

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, the Prince George's County Planning Board has reviewed DPLS-303 requesting a departure of 201 off-street parking spaces of 273 required spaces in accordance with Subtitle 27 of the Prince George's County Code; and

WHEREAS, after consideration of the evidence presented at the public hearing on Thursday July 21, 2005 the Prince George's County Planning Board finds:

A. Location and Field Inspection: The subject property is located on the south side of Merrimack Drive between 15th Avenue and 16th Place, directly across the street from the Langley Park Community Center and Langley Park McCormick Elementary School. The property is currently developed with a one-story brick building containing a gymnasium and a ball field. A sign on the building indicates that the Langley Boys and Girls Club is headquartered at this location.

B. Development Data Summary:

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Zone(s)	R-18 Zone	R-18 Zone
Use(s)	Gymnasium	Church, gym, youth center, clinic
Acreage	2.97± ac.	2.97± ac.
Lots	1	2
Parcels	1	1
Square Footage/GFA	16,000	42,440
Dwelling Units:	N/A	N/A

C. History: The 1990 sectional map amendment for Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt (Planning Areas 65, 66 ad 67) retained the subject property in the R-18 Zone.

D. Master Plan Recommendation: The 1989 approved master plan for Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt and vicinity indicates that roughly half the site is recommended for public or quasi-public land use, while the balance is recommended for medium-suburban residential land uses at up to 5.7 dwelling units per acre.

E. Request: The applicant requests approval of a special exception (SE-4526) for an eleemosynary or philanthropic institution. The use would include a 16,387-square-foot youth center, a 15,750-square-foot “health and human services” building, and an 8,000-square-foot gymnasium. The proposed 24,000-square-foot Mother Teresa Chapel, which is permitted by right in the R-18 Zone, would seat 580 persons. A variance is requested to address deficiencies in setback for the required front and rear yards as well as for building height.

A total of 273 parking spaces and 4 loading spaces are required and the applicant is providing 72 parking and no loading spaces. A departure from parking and loading standards application (DPLS-303) has been filed to address this deficiency. The subject departure from sign design standards application (DSDS-625) was filed to permit two 70-square-foot freestanding signs. The

maximum number of freestanding signs permitted is one and sign area must not exceed 48 square feet for this property

- F. Neighborhood and Surrounding Uses:** The applicant defines the neighborhood as being bounded by East West Highway to the south, the Prince George's County line (New Hampshire Avenue) to the west, and Adelphi Road is to the east. The applicant has defined an extremely large neighborhood that crosses the Northwest Branch and Adelphi Road to the north and University Boulevard to the south and includes numerous subdivisions. In planning, neighborhoods are considered to be units of a larger community. Neighborhoods are defined by the nearest major roads, streams or natural features or railroad rights-of-way. The applicant in this case, by extending the neighborhood north to the Beltway, includes such major roads as Metzerott and Adelphi Roads, the Northwest Branch, and University Boulevard to the south. Staff recommends the following neighborhood based on the nearest major roads and streams:

North - Northwest Branch
East - Riggs Road
South - University Boulevard
West - New Hampshire Avenue

The property is surrounded by the following uses:

North - Across Merrimack Drive is the Langley Park Community Center and Langley Park McCormick Elementary School in the O-S and R-55 Zones. Single-family detached homes are located to the northwest at 15th Avenue and northeast at 16th Place.

East - Single-family detached homes in the R-55 Zone.

South - The Willowbrook and Villages at Langley apartment complexes in the R-18 Zone

West - The Victoria Station Apartments in the R-18 Zone.

The neighborhood contains of mixture of older apartment complexes and single-family detached homes on small lots, with commercial uses along the southern and western boundaries.

- G. DPLS-303:** The site plan indicates that 72 parking spaces are to be provided. The plan correctly notes 273 parking spaces are required. A departure from parking and loading standards is required to address this deficiency. Section 27-588(b)(7)(A) sets forth the following findings:

(A) In order for the Planning Board to grant the departure, it shall make the following findings:

(i) The purposes of this Part (Section 27-550) will be served by the applicant's request;

The purposes of the Parking Regulations are as follows:

- (1) To require (in connection with each building constructed and each new use established) off-street automobile parking lots and loading areas sufficient to serve the parking and loading needs of all persons associated with the buildings and uses;**

The number of parking spaces provided for the proposed church (Philanthropic/ Eleemosynary), in addition to the tentative shared parking arrangements with the McCormick Elementary School, should provide sufficient parking for patrons. The applicant submits that the chapel and nonchapel uses (youth center and clinic) generally do not overlap. However, there is some overlap with the proposed gym. Regarding the chapel, Mass services are tentatively scheduled for Saturday (one service) and Sunday (two services). As to the clinic, it will operate Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Latin American Youth Center (LAYC) will also operate Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tentatively, the gymnasium will operate Monday-Saturday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday 8 a.m. to noon.

