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DETAILED SITE PLAN

DSP-06050

Application	General Data
Project Name: Commerce Bank—Berwyn Heights Location: 5815 Greenbelt Road, Berwyn Heights On the south side of Greenbelt Road, east of 58 th Avenue and west of 59 th Avenue Applicant/Address: Commerce Bank 9000 Atrium Way Mt. Laurel, New Jersey 08054	Date Accepted: 12/6/2006
	Planning Board Action Limit: Waived
	Plan Acreage: 0.87
	Zone: C-S-C, R-R, D-D-O
	Dwelling Units: NA
	Square Footage: 3,676
	Planning Area: 67
	Tier: Developed
	Council District: 03
	Municipality: Berwyn Heights
200-Scale Base Map: 210NE06	

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates
Request to expand the Development District to include Lot 36, rezone Lot 36 from the R-R Zone to the C-S-C Zone, and to construct a 3,676-square-foot bank on the property.	Adjoining Property Owners Previous Parties of Record Registered Associations: 9/18/2006 (CB-12-2003)
	Sign(s) Posted on Site and Notice of Hearing Mailed: 5/15/2007

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: Lareuse	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
	X		

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

June 4, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: Steve Adams, Urban Design Supervisor

FROM: Susan Lareuse, Urban Design Section, Development Review Division

SUBJECT: Detailed Site Plan, DSP-06050
Commerce Bank, Berwyn Heights

The Urban Design staff has completed its review of the subject application and appropriate referrals. The following evaluation and findings lead to a recommendation of APPROVAL with conditions, as described in the recommendation section of this report.

EVALUATION

The detailed site plan was reviewed and evaluated for compliance with the following criteria:

- a. The requirements of the 2001 *Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for the Greenbelt Metro Area* and the 1989 *Approved Master Plan for Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt and Vicinity*.
- b. The requirements of the Zoning Ordinance in the C-S-C Zone and the standards of the Development District Overlay Zone (DDOZ);
- c. The requirements of the *Landscape Manual*;
- d. The requirements of the Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance;
- e. Referrals.

FINDINGS

Based upon evaluation and analysis of the subject application, the Urban Design staff recommends the following findings:

1. **Request:** The subject application requests approval to demolish an existing commercial building and an adjacent residential building located on the site and construct a 3,676-square-foot commercial bank. The detailed site plan proposes to expand the boundary of the development

district to include Lot 36. In addition, the plan proposes to rezone Lot 36 from the R-55 Zone to the C-S-C Zone, in order to combine the land into the development of the subject site.

2. **Development Data Summary:**

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Zone(s)	C-S-C/R-R/DDOZ	C-S-C/DDOZ
Use(s)	Commercial and residential	Commercial Office—bank
Acreage	0.87	0.87
Lots	6	1
Parcels	0	0
Square Footage/GFA	5,263	3,676

Other Development Data:

Parking Required (Per Section 27-568(a)): One space per 250 square feet of the first 2,000 square feet of the gross floor area (GFA) and then one space per 400 square feet of GFA above the first 2,000 square feet.

	REQUIRED	PROPOSED
Total Parking Spaces	13	21
Of Which Standard parking spaces (9.5' x 19.0')	-	19
Handicapped spaces (16.0' x 19.0')	1	2
Loading space	0*	0

Note: * No loading space is required for any commercial office including banks with a gross floor area less than 10,000 square feet.

3. **Location:** The site is located on the south side of Greenbelt Road (MD 193), at its intersection with 58th Avenue and 59th Avenue, within the boundary of the City of Berwyn Heights, in Planning Area 67, Council District 3.
4. **Surrounding Uses:** The property is surrounded on three sides by streets, to the east by 58th Avenue, to the south by Greenbelt Road (MD 193), and to the west by 59th Avenue. To the north the property backs up to single-family detached lots in the R-55 Zone.
5. **Previous Approvals:** The subject site is zoned C-S-C and improved as a retail store. Lot 36 is zoned R-55 and is developed with a single-family detached unit.
6. **Design Features:** The bank site is proposed as a single building in the middle of the site with parking along all three street sides of the building. A drive-through is proposed at the rear of the building with three lanes. The site proposes more green area than currently exists on the site, as a requirement of the Department of Public Works and Transportation. The treatment of the streetscape is a proposed six-foot-wide grass strip, an eight-foot-wide sidewalk and another eight-foot-wide planting area behind the sidewalk. A retaining wall is proposed along the back of the eight-foot-wide planting area. The retaining wall extends above the grade on the back side of the wall, in an attempt to provide a screen wall to block the front of vehicles from the view of pedestrians. Spot grades, which would normally indicate the height of the wall on the site plan at all corners of the wall, have not been provided; however, the detail on the plans indicates that the

wall may be as high as 7.5 feet in height, which may create a fortress-like appearance from the street-line and the pedestrian walkway. Behind the wall is another seven feet of grass area to the parking lot. The staff recommends that the wall be redesigned to create two separate walls with a terrace between, where each retaining wall is approximately three feet in height or less. In addition, the steps leading from the pedestrian zone to the building should be widened to 12 feet.

