

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, the Prince George's County Planning Board has reviewed Special Permit Application No. SP-130008, Sudsville Laundry, requesting a special permit to construct an addition and façade improvements to an existing laundromat in accordance with Subtitle 27 of the Prince George's County Code; and

WHEREAS, after consideration of the evidence presented at the public hearing on May 4, 2017, the Prince George's County Planning Board finds:

- A. **Location and Field Inspection:** The 1.28-acre pentagon-shaped property is located on the southeast side of Silver Hill Road, at the intersections of Suitland Parkway, Silver Hill Road (MD 458) and Parkway Terrace Drive in Suitland, Maryland. The property consists of two adjacent Parcels, Parcel A (0.82 acres) and Parcel 50 (0.46 acres). The site, 4501 Silver Hill Road, is improved with a 4,950-square-foot single-story building that is currently used as a laundromat (located on Parcel A). Parcel 50 is currently undeveloped and proposed for additional parking and landscaping. Access to the property is via a single entrance on Silver Hill Road and a single entrance on Parkway Terrace Drive. The applicant is proposing a 3,933-square-foot rear addition to the existing 4,950-square-foot building. There are 23 (existing) diagonal parking spaces on the north and south sides of the building and a proposed 24-space parking lot located to the rear of the building.
- B. **History:** The existing building was originally constructed in 1969 and operated as a fast-food restaurant. The building was converted into a laundromat in 1997, when the current owner acquired the property. The laundromat use was legally established prior to the adoption of the 2006 *Approved Suitland Mixed-Use Town Center Zone Development Plan* (Suitland M-U-TC Development Plan) that classified the property in the Mixed-Use Town Center (M-U-TC) Zone. The most recent Use and Occupancy Permit, 4322-1998-3, was issued on January 5, 2009. Parcel 22 was added to the subject development in January 2017, when the development application was amended. On December 4, 2013, the M-UTC Committee denied Permit Application 1401 because the proposal exceeded the 15 percent threshold of the M-U-TC design standard. The M-UTC Committee did not review the amended application.
- C. **Master Plan Recommendation:** The property is in the Suitland M-U-TC Zone. The Suitland M-U-TC Development Plan establishes design standards and guidelines that govern development within the zone. The 2014 *Approved Southern Green Line Station Area Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* (Southern Green Line Station Area Sector Plan and SMA) places the property in the Development District Overlay (D-D-O) Zone that regulates uses permitted within the M-U-TC boundary. The *Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan* (Plan Prince George's 2035) designates the area in the Established Communities Growth Policy area. The vision for established communities is a context-sensitive infill and low- to medium-density development. This application is consistent with the General Plan development pattern policies.

The development plan classified the property in the M-U-TC Zone. The M-U-TC Zone:

- **provides for a mix of commercial and limited residential uses which establish a safe, vibrant, 24-hour environment; designed to promote appropriate redevelopment of, and the preservation and adaptive reuse of selected buildings in older commercial areas;**
- **establishes a flexible regulatory framework, based on community input, to encourage compatible development and redevelopment;**
- **mandates approval of a development plan at the time of zoning approval, that includes minimum and maximum development standards and guidelines, in both written and graphic form, to guide and promote local revitalization efforts; and**
- **provides for legally existing buildings to be expanded or altered, and existing uses for which valid permits have been issued to be considered permitted uses, and eliminating nonconforming building and use regulations for the same.**

This development application generally conforms to the mixed-use town center land use recommendations of the development plan because a laundromat is a permitted use. However, because the proposal exceeds the 15-percent threshold that precipitates full compliance with the design standards of the development plan, the applicant must gain approval from the Prince George's County Planning Board.

D. **Request:** The applicant proposes a 79 percent increase in the building's existing square footage, which exceeds the 15-percent threshold requiring full compliance with the Suitland M-U-TC Development Plan. The applicant is requesting approval of the 3,933-square-foot rear addition and departures for building placement, ground floor windows, sidewalks and storefront, parking and loading, perimeter landscaping for parking, and signage requirements as outlined in the development plan.

E. **Surrounding Uses:** The site is surrounded by the following uses located within the D-D-O Zone:

**North—** Properties in the M-U-TC Zone developed with a variety of uses that include multifamily residential apartments (R-18) along Parkway Terrace Drive.

**South—** Suitland Parkway.

**East—** Properties in the M-U-TC Zone developed with a variety of uses that include multifamily residential apartments (R-18) along Parkway Terrace Drive.

**West—** Properties in the M-U-TC Zone developed with a variety of uses that include a single-family dwelling fronting on Parkway Terrace multifamily residential apartments (R-18) along Parkway Terrace Drive.

