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Special Exception Alternative Compliance 901 and 903 Cypresstree Drive

SE-25003
AC-25002

REQUEST	STAFF RECOMMENDATION
SE-25003: For a building expansion of 2,581.33 square feet of gross floor area and other associated site improvements to an existing church or similar place of worship use. AC-25002: Alternative compliance from Section 4.7 of the 2010 <i>Prince George's County Landscape Manual</i>.	With the conditions recommended herein: • Approval of Special Exception SE-25003 • Approval of Alternative Compliance AC-25002

Location: On the east side of Cypresstree Drive, at its intersection with K Street.

Gross Acreage:	0.62
Zone:	RSF-65
Prior Zone:	R-55
Reviewed per prior Zoning Ordinance:	Section 27-1903(b)
Dwelling Units:	N/A
Gross Floor Area:	3,919 sq. ft.
Lots:	6
Parcels:	0
Planning Area:	72
Council District:	05
Municipality:	N/A

Applicant/Address:
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1109 Dunoon Road
Silver Spring, MD 20903

Staff Reviewer: Evan King
Phone Number: 301-952-3554
Email: Evan.King@ppd.mncppc.org



Planning Board Date:	06/26/2025
Planning Board Action Limit:	N/A
Staff Report Date:	06/12/2025
Date Accepted:	03/31/2025
Informational Mailing:	01/30/2025
Acceptance Mailing:	03/25/2025
Sign Posting Deadline:	TBD

The Planning Board encourages all interested persons to request to become a person of record for this application. Requests to become a person of record may be made online at

http://www.mncppcapps.org/planning/Person_of_Record/.

Please call 301-952-3530 for additional information.

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THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT:

TO: The Prince George's County Planning Board
The Prince George's County District Council

VIA: Jeremy Hurlbutt, Supervisor, Zoning Section,
Development Review Division

FROM: Evan King, Planner II, Zoning Section,
Development Review Division

SUBJECT: Special Exception SE-25003 and Alternative Compliance AC-25002
901 and 903 Cypressstree Drive

REQUEST: **SE-25003:** Special exception for a building expansion of 2,581.33 square feet of gross floor area and other associated site improvements to an existing church, or similar place of worship use.

AC-25002: Alternative compliance from Section 4.7 of the 2010 *Prince George's County Landscape Manual*.

RECOMMENDATION: **APPROVAL, with conditions**

NOTE:

The Prince George's County Planning Board has scheduled this application on the consent agenda, for transmittal to the Zoning Hearing Examiner, on the agenda date of June 26, 2025.

You are encouraged to become a person of record in this application. Requests to become Persons of Record should be submitted electronically, by email to: ZHE@co.pg.md.us. Questions about becoming a person of record should be directed to the Hearing Examiner at 301-952-3644. All other questions should be directed to the Development Review Division at 301-952-3530.

The Zoning staff have reviewed the subject application and present the following evaluation and findings leading to a recommendation of APPROVAL, with conditions, as described in the Recommendation section of this technical staff report.

I. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- A. Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance.** This property is located within the Residential, Single-Family-65 (RSF-65) Zone. However, this application has been submitted and reviewed under the applicable provisions of the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance effective prior to April 1, 2022 (prior Zoning Ordinance), pursuant to Section 27-1900 *et seq.* of the current Zoning Ordinance. Under the prior Zoning Ordinance, the site was in the One-Family Detached Residential (R-55) Zone, which was effective prior to April 1, 2022. Pursuant to Section 27-1903(b) of the Zoning Ordinance, development applications of any type for properties not in the Legacy Comprehensive Design (LCD), Legacy Mixed-Use Community (LMXC), and Legacy Mixed-Use Town Center (LMUTC) Zones may utilize the prior Zoning Ordinance. The subject application qualifies for review under the prior Zoning Ordinance because the subject property is not in the LCD, LMXC, or LMUTC Zones. The applicant complied with the requirements of Section 27-1904 of the Zoning Ordinance, and this application was accepted for review on March 31, 2025, prior to the abrogation date (April 1, 2025) of Section 27-1900, for use of the prior Zoning Ordinance.

A special exception is reviewed and decided by the Prince George's County Zoning Hearing Examiner. Pursuant to Section 27-317(a) of the prior Zoning Ordinance, a special exception may only be approved upon a finding that all of the following standards are met:

- (1) The proposed use and site plan are in harmony with the purpose of this Subtitle;**
- (2) The proposed use is in conformance with all the applicable requirements and regulations of this Subtitle;**
- (3) The proposed use will not substantially impair the integrity of any validly approved Master Plan or Functional Master Plan, or, in the absence of a Master Plan or Functional Master Plan, the General Plan;**
- (4) The proposed use will not adversely affect the health, safety, or welfare of residents or workers in the area;**
- (5) The proposed use will not be detrimental to the use or development of adjacent properties or the general neighborhood; and**
- (6) The proposed site plan is in conformance with an approved Type 2 Tree Conservation Plan; and**

(7) **The proposed site plan demonstrates the preservation and/or restoration of the regulated environmental features in a natural state to the fullest extent possible in accordance with the requirements of Subtitle 24-130(b)(5).**

- B. Prince George's County Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance.** Pursuant to Section 25-119(a)(2)(B) of the 2024 Prince George's County Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance (WCO), special exception applications shall include a Type 2 tree conservation plan or a standard letter of exemption.
- C. Prince George's County Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance.** The property is subject to a minimum percentage of tree canopy coverage, per requirements set forth in Section 25-128, Tree Canopy Coverage Requirements, of the Prince George's County Code.

