

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, the Prince George’s County Planning Board is charged with the approval of Detailed Site Plans pursuant to Part 3, Division 9 of the Zoning Ordinance of the Prince George’s County Code; and

WHEREAS, in consideration of evidence presented at a public hearing on May 4, 2017, regarding Detailed Site Plan DSP-99044-12 for Prince George’s Plaza, DSW & ULTA Signage, the Planning Board finds:

1. **Request:** The subject application is for approval of a detailed site plan (DSP) for two new building-mounted signage, 6.5 feet in height, to advertise two new retail stores at Prince George’s Plaza Shopping Center.

2. **Development Data Summary:**

	EXISTING	APPROVED
Zone	M-U-I/T-D-O	M-U-I/T-D-O
Use	Commercial / Retail	Commercial / Retail
Gross Tract Area (acres)	51.78	51.78
Net Tract Area (acres)	51.78	51.78
Gross Floor Area (square feet)	1,104,463	1,104,463

3. **Location:** The subject property is located in Council District 2 and Planning Area 68. More specifically, the project is located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of East-West Highway (MD 410) and Belcrest Road, approximately 1,600 feet west of the intersection of MD 410 and Queens Chapel Road (MD 500).
4. **Surrounding Uses:** The subject site, Prince George’s Plaza, is bounded to the south by East-West Highway (MD 410), to the north by multifamily apartments in the Mixed Use–Infill (M-U-I) Zone, to the west by commercial office space in the M-U-I Zone, and to the east by Belcrest Road. Surrounding the property are a variety of retail and multifamily uses in the M-U-I, Multifamily High-Rise Residential (R-H), Mixed Use–Transportation Oriented (M-X-T), and Multifamily Medium Density Residential (R-18) Zones.
5. **Previous Approvals:** The original existing development on the site was an enclosed shopping mall that was developed in the late 1950s. The 2016 *Approved Prince George’s Plaza Transit District Development Plan and Transit District Overlay Zone* (Prince George’s Plaza TDDP/TDOZ) retained the property in the M-U-I/D-D-O Zones. The original Detailed Site Plan, DSP-99044 and companion cases for Primary Amendments TP-00001, and Secondary Amendments TS-99044A have been previously approved and discussed below. The property was also the subject of a Departure from Sign Design Standards (DSDS-440), approved in

December 1991, and Departure from Design Standards DDS-515 was reviewed and approved by the Prince George's County District Council on July 10, 2001.

The original DSP was designed for Phase I of the redevelopment of the mall and included the renovation of an existing pad site as an Outback Steakhouse, a portion of the streetscape improvements along East-West Highway (MD 410) in front of Outback Steakhouse, and the redesign of the area around the east end of the shopping center.

Detailed Site Plan DSP-99044/01 was for the purpose of constructing a new anchor store (Target) and the addition of two tenants at the rear of the shopping center. The Planning Board granted a further amendment to Standard S8 in 2003, in conjunction with DSP-99044/01. Departure from Design Standards DDS-515 was also approved for conformance with Section 4.7, Buffering Incompatible Uses, of the *Prince George's County Landscape Manual*.

Detailed Site Plan DSP-99044/02 was for the purpose of renovating the rear of the shopping mall to improve access into the center, repaving, and incorporating additional green area and was approved administratively.

Detailed Site Plan DSP-99044/03 was to allow two-way traffic in an existing drive aisle that was previously utilized for one-way traffic for loading purposes, and was approved administratively.

Detailed Site Plan DSP-99044/04 was for the purpose of adding a restaurant pad site (Olive Garden) of 7,685 square feet, and was approved by the Planning Board on June 21, 2005.

Detailed Site Plan DSP-99044/05 was for modification of the rear elevation on the east end of the structure to accommodate new tenants and to remove 19 parking spaces, and was approved administratively.

Detailed Site Plan DSP-99044/06 was for the purpose of constructing a pad site for a sit-down restaurant (Famous Dave's) of 6,574 square feet and was approved by the Planning Board on September 11, 2008. The approved Famous Dave's restaurant was never constructed.

Detailed Site Plan DSP-99044/07 was for the purpose for constructing a Chick-fil-A fast-food restaurant on Prince George's Plaza Parcel A-1 and was approved by the Planning Board on October 3, 2013. The approved Chick-fil-A fast-food restaurant was appealed to the District Council on April 14, 2014, which approved the use but disapproved the drive-through service as recommended in the PGCPB Resolution No. 13-127, and the fast-food restaurant was not constructed.

Detailed Site Plan DSP-99044/08 was for the purpose of adding a T.J. Maxx, including signage to an existing tenant site and was approved administratively.

Detailed Site Plan DSP-99044/10 was for the purpose of exterior renovations to Outback Steakhouse and changes to the entrance and was approved administratively.

