

**FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION
OFFICE OF PLANNING AND ZONING
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND**


APPLICANT: BL Quarterfield Associates, LLC

ASSESSMENT DISTRICT: 4

CASE NUMBER: 2023-0133-V

COUNCILMANIC DISTRICT: 2

HEARING DATE: September 19, 2023

PREPARED BY: Joan A. Jenkins 
Planner II

REQUEST

The applicant is requesting a variance to allow a greater number of signs than allowed, signs with greater area than allowed, and a sign that projects above the roof of a structure in a business complex on property located at 424 George Clauss Boulevard in Severn.

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The subject site consists of 11.31 acres of land and is located with approximately 765 feet of frontage on the west side of George Clauss Boulevard. It is identified as part of Lot 11 on Parcel 560 in Block 4 on Tax Map 15 in the Quarterfield Crossing subdivision.

The property is currently zoned primarily C3 – General Commercial District with the western side of the lot zoned W1 - Industrial Park District as adopted by the comprehensive zoning for Councilmanic District 2, effective January 29, 2012. The site is a stand-alone tenant space in the Quarterfield Crossing shopping center and is currently a Sam’s Club warehouse store.

APPLICANT’S PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes the following:

- “Sam’s Club” identification sign on the 45 degree angled customer entrance facade. The white lettered area will be 94 square feet, the wall painted area will be 798 square feet in blue.
- “Welcome” sign 9.27 square feet, front facade over the right side door
- “Exit” sign 2.59 square feet, front facade over the left side door
- “Loading zone” identification sign 6.86 square feet, 96 square feet of blue painted area (on the angled canopy drive-thru area next to the front entrance)
- “Tire Installation” identification sign 6.40 square feet, no blue paint (west side over a garage door)
- “Sam’s Club” identification sign 64 square feet of white lettering, 319 square feet of blue painted area (south side)

- “Pharmacy” identification sign on the south elevation¹ 8.94 square feet, no blue paint
- “Sam’s Club” identification sign on the east side 64 square feet of white lettering, 319 square feet of blue painted area (south side)

REQUESTED VARIANCES

§ 18-3-308(b)(2) of the Anne Arundel County Zoning Ordinance sets forth the requirements for signs in business complexes. The ordinance allows a business complex to have identification signs for the name of a tenant on not more than two facades in a one or two story structure, so long as the area of the signs does not exceed, for each tenant facade, the lesser of 10% of the area of the facade or 200 square feet. The applicant has proposed signs with the name of the tenant on four facades, requiring a variance to allow signage on two additional facades. The applicant has proposed signs with an area of 319 square feet on the east side, 327.94 square feet on the south side, 807.27 square feet on the front facade main entrance and 96 square feet on the angled canopy, and 6.40 square feet on the west side. Variances are required to allow signs with greater area for the east side (119 square feet), south side (128 square feet), and front facade (608 square feet).

§ 18-3-308(b)(3) of the code allows one identification sign at each service entry, so long as the area of each sign does not exceed four square feet. The “Tire installation” sign on the west side will be 6.4 square feet requiring a variance of 3 square feet. The “Welcome” sign on the front facade will be 6.68 square feet requiring a variance of 3 feet.

§ 18-3-308(b)(5) of the Code allows one identification sign for each secondary business in a structure that contains one principal use so long as the area of all identification signs on the structure does not exceed 400 square feet. The “Pharmacy” has been determined to be a secondary business. The total signage is 1,560.19 square feet requiring a variance of 1,160.19 square feet to the 400 square foot maximum.

§ 18-3-303(b)(4) of the Code prohibits a sign that projects above the roof of a structure, a sign painted on the roof of a structure, and a sign supported by poles, uprights, or braces extending from or attached to the roof of a structure. The blue painted area on the entrance facade is 798 square feet and projects above the roof structure. A variance is required to allow signage above the roof structure.

