

July 30, 2009

MEMORANDUM:

TO: Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: Steve Adams, Urban Design Supervisor

FROM: Elizabeth Whitmore, Senior Urban Planner
Susan Lareuse, Planner Coordinator

SUBJECT: Prince George's Plaza
Primary Amendments, TP-00001

The Urban Design staff has reviewed the requested Primary Amendments for the subject property and presents the following evaluation and findings leading to a recommendation of DENIAL for P94 and APPROVAL of P1, P96 and P97 with conditions.

EVALUATION

The Primary Amendments were reviewed and evaluated for compliance with the following criteria:

- a. The requirements of the Prince George's Transit District Development Plan (TDDP).
- b. The requirements and findings of Section 27-213.05(e)(1), Specific District Council Procedures.
- c. Referrals.

FINDINGS

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

1. This development proposal is for Subarea 11, located at the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Belcrest Road and East West Highway, within the Prince George's Plaza Transit District Overlay Zone (TDOZ). The site is north of the Prince George's Metro Station, directly across from East West Highway. The underlying zone for this parcel is C-S-C. The purpose of the Mandatory Development Requirements and Site Design Guidelines for Parcel 11 is ■To provide for retail, service and office uses. A mixed-use development should be considered in the future for this property given its close proximity to the Metro

station. In order to facilitate the proposed development, the applicant has requested several amendments to the Mandatory Development Requirements and Guidelines.

Currently the subject site is improved with four (4) structures, the largest being the enclosed shopping mall, Prince George's Plaza. The total gross floor area for all structures is approximately 959,500 square feet. Existing parking lots contain 3,583 spaces. The applicant is proposing to raze the existing restaurant adjacent to East West Highway and build an Outback Steakhouse. The proposal also includes the replacement of the G. C. Murphy's with an anchor store and accessory building.

2. In general, the Transit District Site Plan is in strict conformance with all the Mandatory Development Requirements of the Transit District Development Plan, with the exception of District-wide Mandatory Development Requirement P1 and Subarea 11 Mandatory Development Requirements P94, P96, and P97. These amendments are being processed along with a Detailed Site Plan (DSP-99044) for Subarea 11.

DISTRICT-WIDE MANDATORY DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS (P. 30-92)

- P1 Unless otherwise stated within the Subarea Specific Requirements, each developer, applicant, and the applicant's heirs, successors and/or assigns, shall be responsible for streetscape improvements along the entire length of the property frontage from the building envelope to face of curb. (See figures 7, 8 and 9. Toledo Terrace: 20-foot pedestrian zone; East West Highway: 40-foot pedestrian zone; Belcrest Road: 20-40 foot pedestrian zone.) These improvements shall be included as part of any application for building or grading permits, except for permits for interior alterations which do not constitute redevelopment as defined in the previous chapter. No building or grading permits shall be issued without a Detailed Site Plan which indicates conformance with the streetscape requirements of the TDDP. Construction of the streetscaping improvements shall be in phase with development, or the construction schedule shall be determined at the time of Detailed Site Plan.**

The following statement of justification is provided by the applicant:

■A Primary Amendment is requested to allow a 28 foot landscape strip instead of 40 feet along East West Highway. The applicant proposes to improve the streetscape along East West Highway from the eastern side of the main entranceway to the southeastern corner of the property. Within this 28' wide area, the applicant proposes an 8 feet wide sidewalk with an 11 feet landscaped area on the street side and a 9 feet landscaped area on the side of the sidewalk adjacent to the drive aisle. The landscaped areas will include shade trees and evergreen shrubs. The shade trees will provide an overhead canopy and will define the pedestrian path along East West Highway. The shrubs will be used to screen parking areas from view of the roadway and as a buffer to separate pedestrians from the roadway. Pedestrian (post-top) lighting will be provided along this sidewalk as well. It is believed that the 40 feet landscaped strip was intended only if a re-development scheme included offices adjacent to East West Highway. According to a Community Planning Division memo (from Steve Fisher and Brenda Iraola) dated May 3, 2000, "...the applicant is exempt from the 40 feet build-to line... since the build-to line was only

intended for office uses along East West Highway. Therefore, the 40 feet width requirement of the landscape strip would be applicable only under that scenario. By providing a 28 feet pedestrian zone including landscape elements recommended by the TDDP, the applicant will be conforming with the objectives of the TDDP except for the width of the landscape strip.●

The City of Hyattsville, in a memorandum dated January 18, 2001 (Mayor Armentrout to Whitmore), offered the following comment:

■The City of Hyattsville agrees with the applicant that the proposed landscape strip of 26 feet will improve the streetscape along East West Highway from the eastern side of the main entranceway to the southeastern corner of the property. The pedestrian zone is in keeping with the proposed pedestrian zone in the development to the east of the intersection of Belcrest Road and East West Highway, provides for pedestrian safety, and is in keeping with the current land use.●