II. BACKGROUND

- A. Summary and Request:** A special exception for a building expansion of 2,581.33 square feet of gross floor area and other associated site improvements to an existing church, or similar place of worship use.
- B. Development Data Summary:**

	EXISTING	EVALUATED
Zone(s)	RSF-65 (prior R-55)	R-55
Use	Church or similar place of worship	Church or similar place of worship
Gross Acreage	0.62	0.62
100-Year Floodplain (acres)	0	0
Net Lot Acreage	0.62	0.62
Lot(s)	6	6
Parcel(s)	0	0
Dwelling Units	0	0
Gross Floor Area (square feet)	1,337.67 sq. ft.	3,919 sq. ft.

- C. Location and Site Description:** The subject property is located on the east side of Cypressstree Drive, directly across from its intersection with K Street. The 0.62-acre property consists of six lots known as Lot 814, Lot 815, Lot 816, Lot 817, Lot 818, and Lot 819. It is adjacent to single-family detached residential units and another church or similar place of worship. This application requests to expand the existing building used for a church or similar place of worship from Lots 815, 816, and 817 to Lots 814, 818, and 819.
- D. Proposed Use(s):** The subject application proposes to raze 514.34 square feet of the existing building and construct a 3,095.67-square-foot addition. This application is for the expansion of an existing building for a church or similar place of worship

use, from 1,337.67 square feet to 3,919 square feet. Lots 815, 816, and 817 are currently surrounded by a fence which the applicant proposes to raze. In accordance with Section 27-441 of the prior Zoning Ordinance, a church or similar place of worship on a lot less than one acre in size requires a special exception. As detailed below, a use and occupancy permit was issued for a church use prior to the requirement for a special exception becoming effective, which would make the church or other place of worship eligible to certify as a lawful nonconforming use. However, the church has not been certified as a nonconforming use. Accordingly, this special exception application was filed in order to comply with the requirements of Section 27-441.

- E. Neighborhood and Surrounding Uses:** The general neighborhood is bordered by Martin Luther King Jr Highway to the south, Sheriff Road to the north, Glen Willow Drive to the east, and Addison Road to the west. The neighborhood is primarily residential, consisting mostly of single-family detached housing in the RSF-65 (prior R-55) Zone. The neighborhood includes other churches in the RSF-65, Commercial, Neighborhood, and Residential, Multifamily-20 (RMF-20) (prior Multifamily Medium Density Residential) Zones distributed throughout the predominantly RSF-65-zoned area, and a community center. The neighborhood also includes a medium-density multifamily residential area zoned RMF-20 along Greig Street; a small area of townhomes zoned Residential, Single-Family-Attached (RSF-A) in its southeast corner; and an area of government offices, a school, and commercial uses in its southwest corner zoned Reserved Open Space (ROS), Commercial, General and Office (CGO) and RMF-20.

The immediate uses surrounding the subject property are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| North— | Single-family detached dwellings in the RSF-65 (previous R-55) Zone. |
| West— | Cypresstree Drive, with single-family detached dwellings and a church or similar place of worship in the RSF-65 (previous R-55) Zone. |
| South— | Five vacant lots, with a single-family detached dwelling beyond, in the RSF-65 (previous R-55) Zone. |
| East— | Rear yards of single-family detached residential dwellings in the RSF-65 (previous R-55) Zone. |

- F. History and Previous Approvals:** Prior history of this church or similar place of worship, of which this application is requesting an expansion, is detailed below:

The building is visible in aerial imagery from 1965 onward. Aerial imagery prior to 1965 is available only for 1938 and earlier. The building was constructed in 1940, according to the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation.

Prince George's County Council Bill CB-23-1993 became effective on August 31, 1993, requiring special exception approval for a church or similar place of worship use in the R-55 Zone, on a lot less than one acre in size. Prior to that bill's

effective date, a church or similar place of worship was a permitted use irrespective of the lot size.

Council Bill CB-76-1993 became effective on December 31, 1993. This bill altered the special exception requirement to apply only to a church or similar place of worship use in the R-55 Zone, on a lot less than one acre in size.

Permit No. 8376-1992-GU-00, for the use and occupancy of a church in the existing building, was approved by the Prince George's County Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement in 1992, before the effective date of CB-23-1993 and CB-76-1993. The permit was mailed to the applicant after the effective date of CB-23-1993 and CB-76-1993, on November 4, 1993. Since the property's use and occupancy as a church were established through an approved permit before CB-23-1993 went into effect, a special exception was not previously required. However, the proposed expansion and site improvements now necessitate a special exception per the requirements enacted in CB-23-1993 and imposed by Section 27-442 of the prior Zoning Ordinance.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE

This application, for the expansion of a building for a church or similar place of worship use through a special exception, is being reviewed in accordance with the prior Zoning Ordinance. The analysis of all required findings for approval are provided below.

