

July 30, 2009

MEMORANDUM:

TO: Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: Steve Adams, Urban Design Supervisor

FROM: Gary Wagner, Planner Coordinator

SUBJECT: MetroView  
Detailed Site Plan, SP-01012

The Urban Design staff has reviewed the Detailed Site Plan and presents the following evaluation and findings leading to a recommendation of APPROVAL with conditions.

EVALUATION

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

- a. The requirements of the New Carrollton Transit District Development Plan (TDDP)
- b. The requirements of Part 10A. Overlay Zones of the Zoning Ordinance.
- c. The requirements of the Zoning Ordinance in the M-X-T Zone
- d. Referrals.

FINDINGS

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

1. The Detailed Site Plan is for a 325,000-square-foot office building at the northwest corner of the intersection of Harkins Road and Ellin Road within the New Carrollton Transit District Overlay Zone (TDOZ). The site consists of 18.61 acres in the M-X-T Zone and is directly across Harkins Road from the IRS building. The entire building, which will be occupied by CSC, Inc., will be devoted to serving the IRS.

**Section 27-548.08.(c) Required findings for a Detailed Site Plan in the Transit District Overlay Zone**

2. **The Transit District Site Plan is in strict conformance with any Mandatory Development Requirements of the Transit District Development Plan;**

The Detailed Site Plan is in general conformance to all Mandatory Development Requirements of the Transit District Development Plan (TDDP). The following Mandatory Development Requirements warrant discussion:

Section 5.N Parking Design

Mandatory Requirement 3.c. requires the following:

**That all temporary on-grade parking lots be landscaped per existing Prince Georges County Code requirements at a minimum.**

The applicant filed an application for Alternative Compliance to seek some relaxation of the above requirement. See Finding 15 for discussion.

Section 5.O. Public Places

Mandatory Requirement 3.b. requires the following:

**All landscaping materials installed shall be irrigated in accordance with existing codes.**

The applicant should provide plans and details for irrigation in all plazas areas prior to certification of the Detailed Site Plan.

Section 6.D Parking Standards

Mandatory Requirement 2.a. requires the following:

**The maximum number of parking spaces allowed per each phase shall be described in chart 6.d.1. Up to the maximum number of spaces shown on Chart 6.d.1. may be provided during each corresponding Phase, regardless of the amount of commercial and residential space built at any particular time.**

For a discussion on this issue, see Transportation Finding 17.

3. **The Transit District Site Plan is consistent with, and reflects the guidelines and criteria contained in the Transit District Development Plan;**

The Transit District Site Plan is in general conformance with, and reflects, the guidelines and criteria contained in the Transit District Development Plan. The following guidelines warrant discussion:

Section VI, Transportation and Circulation

Guideline 3.m. requires the following:

**During the review of detailed site plans the developer and Planning Board shall consider opportunities for the incorporation of (1) bikeways to accommodate bikers destined for the MetroView employment area and the New Carrollton Metro Station, and (2) bicycle parking and semi-public shower facilities in conjunction with each office building.**

In a memorandum dated April 16, 2001 (Shaffer to Wagner), the trails coordinator offered the following comments with regard to the above:

In accordance with the *Adopted and Approved New Carrollton Transit District Development Plan* (TDDP) and the *Adopted and Approved Bladensburg-New Carrollton and Vicinity Master Plan*, the applicant and the applicant's heirs, successors, and/or assigns shall provide the following:

- a. The Adopted and Approved TDDP and Master Plan recommend that Harkins Road and Ellin Road be designated as Class III bikeways with appropriate signage. Because Harkins Road and Ellin Road are county rights-of-ways, the applicant, and the applicant's heirs, successors, and/or assigns shall provide a financial contribution of \$420 to the Department of Public Works and Transportation for the placement of this signage. A note shall be placed on the final record plat for payment to be received prior to the issuance of the first building permit.

Note: If designated bike lanes are to be implemented, this will be done by the Department of Public Works and Transportation at the time of road improvement.

- b. The TDDP also recommends the inclusion of bicycle parking within the transit district, although no specific numbers of racks are required. The recently approved Prince George's Plaza TDDP recommends four bicycle racks (each holding a minimum of two bikes) per 10,000 gross square feet of floor space. Using this standard, 260 bicycle parking spaces would be required for the 325,000-square-foot building being proposed. However, staff has found this standard to be excessive and recommends that one-quarter of this number of bicycle parking spaces be implemented. Therefore, it is recommended that bicycle racks accommodating 65 bicycle parking spaces be located at appropriate locations on the site, preferably close to the building entrances where feasible.
- c. The TDDP also recommends the provision of semi-public shower facilities be considered in conjunction with the development of new office buildings. Therefore, the inclusion of these facilities in the design of the proposed building is encouraged.

