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DETAILED SITE PLAN

DSP-02030

Application	General Data
Project Name VISIONS II CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER Location SOUTHWEST QUADRANT OF HURON AVENUE AND SUTLAND ROAD Applicant/Address Makeda McKnight & Kaye Dupree #59 Kettering Drive Largo, Maryland 20714	Date Accepted 06/21/2002
	Planning Board Action Limit 10/01/2002
	Plan Acreage 2.3882
	Zone C-S-C
	Dwelling Units NA
	Square Footage 8,350
	Planning Area 75A
	Council District 07
	Municipality NONE
	200-Scale Base Map 204NE04

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates
Approval of a day care facility for children in an existing shopping center	Adjoining Property Owners 06/21/2002 (CB-15-1998)
	Previous Parties of Record N/A (CB-13-1997)
	Sign(s) Posted on Site 08/30/2002
	Variance(s): Adjoining Property Owners N/A

Staff Recommendation			Staff Reviewer: ZHANG
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
		X	

July 30, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: Steve Adams, Urban Design Supervisor

FROM: Henry Zhang, Urban Design Section, Development Review Division

SUBJECT: Detailed Site Plan, DSP-02030
Visions II Child Development Center

The Urban Design staff has reviewed the Detailed Site Plan for the subject property and presents the following evaluation and findings leading to a recommendation of DISAPPROVAL as described in the Recommendation section of this report.

EVALUATION

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

- a. The requirements of the *Zoning Ordinance* in the C-S-C Zone and the requirements of Section 27-464.02 for a Day Care Center in the C-S-C Zone
- b. The requirements of the *Landscape Manual*
- c. The requirements of the *Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance*
- d. Referral comments

FINDINGS

Based upon the evaluation and analysis of the subject Detailed Site Plan, the Urban Design Review staff recommends the following findings:

1. Request: The subject application is for approval of a day care center facility for 100 children to be located in an existing shopping center in the C-S-C Zone.
2. Development Data Summary:

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Zone(s)	C-S-C	C-S-C
Use(s)	Retail	Daycare
Acreage	2.38	2.38
Total Square Footage/GFA	43,370	43,370
The Proposed Day Care Center Building	8,350	8,350

OTHER DEVELOPMENT DATA

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Enrollment		100 children
Playground area required		3,750 square feet
Playground area provided		3,800 square feet
Total parking space	107 spaces (77 spaces required)	86 spaces
Loading space	3 spaces (3 spaces required)	3 spaces

3. Location: The site is located in Planning Area 75A, Council District 7. More specifically, it is situated on the north side of Suitland Road (MD 218), west of Huron Avenue.
4. Surroundings and Use: The subject property is bounded to the north by a 20-foot-wide public alley, to the east by the Huron Avenue right-of-way, to the west by additional commercial property zoned C-S-C, and to the south by the Suitland Road right-of-way.
5. Previous Approvals: The subject site consists of Parcels I and II. Parcel I was constructed circa 1954 and Parcel II was developed prior to 1949. In 1999, a Detailed Site Plan (SP-99021) application for approval of a daycare facility for 75 children in two buildings of the existing shopping center was filed and approved by the Planning Board (PGCPB No.00-57) with one condition. In that application, the proposed enrollment of 75 children was located in two separate existing buildings. One of the buildings is two stories, contains approximately 19,680 square feet, and was then used as the structure for the church sanctuary. Forty-five out of the 75 children were assigned to this building. The proposed outdoor play area was adjacent to this building. The other is a single-story structure of approximately 8,350 square feet, which was proposed to accommodate the remaining 30 children. The two buildings were located on two ends of the existing shopping center approximately 180 feet away from each other. No daycare operation has been initiated since the approval of the Detailed Site Plan for the proposed day care facility. The 19,680-square-foot building is currently used as an entertainment center hosting activities such as banquets, meetings, theater shows, etc., and the 8,350-square-foot building is vacant.
6. Design Features: The proposed day care facility is located within the same shopping center as that of previously approved Detailed Site Plan DSP-99021. The subject application proposes an enrollment

of 100 children in the above-noted 8,350-square-foot building only and proposes the same outdoor play area as was presented in the previously approved Detailed Site Plan, SP-99021, as well. The outdoor play area in this case is approximately 365 linear feet (as noted on the site plan) away from the proposed day care facility building. The proposed outdoor play yard is currently improved as a surface parking lot. The conversion of a portion of the existing parking lot into the proposed outdoor play area use will result in a loss of 21 parking spaces and relocation of one loading space. Except for the above-mentioned parking lot change, the layout of the existing shopping center will not be modified.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

