TITLE: Casabella Commons

FILE NUMBER: SP 06-04, AP# 15003, FRO# 15023

REQUEST: Concept Site Development Plan Approval
The Applicant is requesting Concept Site Development Plan approval for a Village Center mixed use development of three structures to include 8,550 s.f. of office and retail uses and one residential apartment located on a one-acre site.

PROJECT INFORMATION:
ADDRESS/LOCATION: Located on the west side of Urbana Pike adjacent to, and south of, Urbana Elementary School in Urbana
TAX MAP/PARCEL: TM 96; Parcel 98
COMP. PLAN: Village Center
ZONING: Village Center
PLANNING REGION: Urbana
WATER/SEWER: W-4; S-4

APPLICANT/REPRESENTATIVES:
APPLICANT: CasaBella LLC
OWNER: - same -
ENGINEER: N/A
ARCHITECT: N/A
ATTORNEY: N/A

STAFF: Denis Superczynski

RECOMMENDATION: Conditional Approval

ATTACHMENTS:
EXHIBIT 1- Concept Site Plan
EXHIBIT 2- Site Renderings
Development Request

The Applicant is requesting Concept Site Development Plan approval for a mixed use development consisting of three proposed buildings on a 42,501 s.f. parcel. The proposed plan includes:

Current Concept Plan Application:
- Phase 1 - three new structures (building footprints of 1,250 s.f., 4,800 s.f., and 1,250 s.f.) to include 4,900 s.f. of medical offices, 3,650 s.f. of commercial office and retail, and a single 1,250 s.f. one-bedroom apartment.

Future Phases – FOR INFORMATION ONLY
- Phase 2 (Parcel 96) – Redevelopment of 16,901 s.f. parcel; two new structures of approximately 1,500 s.f. footprint each; no use designated
- Phase 3 (Parcel 97) – Adaptive re-use of existing residential structure (approx. 1,500 s.f. footprint); no use designated

The primary uses are being reviewed as an Apparel store under the heading of Commercial Uses-Retail; Office professional and Office business under the heading of Commercial Business and Personal Services per §1-19-5.310 Use Table in the Zoning Ordinance. All proposed uses are principal permitted uses in the VC Zoning District subject to Site Development Plan approval. Further details regarding these uses may be provided as part of the Site Development Plan application.

As required by Zoning Ordinance §1-19-7.500(D), Site Development Plan proposals in the VC Zoning District are required to submit plans to the Planning Commission (or its representative) for Concept Site Development Plan Approval. This Concept Site Development Plan must demonstrate how the proposed activity will meet development standards listed in §1-19-7.500(C).
BACKGROUND

Development History

This Applicant is the third owner to file a Site Development Plan on this parcel in the past decade. A previous site plan, SP-06-04 (Village Commons), received Concept Site Plan approval from the Planning Commission in May 2008 for a multi-structure mixed-use development. In August 2013, a second owner made application to secure Concept Site Plan approval for a similar mixed-use plan but opted to withdraw the proposal last year.

Existing Site Characteristics

The Site is currently occupied by a relatively new (built in 1984) single-family detached home and a single large specimen tree near its southern property line. The Site is currently served by a single driveway providing direct access onto Urbana Pike, a roadway with Collector status. The land slopes gradually toward the rear of the narrow, elongated parcel with a small number of small trees and shrubs at its westernmost edge. An existing well and septic system which serve the property are located on the parcel with the well being located in the front yard between the house and Urbana Pike.

Single-family structures occupy the contiguous lots (Parcels 96 & 97) on either side of the Site and constitute lands which are identified as future phases of this proposed mixed-use development. Both are zoned Village Center, VC. The total area of the three parcels is 2.31 acres. The Applicant, owner of parcel 98, is also the contract purchaser of Parcels 96 & 97. The current owner of Parcel 96, All Star

Figure 1- Aerial view toward the north; Urbana Elementary School on the left side of the image.
Group, LLC, operates a real estate office in the existing structure having received both Concept Plan and Site Development Plan approval for the use in 2014.

Surrounding land uses include: Urbana Elementary School north of the Site, single-family residential uses along Urbana Pike (east and west sides), a church, and several small retail and office uses within a few hundred feet of the subject Site. A small former church sanctuary and historic cemetery are located southeast of the Site on an adjoining property.

The Villages of Urbana PUD is located across Urbana Pike to the rear of the existing facing structures, approximately 250 feet from the subject Site.

Figure 2- General aerial view showing site
### ANALYSIS
Summary of Development Standards Findings and Conclusions

**Form and Layout**
The Applicant proposes to develop three new structures on the Site, with the largest of the three – at 4,800 s.f. in size – situated between the two smaller structures at the front and rear of the elongated parcel. The drive aisles and parking areas are located along the interior-facing northern frontages of the buildings. The front and rear structures are visually joined to the larger central building by arbors that allow movement between the buildings as well as between this site and the adjoining Phase 2 Parcel 96.