F. **Special Permit Findings:** Section 27-239.02(a)(6)(B) of the Zoning Ordinance states:

**The Planning Board may grant a special permit in the M-U-TC Zone if it finds that the site plan is in conformance with the approved Town Center Development Plan and its guidelines and any specific criteria for the particular use. In the event a special permit is approved by the Planning Board, the approval is conditional upon the issuance of a building or use and occupancy permit by the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE), Division.**

The Suitland M-U-TC Development Plan sets forth guidelines for all development in the town center. The applicant is proposing new gross floor area (GFA) in this instance, which subjects the entire site to review for compliance. These are discussed further in Finding H.

G. **Recommendation of the Suitland M-U-TC Local Design Review Committee (Suitland LDRC):** On December 4, 2013, in accordance with the local review process, the Suitland Design Review Committee reviewed the application and recommended denial because the application did not meet the guidelines and standards for Building Placement, Stormwater Management, Sidewalks and Storefront, Circulation and Parking Area Design, Landscaping, Buffering and Screening, and Signage. The committee also recommended that the applicant seek opportunities to comply with the relevant design standards as much as possible considering site limitations during the special permit process. Members of the community at the design review meeting spoke highly of the facility and operation in terms of cleanliness, quality customer service, and a needed facility for the surrounding communities. The site plan boundaries were revised and reviewed by the Planning Board, which found that the revision to the site plan that includes an expanded property boundary will not change the recommendation of the Suitland Design Review Committee.

H. **Design Standards of the 2006 Approved Suitland Mixed-Use Town Center Development Plan:** As previously stated, the applicant is subject to the design standards which have been listed and evaluated for conformance to the development plan. The applicant has requested a departure from some of the design standards contained in the development plan, which have also been evaluated for conformance to the required findings. The applicable M-U-TC standards are discussed below:

1. **Building Placement (pages 25–26):** This standard requires a minimum building setback of 14 feet and a maximum setback of 22 feet from the edge of curb. The existing building is set back approximately 50 feet from the public right-of-way, and the proposed addition is located behind the existing building. A departure is required to site buildings more than 22 feet from the edge of the curb.

2. **Stormwater Management (page 26):** Low-impact development techniques are required on all sites as the primary method of collecting and/or treating stormwater. The plan does not address Low-Impact Development design techniques and strategies.
3. **Façade Design (pages 28–30):** These standards establish requirements to add visual interest at the street level and to maintain a strong visual connection between the street and street-level uses. Façade materials are high quality, durable and attractive (such as brick, stone and masonry). Imitation or synthetic exterior building materials that stimulate the appearance of natural stone or brick shall be avoided. Ground floor windows should incorporate large multipaned windows for commercial ground floor development. This is an existing building with a band of glass windows typical of the original use as a fast food restaurant. A departure is required for the existing ground floor windows. The proposal also includes the addition of new doors that front Silver Hill Road, the exterior façade of the rear addition shall include architectural details in the form of arches and pillars for both the east and west elevations, which generally conforms to the development plan.
4. **Sidewalks and Storefronts, Standards 1 and 2 (page 30):** These standards require that sidewalks be designed to be separated from streets by a six-foot landscape strip and be a minimum of eight feet wide, constructed of concrete accented with brick. There is an existing sidewalk along the property's frontage, within the public right-of-way of Silver Hill Road (MD 458) and Parkway Terrace Drive, which does not meet these requirements. A departure to retain the existing sidewalk width at this location at the edge of the Town Center is required.
5. **Site and Streetscape Lighting (page 31):** Applications for development in the commercial district shall include a lighting plan. The proposal for this site is for an addition to an existing building. While a lighting plan was not provided, lighting is shown on the building elevations.
6. **Circulation and Parking Area Design, Standard 18 (page 43):** This standard establishes a minimum (26) and maximum (41) number of parking spaces to serve the development. The applicant is providing 47 parking spaces. A departure is required.
7. **Landscaping, Buffering and Screening, (pages 43–44):** These standards require various landscape improvements, including landscaping adjacent to public rights-of-way, perimeter landscaping for parking lots, and interior planting areas in parking lots. The proposal generally conforms to this requirement. There are opportunities to eliminate parking to increase landscaping areas. A departure is recommended for the elimination of the minimum three-foot grille, metal latticework fence or brick, stone or finished concrete wall screening requirement.
8. **Signage—Sign, Provision 2 (page 45) and Sign Design Standards 5 and 6:** These standards establish signage systems to enhance the visual standard of the community. The applicant is not proposing any new or replacement building signage and generally