Required Findings—Section 27-317 of the prior Zoning Ordinance provides the following applicable findings:

(a) A Special Exception may be approved if:

(1) The proposed use and site plan are in harmony with the purpose of this Subtitle.

The purposes of Subtitle 27 of the Prince George's County Code, as set forth in Section 27-102(a)(1-15) of the prior Zoning Ordinance, are generally to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public; to promote compatible relationships between various land uses; to guide orderly development; and to ensure adequate public facilities and services.

Staff find that the proposed use is in harmony with the purposes of this subtitle, and will not negatively impact the health, safety, and welfare of the public. The proposed church or similar place of worship expansion will be adequately buffered from surrounding residential uses, in accordance with the requirements of the 2010 *Prince George's County Landscape Manual* (Landscape Manual), which is evaluated further below. The proposed project will bring the current building and its addition into compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act, building code, and zoning requirements. It will also allow more congregants without substantial impact to public facilities. The project also promotes orderly development by

expanding the existing facility, in adherence with the regulations of the prior Zoning Ordinance, as outlined in this technical staff report.

(2) The proposed use is in conformance with all the applicable requirements and regulations of this Subtitle;

As outlined within this technical staff report, this application has demonstrated conformance with the requirements and regulations of the Zoning Ordinance. Specifically, the general findings for approval of all special exceptions contained in Section 27-317(a); additional requirements for specific special exceptions contained in Section 27-341 of the prior Zoning Ordinance; and requirements of the R-55 Zone contained in Part 5, Division 1 and Sections 27-430, 27-441, and 27-442 of the prior Zoning Ordinance are evaluated further in this technical staff report and addressed with recommended conditions of approval, as appropriate.

The application has also demonstrated conformance with the Landscape Manual, the WCO, and the Prince George's County Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance, as evaluated further in this technical staff report and addressed with recommended conditions of approval, as appropriate.

(3) The proposed use will not substantially impair the integrity of any validly approved Master Plan or Functional Master Plan, or, in the absence of a Master Plan or Functional Master Plan, the General Plan;

The proposed addition to the church or similar place of worship will not substantially impair the integrity of the 2010 *Approved Subregion 4 Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* (master plan).

The master plan recommends institutional land uses on the subject property (page 380). This special exception proposes a church or similar place of worship use, which per Section 27-441(b) of the prior Zoning Ordinance, is an institutional use. This special exception conforms to the master plan's land use recommendations for the subject property. The subject property lies in Living Area B, as designated by the master plan. Expansion of a church or similar place of worship use does not impair any of the policies and strategies enumerated for Living Area B, on pages 105 and 106 of the master plan.

Historic Preservation staff noted that the master plan contains goals and policies related to historic preservation (pages 287–296). However, these are not specific to the subject site, or applicable to the proposed development. A search of current and historic photographs, topographic and historic maps, and locations of currently known archeological sites indicates the probability of

archeological sites within the subject property is low. There are no Prince George's County historic sites or resources on or adjacent to the subject property.

Transportation Planning staff also determined that vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle access and circulation for this plan are acceptable, and consistent with the 2009 *Approved Countywide Master Plan of Transportation*.

(4) The proposed use will not adversely affect the health, safety, or welfare of residents or workers in the area;

The proposed use will not have adverse effects on the health, safety, or welfare of residents. Only one additional parking space is proposed, which will provide adequate parking on-site per Section 27-568 of the prior Zoning Ordinance. The safety of vehicular circulation is improved with defined drive aisles, appropriate dimensions for perpendicular and parallel spaces, and pedestrian walks separated from vehicular circulation, in accordance with Sections 27-556, 27-558, and 27-560 of the prior Zoning Ordinance. The use will also be adequately buffered from surrounding residential uses by compliance with the standards of the Landscape Manual, by measures deemed sufficient by the Alternative Compliance Committee, as documented in the recommended Alternative Compliance AC-25002.

(5) The proposed use will not be detrimental to the use or development of adjacent properties or the general neighborhood; and

The proposed use will not be detrimental to the use of surrounding properties. As discussed above, the site will be designed with the required parking and circulation to serve the proposed use. The use will be adequately buffered from surrounding residential uses per the standards of the Landscape Manual, by measures of AC-25002.

(6) The proposed site plan is in conformance with an approved Type 2 Tree Conservation Plan; and

This project meets the exemption criteria in Section 25-119(b)(5)(A) of the WCO because the site is less than 40,000 square feet in size and does not have a previously approved tree conservation plan. The site received a Standard Letter of Exemption (S-013-2025) from the WCO on February 20, 2025, and it remains valid until February 20, 2030. No additional information is required regarding woodland conservation.

