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Detailed Site Plan

DSP-06015

Application	General Data	
Project Name: Capitol Heights Shopping Center Location: South side of Central Avenue (MD 214), approximately 200 feet east of its intersection with Shady Glen Drive Applicant/Address: Zimmer Development Company, LLC 111 Princess Street Wilmington, NC 28402	Date Accepted:	01 /27/2009
	Planning Board Action Limit:	Waived
	Plan Acreage:	29.44
	Zone:	CSC/DDO
	Dwelling Units:	N/A
	Gross Floor Area:	113,389 sq. ft.
	Planning Area:	75A
	Tier:	Developed
	Council District:	06
	Election District:	18
	Municipality:	N/A
	200-Scale Map:	201SE07

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates	
A 113,389-square-foot shopping center with grocery, retail, restaurant, and bank uses.	Informational Mailing:	08/29/2008
	Acceptance Mailing:	01/27/2009
	Sign Posting:	05/12/2009

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: H. Zhang, AICP	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
		X	

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Detailed Site Plan DSP-06015
Type II Tree Conservation Plan TCPH/009/09
Capitol Heights Shopping Center

The Urban Design staff has completed the review of the subject application and appropriate referrals. The following evaluation and findings lead 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 2004 *Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for Morgan Boulevard and Largo Town Center Metro Areas* and the standards of the Development District Overlay Zone;
- b. The requirements of the Zoning Ordinance in the Commercial Office (C-O) Zone;
- c. The requirements of the Zoning Ordinance in the Commercial Shopping Center (C-S-C) Zone and the site design guidelines;
- d. The conditions of Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-06139;
- e. The requirements of the *Prince George's County Landscape Manual*;
- f. The requirements of the Prince George's County Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance;
- g. Referral comments.

FINDINGS

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

- 1. **Request:** The subject application is for approval of an integrated shopping center with a gross floor area (GFA) of 113,389 square feet in the Commercial Shopping Center (C-S-C) Zone within a Development District Overlay (D-D-O) Zone.

2. **Development Data Summary:**

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Zone(s)	C-S-C/C-O/D-D-O	C-S-C/C-O/D-D-O
Use(s)	Undeveloped	Commercial Shopping Center
Acreage	27.77	27.77
Parcels	1	1
Building square footage/GFA	-	113,389
Of which Building 1-Giant	-	57,960
Building A-Retail	-	15,027
Building B-Retail	-	8,320
Building C-Retail	-	8,612
Building D-Bank	-	4,670
Building E-Restaurant	-	4,800
Building F-Restaurant (Sit-Down)	-	7,000
Building G- Restaurant (Sit-Down)	-	7,000

OTHER DEVELOPMENT DATA

	REQUIRED	PROPOSED
Total Parking Spaces	674	674
Of which Compact parking spaces	-	116 (224 allowed)
Handicapped spaces*	14	21
Van accessible spaces	-	4
Loading spaces	10	10

*Note: This standard has not yet been met completely. Handicap parking spaces and aisles are not correctly sized or arranged. In addition, the spaces are not properly distributed to serve each building. A minimum of one van-accessible space should be allocated to serve each individual building or each part of the shopping center building.

3. **Location:** The property is located along the south side of Central Avenue (MD 214), approximately 200 feet east of its intersection with Shady Glen Drive, in Planning Area 75A/Suitland-District Heights, and Council District 6.
4. **Surrounding Uses:** The site is bounded on the north by the right-of-way of Central Avenue (MD 214), and by the right-of-way of Walker Mill Drive on the west and south sides. Walker Mill Drive is designated as a historic route from Shady Glen Road to Ritchie Road. Across Walker Mill Drive from the proposed shopping center are residential lots zoned R-80 (One-Family Detached Residential) and R-R (Rural Residential). To the north of the subject site, across Central Avenue (MD 214), are properties zoned C-O (Commercial Office) and C-S-C (Commercial Shopping Center). To the west, there is a 0.4855-acre property zoned C-O (Parcel 194) that is already under the ownership of the Prince George's County Government and is the site of a proposed fire and rescue station. To the southwest, there is a property that is zoned C-S-C. To the east of the site are properties in the I-1 (Light Industrial) Zone. The site is within one mile of Seat Pleasant, and two-thirds of a mile from the Morgan Boulevard Metro Station.

5. **Previous Approvals:** The subject site was previously zoned I-1 (Light Industrial). The 2004 *Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for Morgan Boulevard and Largo Town Center Metro Areas* (Council Resolution CR-36-2004) rezoned the subject site to the C-O (Commercial Office) Zone. The 2004 sector plan also included the site in the Central Avenue Corridor Node, which is adjacent to the Morgan Boulevard Metro Core.

A revisory petition was filed on June 25, 2004 by the owners of the Santos property (adjacent to the subject site) with the District Council, to request restoration of the I-1 Zone, based on a mistake in the SMA. On October 20, 2004, the Santos petition was amended by adding the adjacent Zimmer property and requesting the C-S-C (Commercial Shopping Center) Zone instead of the I-1 Zone. On February 14, 2005, the District Council approved Zoning Ordinance No. 2-2005 to revise the Morgan Boulevard sector plan and sectional map amendment (SMA) to change the zoning classification from D-D-O/C-O to D-D-O/C-S-C based on a factual error made in the SMA. On September 4, 2008, the Prince George's County Planning Board (PGCPB Resolution No. 08-109) approved Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-06139 and the Type I Tree Conservation Plan (TCPI/26/06) for the Capitol Heights Shopping Center, Parcels A and B with conditions. The site also has an approved Stormwater Management Concept Plan, 32244-2005-00.

6. **Design Features:** The subject site is a currently undeveloped lot in the southern portion of the proposed Central Avenue Corridor Node. The site is irregular in shape with two sides fronting public rights-of-way. Existing site features include a stream, with an existing wetland, running from the northwest to the southeast through the site dividing it into two sections. The site plan proposes two access points from Central Avenue (MD 214), which is an arterial roadway, and one access point from historic Walker Mill Drive. The access point that connects Walker Mill Drive to Central Avenue will be shared with a proposed fire/EMS station on Parcel A. The subject site, Parcel B, consists of two major sections: a 'shopping center' in the southern portion and a 'restaurant row' in the northern portion of the site. There is an access road connecting the two sections, which are separated by surface parking lots and in-stream stormwater management ponds.

