

July 30, 2009

MEMORANDUM:

TO: Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: Steve Adams, Urban Design Supervisor

FROM: James Jordan, Urban Designer

SUBJECT: Detailed Site Plan, SP-00015
Silver Hill Park, BP Amoco

The Urban Design staff has reviewed the site development plans for the subject property and presents the following evaluation and findings leading to a recommendation of APPROVAL with conditions.

EVALUATION

This Detailed Site Plan was reviewed and evaluated for compliance with the following criteria:

- a. Conformance to the requirements of Section 27-459 of the Zoning Ordinance, and the requirements of the *Landscape Manual*.
- b. Referrals.
- c. Site Design Guidelines.

FINDINGS

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

1. Location: The subject property is located in the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Branch Avenue (MD 5) and Silver Hill Road (MD 458). The proposed development is bounded to the north by a property currently under development, a CVS Drugstore; to the east and south by a public alley; and to the west by the MD 5 right-of-way.
2. The Proposed Development: The purpose of this Detailed Site Plan is for the approval of a 4,830 square-foot gas station. The plan includes site, landscape plans, and architecture. The subject property will be accessible from Branch Avenue and Old Silver Hill Road. It should

be noted that the proposed gas station will be located on a parcel that will support two uses, the gas station and a CVS drugstore which is currently under construction. The CVS drugstore is a permitted use in the C-M Zone and did not require Detailed Site Plan review.

3. Background: The *Subregion VII Master Plan* (1981) recommended service/commercial land use for this site. The *Subregion VII SMA* (1984) rezoned the subject property from C-2 to the C-M Zone. In a memorandum (Fields to Jordan) dated June 21, 2000, master plan issues pertaining to the subject application and the proposed development are raised. See Finding No.7 for a detailed discussion of the noted issue.

On April 11, 1984, the District Council approved the Sectional Map Amendment for Subregion VII, CR-100-1984, which rezoned the property to C-M with no conditions or considerations.

4. The development data for the subject property is as follows:

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Zone: | C-M |
| Total Site Area: | 3.29 acres |
| Proposed Use: | Gas Station |
| Building Area (Gas Station): | 4,830 sq. ft. |
| Parking Required: | |
| Gas Station: (1 space/employee) | 2 spaces |
| CVS Drug Store (1 space/150 sf of 1 st 3000 sf GFA + 1 space/200 sf above 1 st 3000 sf GFA). | 54 spaces |
| Parking Provided: | 124 spaces |
| Loading Spaces Required: | 1 spaces |
| Loading Spaces Provided: | 1 spaces |

5. Conformance with the Requirements of the Zoning Ordinance in the C-M Zone, including the Requirements of the Prince George's Landscape Manual: Gas Stations are permitted in the C-M Zone pursuant to the following requirements of Section 27-358 of the Zoning Ordinance:

1. A gas station may be permitted subject to the following:

- (1) **The subject property shall have at least one hundred and fifty (150) feet of frontage on and direct vehicular access to a street with a right-of-way width of at least seventy (70) feet;**

Comment: The subject property has more than 150 feet of frontage on, and direct vehicular access from, both Branch Avenue and Old Silver Hill Road. Both rights-

of-way have a minimum width of 70 feet.

- (2) **The subject property shall be located at least three hundred (300) feet from any lot on which a school, outdoor playground, library, or hospital is located;**

Comment: No school, playground, library, or hospital is located within three hundred feet of the subject property.

- (4) **The storage or junking of wrecked motor vehicles (whether capable of movement or not) is prohibited;**

Comment: No wrecked motor vehicles will be stored or junked on the subject property.

