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Conceptual Site Plan

Detailed Site Plan

CSP-13009
DSP-13041

Application	General Data	
Project Name: Chillum Road Shopping Center Location: On the south side of Chillum Road (MD 501), approximately 320 feet west of its intersection with Queens Chapel Road. Applicant/Address: Chillum Road Shopping Center LLC 1919 M Street, Suite 320 Washington, DC 20036	Planning Board Hearing Date:	05/15/14
	Staff Report Date:	05/01/14
	Date Accepted:	03/20/14
	Planning Board Action Limit:	05/30/14
	Plan Acreage:	6.94
	Zone:	M-X-T/T-D-O
	Dwelling Units:	N/A
	Gross Floor Area:	63,194 sq. ft.
	Planning Area:	68
	Tier:	Developed
	Council District:	02
	Election District	17
	Municipality:	N/A
	200-Scale Base Map:	206NE02

Purpose of Application	Notice Dates	
To amend the sign requirements of the 2006 Approved Transit District Development Plan and Transit District Overlay Zoning Map Amendment for West Hyattsville for the Chillum Road Shopping Center.	Informational Mailing:	11/12/13
	Acceptance Mailing:	03/19/14
	Sign Posting Deadline:	04/15/14

Staff Recommendation		Staff Reviewer: Ruth Grover, M.U.P., A.I.C.P. Phone Number: 301-952-4317 E-mail: Ruth.Grover@ppd.mncppc.org	
APPROVAL	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	DISAPPROVAL	DISCUSSION
	X		

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Conceptual Site Plan CSP-13009 and Detailed Site Plan DSP-13041
Chillum Road Shopping Center

The Urban Design Section has completed the review of the subject applications and appropriate referrals and presents the following evaluation and findings leading to a recommendation of APPROVAL with conditions, as described in the Recommendation Section of this staff report.

EVALUATION

The conceptual site plan and detailed site plan applications were reviewed and evaluated for compliance with the following criteria:

- a. The requirements of the Zoning Ordinance for the Mixed Use–Transportation Oriented (M-X-T) and Transit District Overlay (T-D-O) Zones.
- b. The requirements of Final Plat WWW 39-42.
- c. The requirements of the 2010 *Prince George's County Landscape Manual*.
- d. The requirements of the Prince George's County Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance.
- e. The requirements of the Prince George's County Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance.
- f. Referral comments.

FINDINGS

Based upon the evaluation and analysis of the subject applications, the Urban Design Section recommends the following findings:

1. **Request:** The subject conceptual site plan (CSP) and detailed site plan (DSP) propose to amend the sign requirements of the 2006 Approved Transit District Development Plan and Transit District Overlay Zoning Map Amendment for the West Hyattsville Transit District Overlay Zone (West Hyattsville TDDP) exclusively for the Chillum Road Shopping Center.

2. **Development Data Summary:**

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Zone(s)	M-X-T/T-D-O	M-X-T/T-D-O
Use(s)	Integrated Shopping Center	Integrated Shopping Center
Acreage	6.94	6.94
Parcels	2	2
Lots	N/A	N/A
Gross Floor Area	78,887	78,887

3. **Location:** The subject property is located on the south side of Chillum Road (MD 501), approximately 320 feet west of its intersection with Queens Chapel Road. The property is also located in Planning Area 68, Council District 2, and in the Developed Tier.
4. **Surrounding Uses:** The site is bounded on the northeast by Chillum Road (MD 501); to the northwest by a Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metro use in the Mixed Use–Transportation Oriented and Transit District Overlay (M-X-T/T-D-O) Zones; to the southwest by a WMATA Metro use and a self-storage facility in the M-X-T/T-D-O Zone; and to the southeast by the Chillum Shopping Center in the M-X-T/T-D-O Zone.
5. **Previous Approvals:** The site is subject to the requirements of Final Plat WWW 39-42.
6. **Applicant’s Justification for the Request:** The applicant requests, in accordance with the West Hyattsville TDDP, an amendment through a CSP for the subject property to amend the sign regulations of the West Hyattsville TDDP. A DSP is being reviewed together with the CSP because it is required in the M-X-T Zone. The applicant has requested a global amendment to the sign standards for the shopping center that would allow future tenants to obtain sign permits for signs that deviate from the architectural standards without requiring them to obtain a departure pursuant to the provision in the West Hyattsville TDDP, which provides at page 39 that departures for signs that do not comply with the TDDP standards and that do not otherwise require a DSP will be reviewed in the site plan process. More specifically, the applicant requests that signs and that this standard comply with the following standard be allowed in the Chillum Road Shopping Center, and that this standard would replace the provisions of the West Hyattsville TDDP regarding lighting, and the sign specifications regarding type of building signage, cornice and parapet signage, and lettering:

“Existing building mounted signage may be replaced with internally illuminated signage until such time as the property is comprehensively redeveloped per the TDDP or a comprehensive refacing of the shopping center takes place, which would comprise no less than 75 percent of the total front facades of the center. Cloud signs and other signage incorporating attractive design shall not exceed 200 square feet for no more than three anchor tenants. Signage shall be limited to 125 square feet per sign for each of the other tenants in the main building of the center and 60 square feet for each building occupying a pad site. Flashing, travelling, animated or intermittent signage shall be prohibited. All signage shall be approved by the Planning Board or its designee, which may include the Permit Review Division of the Development Review Division within the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.”

More particularly, the applicant requests the following modifications of the TDDP standards. Each specific request is followed by staff comment.

- a. **Configuration and Techniques #1 (part), (Page 108 of the TDDP) Sign Lighting:** Building signs shall be illuminated with external lighting only. Lighting shall provide full cut-off fixtures to reduce sky glow and glare. Flashing, travelling, animated, or intermittent lighting shall be prohibited on the exterior of any building, or building sign, whether such lighting is temporary or long-term duration.

Comment: The proposed amendment will not meet this standard since the applicant's proposed amendment would allow internally-illuminated signage. The Planning Board found in DSP-08067 (The Shops at Queens Chillum) that the standard for externally-illuminated signage was written into the TDDP for transit-oriented development that is close to the street and pedestrian friendly. This is an existing center that is suburban in nature and vehicle-oriented, thus necessitating externally-illuminated signage that is visible to vehicles travelling on Chillum Road.

- b. **Configuration and Techniques #2 (part), (Page 108 of the TDDP) Sign Specifications:** Building signage shall be permitted as board signs, cornice signs, blade signs, and window signs only. All other signage, including freestanding signs, shall be prohibited.

Comment: The proposed amendment will not meet this standard since it would allow signs other than board signs, cornice signs, blade signs, and window signs. As indicated above, this is an existing center that is suburban in nature and compliance with this standard is neither feasible nor practical. Such signage would not be visible to vehicles travelling on Chillum Road.

- c. **Configuration and Techniques #2 (part), (Page 108 of the TDDP) Sign Specifications:** Cornice/parapet signs shall be permitted using a masonry or bronze plaque bearing an owner or building's name.

Comment: The proposed amendment will not meet this standard since it would allow signs located on the cornice or parapet that are not masonry or bronze plaques bearing the owner or building's name. Given the design of this existing building and its location on the property, the only visible location for the building-mounted signage is on the cornice or parapet and in order for the signage to be visible from Chillum Road, it must be more substantial than a bronze plaque or masonry sign.

- d. **Configuration and Techniques #2 (part), (Bullet 7, Page 108 of the TDDP) Sign Specifications:** Lettering for all signage shall not exceed 18 inches in height or width and three inches in relief.

Comment: The proposed amendment will not meet this standard since it would allow lettering that exceeds 18 inches in height or width and three inches in relief. The existing building is perpendicular to Chillum Road and, as a result, building-mounted signage is difficult to see from Chillum Road. Larger letters will allow the signs to be more visible to vehicles travelling along that roadway.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

7. **The requirements of the Zoning Ordinance:** The subject CSP and DSP have been reviewed for compliance with the relevant requirements of the Zoning Ordinance in the M-X-T and T-D-O Zones. More particularly, the application conforms to the requirements of

Section 27-548.08(c)(1) which establishes the required findings for approval of a DSP in a T-D-O Zones. It states:

- (1) **The findings required by Section 27-285(b) shall not apply to the T-D-O Zone. Instead, the following findings shall be made by the Planning Board when approving a Detailed Site Plan in the T-D-O Zone. The Urban Design Section has included each required finding in boldface type below, followed by staff comment:**

- (A) **The Transit District Site Plan is in strict conformance with any mandatory requirements of the Transit District Development Plan;**

Comment: The purpose of this DSP is to request amendments to the West Hyattsville TDDP and the Planning Board, under Section 27-538.08(c)(2) of the Zoning Ordinance, has the authority to approve such amendments. Since the applicant is not proposing any additional development on the subject property, it is otherwise exempt from the TDDP standards.