The applicant is providing a five-foot-wide sidewalk along the property's frontage on Walker Mill Drive in compliance with the sector plan. However, pedestrian access and internal circulation are concerns in this DSP. Pedestrians must navigate parking areas with minimal pathways, lighting, or amenities. There is no sidewalk provided at the second access point off Central Avenue. There are no crosswalks provided at both intersections and internal roadways where pedestrian crossings are needed. Pedestrians must cross traffic that is entering and leaving the site to access the buildings. The proposed pedestrian pathways are on the periphery of the parking lot. There is no pedestrian scale lighting proposed for the subject site. Lighting on peripheral pathways consists of ambient light from the parking lamps, which is designed to dissipate near the periphery of the site. A gazebo was added adjacent to a stormwater management pond along the sidewalk entering the site from Central Avenue to create a public space. However, there are no benches, trash receptacles, or other pedestrian site furniture. Only one bike rack located near the periphery of the Giant grocery store parking lot can be accessed from Walker Mill Drive.

The Giant store is identified as an anchor in the DSP and is located in the shopping center section. Three additional retail stores will be introduced in the future. The restaurant row consists of three pad sites for a bank, drive-through restaurant, and two sit-down restaurants, which are shown in an attached footprint. All of the stores are oriented toward the interior surface parking lots with the side and rear façades facing Central Avenue.

The proposed Giant store is a one-story, flat-roof, big-box building. The north (front) and east elevations of the Giant utilize exterior insulation and finish system (EIFS) cornices and panels, which are detailed with a darker color EIFS stripe, face brick water tables, and pilasters. The entrances are accented by dormers. There are primary and secondary entrances, which utilize a storefront system of window glass in clear anodized aluminum framing set in EIFS panels. The primary entrance has display windows. The building is articulated by a two-step bump out that displays the signage for the store. Three additional buildings are included in the shopping center for future retail. The front elevations of those buildings are designed in a similar three-part composition and are accented with hip roof towers to moderate the horizontal dominance of the entire façade. The entire shopping center front façade is finished with a combination of split-face concrete masonry units (CMUs), face brick, and an aluminum storefront system. Horizontal and vertical accents are rose and buff toned face bricks, cast stone, and EIFS. Dark gray metal, green and white, and red and white fabric awnings have been added between the primary entrances. The façade of the south (rear) elevation is blank, painted CMUs except one service door, three loading docks, and a compactor. The south (rear) elevation, which will be screened by afforestation, incorporates standard and ground-face CMUs, 21 service entrances, and four loading spaces. Compared to the front elevation, the rear elevation is plain and dull.

The three freestanding buildings in the restaurant row section are designed in a three-part composition with the same combination of finishing materials as the buildings in the shopping center section. Additional rose brick and cast-stone bands are used on each elevation. Since no specific tenants are identified, the building-mounted signs shown on the elevations are place holders without the required details. Additional refinement of the elevations and signage will be needed through a revision to the detailed site plan in the future.

The lighting for this site falls into two basic categories: building-mounted and pole-mounted fixtures. The architecture is lit by six types of accent lighting with a diverse range of styles. A materials board indicates that they will have the same white finish, which should help to unify the various styles. The parking lot is lit by pole-mounted lamps of various heights with cut-off fixtures, which direct light toward the ground and prevent light pollution. No pedestrian-scale lighting has been proposed.

The detailed site plan indicates that there will be two monumental signs proposed for the subject site. One sign is proposed at the east entrance from Central Avenue. The other sign is proposed for the entrance to restaurant row from the access drive. No signage has been proposed for the entrance from Walker Mill Drive or the western Central Avenue entrance, and no sign details have been provided.

The subject site has service and loading entrances on the rear elevations of the buildings. In the shopping center, these loading areas are fronting on Walker Mill Drive. In the retail section of the shopping center, the loading areas will be adequately screened by a proposed area of afforestation. The Giant store has a large loading dock servicing two trucks at a time. The screening for this area is inadequate to block the views of the loading dock and service areas from Walker Mill Drive. There is an unplanted ten-foot public utility easement (PUE) between the road and the sidewalk. Inside the sidewalk, within the property boundary, the applicant has placed a ten-foot-wide landscaped strip with one shade tree per 35 linear feet, and shrubs in between. In restaurant row, service areas face the existing sidewalk on Central Avenue. Signage provided on the back of two of the three buildings indicates that it is intended to be visible from Central Avenue. There is limited screening in this location; only a ten-foot PUE and a ten-foot landscaped strip are located between the rear of these buildings and Central Avenue.

The applicant has not provided any green building techniques in the submittals, but expressed willingness to utilize green building techniques when possible, during construction and in insulation choices and techniques.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

7. **The 2004 Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for Morgan Boulevard and Largo Town Center Metro Areas and the standards of the Development District Overlay Zone (DDOZ):** The 2004 Morgan Boulevard and Largo Town Center master plan defines long-range land use and development policies, detailed zoning changes, design standards, and a DDOZ for the Central Avenue Corridor Node. The subject site is in the southern portion of the corridor node. The vision for the node is to enhance pedestrian, cyclist, and bus circulation between the two nearby metro cores. The standards developed for this node implement the *Prince George's County Approved General Plan* recommendations for centers and corridors. The sector plan for the corridor node at Central Avenue calls for development and redevelopment of higher intensity residential and nonresidential mixed uses. Linkages to Central Avenue promote pedestrian movement to bus service on Central Avenue and access to the Metro station. Development will not have the same intensity as the Morgan Boulevard Metro Station core areas, but should have greater intensity than the surrounding suburban properties.

Section 27-548.25(b) of the Zoning Ordinance requires that the Planning Board find that the site plan meets applicable development district standards. The development district standards are organized into three categories: public areas, site design, and building design. The applicant has submitted a statement of justification that provides a detailed explanation of how the proposed shopping center conforms to each development district standard.

