

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

APPLICANT: The Coordinating Center

ASSESSMENT DISTRICT: 3

CASE NUMBER: 2025-0006-V

COUNCILMANIC DISTRICT: 5

HEARING DATE: March 13, 2025

PREPARED BY: Sara Anzelmo
Planner



REQUEST

The applicant is requesting a variance to allow tenant identification signage on a third facade within a business complex on property located at 8531 Veterans Highway in Millersville.

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The subject site consists of 12,471 square feet and is located on the east side of Veterans Highway. It is identified as Unit B of Parcel 306 in Grid 18 on Tax Map 22.

The property is zoned MXD-N – Mixed Use Neighborhood District. The specific subject of this variance application is the second and third story of a multi-tenanted commercial building that is part of the Severna Park Gateway Land Condominium business complex.

PROPOSAL

The applicant seeks approval to remove and replace three existing tenant identification signs located on three separate facades. The proposed signs would measure 5' by 7.5' (37.5 sf).

REQUESTED VARIANCES

§ 18-3-308(b)(2) of the Anne Arundel County Zoning Code provides that a business complex may have identification signs on not more than two facades, so long as the area of the signs does not exceed, for each tenant façade, the lesser of 10% of the area of the façade or 200 square feet. The applicant proposes identification signage on three façades, necessitating a variance of one to the maximum two facades allowed.

FINDINGS

A review of the County 2024 aerial photograph shows that the business complex contains five freestanding commercial buildings. Three of the buildings are only one story high, and a fourth building is primarily one story high with a small partial second story. In contrast, the subject building is three full stories high and contains the following tenant identification signs: “The Coordinating Center” on three facades (north, south, and west) plus a Coordinating Center logo on a fourth angled facade at the southwest corner of the building; “Ledo Pizza” or “Ledo Pizza &

Pasta” on two facades (south and west) plus a Ledo logo on a third angled facade at the southwest corner; “Arundel Pediatric Dental Care” on one facade (south); and “Kick Connection” on one facade (south).

The building at 8539 Veterans Highway has tenant identification signs for “The Goddard School” on two facades (north and south). The building at 8541 Veterans Highway has tenant identification signs for “Libations” on two facades (west and north). The buildings at 8533 Veterans Highway and 8529 Veterans Highway have tenant identification signs for a variety of tenants on not more than two facades of each tenant space. As such, the subject building is the only location within the commercial business complex that contains tenant identification signs that exceed the maximum of two facades allowed.

The applicant’s letter explains that, when they initially purchased the second and third floor of the building, six signs were installed across four locations (not including the signage of the other businesses owned and occupied on the first floor, e.g. Ledo Pizza). The letter indicates that they merely wish to replace their long standing signage with new signs. While not specifically stated, the letter infers that the existing signage was actually permitted. However, a review of all of the approved sign permits associated with the subject property (with the exception of the Ledo Pizza signage) revealed the following:

Permit #B02289527 was issued on October 22, 2012 to install one illuminated channel letter wall mounted sign 48.75 sf to read “Bayside Physical Therapy” and reface one illuminated pylon freestanding sign 8.25 sf (total 57.5 sf).

Permit #B02284714 was issued on April 13, 2012 to install a 16’11” by 3’6” LED channel letter sign and 2’ by 5’6” directory sign to read “Arundel Pediatric Dental Care”.

Permit #B02294057 was issued for The Coordinating Center on June 13, 2013. The permit was described as a “left side logo w/lettering 82.8 sf; right side logo w/lettering 65.2 sf; entrance identification sign 3.5 sf; total 151.43 sf”. The permit description also notes that the permit was revised on May 28, 2013 to remove the center logo. As such, it appears that the tenant identification signs for The Coordinating Center were only approved on two facades. It should also be noted that the permit was never finalized and was eventually cancelled.

There were no other sign permits on file for the subject property until the current sign permit applications were submitted.

The **Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA)** commented that the proposal does not penetrate airspace managed by MAA and noted that the applicant should verify with FAA [Federal Aviation Administration].

The **Fire Marshal’s Office** reviewed the proposal and deferred to the Office of Planning and Zoning and the Department of Inspections and Permits.

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

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

In this particular case, due to its height, the three story subject building enjoys relatively easy visibility along Veterans Highway, as compared to the various inline tenants within the one story buildings in the complex. There is no tenant in any of the other four buildings that has the luxury of identification signs on more than two facades. It should be noted that there is also a freestanding sign at the entrance of the business complex. That sign lists the name of the complex as well as the individual tenants, including The Coordinating Center. In addition, the Code allows for directional signage within a business complex as needed¹ which could also help lead motorists to the general area of the business, if necessary.