FINDINGS

This Office finds that this property contains a retail warehouse store that according to State Department of Assessments and Taxation records was built in 2008. The property is accessed from George Clauss Boulevard off MD 174 (Quarterfield Road). The applicant is rebranding with new signage.

This Office notes that per Section 18-3-304 of the Code sign area is measured as the smallest rectangular area enclosing all elements of the sign, including the extreme limits of the writing,

¹ The applicant’s letter says that the Pharmacy sign is on the front elevation. It appears to be on the south side, however, since the front elevation is at an angle..

representation, emblem, logo, or other display, any material or color forming an integral part of the background of the display, and all ornamental attachments and inner connecting links.

The applicant explains that Sam's Club corporate requires the blue color paint background as part of their corporate image worldwide, and requires consistency in the corporate brand image. They note that without this variance approval Sam's Club at 424 George Clauss Blvd would not meet the corporate compliance requirement. The letter also notes that Lowes Home Improvement and Walmart in the same shopping centers have similar painting and signage square foot overage allowances in place.

The **Health Department** commented that the referenced property is served by public water and sewer facilities. The Department has no objection to the request.

Approval of the variances would not substantially impair the appropriate use or development of adjacent property, be detrimental to the public welfare, nor would it alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

However, for the granting of a zoning variance, a determination must be made as to whether because of certain unique physical conditions peculiar to or inherent in the particular lot or because of exceptional circumstances other than financial, strict implementation of the Code would result in an unwarranted hardship or practical difficulties. The need sufficient to justify a variance must be substantial and urgent and not merely for the convenience of the applicant.

The subject property is not unique compared with other properties in business complexes, and the restrictions of the Code do not have a disproportionate effect on the subject property relative to other business complex properties throughout the County. The site is a destination shopping location that is a members only club and has been a thriving business since 2008 in this location with signage that consists of only the lettering and no blue painted background. The Quarterfield Crossing shopping center has a freestanding sign at the corner of Quarterfield Road and George Clauss Boulevard with the Sam's Club business listed. A variance was not found for any of the current signage. The desire of a corporate entity to have signage larger than allowed to conform to corporate requirements is not justification for a hardship. The applicant has not demonstrated hardship.

Finally, this Office notes that the Code generously allows identification signs to assist customers. While a variance would be required for more than two facades due to the configuration of the building and the location of the entrance relative to the roadway entrance, as proposed with the blue background the remaining variances are not deemed to be warranted and cannot be considered the minimum necessary to afford relief.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the standards set forth in § 18-16-305 of the Anne Arundel County Code under which a variance may be granted, this Office recommends ***denial*** of the proposed variance requests.

2023-0133-V

DISCLAIMER: This recommendation does not constitute a building permit. In order for the applicant(s) to construct the structure(s) as proposed, the applicant(s) shall apply for and obtain the necessary building permits and obtain any other approvals required to perform the work described herein. This includes but is not limited to verifying the legal status of the lot, resolving adequacy of public facilities, and demonstrating compliance with environmental site design criteria.

SIGNAGE GENERAL NOTES

1. SIGNAGE SHALL BE FABRICATED AND INSTALLED BY AN APPROPRIATELY LICENSED SIGN CONTRACTOR.
2. SIGNAGE SHALL BE INSTALLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SIGNAGE SCHEDULE AND THE SIGNAGE ATTACHMENT NOTES.
3. SIGNAGE SHALL BE INSTALLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SIGNAGE ATTACHMENT NOTES.
4. SIGNAGE SHALL BE INSTALLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SIGNAGE ATTACHMENT NOTES.
5. SIGNAGE SHALL BE INSTALLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SIGNAGE ATTACHMENT NOTES.