4. **The Transit District Site Plan meets all of the requirements of the Transit District Overlay Zone and applicable regulations of the underlying zones;**

When the conditions of approval below are met, the Detailed Site Plan for the proposed office building will meet the requirements of the Transit District Overlay Zone. The following are site data and density calculations for the development:

Gross Site Area	18.61 acres
Zone	M-X-T
Gross Floor Area (proposed office building)	325,000 sf
Base Density (without optional method of development - 0.4FAR)	324,260 sf
Bonus Incentives	
Open Arcade - (625 sf. x 3)	1,875 sf
Enclosed Pedestrian Space - (3,168 sf. x 4)	12,672 sf
Outdoor Plaza - (16,679 sf. x 8)	<u>133,432 sf</u>
Sub-Total of allowed Building Area	472,239 sf
Parking **	1,388 spaces

\*\* See Finding 17 for discussion of parking.

See Findings 7 through 13 for discussion of other regulations of the M-X-T Zone.

5. **The location, size and design of buildings, signs, other structures, open spaces, landscaping, pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems, and parking and loading areas maximize safety and efficiency and are adequate to meet the purposes of the Transit District Overlay Zone;**

The site was previously graded. Access to the site off of Harkins Road is located where there is an existing median break which coincides with access to the IRS building. The building is sited just west of the access point. The proposed 12-story office building is 325,000 square feet and is appropriate in size for an office building in the TDOZ with excellent access to the New Carrollton Metro Station. Vehicular and pedestrian systems are designed so that conflicts are minimized. The temporary parking lot and loading area are efficiently designed and maximize safety. The materials of the 12-story building will consist of pre-cast concrete, imitating limestone, EIFS with stone finish, black aluminum window framing with blue tinted windows. A 12-story tower structure will be located over the 2-story entrance and lobby area, which will serve as an accent for the building and entrance.

6. **Each structure and use, in the manner proposed, is compatible with other structures in the Transit District and with existing and proposed adjacent development.**

The proposed office building is the first building of several on this particular parcel within the TDOZ. Future development could include two more office buildings, a hotel, retail on the lower level of the proposed parking garage, and two high-rise residential apartment buildings. With the conditions below related to screening of the surrounding residential homes, this office building will be compatible to the degree possible with existing residential development to the north.

**Required Findings for Detailed Site Plans in the M-X-T Zone**

7. **The proposed development is in conformance with the purposes and other provisions of this Division;**

The proposed office building is located within one block (500 feet √) of the New Carrollton Metro Station. The building maximizes the full development potential inherent in the location of the site by providing employment within walking distance of a major transit station. The new building will encourage the goal of providing a 24-hour environment and help maximize the interaction between uses. The architecture of the building will provide for a distinctive visual character and identity within the Transit District.

8. **The proposed development has an outward orientation which either is physically and visually integrated with existing adjacent development or catalyzes adjacent community improvement and rejuvenation;**

The proposed office building is oriented toward and visually integrated with the IRS building and the Metro station. The building is not oriented toward the existing residential development. The building and parking lot are sited 30-40 feet lower than the residential areas, and screening will be provided in accordance with the conditions below to screen the residential development from the office development.

9. **The proposed development is compatible with existing and proposed development in the vicinity;**

With the conditions below related to screening of the surrounding residential homes, this office building will be compatible to the degree possible with existing residential development to the north.

10. **The mix of uses, and the arrangement and design of buildings and other improvements, reflect a cohesive development capable of sustaining an independent environment of continuing quality and stability;**

The proposed office building is the first building beyond the construction of the IRS building. The arrangement and design of the building, parking, loading areas and pedestrian circulation are cohesive and capable of sustaining an independent environment of continuing quality and stability.

11. **If the development is staged, each building phase is designed as a self-sufficient entity, while allowing for effective integration of subsequent phases;**

The proposed office development is designed to be self-sufficient and will allow for the effective integration of subsequent phases.

12. **The pedestrian system is convenient and is comprehensively designed to encourage pedestrian activity within the development;**

The pedestrian system is convenient and provides direct access to the Metro station. Several plaza areas and sitting areas have been provided to encourage pedestrian activity on the site.

13. **On the Detailed Site Plan, in areas of the development which are to be used for pedestrian activities or as gathering places for people, adequate attention has been paid to human scale, high quality urban design and other amenities, such as the types and textures of materials, landscaping and screening, street furniture and lighting (natural and artificial).**

The plazas and sitting areas have been designed with adequate attention to details such as special paving, benches, lighting and landscaping.