The detailed site plan meets most of the standards with the exception of several development district standards for which the applicant has requested an amendment. In order to allow the plan to deviate from the development district standards, the Planning Board must find that the alternative development district standards will benefit the development and the development district, and will not substantially impair implementation of the sector plan. The amendments that the applicant has requested are discussed below.

SITE DESIGN

Building Siting and Setbacks Standards

- A. **Buildings shall front the street edge and shall be located within an appropriate distance from the edge of the curb. Appropriate ranges for front build-to lines from the street edge are as follows:**
 3. **In subarea 2 of the Largo Town Center core area and in the Central Avenue Corridor Node area, all new buildings shall be located within 10 to 16 feet of the edge of the curb.**

Comment: The applicant's response to staff comments concerning this standard is that "it is impossible to have buildings within 10 to 16 feet of the edge of the curb because of the right-of-way dedication." The existing rights-of-way that the applicant is referring to are along Central Avenue, an arterial road, and Walker Mill Drive, a historic road. The sector plan clearly outlines two- to four-story buildings in the corridor node and

established design standards and guidelines suited to the interior roads and buildings affiliated with this style of development. The development style provided in the DSP conflicts with the sector plan's vision and does not meet this development district standard. The request to amend this standard is not justified.

D. Building façades shall occupy a minimum of:

- 3. 50 percent of the property's street-facing frontage in the Central Avenue Corridor Node area.**

Comment: The DSP does not meet this standard. The applicant argues that it is not possible to have building façades to occupy more than 50 percent of the entire property's street-facing frontage on Central Avenue due to the proposed in-stream stormwater management pond. In the restaurant row section, the percentage of the street frontage occupied by the proposed three buildings is also less than the required 50 percent of the street frontage facing Central Avenue. The buildings are oriented away from Central Avenue and toward the interior parking lots, which is not consistent with the sector plan.

Parking Requirements Standards

- A. The maximum number of off-street parking spaces permitted for each land use type shall be equal to the minimum number of required off-street parking spaces in accordance with Section 27-568(a) of the Zoning Ordinance, except modified as follows:**

- 2. The maximum number of off-street parking spaces permitted for Shopping Centers between 25,000 and 399,999 square feet of gross leasable area (GLA) shall be modified from Section 27-568(a) as:**

- a. All uses except theaters shall provide no more than one space per 200 square feet of GLA.**

Comment: The parking requirements include three steps of calculation to allow parking reduction in order to reduce vehicle trips in the entire sector plan area including the subject site. Standard A sets out the maximum number of parking spaces allowed, which is equal to the minimum allowed number of parking spaces pursuant to Section 27-568(a); Standard B allows a 20 percent reduction of the number as result of Standard A; and Standard C factors in an additional reduction if two or more uses have been proposed in the development. The applicant has chosen to utilize the maximum number of spaces available and has not utilized parking reduction methods as outlined in Standards B and C. The developer argues that they have provided shared parking spaces that exceed the minimum allowed. This is not accurate, as the applicant chose the maximum number of parking spaces with no reductions and, therefore, no shared parking is utilized to reduce the overall number of spaces. Some of the parking spaces are also undersized. The compact spaces are not clearly labeled.

Parking and Loading Area Design Standards

- A. Surface parking lots shall not be located between the main building on a lot and the street. Parking lots should be located to the rear of buildings. When**

this is not possible or feasible, parking should be located to the side or rear to the extent possible. In no case may surface parking areas occupy more than 30 percent of the frontage of the lot.

Comment: The parking lots are not located between the building and the street. However, all of the parking is in front of the building, which is considered an unacceptable arrangement. Lack of conformance with the other development district standards directly affected the applicant's ability to meet this standard.

- C. Parking lots shall be well lighted to ensure safety and shall be located and designed so as to avoid creating isolated and remote areas. Internal pedestrian paths shall be well illuminated and clearly delineated within parking lots.**

Comment: The peripheral pedestrian pathways create pedestrian safety issues. No pedestrian-scale lighting has been proposed. Ambient light from the parking lot is considered insufficient lighting since the applicant needed this light to dissipate near the periphery. Shadowy areas created by street trees may also affect peripheral walkways. Several suggestions, such as an allee to connect the shopping center section and the restaurant row section and additional pedestrian-scale lighting along the pedestrian paths, were made to the applicant during the review process to improve internal pedestrian circulation and lighting. None of these suggestions have been applied in the subject detailed site plan. This standard has not been adequately met.

- K. All parking lots, garages, and onstreet parking areas shall be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).**

Comment: This standard has not been met. Handicap parking spaces and aisles are not correctly sized or arranged. The aisles and spaces are both undersized. By way of example, in restaurant row, a handicap parking space is only six feet wide. Some are mislabeled, the dimensions altered, misrepresenting their size. The handicap parking spaces in front of the retail buildings are inappropriately placed; they should be placed directly in front of the building to accommodate the shortest possible, accessible route.

- L. Parking lots shall be screened from roadways and public areas (such as sidewalks, plazas, and abutting open space) with appropriate landscaping, a continuous, low masonry wall, or other appropriate screening techniques. Landscaping shall be provided in surface parking lots, as follows:**

- 1. A landscaped strip consisting of a minimum four-foot-wide landscaped strip between the right-of-way line and the parking lot, with a brick, stone, or finished concrete wall between 36 and 48 inches in height shall be provided to screen the parking lot. The wall shall be located adjacent to but entirely outside the four-foot-wide landscaped strip. Plant with a minimum of one shade tree per 35 linear feet of frontage, excluding driveway openings, and with a mixture of evergreen groundcover and low shrubs planted between the shade trees.**
- 2. Perimeter landscaping from incompatible uses as defined in Section 4.7 of the *Landscape Manual* shall consist of a landscaped strip to be a minimum of four feet wide, with a minimum three-foot-high brick,**

stone, or finished concrete wall, and/or plantings to consist of one tree and three shrubs per 35 linear feet of parking lot perimeter adjacent to a property line.