conforms to the standards. However, it should be noted that the existing canopy signage, while recently replaced, is internally illuminated. Standard 2 prohibits freestanding, pole-mounted commercial signs. The applicant has proposed to replace the existing freestanding, pole-mounted sign with an internally-illuminated monument sign. Standard 5 does not permit internally-illuminated signs, and signage with internally-illuminated individual letters attached to a non-illuminated background is subject to the approval of the Suitland Design Review Committee. Standard 6 requires that signs are externally illuminated and that illumination of a sign should be shaded, shielded, or directed so that the light intensity does not adversely affect the surrounding area. A departure is required for the proposed internally-illuminated signage.

I. **Required Findings:** Section 27-548.00.01(a) of the Zoning Ordinance states:

- (1) **A Special Permit may be permitted by the Planning Board, in accordance with the provisions of Section 27-239.02.**
- (2) **The Planning Board is authorized to allow departures from the strict application of any standard or guideline approved in a Town Center Development Plan in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section 27-239.01 and subject to the following findings:**
  - (A) **A specific parcel of land has exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape; exceptional topographic conditions; or other extraordinary situations or conditions;**
  - (B) **The strict application of the Development Plan will result in peculiar and unusual practical difficulties to, or exceptional or undue hardship upon, the owner of the property; and**
  - (C) **The departure will not substantially impair the intent, purpose, or integrity of the General Plan, Master Plan, or the Town Center Development Plan.**

The property is unique because it is the only property in the commercial district that is anchored by a major pedestrian crossing, a historic roadway, a transit oriented commercial “boulevard” and a “neighborhood street.” Because of these extraordinary topographic conditions, the laundromat property serves as the de facto commercial gateway for the southernmost portion of the Town Center area. The Suitland M-U-TC Development Plan anticipates new construction of the sites along the boulevards, whereas at this location, the applicant proposes an addition to the existing building. This level of burden is not constitutionally commensurate with the applicant’s proposal for a building addition. The recommended departures will not substantially impair the integrity of the development plan.

1. **Building Placement:** The departure for 28 feet from the edge of the curb is supported. The existing building was constructed pursuant to the 50 feet minimum setback required at the time of construction. The proposed addition is limited by topography to the rear of the existing building. The waiver for building placement is an opportunity for the applicant to increase pedestrian and landscape improvements along Silver Hill Road (MD 458).
2. **Façade Design-Ground Floor Window Placement:** The departure from the ground-floor windows requirement of large multipaned windows for commercial ground-floor development is supported. The applicant is not proposing to replace any of the existing windows. The nature of the use of the existing building as a laundromat and the fact that the proposed rear addition does not include any windows, but includes architectural details, which complements the neighborhood aesthetic support this departure.
3. **Sidewalks and Storefronts, Standards 1 and 2:** The departure request for the sidewalk departure of three feet from the minimum requirement of eight feet is supported. Retaining the existing sidewalk width is reasonable because there is an existing sidewalk along the property's frontage, within the public right-of-way of Silver Hill Road and Parkway Terrace, which does not meet these requirements. The existing conditions can be supported, as the sidewalk along Silver Hill Road is governed by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and Parkway Terrace by Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation. Further, the widening of the sidewalk would impact existing trees that were planted with the original development of the property that are now mature.
4. **Circulation and Parking Area Design, Standard 18:** The applicant is providing 47 parking spaces and seeks a departure for six parking spaces above the maximum (41) number of parking spaces permitted to serve the development. A departure for two of the six additional parking spaces (43 total) is supported given the nature of the use as a laundromat. The elimination of four parking spaces, two at the front of the development and two in the rear-parking lot is recommended to provide for expanded landscape areas at the front of the property along Silver Hill Road (MD 458) and in the rear-parking area.
5. **Landscaping, Buffering and Screening:** The applicant's proposal generally conforms to the requirements of this standard. However, due to the proximity of the subject property to Suitland Parkway, a designated historic roadway, the National Park Service has requested thick, native vegetation for screening along the western boundary in lieu of any type of fencing. It is recommended that additional shrubbery be provided at the rear eastern property boundary and that all existing trees are maintained and filled in where necessary. A departure is recommended for Standard 2, which requires a minimum three-foot-high grille,

metal latticework fence or brick, and/or a stone or finished concrete wall to screen a parking lot adjacent to a public right-of-way.