The Town of University Park, in a memorandum dated June 5, 2000 (Mayor Brunner to Whitmore), offered the following comment:

■We strongly support a pedestrian walkway and streetscape along the entire frontage of the Plaza along East West Highway without phasing. This streetscape may be reduced in width by providing tree wells/trees on both sides of a sidewalk. Convenient and efficient pedestrian access is a crucial element for the success of the Plaza and the concept of Metro, as well as being one of the primary purposes of a TDOZ. Phasing is not acceptable because it suggests no definite dates for completion of pedestrian access and does not fulfill the mandate for a coordinated and integrated development scheme.●

The Community Planning Division, in a memorandum dated January 29, 2001 (Fisher, Iraola to the Development Review Division), offered the following comment:

■...The applicant requests a Primary Amendment to P1 to allow a 28 feet landscape strip instead of 40 feet. The applicant is responsible for the entire 40 feet pedestrian zone. The TDDP states that the applicant shall be responsible for streetscape improvements to be made along the entire length of the property frontage from the building envelope to face of curb. (See Figures 7, 8 and 9 . . . East West Highway: 40 pedestrian zone . . .)● In addition, all previous applications (e. g. Subarea 4- Hollywood Video Store, Subarea 6 - Super Fresh grocery store, and Subarea 9- Home Depot) have complied with the 40 feet pedestrian zone Mandatory Development Requirement.

■The applicant states that a Community Planning Division memo dated May 3, 2000 waives P1 because of the statement the applicant is exempt from the 40 foot build-to-line●. However, this statement refers specifically to the 40 foot build-to-line● requirement and not the 40 foot pedestrian zone● along East West Highway. In fact, it would be a detriment to the entire north side of the East West Highway streetscape concept for this requirement to be amended. If the applicant wishes to install 28 feet of the pedestrian zone at this time, a future phase will need to include

the remaining 12 feet of the pedestrian zone in order to fulfill the TDDP Mandatory Development Requirement. It should also be noted that the proposed 40 foot pedestrian zone can accommodate the required streetscape elements of shade trees (double staggered row), pedestrian lighting, and walkway. Therefore, we recommend that no amendment be granted.●

The Transportation Planning Section, in a memorandum dated March 23, 2001 (Shaffer, to Lareuse), offered the following comment pertaining to trails:

■In accordance with the Adopted and Approved Prince George's Plaza Transit District Development Plan (TDDP), the applicant should provide the following:

- ...the 40-foot-wide pedestrian zone along MD 410, as shown on Figure 8 of the TDDP. Included with this pedestrian zone shall be a minimum 11-foot-wide sidewalk. This extra sidewalk will accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists. This type of facility is warranted due to the heavy pedestrian and bicycle traffic coming and going from the Metro Station and the shopping center, as well as the other high-density uses in the area. There is an existing need for this sidewalk to facilitate safe nonvehicular traffic to the subject property.●

Urban Design Staff Comment: Staff supports a reduction in the width of the pedestrian zone from 40 feet wide to 28 feet wide (minimum) measured from face of curb. This pedestrian zone should be provided along the entire street frontage of East West Highway. The plans as submitted indicate the applicant is proposing a 28 foot-wide pedestrian zone on the eastern side of the main entrance off East West Highway. The plans should be revised to include the entire frontage of East West Highway. The reduction in width from 40 feet to 28 feet will not be detrimental to the overall design of the Transit District. Pedestrian movement will continue to be provided in accordance with the original proposal. The design of the pedestrian zone is the subject of a Secondary Amendment to S8, which is analyzed in the Detailed Site Plan technical staff report.

SUBAREA 11 MANDATORY DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS (P. 118-119)

- P94 A landmark-type building distinguished by architecture and with a minimum of 8 stories shall be located at the corner of East West Highway and Belcrest Road and shall replace the existing banks. This building and site layout shall be designed to facilitate pedestrian circulation from the Metro station by incorporating the proposed future pedestrian overpass (referred to in P98). The building shall provide equal design attention to East West Highway and Belcrest Road.**

The following statement of justification is provided by the applicant:

- This submittal is for a proposed new anchor store and an Outback Steakhouse only. At this time, there is no redevelopment proposed where the existing banks are located.●

The City of Hyattsville, in a memorandum dated January 18, 2001 (Mayor Armentrout to Whitmore), offered the following comment:

- We concur with the applicant that an exemption from showing a proposed landmark building on any plans for this Detailed Site Plan submittal should be allowed.●

The Town of University Park, in a memorandum dated March 23, 2001 (Mayor Brunner to Whitmore), offered the following comment:

- We strongly oppose the deletion of this structure from the TDDP. The applicant is not required to construct a landmark-type building at this time and has no plans to do so, or, in fact, has any proposal at this time for the site. At the very least, this amendment is premature.
- With the applicant's reasoning, all suggested structures/uses in all subareas of the transit district should be deleted from the TDDP simply because they do not have current plans to construct the suggested structure.●

The Community Planning Division, in a memorandum dated January 29, 2001 (Fisher, Iraola to the Development Review Division), offered the following comment:

- The applicant is not required to construct a landmark-type building at this time. This Mandatory Development Requirement only applies at such time as the existing bank buildings are demolished and new construction takes place at their location. At this juncture the applicant need only recognize a future landmark-type building on the site plan. The applicant has provided no statement of justification as to why a permanent exemption from complying with this Mandatory Development Requirement should be granted as part of this particular site plan approval. Given the lack of an acceptable justification for relief from this requirement, we have no choice but to recommend that no amendment be granted.●

Urban Design Staff Comment: Staff believes that the applicant has provided insufficient justification to be granted relief from the above primary requirement. The designation on the

plan as a possible future landmark building is reasonable and does not require any construction at this time. In order to assure the integrity of the plan, this issue will be revisited at the time of any proposed demolition of the bank building. Staff recommends that **no amendment be granted.**

P96 Build-to lines shall be 20 feet from face of curb along Belcrest Road. A build-to line up to 40 feet from face of curb along Belcrest Road may be permitted provided the space between the building and the streetscape is designed for the pedestrian experience, for example, plaza, fountain, focal point, sitting area and landscaped area.

The following statement of justification is provided by the applicant:

■The minimum build-to line mandatory requirement, P96 of Subarea 11, is not a reasonable requirement of the subject property. In fact it is the applicant's belief that the retention of this requirement within Subarea 11 was an inadvertent error. The requirement was originally included when the site was recommended for MXT rezoning and redevelopment with office space. When the council decided to retain this zone in the CSC zone, other similar requirements relating to office uses were deleted. The Detailed Site Plan application is for changes to an existing retail building and should not be required to adhere to this condition. A 20-40 foot build-to line along Belcrest Road would change the entire orientation of the building, parking and access on the property and would prohibit interconnected circulation around the entirety of the mall.●

The Town of University Park, in a memorandum dated June 5, 2000 (Mayor Brunner to Whitmore), offered the following comment:

■We have no objection to waivers of the build-to lines of 20 feet from face of curb along Belcrest Road or a build-to line of 40 feet from face of curb along Belcrest Road with intervening streetscaping.●

The Community Planning Division, in a memorandum dated May 3, 2000 (Fisher, Iraola to the Development Review Division), offered the following comment:

■Adherence to this requirement would make it difficult to impossible to construct the anchor store. At the time of TDDP approval, the District Council relieved the applicant of a similar requirement along East West Highway in order to allow expansion of the existing shopping center. Accordingly, it would be reasonable to permit a similar exemption along Belcrest Road. It is recommended that P96 be amended to provide a parallel requirement to that governing East West Highway, as stated in P95. That is, the 20-40 foot build-to line would apply only to structures containing more than three office uses.●

Urban Design Staff Comment: Based on the above-referenced comments, the Urban Design Section recommends that an amendment be granted to P96 and the language should be revised to mirror that of P95.

The existing language for P96 should be replaced with the following language:

- For structures containing more than three office uses, a build-to line shall be established 40 feet from face of curb along Belcrest Road.●

P97 Where surface parking lots are adjacent to a public road the following shall apply:

- a. A minimum 30-foot-wide landscaped strip as measured from the streetscape shall be provided along East West Highway.**
- b. A minimum 20-foot-wide landscaped strip as measured from the streetscape shall be provided along Belcrest Road.**

The following statement of justification is provided by the applicant:

- This amendment was intended for a redevelopment scenario in which offices would front onto East West Highway and Belcrest Road. Providing an additional 30-foot-wide landscaped strip in addition to the 20-40 foot pedestrian zone along Belcrest Road, as required by P1, would be an onerous and inappropriate requirement for this existing shopping center.●

The Community Planning Division, in a memorandum dated May 3, 2000 (Fisher, Iraola to the Development Review Division), offered the following comment:

- This requirement was put in place in order to provide a pleasing appearance for parking lots from the 40 foot pedestrian zone required by P1. Under a redevelopment scenario in which offices would be constructed at the 40 foot build-to line required by P95, observance of P97 would avoid having parking lots directly abutting the pedestrian zone

and even with the fronts of the buildings. Instead, a 30 foot green area would be created between the pedestrian zone and the parking lot and the parking lot would begin 30 feet back from the face of the buildings. However, in this instance the applicant is exempt from the 40 foot build-to line. Accordingly, P 97 would not serve its intended purpose and no objection is raised to grant of a Primary Amendment. •

Urban Design Staff Comment: Although the applicant does not ask specifically for East West Highway to be included in this request, verbal conversations with the applicant indicate it is to be included. Staff has no objection to this request. Therefore, based on the above analysis from the Community Planning Division, the Urban Design Section recommends **approval of the above primary** to be applied to Belcrest Road and East West Highway.