NEW SIGNAGE SCHEDULE

SIGNAGE LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	LENGTH	WIDTH	COLOR	MATERIAL	HEIGHT	INSTALLATION
1. MAIN BUILDING	MAIN BUILDING SIGNAGE	16'-0"	16'-0"	WHITE	ALUMINUM	7'-0"	ON-ROOF
2. MAIN BUILDING	MAIN BUILDING SIGNAGE	16'-0"	16'-0"	WHITE	ALUMINUM	7'-0"	ON-ROOF
3. MAIN BUILDING	MAIN BUILDING SIGNAGE	16'-0"	16'-0"	WHITE	ALUMINUM	7'-0"	ON-ROOF
4. MAIN BUILDING	MAIN BUILDING SIGNAGE	16'-0"	16'-0"	WHITE	ALUMINUM	7'-0"	ON-ROOF
5. MAIN BUILDING	MAIN BUILDING SIGNAGE	16'-0"	16'-0"	WHITE	ALUMINUM	7'-0"	ON-ROOF

EXISTING SIGNAGE SCHEDULE

SIGNAGE LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	LENGTH	WIDTH	COLOR	MATERIAL	HEIGHT	INSTALLATION
1. MAIN BUILDING	EXISTING MAIN BUILDING SIGNAGE	16'-0"	16'-0"	WHITE	ALUMINUM	7'-0"	ON-ROOF
2. MAIN BUILDING	EXISTING MAIN BUILDING SIGNAGE	16'-0"	16'-0"	WHITE	ALUMINUM	7'-0"	ON-ROOF
3. MAIN BUILDING	EXISTING MAIN BUILDING SIGNAGE	16'-0"	16'-0"	WHITE	ALUMINUM	7'-0"	ON-ROOF