If walls are constructed, they shall be located adjacent to but entirely outside the four-foot-wide landscaped strip and shall provide at least one passage with a minimum of three feet in width per every 60 linear feet when the wall is adjacent to open space, a pedestrian path, public plaza, or other pedestrian-oriented space to facilitate pedestrian movement and foster connections between parking areas and nearby uses.

Comment: The applicant has not met these design standards. The applicant provided a ten-foot-wide landscaped strip, in accordance with the Landscape Manual, on the perimeters along Central Avenue and Walker Mill Drive. The DDOZ standard above modifies that standard to reduce the width of the landscaped strip while requiring a wall to increase the amount of buildable area and encourage higher densities in the corridor node. The landscaped strip along Central Avenue has no wall. The strip on the southern end of the site along Walker Mill Drive has a wall that has a varying height from 12.38 feet to 3.38 feet. This wall is neither tall enough nor long enough to screen the loading area of the Giant grocery store from the public views on Walker Mill Road. There are no breaks in any of the proposed walls to allow for pedestrian movement. Internal access driveways have less than two feet between the edge of the road/parking lot and the sidewalk. The applicant has confused their perimeter planting schedules. The correct perimeter label must be placed with the correct planting schedule to complete evaluation of these criteria. Shade trees, evergreen trees, ornamental trees, and shrubs should be listed separately in accordance with the schedules in the Landscape Manual.

- 3. Interior planting shall be required for any parking lot which is 6,000 square feet or larger. A minimum of nine percent of the lot must be interior planting area. For purposes of calculation, all areas within the perimeter of the parking lot shall be counted, including planting islands, curbed areas, corner areas, parking spaces, and all interior driveways and aisles except those with no parking spaces located on either side. Landscaped areas situated outside the parking lot, such as peripheral areas and areas surrounding buildings, may not be counted as interior planting area.**

Comment: The applicant calculated the interior parking per the Landscape Manual so that one section requires no interior plantings, one requires eight percent, and one requires ten percent of the respective parking lot to be the interior planting area. The DDOZ standard given above should override the standard utilized. The applicant has not met this standard.

- M. Convenient and easily visible pedestrian connections shall be provided between parking areas and adjacent buildings and destinations.**

Comment: Pedestrian safety and connectivity standards have not been met. The sidewalks have been placed on the periphery of the site. Pedestrian pathways should be

integrated into the central activity zone of the site and provide direct routes wherever possible.

Landscaping, Buffering, and Screening Standards

- A. Public spaces shall be planted with shade and flowering trees, evergreen shrubs, and other appropriate landscaping to provide shade, increase air quality, and treat stormwater, as well as to add interest, visual appeal, and year-round greenery and color. Other devices, such as trellises, covered walkways, pavilions, and gazebos are also encouraged in public spaces to mark special locations and contribute to sense of place.**

Comment: The applicant's response to concerns about the quality and quantity of the proposed landscape plantings and pedestrian amenities is that ample landscaping, a gazebo, and benches have been provided at public places. The applicant has met the letter of this standard by providing a gazebo, which is visible on the plan, and details have been provided. However, there are no benches, site furniture, or other pedestrian features proposed in the site plans or in the details package.

- I. Dumpsters and storage, service, loading, and delivery areas shall be hidden from public streets, walks, and from all adjacent property containing residential, commercial, and mixed-uses by utilizing landscaping, buffer walls, or other methods to screen the equipment.**

Comment: The wall on Walker Mill Drive needs to be increased in height and in length to screen the view of the loading area and unornamented rear elevation of the Giant grocery store. The proposed wall in this location is 3.38–12.38 feet in height, which is not tall enough at its lowest point to screen views. The topography slopes downhill in this portion of the site. The wall does not extend far enough in length to shield all of the rear elevation and loading area. The service areas located on the unornamented rear elevations of the restaurants and bank will face Central Avenue. There is no wall proposed in this location. There is no specific minimum set by the standard above for screening. It simply states that these areas must be screened. This standard has not been met.

Monument/Freestanding Signs Standards

- F. Signs incorporating neon lights in their design shall not be permitted.**

Comment: The applicant has not included lighting in the package for the monument sign. The details indicate that the sign will have a white Lexan face with tenant graphics. The applicant has stated that the sign will not include neon, but details are not included for how the sign is lit.

- H. Plantings and low masonry walls should be incorporated around the base of signs to soften their appearance and help integrate them into the surrounding urban pattern.**

Comment: A low, brick masonry wall has been provided on the base of the sign. The top of the sign includes a cornice with a note that states it will have a painted texture, which may be in conflict with other standards forbidding low-quality materials and EIFS. No

landscaping is shown in the area where the sign has been placed and no additional landscaping details were included in the package for the sign. This standard has not been met.

- I. A comprehensive sign package shall be approved for any institutional, commercial, office, multifamily, or mixed-use development at the time of detailed site plan review. Each detailed site plan shall be accompanied by plans, sketches, or photographs indicating the design, size, methods of sign support, and other information the Planning Board requires. In approving these signs, the Planning Board shall find that the proposed signs are appropriate in size, type, design, and are complementary to the development district, given the proposed location and the use to be served.**

Comment: The method utilized to light the monumental sign, specific materials utilized, and landscaping surrounding the sign are missing from this sign package. A second monumental sign is shown at the entrance of restaurant row. Separate details should be provided for this sign as it will be inherently differ from the one submitted in that it will only serve three restaurants and a bank, not the entire development. This standard has not been met.

- J. Only one monument on-site sign shall generally be permitted for each office building complex, single office building, commercial/retail building, shopping center, mixed-use development, or multifamily residential complex. If the property or development project has frontage on two parallel (or approximately parallel) streets, one monument sign shall be permitted on each street, as modified from Section 27-614(d) of the Zoning Ordinance.**

Comment: The applicant has proposed two signs. One is located 20 feet from the right-of-way on Central Avenue. The second is at the entrance of restaurant row. The applicant has argued that the development has frontage on two approximately parallel streets, which is correct, but only one sign is permitted on each street. No other entry signs have been provided.

