



Detailed Site Plan Departure from Sign Design Standards Steeplechase Business Park

DSP-05044-14
DSDS-24001

REQUEST	STAFF RECOMMENDATION
DSP-05044-14: To develop a multi-tenant retail building on Parcels 69 and 70. DSDS-24001: A departure from Section 27-613(c) of the prior Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance.	With the conditions recommended herein: APPROVAL of Detailed Site Plan DSP-05044-14 APPROVAL of Departure from Design Standards for Signage DSDS-24001

Location: On the south side of Alaking Court, approximately 1000 feet east of its intersection with Hampton Park Boulevard.	
Gross Acreage:	2.03
Zone:	IE
Zone Prior:	I-1
Reviewed per prior Zoning Ordinance:	Section 27-1903(b)
Dwelling Units:	0
Gross Floor Area:	15,150
Planning Area:	75A
Council District:	06
Municipality:	0
Applicant/Address: ATAPCO BELTSVILLE LLC One South Street, Suite 2800 Baltimore, MD 21202	
Staff Reviewer: Price, Todd Phone Number: 301-952-3994 Email: Todd.Price@ppd.mncppc.org	



Planning Board Date:	09/26/2024
Planning Board Action Limit:	09/30/2024
Staff Report Date:	09/12/2024
Date Accepted:	06/20/2024
Informational Mailing:	02/08/2024
Acceptance Mailing:	06/14/2024
Sign Posting Deadline:	08/27/2024

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THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Detailed Site Plan DSP-05044-14
Departure from Sign Design Standards DSDS-24001
Steeplechase Business Park

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 technical staff report.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The subject property is within the Industrial, Employment (IE) Zone and was previously located within the Light Industrial (I-1) Zone. This application is being reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the prior Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance. Pursuant to Section 27-1903(b) of the Zoning Ordinance, certain proposals or permit applications may utilize the prior Zoning Ordinance for development of the subject property. The applicant has elected to have this application reviewed under the requirements of the prior Zoning Ordinance, and therefore, this application is being processed as an amendment to Detailed Site Plan DSP-05044. Staff considered the following in reviewing this application:

- a. The prior Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance for the Light Industrial (I-1) Zone, and site design guidelines;
- b. Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-03113;
- c. The 2010 *Prince George's County Landscape Manual*;
- d. The Prince George's County Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance;
- e. The Prince George's County Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance;
- f. Referral Comments; and
- g. Community Feedback.

FINDINGS

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

1. **Request:** The subject detailed site plan (DSP) requests to develop a multi-tenant retail building on Parcels 69 and 70.

The applicant also requests a departure from sign design standards (DSDS) for an additional 157.5 square feet of building-mounted signage.

2. **Development Data Summary:**

	EXISTING	EVALUATED
Zone(s)	IE (prior I-1)	I-1
Use(s)	Vacant	Retail
Gross Tract Acreage	2.03	2.03
Parcels	2	2
Gross Floor Area (GFA)	0 sq. ft.	15,150 sq. ft.

Parking Requirements (Per Section 27-568(a) of the prior Zoning Ordinance)

	REQUIREMENT	PROPOSED
Integrated Shopping Center 1.0 per 250 sq. ft. of GFA $=15,150/250=60.6$	141	141
Standard car spaces		91
Compact car spaces		44
Handicap Van-accessible	5	6

Loading Spaces (Per Section 27-582(a) of the prior Zoning Ordinance)

	Required	Provided
Loading spaces (12 feet x 33 feet)	3	1*

Note: *As part of an integrated shopping center, 2 loading spaces are provided elsewhere in the shopping center.

Bicycle Spaces

This DSP includes two U-shaped bicycle racks, which are located at the building entrance, to support a multimodal system of service.

Sign Design Data—Building-Mounted Signage Area

Lineal feet of width at front of the building	Maximum Area Permitted	Area Requested	Departure Requested
190 feet	380 sq. ft.	537.5 sq. ft.*	157.5 sq. ft.*

Note: *DSDS-24001, for an additional 157.5 square feet of building-mounted signage, has been requested with this DSP.

