

Case No. SP-05099

Applicant: Commerce Bank

COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND,
SITTING AS THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

ORDER AFFIRMING PLANNING BOARD SITE PLAN DECISION,
WITH REVISIONS AND CONDITIONS

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, after review of the administrative record, that the decision of the Planning Board in PGCPB No. 06-171, approving with conditions a detailed site plan for a bank on property described as approximately 0.63 acres of land in the M-U-I/D-D-O Zone, in the northeast corner of the intersection of Guilford Road and Baltimore Avenue (US Route 1), in College Park, is:

AFFIRMED, for the following reasons, which are hereby adopted as the findings of fact and conclusions of law of the District Council in this case:

A. The District Council adopts Board findings concerning development data, par. 2; location, par. 3, surrounding uses, par. 4; and previous approvals, par. 5. These paragraphs have the basic information about the site and the proposed commercial development.

B. As to the design of the proposed commercial bank, the District Council concludes:

(1) The subject property, in the M-U-I/D-D-O Zone, includes 0.63 acres and has two commercial structures. The bank structure as proposed would be at the northeast corner of Guilford Road and Baltimore Avenue, with parking in the rear and a drive-through window in the middle of the site.

(a) The bank building does not meet the 70% minimum frontage coverage requirement in the College Park Sector Plan. No building frontage is proposed on the northern frontage on Route 1.

(b) The bank building as proposed does not represent a significant commercial center with a mix of uses, and does not promote a pedestrian-oriented environment within the College Park Development District.

(c) In particular, the drive-through window in the bank, a feature that is specifically prohibited in the design guidelines, must be removed from the building.

(d) The site plan and proposed development must be revised, to conform to College Park Sector Plan requirements, design guidelines, and maps.

(2) The District Council agrees that this site is in need of commercial redevelopment. The proposed bank building, if redesigned to conform to Sector Plan guidelines and requirements, may be approved.

(3) The District Council is in general agreement with comments and findings on pages 6 through 11 of the Planning Board's resolution, PGCPB No. 06-171. Exceptions are as follows:

(a) The Board suggests, in par. 8.a. on page 6, that the subject site is not of "practical" size to have a mix of uses. The District Council concludes that both bank and retail/commercial office uses should be developed on the property, which is sufficiently large for both use types.

(b) The District Council concludes that bank and retail/commercial office uses will be compatible with one another, under § 27-546.19 (c) of the Zoning Ordinance. These two land use types are very similar, in traffic generation, parking, and visual effects.

(c) The District Council further concludes that bank and retail/commercial office uses will be compatible with adjacent residential and commercial development, and with future development, as provided in § 27-546.19 (c). The applicant's

revised detailed site plan must show landscaping and buffering substantially similar to what the present site plan shows, to screen and buffer properties north and east of the site. The revised plan must also show on the Baltimore Avenue and Guilford Road frontages, and in the interior of the property, a pedestrian-oriented environment, comfortable and inviting, as stated in the Sector Plan.

(d) The Council will require retention of the existing commercial office building as leasable space on Baltimore Avenue, to provide a mix of uses and frontage coverage, unless the applicant can offer a different combination of bank and office uses in a two-story building and Urban Design and College Park review and approve it. The District Council finds that a bank building showing two stories (in visual effect) and the present two-story structure on the Baltimore Avenue frontage, with appropriate modifications, will be compatible with buildings on adjacent properties, as to size, height, and massing. Two-story structures on this central commercial site in the College Park Development District are necessary to encourage new development or redevelopment on adjacent properties, but their size, height, and massing will not overwhelm adjacent uses and structures.

(e) As the Planning Board concluded, the applicant's present proposal generally conforms with requirements in § 27-546.19 (c) (5). The revised site plan, with review by Urban Design and the City of College Park, should show site features similar to those on the present plan, to minimize intrusive effects on adjacent properties and encourage more mixed commercial development, as recommended in the College Park Sector Plan.

