



*Note: Staff reports can be accessed at [www.mncppc.org/pgco/planning/plan.htm](http://www.mncppc.org/pgco/planning/plan.htm).*

## Special Exception Application

**SE-4526 /VSE-4526,  
 DSDS-625, DPLS-303**

Application	General Data
<b>Project Name:</b> Mother Teresa Center  <b>Location:</b> South side of Merrimac Drive adjacent to 15 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, known as 1515 Merrimac Drive.  <b>Applicant/Address:</b> Roman Catholic Archdiocesan Bishop of Washington 5001 Eastern Avenue Hyattsville, Maryland 20782	Date Accepted: 3/16/05
	Planning Board Action Limit: N/A
	Plan Acreage: 2.97
	Zone: R-18
	Dwelling Units: N/A
	Square Footage: 42,440
	Planning Area: 65
	Tier: Developed
	Council District: 02
	Municipality: N/A
200-Scale Base Map: 210NE02	

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates
SE-4526—Church (Eleemosynary or Philanthropic Institution), (Youth Center), (Gymnasium), (Clinic) VSE-4526—Variance for setbacks of front-20 feet, rear-20 feet, yards & height of building 25 feet in R-18 Zone DSDS-625—Departure of sign area – 22 additional sq. ft. & quantity – 2 freestanding signs DPLS-303—Departure of 201 off-street parking spaces of 273 required spaces AC-05018—for bufferyard deficiency	Adjoining Property Owners Previous Parties of Record Registered Associations: (CB-12-2003)  Sign(s) Posted on Site and Notice of Hearing Mailed:
	12/16/04       05/13/05

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: Jimi Jones	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
	X		

July 15, 2005

**TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT:**

TO: The Prince George's County Planning Board  
The Prince George's County District Council

FROM: Jimi Jones, Acting Supervisor, Zoning Section

SUBJECT: **Special Exception Application No. 4526 /VSE-4526**  
**Alternative Compliance Application No. 05018**  
**Departure from Sign Design Standards No. 625**  
**Departure from Parking and Loading Standards No. 303**

REQUEST: **Eleemosynary/Philanthropic Institution (Church, Youth Center,  
Gymnasium and Clinic)**

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL with conditions

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NOTE:

This application is on the agenda for the Planning Board to decide whether or not to schedule a public hearing. If the Planning Board decides to hear the application, it will be placed on a future agenda.

Any person may request the Planning Board to schedule a public hearing. The request may be made in writing prior to the agenda date or in person on the agenda date. All requests must specify the reasons for the public hearing. All parties will be notified of the Planning Board's decision.

You are encouraged to become a person of record in this application. The request must be made in writing and sent to the Office of the Zoning Hearing Examiner at the address indicated above. Questions about becoming a person of record should be directed to the Hearing Examiner at 301-952-3644. All other questions should be directed to the Development Review Division at 301-952-3530.

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**FINDINGS:**

**A. Location and Field Inspection:** The subject property is located on the south side of Merrimack Drive between 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 16<sup>th</sup> 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:**

	<b>EXISTING</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>
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 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 has been filed to address this deficiency. A departure from sign design standards application has also been 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 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and northeast at 16<sup>th</sup> 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. Parking Regulations:**

The site plan indicates that 72 parking spaces are to be provided. The plan correctly notes 273 parking spaces are required. An application for departure from parking and loading standards has been filed (DPLS-303) to address this deficiency (see Part L of this report).

**H. *Landscape Manual Requirements:*** The applicant must subdivide the subject site. The new southern property line will require a 30-foot building setback and a 20-foot-wide landscaped buffer (“B” landscape buffer). The applicant has submitted an application for alternative compliance (AC-05018), which is under review by the Alternative Compliance Committee. A recommendation from the committee will be prepared in time for the Planning Board hearing.

**I. Zone Standards: VSE-4526**

The building has been horizontally positioned on the site to minimize the amount of variances necessary; however, due to the unusual shape of the property, the proposed building will require relief from the strict application of Section 27-442(e), Yards. The building has been positioned so that it is 10 feet from the front property line, thus requiring a variance from the front building restriction line of 20 feet. Due to the unique shape of the lot, the building is also placed seven feet from the rear property line, thus requiring a variance from the rear building restriction line of 23 feet.

