

January 22, 2013

Attachment B

Billings City Council
210 North 27th Street
Billings, MT 59101

Dear Council Members;

Thank you for your consideration of our request for variance from city code sections 6-1208(i)(4) and 6-1208(h)(5). I would like to take this opportunity to clarify the rationale behind our application for variance.

The existing conditions on site are not ideal and are the result of the property being built in 1974. At the time, the intersection of Grand and 24th was at the far west end of Billings and did not have the traffic volume it experiences today. The design easily accommodated the traffic the bank generated at the time and did not cause any traffic issues. Fast forward 40 years....couple the increase in bank customer activity with the traffic volume at the intersection and we have less than ideal circumstances.

Through our planned remodel we are shifting the majority of our ingress traffic, generated by the drive-up and ATM, much further away from the intersection. Additionally, we are providing for significantly more on-site stacking that will move traffic much more quickly off of Grand Avenue and on to our property. Lastly, we are providing for traffic flow on the property rather than on and off Grand Avenue. By making all of these changes, we will be significantly reducing the safety concerns.

Following is our reasoning for each variance request:

6-1208(i)(4); drive approach distance to a corner at two arterial street corners in a community commercial zone.

1. Our building, with its unusual footprint, was constructed in 1974 within 85'-0" of the intersection of Grand and 24th Street West. We have key functions that operate within the east portion of the building that need to be accessed from the 24th Street side. To eliminate the drive approach located within the minimum required distance of 100'-0" from the intersection would cripple our ability to retain function of the East side of the building.
2. Removing the drive approach within the minimum 100'-0" would create congestion on Grand Avenue by forcing both lobby and drive-up traffic to ingress through the same drive approach. This would nullify many of the benefits of the improvements we are making by shifting the majority of the traffic further west on Grand Avenue. Drive-up and lobby traffic would be competing for access as they attempt to maneuver on the site to their respective areas. This could shift traffic back on to Grand Avenue during busy banking hours.

3. In retaining the current drive approach location, we intend to improve it in every conceivable way. Most significantly by reducing the traffic into the approach. It will remain an ingress only with a reduced width of 16'-0" and will be reconstructed to meet code. Additionally, there will be appropriate signage to indicate "No Exit".

6-1208(h)(5); to allow three drive approaches serving a development with between 60-600 feet of street frontage.

1. The existing property encompasses the entire south half of the block between 24th and 25th Street West. It has (7) existing drive approaches on Grand Avenue. Our intention is to improve upon this condition by reducing the total number of drive approaches to (3). Each drive approach will provide ingress to the property for specific types of traffic; employee/tenant parking, drive-up customers, and lobby customers.
2. By providing (3) drive approaches to serve the individual traffic needs, we mitigate conflicts and congestion that would result from the stacking of drive-up customers at the new drive-up teller line and lobby customers maneuvering to the lobby parking lot.
3. Additionally, the (3) distinct drive approaches allows for traffic flow on the property rather than on and off of Grand Avenue.

I've attached pictures with notes to help you better view the requests that we are asking you to consider. I hope that this letter along with the pictures helps further clarify our need for the two variances and the value they will bring to traffic flow on Grand Avenue. I would welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you may have concerning our request or the planned improvements.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



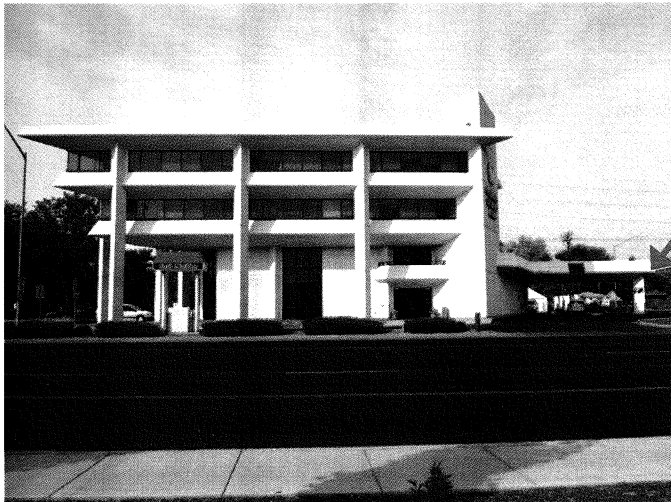
Mary Jo Devenier
SVP of Operations
Western Security Bank



This is the view of our building looking east on Grand Avenue.

This is the existing approach into our drive-up. We are requesting a variance of code 6-1208(i)(4) to be less than the minimum 100' from the intersection. This will become the entrance to our customer parking.

This is the existing drive approach to our customer parking area. This will become the new approach to the drive-up.



This is the view of our building looking north across Grand Avenue.

This is the existing approach to our drive-up. The area will become our customer parking. If the variance isn't granted, all traffic would have to flow through the new drive-up approach with all customer parking funneling through the narrow drive on the south side of the building.



This is a view of our building from the corner of 24th Street West and Grand Avenue.

This picture provides a perspective of the distance from the corner to the approach we are requesting the variance for.