- (7) The proposed site plan demonstrates the preservation and/or restoration of the regulated environmental features in a natural state to the fullest extent possible in accordance with the requirements of Subtitle 24-130(b)(5).**

In conformance with Section 27-296(c)(1)(j) of the prior Zoning Ordinance, an approved Natural Resources Inventory (NRI-140-2024) was submitted with the application. The site contains no regulated environmental features to preserve and/or restore as defined in the prior Prince George's County Subdivision Regulations. Accordingly, this finding is met.

Additional Requirements for Specific Special Exceptions—Section 27-341.02 (1-5) of the prior Zoning Ordinance provides the following applicable requirements:

- (a) A church or similar place of worship may be permitted, subject to the following:**

- (1) The minimum setback for all buildings shall be twenty-five (25) feet from each lot line;**

The minimum setback requirement of 25 feet, per this section, is met from all lot lines. However, as discussed elsewhere, Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, of the Landscape Manual, prescribes more stringent (40-foot) setback requirements, which will apply to the northern, eastern, and southern property lines. Per Section 27-103(a) of the prior Zoning Ordinance, in the case of multiple applicable dimensional standards, the stricter ones must be applied. The front yard setback requirement remains 25 feet, however, in accordance with this section and Section 27-442(e) of the prior Zoning Ordinance, there is no required bufferyard on the property's front yard imposed by the requirements of Section 4.7 of the Landscape Manual. The applicant requested alternative compliance for these bufferyards, in part, to reduce the required building setback to 25 feet along the eastern and northern property lines. The Planning Director recommended approval of the requested alternative compliance, as detailed further in this technical staff report. All other requirements of the Landscape Manual are also evaluated further in this technical staff report.

- (2) When possible, ingress and egress should be located so as to direct traffic away from streets that are internal to a residential subdivision;**

Ingress and egress to the property is via Cypressstree Drive. There is no feasible alternative to the proposed access, as the property only fronts on Cypressstree Drive.

- (3) The applicant shall satisfactorily demonstrate that parking and traffic will not adversely affect adjacent residential neighborhoods;**

All parking is internal to the subject site and will not adversely affect the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Traffic impacts will be minimal, as parking capacity is proposed to be expanded by only one space.

- (4) When possible, there should be no parking spaces or loading areas located in the front yard; and**

The majority of on-site parking will be located to the side of the proposed building. There are three proposed parking spaces in front of the proposed building, as landscape bufferyards and planting islands required by Sections 4.3 and 4.7 of the Landscape Manual limit the number of spaces possible to fit in the main portion of the lot. These spaces will not negatively impact the aesthetic along Cypressstreet Drive, as the front parking area will be screened from the street by a required landscape strip. All other parking spaces are located to the side of the building.

- (5) The maximum allowable lot coverage for the zone in which the use is proposed shall not be increased.**

Per Section 27-442 of the prior Zoning Ordinance, the maximum allowable lot coverage for a church or similar place of worship in the R-55 Zone is 60 percent. The proposed lot coverage is 50.2 percent (13,653 square feet).

Regulations of the R-55 Zone: The following regulations of the R-55 Zone are applicable to the proposed project.

Section 27-420. – Fences and walls

The existing fence on the property will be razed and replaced with a decorative steel fence. Staff have reviewed the provisions of Section 27-420 of the prior Zoning Ordinance and found that only Section 27-420(a) and (d) apply to the applicant's proposed fence.

- (a) Unless otherwise provided, fences and walls (including retaining walls) more than six (6) feet high shall not be located in any required yard, and shall meet the setback requirements for main buildings. (See Figure 42.) On lots consisting of one (1) acre or less, fences in the front yard shall not be more than four (4) feet high unless a variance is approved by the Board of Appeals. In the case of a corner lot consisting of one (1) acre or less, fences in the front yard or side yard shall not be more than four (4) feet high unless a variance is approved by the Board of Appeals. Fences constructed pursuant to a validly issued building permit prior to October 1, 2008, shall not be**

deemed nonconforming; however, replacement of an existing fence must comply with the four (4) foot limitation.

The proposed fence will not exceed 6 feet in height in the rear and side yards, and 4 feet in the front yard. Accordingly, the fence need not comply with the applicable setbacks for main buildings, and no variance is required.

- (d) Walls and fences more than four (4) feet high (above the finished grade, measured from the top of the fence to grade on the side of the fence where the grade is the lowest) shall be considered structures requiring building permits.**

Portions of the proposed fence exceed 4 feet in height, and therefore, will require a building permit.

Section 27-421.01. – Frontage

Each lot shall have frontage on, and direct vehicular access to, a public street, except lots for which private streets or other access rights-of-way have been authorized pursuant to Subtitle 24 of this Code. Additional provisions are contained in Sections 27-431(d) and (e) and 27-433(e) and (f).

The proposed project has frontage on and direct vehicular access to Cypress tree Drive.