- L. Signs should be externally lit, and light should be directed to illuminate the sign face only. Light spillover should be discouraged. Lighting sources should be concealed or screened by landscape plantings, low walls, or other methods.**

Comment: This standard has not been met. The monumental sign package did not include landscaping or lighting. The sign appears to be lit internally. No landscaping is indicated to soften the sign or conceal external light sources. The applicant has responded that the signs will be externally lit, that the light will be directed at the face only, and that the lighting sources will be concealed by landscape plantings. External light sources have not been submitted as part of the sign or lighting package, nor has it been revised in the detailed site plan. Each of these details should be reflected in the sign package and on the site and landscape plans.

BUILDING DESIGN

Height, Scale, and Massing Standards

- C. For the Central Avenue Corridor Node area, buildings shall be between two and four stories in height. The shopping center on the Santos/Zimmer properties shall be anchored by a national grocery chain store, a food or beverage store, which includes a bakery, pharmacy, deli, and seafood counters. No store on the Santos/Zimmer properties may exceed 125,000 square feet gross floor area.**

Comment: The proposed buildings in the subject detailed site plan are single story and therefore, do not meet this standard. The applicant has responded to this comment by indicating that all of the proposed buildings are 20 feet or more in height. The standard above calls for a building height of two to four stories because the corridor node is in the Developed Tier within a Development District Overlay (D-D-O) Zone. The sector plan provided opportunities to reduce parking and bufferyards to create more buildable space so this vision could be realized at an appropriate density for the site's location.

- H. The massing of a building should be appropriate to its surroundings and the size of its site. Monolithic box-like structures should be avoided.**

Comment: The applicant's response to staff comments is that the massing of buildings is appropriate to its surroundings and the size of the site; however, they do not meet the scale requirements of the sector plan. The sector plan allowed multiple opportunities to reduce parking, buffers, and other standards that consume land in order to accommodate the building height and density envisioned in the sector plan. This standard has not been met.

- I. The height, scale, and massing of buildings within a large parcel should be clustered so that the relationships create a sense of outdoor space.**

Comment: This standard has not been met. The individual buildings on this site are out of scale with the sector plan vision of the corridor node. The height, scale, and massing of the building layout does little to create a feeling of outdoor space or a pedestrian-friendly environment. The applicant has responded that the height, scale, and massing of buildings within the development will be clustered to create a sense of outdoor space. Any modification to the building height, scale, or massing should be reflected on the detailed site plan. The current arrangement does not support the vision of a pedestrian friendly shopping center set forth by the sector plan.

- K. Ensure that the design of development does not negatively impact existing surrounding neighborhoods.**

Comment: There is concern about the visual impact of the proposed development on historic Walker Mill Drive. Directly across Walker Mill Drive is property zoned R-80 and R-R. The R-R Zone should be screened by the proposed afforestation along the southern edge of the site. The R-80 Zone and traffic on Walker Mill Drive may have an unattractive view of the unornamented rear elevation and loading areas at the back of the Giant grocery store.

Materials and Architectural Details Standards

- A. High-quality materials that are durable and attractive shall be used on the façades of all proposed buildings. These materials include, but are not limited to, brick, stone, precast concrete, wood, and tile.**
- D. Low-quality materials such as standard smooth-faced concrete masonry units, prefabricated metal panels, and exterior insulation and finish systems (EIFS) shall not be used. Imitation or synthetic exterior building materials, which simulate the appearance of natural materials, should be avoided.**

Comment: This standard has not been met. The buildings utilize EIFS heavily in the large panel format that composes the primary façade of the grocery store with face brick and CMU details. EIFS is also utilized extensively on cornices and panels located above entryways. The applicant defended this by stating that the EIFS is part of the anchor's (Giant) franchise architecture. Franchise architecture is not supported by the sector plan. The applicant also intends to utilize painted, standard CMUs primarily on the rear and side elevations of the buildings. The use of EIFS and painted, standard CMUs are not supported by the sector plan.

- E. Environmentally friendly, energy-saving “green” building materials and techniques are strongly encouraged.**

Comment: The applicant states that “green” building materials will be incorporated into the shell building design to as great an extent as is feasible, with particular emphasis on energy efficient strategies and building insulation. The applicant's statement above is vague and cannot be evaluated for conformance. This statement was also not reflected in the site plan. No new information has been provided concerning the use of “green” materials.

- G. Trademark buildings with typical franchise architecture shall not be permitted.**

Comment: The applicant has stated that the anchor, Giant, requires some level of franchise architecture. Franchise architecture is not supported by the sector plan.

Building Façades and Storefronts Standards

- C. Rear and side building entrances should be provided if served by an adjacent parking area. These entrances should be inviting, well lit, and clearly articulated with awnings, signs, lighting, and plantings.**

Comment: The shopping center section does not have this issue. However, the restaurant row section does. The applicant has responded that this standard does not apply to the current design, but as the final design develops for the freestanding buildings, this guideline will be respected to as great an extent as possible. The drive-through restaurant meets the side entrance standard; however, signage should be considered on the south or east elevation. The current proposed signage is only on the west elevation, facing the bank, and the north elevation, facing Central Avenue. The two sit-down restaurants have signage on the south and north elevations. No signage or side entrances are proposed.

Three types of wall sconces are identified in the materials list, but are not shown on the elevations.

Window and Door Openings Standards

- C. Large, blank building façades shall not face public areas such as streets, plazas, and zones of pedestrian activity.**

Comment: This standard has not been met. It should be noted that the rear elevations of most of the buildings proposed in the DSP will face streets. The side and rear elevations include minimal architectural details. In addition, the rear elevation of the Giant will face historic Walker Mill Road, while the rear elevations of restaurant row will face Central Avenue. See the discussion above for a detailed description of the rear elevations (in the comment for Building Façades and Storefronts). The fact that signage is proposed for the rear elevations facing Central Avenue indicates that the applicant is aware that these façades will be visible to the street. Both of these areas have insufficient screening to block the view of the blank façades.

