Commissions Request(s):</b> ZBA (Zoning Board of Adjustment) - Use variance for self-storage	

### How did the meeting inform the community about the development project?

*Ex: Community engagement to-date, location and history of the site, demolition needs, building footprint and overall square footage, uses and activities (particularly on the ground floor), transportation needs and parking proposed, building materials, design, and other aesthetic elements of the project, community uses, amenities and programs.*

The applicant began by explaining the need for a use variance. The former UI – Urban Industrial zoning, which permitted self-storage, was recently changed to UC-MU (Urban Center – Mixed Use), which does not permit self-storage. It may be the case that zoning changes have leapfrog the life of the existing buildings, since this building in its bones is best suited for storage use. Due to the terrain, Gold Way is located one level above the frontage along Melwood Ave. The unique history of the building suggests that its original use was a car dealership and used for car storage/showroom. The owner has used the building as office space and business storage for over twenty years. The applicant cited the tall apartment buildings being developed next door as compatible uses, since the small units have very little space for storage.

The applicant presented the site plan and floor plans to show how the storage units would be laid out and configured. While the size of each storage unit may change with final design, they will likely be five by five feet. There will be three separate entrances, with a common area hallway and stair to second floor parking area, which is also existing. There is also an existing loading space on site. This is a compatible use and low impact, and we find it to be a welcomed addition to the neighborhood.

### Input and Responses

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
Can you tell us about the construction of the building?	It is a common construction steel building with internal beams and a masonry exterior, along with a concrete floor, which is waterproof.

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>I am curious about the building's adaptability for a future use, in a case where it is redeveloped for changing needs for the area.</p>	<p>While I am sensitive to the idea of buildings exhibiting a loose fit and long life for adaptability. This building has unique constraints due to topography and being landlocked that limits its potential uses, other than storage. If redeveloped for housing or commercial in the future, the site could work well to accommodate a two-level parking structure with a multi-story structure above, but the reuse of the existing structure would not be feasible.</p>
<p>A question for DCP staff: can you provide a rationale for why the new zoning (UC-MU) does not permit self-storage?</p>	<p>DCP Staff: The UC-MU zoning prioritizes higher density housing and employment uses within the urban core of the city, taking advantage of proximity to high frequency transit and Oakland's major economic drivers. Warehouse/storage uses are not the highest and best use of space in this area. Self-storage tends to be less active on a daily basis and typically accessed by cars and moving trucks, while walkability and the use of car-alternatives are promoted in this district. The UC-MU promotes active ground level uses, such as storefronts, while storage spaces by their nature tend to be closed off to the street and public realm. The UC-MU is not unique in prohibiting self-storage, since this use is only permitted in a few industrial and highway commercial zones. Neighboring districts along the Baum/Centre corridor, such as LNC and UNC, similarly do not permit this use.</p>

**Planner completing report:** Christian Umbach, Senior Planner