Section 27-442. – Regulations

	Required	Proposed
Minimum net lot area	6,500 square feet	27,197 square feet
Maximum lot coverage	60 percent	50.2 percent
Minimum lot width at street frontage	45 feet*	149.2 feet
Minimum lot width at front building line	65 feet	170.8 feet
Minimum front yard depth	25 feet**	25 feet**
Minimum side yard depth	17'/8' (total of both/minimum of either)**	25 feet*
Minimum rear yard depth	20 feet**	25 feet**
Maximum building height	35 feet	30 feet

Note: *The minimum lot width at street frontage for all other uses in the R-55 Zone is shown as 454 feet in the prior Zoning Ordinance. A copy of the 1991 Zoning Ordinance shows this requirement to be 45 feet, followed by a footnote (Footnote 4) in superscript, with this footnote applying to other lot width standards for the R-55 Zone in the same table. For these reasons, staff

have determined that the standard of 454 feet in the most current copy of the prior Zoning Ordinance was intended to be 45 feet.

****Section 4.7 of the Landscape Manual prescribes a minimum 40-foot building setback, which will apply to the northern, eastern, and southern property lines (i.e., the side and rear yards). The R-55 Zone requires side (17/8 feet (total of both/minimum of either)) and rear (20 feet) yard setbacks. These setbacks required in the R-55 Zone are less than the 40 feet required by the Landscape Manual. Per Section 27-103(a) of the prior Zoning Ordinance, in the case of multiple applicable dimensional standards, the stricter ones must be applied. Therefore, the 40-foot setback requirements apply. However, as discussed below, the applicant has requested alternative compliance from Section 4.7 of the Landscape Manual, to allow for 25-foot building setbacks, and the Planning Director recommends approval. If the alternative compliance is approved, the applicant's proposed setbacks will comply with the applicable setback requirements.**

Section 27-568 – Schedule (number) of spaces required, generally

In accordance with the parking and loading regulations contained in Section 27-568 of the prior Zoning Ordinance, for churches or similar places of worship, there is one space required for every four seats in the main auditorium, and one space for every four seats in other rooms occupied at the same time as the main auditorium. The church currently has 48 seats, with no seating in additional rooms being occupied at the same time as the main auditorium. The total number of parking spaces required for the church would be 12, based on the current number of seats. Currently, the site contains 19 parking spaces which demonstrates conformance with the requirements of Part 11 of the prior Zoning Ordinance.

The proposed building expansion will increase the number of auditorium seats from 48 to 80, and the number of required parking spaces from 12 to 20. The proposed project will have 20 parking spaces, fulfilling the minimum parking requirements per Section 27-568. Per Section 27-566 of the prior Zoning Ordinance, parking lots with space requirements below 25 overall are required to have one space reserved for the physically handicapped. The proposed project provides one handicap parking space in front of the building. Therefore, the site will continue to comply with Part 11.

IV. COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF THE 2010 PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY LANDSCAPE MANUAL

The proposed development is subject to the requirements of the Landscape Manual. Specifically, conformance is required to Section 4.2, Requirements for Landscape Strips Along Streets; Section 4.3, Parking Lot Requirements; Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses; and Section 4.9, Sustainable Landscaping Requirements. Analysis of conformance with these sections is discussed below:

Section 4.2, Requirements for Landscape Strips Along Streets

The proposed project is subject to requirements in Section 4.2 of the Landscape Manual, as the increase in gross floor area will be greater than 10 percent. These applicability criteria are listed in Section 1.1(d) and (f) of the Landscape Manual.

The proposed project meets the requirements of Section 4.2, as demonstrated on Sheet C301 of the submitted landscape plan, by providing above the required numbers of shade trees and shrubs given the property's designation according to the 2014 *Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan* and linear footage of landscape strip along the street.

Section 4.3, Parking Lot Requirements

The proposed project is subject to requirements in Section 4.3 of the Landscape Manual, as it involves an increase in impervious surface, an increase in parking spaces, and a total parking lot area above 7,000 square feet. These applicability criteria are listed in Section 1.1(d) and (g) of the Landscape Manual.

The proposed project meets the requirements of Section 4.3, for parking lot perimeter landscape strips, as demonstrated on Sheet C301 of the submitted landscape plan, by providing above the required numbers of plants and above the required strip width for the site's designation, as stated in Plan 2035.

The proposed project addresses the requirements of Section 4.3, for interior planting for parking lots, as demonstrated on Sheet C301 of the submitted landscape plan, by providing the required number of shade trees, sufficient pervious surface for each shade tree, and an appropriate concentration and distribution of sufficiently-sized planting islands in the parking lot oriented appropriately to parking spaces, as required for the site's designation, as stated in Plan 2035.

The project proposes an insufficient percentage of the total interior landscape area of the parking lot for this requirement. Alternative Compliance AC-25002 addresses this requirement, as described in the Alternative Compliance section below, and has been recommended for approval by the Alternative Compliance Committee and the Planning Director.

Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses

The proposed project is subject to requirements in Section 4.7 of the Landscape Manual, as church or similar places of worship uses are considered incompatible with residential uses by this section. These applicability criteria are listed in Section 1.1(d) and (i) of the Landscape Manual. The proposed project addresses compliance with this section in three separate areas of the subject property, listed below as Bufferyards A, B, and C.