- (5) **Access driveways shall be not less than thirty (30) feet wide unless a lesser width is allowed for a one-way driveway by the Maryland State Highway Administration or the County Department of Public Works and Transportation, whichever is applicable, and shall be constructed in compliance with the minimum standards required by the County Road Ordinance or Maryland State Highway Administration regulations, whichever is applicable. In the case of a corner lot, a driveway may begin at a point not less than twenty (20) feet from the point of curvature (PC) of the curb return or the point of curvature of the edge of paving at an intersection without curb and gutter. A driveway may begin or end at a point not less than twelve (12) feet from the side or rear lot line of any adjoining lot;**

Comment: Two, 25-foot-wide, one-way entrance/exit drives will be located along the frontage of Branch Avenue. One 30-foot-wide access driveway will be located along the frontage of Old Silver Hill Road. The subject property is not a corner lot. All driveways are located more than 12 feet from the side of rear lot line of any adjoining lot.

- (6) **Access driveways shall be defined by curbing;**

Comment: All access drives are defined with curbing on both sides.

- (7) **A sidewalk at least five (5) feet wide shall be provided in the area between the building line and the curb in those areas serving pedestrian traffic;**

Comment: A five-foot-wide concrete sidewalk is provided along the entire frontages of both Branch Avenue and Old Silver Hill Road.

- (8) Gasoline pumps and other service appliances shall be located at least twenty-five (25) feet behind the street line;**

Comment: The proposed gasoline pumps and service bays will be located a minimum of 45 feet behind the nearest street line, Branch Avenue.

- (9) Repair service shall be completed within forty-eight (48) hours after the vehicle is left for service. Discarded parts resulting from any work shall be removed promptly from the premises. Automotive replacement parts and accessories shall be stored either inside the main structure or in an accessory building used solely for the storage. The accessory building shall be wholly enclosed. The building shall either be constructed of brick (or another building material similar in appearance to the main structure) and placed on a permanent foundation, or it shall be entirely surrounded with screening material. Screening shall consist of a wall, fence, or sight-tight landscaping material, which shall be at least as high as the accessory building. The type of screening shall be shown on the landscape plan.**

Comment: The subject plan and its general notes do not address the subject criteria. It is recommended that the general notes be amended to demonstrate conformance to the subject requirement.

- (10) Details on architectural elements such as elevation depictions of each facade, schedule of exterior finishes, and description of architectural character of proposed buildings shall demonstrate compatibility with existing and proposed surrounding development.**

Comment: Details, architectural elements, exterior finishes, and the proposed architectural character are well defined by the proposed plans. Staff believes the proposed development is compatible with the existing and proposed surrounding development.

The Detailed Site Plan will be in general conformance with the regulations governing development in the C-M Zone, when amended as recommended.

Sections 4.2, Commercial and Industrial Landscape Strip Requirements, 4.3(b)(c), Parking Lot Requirements, Perimeter Landscape Strip Requirements, Interior Planting, apply to the subject site. The landscape plans are in full conformance with the requirements of the *Landscape Manual*.

6. Conformance with the Requirements of the Woodland Conservation Ordinance: The subject application was referred to the Environmental Planning Section, and in a memorandum

(Stasz to Jordan) dated July 6, 2000, it was noted that this site is exempt from the provisions of the Woodland Conservation Ordinances, because there is less than 10,000 square feet of woodland on the subject property. A Tree Conservation Plan is not required.

7. Urban Design: The applicant is proposing to provide a freestanding building structure that will be centrally located on the site with parking bays and drive aisles located around two sides of the building. A freestanding canopy with the service pump bays will also be located on the property. Extensive landscaping is proposed at the perimeter of the subject property, the east and south, which is bounded by the public alley. The proposed building structure will be 22-feet-high and the freestanding canopy will be approximately 20-feet-high. Both structures will be linear in layout. The exterior finish materials for the building will be E.I.F.S. The entrance elevation provides for a system of storefront glazing accented by a continuous projected horizontal metal canopy/soffit above the glazing.