4. BUILDING ADDRESS SIGN



7. SECONDARY SAM'S CLUB SIGN



2. PHARMACY



6. TIRE INSTALLATION



5. LOADING AREA



1. SAM'S CLUB SIGN



13. PYLON SIGN



10. SIGN ATTACHMENT EIFS ON METAL STUD



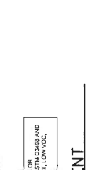
9. SIGN ATTACHMENT @ EXISTING CMU



8. SAM'S FUEL CANOPY SIGN



11. CANOPY SIGN ATTACHMENT



12. SIGN ATTACHMENT



14. SIGNAGE ATTACHMENT



REBRAND
SEVERNA, MD
CLUB #4771

CONTRACT NUMBER: 99961118
DATE: 11/11/22

DESIGNER: BTR
PROJECT: SEVERNA CLUB REBRAND
DATE: 04-19-22

NO. OF SHEETS: 24

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COMMENTS

1. SIGNAGE SHALL BE FABRICATED AND INSTALLED BY AN APPROPRIATELY LICENSED SIGN CONTRACTOR.

Sam's Club

ARCHITECT

CLUB #4771

DATE: 04-19-22

SIGNAGE DETAILS

SHEET: A2.1



Maryland



Google Maps







Maryland

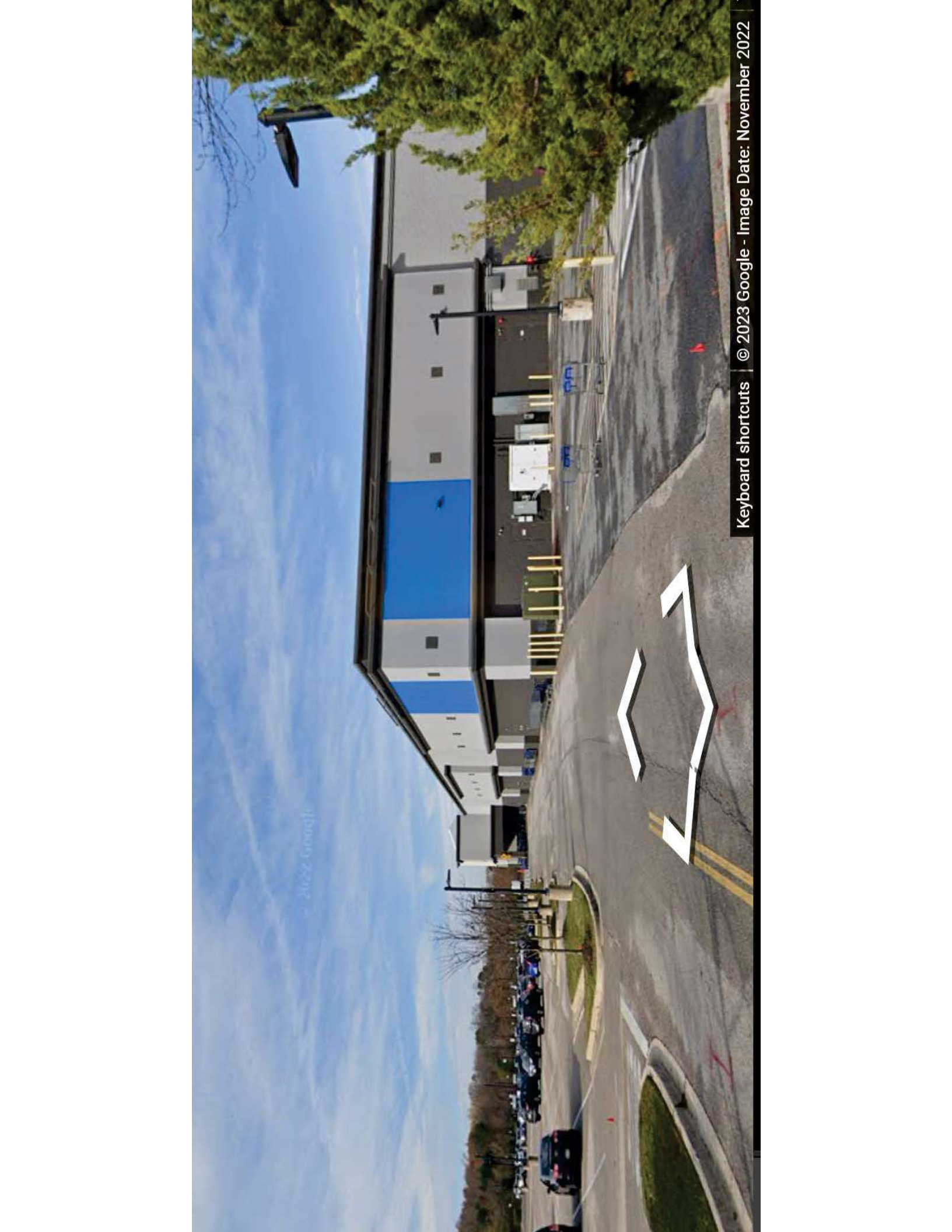
Google Maps



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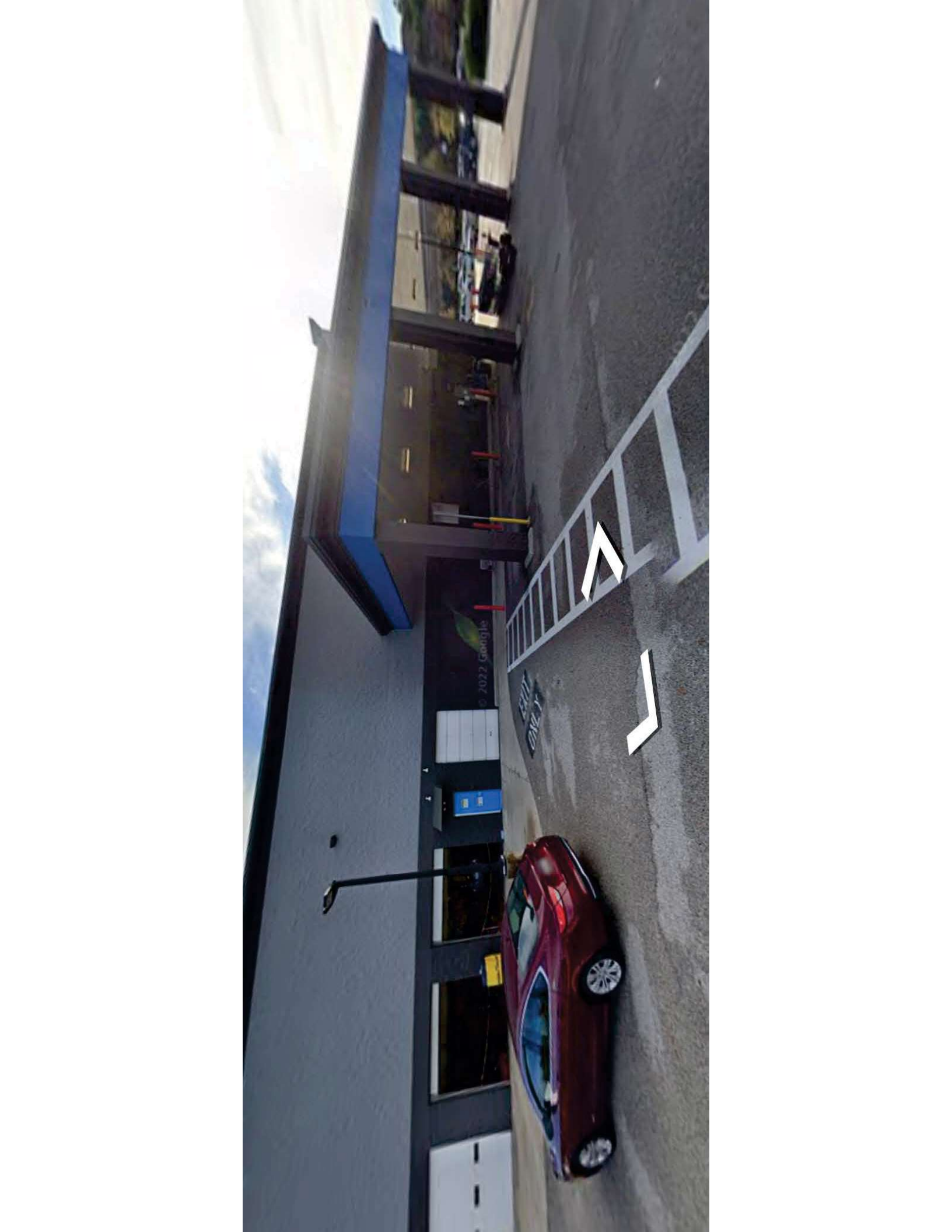
Keyboard shortcuts

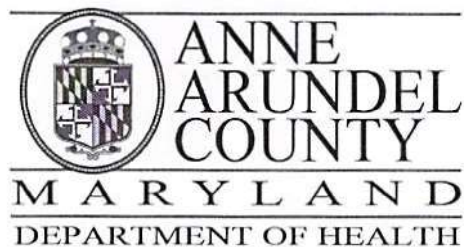
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J. Howard Beard Health Services Building
3 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Phone: 410-222-7095 Fax: 410-222-7294
Maryland Relay (TTY): 711
www.aahealth.org

Tonii Gedin, RN, DNP
Health Officer

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sadé Medina, Zoning Applications
Planning and Zoning Department, MS-6301

FROM: Brian Chew, Program Manager *BC*
Bureau of Environmental Health

DATE: August 23, 2023

RE: Capital Site Lighting, LLC.
424 George Claus Blvd.
Severn, MD 21144

NUMBER: 2023-0133-V

SUBJECT: Variance/Special Exception/Rezoning

The Health Department has reviewed the above referenced variance to allow a greater number of signs than allowed, signs with greater area than allowed and a sign that projects above the roof of a structure.

The Health Department has reviewed the above referenced request. The property is served by public water and sewer facilities. The Health Department has no objection to the above referenced request.

If you have further questions or comments, please contact Brian Chew at 410-222-7413.

cc: Sterling Seay



Legend

Foundation

Addressing



Parcels



Parcels - Annapolis City



Planning

County Planning



0 250 500
ft



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