The landscaping and screening of the project to the residential development to the north incorporates both fencing and landscaping as a bufferyard from the adjacent existing residential dwelling to the north. The fence is proposed as a six-foot-high, board-on-board wood fence. The staff recommends that the plans be modified to specify a fence material other than wood in an earth-tone color. The plant material should also be revised to substitute native plants, where possible, and the use of invasive species should be avoided. The *Tilia Cordata* (Little-leaf Linden) trees along the streetscape should be replaced with another acceptable species, due to the graft incompatibility issues associated with the plant and the abundance of bees in the flowering season, which makes them questionable street trees.

The architecture proposed for the bank indicates the use of red brick, Belgian block, and EIFS and glass as exterior finish materials. The building is of a modern design with all offices on the first floor and a varied roof line that permits light into the first floor.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

7. The proposed development conforms to the purposes and recommendations for the development district as stated in the 2001 *Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for the Greenbelt Metro Area* and the standards of the Development District Overlay Zone (DDOZ). Section 27-548.26 of the Zoning Ordinance states the following:

(b) Property Owner.

- (1) A property owner may request that the District Council amend development requirements for the owner's property, as follows:**
- (A) An owner of a property in, adjoining, or separated only by a right-of-way from the development district may request changes to the boundary of the approved D-D-O zone.**
- (B) An owner of property in the Development District may request changes to the underlying zones or the list of allowed uses, as modified by the Development District Standards.**

The applicant is asking to include Lot 36 in the development district, in accordance with (A) above, and to change the underlying zone of that lot from the R-55 Zone to the C-S-C Zone, in accordance with (B) above.

(2) The owner's application shall include:

- (A) A statement showing that the proposed development conforms with the purposes and recommendations for the Development District, as stated in the Master Plan, Master Plan Amendment, or Sector Plan; and**

The applicant has provided a justification statement, which lists all of the purposes and a comment for each demonstrating how the project conforms, as follows:

“(a) The specific purposes of the Development District Overlay Zone are:

“(1) To provide a close link between Master Plans, Master Plan Amendments, or Sector Plans and their implementation;

“Comment: This proposal helps to implement the Greenbelt Metro Area Sector Plan. The sector plan envisions the Greenbelt Road and Beltway Plaza corridor as a cohesive retail and office area that attracts new businesses, strengthens existing businesses and guards against commercial decline through revitalization and redevelopments efforts. This proposal will provide a new business in this corridor by redeveloping the subject property.

“(2) To provide flexibility within a regulatory framework to encourage innovative design standards;

“Comment: This proposal helps even out the property line of the proposed Commerce Bank and provide a buffer between the residential property and the bank property.

“(3) To provide uniform development criteria utilizing design standards;

“Comment: With the exception of the amendments being proposed, this proposal complies with the design standards outlined on pages 207–212 of the sector plan.

“(4) To promote an appropriate mix of land uses;

“Comment: This proposal is appropriate for the Greenbelt Road commercial strip. The proposed Commerce Bank adds to the mix of commercial businesses and office space along the strip.

“(5) To encourage compact development;

“Comment: This proposal is compact. The proposed Commerce bank building sits in the center of the property. The bank will have drive-through tellers attached to the rear of bank building. This proposal also allows for parking as well as enough room for safe internal circulation within the site for the bank customers.

“(6) To encourage compatible development which compliments (sic) and enhances the character of an area;

“Comment: This proposal encourages compatible development, which complements and enhances the character of the Greenbelt Road corridor. The proposed Commerce Bank building is comparable in size to the other commercial buildings in the area. Also, the proposed Commerce Bank building is designed with red brick, limestone, glass and Belgian Block. These materials provide continuity with other structures along Greenbelt Road. Furthermore, the architectural elevations submitted in conjunction with the detailed site plan demonstrate that design features were added to the building to enhance visual interest.

“(7) To promote a sense of place by preserving character-defining features within a community;

“Comment: The proposal preserves the character of the community as it was designed with materials that are compatible with the surrounding residential and commercial buildings.

“(8) To encourage pedestrian activity;

“Comment: This proposal includes pedestrian features in its design. For instance, the applicant proposes to provide a concrete sidewalk along the front and sides of the proposed bank. This concrete sidewalk will provide a connection to and from the bank for all pedestrian traffic in the surrounding area.

“(9) To promote economic vitality and investment;

“Comment: This proposal provides employment opportunities for the citizens of Prince George’s County. Furthermore, redevelopment of this property as a bank will increase the county’s tax base.”

(B) A site plan, either the Detailed Site Plan required by Section 27-548.25 or a Conceptual Site Plan.

The applicant has filed detailed site plan (DSP-06050) in order to incorporate Lot 36 into the development district and to request the rezoning of the subject property.

(3) Filing and review of the application shall follow the site plan review procedures in Part 3, Division 9, except as modified in this Section. The Technical Staff shall review and submit a report on the application, and the Planning Board shall hold a public hearing and submit a recommendation to the District Council. Before final action the Council may remand the application to the Planning Board for review of specific issues.

The Planning Board hearing for this case is the evidentiary hearing and the Planning Board will make a recommendation to be forwarded to the District Council on this case.

(4) The District Council may approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove any amendment requested by a property owner under this Section. In approving an application and site plan, the District Council shall find that the proposed development conforms with the purposes and recommendations for the Development District, as stated in the Master Plan, Master Plan Amendment, or Sector Plan, and meets applicable site plan requirements.

