

MCPB Item No. Date: 10-04-12

Dennis Avenue Health Center, Mandatory Referral, MR2013001

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Completed: 09/20/12

Description

- 2000 Dennis Avenue
- 6.96 Acres R-60 Zone
- 1989 Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton
- Applicant: Montgomery County Department of General Services
- Submitted July 26, 2012



Summary

- Staff recommends approval and transmittal of comments to the Montgomery County Department of General Services.
- There are no major issues with the proposed project.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the proposed mandatory referral with the following comments:

- 1. Confirm that all sidewalks and crosswalks are American Disability Act (ADA) compliant.
- 2. Provide a sidewalk and a crosswalk connecting the southeast parking aisle to the building's main entrance. Provide an alternative direct sidewalk in addition to the planted serpentine pathway.
- 3. Improve the sidewalk fronting the property along the south side of Dennis Avenue to include a minimum five-foot wide green panel between the curb and a five-foot wide sidewalk.
- 4. Address the detailed sediment control/stormwater management plan stage items which are outlined in the attached letter from the Department of Permitting Services.
- 5. Accommodate a minimum of 10 bike spaces among short term (bike racks) and long term facilities (bike lockers or bike storage room).
- 6. Submit a Preliminary Plan of Subdivision followed by a Record Plat.
- 7. A mandatory referral application is required for any program expansion that will increase either the building square footage or the number of staff in excess of the 97 total staff members considered in this mandatory referral.

INTRODUCTION

The Department of General Services (DGS) is proposing to replace the existing Dennis Avenue Health Center with a new facility for the Department of Health and Human Services. The existing structure, a former elementary school, was built in 1965 and discontinued the school use in 1976. The structure is not adequate to meet the needs and mission of the County's health care programs. The new buildings will be constructed on the same 6.96-arce site of the existing structure. The new building and a portion of the new parking lot is proposed along the western side of the property in a vacant field, which will allow the existing facility to remain in operation during construction. The existing facility will be demolished for construction of the remaining portion of the new parking lot.



Figure 1: Proposed Site Plan

The proposed structure will be a two-story building of 53,432 gross square feet compared to 29,500 gross square feet of the existing structure. The new building is placed in a north/south orientation for maximum solar exposure. The layout also accommodates parking close to the building for accessibility. The Applicant will seek Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification for New Construction and Major Renovation.

The new facility will house the following programs: Communicable Disease & Epidemiology Director's Office; STD Services; HIV Services; Disease Control; Vital Records; Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Response; Immunization Program; Refugee Program; Tuberculosis Control Program; Dental Services; Command Center; warehouse space for vaccine and biohazard storage; and meeting rooms and shared spaces. The existing facility has 95 total staff; the new facility will have 97 total staff.

Context

The subject property is located along Dennis Avenue, east of Georgia Avenue (MD 97) just south of the Wheaton Sector Plan Area. The site is bordered by single-family attached homes along the eastern property line with single-family detached homes facing the property across Dennis Avenue. To the south and west are three medical office buildings with surface parking lots. The site is located in the 1989 *Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton* area and zoned R-60.



Figure 2: Existing Site Aerial

DISCUSSION

Conformance to Development Standards

The proposed use (classified as a Clinic) is allowed by special exception in the R-60 Zone. The following table compares this project against the requirements for a Special Exception for a medical or dental clinic for five or more practitioners as outlined in Sec. 59-G-2.14.

Sec. 59-G-2.14 Clinic

A special exception for a medical or dental clinic for five or more medical practitioners may be continued, subject to the following requirements, if the petition was granted prior to February 20, 1989:

REQUIREMENT	PROPOSED
 (1) Minimum lot area: 40,000 square feet. (2) Minimum frontage: 200 feet. (3) Minimum setback from all property lines: 40 feet, except that the setbacks may be reduced if found to be compatible within a historic district as set forth in Sec. 59-A-6.23. (4) Maximum building height: as specified in the zone. (45 feet) (5) Maximum lot coverage: 15 percent. 	 (1) Lot area: 303,178 square feet. (2) Frontage: 839 feet. (3) Minimum setback: 39.5 feet. (4) Maximum building height: 45.3 feet. (5) Maximum lot coverage: 8 percent.
The property must front on and have direct access to a public road built to arterial or higher standards.	The property fronts onto an arterial, Dennis Avenue.
Any accessory service that is part of the clinic, including a laboratory or pharmacy for use by patients of medical practitioners in the clinic, must comply with the following standards:	
(1) Direct access from the street is prohibited; any access must be from an interior lobby or hallway or from a parking area that does not front on a public street.	(1) Public access to all programs is provided from interior lobby.
(2) Hours of operation must be no earlier and no later than those of medical practitioners in the clinic.	(2) The hours for medical practitioners are the same for the hours of operation: 8:00 AM-4:00 PM, Monday through Friday (except for emergencies).
Adequate parking must be provided on site in accordance with the requirements for a medical or dental clinic, as stated in Article 59-E, and further limitations, if any, prescribed by the Board. Total parking spaces required: 267	212 parking spaces are provided, 55 spaces less than required. (See table and discussion below.)
The Board may limit hours of operation, number of practitioners and employees, and the number, character and extent of accessory services.	The number of staff will increase from 95 to 97. The hours for the facility will be the same as now; 8:00 AM- 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday (except for emergencies).

Required and Proposed Parking Spaces

The current proposal doubles the existing number of parking spaces from 105 to 212 spaces. However, Article 59-E requires a minimum of 267 parking spaces for a medical clinic of 53,432 GSF. Therefore the proposal provides 55 fewer parking spaces than required. The Applicant analyzed their Program of Requirements and determined there are three categories of uses proposed in the building: medical office; non-medical general office; and warehouse. The Applicant analyzed parking needed of each category and the result of this analysis indicated a total of 212 parking spaces to be sufficient. The Applicant also observed the amount of "overflow" parking accommodated along the entry drive aisle when the existing lots were full.

The Applicant's decision to provide fewer parking spaces is not an issue of budget or site limitation. Their goal was to provide sufficient parking for the uses of the building without providing excessive spaces. The Applicant has a pending request with the Department of Permitting Services for their approval of the reduced parking calculation.

Staff supports the reduced parking analysis for the following reasons: (1) the rationale behind the category breakdown of uses within the building is reasonable. Only 62% of the facility's proposed building is dedicated for medical office use; (2) Health and Human Services Department is not proposing an expansion of programs and services currently being offered (the Department will increase by 2 persons in the new facility); (3) the proposal doubles the existing number of parking spaces. The photos documenting "overflow" parking along the entry drive aisle show that any need for additional parking would be easily accommodated; and (4) there are environmental benefits, such as reducing stormwater runoff and decreasing heat island effects, of not increasing the amount of pavement associated with the additional 55 parking spaces.

On-Site Parking			
Minimum Requirements		Provided	
Medical or dental clinic:		Medical use:	
5 spaces/1,000 GSF @ 53,432	267 SPACES	5 spaces/1,000 GSF @ 33,288:	167 SPACES
		General office use:	
		2.5 spaces/1,000 GSF @ 13,999:	35 SPACES
		Warehouse use:	
		1.5 spaces/1,000 GSF @ 6,145:	10 SPACES
TOTAL	267 SPACES	TOTALS 53,432 GSF	212 SPACES

Conformance to Master Plan

The proposed project is consistent with the Approved and Adopted 1989 *Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton.* The Master Plan lists all closed public schools in the planning area along with their then current or proposed uses. Dennis Avenue Elementary School, closed in 1976, was listed as being reused as "Montgomery County Department of Health permanent health care facility". The Master Plan acknowledged that enrollment in elementary and middle schools will increase over the following decades and anticipated no further school closures. Of those closed school facilities that were in reuse, the Plan did not recommend that the buildings be recaptured for public school use. It supported continued reuse with compatibility between these facilities and the surrounding land uses.

The facility is located within the service area of the new Flora Singer Elementary School, which opened last month and was constructed to relieve space deficits at Oakland Terrace Elementary School. Due to the opening of this new elementary school, the Montgomery County Public Schools staff does not anticipate the need for recapturing this site for a new elementary school in the future.



Figure 2: Proposed north face of the project

Compatibility with Surrounding Neighborhood

Staff finds the proposal compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and properties.