6. **Design Features:** This application involves two new retail locations, which are a part of a larger 51.78-acre development known as the Mall at Prince George's. The site is currently improved with a 900,000-square-foot mall, which includes multiple retail stores and restaurants. The site can be accessed from its main entrance on East-West Highway (MD 410) to the south, Belcrest Road on the east, and from multiple locations along Toledo Terrace, which circumvents the mall on the site's northern and western boundaries. The existing parking compound fully encircles the mall. The two proposed building-mounted signs are set back approximately 400 feet from MD 410, have a sign face areas of 143 and 95 square feet, respectively, and are internally-lit channel letter signs, which are located 10 feet above the sidewalk, near the mall's westernmost entrance.

COMPLIANCE WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

7. **2016 Approved Prince George's Plaza Transit District Development Plan and Transit District Overlay Zone**—The following development district standards warrant discussion:

Attached Signs, Design Standards

1. **Signs shall be rectangular and oriented horizontally or vertically.**
2. **Vertical wall signs may not exceed a maximum dimension of three-feet by two times the business' frontage width.**
3. **The bottom of the wall sign shall not be installed less than ten feet above the sidewalk.**
4. **A wall sign with digital or electronic content is a digital screen.**

Neither of the above limitations on the size of horizontal signage allowed for the development district is entirely consistent with the subject application. However, a diagram showing the minimum horizontal wall sign elevation and the maximum sign height can be referenced. The maximum allowed sign height is 36 inches, or 3 feet. The subject site is proposing a sign larger than this criterion; therefore, the applicant has requested approval to place a 6.5-foot sign on the property. The Planning Board found that larger building-mounted signs should be allowed, similar to some of the signage that currently exists for other retailers in the mall.

The proposed application is for a building-mounted sign of 6.5 feet in height (a deviation of 3.5 feet). The material proposed is shown as follows:

Sign Face—The face of the signs are acrylic channel-style letters with the logo and text back-lit so they will be illuminated at night.

Lighting—Internal illumination with G.E. Tetra Max White (light emitting diode (LED)) lights.

The applicant is requesting a modification of this standard to allow the increase in sign height as proposed.

The applicant provides the following justification for the amendments:

A DSP is required for the addition of two building-mounted retail signs on the existing mall pursuant to the 2016 *Approved Prince George's Plaza Transit District Development Plan and Transit District Overlay Zone* (Prince George's Plaza TDDP/TDOZ). The TDDP design standards for wall signs limits the dimension of a wall sign to three feet, and the DSP seeks to amend that standard to allow the two signs for new tenants within the existing building to use a dimension of 6.5 feet in height, pursuant to Section 27-548.08(c)(3) of the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed signs meet all of the other TDDP design standards, except the height of the dimension.

Currently, there are various wall signs on the buildings of various tenants. The dimensions of these signs vary from one to nine feet in height. This will be the first location for the two new tenants in this geographic marketing area, and brand identification is an important element for attracting the new tenants to the existing center. The location of the tenants will be set back from the main thoroughfare, East-West Highway (MD 410), and the building is set back a great distance from MD 410. While there is no direct entrance to the tenant location near the sign, the location does provide significant identification for the tenant's existence in the center where the brand appeals to both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The signage design standards are intended to "...permit a creative and interesting array of sign designs... interesting visual presentation which attracting visitors to the Transit District." The additional increase of the existing three-foot maximum dimension allows this intent to be fulfilled and allows a new tenant to the area to enjoy similar brand recognition and identification as other existing well-known tenants to this portion of the transit district. The TDDP recognizes the larger Prince George's Plaza Mall as a significant part of the transit district and allows for its continuation of the main center as parking areas are subsequently developed consistent with the TDDP. The proposed amendment of the sign dimension allows for development and attraction of additional retail, as envisioned by the TDDP and, therefore, does not substantially impair implementation. For these reasons, the applicant requests an amendment of the wall sign standards for the additional 3.5 feet to allow the two signs proposed in the DSP.

Modification of a development district standard is permitted through the process described in Section 27-548.25(c) of the Zoning Ordinance. That section provides generally that an applicant may request the Planning Board to apply different development standards from the development district standards implemented in the sector plan. The Planning Board, however, must find that the

alternate development district standards requested will benefit the development and the development district and will not substantially impair implementation of the master plan, master plan amendment, or sector plan.

The applicant, as indicated above, is respectfully requesting the Planning Board to approve a modification to the signage design criteria provided in Chapter 8 of the sector plan

The Planning Board agrees with the applicant that the need for advertising of the property is paramount to the success of the retail stores and the speed of vehicles along MD 410, the distance from the road, the proposed size of the sign, and illumination of the sign are justified.