- (B) **The Transit District Site Plan is consistent with, and reflects the guidelines and criteria for development contained in, the Transit District Development Plan;**

Comment: The purpose of this DSP is to request amendments to the TDDP and the Planning Board, under Section 27-538.08(c)(2), has the authority to approve such amendments. The applicant is proposing to maintain the existing shopping center on this subject property, and the guidelines and criteria for development are not applicable at this time.

- (C) **The Transit District Site Plan meets all of the requirements of the Transit District Overlay Zone, and applicable regulations of the underlying zones;**

Comment: The applicant is not proposing any new development as part of this DSP. The sole purpose of this site plan is to request an amendment to the sign regulations contained in the TDDP in accordance with Section 27-538.08(c)(2).

- (D) **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;**

Comment: The applicant is not proposing any new development as part of this DSP. The sole purpose of this site plan is to request an amendment to the sign regulations contained in the TDDP in accordance with Section 27-538.08(c)(2).

- (E) **Each structure and use, in the manner proposed, is compatible with other structures and uses in the Transit District, and with existing and proposed adjacent development.**

Comment: The applicant is not proposing any new development as part of this DSP. The sole purpose of this site plan is to request an amendment to the sign regulations contained in the TDDP in accordance with Section 27-538.08(c)(2).

Section 27-548.08(c)(2) goes on to state that the applicant may ask the Planning Board to apply development standards which differ from the mandatory requirements in the TDDP, unless the plan provides otherwise. The Board may amend any mandatory requirements except building height restrictions and parking standards, requirements which may be amended by the District Council under procedures in Part 10A, Division 1, of the Prince George's County Code. The Board may amend parking provisions concerning the dimensions, layout, or design of parking spaces or parking lots.

The subject application is also in conformance with the requirements of Section 27-547(d) of the Zoning Ordinance, which governs uses in mixed-use zones. Each relevant section of the M-X-T Zone requirements is included in **boldface** type below followed by staff comment:

- (d) **At least two (2) of the following three (3) categories shall be included on the Conceptual Site Plan and ultimately present in every development in the M-X-T Zone. In a Transit District Overlay Zone, a Conceptual Site Plan may include only one of the following categories, provided that, in conjunction with an existing use on abutting property in the M-X-T Zone, the requirement for two (2) out of three (3) categories is fulfilled. The Site Plan shall show the location of the existing use and the way that it will be integrated in terms of access and design with the proposed development. The amount of square footage devoted to each use shall be in sufficient quantity to serve the purposes of the zone:**

- (1) **Retail businesses;**
- (2) **Office, research, or industrial uses;**
- (3) **Dwellings, hotel, or motel.**

Comment: The subject shopping center contains two (retail and office) out of three of these categories of use and, therefore, meets this requirement.

- 8. **Final Plat WWW 39-42:** Final Plat WWW 39-42 was approved for the site on November 20, 1960 for a resubdivision of Parcel K for the Chillum Road Shopping Center. The plat contains no notes relevant to the subject application.
- 9. **2010 Prince George's County Landscape Manual:** Per Section 27-548 of the Zoning Ordinance, landscaping, screening, and buffering within the M-X-T Zone shall be provided pursuant to the provisions of the 2010 *Prince George's County Landscape Manual* (Landscape Manual). However, per County Council Bill CB-2013-17, the project is exempt from the requirements of the Landscape Manual, as it had a DSP approved for the property prior to 2010.
- 10. **Prince George's County Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance:** This property is exempt from the requirements of the Prince George's County Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance because the property does not contain more than 10,000 square feet of existing woodland.
- 11. **Prince George's County Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance:** The subject project is exempt from the requirements of the Prince George's County Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance per Council Bill CB-2013-19, as it had a site plan approved prior to 2010 and because the subject project does not involve land disturbance greater than 5,000 square feet. In fact, the project does not involve any land disturbance at all.