The proposed identification signage on three facades would not necessarily alter the essential character of the neighborhood, impair the appropriate use or development of adjacent properties, or be detrimental to the public welfare. However, given that the applicant appears to have constructed the existing signs without County approval, the desire to replace them does not justify the request for a variance. Of the three identification signs proposed, the one that appears to be the least necessary is the sign on the northern facade. That side of the building is barely visible from Veterans Highway due to its location behind another building, the angled position of the building, and the location of heavy trees to the north. The applicant could easily amend their sign permit to comply with the two facade maximum by eliminating the sign on the north facade from the proposal, while still providing good visibility from Veterans Highway with signs on the west and south facades and the freestanding business complex sign already in place.

Based on the above, the proposed variance is not warranted; therefore, it cannot be considered the minimum necessary to afford relief.

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the standards set forth in § 18-16-305 of the Code under which a variance may be granted, this Office recommends *denial* of the proposed variance to § 18-3-308(b)(2) to allow tenant identification signage on a third facade in a business complex.

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.

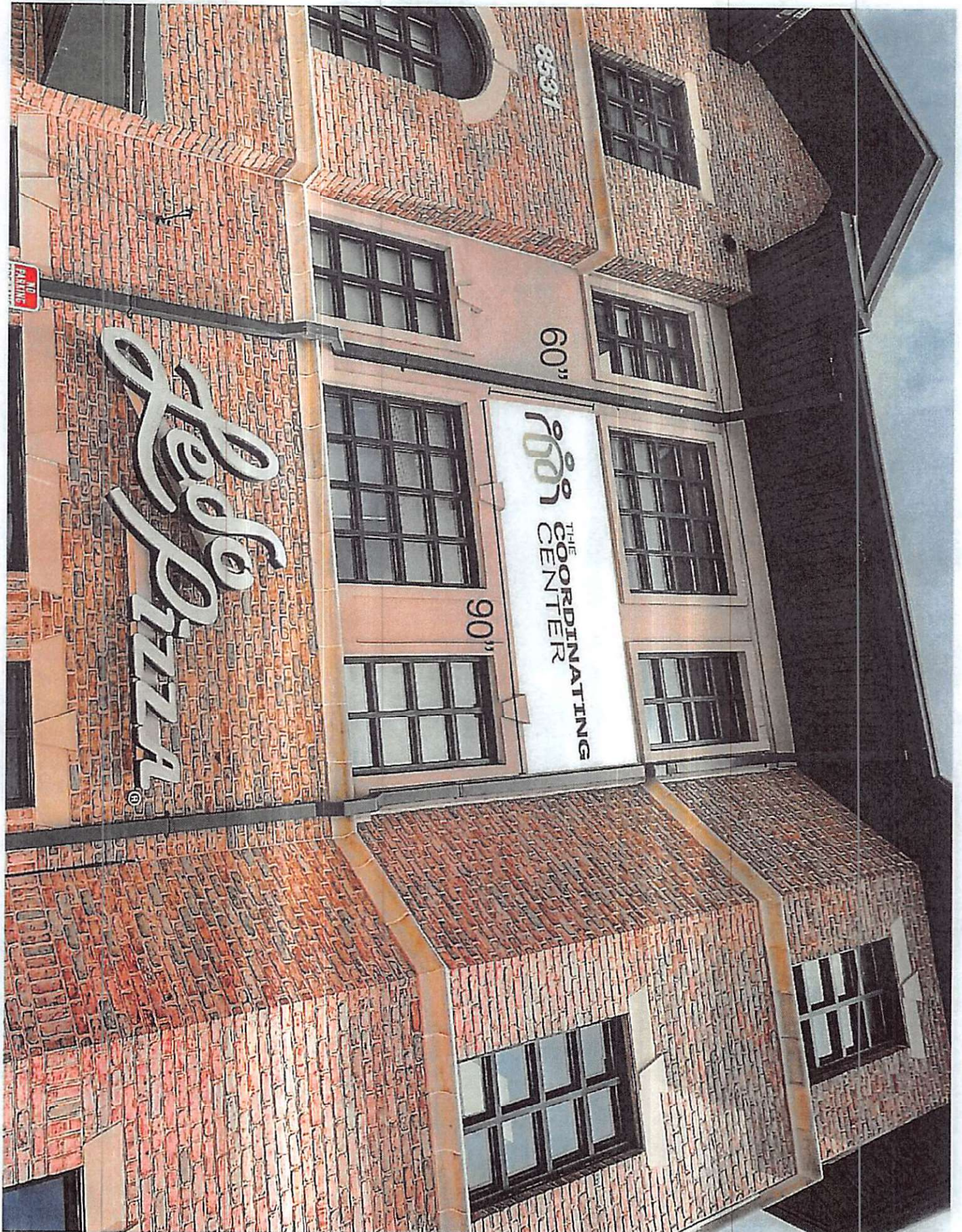
¹ § 18-3-308. Signs for business complexes. (c) Directional signs. A business complex may have directional signs as necessary. Each sign may not exceed six square feet in area or a height of five feet.