Comment: Under Section 27-548.26(b)(5), the District Council is required to find “that the proposed development conforms with the purposes and recommendations for the Development District as stated in the Master Plan, Master Plan Amendment or Sector Plan, and meets applicable site plan requirements.” Conformance to the applicable site plan requirements is being demonstrated in the detailed site plan.

Staff is in agreement with the applicant’s justification to include Lot 36 in the Development District as part of the redevelopment of this site and with the proposal to rezone the property from the R-55 Zone to the C-S-C Zone. Staff concludes that the applicant has adequately demonstrated, for purposes of including Lot 36 in the DDOZ and rezoning it from R-55 to C-S-C, that the

proposed development conforms with the purposes and recommendations for the development district as stated in the sector plan and will meet the applicable site plan requirements prior to the approval of a detailed site plan.

8. In general, the detailed site plan is in conformance with the development district standards of the development district overlay plan. Where a development district standard cannot be complied with, Section 27-548.25(c) allows the applicant to ask the Planning Board to apply different development standards, unless the plan provides otherwise. The Board must find that the alternate standard will benefit the development and the development district and will not substantially impair implementation of the master plan, master plan amendment, or sector plan. The applicant requests relief from one development standard regarding a required build-to line in the following discussion in the applicant's justification statement:

“BUILDING ORIENTATION AND SETBACKS

- “4. A front build-to line between 15 and 30 feet from the right-of way shall be established for any commercial buildings which front onto the south side of Greenbelt Road between Kenilworth Avenue and the CSX railroad right-of-way.**

“Comment: The applicant seeks to amend the front build-to-line along Greenbelt Road from 15 to 59 feet. The subject property is located on the very western edge of the DDOZ. By allowing an amendment to the build-to-line, the property serves as a transition into more suburban layouts to properties outside the DDOZ. Although parking is provided in front of the building, parking will be fully screened by a brick wall and a landscape strip.”

The Community Planning Division provided the following analysis of the applicant's proposal:

“The requested amendment to the Development District Standards to increase the front build-to line to 59 feet is inconsistent with the objectives of the plan and the intent of the design standards to ‘improve the overall corridor appearance and spatial organization to produce a unifying image of the commercial corridor’ (p. 125), and to ensure that ‘off-street parking lots and garages shall not be the dominant feature of the street edge, interrupt the pedestrian route, or negatively impact vistas to and from surrounding areas’ (P. 212).”

“The applicant has made a good-faith effort to explore alternative site layout options to bring the bank structure closer to the street and relocate parking areas to the rear. However, staff understands that the grading of the site would result in a building that would be located several feet above street level if it were located along the build-to line specified in the Development District Standards, which would be at odds with the intent to create a pedestrian-friendly streetscape with buildings located at grade with the sidewalk. In addition, the relocation of all parking to the rear of the site would have a detrimental impact on the design of the building and relationship to the adjoining residential neighborhood.

“To mitigate the visual impact of parking in front of the structure, the applicant has provided a combination of landscape screening and a three-foot high screening wall along the frontage of MD 193, consistent with the Development District Standards specified on page 211. In addition, a small pedestrian seating area has been proposed along the

western edge of the property as an additional public amenity on the site. However, the primary pedestrian linkage from Greenbelt Road to the front of the proposed banking structure, which also serves as handicapped access to the building, is located off to the side of the front entry. The applicant should be encouraged to relocate this pathway to be in line with the main entrance of the building to provide direct access to the street both physically and visually, and to minimize the distance traveled by the physically handicapped.

“In addition, the applicant is encouraged to extend the special paving treatments on pedestrian areas adjoining the bank building and located at the pedestrian plaza so that they continue across the proposed parking area to the plaza and Greenbelt Road. The use of special paving treatments will enhance the visual appeal of the project and more clearly delineate pedestrian crossings than simple pavement striping.”

9. The following Development District standards also apply to the site. The applicant has provided comments before each of the standards, as stated in the justification statement:

“ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS AND MATERIALS

- “1. Buildings shall be designed with compatible massing, scale and heights with adjacent structures and sensitivity to surrounding communities.**

“Comment: The applicant’s proposal complies with this design standard. Specifically, the proposed building is 28 feet in height which is compatible with the residential buildings to the south of the subject property as well as the single story commercial structures to the east and west of the subject property. In addition, the proposed Commerce Bank building will be 3,676 square feet in size. Again, this building is comparable in size to the other commercial structures in the area.

- “2. Appropriate roof forms shall be selected for the height, size, type and function(s) of a proposed building.**

“Comment: The proposed roof form for the Commerce Bank building is appropriate. The height of the roof conforms to the other structures in the area. Furthermore, the applicant has selected a roof that slopes toward the front entrance of the proposed building. This feature enhances the visual interest of the proposed Commerce bank building.

- “3. Roof lines shall be varied, where appropriate, through the use of pediments, parapets, lantern, cupolas or other architectural features.**

“Comment: The proposed Commerce Bank building complies with the design standard outlined in 3. As illustrated on the attached building elevations, the roof line for the majority of the proposed bank structure measures at 15 feet 2-5/8 inches. However, there is a portion toward the center of the proposed structure where the roof line increases to 26 feet, thereby creating a varied roof line.

- “4. Building facades shall be varied and articulated to provide visual interest and enhance the street edge by utilizing elements such as arcades, porches, bay windows, display cases, balconies and/or other projections/recesses. The**

maximum front façade wall length shall be 100 feet before articulation such as projections or recesses and changes in material and/or color.