Lighting Standards

- B. Building lighting shall be coordinated in design with site lighting.**

Comment: As discussed previously, there is no pedestrian-scale site lighting proposed. The parking lot fixtures do not appear to match an ornamental sector style, nor are they coordinated with architectural lighting. In addition, the architectural lighting package provided indicates that the building-mounted lamps have very diverse styles. Several of the buildings in restaurant row have lighting fixture styles shown in the materials list, but lighting is neither shown nor labeled on the site plan or building elevations.

- E. One consistent style of ornamental pole and luminaire should be used to be coordinated with the appropriate public agencies.**

Comment: The proposed poles are utilitarian rather than ornamental. No landscape lighting has been presented in the detailed site plan or lighting package. The above standard applies to the pole-mounted parking lot luminaires and street lamps (if provided). This standard has not been met.

Building and Canopy Signs Standards

- A. Signs shall primarily serve to identify the name and/or type of business establishment.**
- D. Retail and/or commercial signage should be placed in the zone of the façade that is directly above the storefront. The size of the sign should be in proportion to the height and width of the building face to which it is attached.**

Comment: This standard has not been met. The architectural elevations should be modified to reflect the actual number of retail stores that the detailed site plan specifies.

There are 16 address labels, 23 entry doors, and 23 building-mounted signs on a section of retail building that supports three stores. The signage for these elevations should also be modified to conform to this standard.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE OPEN SPACES

Parks and Plazas Standards

- A. Public art, such as statues, decorative fountains, and sculpture shall be incorporated into public and private open spaces, and coordinated with appropriate agencies.**

Comment: The proposed shopping center includes no statues, decorative fountains, or sculptures. Open spaces provided by the applicant include the gazebo near the stormwater management pond, stream and wetland areas, and afforestation.

- B. Street furniture and amenities such as benches, gazebos, trash receptacles, and drinking fountains should be provided and coordinated to present a common style or theme.**

Comment: The subject site lacks these pedestrian amenities. There is a gazebo, but the applicant should modify the package to include benches, garbage receptacles, and other pedestrian amenities in the design package.

- C. Parks, plazas, and other public space should be well lit and should not be designed with isolated or dark areas.**

Comment: The area surrounding the gazebo is only lit by a single overhead parking lamp. The addition of landscape trees will likely create shadows and dark areas that are not captured on the photometric plan. No landscape or pedestrian-scale lighting has been submitted or proposed.

Sidewalks, Crosswalks, and Trails Standards

- A. Sidewalks shall be provided on both sides of all public streets subject to the approval of DPW&T.**

Comment: The current design has no internal public streets. Two out of three of the access drives have included sidewalks on one side. The third entrance has no sidewalk proposed. Interior sidewalks are only two feet from the access road/parking lots.

- B. Walkways shall connect all uses, sidewalks, and public spaces in the most direct way possible, carrying across and through public spaces and street intersections.**

Comment: The sidewalks are located along the periphery of this site forcing pedestrians to walk around parking lots. The sidewalks, where provided, line one side of the entrance drive and create unnecessary crossings. In general, the subject proposal does not seem to encourage pedestrian use. There are no internal crosswalks proposed. There are no sidewalks, entry signs, or other features at the Central Avenue entrance closest to the

Shady Glen Drive intersection. They will only access ingress and egress through the entry on Walker Mill Drive or a new driveway on Shady Glen Drive.

- D. Sidewalks shall be set back from the curb edge. A green, landscaped strip at least five feet in width shall separate street from sidewalk to allow for the planting of shade trees to further protect pedestrians and enliven the streetscape.**

Comment: The proposed development provides only a two-foot strip between the sidewalks and the road/parking lot on internal sidewalks, except for sidewalks along Walker Mill Drive. The sidewalk along Central Avenue is not clearly identified.

- G. Crosswalks should be provided at all intersections. At locations with high pedestrian traffic, these crosswalks should be safe crosses, with bump-outs, special paving, reflector treatments, countdown pedestrian crossing signs, or street narrowing at corners to provide a greater degree of pedestrian safety (subject to the approval of DPW&T and other appropriate agencies).**

Comment: No crosswalks are shown in this design proposal.

- I. Sidewalks, crosswalks, and trails shall be well lit with pedestrian-scale lighting fixtures.**

Comment: No pedestrian-scale lighting has been submitted with the detailed site plan package. The subject site plan does not indicate any pedestrian-scale lighting along sidewalks. Light from the parking lot lamps is designed to dissipate at the periphery of the site. The addition of trees may influence how much light and shadow is created on these remote pedestrian paths. Peripheral walkways are along the fringe of active pedestrian zones and may create a safety hazard.

- J. Bicycle parking facilities and racks shall be located in highly visible and well-lit areas convenient to building entrances.**

Comment: The applicant has responded that bicycle parking facilities and racks are located in highly-visible and well-lit areas convenient to building entrances. It should be noted that only one bike rack is proposed in the subject detailed site plan. No bike racks are provided in restaurant row. One bike rack is located near Giant in a strip between the access road and parking/loading access aisle on the side of the Giant. It is well lit by a parking lot lamp above. The location could be more accessible to more of the buildings, or additional bike racks should be considered. Locations that are closer to the central activity zone and further from the periphery of the site would be beneficial in meeting this standard. Bike racks have not been labeled on the detailed site plan.

- K. Pedestrian circulation should provide convenient and well-marked access to the Metro stations.**

Comment: The subject site is within two-thirds of a mile of the Morgan Boulevard Metro Station, but adjacent to the metro cores. The sector plan envisions that the subject site should create a stronger public-transit connection through enhancement of the nearest bus stop by adding a bus shelter and other pedestrian amenities. The applicant has responded that no bus shelter has been provided with this development. Pedestrian

walkways and amenities are insufficient to promote strong pedestrian circulation. This standard has not been met.

Street and Site Furniture Standards

- A. Bus shelters shall be provided on bus service routes as determined by appropriate agencies. These shall be constructed with high-quality materials and shall be compatible with the overall character and materials of the mixed-use center in the core area.**

Comment: The applicant has indicated that no bus shelter will be provided with this development. The sector plan indicates that bus transportation from metro cores should be enhanced in the Central Avenue Corridor Node, which is adjacent to the metro cores and offers opportunities for bus transportation. The character of the bus station should be compatible with the core.