7. Zoning Ordinance: The subject application has been reviewed against the requirements in the C-S-C Zone and the Site Design Guidelines of the Zoning Ordinance.
- a. The subject application is in general conformance with the requirements of Section 27-461, which governs the development of a day care center in a commercial zone. The proposed day care center for children is a permitted use in the C-S-C Zone.
 - b. The subject application, however, is not in accordance with the requirements of Section 27-464.02 (a) (1) (iv), as stated below:

“(iv) An off-premises outdoor play or activity area shall be located in proximity to the day care center, and shall be safely accessible without crossing (at grade) any hazardous area, such as a street or driveway;”

Comment: The proposed outdoor play area is an off-premises one and it is located approximately 365 linear feet away from the daycare facility. It is not in proximity to the day care center. The proposed route for children to walk from the facility building to the play area, and vice versa, is adjacent to portions of the parking lot and driveway with only a six-inch grade difference. Because the existing shopping center is a commercial strip along Suitland Road, which is a three-lane collector with an average daily traffic (ADT) of 20,250, the driveway and parking lot are heavily used. The driveway and the parking lot will be a potential hazard to the walking children.

The proposed walking route will pass by eight (8) stores. (Table 1. The list of retail stores that are located between the proposed outdoor play area and the daycare building.)

Table 1. List of retail stores

Name and Address	Description of products and services
Elements of Entertainment	Receptions, meetings, banquets, special events, theater shows, Bemo's play land
4646 Suitland Road	
Suitland, Maryland 20746	
God's Church International	Church-Christian fellowship
4650 Suitland Road	
Suitland, Maryland 20746	
Suitland Carryout	Seafood/ Food carryout
4654 Suitland Road	
Suitland, Maryland 20746	
Suitland Pawn and Paging	Pawn broker/ retail electronic products
4658 Suitland Road	
Suitland, Maryland 20746	
Trojan Labor	Vacant
4660 Suitland Road	
Suitland, Maryland 20746	
Parks Fish Market	Seafood market/carryout
4662 Suitland Road	
Suitland, Maryland 20746	
Beauty Supply	Retails beauty products
4666 Suitland Road	
Suitland, Maryland 20746	
Sonny Barber shop	Hair care services
4668 Suitland Road	
Suitland, Maryland 20746	

It is doubtful that the children would benefit from walking by these stores on a daily basis on their way to the play area. This is particularly true of the pawn broker establishment. In addition, there are no shelters or columns to either cover or define the proposed walking route and to protect the children from inclement weather or serve to separate them from patrons of the shopping center. The staff noticed during several visits to the Suitland area and the subject site that a liquor store is located across Huron Avenue from the proposed day care facility.

The shopping center in question is adjacent to Suitland Manor, which is a dilapidated multifamily apartment community grappling with a high level of drug-related crime. Because of its dilapidated condition, Suitland Manor is one of the three top priority areas for revitalization in Prince George's County. The county, with assistance from the state, currently has spent approximately \$6 million for acquisition and demolition of buildings located in Suitland Manor. The location of a day care center for children in proximity to such an environment is at odds with the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance as stated in Section 27-102. In this case, the location and spatial arrangement of the day care facility and outdoor play area fail to protect and promote the health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience, and welfare of the prospective daycare students.

- c. The subject application is not in accordance with several design guidelines regarding loading, circulation and site amenities as stated in Section 27-274 (2) and (6).