3. **Location:** The subject site consists of 2.03 acres and is located on Parcels 69 and 70 within the Steeplechase Business Park, recorded in the Prince George's County Lands Records in Plat Book SJH 250, Plat No. 9. Specifically, it is located on the south side of Alaking Court, approximately 1,000 feet east of its intersection with Hampton Park Boulevard. The subject site address is 9221 and 9241 Alaking Court, Capital Heights, Maryland. The subject property is in Planning Area 75A and Council District 6.
4. **Surrounding Uses:** The site lies within the Steeplechase Business Park. It is bound to the north by Alaking Court, and beyond by retail and industrial uses in the Industrial Employment (IE) Zone. To the east is a hotel, which is under construction, in the IE Zone, and beyond is Interstate 495 (Capital Beltway). To the west is a credit union, and beyond is retail use in the IE Zone. To the south is an exit ramp associated with the interchange of the Capital Beltway and Ritchie Marlboro Road.
5. **Previous Approvals:** Preliminary Plan of Subdivision (PPS) 4-03113 was approved by the Prince George's County Planning Board on March 11, 2004 (PGCPB Resolution No. 04-49), for an overall development titled Steeplechase Business Park, containing 110.26 acres in the prior Light Industrial (I-1) Zone. PPS 4-03113 approved 28 lots, 4 parcels, and 1 outparcel for development of an industrial/business park consisting of approximately 850,000 square feet of space including a bank, restaurants, a gas station, and office, retail, and warehouse space. PPS 4-03113 was approved subject to 11 conditions, of which the conditions relevant to the review of this proposed amendment are analyzed within Finding 9 of this technical staff report.

In 2006, the Prince George's County District Council approved DSP-05044 for the 33.04-acre retail portion of the development along Alaking Court, which includes the subject property, approving the general site design without approving architecture for the proposed buildings.

In 2007, the District Council approved DSP-05044-01, which included architecture for several parcels, but not for the subject parcels. In conjunction with DSP-05044-01, the Planning Board and District Council also approved DSDS-641 for freestanding and building-mounted signage.

DSP-05044-02 was approved by the Planning Board in 2009 for a bank on former Parcel 18, now Parcel 34.

Four other Prince George's County Planning Director-level revisions were subsequently approved for minor site and architectural changes.

In 2015, the Planning Board approved DSP-05044-07 for a multi-tenant retail building on Parcel 49, now Parcel 63.

In 2017, the Planning Board approved DSP-05044-08 to develop a hotel building and amenities.

Three Planning Director-level revisions were subsequently approved for minor site and architectural changes.

In 2023, DSP-05044-12 was withdrawn by the applicant.

DSP-05044-13 was a Planning Director-level revision approved in 2022, for the installation of two new electric charging stations and three new parking spaces.

A Stormwater Management (SWM) Concept Plan (8004290-2000-09) and letter approved by the Prince George's County Department of Permitting, Inspection and Enforcement (DPIE) were submitted with the subject application.

6. **Design Features:** This DSP amendment proposes the development of a 15,150-square-foot multi-tenant retail building facing Alaking Court. The site proposes 141 parking spaces surrounding the building, including six handicap van-accessible spaces, and two inverted U-shaped bike racks. There will be an enclosed dumpster at the southwest corner of the site. Sidewalk and crosswalks provide connectivity to the existing sidewalk within Alaking Court.

Architecture

The proposed single-story building will be 24 feet high. The building façade includes a combination of brown and black brick, gray stone veneer, and off-white exterior finish. The roof line will have raised parapets to create visual interest. All elevations will include either a metal canopy or fabric awning above the storefront doors.



Figure 1: Typical Architecture

Signage

The subject DSP proposes one freestanding sign and building-mounted signage for future tenants. The 15-foot-high freestanding sign will be located at the entrance off of Alaking Court, at the northwest corner of the site. The building-mounted signage will be on all four sides of the building.