![Figure 3- Zoning of Site and vicinity in Urbana.](image)

Proposed structures as situated from front to rear of the Site:

**Front Building** – This 2-story, 1,250 s.f. (building footprint) structure faces Urbana Pike and is designed to a scale and form that complements other late 19th and early-20th century residential buildings in Urbana. A small public plaza is proposed for the building front yard providing an inviting public space at this building’s main entrance to the public sidewalk. The proposed use is medical offices.
Center Building – This 1-story, 4,800 s.f. (building footprint) structure forms the core of the mixed-use complex and faces the interior (northward) of the parcel. The building is designed to appear as two separate building forms being joined by a recessed and shorter central entry space. This design approach allows a structure of nearly 5,000 s.f. to visually approximate the scale of other structures in the older village of Urbana without the lost efficiency of a larger structure. Its orientation along the southwest-to-northeast axis of the parcel also allows the building to exist without dominating other smaller structures in the vicinity. The traditional gabled roof and dormer window elements also assist in the effort to design a structure that is compatible with more modest buildings in the neighborhood. The central building also employs a subtle but effective recess of the structure’s primary façade which serves the purpose of further diminishing its perceived mass when viewed from Urbana Pike. The proposed uses are medical offices and retail.

Rear Building – This 2-story, 1,250 s.f. (building footprint) structure is an architectural reflection of the Front Building (with wrap-around porch) with a main entrance facing the rear of the property. The proposed uses are business offices and a 2nd-story, 1-bedroom residential apartment.

Phases 2 & 3 – These future project phases are illustrated – for informational purposes - to identify plans for what may be the entirety of the Applicant’s land holdings associated with the project. No Concept Plan approval is being sought for these three additional structures at this time. However, it should be noted that Staff recognizes the future phases – as illustrated and annotated – appear to meet the basic design criteria set forth for the Village Center district. All three proposed structures are conceptually identified as 2-story, 1,500 s.f. buildings using as a design basis the existing residential structure on parcel 97, which would remain and be redeveloped under the Applicant’s proposal.

The scale of all structures shown on the Concept Development Plan is compatible with the general scale and form of buildings throughout Urbana’s Village District-zoned areas as well as with much of the approved single-family detached residences developed nearby in the Villages of Urbana PUD.

As seen from the street, the proposed development would be not unlike many commercial structures in the County’s rural villages and would provide an appropriate “filling out” of the area situated between the larger school and fire station structures and the burgeoning commercial buildings under construction on the southern edge of the Village Center District.
Access and Parking
The proposed centralized driveway would provide direct access onto Urbana Pike and would meet the design criterion of placing parking and drive aisles to the side or rear of structures in the VC District. Secondary, and perhaps tertiary, vehicular access points could be accommodated with the development of Phases 2 & 3 and the Applicant has indicated this possibility on the Plan. An interim T-turnaround is provided on the northern edge of the paved vehicular area – reaching into Parcel 97 – and is adequate to serve emergency and other longer vehicles on the Site. The driveway appears to be approximately 42 feet wide at the front of the site narrowing down to about 30 feet along the Center building. Staff would recommend reducing the driveway width, especially at the front of the site to 24 feet to reduce the amount of pavement.

The Site fronts along Urbana Pike (former MD 355) and will be turned over to County ownership in the near future. The County and SHA are cooperating on interim designs that allow for a reduced road section more appropriate to the planned village scale and function of the roadway. No elements of the proposed Concept Site Development Plan appear to interfere with expected County improvements being considered as part of the ultimate street section imagined for this segment of the road.

Areas available for both on-site, and off-site (on-street) parking as well as loading space capacity appear generally adequate to meet the requirements of the mix of uses planned for this development. Detailed parking plans and calculations would follow at the time of Site Development Plan application.

Figure 5- Aerial view toward the west showing general development density in vicinity of Casabella Commons site.
Development Density
Non-residential density in the VC district is not limited explicitly other than by practical site, circulation, design, dimensional regulations, and infrastructure constraints. The residential development density of this proposal is 1 dwelling/acre (gross). VC-zoned parcels may not exceed 5 dwellings per acre in a Community Growth Area. If the Applicant moves forward with the development of Phase 2, the inclusion of multiple structures on Parcel 96 would necessitate that at least one residential dwelling be included to meet the requirements set forth in Section 1-19-7.500(B)(4).

Since the overall project includes 3 parcels totaling 2.31 acres, a maximum residential yield for all three projected phases could include up to 11 dwellings.

