



1. Nature of Proposed Use:

The proposed use is for New City Neighbors to use the space at 1115 Leonard St NE as its base of operations for its program services. New City Neighbors is a faith-based community development organization that has operated in Grand Rapids' Creston Neighborhood since 2007. We are currently located on the property of 4th Reformed Church, including a 3 acre urban farm. We work with a diverse community of urban youth from 1st to 12th grade. Our mission is to empower youth to reach their full potential. We believe that when children's minds, bodies, and souls are nourished, they flourish. We fill two gaps in our neighborhood – a gap in youth employment for low income youth, and a gap in access to healthy, fresh vegetables in the Creston neighborhood. Our programs include education activities, an urban farm social enterprise, and a cafe social enterprise. The space is well suited to host these programs.

The existing 1890s historic farmhouse on the property will be preserved and repurposed. The ground floor will be handicap accessible and have two large program rooms, two handicap accessible bathrooms, a handicap accessible office and a commercial kitchen. The second floor will have additional meeting space and employee offices and storage.

The commercial kitchen will be used by our cafe social enterprise to host pop-up cafe events that occur weekly through the warmer months of the year. Typically 10-15 events a season. The main purpose of the enterprise is to train youth in the farm-to-table industry. One of the main products sold by the cafe is wood fired pizzas and we will install an outdoor woodfired pizza oven to the east of the farmhouse. The kitchen will be licensed by the health department.

The one acre of open land behind the property will be used as an urban farm/community garden. The produce grown by the farm is sold to neighboring residents through a Community Supported Agriculture program where customers purchase a share of the farm's produce and then pick it up weekly throughout the year. 25% of produce grown also goes to surrounding neighborhood food pantries. Revenue earned supports our youth employee wages. Equipment used on the farm portion will be small scale and similar in size to residential lawn equipment.

The building will typically only be used 7am-6pm Monday-Friday and will be used by 5 full time New City Neighbors employees. The 8 spaces provided will accommodate their needs and traffic during these times will be minimal.

Farm shares and the pop up cafe typically occur Thursdays from 12pm-7pm May-December. Farm Share pick up/Cafe days will be the busiest use of the property. Typically 100 customers will pass through the property during the Thursday timeframe. 8 off street parking spaces will be provided, but will likely be inadequate at that particular time. There is ample street parking available for these events along the whole length of the property on Herrick so existing residents will not have their parking disrupted during these events.



The building is also perfectly located blocks away from the two schools we most serve through our programs--Wellspring Preparatory High School and Kent Hills Elementary. The bus stop used by Wellspring Preparatory students is in the front of the property and this will be the perfect space to connect the youth of Creston to the services we provide.

2. Site and Building Layout:

The existing buildings will all remain. The current residential home will be modified to include a handicap accessible ramp to the east of the property and will be handicap accessible on the first floor. The three current outbuildings will be used to store farm/gardening equipment. The parking lot will be located to the east of these buildings and will include 8 parking spaces. A new 20ft. X 40ft. greenhouse will be located behind the current outbuildings along the east side of the property (pictures of build type are attached). The end walls of the structure will be made of durable polycarbonate, the sides will be two layer 6mil greenhouse quality poly. Sides will be flexible to allow them to roll up for proper ventilation.

The one acre rear of the property will be used for urban farming/community gardening. The space will be broken up into 3 50X100 ft. crop blocks. An edible landscape hedge will be used to buffer gardening from the sidewalk and adjacent properties.

Adjacent land is largely commercial. The south most adjacent property to the east is a commercial gas station. To the north of the gas station and along the east of the property is a small commercial mall that includes a Bigby Coffee with drive thru and a Jet's pizza. To the north above the Jet's pizza is an insurance agency. The north most portion of the property is adjacent to 3 residential homes. The vast majority of activities and all buildings and parking will be located adjacent to commercial properties.

Standard #1: Master Plan/Zoning Ordinance:

The proposed use is consistent with the city's Master Plan. The use will preserve and repurpose a historic home, provide economic opportunities for a diverse population of young people, and preserve green space. The building use is in keeping with NOS zoning as it transitions commercial use nicely to low density residential use with offices being located on Leonard and community garden space being located behind. The use of the acre of land behind for farming/community garden is in keeping with LDR which allows community gardening. In addition, the proposed greenhouse is significantly distanced from any residential property. The neighbors to the southeast along the property line are all commercial use and the majority of activity will occur there.



Standard #2: Site Plan Review Standards:

The proposed use will locate 8 off street parking locations, and will include handicap access to the public portion of the first floor of New City Neighbors' offices, including two accessible bathrooms. Parking lot will retain water on site and will include porous patio pavers for the majority of the parking area. Field use will be buffered from the street by a hedge, and the existing tree canopy along the east property line will be preserved.

Standard #3: Neighborhood Effects:

- a. The proposed use will transition the neighborhood from commercial use along Leonard and Fuller street. The former residential home located on Leonard will be preserved and repurposed for New City Neighbor's youth and social enterprise programming. The one acre of green space behind the property will respect residential neighbors by being used as a farming/community garden space.
- b. New parking will be located behind existing outbuildings to buffer from residential properties. Handicap accessibility and any outdoor cooking will be located to the southeast of the property adjacent to an existing commercial gas station and over 200ft. away from neighboring residential properties. The community garden area will be buffered from the street by a green hedge of blueberry bushes and flower plantings.
- c. The farm/community garden will not use any fertilizing products that admit significant odors (for example no animal manures will be used). Equipment used on the farm will be small scale and will only be used during business hours. Noise levels and frequency of use will be similar to common residential lawn equipment use. Pesticides are rarely used in the farm/community garden, if pesticides are used they will be certified organic and non-toxic. They will be applied by a backpack sprayer and will not drift to neighboring properties. We will not use any weed killers. The three existing outbuildings on the property will nicely contain all farm equipment so there is no visual clutter. Outdoor cooking will be no more than one day a week, and will be conducted away from residential properties.
- d. Residents currently use the property as a backdoor cut through to the back end of the commercial properties on Leonard. The farm/community garden space will be set up to continue to allow pedestrians to use the property in this manner. In addition, the hedges along the walkway on Herrick will be an edible landscape and open to free use by the public.



Standard #4. Environment:

The proposed use will maintain one acre of green space for the neighborhood by utilizing it as an urban farm/community garden as opposed to developing it. We will also preserve all existing trees that are not unhealthy/dangerous.

Standard #5. Public Facilities:

- a. We will provide handicap access to the public portion of the office building and two public restrooms in addition to off street parking.
- b. The proposed use will benefit the surrounding neighborhood by offering first time jobs to young people. Employed youth will be less of a social expense (less prone to need social services or participate in crime) and instead will be contributing members of the community.
- c. The proposed use will abide with all current city and state laws and ordinances.

Standard #6. Sale and/or Consumption of Alcohol.

No Alcohol will be sold or consumed by the public.