

**R E S O L U T I O N**

WHEREAS, the Prince George’s County Planning Board has reviewed DPLS-408, Gateway Center, Parcel L, Bladensburg Commons, requesting a departure for 60 parking spaces of 230 required 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 December 11, 2014, the Prince George's County Planning Board finds:

1. **Request:** The subject application requests approval of a departure from parking and loading standards (DPLS) for a reduction in the 230 parking space parking requirement by 60 spaces. The companion Detailed Site Plan DSP-14012, Gateway Center, Parcel L, Bladensburg Commons (PGCPB Resolution No. 14-134) may be referred to for additional information.
2. **Location:** The subject site is located on the east side of 57th Avenue, approximately 2,600 feet north of its intersection with Landover Road (MD 202) in the Town of Bladensburg, in Council District 5.
3. **Development Data Summary:**

	<b>EXISTING</b>	<b>APPROVED</b>
Zone(s)	R-10	R-10
Use(s)	Vacant, wooded	Multifamily dwellings
Acreage	7.0	7.0
Square Footage/GFA	0	104,628

**OTHER DEVELOPMENT DATA**

**Parking Requirements:**

	<b>REQUIRED</b>	<b>APPROVED</b>
Total Parking Spaces (2 per every dwelling unit) (0.5 spaces per bedroom in excess of one per unit)	230	170*
Standard Spaces (9.5 x 19 feet)		103
Compact Spaces (8 x 16.5 feet) (up to one-third of the required number of spaces)		61
Handicap Spaces	6 (2 van-accessible)	6 (4 van-accessible)
Total Loading Spaces	1	1

\*The applicant has applied for a DPLS.

4. **Surrounding Uses:** The subject seven-acre R-10-zoned property is located on the east side of 57th Avenue and the north side of 58th Avenue, and is also known as 4200 58th Avenue. The subject site is bounded to the north by Elizabeth Seton High School in the Townhouse (R-T) Zone. To the south, east, and west of the subject site are existing multifamily developments in the R-10 Zone.
5. **Previous Approvals:** The site was previously approved as part of Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-94032. The site is currently the subject of Preliminary Plan 4-14004, which has not yet been reviewed by the Prince George's County Planning Board. The public hearing is scheduled for December 11, 2014, and must be heard prior to the subject detailed site plan (DSP) application. The DSP must be in conformance with all of the applicable conditions included for the approved preliminary plan. The property was also the subject of a request for Alternative Compliance (AC-95042) as part of the Elizabeth Seton High School site. Alternative compliance is no longer required, as the applicant is providing all of the necessary bufferyards.
6. **Design Features:** The subject site has a single point of access from 58th Avenue. Surface parking is proposed along the north and east sides of the proposed multifamily building.
7. **Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance:** The subject application has been reviewed for compliance with the requirements of the R-10 Zone; and Part 11, Off-Street Parking and Loading.
8. **Departure from Parking and Loading Standards:** The application requests a reduction in the required number of parking spaces by 60 parking spaces. Based on the requirements of Section 27-568(a) of the Zoning Ordinance, this proposed development would normally require a minimum of 230 parking spaces. The site can only provide 170 spaces; hence the need for the proposed departure application. The site has been reviewed for compliance with the parking and loading requirements and required findings for approval of a departure contained in the Zoning Ordinance, as follows:

Section 27-588(b)(7) of the Zoning Ordinance contains the following required findings for departure applications. Each standard is listed in **boldface type** below, followed by staff comment:

**(A) In order for the Planning Board to grant the departure, it shall make the following findings:**

- (i) **The purposes of this Part (Section 27-550) will be served by the applicant's request;**

**Section 27-550. Purposes**

- (a) **The purposes of this Part are:**

- (1) To require (in connection with each building constructed and each new use established) off-street automobile parking lots and loading areas sufficient to serve the parking and loading needs of all persons associated with the buildings and uses;**
- (2) To aid in relieving traffic congestion on streets by reducing the use of public streets for parking and loading and reducing the number of access points;**
- (3) To protect the residential character of residential areas; and**
- (4) To provide parking and loading areas which are convenient and increase the amenities in the Regional District.**

**Applicant's Justification:** The applicant provided the following justification for how the purposes of Section 27-455 of the Zoning Ordinance will be met:

The Traffic Group conducted two parking demand and parking occupancy analyses in Prince George's County at similar apartment complexes, Largo Center Apartments and Steeplechase Apartments. Both of the study areas are within the county's Established Communities area, formerly referred to as the Developing Tier, and are communities that are more auto-oriented with less adjacent public transportation than the subject property. Additionally, apartment development in general throughout the region is being developed with less parking due to decreased demand. The two analyses concluded that lesser demand for parking does indeed exist and the ratio of 1.36 spaces per unit is a reasonable range of parking for a variety of apartment communities of various sizes. The subject property will have 100 dwelling units with a mix of one and two bedrooms, and is proposed to be parked at 1.67 parking spaces per dwelling unit. The applicant, Shelter Group, has decades of experience in developing affordable housing in urban communities served by public transportation linkages. Its observations of their communities confirm the results of The Traffic Group study, finding that lower parking ratios are particularly relevant to their affordable housing communities.

The adjacent roads to the property, 57th and 58th Avenues, are on Bus Route T18. The residents of the proposed apartments will be able to utilize this public transit system.