The applicant also proposed a building height of 50 feet. Section 27-442(f) sets a 40-foot maximum height for buildings in the R-18 Zone. A variance of 10 feet is requested.

According to Section 27-230, variances may be granted when:

- 1) **A specific parcel of land has exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape, exceptional topographical conditions, or other extraordinary situations or conditions;**

The subject property suffers from exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape. The proposed use will be situated on land that is between an existing publicly dedicated right-of-way (Merrimack Road) and the existing Willowbrook apartment complex on Parcel L. The residue of remaining land creates an extremely awkward, crescent-shaped property that has an abundance of street frontage but has a narrow depth. This depth then creates a conflict with the required yards that, while appropriate for a suburban setting, is less necessary for the urban environment in which the project is situated.

**2) The strict application of this Subtitle will result in a peculiar and unusual practical difficulties to, or exceptional or undue hardship upon the owner of the property; and**

The strict application of this Subtitle will result in undue hardship upon the owner of the property. The use is intended to serve the local users of the proposed Mother Teresa Center, the vast majority of which reside within walking distance of the site. The applicant submits that the property for this project is being donated and no other options are available for the location of such a facility.

**3) The variance will not substantially impair the intent, purpose, or integrity of the General Plan or the Master Plan.**

Finally, this application will not impair the intent or purpose of either the General Plan or the master plan. The master plan does not specifically address the proposed use in areas recommended for medium-suburban land use. The proposed eleemosynary or philanthropic institution is permitted via a special exception and is legislatively presumed to be compatible.

The proposed Mother Teresa Center is consistent with the guidelines that have been established for recreation in the plan. The master plan for Langley Park states:

- Within the county's fiscal capacity, the development of recreational facilities should be staged proportionately with population growth in the area.
- Sites for neighborhood and community parks should be easily accessible for the intended users.
- Recreational opportunities should be offered in each community to reflect the recreational preferences and needs of local users.
- Development of private or commercial recreation areas should be encouraged to help meet recreational needs.

The multiservice facility does conform to these guidelines. One of the underlying reasons for the proposed Mother Teresa Center is to provide social services to both the growing Latino and general population in the area. The center is situated so that intended users can access it with ease.

Regarding the building height for the proposed Mother Teresa Center, a variance is requested for the chapel, which also has a spire with a cross. The spire structure or tower also contains an elevator. In total, this part of the building is approximately 65 feet. This is 25 feet higher than the height permitted by Code. The applicant contends however, that with regard to the height of the

spire and/or elevator tower, Section 27-117 states that “the height limits set forth in this Subtitle shall not apply to belfries, chimneys, . . . spires, bulkheads, elevators, or similar structures.” Accordingly, though the height of the spire extends beyond the 40-foot statutory height limit for buildings, it is exempted under Section 27-117. Further, the height of the spire with cross are necessary architectural elements of the chapel. Even though this portion of the building projects higher than the maximum allowed height for a structure in the R-18 Zone as identified in 27- 442 (f), it is a critical functional element because it identifies the structure as a church and further evokes a better understanding of the heritage of the congregation. Further, it is consistent with the Spanish Mission style architecture of the chapel that is reminiscent of the prevalent form of architecture from the Southwestern United States, Central, and South America. Based on the elevations submitted by the applicant, the church includes a “bell tower” with an elevator leading to the top, which is exempt from the height requirement. The proposed height for the church is 50 feet. The church exceeds the height limit by 10 feet. A 10-foot variance is necessary, given the style of the building. The architecture is a unique style, which is appropriate given the community that it will serve.