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 4. Specifically, and as demonstrated on the architectural elevations submitted in conjunction with this detailed site plan, the building fronts Greenbelt Road and is 73.75 feet in length. The challenge is to design a building that has architectural interest and continuity for the length of the building. The applicant, through the use of a number of unique architectural features, has met this challenge. For example, the applicant is proposing four main façade materials; Red Brick, Limestone, Glass, and Belgian Block. The use of these materials along the length of this building brings continuity to the Greenbelt Road frontage. In order to retain architectural interest, the applicant will provide a canopy over the entrance of the bank. This architectural element helps break up the lines of the building. The applicant has also chosen to vary the roof line of the building. The roof line above the banking floor is almost 11 feet higher than the remaining roof line. This section of the roof will slope toward the front entrance of the bank to add visual interest.

- “5. Building fenestration such as entrances and windows shall be compatible on each structure and shall reflect a pedestrian scale. Individual “punched” or framed windows are recommended. Buildings designed with “ribbons or bands” of glass divided by precast concrete panels are also acceptable. Buildings designed entirely with “ribbons or bands” of glass at the ground-level shall be avoided.**

“Comment: The proposed Commerce Bank building complies with the design standards outlined in 5. The proposed building entrance was scaled to the pedestrian with varied architectural features and materials. As stated above, the proposed building has a canopy over the front entrance for pedestrians. Furthermore, this building was not designed entirely with “ribbons or bands” at the ground level.

- “6. Large blank building walls are not permitted when facing public areas, such as streets, parking lots or zones of pedestrian activity.**

“Comment: The applicant’s proposed building complies with the design standard outlined in 6. The applicant is not proposing to provide large blank walls. The building is 73.75 feet in length. A canopy is proposed to break up the blank wall along the front. Furthermore, the façade of the proposed Commerce Bank building includes signage and has a variety of materials; Red Brick, Limestone, Glass, and Belgian Block.

- “7. All mechanical equipment shall be screened from view, including equipment on roof area. Screening shall be a natural extension of the building walls or roofing and constructed of the same building materials.**

“Comment: The proposed development complies with the design standards outlined in 7 as well as the screening requirements within the *Landscape Manual*. Specifically, the mechanical equipment will be located on the roof and will be screened with the same building materials.

- “8. All antennas and dishes, either on buildings or freestanding, shall be located as inconspicuously as possible and shall either be screened from view from streets and pedestrian areas (in the case of dishes) or designed and painted to blend into their surroundings, to the degree possible.**

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 8. The applicant is not proposing any antennas or dishes in its building design.

- “9. Durable and attractive high-quality materials shall be used on all buildings within the Core Area. Exterior building materials such as tinted or textured precast concrete, brick, stone, iron and steel are recommended. Imitation or synthetic exterior building materials which simulate the appearance of stone or brick shall be avoided.**

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 9. Specifically, the proposed building materials are Red Brick, Limestone, Glass and Belgian Block.

- “10. The color palette for buildings shall be kept simple and the selection of exterior colors shall allow the buildings to blend in harmoniously with the overall fabric of adjacent buildings.**

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 10. The proposed colors are Red Brick and Limestone.

- “11. Trademark (or chain) buildings are not permitted along the corridor, including Beltway Plaza, unless their exterior design is modified to relate to both the specific site and local building traditions, particularly regarding the building’s siting, form, scale, detailing, color and construction materials.**

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 11. Although the applicant is proposing to construct its trademark building on the subject property, it is proposing to incorporate brick into its building design to reflect and complement the building material trends in this area. A rendering of the “prototype” Commerce Bank building has been attached to this statement in order to help demonstrate this change.

“AWNINGS

- “1. Awnings and canopies shall be utilized, in appropriate locations, at street level entrances and windows to indicate retail and office entrances and enrich the street edge.**

“Comment: The proposed Commerce Bank building complies with the design standards outlined in 1. Specifically, the applicant is proposing to provide a canopy over the front entrance to the bank. The applicant has chosen to use Limestone in the canopy so as to help distinguish this architectural detail.

- “2. Awnings and canopies may project up to five feet beyond the building edge, but shall be at least eight feet above the sidewalk to avoid obstacles in the pedestrian space.**

“Comment:The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 2. The proposed canopy is nine feet above the sidewalk and entrance to the bank.

- “3. The placement of awnings and their style, coloring and size shall complement the architectural style and character of the building.**

“Comment: The applicant is not proposing awnings in the design of its building.

- “4. A building’s first floor may be recessed from the front setback to provide a pedestrian arcade/colonnade or port-cochere at the primary building entrance. The arcade/colonnade or port-cochere shall have a vertical clearance of 10 feet or more.**

“Comment: The applicant is not proposing a pedestrian arcade/colonnade or port-cochere as part of its building design.

“SIGNS

- “3. Freestanding or monument signs (signs mounted directly on a solid base) shall be used along the Greenbelt Road commercial corridor. Pole-mounted and pylon signs are not permitted.**

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 3. Specifically, there will be a double faced monument sign to identify the proposed bank. The sign detail is shown on sheet 5 of 10 in the detailed site plan.

