

SUBJECT: Detailed Site Plan for Magnolia Gardens Nursing Home

BACKGROUND: There is an existing 114-bed nursing home facility located on Doctors Hospital's campus, outside of the City of Greenbelt. The existing nursing home facility was built in 1970 and because of its age, design and condition; it is in nonconformance with current building standards and codes or the American with Disability Act. As stated by the Applicant, "while properly encapsulated, the presence of undesirable building materials such as asbestos and lead paint prohibit even the most minor renovations." In addition, the existing facility does not meet the space needs of a state of the art nursing home facility.

The Applicant, Magnolia Gardens Real Estate, LLC, which represents a partnership between Doctors Hospital and Genesis Healthcare, is proposing to replace the aged facility, with a new 76,660-square-foot, one-story nursing home facility on property adjacent to the Doctors Hospital campus. The facility is designed to accommodate a maximum of 130 beds, but initially it will have 114 beds.

ANALYSIS: Although the Board did not have quorum, it felt that it was important to review and comment on the subject detailed site plan. The proposed facility will replace an aged, nonconforming structure. The new facility utilizes environmental site design including permeable pavement in the parking lots, bio-swales, rain gardens and an underground rainwater harvesting system. The Applicant has indicated it will use green building techniques during construction of the new facility.

The one component of the proposed project the Board has a concern with is the pedestrian circulation system. As proposed, pedestrian access to the facility is via a new sidewalk connecting to an existing sidewalk on Mallery Drive and extending along the eastern perimeter of the site. However, the main entrance to the facility is on the western side of the building. This provides an indirect route, and leads pedestrians towards the rear of the facility resulting in safety concerns as well. To provide direct pedestrian access, a sidewalk should be provided from Mallery Drive, along the access road to the west leading to the main building entrance. The Board understands that the Applicant has explored this connection, but an easement with the abutting residential property and the site's topography pose challenges. However, the Board feels this is a critical pedestrian connection that must be evaluated further. This is especially important because pedestrians will likely take the most direct route, and if no sidewalk is present, will be forced to walk in the roadway of the access drive.

The Board also has a concern with the lack of a pedestrian connection serving the neighboring residential development to the east. There is a logical connection that should be made from the terminus of Nightingale Drive to the proposed sidewalk along the access drive to the east. The Board understands that there may be some resistance from the residential community, but feels that the Applicant needs to explore the connection further.

RECOMMENDATION: The Board recommends City Council support the Detailed Site Plan for Magnolia Gardens Nursing Home with the following Condition:

1. The applicant agrees to re-evaluate the pedestrian circulation system with the goal of providing a sidewalk from Mallery Drive, along the access road to the west and extending to the main entrance of the facility, and to provide a pedestrian connection from Nightingale Drive to connect to the proposed sidewalk along the east side of the facility to serve the neighboring residential community.

Respectfully submitted,

George Branyan
Chair

There was no quorum, but the three members present concurred with the above recommendation.

