

Applicant Letter



12/12/17

City of Billings
Zoning Commission
Miller Building 1st Floor Conference Room
2825 3rd Ave. North
Billings, MT 59102

Dear Zoning Commission,

Friendship House of Christian Service is a nonprofit community development agency that has been serving the low-income and disadvantaged children and families of the south side of Billings for over 60 years. To better meet community need, we are always looking for ways to deepen our impact and serve more clients in order to fulfill our mission.

In accordance with the existing city growth policy, we are not proposing to "grow" the city limits or footprint and jeopardize the "essential investment." Rather we are doing infill by taking an existing structure and land in the heart of the south side triangle and changing the use. No extension of utilities or services will be required as this is an existing property already served. As related to "place makers" and "community fabric," growth policy goals, Friendship House is truly a community gathering place with a rich history of being the very fabric of the south side. We serve the community with a preschool, youth program, teen program, adult education, counseling and meet basic needs such as food, clothing and support for south side residents. Finally as it relates to "strong neighborhoods" the community development work Friendship House does on a daily basis is vital to keep the south side strong and at-risk and low-income families moving forward out of poverty. Our project is truly in the spirit and vision of our city growth policy.

We have recently purchased a blighted house across the street from our facility. Our plan is to transform this space into a beautiful, usable parking lot for our fleet of vehicles. Friendship House currently has only on street parking for our fleet of 9 vehicles including five- 15 passenger transportation vans, 2 mini vans, 1 car, and 1 school bus. Because we transport over 100 children daily and serve more than 1,900 clients annually, we need these vehicles to best serve our community and pick up and drop off kids from the 7 elementary schools we serve with our programming. With limited parking options, we must park our vehicles as well as employee vehicles on the street. Because of this, the at-risk kids we serve are left exposed to passing cars (who are often driving too fast) when entering and exiting vehicles. This creates unsafe, potentially deadly situations.

Reflecting the love of Jesus Christ by fostering renewal, stability, and transformation in the lives of youth and families in South Billings.

Phone: 406-259-5569

Fax: 406-259-9117

3123 8th Ave S. Billings, MT 59101

www.FriendshipMT.org



Additionally, when children leave our care with their parents, students will often run in between the parked Friendship House vehicles and out on to the street. Oncoming vehicles have little visibility and little chance to slow down to avoid a collision. We're fortunate to not have had an accident. There have been too many close calls involving Friendship House children. This is where we need your help to approve a zoning change to make our parking lot a reality.

In addition to increasing children's safety, Friendship House vehicles parked on the street are open to vandalism, property and vehicle theft. This has happened numerous times in the past several years because of our inability to lock up our vehicles in a secure parking area. This increases our costs to fix these vehicles that we use to transport children from school and on field trips. Because all of our vehicles are donated, we want to be good stewards and protect these generous gifts.

A secure, designated, beautiful parking lot will protect and better serve our at-risk children and vulnerable adults while entering and exiting from our life changing programs. It will keep the vehicles from vandalism, property and auto theft.

Further, the parking lot will allow us to be better neighbors by not taking up the entire allotment of on-street parking in the neighborhood.

A beautifully landscaped parking lot is more attractive than the currently blighted house. This is a true community development project allowing us to fulfill our mission of taking our south side neighborhood from blight to beauty.

I would very much appreciate the zoning commissions vote to allow up to do this much needed project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rev. Matt Lundgren".

Rev. Matthew J. Lundgren
Executive Director

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Letter from Task Force

South Side Neighborhood Task Force
3123 8th Ave. S.
Billings, MT 59101

11/25/17

City of Billings
Zoning Commission
Miller Building 1st Floor Conference Room
2825 3rd Ave. North
Billings, MT 59102

Dear Zoning Commission,

As a part of keeping and making the South Side Neighborhood safe, beautiful, and functional we as a Task Force fully support the zoning variance requested by Friendship House of Christian Service for the parking lot project at 802 S. 31st St.

This project will allow for better access to parking for neighbors, staff and clients of Friendship House. Further, it will provide much needed safety for south side children entering and exiting vehicles at Friendship House.

Please approve this zoning request.