- “4. Freestanding or monumental signs shall be used primarily to identify the name and type of business establishment. These signs may also be used as directional signs for buildings, especially those with multiple tenants, and parking lots and/or garages.**

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 4. As stated above, the applicant proposes to provide a double faced monument ID. sign to identify the name of the proposed bank. Furthermore, the applicant proposes to provide freestanding directional signs for the parking lot and drive-through tellers of the proposed bank. The sign details are shown on sheet 5 of 10 of the detailed site plan

- “5. The location of freestanding signs shall comply with Section 27-614(a) of the Zoning Ordinance.**

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 5. Specifically, the proposed bank building associated with the freestanding sign is over 40 feet behind the front street line. Also the sign is at least 10 feet behind the existing right of way line.

- “6. The height of freestanding/monument exterior signs for existing shopping malls or other existing retail establishments shall not exceed 25 feet. The height of freestanding/monument signs for new development shall not exceed 15 feet along Greenbelt Road and 10 feet elsewhere along the commercial corridor. A coordinated sign program for the entire development with a directional sign(s) on the nearby major highway shall be encouraged.**

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 6. The proposed height of the double faced monument sign is seven feet.

- “8. The area of freestanding signs shall not exceed 1 square foot for each 4 linear feet of street frontage, to a maximum of 100 square feet for building(s)**

not located in an integrated shopping center, other commercial center with 3 or more businesses served by common and immediate off-street parking and loading facilities, or an office building complex, as modified from Section 27-614(c). The street frontage shall be measured on the property occupied by the use associated with the sign.

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 8. The proposed square footage of freestanding sign for the bank is 48 square feet, which is below the 60 square feet that is allowed for the street frontage of the subject property.

“9. The quantity of freestanding signs shall be equal to or less than the amount permitted by Section 27-614(d), Freestanding Signs, in Part 12 of the Zoning Ordinance.

“Comment:The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 9.

“10. New billboard signs shall not be permitted along the Greenbelt Road commercial corridor.

“Comment:The applicant is not proposing to construct a new billboard sign.

“INDIVIDUAL COMMERCIAL TENANT SIGNS ATTACHED TO A BUILDING OR CANOPY

“11. Signature or major user facade signs shall be placed near the roof line of the building. One sign per building is permitted except where building recognition is required from different vantage points and the two signs are not visible at the same time from any of those points.

“Comment: The applicant proposes to place two signature signs on the front of the building. The signs are different; one is a red Commerce Bank logo which will be located on the actual façade of the building. The other is located on the canopy and spells out Commerce Bank with black letters along with a smaller red Commerce Bank logo. Vehicles traveling eastbound on Greenbelt Road can only see the sign attached to the canopy because the canopy extends from the building and hides the Commerce Bank logo that is attached to the actual wall. However, vehicles traveling westbound on Greenbelt Road can only see the logo sign from that vantage point because the canopy is extended over the entrance of the bank.

“Both signs on the front as well as the Commerce Bank signs on the sides of the building have been placed near the roof line. The sign details are shown on sheet 5 and 9 of 10.

“12. Roof-mounted signs and signs protruding above parapet walls or the roof line shall not be permitted.

“Comment: The applicant is not proposing any roof-mounted signs or signs that protrude above parapet walls or roof line.

“13. Building signs shall be simply designed, contain a minimum amount of information and have a maximum of three colors. Building signs that are excessively elaborate, over-sized in proportions, or use poor quality materials are not permitted. At Beltway Plaza, sign colors shall be

consistent with the established Beltway red letter color and neutral background which may include, in addition to logos, unique and distinct architectural features. National retailer signs are permitted but may require modifications to remain compatible with the established sign plan at Beltway Plaza or along Greenbelt Road.

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 13. The applicant is not proposing to provide any building signs with more than three colors.

“14. Tenant signs shall be located in a designated sign field, or other suitable space, that has been provided as part of the overall architectural design. Wall signs shall be placed in the zone of the facade which is directly above the storefront. The size of the sign shall be in proportion to the height and width of the building face to which it is attached.

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 14. The applicant will be the only business using the subject property.

“15. Commercial tenants (businesses) fronting public streets and with an exterior façade shall be limited to one sign per tenant to avoid overcrowding and cluttering the building facade.

“Comment:As stated above, the two signs on the front of the building are required for building recognition from different vantage points. The sign attached to the canopy can only be seen by vehicles traveling eastbound on Greenbelt Road because the canopy blocks the view of the logo sign attached to the wall. At the same time, vehicles traveling westbound on Greenbelt Road can only see the logo sign attached to the actual wall.

“The signs are different and do not clutter the building façade. Only one sign, the red Commerce Bank logo, will be placed on the actual exterior brick façade. The other sign, the black Commerce Bank sign along with a smaller red logo, will be placed on the limestone canopy just above the entrance to the building. The signs compliment each other and were placed in these locations to compliment the architecture of the building rather than detract from the architecture.

“LANDSCAPE PLANTINGS, BUFFERS AND SCREENING

“1. Landscape plantings shall be provided along the Greenbelt Road commercial corridor to (1) screen parking lots from adjacent properties and roadways; (2) enhance buildings, roadways, open spaces, public activity areas, walk-ways; and (3) define parking areas.

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 1. The applicant proposes to provide landscape plantings along Greenbelt Road, 58th and 59th Avenues to screen the parking lot. In addition, the applicant is proposing to provide a low wall between the parking area and Greenbelt Road so as to provide additional screening.