Section 27-103(a) states that in the case of multiple standards applicable to the same aspect of a proposed project, the strictest standard shall apply. At 40 feet each, all 3 bufferyards required by this section of the Landscape Manual are required to be wider than setback requirements imposed by Section 27-341.02(a) of the prior Zoning Ordinance (requirements for church or similar place of worship), and Section 27-442(e) (requirements of the R-55 Zone). Therefore, the requirements for bufferyard width imposed by the Landscape Manual are the applicable setback requirements for the northern, eastern, and southern borders of the property.

Bufferyard A, required by this section to buffer the residential use bordering the property along the southern property boundary, falls short of setback and width requirements. AC-25002 addresses this requirement, as described in the Alternative Compliance section below, and has been recommended for approval by the Alternative Compliance Committee and the Planning Director.

Bufferyard B, required by this section to buffer the residential uses bordering the property along the eastern property boundary, falls short of setback and width requirements. AC-25002 addresses this requirement, as described in the Alternative Compliance section below, and has been recommended for approval by the Alternative Compliance Committee and the Planning Director.

Bufferyard C, required by this section to buffer the residential use bordering the property along the northern property boundary, falls short of setback and width requirements. AC-25002 addresses this requirement, as described in the Alternative Compliance section below, and has been recommended for approval by the Alternative Compliance Committee and the Planning Director.

Section 4.9, Sustainable Landscaping Requirements

The proposed project is subject to the requirements of Section 4.9 of the Landscape Manual, as it does not meet exemption requirements specified in Section 1.1(d) of the Landscape Manual. The proposed project meets the requirements of Section 4.9, as demonstrated on Sheet C301 of the submitted landscape plan, by proposing plants in excess of minimum count requirements for each required category, by proposing no invasive species, and by proposing no planting on slopes greater than 3:1.

V. ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE

Section 4.3, Parking Lot Requirements

The applicant requests alternative compliance from the requirements of Section 4.3, Parking Lot Requirements, of the Landscape Manual, specifically from the interior parking lot planting requirements. Table 4.3-1, Parking Lot Interior Planting Requirements, requires eight percent of interior planting area for parking lots between 7,000–49,999 square feet in size. The subject property has 8,265 square feet of parking area, and as such, is required to provide 8 percent, or 662 square feet of interior planting area. The applicant proposes 7.6 percent, or 632 square feet of internal planting area.

REQUIRED: Section 4.3, Interior Planting for Parking Lots 7,000 Square Feet or Larger

Parking lot area	8,265 square feet
Interior planting area required	8 percent/662 square feet
Minimum number of shade trees	3

PROVIDED: Section 4.3, Interior Planting for Parking Lots 7,000 Square Feet or Larger

Parking lot area	8,265 square feet
Interior planting area provided	7.6 percent/632 square feet
Shade trees provided	4

Justification of Recommendation

The proposed plans show 30 square feet less interior planting area than required, for a reduction of 0.4 percent. As an alternative, the applicant has provided an additional shade tree within the provided interior planting area. The parking lot is separated into two areas and the planting areas are distributed throughout both and include shrub and groundcover plantings in addition to the three shade trees required with AC-25002. Both portions of the parking lot are also surrounded by additional tree and shrub plantings, creating an enhanced appearance and visual relief within the parking lot.

The Planning Director finds that given the minor reduction in planting area, provision of the additional shade tree, and additional shrub and groundcover plantings, the applicant's proposal is equally effective as normal compliance, with respect to Section 4.3 of the Landscape Manual.

Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses

The applicant requests alternative compliance from the requirements of Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, along the north, east, and south property lines adjacent to single-family detached residential uses. To the south, the property is adjacent to vacant land zoned RSF-65, prior R-55 Zone. Table 4.7-2, Minimum Bufferyard Requirements, requires a Type C bufferyard for a place of worship, which is medium impact, adjoining single-family detached dwellings. Table 4.7-3, Bufferyard Types, requires a minimum building setback of 40 feet, a minimum landscape yard width of 30 feet, and 120 plant units per 100 linear feet of property line for a Type C bufferyard. The applicant proposes an alternative design from these requirements, as follows: along all three bufferyards, the applicant proposes to reduce the required landscape yard from 30 feet to 15 feet; and along northern and eastern bufferyards, reduce the required building setback from 40 feet to 25 feet. The southern bufferyard does not require a decrease in building setback, as the building is set back 75 feet. However, the applicant still proposes to reduce the landscaped yard to 15 feet.

REQUIRED: Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, southern property line, adjacent to a vacant single-family detached residential property (Lots 820-823)

Length of bufferyard	194 linear feet
Minimum building setback	40 feet
Minimum landscape yard	30 feet
Existing trees	0 percent
Fence or wall	0 linear feet
Plant units (120 per 100 linear feet)	233

PROVIDED: Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, southern property line, adjacent to a vacant single family detached residential property (Lots 820-823)

Length of bufferyard	194 linear feet
Minimum building setback	75 feet
Minimum landscape yard	15 feet
Existing trees	0 percent
Fence or wall	194 linear feet
Plant units	277

Justification of Recommendation

The proposed place of worship is 75 feet from the southern property line, and the proposed landscape yard is 15 feet wide. To render the proposed bufferyard equally as compliant as the required bufferyard, the applicant has proposed a 6-foot-high, ornamental steel fence along the property line, and a total of 277 plant units, which is 44 more than required. The Planning Director finds that, given the provision of the ornamental fence and additional plant units as well as the configuration of proposed improvements, the applicant's proposal is equally effective as normal compliance, with respect to Section 4.7 of the Landscape Manual for the southern property line.