- B. Street furniture should be constructed of durable materials and require minimal maintenance.**
- C. Street furniture shall include, but not be limited to, bicycle racks, bus shelters, benches, trash receptacles, and fountains.**
- D. Street furniture should be placed at strategic locations, such as bus stops, public plazas, high pedestrian traffic areas, along trails, and within retail/commercial activity zones.**
- E. Street furniture design and numerical requirements shall be coordinated throughout the core areas with appropriate public agencies to be consistent in style, quality, and character.**

Comment: No street furniture is provided other than one gazebo and one bicycle rack. Appropriate street furnishings should be provided. This standard has not been met.

Lighting Standards

- A. Exterior areas, public spaces, roads, sidewalks, and trails shall be well-illuminated to ensure safety and improve visibility while minimizing light spillover to other properties.**

Comment: The applicant has responded that all exterior areas, public spaces, roads, and sidewalks have been well illuminated. However, no nonarchitectural pedestrian-scale lighting has been submitted. Light from the parking lot will dissipate appropriately at the periphery of the site, making pedestrian scale lighting an essential element. This standard has not been met.

- B. High-quality, pedestrian-scale ornamental poles and luminaires should be used on all sidewalks and trails and are strongly encouraged in other areas of pedestrian activity.**

Comment: As discussed previously, no pedestrian scale lighting has been submitted in the detailed site plan or lighting package. The lighting poles the applicant is referring to are assumed to be the parking lot lamps and fixtures. The light from these fixtures will dissipate at the fringe of the site according to the photometric plan. The pedestrian walkways that have been provided by the applicant on the periphery of the site, where light from the parking lot will be minimal, and obstructions, such as trees, may cause additional shadows. Pedestrian-scale lighting should be added to these pathways and public spaces, or pedestrian circulation should be revised so that they are incorporated into the central activity zones of the site.

F. At the time of the first detailed site plan, a consistent type of ornamental pole and luminaire shall be selected in consultation with DPW&T to be used along public streets adjacent to all subsequent development proposals in the core areas.

Comment: As discussed previously, the DSP provides various types of luminaires which are utilitarian, not ornamental.

8. **Zoning Ordinance:** The subject application has been reviewed for compliance with the requirements of the C-S-C Zone and the site plan design guidelines of the Zoning Ordinance.

a. The subject application is in conformance with the requirements of Section 27-461(b) of the Zoning Ordinance, which governs development in commercial zones. The proposed uses including a shopping center, a bank, and restaurants are permitted uses in the C-S-C Zone. In addition, the subject site was rezoned from the I-1 Zone to the C-S-C Zone through a zoning map amendment application, which was approved by the District Council (via Zoning Ordinance No. 2-2005) on February 14, 2005, with two specific conditions as follows:

A. The shopping center on the properties shall be anchored by a national grocery chain store, a food or beverage store, which includes a bakery, pharmacy, deli, and seafood counters.

Comment: The Giant grocery store is the only known tenant of this DSP. The rest of the retail, bank, and restaurant tenants are still unknown.

B. No store on either property may exceed 125,000 square feet gross floor area.

Comment: The Giant grocery store, which has a total gross floor area of approximately 57,960 square feet, is the largest store in the proposed shopping center. The DSP satisfies this condition.

b. The only regulation in the C-S-C Zone is the front building setback from the street that has been superseded by the build-to-line DDOZ standard. See above Finding 7 for discussion.

9. **Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-06139:** The Planning Board approved Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-06139 with 21 conditions and the following conditions are applicable to the review of this DSP. Other permit-related conditions will be enforced at the time of issuance of the respective permits.

8. **At the time of detailed site plan, the approved technical stormwater management plan shall be submitted for review. The plan shall demonstrate the incorporation of wetland benches and forebays into the stormwater management design for the in-stream stormwater management pond and shall be correctly reflected on the associated TCPII.**

Comment: This information has not been provided with the DSP. According to the review by the Environmental Planning Section (Shoulars to Zhang, April 24, 2009), this information is needed for review. The plan should demonstrate the incorporation of wetland benches, with emergent planting, into the stormwater management design for the in-stream stormwater management pond and should be correctly reflected on the associated DSP, TCPII, and landscape plan.

10. **The applicant, the applicant's heirs, successors, and or assignees shall provide a standard sidewalk a minimum of five-feet wide along the property's entire street frontage of Walker Mill Drive. The sidewalk shall be set back from the curb edge with a green, landscaped strip of at least five feet in width, unless modified by DPW&T.**

Comment: The applicant has provided a standard five-foot-wide sidewalk along the length of Walker Mill Drive with a ten-foot strip (except where the turn lane enters the site) between the curb edge and the sidewalk. No landscaping has been proposed for this strip.

15. **The development of this property shall be in accordance with the conditions set forth in Zoning Ordinance No. 2-2005.**

Comment: See Finding 8 above for discussion. The DSP only partially fulfills the conditions attached to Zoning Ordinance No. 2-2005.

21. **Total development of Parcel A, excluding a public safety facility by the County, and Parcel B within the subject property shall be limited to uses which would generate no more than 621 AM, 1,612 PM, and 1,545 weekend peak hour vehicle trips. Any development generating an impact greater than that identified herein above shall require a new preliminary plan of subdivision with a new determination of the adequacy of transportation facilities.**

Comment: According to the review by the Transportation Planning Section (Mokhtari to Zhang, May 15, 2009), the proposed development is projected to generate no more traffic than the required AM and PM peak-hour vehicle trips.

10. **Landscape Manual:** The 2004 *Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for Morgan Boulevard and Largo Town Center Metro Areas* and the standards of the Development District Overlay Zone (DDOZ) have modified the applicable sections of the Landscape Manual. Specifically, DDOZ standards for Site Design, Landscaping, Buffering and Screening Standard J, state that Sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, and 4.7, do not apply within the development district.

The proposed development for a commercial shopping center is subject to development district overlay standards. See above Finding 7 for discussion.