14. The Detailed Site Plan will be in conformance to Conceptual Site Plan, CSP-90091/01 (PGCPB No. 95-196), when Finding 1 is amended via a reconsideration to be heard on the same day as this Detailed Site Plan.
15. The Detailed Site Plan is in general conformance with the applicable sections of the Prince George's County *Landscape Manual*. The following Alternative Compliance plan (AC-01005) is recommended for approval by the Alternative Compliance Committee. The Planning Director will review the AC case with a recommendation to the Planning Board at the hearing.

REQUEST: Alternative Compliance is requested for Section 4.3.c, Interior Planting, and Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses for the northern property lines.

#### BACKGROUND

The site is located in the New Carrollton Transit District Overlay Zone. A Detailed Site Plan for a 325,000-square-foot office building with a 1,388-space temporary surface parking lot is proposed. The site is subject to the requirements of the Transit District Development Plan (TDDP) and the Prince George's County *Landscape Manual*. The applicant has requested alternative compliance to provide smaller plant materials in the temporary parking lot. The applicant has also requested alternative compliance to provide bufferyard plantings at a later date, when future development will be constructed.

#### Section 4.3.c, Interior Planting

Area of parking compound:	442,238 sf
Interior area required (10%)	42,224 sf
Interior area provided (10.5%)	44,176 sf
Number of Shade Trees required:	148 shade trees @ 2.5" to 3" caliper
Number of Shade Trees provided:	148 shade trees @ 1.5" to 2" caliper

JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDATION:

The office building and temporary parking lot represent the first phase of development for this parcel. Future phases could include 600,000 square feet of additional office, a 200-room hotel, two 200-unit, high-rise apartment buildings, and 25,000 square feet of retail in the lower level of the parking garage. When this future development occurs, the parking garage will take the place of the temporary parking lot. Since the parking lot is temporary, the applicant would like to be able to provide smaller plant materials (1.5 inches to 2 inches) so that those plant materials can be transplanted to another location on the site when the parking garage is constructed. Smaller plant materials will have a better chance of surviving the transplant. Since the applicant has provided the quantity of plant materials in the parking lot, and intends to utilize the plant materials on other portions of the site when the parking garage is constructed, the committee is of the opinion that the alternative plan is equal to or better than normal compliance to the requirements of the *Landscape Manual*.

Section 4.7 (Buffering Incompatible Uses)

REQUIRED: Along the northern property line, adjacent to residential apartments

Length of bufferyard	925 feet ∇
Landscaped yard	20 feet
Building setback	30 feet
Plant units (80 PUs/100 LF)	444 plant units (40% existing woodlands)

PROVIDED

Landscaped yard	50 feet (required by TDDP)
Building setback	550 feet ∇
Plant units	none

REQUIRED: Along the northern property line, adjacent to SFD residential

Length of bufferyard	890 feet ∇
Landscaped yard	30 feet
Building setback	40 feet
Plant units (120 PUs/100 LF)	961 plant units (10% existing woodlands)

PROVIDED

Landscaped yard	50-75 feet (required by TDDP)
Building setback	175 feet ∇
Plant units	none

**JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDATION:**

When the future development occurs in this area of the site, it will likely be high-rise residential apartments which will be more compatible and require less plant materials. Additionally, there are some existing residential dwellings that are within the boundaries of the TDOZ and in the required bufferyard. These dwellings are owned and rented out by the applicant. Because of these factors, and the fact that there is a substantial horizontal and vertical distance between the temporary parking lot and the residences (the parking lot is 40 feet lower in elevation), the committee is of the opinion that some relief is warranted. However, the applicant should be required to provide some temporary screening at the top of the slope in the form of evergreen trees to screen the existing single-family dwelling residences from the development. Also, the portion of the bufferyard that will not be affected by future development (460 linear feet paralleling and between Harkins Road and the backs of existing residential lots) should be provided at this time. The committee is of the opinion that the alternative compliance plan will be equal to or better than normal compliance to the requirements of the *Landscape Manual* if the conditions below are adopted.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Alternative Compliance Committee recommends APPROVAL of the alternative compliance plan (AC-01005) for Section 4.7 along the northern property line and Section 4.3.c, Interior Planting, subject to conditions 1.c. and 1.d. below.

**Referrals**

16. **The Environmental Planning Section**

In a memorandum dated March 7, 2001 (Stasz to Wagner), the Environmental Planning Section offered the following comments.

The Environmental Planning Section previously reviewed applications on this property numbered 4-89124, 4-96011 and 4-01014. A Tree Conservation Plan, TCPI/8/96, was



approved with 4-96011, which covers a larger area wholly containing the subject property. TCPII/88/90 was approved by staff as part of a grading permit for a larger area which includes the subject property.