A detail for the freestanding sign is provided with the plan set and proposes a pylon sign to advertise future tenants. The sign will have a brick base with aluminum cabinet and raised tenant panels. The total height of the sign will be 15 feet, with a signage face of approximately 60 square feet. The freestanding sign will be illuminated externally by ground lighting.

Section 27-614 of the prior Zoning Ordinance provides regulations for freestanding signs. The maximum height allowable is 25 feet. The proposed height is 15 feet. The maximum allowable area for the sign is calculated as 1-square-foot of sign area for each 2 lineal feet of street frontage, to a maximum of 200 square feet. The maximum allowed for this project is 173.7 square feet. The DSP proposes 60 square feet and, therefore, is within the allowable square footage.

The proposed building-mounted signs are the subject of DSDS-24001, which is further discussed in Finding 9 below.

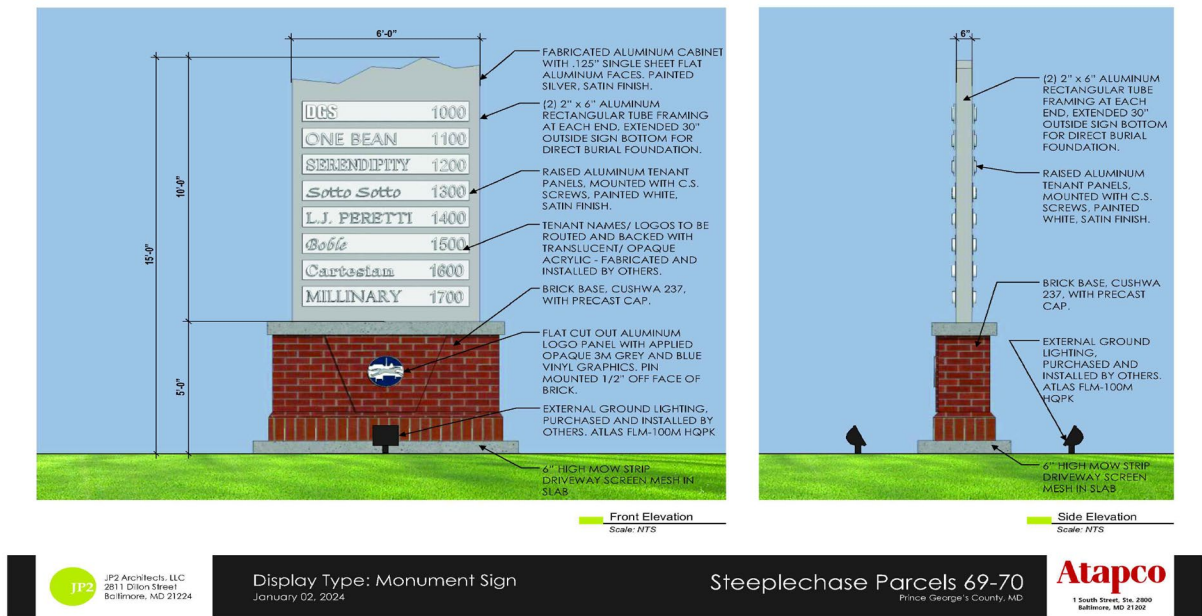


Figure 2: Freestanding Sign

Lighting

The subject DSP includes both building-mounted and pole-mounted lighting throughout the site, with details for the pole-mounted lighting included on the submitted photometric plans. Staff find that the submitted photometric plan shows adequate lighting for users on-site and is sufficient for illuminating drive aisles and building entryways. A condition is included herein requiring the applicant to add a note indicating that all light fixtures included in this DSP are full cut-off and directed downward to reduce glare and light spill-over.