11. **Woodland Conservation Ordinance:** This property is subject to the provisions of the Prince George's County Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance because the gross tract area is in excess of 40,000 square feet, there are more than 10,000 square feet of existing woodland, and there is an approved Type I Tree Conservation Plan, TCPI/026/06, for this site.
- a. The subject site has a previously approved Natural Resources Inventory (NRI/001/06-01), dated October 29, 2006. The current NRI correctly shows all of the required information. No additional information regarding the NRI is required with this DSP.
 - b. A Type II Tree Conservation Plan (TCPII/141/91) was approved for a portion of the subject property in 1991. A new Type II tree conservation plan has been submitted with this DSP. The total requirement for the 29.44-acre site is 4.56 acres. The requirement is proposed to be met with 0.91 acre of on-site preservation and 3.65 acres of on-site reforestation/afforestation and landscaping. The TCPII meets the requirements of the Woodland Conservation Ordinance.
12. **Referral Comments:** The subject application was referred to the concerned agencies and divisions. The referral comments are summarized as follows:
- a. The Community Planning North Division, in a memorandum dated May 20, 2009, indicated that the subject DSP is consistent with the 2002 General Plan Development Pattern policies for the Developed Tier and conforms to the land use recommendations of the 2004 *Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for Morgan Boulevard and Largo Town Center Metro Areas* for retail uses per District Council Zoning Ordinance No. 2-2005. However, this application does not adhere to the Development District Overlay Zone standards. Specifically, the Community Planning North Division identified the following:

The intent of these standards as stated earlier is to promote an urban town center; however, the large setbacks and one-story buildings reflect the design of a suburban shopping center. Table 10: Summary of Building Regulations, recommends that buildings be set back 10 to 16 feet from the curb edge and be between two and four stories in height (p. 89). None of the buildings meet the standard for setback or height requirements. In addition, façades in the Central Avenue Corridor Node must occupy more than 50 percent of the property's street-facing frontage. Of the total 113,389 square feet proposed, only 23,470 square feet or 21 percent would meet the street frontage requirement.

The Materials and Architectural Details section states "low-quality materials such as standard smooth-faced concrete masonry units, prefabricated metal panels, and exterior insulation and finish systems (EIFS) shall not be used" (p. 109). These materials are proposed in the design of the Giant Food Store, as part of this application.
 - b. The Subdivision Section, in a memorandum dated February 12, 2009, noted that the property is the subject of Preliminary Plan 4-06139, which was approved by the Planning Board on July 17, 2008, and provided an overview of the conditions that are applicable to the review of this DSP. The Subdivision Section concluded that the DSP is in substantial conformance with the previously approved Preliminary Plan of Subdivision, 4-06139.
 - c. The Transportation Planning Section, in a memorandum dated May 15, 2009, identified five transportation-related conditions attached to the previously approved Preliminary Plan of

Subdivision, 4-06139, that are enforceable at the time of building permit. In general, the subject property complies with the necessary findings for a detailed site plan, as those findings may relate to transportation.

In a separate memorandum from the Transportation Planning Section dated February 27, 2009 on review for master plan trail compliance, the trails planner noted that there is no master plan trails that impact the subject property. The trails planner also provided a review of the applicable DDOZ standards related to sidewalks and pedestrian environment and recommended four conditions.

- d. The Environmental Planning Section, in a memorandum dated April 24, 2009, indicated that the plans as submitted have been found to address the environmental constraints for the site and the requirements of the Prince George's County Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance. The Environmental Planning Section recommends approval of DSP-06015 and TCPII/009/06, subject to several conditions.
 - e. The Department of Parks and Recreation responded to a referral request dated February 6, 2009, indicating no comments.
 - f. The Historic Preservation Section, in memorandum dated May 8, 2009, indicated that the proposed DSP for a shopping center would have no effect on identified historic sites, resources, or districts.
 - g. The Permit Review Section, in a memorandum dated February 17, 2009, provided nine referral comments and questions. The Permit Review Section found that the subject detailed site plan appears to be consistent with the conditions established by the District Council within Zoning Ordinance No. 2-2005. However, concerns were expressed about conformance with sector plan standards, signage, and landscape requirements.
 - h. The subject application was also referred to the Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation (DPW&T). At the time that the staff report was written, DPW&T had not responded to the referral request.
 - i. The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), in a memorandum dated May 12, 2009, stated that an access approval and a permit are required and that the permit is subject to plan reviews and approvals by the Engineering Access Permits Division of the SHA.
 - j. The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), in a memorandum dated February 26, 2009, stated that there are issues concerning the project that need to be addressed. These comments will be released upon receipt of payment for the WSSC plan review.
 - k. Verizon, Inc., in response to a referral request dated February 5, 2009, stated that the steel post located in the PUE must be removed (Sheet 4). The applicant, on April 2, 2009, indicated that the steel post has been removed in response to the comment.
 - l. PEPCO responded via telephone with some comments on requirements and instructions for the applicant to submit information on their website, and indicated that PEPCO's review prior to any action taken on this DSP is required.
13. In accordance with Section 27-285(b) and Section 27-548.25 of the Zoning Ordinance, the Urban Design Section concludes that it is not possible to find that the detailed site plan represents 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 DSP does not meet the sector plan vision for the *Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for Morgan Boulevard and Largo Town Center Metro Areas*. The site layout and design do not conform with many of the design standards of the Development District Overlay Zone (D-D-O-Z) created for the Central Avenue Corridor Node. Specifically, the sector plan sets standards for a two- to four-story shopping center with multimodal transportation options for bus passengers, cyclists, and pedestrians to support a compact, walkable shopping center with a lively pedestrian-friendly streetscape. The DSP application is not in conformance with the development pattern envisioned by the sector plan and multiple DDOZ standards. Due to the applicant's failure to show compliance with those important DDOZ standards and the inability to sufficiently justify the required amendments to the DDOZ standards, the Urban Design staff is unable to recommend approval of DSP-06015 for the Capitol Heights Shopping Center.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the foregoing evaluation and analysis, the Urban Design Section recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and DISAPPROVE Detailed Site Plan DSP-06015 for the Capitol Heights Shopping Center.