



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772
www.pgplanning.org

PGCPB No. 2020-71

File No. DSDS-707

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Prince George's County Planning Board is charged with the approval of Detailed Site Plans pursuant to Part 3, Division 9 of the Zoning Ordinance of the Prince George's County Code; and

WHEREAS, in consideration of evidence presented at a public hearing on May 14, 2020, regarding Departure from Sign Design Standards DSDS-707 for Laurel Hospital Property, the Planning Board finds:

1. **Request:** A Departure from Sign Design Standards (DSDS) is requested from the institutional use sign requirements of Section 27-617(a) of the Zoning Ordinance. This request was made in accordance with Section 27-612 of the Zoning Ordinance, to allow for taller, larger, and greater quantity of signs than typically allowed.

In conjunction with this DSDS, the Planning Board approved detailed site plan DSP-19049 (PGCPB Resolution No. 2020-69) for development of a 70,200-square-foot freestanding medical facility and a 79,900-square-foot medical office building on the site of the existing Laurel Hospital. The Board also approved a departure from design standards DDS-667 (PGCPB Resolution No. 2020-70) for the reduction in size of standard parking spaces to 9 feet by 18 feet. This development represents the first phase of a larger project to redevelop the hospital site into a medical campus.

2. **Development Data Summary:**

	EXISTING	APPROVED
Zone	R-R	R-R
Use(s)	Hospital	Medical Campus
Gross Acreage	48.02	48.02
Total Gross Floor Area	389,397 sq. ft.	151,651 sq. ft.

OTHER DEVELOPMENT DATA

Parking Spaces

Facility on Medical Campus	Required	Provided**
Freestanding Medical Facility (1 space/200 sq. ft.)	351	355
Medical Office Building (1space/200 sq. ft.)	400	400
Handicap-Accessible*	22	22
Handicap Van-Accessible*	16	16
Total Parking***	751	755

Note: *Total required and provided parking includes accessible and van-accessible spaces.

**The Planning Board approved companion case, DDS-667, to reduce the standard parking space size from 9.5 feet by 19 feet to 9 by 18 feet for all parking spaces proposed in the companion DSP.

***A total of 1,400 parking spaces will be provided on the full medical campus site. This will satisfy the requirements for all uses on the property once the existing hospital is demolished.

Loading Spaces

Use	Required	Provided
Freestanding Medical Facility	1	1
Medical Office Building	1	1

3. **Location:** The subject property is in the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Van Dusen Road and Contee Road. The property is further located in Council District 1 and Planning Area 60.
4. **Surrounding Uses:** The subject property is bounded by single-family detached dwellings and Oseh Shalom Temple to the north, which are located in the City of Laurel. The southern and eastern sides of the property are bound by Van Dusen Road, with the Greater Laurel Professional Park within the City of Laurel beyond. Contee Road bounds the site to the west, with a mix of single-family detached residential and single-family attached (townhouse) residential development in the Rural Residential (R-R) and Residential Medium Development Zones located beyond.

5. **Previous Approvals:** The property was originally developed in the mid-1970s, with a 255,000-square-foot public hospital. Since then, an additional 100,125 square feet of development was added to the property, including a 4,125-square-foot MRI building in 1989, a 60,000-square-foot medical office building in 1990 (DSP-90034), and a 36,000-square-foot emergency room in 1994.

On April 19, 1990, the Prince George's County Planning Board approved DSP-90034 (PGCPB Resolution No. 90-151) for the 60,000-square-foot medical office building in the northern portion of the site. DSP-90034-01 was approved by the Planning Director in 1992, for the addition of bioretention areas and a generator enclosure. On May 30, 2000, the Planning Board approved DSP-90034-02 (PGCPB Resolution No. 00-42) for a 6,450-square-foot addition to the fourth floor of the hospital building.

In 1995, the Planning Board approved DSDS-510 (PGCPB Resolution No. 95-384) to allow an increase in the building-mounted sign area and for the provision of three additional freestanding signs.

In 2018, the Prince George's County District Council approved Council Bill CB-56-2018 to add Footnote 130 to the residential zone use table (Section 27-441 of the Zoning Ordinance), to allow for the conversion of a hospital to a health campus.

The site also has an approved Stormwater Management (SWM) Concept Plan, 53967-2018-01, which is valid through April 12, 2022.