REQUIRED: Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, eastern property line, adjacent to single-family detached dwellings on Lots 7-10

Length of bufferyard	151 linear feet
Minimum building setback	40 feet
Minimum landscape yard	30 feet
Existing trees	0 percent
Fence or wall	N/A
Plant units (120 per 100 linear feet)	182

PROVIDED: Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, eastern property line, adjacent to single-family detached dwellings on Lots 7-10

Length of bufferyard	151 linear feet
Minimum building setback	25 feet
Minimum landscape yard	15 feet
Existing trees	0 percent
Fence or wall	151 linear feet
Plant units	223

Justification of Recommendation

The proposed place of worship is 25 feet from the eastern property line, and the proposed landscape yard is 15 feet wide. To render the proposed bufferyard equally as compliant as the required bufferyard, the applicant has proposed a 6-foot-high, ornamental steel fence along the property line, and a total of 223 plant units, which is 41 more than required.

The Planning Director finds that given the provision of the fence and additional plant units, as well as the configuration of proposed improvements, the applicant's proposal is equally effective as normal compliance, with respect to Section 4.7 of the Landscape Manual for the eastern property line.

REQUIRED: Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, northern property line, adjacent to a single-family detached dwelling on Lots 812 and 813

Length of bufferyard	171 linear feet
Minimum building setback	40 feet
Minimum landscape yard	30 feet
Existing trees	0 percent
Fence or wall	N/A
Plant units (120 per 100 linear feet)	206

PROVIDED: Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, adjacent to a single-family detached residential use on Lots 812 and 813

Length of bufferyard	171 linear feet
Minimum building setback	25 feet
Minimum landscape yard	15 feet
Existing trees	0 percent
Fence or wall	171 linear feet
Plant units	256

Justification of Recommendation

The proposed place of worship is 25 feet from the northern property line, and the proposed landscape yard is 15 feet wide. To render the proposed bufferyard equally as compliant as the required bufferyard, the applicant has proposed a 6-foot-high, ornamental steel fence along the property line, and a total of 256 plant units, which is 50 more than required.

The Planning Director finds that given the provision of the fence and additional plant units, as well as the configuration of proposed improvements, the applicant's proposal is equally effective as normal compliance, with respect to Section 4.7 of the Landscape Manual for the northern property line.

Recommendation

The Planning Director recommends APPROVAL of Alternative Compliance AC-25002, for 901 and 903 Cypress tree Drive, from the requirements of Section 4.3, Interior Planting Requirements, and Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, of the Landscape Manual, along the northern, eastern, and southern property lines.

VI. COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF THE 2024 PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY WOODLAND AND WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSERVATION ORDINANCE

This project meets the exemption criteria in Section 25-119(b) of the WCO because the site is less than 40,000 square feet in size and does not have a previously approved tree conservation plan. The site received a Standard Letter of Exemption (S-013-2025) from the WCO on February 20, 2025, and it remains valid until February 20, 2030. No additional information is required regarding woodland conservation.

There is one specimen tree on the subject property, near the southeast corner. The specimen tree is proposed to be removed to allow for construction of the parking lot. The site is exempt from and is not subject to the specimen tree conservation requirements contained in the WCO.

VII. COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY TREE CANOPY COVERAGE ORDINANCE

Prince George's County Council Bill CB-21-2024, for the Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance, became effective July 1, 2024. Subsequently, Subtitle 25, Division 3, Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance, of the Prince George's County Code, requires a minimum percentage of the site to be covered by tree canopy for any development projects that propose more than

2,500 square feet of gross floor area, or disturbance, and requires a grading permit. The subject site is located within the RSF-65 Zone. The Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance is not subject to the current Zoning Ordinance grandfathering provisions and does not contain any grandfathering provisions for using the prior zoning, except for specified legacy zones or developments that had a previously approved landscape plan demonstrating conformance to tree canopy coverage (TCC) requirements. Therefore, this application is being reviewed for conformance with the TCC requirements for the current property zone, which is RSF-65.

Staff find that the proposed project is in conformance with the applicable provisions of the Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance for the RSF-65 Zone, which is subject to a minimum TCC of 20 percent, per the requirements set forth in Section 25-128 of the Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance. The subject site is 0.62 acre in size, requiring 0.12 acre, or 5,439 square feet of TCC. The project proposes 15,175 square feet of TCC on the site, exceeding and satisfying the requirement.

The submitted landscape plan reflects conformance of the site with former TCC requirements for the prior R-55 Zone, which are the same as current requirements for the RSF-65 Zone. The applicant will need to reference the current RSF-65 Zone on the landscape plan, rather than the former R-55 Zone, as the Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance is separate from the Zoning Ordinance. A condition requiring reference to the RSF-65 Zone in the TCC schedule on the landscape plan has been included in the Recommendation section of this technical staff report.