The Planning Board concurs that the purposes of the off-street parking and loading standards will be met by the subject proposal. Adequate parking will be provided for the proposed use based upon the peak parking demand analysis provided by the applicant. Public transportation is conveniently available, and on-street parking is not permitted on either 57th or 58th Avenue; therefore, approval of a parking departure will not promote on-street parking or congestion associated with on-street parking on these adjacent streets. The proposed parking will be provided in locations convenient to the proposed use. The departure will not affect the character of adjacent residential areas. It is noted in Finding

13 of this report that the Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) is not in support of the requested departure.

**(ii) The departure is the minimum necessary, given the specific circumstances of the request;**

The departure is the minimum necessary. The application has provided parking in all reasonable areas on-site, while meeting other Zoning Ordinance standards and protecting open space. It is noted that the applicant is providing 61 compact spaces. These should be clearly labeled on the plan. In addition, General Note 6(a) indicates that compact spaces are required. The note should be revised to accurately reflect the Zoning Ordinance, which states that up to one-third of the total number of required spaces may be compact. The application is in conformance with this requirement.

**(iii) The departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances which are special to the subject use, given its nature at this location, or alleviate circumstances which are prevalent in older areas of the County which were predominantly developed prior to November 29, 1949;**

The departure is necessary in order to alleviate circumstances which are special to the subject use, given its nature at this location. The apartment building is proposed in an area with steep slopes that greatly reduce the amount of developable area on the site. Additional parking would result in increased stormwater runoff, placing a greater burden on the stormwater management facilities. Moreover, the reduction of unnecessary impervious surface results in better environmental site design by minimizing the heat island effect in conformance with the county's environmental goals.

**(iv) All methods for calculating the number of spaces required (Division 2, Subdivision 3, and Division 3, Subdivision 3, of this Part) have either been used or found to be impractical; and**

The applicant indicated that all methods provided in Part 11 for calculating the number of spaces required by the Zoning Ordinance have been examined and found to be impractical, leaving no alternative but to pursue the departure request.

**(v) Parking and loading needs of adjacent residential areas will not be infringed upon if the departure is granted.**

An evaluation of the adjacent neighborhood through aerial photography indicates that the communities directly adjacent to the subject proposal are residential multifamily and institutional. Consequently, the proposed parking reduction is not likely to impact residential neighborhoods. The applicant has provided evidence based on their analyses that the proposed parking rate of 1.67 parking spaces per unit is appropriate for multifamily communities of the general size proposed. In light of this finding, there will

be no need for residents of Bladensburg Commons to seek parking on adjacent streets where it is allowed. The Planning Board concurs with the applicant's evaluation and finds that granting the departure will have no effect on the parking and loading needs of the adjacent residential area.

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

a. **Community Planning**—The Planning Board finds the following:

- (1) The DPLS is also consistent with the Port Towns Sector Plan recommendations and the goal to “Reduce dependency on use of automobile(s)” (page 59). Additionally, the development is close to the T18 bus line which connects to three metro stations.
- (2) The requested departure is in conformance with county's general plan support of parking reduction (page 198), “Reduce fragmented, uncoordinated, inefficient, reserved single use parking.”

b. **Transportation Planning**—The Planning Board finds the following:

**Departure from Parking and Loading Standards DPLS-408**

The applicant is requesting a departure of 60 parking spaces from the required 230 spaces. A departure of 60 spaces is proposed; the applicant will provide 170 parking spaces. In granting a departure, the Planning Board must find (see Section 27-588 of the Zoning Ordinance) that the off-street parking proposed is sufficient to serve the parking needs of the proposed use, in this case 100 multifamily residential units. In addition, the Planning Board needs to address the issue of on-street parking on adjacent public streets. According to the DPW&T, no on-street parking is currently allowed on adjacent 57th and 58th Avenues.

The applicant's traffic consultant determined that 1.36 to 1.67 parking spaces per unit is acceptable and that public transportation (bus service) is available. The required parking amounts to 2.3 spaces per unit. The applicant is proposing 1.67 spaces per unit. In addition, two-thirds of the spaces must be compact spaces. Less than one-half of the applicant's proposed spaces are compact spaces.

Over one-half of the residential units will serve households earning 30 to 60 percent of area median income according to the justification statement. Public transportation (bus service) is available on 57th and 58th Avenues within walking distance of the proposed development. For these two reasons the off-street parking proposed should be sufficient to serve the parking needs of the proposed use. Staff therefore does not oppose the departure.

**Conclusion**

From the standpoint of transportation, it is determined that this plan is acceptable and meets the finding required for a DSP as described in Section 27-285 pending approval of Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 4-14004 by the Planning Board.

- d. **Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T)**—In a memorandum dated November 17, 2014 (Issayans to Masog), DPW&T indicated that because there is no on-street parking on either 57th Avenue or 58th Avenue, the minimum number of parking spaces required by the Zoning Ordinance should be provided. The Planning Board finds however, based on the applicant's analysis, that sufficient parking will be available with the departure.
- e. **Prince George's County Fire Department**—In a memorandum dated October 22, 2014, the Fire Department provided comments regarding fire apparatus, hydrants, and lane requirements. Those issues will be enforced by the Fire/EMS Department at the time of permit issuance.
- f. **Town of Bladensburg**—At the time the technical staff report was written, comments on the departure had not been received from the Town of Bladensburg.

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.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appeal of the Planning Board's action must be filed with the District Council 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 Bailey, seconded by Commissioner Geraldo, with Commissioners Bailey, Geraldo, Shoaff and Hewlett voting in favor of the motion, and with Commissioner Washington absent at its regular meeting held on Thursday, December 11, 2014, in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

Adopted by the Prince George's County Planning Board this 11th day of December 2014.

Patricia Colihan Barney  
Executive Director

By Jessica Jones  
Planning Board Administrator

PCB:JJ:CF:arj