Loading Space: The proposed outdoor play area will convert a portion of the existing parking lot. This proposal will result in a loss of 21 existing parking spaces and relocation of one loading space. The relocated loading space will be on the parking lot in front of the daycare facility. The proposed location of the loading space will generate two problems which violate the loading space design guidelines in Section 27-274(2)(B). The loading space will be oriented toward Suitland Road and will be visually obtrusive. The loading space will also be immediately inside the parking area. Because of its close proximity to both Suitland Road and Huron Avenue, the relocated loading space cannot be adequately screened from the two public roads and the public views therein.

The proposed outdoor play area will also lead to the re-arrangement of the other two existing loading spaces into a back-to-back parallel layout in front of the proposed play ground. Since there is only 1 ingress/egress point to the loading spaces with a 23-foot-wide driveway, the proposed 2 loading spaces will be virtually used as 1 loading space only. This arrangement does not fulfill the requirement for three loading spaces for the shopping center.

Site Circulation: The proposed day care facility is located adjacent to the southeast driveway entrance, which is one of the two entrances to the shopping center. The entrance driveway is right at the intersection of Huron Avenue and Suitland Road. There is no space in front of the driveway for queuing. The relocated loading space coupled with the pick-up/drop-off traffic of the daycare will generate negative impact on the site circulation. Due to its commercial-strip-style layout, the parking lot of this shopping center has been used as a through-access drive, which generates a lot of through traffic.

Site Amenity: The proposed outdoor playground will require the elimination of an existing trash dumpster. The trash dumpster was also an unresolved issue in the Detailed Site Plan, SP-99021. The only condition attached to the approval of Detailed Site Plan SP-99021 was to require the applicant to provide the location of the trash dumpster and any applicable screening. The subject application does not show either the existing trash dumpster or a proposed new location for it.

Trash is a major issue for all the merchants in the shopping center. The community has been battling illegal dumping for years and substantial public funds have been spent trying to curb this problem. The elimination of the existing trash dumpster is likely to compound this problem farther

8. Landscape Manual: The proposed day care center is generally exempt from the requirements of the applicable sections, except for Section 4.3 of the *Landscape Manual*, because the day care is part of the shopping center and does not involve an increase in gross floor area. The day care center use is categorized as a low impact, while the former retail facility is considered medium impact use.

The site plan shows a restriping of some of the pre-1970 parking spaces (10 feet x 20 feet) to current standard spaces (9.5 feet x 19 feet). The site is now subject to the requirements of Section 4.3 of the *Landscape Manual*. The subject site plan is not in accordance with this requirement of the *Landscape Manual*.

9. Woodland Conservation Ordinance: The property is not subject to the provisions of the Prince George's County Woodland Conservation Ordinance. Even though the site is more than 40,000 square feet in area, it contains less than 10,000 square feet of woodland and does not have a previously approved Tree Conservation Plan. A Tree Conservation Plan is not required.
10. Referral Comments: The subject application was referred to all concerned agencies and divisions. Major referral comments are summarized as follows:
- a. The State Highway Administration (SHA) has no objection to the approval of Detailed Site Plan DSP-02030, Vision II Child Development Center. SHA stated in a memorandum dated July 2, 2002, that adequate existing site access and frontage improvements consistent with State Highway Administration guidelines are correctly reflected on the plan.
 - b. The Permit Review Section provided several questions concerning compliance with the applicable regulations and additional information being added to the Detailed Site Plan in a memorandum dated July 8, 2002. Major questions such as the location of the outdoor play area and restriping of the pre-1970 standard parking spaces have been discussed in the previous findings. No revisions have been made yet.
 - c. The subject application was referred to the Environmental Planning Section and in a memorandum dated June 27, 2002, the staff finds that there are no streams, wetlands, wetland buffers, 100-year floodplain, or severe and steep slopes with highly erodible soils found to occur on the subject parcel. There are no noise issues either with this application.
 - d. In a memorandum dated July 15, 2002, the Subdivision Section staff found that the proposed site plan does not show correct distances of property lines according to record plat WWW 19@78. The staff noted that the building restriction lines on the record plat and the centerlines and ultimate rights-of-way also should be shown on the site plan.
 - e. The subject application was also referred to the Department of Environmental Resources/Concept. In a memorandum dated July 11, 2002, the staff noted that the site plan for the Vision II Child Development Center, DSP-02030, is consistent with approved stormwater concept #15991-2002.
 - f. The Transportation Planning Section in a memorandum dated August 29, 2002, offered the following comments:

"Suitland Road is a proposed 80' R/W at this location with 40' from centerline.