“2. A conceptual landscape plan showing the general location, type and quantity of plant material shall be submitted as a component of the Conceptual Site Plan. A final landscape plan showing final location, type, size and quantity of plant material shall be submitted as a component of the Detailed Site Plan.

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 2. The applicant has included a Landscape and Lighting Plan in this Detailed Site Plan.

- “3. Landscaping, screening and buffering of all parking lots, parking garages and loading areas shall comply with the requirements of the Landscape Manual unless otherwise noted.**

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outline in 3. Specifically, the applicant proposes to provide buffering and screening in compliance with the Landscape Manual along 58th and 59th Avenues and Greenbelt Road.

- “4. The bufferyard requirements along the commercial corridor may be reduced to facilitate a compact form of development compatible with the proposed urban character of the areas surrounding the Greenbelt Metro Station. The minimum bufferyard requirements for incompatible uses in Section 4.7 of the Landscape Manual shall be reduced by 50 percent. Alternative compliance shall not be required for this reduction. A six-foot-high, opaque masonry wall or other opaque screening treatment shall be provided in conjunction with the reduced width of the bufferyard between residential and commercial uses. The plant units required per 100 linear feet of property line or right-of-way shall also be reduced by 50 percent.**

These deviations shall be reviewed and approved in detail during the time of Detailed Site Plan.

“Comment: Two of the bufferyard requirements between the residential and commercial use were reduced by 50 percent as allowed by design standard 4. A six-foot-high fence has been provided in conjunction with the reduced bufferyard requirements. First, the minimum landscaped yard requirement is 30 feet. The applicant proposes to provide 15 feet of landscaped yard, a 50 percent reduction. Second, the minimum number of plant unit requirements is 258. The applicant proposes to provide 130 plant units, a 50 percent reduction. The proposed building setback for the bufferyard meets the 40 feet minimum. The applicant proposes a building setback of 61 feet, thus the 50 percent reduction is not required in this case.

- “5. Parking lots/spaces which are located adjacent to the right-of-way line or curb edge due to site constraints shall be screened from adjacent roadways and public areas with a continuous, low masonry wall in compliance with the Parking Lot Landscape Strip, Option 4, requirements in the Landscape Manual.**

A four-foot-wide landscape strip shall be provided between the right-of-way line and the parking lot. The wall shall be between 36 and 42 inches in height and be faced on both sides with a masonry veneer. Unfinished concrete black or poured-in place concrete are not acceptable materials. The low masonry wall shall be compatible in materials and design with nearby buildings. Low shrubs and groundcover plantings, with a maximum growing height of 24 inches, may be planted in front of the wall and between the shade trees to form a continuous planting bed.

“Comment: The applicant proposes to provide a three-foot-high screening wall along Greenbelt Road with a four-foot-wide landscaped strip in front of the wall, which will screen the parking area from traffic along Greenbelt Road. The applicant also proposes to provide a three-foot-high screening wall and a four-foot-wide landscaped strip along 59th Avenue. The details of the proposed screening walls are illustrated on sheet 7 of 10 of the detailed site plan.

The applicant also proposes to provide a four-foot-wide landscaped strip with a three-foot-high landscape screening along 58th Avenue.

- “6. Parking lots utilizing berms shall be avoided in the commercial corridor as illustrated in Parking Lot Landscaping Strip, Option 2, of the Landscape Manual.**

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 6. The applicant is not proposing to install a berm to screen its parking area.

- “7. Chain-link fencing (of any type), corrugated metal, corrugated fiberglass, sheet metal or wire mesh shall not be used as screening material. Barbed wire shall not be permitted.**

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standard outlined in 7.

“PARKING AND CIRCULATION

- “1. Parking and loading spaces for commercial uses along the Greenbelt Road commercial corridor shall be consistent with the requirements set forth in Part 11 of the Landscape Manual, unless otherwise noted.**

“Comment: The applicant proposes to provide 25 spaces, 2 handicapped spaces and a van access aisle. The spaces are dimensioned in accordance with Part 11 of the Zoning Ordinance.

- “2. Off-street parking lots and garages shall not be the dominant feature of the street edge, interrupt the pedestrian route or negatively impact vistas to and from surrounding areas. Parking areas located in a front yard shall be screened from public view and separated from walkways by landscaped screening, low profile walls, decorative fencing, or shall be located to the rear or side of buildings, below grade or in a parking structure.**

“Comment: As stated above, the proposed Commerce Bank building fronts Greenbelt Road. The parking area along Greenbelt Road will be screened by a four-foot-wide landscaped strip and a three-foot-high brick wall.”

Staff Comment: The plan proposes perpendicular parking spaces that could be converted to parallel spaces, which would allow the movement of the building closer to the right-of-way. Staff recommends that the plans be revised to reflect parallel spaces and move the building forward on the site approximately 12 feet. An additional consequence of conforming to the build-to line is that additional green area could be provided at the rear of the lot, widening the bufferyard area and reducing the impervious area of the site.

“3. Common, shared entrances (curb cuts) shall be utilized for access to nonresidential property, wherever feasible, instead of individual entry points to each property or parking area. The amount of curb cuts used shall be minimized.

“Comment: The proposed plan complies with the design standards outlined in 3. There will be no direct access from Greenbelt Road. The access points are located along the side streets, 58th and 59th Avenues.