Loading and Trashing Facilities

The submitted plans show one loading space provided. The development proposed with this application is part of an integrated shopping center within the Steeplechase Business Park. The parking calculations provided on the DSP require three loading spaces for the integrated shopping center. Two of the loading spaces are provided within the existing shopping center on adjacent parcels.

The submitted plans show the location of the proposed dumpster. Details of the dumpster enclosure are included in this DSP, and landscape screening is provided. Staff find that the provided enclosure and landscaping adequately screen the proposed trash facility.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Prior Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance:** The DSP application has been reviewed for compliance with the requirements of the I-1 Zone of the prior Zoning Ordinance:

- a. This DSP is in conformance with the requirements of Section 27-473(b) of the prior Zoning Ordinance, which governs uses in the I-1 Zone. Various types of stores, eating and drinking establishments, and services which could be potential tenants, are all permitted in the I-1 Zone.
 - b. Section 27-474 of the prior Zoning Ordinance provides additional regulations for development in industrial zones, including requirements for setbacks, net lot area, lot frontage, building coverage, and green area. The subject DSP meets all of these requirements, as shown on the submitted plans.
 - c. As discussed herein, this DSP is in conformance with all of the applicable site design guidelines, as referenced in Section 27-283 and contained in Section 27-274 of the prior Zoning Ordinance. The proposed plan meets all of the site design guidelines by providing safe, efficient, and convenient vehicular and pedestrian circulation, adequate lighting, and landscaping. Discussion relative to conformance with other site design guidelines can be found in Finding 6 above and in the referrals incorporated herein by reference.
- 8. Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-03113:** PPS 4-03113 was approved by the Planning Board on March 11, 2004 (PGCPB Resolution No. 04-49), subject to 11 conditions, for an overall development of Steeplechase Business Park containing a total of 110.26 acres in the I-1 Zone. Two of the conditions are relevant to this proposed amendment, as follows:
- 3. Development of this property shall be in conformance to the approved Stormwater Management Concept Plan 8004290-2000-09.**

An approved Stormwater Management Concept Plan (8004290-2000-09) and approval letter were submitted with the subject DSP.
 - 4. An automatic fire suppression system shall be provided in all new buildings proposed in this subdivision, unless the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department determines that an alternative method of fire suppression is appropriate.**

The condition is referenced in Note 7 on the recording plat, in Plat Book SJH 244, Plat No. 45. This should also be noted on the DSP as a general note and will be evaluated for conformance at the time of building permit for the proposed building on Parcels 69 and 70. A condition has been added herein, to add a general note to the DSP to satisfy this condition.
- 9. Departure from Sign Design Standards DSDS-24001:** The applicant is proposing to increase the building-mounted signage for the overall building from the allowed 380 square feet to 537.5 square feet. The applicant has requested a DSDS, in accordance with Section 27-612 of the prior Zoning Ordinance. Section 27-239.01(b)(7)(A) of the prior Zoning Ordinance 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 prior 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. The proposed building-mounted signage is appropriate, and standard, in terms of quantity and location within the Steeplechase Business Park, which has been almost fully developed. The applicant seeks to continue to provide a high-quality identity and image that will attract quality businesses and create a solid image that can be appreciated by diverse users, tenants, and patrons. The additional building-mounted signage area provides for adequate identification and advertisement in a manner that is compatible with the business park land use. The signage will support the purposes of Section 27-589(a), Purposes, by guiding orderly growth and encouraging the appropriate use of land without being unsightly, unsafe, or hazardous.

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

The applicant considers the departure to be the minimum necessary to provide visibility of signs for each tenant from the nearby road frontages and adjacent employment uses. Staff find that the proposed size, design, and location of the signs will be consistent with signage on other buildings and sites within the retail area of Steeplechase Business Park. For these reasons, staff find that the departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request.