6. **Design Features:** The subject 48.02-acre site is currently developed with a 200-bed hospital, wound care facility, medical office building, heating plant, and the Laurel-Beltsville Senior Center. The companion DSP proposes Phase 1 of a master plan to redevelop the hospital site into a health campus. The scope of Phase 1 includes the construction of a 70,200-square-foot freestanding medical facility, a 79,900-square-foot medical office building, and a 1,551-square-foot MRI building, on approximately 10 acres in the southwest quadrant of the property. Most of the area proposed for development is vacant. An existing parking lot occupies a portion of this area and is proposed to be razed as part of the companion DSP. Upon the opening of the freestanding medical facility and medical office building, the existing hospital is planned to be decommissioned and demolished. Future development is envisioned to include a second medical office building and MRI facility. The existing wound care facility, medical office building, heating plant, and the Laurel-Beltsville Senior Center are proposed to remain.

The proposed freestanding medical facility is in the southwest corner of the site, with the medical office building located to its north. The two buildings are connected by an enclosed, elevated walkway. The MRI building is shown abutting the west side of the elevated walkway, with a shared loading, mechanical, and service area abutting the east side of the walkway, between the buildings. Parking is provided on the east and west sides of each building. Access to the Phase 1 development area includes driveway entrances on Contee Road, across from Ironbridge Lane and Van Dusen Road, to the southeast of the freestanding medical facility. Two connections to an existing access road to the north are provided to the new eastern and western parking lots.

Five-foot-wide sidewalks are proposed on the north side of Van Dusen Road and east side of Contee Road, as well as along the periphery of each building and the eastern parking lots. No changes to the vehicular and pedestrian infrastructure outside of the Phase 1 development area are proposed.

The freestanding medical facility is designed to provide community medical services and is to include an emergency department, ambulatory care, labs, clinics, and imaging center. The medical office building will provide physician office space, outpatient services, and a small, ground floor area for ancillary services consisting of a restaurant and/or retail space.

Signage

The companion DSP proposes a total of 17 signs, including 13 building-mounted signs and 4 freestanding monument signs. Monument signs are proposed at driveway entrances to the site off Contee and Van Dusen Roads, with a single monument identity sign provided at the intersection of these two roads. A series of three identity signs are proposed to be mounted to the freestanding medical facility, with 10 signs to be mounted to the medical office building. The applicant has requested the subject DSDS to allow for a larger number of total signs and larger area for some signs, as part of DSP-19049.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

7. **Departure from Sign Design Standards DSDS-707:** A total of 17 freestanding and building-mounted signs are proposed for this development. These signs include 3 freestanding entrance identification signs, 1 freestanding monument sign identifying the Laurel Medical Center campus, and 13 building-mounted signs identifying building names, entrances, and tenant identification. As an institutional development, associated signage is required to conform to the requirements of Section 27-617(a) of the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant has requested a DSDS, in accordance with Section-27-612 of the Zoning Ordinance, to allow for taller, larger, and greater quantity of signs. Signage provided differs from the requirements of Section 27-617, as follows:

- (a) **In any zone (except Comprehensive Design and Mixed Use Zones) where a church; library; school; hospital; fire station; community center; day care center for children; service, fraternal, or civic organizations; or other similar institution is allowed, a sign may be erected. Institutional signs shall meet the following design standards:**

- (1) **Maximum area for each sign - 48 square feet.**

Each proposed, building-mounted sign is less than 48 square feet. Individual freestanding and monument sign areas are shown in the departure request as 48 square feet or less. However, the area for freestanding signs is not identified on the plans and appears to be much greater than 48 square feet. The sign calculations table provided on the plans should be corrected to reflect the individual area of each of the

17 signs provided. In approving DSP-19049, the Planning Board included a condition for this information to be provided on the site plans prior to certification.

(2) Maximum height - 8 feet above finished grade at base of sign.

Three freestanding signs are proposed to be approximately 18.5 feet in height above finished grade at the base of signs. The site identification monument sign is proposed to be slightly greater than 14 feet in height above finished grade at the base of the sign. Signage is not shown on architectural elevations for either building. Therefore, the Planning Board included a condition of approval of DSP-19049 requiring that architectural elevations to be revised prior to certification to identify signage locations.

Given the scale of each building and the overall medical campus, the freestanding signs should be clearly visible, so having a height greater than 8 feet is appropriate for this development.

(3) Minimum setback - 15 feet from adjoining land in any Residential Zone (or land proposed to be used for residential purposes in a Comprehensive Design, Mixed Use, or Planned Community Zone).