6. **Signage–Sign, Provision 2, Sign Design Standards 5 and 6:** The applicant is replacing the existing freestanding pole-mounted commercial sign with an internally-illuminated monument sign. The applicant has requested a departure from Standards 5 and 6 for the monument sign citing as justification that the existing canopy signage is internally lit. The existing canopy signage is internally lit, but it is cost prohibitive to recommend replacement. A departure is supported for the existing canopy signage, but the departure is not supported for the monument sign because it will not serve the purpose or intent of the development plan. The purpose is to visually enhance the community, which is achieved through the reduction of internally-lit signage located on the subject property. Given the area is identified as an area Gateway and bounds multifamily residential uses, the denial of the departure for the monument sign brings the proposal into further conformance with Standard 6 requiring that signs be shaded, shielded, or directed so that the light intensity does not adversely affect the surrounding area. The applicant should revise the site plan to conform to the development plan guidelines' Standard 6 for the monument sign.

The recommended departures reinforce the intent of the development plan, which is to encourage reinvestment and improve the aesthetic of the town center area. The possibility for any future redevelopment remains. In addition, the conditions in this resolution will further bring the proposal into harmony with the standards of the development plan.

- J. **Parking Requirements:** The Suitland M-U-TC Development Plan contains parking standards, which differ from those contained in the Zoning Ordinance, having both a maximum (80 percent) and minimum (50 percent) number of parking spaces based on what is required by Section 11. The applicant is providing 47 parking spaces; however, a maximum of 41 parking spaces are permitted. The development plan requires that all on-site parking be located at the side or rear of the subject property, which is generally met. The elimination of four parking spaces for inclusion of larger landscape areas is recommended in support of the departure from this standard.
- K. **Tree Canopy Coverage:** The Prince George's County Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance is applicable to the subject project because it proposes greater than 5,000 square feet of GFA or disturbance on-site. For a redevelopment property in the M-U-TC Zone, which does not qualify for a standard exemption, the requirement is ten percent of the area within the limit of disturbance shown on the site plan. The submitted site plan provides a tree canopy coverage (TCC) schedule demonstrating conformance to the requirements of the ordinance.

## CONCLUSION

The Planning Board may grant departures from the standards contained in the 2006 Suitland M-U-TC Development Plan through the special permit process. The submitted site plan, justification statement, and other submitted materials are not in full conformance with the development plan standards. However, this is a renovation of an existing building to expand a needed service in this community. The proposed application generally meets the requirements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to Subtitle 27 of the Prince George's County Code, the Prince George's County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission adopted the findings contained herein and APPROVED the above-noted application, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to issuance of permits, the site plan shall be revised to show the following, in conformance with the standards of the 2006 *Approved Suitland Mixed-Use Town Center Zone Development Plan* (Development Plan):
  - a. Eliminate the proposed vinyl fencing along the right-of-way and provide for thick, native landscaping to screen the perimeter of the parking compound.
  - b. Revise the parking schedule to correctly indicate the maximum number of parking spaces required (41) and provided (45). Remove the first diagonal front parking space located along the intersection of Parkway Terrace Drive and Silver Hill Road (MD 458). Remove the first diagonal front parking space located along the intersection of Suitland Parkway and Silver Hill Road.
  - c. Expand the landscape area located along the intersection of Parkway Terrace Drive and Silver Hill Road. Expand the landscape area along the intersection of Suitland Parkway and Silver Hill Road.
  - d. Revise the architectural elevations to the same architectural details for both the east and west elevations.
  - e. Revise the site plan to provide bicycle racks and street furniture to conform with the development plan standards.
  - f. Revise the plans to extend the sidewalk along the property frontage along Parkway Terrace Drive.
  - g. Revise Note 25 to identify the adjacent Suitland Parkway with a historic roadway classification.
  - h. Remove Note 31.

- i. Revise the site plan to conform to the development plan guidelines Standard 6 for the monument sign.
- j. Revise the site plan to conform to the development plans for low-impact development techniques as regulated by the Prince George's County Department of the Environment.
- k. Provide infill street trees in conformance with the development plan standards.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appeal of the Planning Board's action must be filed with the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Maryland within thirty (30) days of the final notice of the Planning Board's decision.

\* \* \* \* \*

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the action taken by the Prince George's County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission on the motion of Commissioner Washington, seconded by Commissioner Geraldo, with Commissioners Washington, Geraldo, Bailey, Doerner, and Hewlett voting in favor of the motion at its regular meeting held on Thursday, May 4, 2017, in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

Adopted by the Prince George's County Planning Board this 25th day of May 2017.

Patricia Colihan Barney  
Executive Director

By Jessica Jones  
Planning Board Administrator