The proposed structure is located in the southwest corner of the site and is oriented with long faces of the proposed building facing north/south to optimize day lighting potential. The proposed location will bring the building closer to the other medical office buildings directly to the south and west of the site and farther from the residential neighborhood located to the northeast. The nearest residence is approximately 255 feet from the proposed structure compared to the existing conditions of 85 feet. All exterior lighting has been designed to shield adjacent residences from intrusive glare while maintaining adequate lighting levels for safety and security.

The proposed 45.3-foot high structure has two floors compared to the existing two-floor structure at approximately 35 feet high. The proposed structure will sit near the highest point of the site. Although the finished ground floor of the new structure will be approximately 12 feet higher than that of the existing building, staff finds the proposal to be compatible with its surroundings since the new building will be set back from Dennis Avenue and lower than the existing three- and four-story medical office buildings on adjacent properties to the south.

The main façade is composed of glass curtain wall system, brick, and masonry block with metal panel siding surrounding the penthouse. A concrete entry canopy with a metal fascia accentuates the main entrance of the building leading into the two-story, glass enclosed lobby. The use of material and vertical elements such as the lobby and stairs help to break the building into separate components. The breaking of the building's mass creates an appearance of a smaller building that relates to the scale of adjacent medical office buildings.

The site design places green spaces and parking lots between the proposed building and the existing, adjacent (to the southeast) and confronting (across Dennis Avenue) single-family houses. The Applicant proposes planting additional canopy trees in the open field along the eastern boundary in addition to the existing landscape buffer. The Applicant also proposes a minimum buffer of approximately 40 feet of green space between Dennis Avenue and the new parking lot with a portion of this area to be planted with canopy trees and shrubs with the remaining portions dedicated to stormwater management facilities.

Adequacy, Safety and Efficiency of Buildings and Open Space

Staff finds the layout of the building and open space to be adequate, safe and efficient.

Vehicular access to the site will be from Dennis Avenue via the two existing driveway locations across from Barrie and Clinton Avenues. The parking layout consists of two lots connected by a circular, drop-off driveway fronting the lobby. The drop-off driveway provides direct access to the building's main entrance for visitors with limited mobile abilities, and the parking lots will include handicapped spaces. The driving aisles are designed to accommodate turning movements of a semi-trailer.

Open space is consolidated around the building and parking lots to create a buffer from the surrounding properties. The largest area of open space is along the eastern property boundary with the adjacent townhouse community. The open space will be landscaped with plantings and used for stormwater management facilities, but not programmed for activity.

Seven transit routes operate along Georgia Avenue, less than 0.2 miles from the project site. A five-foot wide sidewalk exists along the property frontage on Dennis Avenue. Staff has recommended that it be improved with a tree panel between the curb and sidewalk. The Applicant proposes a lead-in sidewalk from Dennis Avenue to the building's main entrance. A signed shared roadway, SR-55, is designated along Dennis Avenue in the 2005 Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan. A bike rack is provided near the entrance.

Transportation

As an existing facility that has been in use for more than 12 years, a traffic study is not required if the land use generates five or fewer additional peak hour trips. The replacement facility will have a similar number of employees during normal operations (95 for the existing facility and 97 for the replacement facility) and will serve the same number of visitors with the same hours of operations. Therefore, a traffic study is not necessary to satisfy Local Area Transportation Review requirements.

Although developments located in the Kensington/Wheaton Policy Area must mitigate 10% of their new sitegenerated vehicular trips, no Policy Area Mobility Review (PAMR) trip mitigation is required. Although the size of the building and number of parking spaces are increasing, the facility is expected to generate less than three additional peak hour trips beyond the number generated by the existing facility. This is due to the modest increase of employees from 95 total to 97 total.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certificate

The Applicant proposes environmentally sensitive design and construction features to achieve LEED silver rating. These include, but are not limited to: water efficiency technologies, energy efficient lighting, high efficiency HVAC systems, and sustainable material selections.

Forest Conservation Law

The site is subject to Chapter 22A Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law. Staff review and recommendations on the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan are included in a separate staff memorandum to the Planning Board. The Planning Board will take a separate action on the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan during the hearing, which is held jointly with the review of this mandatory referral.