"Provided that the existing access to the alley is current blocked by the wrought iron

fence, as noted on the plan, transportation staff has no objection to plan.”

Staff Comment: The above-mentioned wrought iron fence is an existing fence.

In a separate memorandum from the Transportation Planning Section dated July 25, 2002 on Detailed Site Plan Review for Master Plan Trail Compliance, the Trails Planner noted that:

“ There are no master plan trails issues identified in the Adopted and Approved Suitland-District Heights Master Plan. However, standard sidewalks are recommended along the subject property’s entire road frontages of Suitland Road and Huron Avenue, as shown on the submitted site plan, to safely accommodate pedestrians.”

- g. In a memorandum dated August 6, 2002, the Community Planning Division found no master plan issues with this application. The Community Planner, however, expresses a strong concern for the safety of children in the proposed day care center:

“ The location of proposed day care center may not be safe for children of any age, given current retail activities within the shopping center. There are underlying safety concerns that may require close review in order to ensure that:

- *The proposed floor space is well designed to adequately serve 100 children.*
- *It is safe for the children to walk to and from the proposed outdoor play area.*
- *Specific parking spaces will be designated for the day care center in order to minimize conflict with adjoining retail uses.*
- *Access to the day care center is safe for children and their families during drop off and pick-up hours of the day.”*

Staff Comment: Compared with the previously approved detailed site plan, the subject application triples the enrollment number in exactly the same existing building.

The review of the site plan indicates that the safety and comfort of the children walking to and from the proposed outdoor play area has not been adequately assured. The proposed walking route provides no protection for children from inclement weather. Neither a restroom nor a water fountain has been proposed adjacent to the playground.

No parking spaces have been designated specifically for the daycare center. The layout of the daycare facility will have a negative impact on the site circulation as discussed in finding 7(c).

- h. The Redevelopment Authority of Prince George’s County in a memorandum dated August 9, 2002, provided the following comments:

“ The distance between the proposed daycare center and the proposed playground area is too lengthy thereby presenting the children with too much exposure to unauthorized public, traffic and unexpected inclement weather. Children traveling by foot this distance are in a potentially hazardous situation.

“ The 8’ Wrought Iron fence may prevent unwanted guests but does not protect against exposure to trash and dumping in alleyway. The fence also does not offer the highest level of privacy.

“ The 4’ Chain Link fence is not tall enough to prevent undesirable guests from trespassing. This fence also does not offer the highest level of privacy.

“ The location of the play area is questionable due to the high level of crime in the community located across the alley and within the shopping area as well. It is located too far away from the facility to provide immediate shelter if necessary.”

Staff Comment: The Neighborhood Revitalization Division, which is currently known as the Redevelopment Authority of Prince George’s County, had a similar referral comment at the time of approval of Detailed Site Plan, SP-99021. The staff cited the high crime rate in the immediate community as the reason to oppose this location, too.

- i. The subject application was also referred to the State of Maryland Child Care Administration. In a memorandum dated August 29, 2002 (Pitts to Chester), the office provided a report on a preliminary site inspection on the subject site that was conducted on February 26, 2002. The report covers several subjects, the building/facility, food preparation area and equipment (kitchen), sanitary facility (bathroom), water source, outdoor play, and observations of the physical environment. The conditions of the above-noted areas are summarized as stated in the following:

“ Building/Facility Requirements

“It is necessary to ensure that the building/facility structure meets all applicable state and county building regulations and standards. The following observed building conditions must be repaired or corrected: 1) the ceiling has brown/rust colored spots, which indicates some sort of leakage; 2) the floor surface (i.e. carpeting) is in disarray and in need of replacement, due to discoloration and sealing; 3) the room baseboards are not present, and damage to the wall is evident; and 4) there are holes in certain walls, etc. It may be necessary to make contact with a Structural Engineer or Building Inspector to assess specific building/ facility deficiencies.