**J. Sign Regulations:** A departure from sign design standards (application DS-625) has also been 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. Section 27-239.01(b)(7) provides the following findings to be made when approving a sign departure:

**(i) The purposes of this Subtitle will be equally well or better served by the applicant's proposal;**

The purposes of this Subtitle will be equally well or better served by the applicant's proposal. The applicant proposes one additional freestanding sign. Both signs have been designed to serve a practical function of clearly identifying the various buildings and uses on the property. The additional sign is necessary due to the shape of the property. The site plan indicates that each sign would be situated at the east and west entrances to this crescent-shaped property.

The size of each sign would be 70 square feet. The applicant provides that, due to the number of uses involved in the proposed eleemosynary/philanthropic institution (youth center, gymnasium, church and clinic), a larger sign is necessary. Staff agrees that given the shape of the property and number of uses involved, the proposed 70-square-foot signs would provide for adequate identification and advertisement in a manner that is compatible with land uses in the Regional District in accordance with the purposes of the Sign Regulations.

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

The departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request. The signs were designed to clearly identify all of the uses on the property, as well as properly label the buildings as to the chapel and the non-chapel uses. The signs are no larger than necessary, given the amount of information/wording provided on them. The function of the signs would be impaired if they were any smaller, as they would not be legible from the street.

**(iii) The departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances which are unique to the site or prevalent in areas of the County developed prior to November 29, 1949;**

The departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances which are unique to the site. Staff believes the unusual shape of the property makes the additional sign and sign area necessary. The use will have driveways at the eastern and westernmost corners of the site. Strict compliance with Sign Regulations would restrict the property to one 48-square-foot sign. It would be difficult for motorists negotiating this winding road to see the sign in time to turn into the driveway.

**(iv) The departure will not impair the visual, functional, or environmental quality or integrity of the site or of the surrounding neighborhood.**

The departure will not impair the visual, functional, or environmental quality or integrity of the site or of the surrounding neighborhood. The applicant has submitted drawings of the proposed signs (attached). The signs have a monumental appearance and are consistent with the style of the building. Staff has not, however, reviewed information regarding how the signs would be illuminated. The applicant will be required to provide the type and location of lighting for the signs.

**K. Other Issues:** The Historic Preservation and Public Facilities Planning Section, in a memo dated April 21, 2005, notes the location of a historic structure on the adjacent Willowbrook apartment complex to the south and provides the following comments:

“The subject application for special exception for construction of a multipurpose center including a church, youth center, clinic and gymnasium (and the related applications for a variance, departure from sign design standards, and departure for parking and loading standards) includes the McCormick-Goodhart Mansion, also known as Langley Park, identified as Historic Site 65-007, 8151 15th Avenue, Langley Park.

“Built in 1924, Langley Park is a massive two and one-half story Georgian Revival brick and concrete estate mansion. The main (south) facade is dominated with a two-story pedimented portico with Ionic columns. The mansion was designed by prominent architect George Oakley Totten, Jr., for Frederick and Henrietta McCormick-Goodhart, who named the property Langley Park after the Goodhart estate in England. It is one of only three such architect-designed estate houses in Prince George’s County. The house was used as a daycare center in recent years, but is currently vacant.

“The subject property is already substantially developed. The McCormick-Goodhart Mansion/Langley Park is located roughly at the center of the developing parcel and is surrounded by a large garden apartment complex, Willowbrook Apartments, constructed c.1964. At the northern end of the developing parcel, the site of the subject application currently includes an existing gymnasium building to be demolished. Both the existing gymnasium and the proposed development associated with it will not be visible from the historic site.

“The subject application for special exception and the related applications for a variance and departure from sign design standards will have no effect on McCormick-Goodhart Mansion/Langley Historic Site.”

**L. 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
<b>Total</b>		<b>231</b>

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. A garage on either end of the site would be forced, by the limited building area, 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.