However, the Planning Board notes that a survey has not been submitted with this application and the plans have not been revised to reflect the current condition. Multiple utilities and easements may currently exist within the vicinity of the proposed signs, and the applicant should work with the appropriate utility companies to determine the exact location of the utilities. If the installation is determined to be detrimental to any of the affected utilities, the location may be adjusted accordingly. The Planning Board found that the alternative proposal will benefit the retail stores and will not substantially impair the implementation of the TDDP.

8. **Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance:** The DSP application has been reviewed for compliance with the requirements of the M-U-I Zone, and the requirements of the T-D-O Zone of the Zoning Ordinance:

- a. The application is subject to the applicable requirements of the M-U-I and T-D-O Zones. See Finding 7 for discussion of the applicable T-D-O Zone signage related standards.
- b. The following findings shall be made by the Planning Board when approving a DSP in the T-D-O Zone:

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

The DSP requests amendments to the sign standards that have been found not to impair substantially implementation of the TDDP and will benefit the development and the development district,

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

Except for the requested amendments to the sign standards, the DSP is consistent with the Prince George's Plaza TDDP.

- (C) **The Transit District Site Plan meets all of the requirements of the Transit District Overlay Zone, and applicable regulations of the underlying zones, unless an amendment to the applicable requirement or regulation has been approved;**

Except for the requested amendments to the sign standards, the DSP meets the requirements.

- (D) **The location, size, and design of buildings, signs, other structures, open spaces, landscaping, pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems, and parking and loading areas maximize safety and efficiency, and are adequate to meet the purposes of the Transit District Overlay Zone;**

The DSP does not change any site features and meets the required finding.

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

The DSP meets this required finding.

- (F) **Requests for reductions from the total minimum required parking spaces for Transit District Overlay Zones pursuant to Section 27-548.09.02 of the Zoning Ordinance, meets the stated location criteria and are accompanied by a signed Memorandum of Understanding between a car sharing corporation or company and the applicant.**

This DSP does not change any parking related standards and this requirement is not applicable.

9. **Detailed Site Plan DSP-99044 and its revisions:** The DSP was approved for construction of the Prince George's Plaza Shopping Center. The site plan was subsequently revised 10 times. None of the approvals has any sign related standards that are applicable to the review of this DSP. All signage related standards are from the T-D-O Zone, as approved with the 2016 Prince George's Plaza TDDP/TDOZ. See above Finding 7.
10. **2010 Prince George's County Landscape Manual:** The proposal is not subject to the requirements of the 2010 *Prince George's County Landscape Manual*.
11. **Prince George's County Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance:** The proposal is not subject to the requirements of the Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance and will not affect the previously approved Type II tree conservation plan.
12. **Prince George's County Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance:** The proposal is not subject to the requirements of the Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance. No site disturbance is proposed.

13. **Further Planning Board Findings and Comments from Other Entities:** The subject application was referred to the concerned agencies and divisions. The referral comments are summarized as follows:

- a. **Community Planning**—The Planning Board noted that the *Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan* identifies the Mall at Prince George's (known as 'the mall') and Prince George's Plaza (TDDP) as a regional transit district and a first-round downtown, and recommends directing the majority of future employment and residential growth in the County to the regional transit districts. These medium- to high-density areas are envisioned to feature high-quality urban design, incorporate a mix of complementary uses and public spaces, provide a range of transportation options (such as Metro, bus, light rail, bike and car share), and promote walkability. They will provide a range of housing options to appeal to different income levels, household types, and existing and future residents.

Downtowns are areas where public and private investment should be concentrated.

Planning Issues

The 2016 Prince George's Plaza TDDP/TDOZ recommends and anticipates mixed-use redevelopment on the 51-acre Mall at Prince George's property in the future, which would include construction of new streets, onto which any new buildings will be required to front.

The TDDP anticipates continued operation of the Mall at Prince George's, which is set approximately 100 feet back from East-West Highway (MD 410). Such a setback is not, and would not be, permitted under the current TDOZ for new buildings. The wall signage dimension standard contained within the current TDOZ cannot be applied to a building set 100 feet back from the street. The proposed sign dimension is consistent with the existing use and do not substantially impair the TDDP. The Planning Board supports the proposed signage and related amendment to the transit district standards.

- b. **Permit Review**—The Planning Board indicated that there are no zoning issues at this time.
- c. **City of Hyattsville**—The City of Hyattsville did not provide comments on the plan.

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:

- A. APPROVED the amendments to the building-mounted sign criteria of the 2016 *Approved Prince George's Plaza Transit District Development Plan and Transit District Overlay Zone*, as proposed by the applicant, to allow two 6.5-foot, building-mounted, internally-lit, channel letter signs.

- B. APPROVED Detailed Site Plan DSP-199044-12 for Prince George's Plaza, DSW & ULTA Signage.

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

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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