

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, the Prince George’s County Planning Board has reviewed Departure from Parking and Loading Spaces DPLS 415, Potomac Energy Holding, LLC (Dash-In/Shell Aerospace Drive) requesting departure of five of the required 25 parking spaces 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 7, 2015, the Prince George’s County Planning Board finds:

A. **Location and Field Inspection:** The subject property is a square-shaped parcel at the northeast corner of the intersection of Greenbelt Road (MD 193) and Aerospace Road. The 0.9-acre parcel is zoned Light Industrial (I-1) and is improved with an existing gas station with three service bays and a small convenience store. Additional structures on the site include two concrete pump islands, four gasoline pump dispensers, one canopy, three underground storage tanks, one freestanding sign, and 21 surface parking spaces. The property has direct vehicular access via four driveway cuts, two each on Aerospace Road and Greenbelt Road.

B. **Development Data Summary:**

	EXISTING	APPROVED
Zone(s)	I-1	I-1
Use(s)	Gas Station (8 fueling positions) with 3 Service Bays	Gas Station (12 fueling positions) Food or Beverage Store and Car Wash
Acreage	0.9	0.9
Parcels	1	1
Square Footage/GFA	2,188	4,524

C. **History:** The subject property was rezoned to the I-1 Zone pursuant to Zoning Map Amendment Application No. A-7677 on August 28, 1970. The existing gas station was built several years later as a permitted use in the I-1 Zone. In 1998, the District Council, pursuant to County Council Bill CB-40-1998, amended the County Ordinance to require a special exception for a gas station in the I-1 Zone. The existing gas station has remained in its current configuration since the time it was first built.

D. **Master Plan Recommendation:** *The Plan Prince George’s 2035 Approved General Plan* (Plan Prince George’s 2035) was approved May 2014, and defers to the *2010 Approved Glenn Dale-Seabrook-Lanham and Vicinity Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* (Glenn Dale–Seabrook-Lanham and Vicinity Sector Plan and SMA) for specific land use recommendations at this location. The SMA recommends commercial and light-industrial uses for the subject property. The site was retained in the I-1 Zone by the Glenn Dale–Seabrook-Lanham and Vicinity Sector Plan and SMA.

- E. The applicant is requesting a Departure from Parking and Loading Standards (DPLS-415) from Section 27-582(a) of the Zoning Ordinance for five of the required 24 off-street parking spaces.
- F. **Neighborhood and Surrounding Uses:** The subject property, 10000 Greenbelt Road, is located in the Glenn Dale neighborhood. Nearby development has been historically linked to the NASA Goddard complex to the north and west along Greenbelt Road (MD 193) and Good Luck Road. The Glenn Dale Business Campus, the Maryland Corporate Center, and Goddard Corporate Park are all found within the immediate neighborhood. Although some of this land is now planned for a mixed-use development including residences (Glenn Dale Commons), a significant number of offices, auto-related commercial, and warehouse uses remain. The general neighborhood is bounded to the north and east by Northern Avenue, to the west by Good Luck Road, and to the south by Greenbelt Road. The uses immediately surrounding the proposed special exception are as follows:

North— A car wash, beyond which is a large office building/warehouse, both in the I-1 Zone. To the northwest is a large apartment complex (The Glenn Dale) in the Multifamily Medium Density Residential (R-18) Zone.

East— Mini-storage, a church, and a credit union all in the I-1 Zone.

West— Across Aerospace Road is a strip-commercial center (Aerospace Plaza) in the I-1 Zone.

South— Across Greenbelt Road is a large multifamily apartment complex (Woodland Landing) in the R-18 Zone.

- G. **Parking and Loading Regulations:** Based on the gross floor area of the proposed food or beverage store (3,180 square feet) and car wash (1,344), a total of 24 parking spaces and one loading space are required to serve the property. The proposed site plan shows 19 parking spaces and one loading space. The applicant has requested a departure (DPLS-415) for the five required parking spaces not provided.
- H. **Required findings for Departures from Parking and Loading Standards (DPLS-415):** The applicant has requested a departure from Section 27-568 of the Zoning Ordinance, which requires the provision of 24 off-street parking spaces for the subject use. The applicant is providing 19 spaces; therefore, a departure of five spaces is sought.

Section 27-588. Departures from the number of parking and loading spaces required.

27-588(b)(7) Required Findings:

- (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.**

The purposes of the parking and loading regulations will be served by the applicant's request. The applicant seeks to ensure sufficient parking and loading to serve the needs of the patrons of this proposed gas station, convenience store, and car wash, and to relieve on-site traffic and circulation congestion through the elimination of what are probably unnecessary parking spaces on this property. In practice, many of the patrons will leave their cars at one of the 12 fueling positions while entering the store to make a purchase. In addition, many of the patrons will walk to the store from the nearby apartment complexes and office buildings, further lessening the need for parking.

