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Planning Commission Staff Report

Project Type:	Site Development Section Plan
Meeting Date:	April 28, 2014
From:	Purvi Patel Project Planner
Location:	North of Chesterfield Parkway East, south of Interstate 64/US Highway 40 (SE Quadrant)
Applicant:	Stock and Associates Consulting Engineers, Inc., on behalf of Mercy Health Systems
Description:	<u>Mercy Health Systems (Virtual Care Center):</u> A Site Development Section Plan, Landscape Plan, Tree Preservation Plan, Lighting Plan, Architectural Elevations, Architect's Statement of Design, and Parking Demand Study for a 43.35 acre tract of land zoned "UC" Urban Core District located north of Chesterfield Parkway East, south of Interstate 64/US Highway 40 (SE Quadrant).

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Stock and Associates Consulting Engineers, Inc., on behalf of Mercy Health Systems, has submitted a Site Development Section Plan, Landscape Plan, Tree Preservation Plan, Lighting Plan, Architectural Elevations, Architect's Statement of Design, and Parking Demand Study for review. The request is for a four story, 124,000 square foot Virtual Care Center located in the southeast quadrant of Chesterfield Village, east of Elbridge Payne Road. The subject site is zoned "UC" Urban Core District and is governed under the terms and conditions of City of Chesterfield Ordinance Number 2749. The exterior building materials will be comprised of glass (high performance glazing), precast concrete, stone, brick, wood, steel and copper. The proposed building elevations, which include floor to ceiling glass, are articulated by setbacks, projections, balconies and a roof-top terrace.

LAND USE AND ZONING HISTORY OF SUBJECT SITE

There have been several smaller planned developments over the years for this 43.35 acre tract of land; however, none of the plans reached the construction phase and the site remains undeveloped. In 2012, 40.04 acres of this development was zoned "UC" Urban Core District via Ordinance Number 2721. After the zoning was approved, a Site Development Concept Plan was approved by the Planning Commission.

A short time later, Mercy Health Systems acquired additional property, bringing the site to its current 43.35 acres and a new planned district ordinance (Ordinance 2749) was approved on June 17, 2013 by the City of Chesterfield which now governs the entire development.

A grading permit has been issued to the developer based on the currently approved Site Development Concept Plan from 2012, for initial grading on the site which does include tree removal. If the Amended Site Development Concept Plan and this Site Development Section Plan are approved, a new grading permit will be issued for the site to reflect the changes for additional grading area for the surface parking lot and to update areas of tree preservation.

Land Use and Zoning of Surrounding Properties:

The land use and zoning for the properties surrounding this parcel are as follows:

North: Interstate 64 borders the subject site to the north.

South: The property to the south of the subject site is currently zoned "R-5" Residence District with a PEU (Brandywine).

East: The property to the east of the subject site is currently zoned "R6A" Residence District with a PEU (Schoettler Village Apartments).

West: The property to the west of the subject site is currently zoned "C-8" Planned Commercial District (Elbridge Payne Office Park).



Figure 1: Subject Site Aerial

STAFF ANALYSIS

Zoning

The subject site is zoned "UC" Urban Core District under the terms and conditions of City of Chesterfield Ordinance 2749. The submittal was reviewed against and adheres to the requirements of this ordinance and all applicable City Code requirements.

Furthermore, the proposal for the development of the Virtual Care Center, also known as Phase 1A of the Mercy development, substantially complies with the approved Preliminary Development Plan on file (see Figure 2 below).