**M. Required Findings:**

**Section 27-317(a)** of the Zoning Ordinance provides that a special exception may be approved if:

**(1) The proposed use and site plan are in harmony with the purposes of this Subtitle.**

With the recommended conditions, the proposed use and site plan are in harmony with the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance. The purposes of the Zoning Ordinance generally seek to protect and promote the health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience, and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the county. The proposed Mother Teresa Center will allow local residents the convenience of obtaining a multitude of services in their community. This new center will provide much-needed social services to the more than 60,000 low-income people living in the Langley Park area. Through the variety of social services that will be offered, the center will target specific issues affecting the Langley Park community, such as high crime, gang activity, substance abuse and the high school drop-out rate. Specifically, the LAYC will provide after-school services with constructive youth activities, adult education, including computer courses and educational support, economic and employment development, health care, and family services. Additionally, the center will offer recreation, sports, tutoring, counseling, job assistance and family health services.

**(2) The proposed use is in conformance with all the applicable requirements and regulations of this Subtitle.**

Variances regarding setback and building height requirements, as well as a departure from the number of parking and loading spaces required, a departure from sign design requirements, and alternative compliance with the *Landscape Manual's* requirements, are being considered with this application. Approval of these companion applications will ensure that the use is in conformance with all the applicable requirements and regulations of the Zoning Ordinance.

**(3) The proposed use will not substantially impair the integrity of any validly approved Master Plan or Functional Master Plan, or in the absence of a Master Plan or Functional Map Plan, the General Plan.**

The proposed use will not substantially impair the integrity of the 1989 approved master plan for Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt and vicinity. The plan 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. Staff recognizes that an eleemosynary or philanthropic institution is permitted by special exception and is therefore presumed to be both compatible with uses in the neighborhood and in harmony with the plan.

**(4) The proposed use will not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of residents or workers in the area.**

With the recommended conditions, departures and variance, the proposed use will not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of residents or workers in the area. Staff believes the use will provide important social services to the neighborhood. The center will offer activities and

programs for youth in the surrounding area. The site will feature classrooms, art spaces, a computer lab, counseling rooms, office space for staff, and a drop in-center for youth.

**(5) The proposed use will not be detrimental to the use or development of adjacent properties or the general neighborhood.**

The proposed use will not be detrimental to the use or development of adjacent properties or the general neighborhood. The proposed center would actually redevelop the site. The Boys and Girls Club has used the existing gym for many years. The structure, however, has become run down and the property is not well maintained. The proposed center would revitalize the property and give the Boys and Girls Club a new home that would be shared with youth in the neighborhood.

**(6) The proposed site plan is in conformance with an approved Tree Conservation Plan.**

The Environmental Planning Section, in a memo dated April 12, 2005, notes that the property is not subject to the Woodland Conservation Ordinance because it contains less than 10,000 square feet of woodlands. A forest stand delineation is required for the entire site (including the existing apartment complex) before an exemption letter can be issued.

**CONCLUSION:**

With the recommended variances, departures and alternative compliance, the proposed use and site plan are generally in conformance with the Zoning Ordinance and in harmony with the master plan. The use will provide important social services to the neighborhood. Staff therefore recommends APPROVAL of SE-4526 and VSE-4526 subject to the following conditions:

1. The site plan shall be revised as follows:
  - a. Provide four loading spaces in accordance with the Parking Requirements.
  - b. Show an accessible route from the handicap parking spaces to the building as well as a depressed curb for access to the building.
  - c. Prior to signature approval of the special exception, the Forest Stand Delineation (FSD) plan and text shall be signed and dated by the qualified professional who prepared the plans. The FSD plan shall include the property with the apartment complex to the south included.
  - d. A Standard Letter of Exemption from the Woodland Conservation Ordinance shall be obtained from the Environmental Planning Section prior to the application for any building or grading permit.
  - e. Prior to certificate approval of the special exception, a copy of the Stormwater Management Concept Approval Letter or an approved waiver shall be submitted to the Environmental Planning Section.
  - f. Lot coverage calculations shall be shown on the plan.

Staff recommends Approval of AC-05018 subject to a condition that the landscape plan be revised in accordance with decision of the Alternative Compliance Committee.

Staff recommends Approval of DPLS-303 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.

Staff recommends Approval of DSDS-625 subject to the following conditions:

1. A sign plan shall be submitted showing the dimensions of the proposed signs.
2. The site plan shall include the location and type of illumination to be used for the sign.