“STREET FURNITURE

- “1. Street furniture shall be consistent in style, quality and character. Street furniture shall be constructed of durable and high quality materials and require minimal maintenance.**
- “2. Street furniture, including bicycle racks, shall be placed at strategic locations, such as bus stops, public plazas, high pedestrian traffic areas, along trails, and within retail centers.**
- “3. Prior to or concurrent with the first Detailed Site Plan submission for Beltway Plaza, the Planning Board shall approve consistent styles and designs for the street furniture for all future development. This furniture shall include, but is not limited to, benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, light fixtures, banners, bus shelters, kiosks, planters and bollards.**
- “4. For any other commercial property along Greenbelt Road that proposes street furniture, the Planning Board shall approve consistent styles and designs for the street furniture that is compatible with the associated structure(s) on the property and immediately adjacent properties. This furniture shall include, but is not limited to, benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, light fixtures, banners, bus shelters, kiosks, planters and bollards.**

“Comment: The applicant is proposing to provide trash receptacles on the site.

- “5. Street lighting shall be consistent in style, quality and character and shall compliment, in fixture selection and scale, the pedestrian emphasis of the sector plan.**

The plans should be revised prior to signature approval to provide the proposed details and specifications for the lighting fixtures on site for review and approval with requirement 5 above.

In conclusion, staff find that if the conditions of approval for this case are adopted, the development will be in conformance with the development standards.

- 9. **Zoning Ordinance:** The DSP application has been reviewed for compliance with the requirements of the underlying C-S-C Zone that have not been superseded by provisions of the DDOZ, and the plan complies with these requirements.
- 10. **The Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance:** This property is exempt from the provisions of the Prince George’s County Woodland Conservation Ordinance because the

gross tract area is less than 40,000 square feet and there is no previously approved tree conservation plan. The subject property is 0.87 acre in area. The proposal is for the construction of a bank. A tree conservation plan is not required. A standard exemption for the site was approved on August 9, 2006, and it will be valid through August 9, 2008.

11. **Referral Comments:** The subject application was referred to the concerned agencies and divisions. The referral comments are summarized as follows:

- a. In a memorandum dated December 29, 2006, the Historic Preservation Section reviewed the plans and found that a Phase I archeological survey is not recommended on the above-referenced 0.87-acre property on the south side of Greenbelt Road, east of 58th Avenue and west of 59th Avenue in Berwyn Heights, Maryland. A search of current and historic photographs, topographic and historic maps, and locations of currently known archeological sites indicates the probability of archeological sites within the subject property is low. Aerial photographs indicate that the property has previously been impacted by the construction of a commercial building on the property, indicating that any archeological sites that may have been present on the property have already been adversely impacted.

Moreover, Section 106 review may require archeological survey for state or federal agencies. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties, to include archeological sites. This review is required when state or federal monies or federal permits are required for a project.

- b. The Community Planning Division, in a memorandum dated May 3, 2007, indicated that the application is located in the Developed Tier, and is in a designated corridor (Greenbelt Road/MD 193). The vision for the Developed Tier is a network of sustainable, transit-supporting, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, medium- to high-density neighborhoods. The vision for corridors is mixed residential and nonresidential uses at moderate to high densities and intensities, with a strong emphasis on transit-oriented development. This development should occur at local centers and other appropriate nodes within one-quarter mile of major intersections or transit stops along the corridor.

Lots 1-4 and part of Lot 2 are subject to the 2001 *Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for the Greenbelt Metro Area*. Lot 36 is subject to the 1989 *Approved Master Plan for Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt and Vicinity*. Since the applicant seeks to include Lot 36 within the Greenbelt Metro Area Development District Overlay Zone and to rezone the property to the C-S-C Zone, the 2001 sector plan serves as the basis for the review of this proposal.

The requests to rezone Lot 36 to the C-S-C Zone and incorporate it into the Development District Overlay Zone (DDOZ) are consistent with the requirements established by Section 27-548.26(b) of the Zoning Ordinance.

- c. The Transportation Planning Section, in memorandum dated December 12, 2006, stated that the proposed development will replace an existing commercial building and no change to the access to the site is proposed. They found that the circulation was acceptable. They also found, in a memorandum dated February 27, 2007, that the Approved Greenbelt Metro Area Sector Plan designates MD 193 as a pedestrian/bicycle corridor. This can be accommodated through the provision of continuous standard or

wide sidewalks and on-road bicycle facilities such as designated bike lanes or wide outside curb lanes. There is an existing standard sidewalk immediately behind the curb along the subject site's frontage of MD 193. A sidewalk also exists along 58th Avenue to the west of the subject site.

The applicant is proposing a wide streetscape along MD 193. This streetscape includes wide sidewalks, planting boxes, and a narrow grass strip between the sidewalk and the curb. This sidewalk is 8-foot wide. This sidewalk meets the intent of the master plan and will comfortably accommodate pedestrians along the site's frontage of MD 193. Appropriate bicycle compatible pavement markings can be considered by SHA at the time the road is resurfaced.

The Transportation Planning staff also supports the provision of the five-foot-wide sidewalk along the site's frontage of 59th Avenue, and the designated handicap access from the handicapped parking to the building entrance.

The wide sidewalk proposed along MD 193 and the five-foot-wide sidewalk along 59th Avenue accommodate pedestrians in conformance with the sector plan. An additional pedestrian connection is recommended to connect 58th Avenue to the subject site.