- (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 site has an unusual orientation which is visible from Alaking Court as well as the exit ramp from the Capital Beltway. Furthermore, being within the overall

Steeplechase Business Park, which is inclusive of Ritchie-Marlboro Road, Hampton Park Boulevard, and Alaking Court, buildings within the business park are visible from a myriad of streets. The subject multi-tenant building will need to provide building-mounted signage for each tenant that can be visible from multiple orientations. This combination of circumstance is unique to the site and justifies approval of the request for an increase in the maximum area of building-mounted signage.

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

The requested departure assists in the overall effort to provide safe, attractive signage. The additional signage area provided for adequate identification and advertisement is consistent with the land use. The departure will not impair the visual, functional, or environmental quality or integrity of the surrounding neighborhood or nearby community. By contrast, it fits in with the overall commercial and industrial character of the immediate neighborhood.

Based on the analysis above, staff recommend that the Planning Board approve DSDS-24001 for the proposed building-mounted signage, which is designed at an appropriate scale for the size and type of development within the existing Steeplechase Business Park.

- 10. 2010 Prince George's County Landscape Manual:** The application is subject to the requirements of Section 4.2, Landscape Strips Along Streets; Section 4.3, Parking Lot Requirements; Section 4.4, Screening Requirements; and Section 4.9, Sustainable Landscaping Requirements, of the Landscape Manual. The required schedules have been provided, demonstrating conformance to the requirements.
- a. **Section 4.2, Requirements for Landscape Strips Along Streets**—The applicant used Option 1 and Option 2 to fulfill the requirements. Option 1 was used along Alaking Court, where a public utility easement exists. Plantings provided are one shade tree and 10 shrubs per 35 linear feet. Option 2 was used along the Capital Beltway. This requires a minimum 10-foot-wide landscape strip and has an average width of at least 15 feet. Plantings are provided at a rate of one shade tree and five shrubs per 35 linear feet of frontage.
 - b. **Section 4.3, Parking Lot Requirements**—Section 4.3 requires a percentage of the parking lot, determined by size, to be planting area. In this DSP, the parking lot area is approximately 52,594 square feet. Table 4.3-2, Parking Lot Interior Planting Requirements, of the Landscape Manual, requires 10 percent of the interior planting area, which is approximately 5,259 square feet. Schedule 4.3-2 on the landscape plans show 5,320 square feet of the interior planting area is provided.
 - c. **Section 4.4, Screening Requirements**—Section 4.4 requires screening of trash facilities. The submitted DSP shows the proposed trash dumpster to be screened by an enclosure and landscaping.
 - d. **Section 4.9, Sustainable Landscaping**—Section 4.9 requires that a certain percentage of plants within each plant type (including shade trees, ornamental trees, evergreen trees, and shrubs) be native species (or the cultivars of native species). The minimum percentage of plants of each plant type required to be native

species and/or cultivars is 50 percent for shade trees and ornamental trees, and 30 percent for evergreen trees and shrubs. Schedule 4.9-1 provided on the landscape plans, meets this requirement.

11. **Prince George's County Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance:** The site has a prior Type 2 Tree Conservation Plan, TCP2-128-90-11, which was approved on January 22, 2018. The proposed development of Parcels 69 and 70 is within the limits of disturbance of the existing development. The parcels in question do not contain any regulated environmental features or woodlands and are fully developed with a building and parking area. As such, revisions to the TCP2 are not required for conformance. A Natural Resources Inventory Equivalency Letter NRI-059-2024, approved on April 29, 2024 for the proposed activity, was submitted with this application.
12. **Prince George's County Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance:** DSP-05044-07 approved the entire Steeplechase Business Park tree canopy coverage (TCC) at 10 percent. Therefore, this application must maintain the previously approved TCC at 10 percent. The TCC schedule provided on the landscape plans meets the requirement.
13. **Referral Comments:** The subject application was referred to the concerned agencies and divisions. The referral comments are summarized as follows, and incorporated herein by reference:
 - a. **Historic Preservation and Archeological Review**—In a memorandum dated July 18, 2024 (Stabler, Smith, and Chisholm to Price), the Historic Preservation Section offered the following comments:

“The subject property does not contain and is not adjacent to any Prince George’s County Historic Sites or Resources. This proposal will not impact any historic sites, historic resources, or known archeological sites. A Phase I archeology survey is not recommended.”
 - b. **Community Planning**—In a memorandum dated August 22, 2024 (Lutz to Price), the Community Planning Division indicated that, pursuant to Part 3, Division 9, Subdivision 3 of the Zoning Ordinance, master plan conformance is not required for this application.
 - c. **Transportation Planning**—In a memorandum dated August 23, 2024 (Shaw to Price), the Transportation Planning Section offered the following comments:

“Staff conclude that the vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle access and circulation for this plan are acceptable, consistent with the site design guidelines pursuant to Subtitle 27 of the prior Zoning Ordinance, and meets the findings for pedestrian and bicycle transportation purposes if the following conditions are met:

 - “1. Prior to the certification of the detailed site plan, the applicant’s heirs, successors and/or assignees shall provide:
 - “a. Updated plan sheets that include pedestrian crosswalks, with ADA-compliant curb ramps, for all points of vehicle access.”

- d. **Subdivision**—In a memorandum dated August 28, 2024 (Bartlett to Price), the Subdivision Section offered an analysis of the subject property with no conditions of approval.
 - e. **Environmental Planning**—In a memorandum dated July 31, 2024 (Kirchhof to Price), the Environmental Planning Section found the proposed development in conformance with the prior approved TCP2-128-90-11. Natural Resources Inventory, NRI-059-2024, approved on April 29, 2024, for the proposed activity was submitted with this application.
 - f. **Permit Review**—In a memorandum dated August 26, 2024 (Jacobs to Price), the Permit Review Section offered four comments, one of which has been included as a condition of approval.
 - g. **Prince George's County Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPiE)**—In a memorandum dated June 24, 2024 (Branch to Price), DPiE commented that water and sewer lines in Alaking Court abut both parcels.
 - h. **Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)**—In an email dated July 3, 2024 (Pramanik to Price), WSSC offered analysis and comments that were subsequently addressed in revised drawings.
 - i. **Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department**—In a memorandum dated August 22, 2024 (Reilly to Price), the Fire/EMS Department offered a comment that has been included as a condition of approval.
14. **Community Feedback**—As of the writing of this technical staff report, staff did not receive any inquiries or feedback from the community regarding the subject DSP.
15. Based on the foregoing analysis, and as required by Section 27-285(b)(1) of the prior Zoning Ordinance, the DSP, if approved with the proposed condition below, represents a most 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 costs and without detracting substantially from the utility of the proposed development for its intended use.
16. As required by Section 27-285(b)(4) of the prior Zoning Ordinance, which became effective on September 1, 2010, a required finding for approval of a DSP is as follows:
- (4) **The Planning Board may approve a Detailed Site Plan if it finds that the regulated environmental features have been preserved and/or restored in a natural state to the fullest extent possible in accordance with the requirement of Subtitle 24-130(b)(5).**

There are no REFs on the subject property.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the foregoing evaluation and analysis, the Urban Design staff recommend that the Prince George's County Planning Board adopt the findings of this technical staff report and APPROVE Detailed Site Plan DSP-05044-14 and Departure from Sign Design Standards DSDS-24001, for Steeplechase Business Park, subject to the following condition:

1. Prior to certificate approval of the detailed site plan, the following revisions shall be made, or information shall be provided:
 - a. Add a building height label to the site plan.
 - b. If a fire department connection (FDC) will be provided, the detailed site plan shall show the proposed FDC located on the front, address side of the building. Any FDC must be located within 200 feet of a fire hydrant.
 - c. Updated plan sheets that include pedestrian crosswalks with Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant curb ramps, for all points of vehicle access.
 - d. Provide a general note stating that Departure from Sign Design Standards DSDS-24001 has been approved.
 - e. Add a note indicating that all light fixtures are full cut-off and directed downward to reduce glare and light spill-over.