#### Site Description

The property is located north of Harkins Drive between Ellin Road and MD 450. The entire site is within the New Carrollton Transit District Overlay Zone. No wetlands, floodplain or streams occur on the property. Current air photos indicate that the majority of the site has been graded. No historic or scenic roads are affected by this proposal. Noise generated from nearby roadways and the Metro is not a significant impact on the proposed development. No significant noise is expected to be generated by on-site activities. No rare/threatened/endangered species are known to occur in the project vicinity. According to the Sewer Service and Water Service maps produced by DER, the property is in categories W-3 and S-3. Stormwater management facilities approved by DER are in place. The soils map included in the review package indicates that no problematic soils occur in the proposed development area.

#### Environmental Review

- a. The site is in a Transit District Overlay Zone governed by a Transit District Development Plan. There are no environmental issues to be addressed for this site.

*Discussion: No further action is needed.*

- b. This site is subject to the provisions of the Woodland Conservation Ordinance because it is more than 40,000 square feet in size and contains more than 10,000 square feet of woodland. A Tree Conservation Plan is required to satisfy the requirements of the Woodland Conservation Ordinance.

*Discussion: The Forest Stand Delineation and Tree Conservation Plan, TCPII/88/90, were reviewed and approved prior to the issuance of a grading permit for a larger area which contains the subject property. TCPI/8/96 was approved by Planning Board Resolution No. 96-111. No further action is needed.*

- c. A Stormwater Management Concept Approval Letter, CSD# 8328152-2000-0, was provided with this application. It states that all stormwater management requirements will be met by the existing regional pond.

*Discussion: No further action is needed.*

#### 17. The Transportation Planning Section

In a memorandum dated April 17, 2001 (Masog to Wagner), the Transportation Planning Section offered the following comments.

This site is within the New Carrollton Transit District Overlay Zone (TDOZ) and as such its development is guided by the approved New Carrollton Transit District Development Plan (TDDP). The biggest question regarding the subject development is its status regarding the transportation phasing plan presented in the TDDP. Phase I development was to allow up to 200,000 square feet of office space and 900 residential units. To date, no development which comes under county regulations has been constructed within the TDOZ, but the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has constructed a 1.2 million-square-foot building. This building proposal, when made, was presented to the county as a courtesy, but was not formally reviewed for conformance to county regulations and guidelines nor was it subject to same. For that reason, the transportation staff does not consider the IRS building as a part of the phasing plan described in the TDDP. Of course, as it is existing and generating traffic, the IRS building will be taken into account insofar as any current or future transportation adequacy findings.

As noted above, Phase I allows up to 200,000 square feet of office space and 900 residential units. Using trip generation rates presented in the TDDP, this development would generate a maximum of 692 peak-hour vehicle trips. Even using conventional trip generation rates for general office given in the Guidelines, the 325,000 square feet of office space proposed by this site plan would not generate more than 650 peak-hour trips. Therefore, development under this site plan should be considered as Phase I and subject to the various regulations shown in the TDDP for Phase I.

All transportation improvements listed in Chart 6.e.1 of the TDDP have been completed with the exception of item six, which requires a widening on the southbound approach of Finns Lane to MD 450. However, the applicant submitted a traffic impact study dated February 2001 using traffic counts taken in November 2000 in support of Preliminary Plat of Subdivision 4-01014. That study indicated that the intersection of MD 450/Harkins Road/Finns Lane currently operates at Level-of-Service A in both peak hours, and even with development far beyond what is proposed by this site plan, would operate at LOS B or better during both peak hours. For that reason, the transportation staff is not requiring that item six in Chart 6.e.1 be made a condition of the subject site plan.

Other transportation regulations in the TDDP concern Phases IIA and IIB. For the record, the TDDP recommends particularly that the following intersections be studied prior to continuing to later phases: MD 450/Harkins Road/Finns Lane, MD 450/85th Avenue, and MD 450/Riverdale Road. Also, the charts referring to later phases of the TDDP contain several road improvements which have not yet been implemented.

In reviewing transit-oriented development, transportation staff is aware of issues such as building placement and parking quantity. While the planned building could certainly be placed closer to the Metrorail station entrance, a pedestrian bridge over Ellin Road was constructed as a part of the IRS building. The subject building, as proposed, is well-placed vis-a-vis the northern end of that pedestrian bridge. Pedestrian amenities proposed on the site are sufficient.