The sector plan recommends that "Bike racks and lockers shall be provided at transit stops, libraries, schools, recreation centers, shopping areas, and other activity centers" (Sector Plan, page 58). In keeping with this recommendation, staff recommends the provision of two bicycle racks accommodating two bikes each (four bicycle parking spaces) as follows:

1. Provide two bicycle racks accommodating two bicycles each for a minimum of four bicycle parking spaces. The location of the bicycle racks shall be marked and labeled on a revised detailed site plan, prior to signature approval.
- d. The Department of Public Works and Transportation has determined that since the project is a redevelopment site, a minimum reduction of 20 percent of the impervious area is required. The site plan should demonstrate compliance with this requirement.
 - e. The Environmental Planning Section, in a memorandum dated January 1, 2007, noted that there are no environmental issues raised by the application. A stormwater management concept approval was granted for the site (#26498-2006-00) on July 17, 2006.
 - f. The Permit Section, in a memorandum dated January 2, 2007, had a number of comments on the original plans. The applicant has revised the plans to address most of the comments, except for the following:
 1. The site plan should include the dimensions of the ultimate right-of-way from centerline for Greenbelt Road, and dimensioned minimum 35 feet from centerline for 58th Avenue and 59th Avenue.

In addition, building restriction lines have been shown on the plan that do not reflect the underlying C-S-C Zone, nor the requirements of the D-D-O Zone. The plans should be revised prior to signature approval.

- g. In a memorandum dated May 14, 2007, the State Highway Administration (SHA) recommends the upgrading of sidewalks along 58th and 59th Avenues and that the plans should be updated to reflect that 58th Avenue is not a Maryland state highway, as it is shown on the plans. The condition as noted in the SHA memorandum that 58th Avenue is not a state highway is included as a change required prior to signature approval of the plans.
 - h. The City of College Park has not responded to the referral request at the time the staff report was written.
 - i. In letter dated May 11, 2007, Edward Murphy, Town Administrator, to Chairman Parker, advised that the Town Council and Town of Berwyn Heights unanimously supported the application in a meeting on May 9, 2007.
 - j. The City of Greenbelt has verbally stated that they support the decision of the Town of Berwyn Heights.
12. The Urban Design Section recognizes the closing of 59th Avenue as desired by the City of Berwyn Heights. A pedestrian connection should be provided to the subject property and Greenbelt Road. Additional landscaping with native plant species should be provided in the landscape island created between the two streets.
13. As required by Section 27-285(b), the detailed site plan represents a reasonable alternative for satisfying the site design guidelines of Subtitle 27, Part 3, Division 9, of the Prince George's County Code without requiring unreasonable cost and without detracting substantially from the utility of the proposed development for its intended use.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the foregoing evaluation and analysis, the Urban Design staff recommends the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and:

- A. Recommend APPROVAL to the District Council of an amendment to change the boundary of the Development District by including Lot 36, Block 27 as part of the Development District,
- B. Recommend APPROVAL to the District Council to change the underlying zone of Lot 36, Block 27 from R-55 to C-S-C.
- C. APPROVE amendment to the Building Orientation and Setbacks No. 4 for the Greenbelt Road Commercial Corridor to allow adjustment of the build-to line to approximately 48 feet from the right-of-way.
- D. APPROVE DSP-06050 with the following conditions:
 - 1. Prior to certificate approval of this detailed site plan, the applicant shall modify the plan as follows or provide the specified information:
 - a. The plans shall be revised to change the parking spaces from perpendicular spaces to parallel spaces along the Greenbelt Road frontage. The building shall be relocated approximately 12 feet closer to the streetline.

- b. The pedestrian connection from the streetscape to the building shall be relocated to align with the front door of the building. Special paving shall be provided to distinguish the crossing from the surrounding asphalt parking lot. The step shall be widened from 8 feet wide to 12 feet wide.
- c. The single wall located along the sidewalk shall be revised into a minimum of two separate walls, creating a terrace system, where any retaining walls are no more than 3 feet in height. The grade of the topography from the pedestrian zone to the first wall shall be relatively flat, allowing for proper drainage. Landscaping shall be adjusted appropriately.
- d. Provide two bicycle racks accommodating two bicycles each for a minimum of four bicycle parking spaces.
- e. The details and specifications of the proposed lighting fixtures, including the height of poles, fixture type, location, and color shall be reviewed and approved by the Urban Design Section.
- f. The site plan shall include the dimensions of the ultimate right-of-way from centerline for Greenbelt Road, and dimensioned minimum 35 feet from centerline for 58th Avenue and 59th Avenue and establish the correct building restriction lines on the plans.
- g. Building restriction lines should be corrected on the plans.
- h. A detail of the proposed benches shall be shown on the plans and reviewed by Urban Design for durability and design quality. Sufficient shade shall be provided for the sitting area.
- i. The plans shall be changed to indicate that 58th Avenue is not a Maryland state highway.
- j. The plan shall demonstrate that the impervious area of the site has been reduced a minimum of 20 percent from the previous impervious area.
- k. A pedestrian connection shall be provided from 59th Avenue to the sidewalk within the right-of-way along the subject property.
- l. The wood fence located within the bufferyard shall be substituted with a non-wood fence in an earthtone color.
- m. *Tilia Cordata* shall be substituted with another acceptable species for street tree planting.
- n. The landscape island created in the design of the closure of 59th Avenue shall be landscaped with native plant species.