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

The departure is not the minimum necessary per the site plan conditions, as discussed later in this section. Two additional parking spaces could easily be provided.

- (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 site is adjoined by office and apartment uses which will result in many patrons walking to the store. Additional parking along the front of the convenience store would interfere with the stacking lane for the car wash. The purposes of the Parking and Loading Regulations will be served by the request.

- (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**

All methods of calculation have been fully applied to this site. The applicant has applied the correct method for calculating the number of parking spaces required. The applicant is not permitted to use the 20 percent reduction for shared use because one of the uses (the food or beverage store) requires more than 20 parking spaces.

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

The applicant submits that the parking and loading needs of the residential areas will not be infringed upon if this request is granted. The nearest residentially-zoned properties are across both Aerospace Road and Greenbelt Road; they are apartment complexes which have adequate on-site parking.

- (B) In making its findings, the Planning Board shall give consideration to the following:**

- (i) The parking and loading conditions within the general vicinity of the subject property, including numbers and locations of available on- and off-street spaces within five hundred (500) feet of the subject property;**

There is no indication of a shortage of parking within the general vicinity of this facility. The area within 500 feet of the subject property is characterized by commercial, office, and multifamily residential development. All such uses have adequate parking.

- (ii) The recommendations of an Area Master Plan, or County or local revitalization plan, regarding the subject property and its general vicinity;**

The proposed use is consistent with the plan recommendations, as described in paragraph D above, and will not impair the integrity of the master plan.

- (iii) The recommendations of a municipality (within which the property lies) regarding the departure; and**

The subject property is not located within a municipality.

- (iv) **Public parking facilities which are proposed in the County's Capital Improvement Program within the general vicinity of the property.**

There are no public parking facilities proposed for this area.

- (C) **In making its findings, the Planning Board may give consideration to the following:**

- (i) **Public transportation available in the area;**

Public transportation is available at this location. However, this is an automobile-related use, as such it is not anticipated that many patrons will use public transportation. Many patrons are likely to walk to the site from the nearby apartments.

- (ii) **Any alternative design solutions to off-street facilities which might yield additional spaces;**

The applicant is not taking advantage of the use of compact parking spaces and is showing three excessively-wide spaces (13 feet) in a nine-space parking area along the eastern property line. These nine spaces could be redesigned to be eight compact spaces and two regular spaces. This would decrease the departure from five spaces to four.

- (iii) **The specific nature of the use (including hours of operation if it is a business) and the nature and hours of operation of other (business) uses within five hundred (500) feet of the subject property;**

The gas station, convenience store, and car wash will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The proposed development is within 500 feet of residential and retail uses. The use as a gas station has existed since the mid-1970s and is compatible with the nature and operation of other uses in the area.

- (iv) **In the R-30, R-30C, R-18, R-18C, R-10A, R-10, and R-H Zones, where development of multifamily dwellings is proposed, whether the applicant proposes and demonstrates that the percentage of dwelling units accessible to the physically handicapped and aged will be increased over the minimum number of units required by Subtitle 4 of the Prince George's County Code.**

The subject property is located in the I-1 Zone and, therefore, is not subject to this provision.

- I. **Further Planning Board Findings and Comments from Other Entities:** The subject application was referred to the following agencies or divisions:

1. **Transportation**—The impact of a new gas station with food and beverage service and a car wash is estimated using trip rates from the *Trip Generation Manual* (Institute of Transportation Engineers). According to surveys published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers, a high percentage of trips are expected to be pass-by and diverted trips, which would be made by motorists already on the adjacent roadways of Greenbelt Road (MD 193) and Aerospace Road. For this site, it was assumed that 75 percent of the trips would be pass-by or diverted trips. Using trip rates as described above, the trip impact is as follows:

Comparison of Estimated Trip Generation, SE-4757								
Zoning or Use	Units or Square Feet	(AM) Peak-Hour Trips			(PM) Peak-Hour Trips			Daily Trips
		In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total	
Existing Use								
Gas Station	4 dispensers (8 vehicle positions) 2,200 sq. ft.	50	50	100	62	63	125	1,350
Total New Trips	Total trips x (0.25)	6	7	13	15	16	31	
Proposed Use								
Gas Station	6 dispensers (12 vehicle positions) 3,180 sq. ft.	80	80	160	87	88	175	1,835
Food/Beverage Car Wash	1,344 sq. ft.							
Total New Trips	Total trips x (0.25)	20	20	40	22	22	44	
Difference		14	13	27	7	6	13	485

The trips generated by the proposed uses pose very little change from the approved existing uses. The change does not appear to be sufficient to trigger the need for additional studies of traffic impacts. Outside of special exception cases where studies are required, traffic studies have rarely been deemed necessary, and then only for uses generating over 50 new trips. The critical intersection for this site is the intersection of Greenbelt Road (MD 193) and Aerospace Road. Recent traffic counts indicate that the intersection operates adequately. There are no apparent safety issues that would result from the expansion of the uses. It is important to remember that adequacy of transportation facilities is not an issue in the review of this use; review is strictly within the required findings of health, safety, and welfare.