The submitted landscape plan has a discrepancy between the TCC and planting schedules, with the TCC schedule showing 12 ornamental trees and 89 evergreen trees, and the planting schedule showing 10 ornamental trees and 75 evergreen trees. With the planting schedule's lower counts of trees, the plan still meets TCC requirements, but the applicant will need to clarify which counts are correct and apply them to the TCC calculations. A condition requiring this clarification has been included in the Recommendation section of this technical staff report.

VIII. SIGNAGE

The following regulations, in Part 12 of the prior Zoning Ordinance, are applicable to the sign proposed with this project. One sign is proposed and will be attached to the front façade of the building.

Section 27-617. - Institutional – Other than Temporary

(a) In any zone (except Comprehensive Design and Mixed Use Zones) where a church; library; school; hospital; fire station; community center; day care center for children; service, fraternal, or civic organizations; or other similar institution is allowed, a sign may be erected. Institutional signs shall meet the following design standards:

(1) Maximum area for each sign - 48 square feet.

The area of the proposed sign is 34.7 square feet, which meets this requirement. Since the sign is attached to the building's front façade, the area of the sign is determined by reducing that of its entire face by

50 percent, to eliminate the spaces between letters, in accordance with Section 27-591(a) of the prior Zoning Ordinance.

(2) Maximum height - 8 feet above finished grade at base of sign.

The sign's height is 5 feet and 1 inch, which is less than the maximum of 8 feet above finished grade at base of sign.

(3) Minimum setback - 15 feet from adjoining land in any Residential Zone (or land proposed to be used for residential purposes in a Comprehensive Design, Mixed Use, or Planned Community Zone).

The proposed sign will be set back 25 feet, as it will be attached to the front façade of the building.

(4) Type allowed - freestanding or attached to a building.

The proposed sign will be attached to a building.

(5) Maximum number - 1 per street the property fronts on (must face street frontage).

The applicant proposes a single sign.

IX. REFERRAL COMMENTS

The subject application was referred to the concerned agencies and divisions. The referral comments are incorporated herein by reference, and are summarized as follows:

- A. **Subdivision Section**—In a memorandum dated May 30, 2025 (Gupta to King), the Subdivision Section identified no prior preliminary plan of subdivision (PPS) applicable to the property and stated that the proposed project is exempt from filing a PPS and new final plat. The Subdivision Section also stated that in accordance with Section 24-4503(a)(1) and (3) of the Prince George's County Subdivision Regulations, the property does not have a certificate of adequacy.
- B. **Transportation Planning**—In a memorandum dated May 23, 2025 (Udeh to King), the Transportation Planning Section determined that vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle access and circulation for this plan are acceptable, and consistent with the master plan and the 2009 *Approved Countywide Master Plan of Transportation*.
- C. **Environmental Planning**—In a memorandum dated May 23, 2025 (Rea to King), the Environmental Planning Section provided an analysis of the special exception and noted that there are no regulated environmental features on the subject property, and that the proposed project is exempt from the WCO.
- D. **Historic Preservation**—In a memorandum dated April 24, 2025 (Stabler, Chisholm, and Smith to King), Historic Preservation staff noted that the master plan contains goals and policies related to historic preservation (pages 287–296). However, these are not specific to the subject site, or applicable to the proposed

development. A search of current and historic photographs, topographic and historic maps, and locations of currently known archeological sites indicates the probability of archeological sites within the subject property is low. There are no Prince George's County historic sites or resources on or adjacent to the subject property.

- E. **Community Planning**—In a memorandum dated May 21, 2025 (Nair to King), the Community Planning Division found that pursuant to Section 27-317(a)(3) of the prior Zoning Ordinance, this special exception application will not impair the integrity of the master plan.
- F. **Permit Review**—In a memorandum dated May 23, 2025 (Jacobs to King), the Permit Review Section provided an analysis of the application and provided the following conditions which have been included in the Recommendation section of this technical staff report:
 - 1. The dimensions of the final building footprint need to be added to Sheet C200 of the special exception site plan.
 - 2. The method of erecting the channel letters of the building sign should be added to the signage sheet.

X. COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

As of the writing of this technical staff report, no correspondence has been received from the surrounding community.

XI. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the applicant's statement of justification, the analysis contained in the technical staff report, associated referrals, and materials in the record, the applicant has demonstrated conformance with the required special exception findings, as set forth in the prior Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance. Staff find that the proposed application satisfies the requirements for approval, and that the application will be in conformance with the prior Zoning Ordinance requirements.

Therefore, the staff recommend APPROVAL of Special Exception SE-24003, for 901 and 903 Cypressstree Drive, subject to the following condition:

- 1. Prior to certification of the special exception site plan, the following revisions shall be made:
 - a. Label the tree canopy coverage schedule with requirements for the current Residential, Single-Family-65 (RSF-65) Zone, rather than the prior One-Family Detached Residential (R-55) Zone on the landscape plan.
 - b. Determine the correct tree counts by type, to clarify the discrepancies between those in the tree canopy coverage (TCC) and planting schedules on the landscape plan. Apply the correct counts to TCC calculations.