“Food preparation area and equipment

“ There was no food preparation area or kitchen equipment located in the facility during this inspection. Please keep in mind that the kitchen floor must have a surface that can be easily cleaned and maintained (such as tile or linoleum).

“Water source

“There is no appropriate water source located in the building. Appropriate water source are a water fountain or a water cooler. Please ensure that the water source is accessible to children, and would require minimal adult supervision. The child to water source ratio is 1:40.”

“Outdoor Play

“A detailed proposed playground site plan, including the location where children will access the play ground, will need to be developed and submitted to the appropriate agency for approval. Although there is a fenced playground, which is located on the side

of the facility, it does not appear adequate in space/size for the proposed number of children. The other proposed playground area is a portion of the strip mall parking lot which will need to be approved. The ground covering is currently inadequate and inappropriate.

“ Observations of the physical environment

“ Due to the fact that the location of the proposed child care facility may pose a risk to the daycare children, it is respectfully requested that a detailed plan of operation to supervise daycare children, be submitted to the CCA for approval to ensure that the health (physical and psychological), safety, welfare, and supervision of day care children at all times for all ages, including, outside play, entering, and exiting the facility.”

Staff Comment: The Urban Design staff made a follow-up telephone call to Mr. Pitts, who conducted the preliminary site inspection, after the receipt of the memorandum on August 29, 2002. Mr. Pitts expressed a strong concern about the safety of the day care children. But because of the preliminary nature of this inspection, the Child Care Administration does not have a final conclusion at this time. According to Mr. Pitts, many security measures cannot be implemented because of the proposed location of the daycare facility and the outdoor play area. In his report on the outdoor play area, he indicated that a detailed playground site plan should be submitted to the appropriate agency, by which he means the Planning Board of Prince George's County.

In observations of the physical environment, Mr. Pitts mentioned that undesirable establishments are located in close proximity to the proposed day care facility. The frequent presence of individuals without legitimate business in the shopping center and the large volume of through traffic on the parking lot as well as the high crime rate within the area are considered potential risks to the day care children.

- j. The Special Hazards Section, Bureau of Fire Prevention, Prince George's County Fire Department had not responded to the referral request at the time staff report was written.

OTHER FINDINGS:

- 11. The State of Maryland and Prince George's County have undertaken several planning studies and proposed a series of revitalization projects for Suitland with a core area around the crossroad of Silver Hill Road and Suitland Road in order to revitalize this area by increasing employment opportunities, expanding the tax base, and improving affordable housing. These planning efforts are currently being brought together to establish a Mixed-Use Town Center (M-U-TC) at Suitland. The purpose of the M-U-TC is to foster redevelopment and revitalization of the area and establish a distinctive town center through a development plan and design guidelines that will streamline and consolidate the existing review process, allow a flexible mix of compatible uses and encourage transit oriented smart growth.

The M-U-TC plan was initiated by the District Council on February 29, 2002. The study is currently underway and expected to be finished by June 2003. The subject shopping center where the proposed daycare facility is located is inside the M-U-TC core area. The subject application has been presented to the Suitland M-U-TC team during the review process. The team believes that the proposed daycare is not a suitable use at this location and would soon need to be relocated somewhere else.

12. The subject site is located in Prince George's County Police Subregion IV, Beat H-7. According to statistics of the county Police Department, from January 1 to August 27, 2002, there were 202 recorded calls for service at locations between 4600 to 4700 Suitland Road where the subject site is situated (the proposed day care facility is located at 4670 Suitland Road). An average of 25 calls for service per month have been made in very close proximity to the proposed day care center (see attached police record).
13. For the reasons discussed in the above findings (7(b), 7(c), 8, 10 (g), 10(h), 10(i), 11 and 12), the Detailed Site Plan does not represent a 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 cost and without detracting substantially from the utility of the proposed development for its intended use.

The Detailed Site Plan is also in conflict with the purposes of Subtitle 27 and fails to adequately protect and promote the health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience, and welfare of the prospective daycare children.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the foregoing evaluation, analysis and findings, the Urban Design staff recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and DISAPPROVE Detailed Site Plan DSP-02030 for Vision II Child Development Center.