3. **Required Findings, Section 27-213.05 (e) (1), Specific District Council Procedures**
 - A. **The entire Map Amendment, including the Transit District Development Plan, is in conformance with the purposes and other requirements of the Transit District Overlay Zone.**

The entire Map Amendment, including the TDDP, will remain in conformance with the purposes of the Transit District Overlay Zone if the proposed amendments are approved or disapproved as recommended above. The amendments recommended for approval will not impede the creation of a pedestrian-friendly area near the Metro station. The existing and

proposed design relationships of Subarea 1, Subarea 2, Subarea 3, Subarea 4, Subarea 5, Subarea 6 Subarea 9, Subarea 12 and Subarea 13 A and B (located north, northeast, east, southeast, south, southwest, north, northwest and west, respectively, of the subject application) have all been considered during the review of the subject application. This coordination of review for ten (10) subareas has created a coordinated and integrated development that will complement and enhance the character of the area. Also, the proposed development will provide additional businesses within walking distance of the Metro Station to encourage the use of public transportation by customers and employees.

B. Adequate attention has been paid to the recommendations of the Area Master Plan and the *General Plan*, which are found to be applicable to property within the Transit District; and

The *Approved Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for Planning Area 68*, May 1994, and *General Plan* recommendations for Subarea 11 are not affected by the request for the primary amendments recommended for approval. The proposed uses for Subarea 11 are in accordance with the approved TDDP and underlying zones, which considered the Master Plan and *General Plan* recommendations in establishing the permitted uses. Thus adequate attention has been paid to the recommendations of the Master Plan and *General Plan* for this property.

C. The particular area within the chosen boundaries of the Transit District Overlay Zone requires the coordination and flexibility provided by the Transit District Overlay Zone, due to the area's potential for new development, redevelopment, or revitalization, and the ability to provide public facilities and infrastructure. In making this finding, the Council shall review the entire area within the vicinity of an existing or proposed Metro station, especially that which is within a 10-minute walk or one-half (½) mile distance of the station. This distance shall serve as a guide only, and shall not be deemed to preclude review of a somewhat larger or smaller area, in the discretion of the District Council.

As part of the adoption of the Prince George's Plaza TDOZ, the Council provided for the coordination and flexibility of new development in the area around the Metro station. As such, it imposed various use restrictions on the development of Subarea 11. The Primary Amendments recommended for approval still allow for the coordination and flexibility provided by the Transit District Overlay Zone, especially as they apply to the proposed development in Subarea 11.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the foregoing evaluation, analysis and findings of this report, the Urban Design staff recommends that the Planning Board adopt the findings of this report and recommend DENIAL of P94, and APPROVAL of P1, P96, and P97 (for Subarea 11 only) subject to the following conditions:

1. P1 shall be modified as follows:

■Unless otherwise stated within the Subarea Specific Requirements, each developer, applicant, and the applicant's heirs, successors and/or assigns, shall be responsible for streetscape improvements along the entire length of the property frontage from the building envelope to face of curb. (See Figures 7, 8 and 9. Toledo Terrace: 20-foot pedestrian zone; East West Highway: [40] 28-foot pedestrian zone; Belcrest Road 20-40 foot pedestrian zone.) These improvements shall be included as part of any application for building or grading permits, except for permits for interior alterations which do not constitute redevelopment as defined in the previous chapter. No building or grading permits shall be issued without a Detailed Site Plan which indicates conformance with the streetscape requirements of the TDDP. Construction of the streetscaping improvements shall be in phase with development, or the construction shall be determined at the time of Detailed Site Plan.

2. P96 shall be modified as follows:

■Build-to lines shall be 20 feet from face of curb along Belcrest Road. A build-to line up to 40 feet from face of curb along Belcrest Road may be permitted provided the space between the building and the streetscape is designed for the pedestrian experience, for example, plaza, fountain, focal point, sitting area and landscaped area.●]

■For structures containing more than three office uses, a build-to line shall be established 20-40 feet from face of curb along Belcrest Road.●

3. P97 shall be modified as follows:

■Where surface parking lots are adjacent to a public road and adjacent to structures containing more than 3 office uses the following shall apply:

- a. A minimum 30-foot-wide landscaped strip as measured from the face of curb shall be provided along East West Highway.
- b. A minimum 20-foot-wide landscaped strip as measured from the face of curb shall be provided along Belcrest Road.●

Brackets [] denotes removed language
Underlining denotes new language.