The Community Planning Division raised a design issue pertaining to signage in a referral memorandum previously noted in Finding No. 3. The subject application provides for a freestanding sign along the frontage of Branch Avenue. Staff believes that the proposed sign is above the quality of the standard/typical pylon signage used generally by gas stations. The proposed sign is monumental, is designed with architectural features that provide consistency and continuity for the entire gas station development, and will serve as a signature prototype for future BP franchises in Prince George's County. Considering the importance of redevelopment along the Branch Avenue corridor, and the applicants statement that the proposed gas station development is BP's first in this area, staff believes that the entire development proposal reflects a high quality of design.

The Community Planning Division raises a concern that has to do with visual clutter along an important commercial corridor. The adjacent CVS property is under construction and has already obtained permit approval of a freestanding pylon sign with two posts that measures 24 feet in height. The Community Planning Division indicates that given the subject property's proximity to CVS, and the fact that both properties propose freestanding signs, it would be more appropriate for both properties to share one freestanding sign or for each property to provide a ground-mounted sign. Staff concurs with the community planning analysis, but several factors preclude the Urban Design Section from supporting a recommendation pursuant to the said analysis. The following are comments and analysis with respect to the concern cited by Community Planning:

1. CVS already has a sign permit issued for its property, and the approved signage meets all requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. The permit may not have taken into account the collective visual impact of multiple freestanding signs along a commercial corridor, but it was not required. The permit was not issued in error.
2. If an analysis of the proposed uses is appropriate, staff believes that given the nature of a gas station and its target consumer group, the passing motorist, the proposed freestanding sign is most appropriate at the gas station. Gasoline prices are fluid and change sometimes on a daily basis. Advertisement of these prices is most effective for a passing motorist when they are clearly visible from a distance

that will allow for adequate time to turn into the station. Furthermore, the necessity of a freestanding sign at the adjacent CVS is marginal at best in terms of its purpose. It is unlikely that individual sale items will be regularly posted on the CVS sign.

3. The CVS did not require Detailed Site Plan review. Staff cannot obligate separate occupants of a parcel to enter into an agreement for consolidated signage at this juncture of review, particularly when one occupant, CVS, has no requirement for site plan approval and is under construction. Staff does believe that the visual impact of the proposed sign, sited in the southwest corner of the property, will be lessened by the provision of a significant amount of landscaping around the sign. The proposed landscaping is a combination of shade trees, ornamental trees, and shrubs. The shade tree will provide a substantial backdrop for the sign and will help somewhat reduce the scale of the sign to the passing motorist on MD 5, while the shrubs will lessen the vertical impact of the sign standard.

Given all of the circumstances of this case with respect to the proposed signage, the final recommendation of the Community Planning Division is not endorsed by the Urban Design Section.

8. The subject property has an approved Stormwater Management Concept Plan (CSD # 988005540), which was approved on April 18, 2000.
9. Referrals: The subject application was referred to all applicable agencies and divisions; no significant issues were identified. Minor plan revisions were recommended or additional information was requested by the Permit Review Section in a memorandum (Bakka to Jordan) dated June 29, 2000. Subsequent to the receipt of the noted memorandum the applicant revised the plans to address all concerns and provide the requested information. The Department of Public Works & Transportation provided comments for designated roadway improvements within the right-of-way. The plans should address these comments at the time of the review of permits.
10. In general, the Detailed Site Plan represents a reasonable alternative for satisfying the site design guidelines, without requiring unreasonable costs and without detracting substantially from the utility of the proposed development for its intended use.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the foregoing evaluation, analysis and findings of this report, the Urban Design staff recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and APPROVE Detailed Site Plan, SP-00015, Silver Hill Park, BP Amoco subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to certification, the Detailed Site Plan shall be revised as follows:
 - a. Remove all notation and delineation with respect to lease lines on the parcel.

2. Provide a general note demonstrating that repair service shall be completed within forty-eight (48) hours after the vehicle is left for service, discarded parts resulting from any work shall be removed promptly from the premises, and that automotive replacement parts and accessories shall be stored inside the main structure.