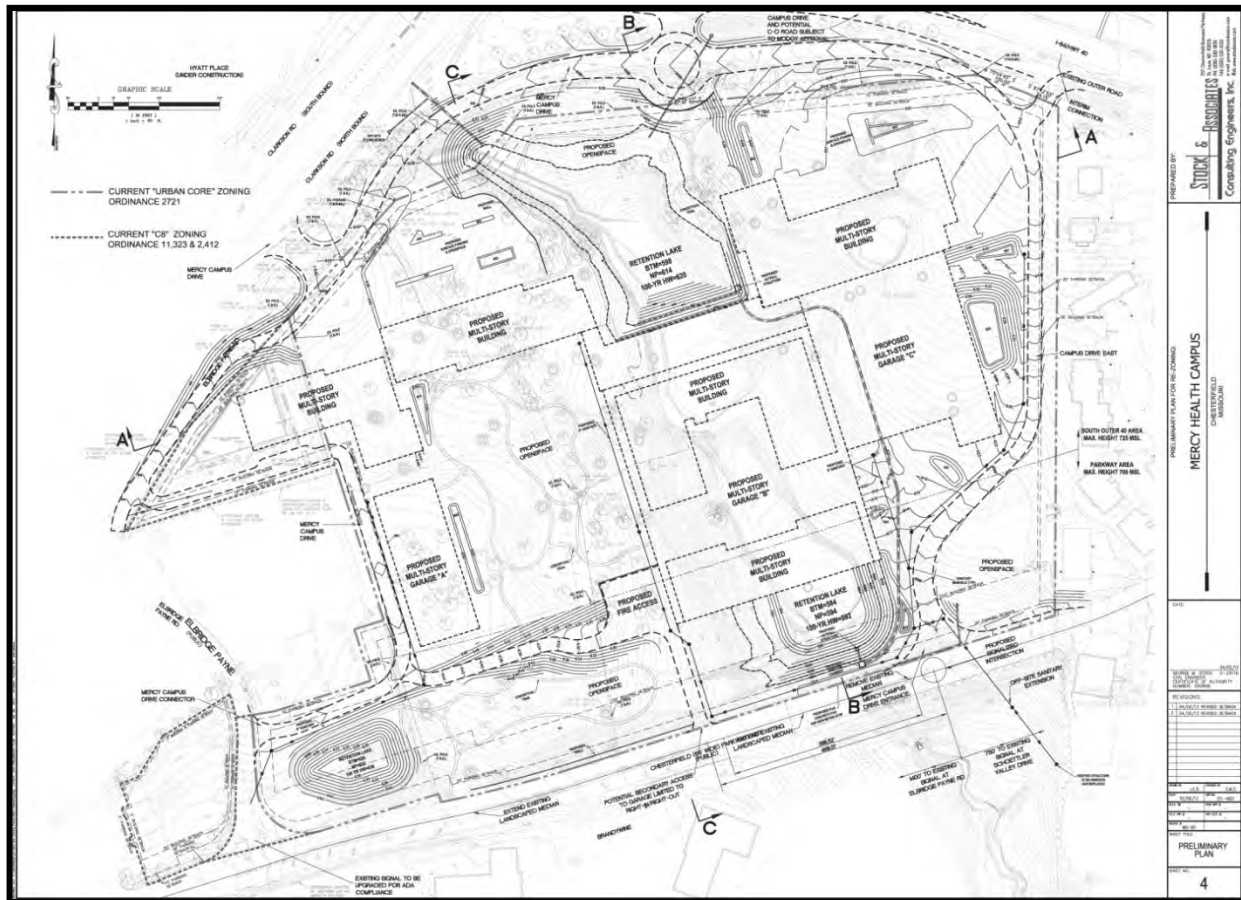


Figure 2: Preliminary Development Plan

Traffic/Road Improvements

As discussed on Pages 5 and 6 of Staff's Amended Site Development Concept Plan report, there will be road improvements associated with the overall Mercy Health Systems Development and the applicant is continuously working with all the involved agencies on the timing of the improvements with each phase of the development. Due to the limited size of the Virtual Care Center, the staffing hours for employees, daily activity on the site and other factors, it has been determined by the various agencies including MoDOT and St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic, that construction of the required road improvements is not required to begin with this first phase of development because the existing roadway network can accommodate the additional traffic that will be generated with this first phase.

Access and Circulation

There are two (2) access points to the Mercy development currently (shown in blue on Figure 3): an entrance off Clarkson Road and a second entrance from Chesterfield Parkway East/Elbridge Payne Road. Once the Mercy site is accessed via one of these two (2) entrances, there are two (2) internal access points leading directly into the smaller Virtual Care Center site within the overall Mercy site. These access points are shown in red in Figure 3 below.

A landscaped drop-off area is proposed off of the easternmost entrance to the site in order to provide a clear arrival point for visitors to the building. The employee and service entrance is located near the northwestern portion of the site off of Elbridge Payne Road.