All proposed signage conforms to this criterion.

(4) Type allowed - freestanding or attached to a building.

Freestanding and building-mounted signage is proposed.

(5) Maximum number - 1 per street the property fronts on (must face street frontage).

Under this provision, a total of two signs would be allowed, as the property fronts on two streets. A total of 17 signs are proposed for both the freestanding medical facility and medical office building. Three freestanding signs are proposed, one each at site access point off of Contee Road, and one at the entrance off of Van Dusen Road. A fourth, freestanding, monument, identity sign is proposed at the corner of Contee and Van Dusen Roads. For both buildings, a total of 13 building-mounted signs are proposed. These include University of Maryland Medical Center identity signs, identity signage for service areas, such as the emergency department, and tenant identity signage for the medical office building.

Section 27-239.01(b)(7)(A) provides that, in order for the Planning Board to grant the departure, it shall make the following findings:

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

Section 27-589(a) of the Zoning Ordinance contains the following purposes for regulating signs:

- (1) **To promote the health, safety, and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the Regional District;**
- (2) **To encourage and protect the appropriate use of land, buildings, and structures;**
- (3) **To regulate unsightly and detrimental signs which could depreciate the value of property and discourage quality development in the Regional District;**
- (4) **To regulate signs which are a hazard to safe motor-vehicle operation;**
- (5) **To eliminate structurally unsafe signs which endanger a building, structure, or the public;**
- (6) **To prevent the proliferation of signs that could detract from the scenic qualities of the landscape or the attractiveness of development; and**
- (7) **To control the location and size of signs, so as to provide for adequate identification and advertisement in a manner that is compatible with land uses in the Regional District.**

In general, the purposes of the sign regulations are to promote the health, safety, and welfare of residents, workers, and motorists by increasing and enhancing sign visibility and readability, to regulate unsightly and detrimental signs, which could depreciate the value of the property, to prevent the proliferation of signs that could detract from the attractiveness of development, and to control scale, consistent with the intended advertising purposes.

The proposed signs are sufficiently sized and located so motorists can easily find the campus and its entrances. The proposed signs will not impede visibility for drivers entering or exiting the site. Given the large size of the property, the signs will not create an appearance of

proliferation. The signs will establish a sense of place, an identity for the campus at a major intersection.

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

The applicant provided an analysis of the existing signs on the property, which will largely be replaced by the proposed signs. They indicate that the building-mounted signs will total less area than the existing large Laurel Hospital Center sign. In addition, the property has two existing freestanding signs, which will be removed and replaced, with two new signs added. Given the specific circumstances of this request, the applicant states, and the Planning Board agrees, that the departure is the minimum necessary to support the goals and needs of this multi-phased medical campus.

(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.**

One purpose of allowing multiple signs for this particular medical campus is to provide clear direction for people seeking emergency services, especially at night. The departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances that are unique to this site, which is a large campus that provides numerous services and includes a building that provides 24-hour emergency medical services. Therefore, the departure is necessary, and the proposed additional signage will better serve visitors of this medical campus and the general welfare of the residents of the County.

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

The placement of the signs will not impair the visual or functional integrity of the surrounding neighborhood. The buildings are set back over 140 feet from the roadways, and so the additional freestanding signs will allow for better direction into the site. The additional building-mounted signs will then allow for navigation for patrons on the site. The signs will not attract undue attention, but will provide for adequate identification and are compatible with the overall campus.

Based on the analysis above the Planning Board approved the departure request for the proposed signage program, which is designed at an appropriate scale for the size and type of development.

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 APPROVED Departure from Sign Design Standards DSDS-707 for Laurel Hospital Property, to allow for a total of 4 freestanding signs and 13 building-mounted signs, with dimensions as shown on DSP-19049.


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

* * * * *

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 Washington, seconded by Commissioner Geraldo, with Commissioners Washington, Geraldo, Bailey, Doerner and Hewlett voting in favor of the motion at its regular meeting held on Thursday, May 14, 2020, in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

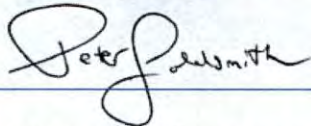
Adopted by the Prince George's County Planning Board this 14th day of May 2020.

Elizabeth M. Hewlett
Chairman


By Jessica Jones
Planning Board Administrator

EMH:JJ:AB:nz

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL SUFFICIENCY



M-NCPPC Legal Department
Date: May 11, 2020