Inasmuch as the area of this site plan has excellent transit service, virtually all of it publicly funded, the transportation staff is very concerned that the site plan, as submitted, has a requirement to provide approximately 800 parking spaces but is providing approximately

1,300 parking spaces. This severe excess of parking will encourage greater usage of automobiles, particularly single-occupant autos, and is counter to the District Council's intent in approving the TDDP in 1989. While Phase I has a parking space limit of 1,900 spaces as shown in Chart 6.d.1, most of these spaces were for the residential component, while the office component was allocated 700 parking spaces. Phase I as described in the TDDP included 200,000 square feet of office space with 700 associated parking spaces, a ratio of 3.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet. In consideration of this ratio, the transportation staff supports the elimination of approximately 150 parking spaces from this site plan.

On-site circulation is acceptable. All adjacent roadways are built to the sections recommended in the TDDP, and access points are in accordance with TDDP recommendations.

In conclusion, the transportation staff finds that the subject plan is subject to the transportation recommendations of Phase I in the New Carrollton TDDP. As such, we find that the requirements are met. However, the transportation staff does support a reduction of the on-site parking spaces to the Phase I parking ratio shown in the TDDP. Notwithstanding this suggestion, the transportation staff finds that the subject application conforms to the TDDP and meets the required Findings of Section 27-548.08.c. with regard to transportation.

18. The Detailed Site Plan is in conformance with the pending Preliminary Plat of Subdivision, 4-010014, which will be heard the same day as the Detailed Site Plan.
19. In a memorandum dated April 13, 2001 (Williams to Wagner), the Growth Policy and Public Facilities Planning Section indicated with regard to police service that the proposed site is within the service area of District I - Hyattsville. The staff concluded that the existing county police facilities will be adequate to serve the proposed technology center.
20. In a memorandum dated March 21, 2001 (Mayor Hanko to Wagner), the City of New Carrollton recommends approval of the Detailed Site Plan. The city listed the following concerns; some have been addressed by the applicant and some have been addressed by this staff report.
  - a. The city would like to ensure that the guard house is architecturally compatible with the office building.

*Comment: Architectural elevations of the guard house have been provided that show that the materials of the guard house match that of the office building.*

- b. The city would like to ensure that all lighting is designed and installed in a manner that is not intrusive to the community.

*Comment: The TDDP requires that a minimum of two foot-candles be maintained site-wide. The site plan meets that requirement. The lighting fixtures in the parking lot are standards that project the lighting in a downward fashion. Additionally, most of the site is 30-40 feet lower than the adjacent residential property. There is one area in the northeast corner of the site where two apartment buildings might be slightly affected. The*

*closest light fixture to a building is 130 feet away and angled away from the apartment building. Staff is of the opinion that the lighting will have a minimal effect on the residential units.*

- c. The city encourages the relocation of the stormwater management pond in the northeast corner of the site to another site on the property.

*Comment: The applicant is in the process of relocating the pond.*

- d. The city recommends landscaping be provided throughout the parking lot to give it a pleasing visual appearance.

*Comment: The applicant has provided adequate landscaping in the parking lot in terms of quantity, and has requested alternative compliance to reduce the size of the plant materials from 2.5-inch to 3-inch caliper to 1.5-inch to 2-inch caliper.*

- e. The city is concerned with the excessive amount of parking provided for the office building.

*Comment: Staff is recommending that the parking spaces be reduced by 150 parking spaces.*

- f. The city has indicated that the future uses of the property have not been articulated in the proposal.

*Comment: The applicant has provided staff with a concept plan showing all future uses. The applicant has indicated that a copy of the plan was provided to the city to address their concerns.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the analysis and findings of this report, the Urban Design staff recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings and APPROVE SP-01012 and AC-01005 subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to certification, the Detailed Site Plan shall be amended as follows:
  - a. The applicant shall provide plans and details for irrigation in all plaza areas.
  - b. The number of parking spaces shall be reduced by 150 spaces.
  - c. The applicant shall provide a double staggered row, 15 feet on center, of 5- to 6-foot evergreen trees, for a minimum distance of 300 linear feet along the top of the slope around the parking lot and between the existing single-family residential homes as a temporary screening measure.
  - d. The Landscape Plan shall be amended to provide the full bufferyard required for the 460-linear-foot bufferyard between Harkins Road and the backs of the existing residential lots.

- e. Bicycle racks accommodating 65 bicycle parking spaces shall be located at appropriate locations on the site, preferably close to the building entrances where feasible. Details of the bicycle racks shall be provided.
- 2. The applicant, and the applicant's heirs, successors, and/or assigns shall provide a financial contribution of \$420 to the Department of Public Works and Transportation for the placement of this signage. A note shall be placed on the final record plat for payment to be received prior to the issuance of the first building permit.