The site is adjacent to MD 193. This roadway is listed in the Glenn Dale–Seabook-Lanham and Vicinity Sector Plan and SMA as an arterial roadway with 120 to 200 feet of right-of-way.

The proposed gas station complies with Section 27-358 of the Zoning Ordinance. It has

direct access to a street with adequate right-of-way, the two-way driveway on Aerospace Road is more than 30 feet wide, the driveways are curbed, a sidewalk of five feet is provided, and the gasoline pumps are more than 25 feet behind the street line.

Access and Circulation

The existing gas station has four access/egress driveways. The proposed gas station will have one two-way driveway on Aerospace Road and two one-way driveways on MD 193. The proposed car wash is located behind the food and beverage store with 295 feet of queuing space. This should prevent any vehicles from queuing onto MD 193). It is deemed that access for the proposed uses on the site is acceptable in consideration of the scope of the facility and the traffic to be generated.

2. **Urban Design**—The architecture for the proposed food and beverage store utilizes a red/brown-colored exterior insulation finishing system (EIFS) product as its primary architectural material, though brick is used on the front (south) and the right-side elevations. EIFS is not a favored material in Prince George’s County due to its lack of durability. It is easily punctured and should not be used within easy reach of pedestrians on any building. The front façade includes a red painted canopy in its center topping a large area of storefront glass, in which the two front entry doors are set. A tower feature, located on the southwestern corner of the building and visible from both the front and right side elevations, includes the applicant’s corporate logo signage on both sides. The tower, clad in white metal panels, scored by rectilinear grey mullion-type detailing, and topped by an angled cornice, provides a measure of visual relief from the monotonous EIFS walls and otherwise flat roof of this structure. The entire watertable is clad in red split-face block which provides a measure of additional texture. Except those noted above, architectural detail is absent from the structure. Downspouts, which are not architectural features, are evident on the rear façade and light fixtures are provided on the sides and front of the building.

The architecture of the car wash is similar in color and design to the food and beverage store, though brick is utilized as the primary material on all the façades. A split or ground face block is similarly provided on the water table, though it is highlighted by a different color and textural band on the car wash. The car wash is rectilinear and flat-roofed, employing the same color brick on the elevations as on the food and beverage store, and accented by a complementary red color on the watertable and the entry doors. The vinyl bay doors are a contrasting blue that complements a royal and light blue banner, with what appear to be pictured soap bubbles on it, that runs around the building just under the roofline. The banner includes signage on the front (west) elevation stating “Splash in Eco Car Wash” and “Enter” and “Exit” over the appropriate windowed bay doors that provide ingress and egress to the car wash. Other signage is noted on the left side (north elevation). Utilitarian access doors are provided on the front (west) elevation and the left side (north) elevation. A single band of un-mullioned windows are included above the water table of the elevation. Details have been included for the signage.

The Planning Board finds that site design and signage are generally acceptable. With respect to architecture, the Planning Board would suggest additional architectural detail and ornamentation such as faux windows or other vertical elements to break up the horizontal massing and enhance the design of the structure due to the site's visibility from the various roadways. The specific recommendations for the upgrades to the proposed architecture are noted as conditions.

3. **Subdivision**—Pursuant to Section 24-111(c)(2) of the Subdivision Regulations, a site is exempt from the requirement of filing a preliminary plan of subdivision if the total development proposed for the final plat does not exceed 5,000 square feet of gross floor area. As previously discussed, the special exception indicates that the proposed construction will not exceed 5,000 square feet of gross floor area, which meets the requirements of the exemption. The development of more than 5,000 square feet on the subject site will require a preliminary plan and a new final plat. Failure of the site plan and record plat to match (including bearings, distances, and lot sizes) will result in permits being placed on hold until the plans are corrected.

CONCLUSION

The applicant has met its burden of proof in this instance.

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.

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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, and Bailey voting in favor of the motion, and with Commissioners Hewlett and Shoaff absent at its regular meeting held on Thursday, May 7, 2015, in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

Adopted by the Prince George's County Planning Board this 4th day of June 2015.

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