- (2) To aid in relieving traffic congestion on streets by reducing the use of public streets for parking and loading and reducing the number of access points;**

The proposed youth center will add 72 new parking spaces to the area. The applicant notes that much of the patrons of the center will come from the surrounding residential neighborhood. The center is within walking distance to its primary clientele.

- (3) To protect the residential character of residential areas; and**

The proposed Mother Teresa Center will be situated in the heart of the Langley Park community for the purpose of serving the local residents. It will protect the residential character of the area through various efforts to become an integral part of the neighborhood. Further, the design of the proposed multipurpose Mother Teresa Center will be aesthetically pleasing and would replace an aging community center.

- (4) To provide parking and loading areas which are convenient and increase the amenities in the Regional District;**

The parking and loading areas will be located on the site of the proposed Center. Parking and loading will be convenient for visitors.

- (ii) The departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request;**

The departure for 201 parking spaces is the minimum necessary, given the

specific circumstances of the request. The proposed site is divided into several different uses. These uses include a chapel, the LAYC, a clinic to be operated by the Spanish Catholic Charities, and a gymnasium. For a chapel with approximately 580± seats, which is proposed for the Mother Teresa Center, approximately 145 parking spaces are required. The site plan correctly notes the following required parking for the uses:

Use	Square Feet	Required Parking Spaces
Chapel	24,000	145 (1 space per 4 seats @ 580 seats)
Non-Chapel:		
Clinic	15,750	79 (1.0 space/200sq. ft.)
Gymnasium	8,000	5 (4 spaces/court; 1/employee)
Youth Center	17,500	44
Total		231

Due to the size and shape of the property, the applicant is proposing 72 parking spaces on-site. The parking lot at the Langley Park McCormick Elementary School across Merrimack Drive to the north will provide an additional 39 parking spaces. Counting the off-site parking, a total of 111 parking spaces would be available. The applicant also submits that the owner of the adjacent (to the south) Willowbrook Apartments will allow parking for the proposed use. The owner of the apartment complex is also donating the subject property for this special exception.

- (iii) **The departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances which are special to the subject use, given its nature at this location, or alleviate circumstances which are prevalent in older areas of the County which were predominantly developed prior to November 29, 1949;**

The departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances which are special to the subject use. The proposed eleemosynary/philanthropic institution, actually involves several uses; a youth center, gymnasium, church and clinic. These uses will operate at different times. The applicant provides the following schedule for the uses:

Uses	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Clinic	--	9:00am - 5:00pm	9:00am - 5:00pm	9:00am - 5:00pm	9:00am - 5:00pm	9:00am - 5:00pm	--
Drop-in Center	--	8:00am - 8:00pm	8:00am - 8:00pm	8:00am - 8:00pm	8:00am - 8:00pm	8:00am - 8:00pm	9:00am - 4:00pm
Gymnasium	8:00am - 12:00pm	8:00am - 10:00pm	8:00am - 10:00pm	8:00am - 10:00pm	8:00am - 10:00pm	8:00am - 10:00pm	8:00am - 10:00pm
Chapel	7:30am - 12:00pm	--	--	--	--	--	5pm-6pm

The proposed clinic, youth center (drop-in center) and gym collectively require 128 parking spaces. With 72 on-site spaces, the uses would be deficient of

roughly 56 parking spaces during the week. However, as provided by the applicant, the majority of the clientele lives in the neighborhood and would walk to the site. In addition, there are several bus stops within close proximity to the property.

- (iv) **All methods for calculating the number of spaces required (Division 2, Subdivision 3, and Division 3, Subdivision 3, of this Part) have either been used or found to be impractical; and**

All methods for calculating the number of spaces required have been used.

- (v) **Parking and loading needs of adjacent residential areas will not be infringed upon if the departure is granted.**

With the use of off-site parking and close proximity of a bus stop, the parking and loading needs of adjacent residential areas will not be infringed upon if the departure is granted.