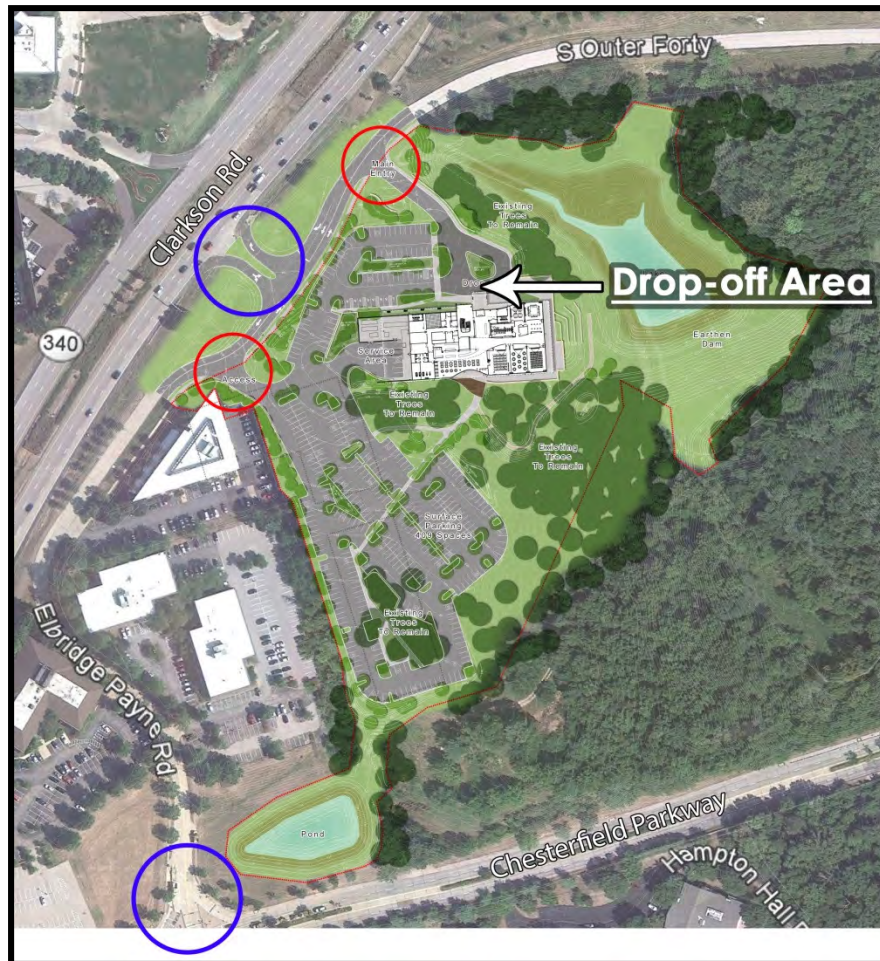


Figure 3: Entrances to Site and Drop-off Area

The proposal includes extending the existing sidewalk on Elbridge Payne Road all along the frontage of the site. This sidewalk will ultimately be tied into future sidewalks along the proposed ring road around the development. Additional sidewalks within the development will provide direct access from the parking areas to both the north and south entrances into the building. Furthermore, the beginnings of the future campus-wide accessible path system will be installed.

Retaining Walls

The proposal includes a terraced retaining wall along the southern and eastern elevations to reduce the fill extents at the existing tree line as the building is designed to allow users "to be in the tree canopy and elevated within the preserved woodlands to the northeast, southwest and southern elevations".¹ The varying height terrace walls will include an architectural concrete finish and aluminum frame cable guardrail where necessary. There is an additional stone masonry wall proposed on the first floor to ground the building, as well as serve as the screening for the mechanical units and service areas on the western end of the building.

Furthermore, modular walls are proposed in the parking lot as well as site perimeters to preserve wooded areas by reducing grading and limits of disturbance. The applicant chose modular walls for these areas due to their flexibility of alignment and design aesthetic.

Open Space

The planned district ordinance for the Mercy development requires a minimum of 30% open space for the entire development. The Section Plan for the Virtual Care Center depicts 86.9% open space. This number will decrease as each phase is developed as the impervious area on the 43 acre site will increase with the addition of buildings and parking areas. However, the developer is aware that the ultimate build out must result in a minimum of 30% open space of the total site as required in the planned district ordinance for the site.

