



Memo

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Jim Chandler, Assistant City Administrator and Director, Community & Economic Development
Kate Powers, City Planner

Date: April 29, 2020

Re: Medical Office Building Architecture – Detailed Site Plan (DSP-20004) – Staff Recommendations

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the City Council with City Staff's recommendations regarding the detailed site plan (DSP) application for a Medical Office Building along Ager Road.

Project Summary

- The subject property is 2.027 acres, zoned Mixed-Use Transit Oriented (M-X-T) and is within the 2006 *Approved Transit District Development Plan for the West Hyattsville Transit District Overlay Zone* (TDDP). This property is located on the southwest side of Ager road, approximately 620 feet north of Hamilton Street and the entrance to the West Hyattsville Metro Station.
- Kaiser Permanente is proposing a three-story medical office building totaling 44,362 square feet with an attached three-story garage. The medical office building proposed will include administrative offices, medical offices, a pharmacy, a coffee shop open to the public, and a small medical laboratory (containing less than 2,000 square feet).
- City Staff supports the applicant's two amendments to be approved by the District Council – the inclusion of medical laboratory and cafe to the permitted Table of Uses and the applicant's requested amendment to the maximum parking ratio.
- City Staff requests three conditions be required for approval which are related to the surface-view on the first floor, sign illumination, and public art.

Project Details

This DSP application seeks to establish approval of architecture for the medical office building on Parcel 1 of the property. Kaiser Permanente is proposing a three-story medical office building totaling 44,362 square feet with an attached three-story garage. The medical office building proposed will include administrative offices, medical offices, a pharmacy, a coffee shop open to the public, and a small medical laboratory (containing less than 2,000 square feet).

The primary building entrance is mid-block along Ager Road and includes dual pedestrian approaches – one from the public walkways and another from the covered canopy within the structured parking garage. The building will have both direct frontage and direct vehicular access to Little Branch Drive to the north and Ager Road to the east. Both Ager Road and Little Branch Run will include sidewalks, street trees, and lighting.

Amendments Required to be Approved by the District Council

1. Amendment to the Preferred Land Use Category and Table of Uses

Under the Mixed-Use Residential preferred land-use category, offices, medical offices, and pharmacies are permitted. However, a medical laboratory, as a principal use, is not permitted. The applicant is requesting an amendment to the list of allowed uses to allow a medical laboratory as an accessory use within the proposed medical office building. The proposed medical lab will be less than 2,000 square feet within the office building.

In addition to the medical lab, the applicant is also proposing a café within the building to be open to the public. Under the Mixed-Use Residential preferred land-use category, the only type of “eating and drinking establishment” included in the use list is one “with live music and patron dancing”. The applicant is also requesting an amendment to the use list to allow a small café.

City Staff supports the applicant’s amendments to the Table of Uses, as the proposed medical laboratory is necessary to the function, operation, and success of the medical office and the proposed café will help activate the space and will be a benefit to both Kaiser members and the general public.

2. Amendment to Maximum Parking Ratio

Maximum parking ratios are outlined within the TDDP for all uses within its boundaries and supersede the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Under the TDDP’s requirements, the maximum number of permitted parking spaces would be 92. The applicant is proposing to construct a parking garage to serve the needs of the building with 238 parking spaces. They believe this is the minimum necessary to ensure that the needs of the patients are served, and parking is not strained on streets outside the facility.

Kaiser Permanente has determined anticipated volume of traffic using the facility and, at peak occupancy, it is anticipated the daily volume of patient visits to the facility will be 562. In addition to this, maximum staff on-site parking during peak occupancy, is estimated to be 105. Kaiser will offer incentives for staff to use public transportation, which will offset some need for staff parking.

City Staff supports the applicant’s amendment to the Maximum Parking Ratio, as the nature of the building’s use calls for sufficient user parking; Those compromised due to illness or other health issues may not find public transportation as a viable option.

Additional Recommendations

1. Staff requests first-floor surface view into the building meet the required 20 feet for the frontage along Ager Road.

One modification City Staff does take concern with, in relation to the windows on the building, is the surface view depth. The standards state that windows shall allow a minimum 60% of surface view into the building for a depth of at least 20 feet.

Staff requests that the first-floor surface view into the building for the frontage along Ager Road meet this requirement. The purpose of having the large windows along Ager Road is to further activate the streetscape. Having an obstructed surface view will negate the benefits related to large windows like blocking light and the view both from the interior and the exterior.

2. Staff requests the "Welcome" sign along Ager Road be illuminated externally, as stated in the standards.

The standards require signage be illuminated with external lighting only, while the applicant is requesting building signage be illuminated internally.

In Staff's opinion, the "Welcome" sign in the front of the building should be illuminated externally. Having the sign externally illuminated will make the signage more pedestrian-friendly and provide a more main street feel as opposed to having internally illuminated signage on the ground-level.

3. Staff requests a public art element, in addition to the LED panel, be integrated into the design. This element should be included on the exterior of the building in a high-visibility area.

While the LED panel on the front of the building is a unique and visually interesting element, it is Staff's opinion that an additional public art element be integrated into the design. As the LED panel will display the Kaiser logo, Staff does not consider it public art. A mural, mosaic, or other artistic element should be integrated to add cultural and aesthetic value to the project and area overall.

Next Steps

The M-NCPPC Planning Board is scheduled to conduct a hearing to consider DSP-20004 on May 21, 2020. Any recommendations adopted by the City Council at the May 4, 2020 meeting will be conveyed to the Planning Board before the M-NCPPC hearing.

Staff is recommending the City Council adopt the following motion:

"I move the City Council authorize the Mayor to provide correspondence to the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission in support of Detailed Site Plan 20004, subject to the following conditions:

1. The first-floor surface view into the building shall meet the required 20 feet for the frontage along Ager Road.
2. The "Welcome" sign along Ager Road shall be illuminated externally, as stated in the standards.
3. A public art element, in addition to the LED panel, shall be integrated into the design. This element shall be included on the exterior of the building in a high-visibility area.

The City Council supports the applicant's amendments to be approved by the District Council, specifically the inclusion of medical laboratory and cafe to the permitted Table of Uses and the applicant's requested amendment to the maximum parking ratio."