(B) In making its findings, the Planning Board shall give consideration to the following:

- (i) **The parking and loading conditions within the general vicinity of the subject property, including numbers and locations of available on- and off-street spaces within five hundred (500) feet of the subject property;**

The Langley Park McCormick Elementary School and the Langley Park Community Center are located across the street and within 500 feet of the proposed use. The Elementary School has 39 parking spaces available for shared parking. In addition, Sawyer Realty, which owns Willowbrook Apartments located adjacent (south) to the subject property, has agreed to share parking with the Mother Teresa Center.

- (ii) **The recommendations of an Area Master Plan, or County or local revitalization plan, regarding the subject property and its general vicinity;**

The 1989 Approved Master Plan for Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt and Vicinity recommends roughly half the site for public or quasi-public land use, while the balance is recommended for medium-suburban residential land uses at up to 5.7 dwelling units per acre.

- (iii) **The recommendations of a municipality (within which the property lies) regarding the departure; and**

No municipality exists within a mile of the subject property.

- (iv) **Public parking facilities which are proposed in the County's Capital Improvement Program within the general vicinity of the property.**

No public parking facilities are proposed in the county's Capital Improvement Program within the general vicinity of the property.

(C) In making its findings, the Planning Board may give consideration to the following:

(i) Public transportation available in the area;

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) provides bus routes that include Langley Park. Specifically, the proposed facility is on the bus line with a bus passing the property on Merrimack Street. Additionally, there are three Metro stations (Hyattsville/West Hyattsville, Takoma Park and Greenbelt) in the area.

(ii) Any alternative design solutions to off-street facilities which might yield additional spaces;

The applicant has considered alternative design solutions to off-street facilities that might yield additional spaces. According to the applicant, structured parking was considered as a way to provide additional parking spaces for the Mother Teresa site. In addition to adding significant cost to the project, the use of structured parking is severely limited in several ways:

The long narrow shape of the parcel makes efficient layout of a garage difficult. The limited available building area would result in a garage on either end of the site, to a position parallel to the proposed Church (Philanthropic/Eleemosynary). This configuration would negatively impact the views to and from the new center.

More importantly a garage on the western end of the site would need to span the existing public 66-inch stormdrain line that crosses west to east on the site. According to the applicant, Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources that the construction of surface parking was allowed in the stormdrain easement, but that buildings were not. A garage on this end of the site does not appear feasible.

On the east end of the site, the stormdrain easement encroaches on the south end of the 23-car parking lot. A parking structure on this end of the site would need to be built between the stormdrain easement and the road right-of-way. At best, a garage built in this restricted area would likely yield one row of parking facing the Merrimac right-of-way. The construction of a parking garage in this area would add significant cost, with little benefit to the project.

(iii) The specific nature of the use (including hours of operation if it is a business) and the nature and hours of operation of other (business) uses within five hundred (500) feet of the subject property

The proposed eleemosynary or philanthropic institution will include a youth center, gymnasium, church and clinic. The applicant has provided hours of

operation for these uses (see chart above). Other nearby uses include McCormick Elementary School (located across the street to the north of the subject property, within 500 feet) with hours of operation Monday–Friday 8 a.m.–3 p.m. The Langley Park Community Center has the following hours:

Monday–Friday 9 a.m.–9 p.m.
Saturday 9 a. m.–4 p.m.
Sunday 12 noon–5 p. m.

The Willowbrook Apartments, which are adjacent to the south, consist of 590 multifamily dwelling units.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to Subtitle 27 of the Prince George’s County Code, the Prince George’s County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission adopted the findings contained herein and recommends APPROVAL of the above-noted application, subject to a condition that the applicant provide a signed copy of the letters from the Board of Education and Sawyer Realty granting permission for shared use of parking lots.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appeal of the Planning Board’s action must be filed with the District Council for Prince George’s County, Maryland within thirty (30) days of the final notice of the Planning Board’s decision.

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This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the action taken by the Prince George's County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission on the motion of Commissioner Eley, seconded by Chairman Hewlett, with Commissioner Squire absent, and with Commissioner Vaughns voting in opposition of the motion, at its regular meeting held on Thursday, July 21, 2005, in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

Adopted by the Prince George's County Planning Board this 8th day of September 2005.

Trudye Morgan Johnson
Executive Director

By Frances J. Guertin
Planning Board Administrator