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CENTER

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8591

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January 9, 2025

Zoning Administration Division
2664 Riva Road
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Permit request for external building signage

To whom it may concern:

I am writing on behalf of The Coordinating Center, a Maryland statewide nonprofit that supports people living with disabilities and complex medical needs, to formally appeal the current restriction on our building's signage and request approval to install a third sign to replace existing signage on one location of our property.

When we initially purchased the 2nd and 3rd floor of our building (8531 Veterans Highway, Millersville, Maryland 21108), six signs were installed across four locations (not including the signage of the other businesses owned and occupied on the first floor, e.g., Ledo Pizza). These signs were vital for ensuring clear visibility and accessibility for our customers and the community. However, during our recent rebranding process, we encountered a challenge when applying for permits to replace the existing signage. We were informed that the current zoning regulations only allow signage in two locations. We have since received permits to install two signs. However, we have a very visible sign in a third location that needs to be replaced. All three signs are 90x60.

This limitation poses a significant challenge to our ability to maintain the visibility our business requires. The additional sign we are requesting is not for a new location but rather to replace existing signage in one of the original locations. Approving this request will allow us to preserve the visibility and directional clarity that have been a critical part of our operations since the building was first established.

We strongly believe that restoring a third sign will:

1. **Enhance Visibility:** Our building is situated in an area where clear signage is essential to guide customers effectively. The third sign ensures that our business remains visible from multiple vantage points, especially for those unfamiliar with the area.



www.coordinatingcenter.org

8531 Veterans Highway | 3rd Floor | Millersville, MD 21108

Phone: 410-987-1048

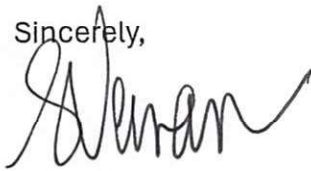
Fax: 410-987-1685

- 2. Maintain Community Accessibility:** For years, our signage has been a reliable point of reference for the community. Reducing our signage to only two locations diminishes our ability to serve the community effectively.

We respectfully ask that you reconsider the current zoning restrictions and grant approval for the installation of a third sign. We are more than willing to work with your office to ensure compliance with all other zoning requirements and to address any concerns you may have about this request.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 240-539-2530 or enewman@CoordinatingCenter.org if you require any additional information or would like to schedule a site visit.

Sincerely,



Erica Newman
Facilities and First Impressions Team Manager
The Coordinating Center

2025-0006-V

Menu Cancel Help

Task MDOT MAA	Due Date 02/06/2025	Assigned Date 01/16/2025
Assigned to Department MDOT MAA	Assigned to Shawn Ames	Status Complete w/ Comments
Action by Department MDOT MAA	Action By Shawn Ames	Status Date 02/05/2025
Start Time	End Time	Hours Spent 0.0

Billable No	Overtime No	Comments Does not penetrate airspace managed by MAA. Applicant should verify with FAA.
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Time Tracking Start Date	Est. Completion Date	In Possession Time (hrs)
Display E-mail Address in ACA <input type="checkbox"/>	Display Comment in ACA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comment Display in ACA

- All ACA Users
- Record Creator
- Licensed Professional
- Contact
- Owner

Estimated Hours 0.0	Action Updated
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Workflow Calendar

Task Specific Information

Expiration Date	Review Notes	Reviewer Name
Reviewer Phone Number	Reviewer Email	




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
Bureau of Environmental Health 

DATE: January 27, 2025

RE: Coordinating Center for Homes and Community Care
8531 Veterans Highway
Millersville, MD 21108

NUMBER: 2025-0006-V

SUBJECT: Variance/Special Exception/Rezoning

The Health Department has reviewed the above referenced variance to allow tenant identification signage on a third façade within a business complex. Requesting permission to place a new 90x60 sign on the building.

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

8527

8529

8531

8533

8539

8541

8537

200 ft