Sincerely,

Dale Fincel, Vice President



Jim Ronquillo, Treasurer

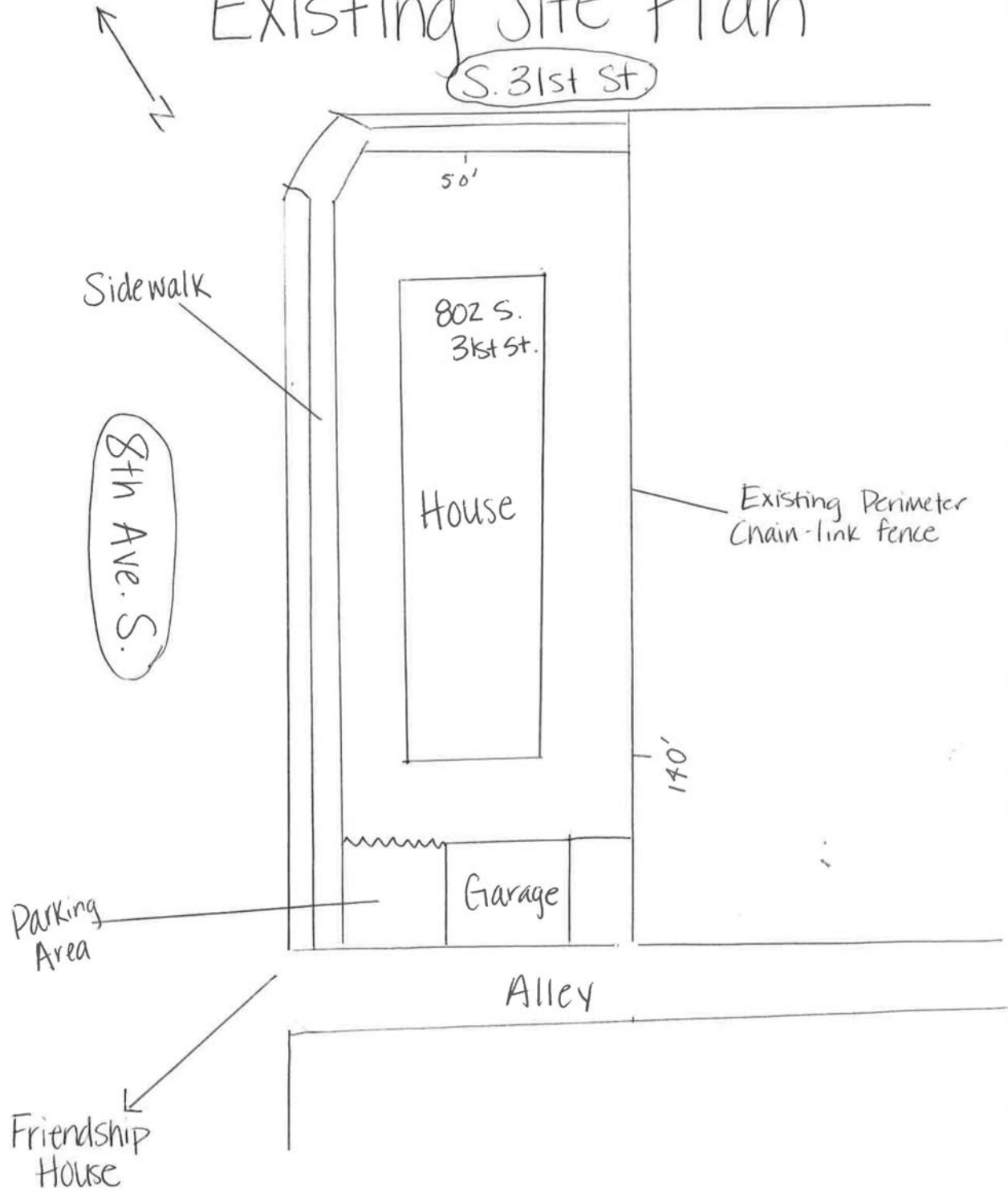


Steve Heppner, Secretary



Site plan

Existing Site Plan



Proposed Parking lot

December 4, 2017

Van Parking Lot Concept Billings, Montana