The proposal includes a lake just east of the building and an additional lake in the southern corner of the site. Both of these lakes will serve as retention lakes for the development. Additionally, there are several small bio-detention areas proposed in the parking field and the northern portion of the site.

Landscaping

The proposed building location takes advantage of the existing woodlands on the site, most of which will be preserved in this phase of the development. Furthermore, the entrance plaza is not only designed to take advantage of the existing woodlands, but with additional plantings it is designed to soften the primary arrival point for visitors to the site. Supplementary landscaping is proposed in various locations, such as the parking fields and bio-retention areas, to enhance the overall experience of the site and to create separation from the building where necessary.

Tree Preservation

Ordinance 2749 requires the development to adhere to the City of Chesterfield's Landscape and Tree Preservation Requirements and additionally states "Where natural buffers exist, every effort shall be made to reduce disturbance and maintain the existing buffer..." The City of Chesterfield Code requirements states a minimum of 30% of the wooded area must be retained. To ensure this minimum requirement will be achieved for the entire development, the submitted Tree Preservation Plan reflects total protected area for the entire development, which is 30.1%. The section details will evolve with each phase and a new Tree Preservation Plan will be submitted reflecting this. The total protected area for the Virtual Care Center alone is 16.77 acres (71.7%) of the total 23.39 acres of wooded canopy.

Figure 4 on the next page shows a colored site plan for the Virtual Care Center. The total tree protection, landscaping and lakes can clearly be seen in the image.

¹ Mercy Virtual Care Center (VCC) Architectural Design Statement, 2014.



Figure 4: Colored Site Plan

Lighting

Site lighting is proposed for walkways and parking fields to assure security and safe travel while on the site and not create light pollution. The applicant is proposing light column bollards along the walkways and LED area lights for the parking fields. Additional can building lighting is proposed to accentuate building features such as the vertical atrium, cantilevers, and terraces.

Architectural Elevations

The applicant is proposing a four story building of approximately seventy (70) feet in height. The proposed height is harmonious with the wide ranging building heights in the surrounding area. The proposal includes human scaled spaces at all levels of the building, as noted in the Architect's Statement of Design. Additionally, the building elevations, which include floor to ceiling glass, are articulated by setbacks, projections, balconies and a roof-top terrace. Balconies on the second and third floors provide a direct connection between the exterior and interior spaces and the roof-top terrace on the fourth floor includes a roof overhang with an integrated trellis covering.

The building is designed to link the interior and exterior spaces through the use of materials and formal elements. The proposal includes facades with strong horizontal lines and floor-to-ceiling glass to optimize the day lighting and engage the natural setting. Undulations in the glass wall create entries at the ground level and balconies on the floors above. And as discussed above, the top floor includes a roof-top terrace created by shifting the enclosure from the building edge. Stone walls are proposed on the first floor to ground the building while columns lift the upper floors to float above the site; furthermore, a protected pedestrian experience is provided by adding recesses at this level to create cantilevers. The building is centered by the glazed, vertical atrium on the north elevation, which marks both the main entrance and a vertical connection to the four story building.

As mentioned earlier, the building materials will be primarily comprised of glass (high performance glazing), precast concrete, stone, brick, wood, steel, and copper. These materials are proposed to provide a highly sustainable project while still providing expansive views, natural light exposure and integrating materials consistent with the natural woodlands setting. The applicant is proposing sandstone textured precast panels in two warm tones for the floor slabs which not only create the horizontal element in the design but also serve to shade the glass (especially on the South elevation). The design also includes vertical precast panels on the West elevation to increase shading and enliven the facade. At the lower level, stone masonry walls ground the building with brick pillars and columns in similar colors to provide additional texture and definition. The proposed vertical glass atrium will be enhanced with wood cladding on the inner surface and copper panels on the exterior face. Additionally, the deck surface of the balconies and fourth floor terrace will be comprised of wood. The roof overhang on the terrace will be covered by painted steel trellis framed in precast panels.

The project was reviewed by the Architectural Review Board (ARB) on February 13th, 2014. A motion to forward the project to the Planning Commission as presented by Staff was approved by the ARB by a vote of 5-0.