12. **Referral Comments:** The subject application was referred to the concerned agencies and divisions. The referral comments are summarized as follows:

- a. **Community Planning Division**—In a memorandum dated April 22, 2014, the Community Planning Division offered the following with respect to community planning issues connected with the subject project:

General Plan: This application is generally consistent with the 2002 *Prince George's County Approved General Plan* Development Pattern policies for the Developed Tier. The vision for the Developed Tier is to maintain a network of sustainable, transit-supporting, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, medium- to high-density neighborhoods.

Transit District Development Plan: This application conforms with the retail/commercial land use recommendation of the West Hyattsville TDDP.

The Community Planning Division recommends that the applicant's amendment request be approved with additional conditions that require complimentary signage that help brand and enhance the image of the shopping center. Any improvements to signage in the Chillum Road Shopping Center should serve to give an updated modern design to the property to meet the intent of the TDDP.

Aviation: The subject properties are not located in a Joint Base Andrews Interim Land Use Control (ILUC) impact area.

SMA/Zoning: The West Hyattsville TDDP rezoned this property from the Commercial Shopping Center Zone (C-S-C) to the M-X-T Zone to allow for redevelopment of these properties with mixed-use offices or residential uses above the ground floor, consistent with the vision of the Queenstown neighborhood. The subject property is located in the M-X-T Zone.

The Community Planning Division then raised the following planning issues connected with the subject project:

Per the West Hyattsville TDDP, the Chillum Road Shopping Center is located in the Queenstown neighborhood, which is envisioned as a lively live/work mixed-use district. Active commercial centers would be located within the Queenstown neighborhood. The preferred land use plan in the TDDP recommends that this property be retail/commercial use in the future. The existing property is commercial and the use is in conformance with the land use intent of the TDDP.

The TDDP states (p. 39) that "new and replacement signs are subject to the TDDP standards." The signage standards in the TDDP are intended to accommodate pedestrian-scale activity that is compatible with the proposed land uses and prohibits signage that is viewed as incompatible with the objectives including internally-lit signage. As stated on page 103 of the TDDP, an important general design principle and intent is "to enhance the visual environment of activity centers." Promoting a strong visual environment through signage helps to brand and enhance activity centers and promotes strong pedestrian and automobile access to a site.

The applicant has provided an application and justification statement requesting that the Planning Board approve an amendment to allow internally-lit building signs in the Chillum Road Shopping Center site only. However, internally-lit signage is prohibited by the TDDP.

The Community Planning Section reviewed the findings of a previous similar amendment request case to approve internally-lit signage for a commercial shopping center in the M-X-T Zone located in the West Hyattsville TDDP. The Planning Board approved the applicant's amendment request to the TDDP with stipulated conditions.

The TDDP stipulates that an important intent of the architectural standards is to enhance the visual environment of activity centers such as the Chillum Road Shopping Center. Since this site is not being redeveloped and the buildings are set back and designed for a suburban layout that would not achieve the TDDP standards at this time, the Community Planning Division recommends that the applicant's amendment request for this site only be revised with additional conditions to support complimentary and enhanced signage on the property. The Community Planning Division recommends that the following additional conditions below be added in approving the request to partially support meeting the intent of the TDDP to enhance the visual environment of activity centers:

- Existing building-mounted signage may be replaced with internally-illuminated signage until such time as the property is comprehensively redeveloped per the TDDP, or a comprehensive refacing of the shopping center takes place, which would comprise of no less than 75 percent of the total front façades of the center.
- Cloud signs and other signage incorporating an attractive design shall not exceed 200 square feet for no more than three anchor tenants. Signage shall be limited to 125 square feet per sign for each of the other tenants in the main building of the center and 60 square feet for each building occupying a pad site.
- All new or replaced signage in the shopping center shall maintain a complimentary signage design (including colors, materials, and design details) that help brand enhance the image of the property, and any improvements should give an updated modern design for the existing property until such time as it is comprehensively redeveloped per the TDDP, or a comprehensive refacing of the shopping center takes place.
- All signage shall be approved by the Planning Board or its designee, which may include the Permit Review Division of the Development Review Division within the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.
- The property owner will work with the City of Hyattsville to develop a five-year schedule for replacement of all signs in the commercial shopping center in accordance with the above provisions.

In summary, staff recommends that the applicant's amendment request for this site only be revised with additional conditions that offer complimentary signage and help brand enhance the image of signage on the property. Any improvements to signage to the buildings in the Chillum Road Shopping Center should serve to give an updated modern design to the property. These additional conditions will help ensure that the general intent of the architectural standards for signage in the West Hyattsville TDDP will be designed

and installed in a manner that enhances the visual environment of this neighborhood activity center for the existing commercial shopping center and takes into consideration a timely redevelopment and general enhancement of the appearance of the overall site.