Stormwater Management Concept

The Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services found the proposal for the stormwater management concept to be acceptable. The proposed plan incorporates Environmental Site Design (ESD) using micro-bio filtration, bio-swales and pervious pavements to help meet stormwater management requirements. A vegetated roof is also proposed to reduce the burden of on-site treatment. The proposed elements will meet required stormwater management goals for the project.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Applicant held two public meetings to present the concept and solicit community input on the proposal at the Mid-County Regional Services Center in Wheaton on February 22 and May 9, 2012. Planning Department staff notified adjoining, confronting and abutting owners, civic and homeowners associations and other interested parties of the proposed mandatory referral by mail on August 10, 2012. To date, staff has not received any inquiry or comments.

CONCLUSION

Based on the review and analysis included in this report, staff concludes that the proposed project is consistent with the *Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton* and meets the requirements of the zone. Staff recommends approval with the comments listed at the front of this report.

MB:ha: N:\Area 2 Division\Brown\DennisAve final staff report

Attachments:

- 1. Stormwater management concept approval letter.
- 2. C201 Site Plan
- 3. LS101 Landscape Plan
- 4. A200 Exterior Elevation
- 5. A201 Exterior Elevation



ATTACHMENT 1

DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES

Isiah Leggett County Executive Diane R. Schwartz Jones Director

April 19, 2012

Geoff Campbell, RLA ADTEK Engineers, Inc. 97 Monocacy Blvd., Unit - H Frederick, MD 21701

Re: Stormwater Management CONCEPT Request for Dennis Avenue Health Center SM File #: 242226 Tract Size/Zone: 6.96 Ac./R-60 Total Concept Area: 6.96 Ac. Parcel(s): 682 Watershed: Sligo Creek

Dear Mr. Campbell:

Based on a review by the Department of Permitting Services Review Staff, the stormwater management concept for the above mentioned site is **acceptable**. The stormwater management concept proposes to meet required stormwater management goals of ESD to the MEP through the use of bio-swales, a green roof, micro-bioretention, and permeable pavement.

The following **items** will need to be addressed **during** the detailed sediment control/stormwater management plan stage:

- 1. Prior to permanent vegetative stabilization, all disturbed areas must be topsoiled per the latest Montgomery County Standards and Specifications for Topsoiling.
- 2. A detailed review of the stormwater management computations will occur at the time of detailed plan review.
- 3. An engineered sediment control plan must be submitted for this development.
- 4. All filtration media for manufactured best management practices, whether for new development or redevelopment, must consist of MDE approved material.
- 5. Once the existing building is demolished, please check to see if any of the proposed permeable pavement will be located in fill. If so, please resubmit a revised concept to address stormwater management for these areas. Permeable pavement should not be located on fill material.
- 6. Green roofs need to be designed by someone with green roof experience.
- 7. Please work with DEP concerning the removal of the existing biofilters and the monitoring station. Keep us informed with any decisions or agreements made between DGS and DEP concerning these structures. The removal of the structures and reuse of materials, including the monitoring station, must be noted in the sequence of construction.
- 8. Use the latest design standards for all the stormwater BMP's.

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This list may not be all-inclusive and may change based on available information at the time.

Payment of a stormwater management contribution in accordance with Section 2 of the Stormwater Management Regulation 4-90 is not required.

This letter must appear on the sediment control/stormwater management plan at its initial submittal. The concept approval is based on all stormwater management structures being located outside of the Public Utility Easement, the Public Improvement Easement, and the Public Right of Way unless specifically approved on the concept plan. Any divergence from the information provided to this office; or additional information received during the development process; or a change in an applicable Executive Regulation may constitute grounds to rescind or amend any approval actions taken, and to reevaluate the site for additional or amended stormwater management requirements. If there are subsequent additions or modifications to the development, a separate concept request shall be required.

If you have any questions regarding these actions, please feel free to contact David Kuykendall at 240-777-6332.

Sincerely

Richard R. Brush, Manager Water Resources Section Division of Land Development Services

RRB: tla CN242226 Dennis Avenue Health Center.DWK

cc: C. Conlon SM File # 242226

ESD Acres:	6.96
STRUCTURAL Acres:	0.00
WAIVED Acres:	0.00