Parking Demand Study

The planned district ordinance for this development requires a Parking Demand Study be submitted during the Site Development review process to determine the appropriate amount of parking to be constructed on the site. This requirement was added to the planned district ordinance during the initial zoning request in 2012 based on Staff's recommendation due to the uniqueness of the uses and activity on this site. Ordinance Number 2749 states the following:

A Parking Demand Study shall be submitted during the site development plan process in accordance with Section 1003.165 of the City of Chesterfield Zoning Ordinance. This study will be reviewed as part of the site development plan submittal and approved by Planning Commission.

Based on this requirement, the applicant has submitted a Parking Demand Study for review and approval for Phase 1A of the development.

The Virtual Care Center is a 123,466 square foot building which will be providing care "virtually" via the internet. There will be no patients visiting the facility and the building is designed to accommodate approximately 400 caregivers. Approximately 200 employees will be associated with 24 hours a day 7 days per week operations and will be on 8, 10 or 12 hour shifts. The remainder of the staff will work conventional 8 hour shifts. The Parking Analysis provided shows approximately 405 employees on site during the busiest times of the day, 8am to 4pm.

As stated in the applicant's Parking Demand Study narrative, the proposed development is a pioneer in the medical field; therefore, it is not studied in parking industry standards. Furthermore, the use is not found in the City of Chesterfield's Off-street Parking, Stacking, and Loading Space requirements. Based on the description of the operations and function of the Virtual Care Center, the closest use found in the City of Chesterfield's Code is the General Office use, especially since there will be no patients visiting the facility.

As discussed above, the Parking Analysis provided for the Virtual Care Center shows a maximum of 405 employees on site at any given time. **Based on the parking needs for the facility, the applicant is proposing 409 spaces for the current Site Development Section Plan.** The parking rate the applicant is requesting is 3.313 spaces per 1000 square feet, which is 0.2 spaces less than the General Office parking

rate per City Code. The minimum required parking for the General Office use is, 3.5 spaces per 1000 square feet and the maximum allowed under this use is 4.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet. Based on the total building area the minimum required parking is 432 spaces and the maximum allowed is 555 spaces.

The second request is for a reduction in the required number of loading spaces. The City of Chesterfield's Off-street Parking, Stacking, and Loading Space requirement for a building of this size is three (3) loading spaces; two (2) spaces 10' x 25' and one (1) space 10' x 40'. The applicant is asking for a reduction to one (1) loading space of 10' x 60'. Based on the building's tenant and use, they do not expect a large volume of truck traffic to the site. As noted in the Parking Demand Study narrative, the building is expected two (2) to four (4) deliveries a month and the majority of the deliveries to the building will be via smaller box trucks which will be using the main entrance to the building and not the loading space.

Staff has reviewed the request and recommends approval of the Parking Demand Study as submitted. This recommendation is based on research done by Staff of similar facilities and the review of the request against City of Chesterfield Code, national standards and the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) standards.

DEPARTMENT INPUT

Staff has reviewed the Site Development Section Plan, Landscape Plan, Tree Preservation Plan, Lighting Plan, Architectural Elevations, Architect's Statement of Design, and Parking Demand Study and has found the proposal to be in compliance with the site specific ordinance and all City Code requirements. Staff recommends approval of the proposed development of Mercy Health Systems (Virtual Care Center).

MOTION

The following options are provided to the Planning Commission for consideration relative to this application:

- 1) "I move to approve (or deny) the Site Development Section Plan, Landscape Plan, Tree Preservation Plan, Lighting Plan, Architectural Elevations, Architect's Statement of Design, and Parking Demand Study for Mercy Health Systems (Virtual Care Center).
- 2) "I move to approve the Site Development Section Plan, Landscape Plan, Tree Preservation Plan, Lighting Plan, Architectural Elevations, Architect's Statement of Design, and Parking Demand Study for Mercy Health Systems (Virtual Care Center), with the following conditions..." (Conditions may be added, eliminated, altered or modified)

CC: Aimee Nassif, Planning and Development Services Director

Attachments: Site Development Section Plan
Landscape Plan
Tree Preservation Plan
Lighting Plan
Lighting Cut-sheets
Architect's Statement of Design
Architectural Elevations
Parking Demand Study