Comment: A proposed condition in the Recommendation section of this staff report would require that the Community Planning Division's suggested additional language be included in the approval, except for the portion referring to coordination with the City of Hyattsville to develop a five-year schedule for replacement of all signs in the shopping center, which we believe is not within the Planning Board's authority to require.

- b. **Prince George's County Police Department**—In comments dated March 28, 2014, the Police Department stated that, after reviewing the plans and visiting the site, they found no crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) issues to be concerned with at the present time.
- c. **Prince George's County Health Department**—In a memorandum dated April 3, 2014, the Health Department, specifying that their comments are based on their understanding that the request in the case is limited to the amendment of sign standards, stated that they had completed a desktop health impact assessment review of the subject project and have no comments to offer relative to the submitted plans.
- d. **The Town of Brentwood, the Town of North Brentwood, and the City of Mount Rainier**—Representatives of the three above-mentioned municipalities, each located within one mile of the subject site, each indicated to staff that they had no comment on the subject project.
- e. **The City of Hyattsville**—In a letter dated April 23, 2014, Mayor Tartaro of the City of Hyattsville, offered the following comments regarding the project:

I am writing to reaffirm the City of Hyattsville's position with respect to amendments to the sign standards for the West Hyattsville Transit District Development Plan (TDDP). The intent of the West Hyattsville Transit District Development Plan is to facilitate pedestrian-oriented development that utilizes Smart Growth principles and we continue to be opposed to requests that are in direct conflict with these principles. The City of Hyattsville does not support design and uses that are inconsistent and in direct conflict with TDOZ principles, as evident by the need to amend the permitted lettering size intended for motorized vehicles, not pedestrians. The City remains concerned that the approval of amendments to the signage standard will subjugating pedestrian-oriented design standards and prioritizing motorized vehicular design throughout the entire West Hyattsville TDOZ. We appreciate your consideration of the City's position with respect to your review of the requested signage amendment for the Chillum Road Shopping Center. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact my staff.

Comment: The City of Hyattsville's comments are noted though staff recommends approval with conditions as it appears that the West Hyattsville TDDP and the Zoning Ordinance support the recommendation.

13. Based on the foregoing and as required by Section 27-276(b)(1) of the Zoning Ordinance, the subject CSP represents a most reasonable alternative for satisfying the site design guidelines without requiring unreasonable costs and without detracting substantially from the utility of the proposed development for its intended use.
14. Section 27-276(b)(4) of the Zoning Ordinance provides the following required finding (in part) for approval of a conceptual site plan, as follows:

(4) The plan shall demonstrate the preservation and/or restoration of the regulated environmental features in a natural state to the fullest extent possible...

Comment: As the subject project is limited to consideration of a request to amend the sign requirements of the West Hyattsville TDDP, this normally required finding need not be made.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the foregoing evaluation and analysis, the Urban Design staff recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and APPROVE Conceptual Site Plan CSP-13009 and Detailed Site Plan DSP-13041 for the Chillum Road Shopping Center, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to signature approval of the project, the applicant shall add the following notes to the plans:
 - a. “Existing building-mounted signage may be replaced with internally-illuminated signage until such time as the property is comprehensively redeveloped per the TDDP, or a comprehensive refacing of the shopping center takes place, which would comprise no less than 75 percent of the total front façades of the center.”
 - b. “Cloud signs and other signage incorporating attractive design shall not exceed 200 square feet for more than three anchor tenants. Signage shall be limited to 125 square feet per sign for each of the other tenants in the main building of the center and 60 square feet for each building occupying a pad site.”
 - c. “All new or replaced signage in the shopping center shall maintain a complimentary signage design (including colors, materials, and design details) that helps brand and enhance the image of the property, and any improvements should consider an updated modern design for the existing property until such time as it is comprehensively redeveloped per the 2006 Approved Transit District Development Plan and Transit District Overlay Zoning Map Amendment for the West Hyattsville Transit District Overlay Zone, or a comprehensive refacing of the shopping center takes place.”
 - d. “All signage shall be approved by the Planning Board or its designee, which may include the Permit Review Section of the Development Review Division within the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.”