(f) As to building materials and color, the applicant's present plan should be modified, so that large expanses of glass material are eliminated to ensure compliance with Building Design Standard B.3 of the College Park Sector Plan, and the design should utilize a two-part organizational structure which promotes a sense of human scale.

This standard is intended for urbanized or semi-urban neighborhoods with local pedestrian traffic.

Affirmance of the Planning Board's decision is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to signature approval of a revised site plan, the applicant shall:
 - a. Provide the sign face area calculation for the secondary blue sign.
 - b. Provide a site plan note as follows: "the height of the primary identification sign on the entrance tower shall not exceed the roof line.
 - c. Provide required evidence and a site plan note that the site is exempt from Subdivision Regulations.
 - d. Correctly label street trees on Baltimore Avenue.
 - e. Relocate the Guilford Road crosswalk and handicapped ramp to the west of their current location, closer to Route 1, in consultation with the State Highway Administration (SHA).
 - f. Re-stripe Guilford Road to show three 10-foot lanes and a crosswalk, subject to approval by SHA.
 - g. Relocate the utility poles, if feasible, from Baltimore Avenue and Guilford Road to an appropriate location at the periphery of the applicant's property in consultation with PEPCO.
 - h. Connect the sidewalk on Guilford Road to the sidewalk along the rear of the building, and enhance landscaping at this location, with a greater variety of plant material.
 - i. Replace the crosswalk on Baltimore Avenue with interlocking brick pavers, in consultation with SHA.
 - j. Install four pedestrian lights, in conformity with the city's lighting plan.
 - k. Retain the existing Honey Locusts on Baltimore Avenue, if at all possible, and correctly label the plans.
 - l. Include a minimum of two trash receptacles, and utilize Victor Stanley or equivalent products for the street furniture, to match existing furniture on Route 1.
 - m. Remove the brick wall in front of the plaza on Baltimore Avenue.

- n. Redesign the plaza area to include additional seating and landscaping.
- 2. The applicant shall file a revised detailed site plan, to be reviewed and approved by the Urban Design Section and the City of College Park. On the revised plan, the applicant shall:
 - (a) Remove the drive-through banking facility and the drive-through canopy.
 - (b) Increase the frontage on Baltimore Avenue and increase the total leasable square footage. To meet the minimum 70% building façade requirement in the Sector Plan, the detailed site plan shall be revised, in accordance with one of these options:
 - (i) The applicant may retain the 2.5-story brick building and use it (or allow its use) as commercial offices, with appropriate renovations for new or existing tenants or purchasers. The applicant may remove the half-story space behind the building, and the area now occupied by this half-story space may be utilized for parking.
 - If option b (i) is chosen, then prior to certificate approval of the detailed site plan, the applicant shall use additional design solutions to provide a façade that portrays the building as a two-story structure. The building's elevation shall include materials such as brick, stainless steel or stone. These plans shall be jointly reviewed and approved by the Urban Design Section and the City of College Park.
 - (ii) In the alternative, the applicant may provide commercial office space above the bank building, and widen the building façade to meet the minimum 70% building façade requirement in the College Park Sector Plan.
- 3. Prior to signature approval of the detailed site plan, the applicant shall show conformance with design guidelines as to architectural facades, in Building Design Standard B.3 of the College Park Sector Plan. The facades should not show large expanses of glass, and the design should meet the 40% minimum – 80% maximum window coverage standard. The Baltimore Avenue and Guilford Road elevations should include brick, stone, or steel accents.

Ordered this 12th day of March, 2007, by the following vote:

In Favor: Council Members Exum, Bland, Campos, Dean, Harrington and Turner

Opposed:

Abstained:

Recused: Council Member Olson

Absent: Council Members Dernoga and Knotts

Vote: 6-0

COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE GEORGE'S
COUNTY, MARYLAND, SITTING AS THE
DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THAT PART OF
THE MARYLAND-WASHINGTON REGIONAL
DISTRICT IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY,
MARYLAND

By: _____
Camille A. Exum, Chair

ATTEST:

Redis C. Floyd
Clerk of the Council