Mixed Uses
Pursuant to Section 1-19-7.500(B)(4) regarding the encouragement of mixed use development in the Village Center Zoning District, the Applicant is including a residential dwelling (2nd floor apartment) in the rear building on the Site. In order for the Planning Commission to permit the inclusion of multiple principal structures on a single lot in the VC District the Commission must find that the “…resulting development will provide an improved design that would not otherwise be created on multiple lots.” Staff finds that the Applicant successfully addresses the 6 requirements listed in Section 1-19-7.500(B)(4) as described below:

- The elongated configuration of the primary parcel (P. 98), as well as the shape and configuration of the Applicant’s Phase 2 and Phase 3 properties would not allow for an efficient use of the land if development was limited to the placement of structures along the site frontage. The use of multiple structures results in a plan which maintains a modest scale for individual buildings.
- Service entrances, utilities, and other shared site infrastructure is more efficiently provided by allowing for multiple structures located along the length of the Site.
- The provision of at least 3,557 s.f. of common plaza/green area is readily accommodated in the layout of the Site Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plaza/Green Area Required:</th>
<th>3,557 s.f.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(726 s.f. green area per 2,000 s.f. of GFA)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Floor Area Proposed:</td>
<td>9,800 s.f. GFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaza/Green Area Proposed:</td>
<td>at least 14,000 s.f. available in proposal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conceptual design identifies an 1,800 s.f. plaza between the sidewalk along Urbana Pike and the Front Building. Two 500 s.f. public walkways separate the three buildings and provide access between Phases 1 and 2. Approximately 11,000 s.f. of undeveloped area is available at the rear of the buildings.

- Parking is illustrated as a shared resource in the proposed development.
- An integrated mix of commercial and residential uses is provided. Future project phases should continue this pattern,
- No historic resources are extant within the boundaries of the Phase 1 Site Plan.

Public Facilities
Public water and sewer service is planned for this area. It is likely that with the reconstruction or replacement of Urbana Elementary School (FY 2015 CIP planned to open in 2020) public water and sewer service will become available along Urbana Pike to serve this Site. At such time as public water and sewer is available to the site, the private well and septic system would be abandoned in compliance
with Health Department regulations. The Site is currently classified S-4/W-4 in the County’s Water and Sewer Plan.

**Detailed Analysis of Development Standards**

Concept Plan Approval for VC projects is required as provided in §1-19-7.500(D) Procedures – concept of the Frederick County Zoning Ordinance.

**Site Development §1-19-7.500 (D):** Development requiring site development plan review, as provided in §1-19-5.310 Use Table, shall receive concept plan approval from the Planning Commission or its authorized representative as the first step in the development review process. The concept plan, submitted in conformance with §1-19-3.301.2 (B) shall demonstrate:

(a) The manner in which the standards within this section have been met by the proposed development; and,

(b) The manner in which the proposed development conforms to adopted county community or corridor plans for the area where the development is proposed.

- **Conformity with Community or Corridor Plan** –
  - No county community or corridor plan has been adopted for the Urbana village area or Urbana Pike village corridor. Generally, the proposal demonstrates adherence to the general principles for compact development outlined in the County’s Comprehensive Plan through seeking the expansion of a mix and intensity of uses conducive to the continuing development of compact neighborhoods in areas generally served by public infrastructure and facilities.

- **Storage and Operations/Refuse and Recycling/Signage** –
  - The Concept Plan as submitted does not preclude compliance with the Code and generally meets expectations for approval at the time of Site Plan Review. Staff will continue to work with the Applicant through Site Development Plan Review process regarding building design and function to reduce or eliminate impacts on the nearby residential and institutional development.

- **Site Development and Layout** –
  - Every effort has been made by the Applicant to ensure that the proposed buildings face the public ways and internal, semi-public spaces.
  - The Applicant makes good use of the traditional village building form – multi-story structures with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential uses on the upper levels. The design of future project phases indicates that this pattern could be continued.
  - Vehicular parking areas and associated drive aisles are provided along the side of the proposed structures.
  - The overall design of the project as a cluster of mixed use buildings in a village setting is served well by the shared parking regime proposed in the Site Plan. The opportunity remains for additional on-street parking spaces as frontage improvements are reviewed and approved for the reconfigured Urbana Pike.
  - The proposed development has been designed around a simple, and expandable, internal driveway that is interconnected and facilitates efficient movement through and within the Site. The Applicant has proposed one full movement driveway onto Urbana Pike to occur in conjunction with the development of Phase 1. Secondary access to the site via Urbana Pike could be accommodated if desirable in future project phases.
  - The layout allows for both vehicular and pedestrian interconnections between the various uses on the property as well as the surrounding neighborhood.
Refuse and recycling (including loading space) can be accommodated at a point with limited visibility from Urbana Pike. As the project moves through the development review process in the future, the visual screening of undesired views will be resolved at the time of Site Plan review.

**Building Massing and Bulk**
- Village Center Footprint Thresholds §1-19-7.500(C)(4)(d)

Since Urbana is a growth area the following building footprint thresholds for non-residential uses would apply:

- Base Footprint Allowance – 5,000 sq ft. within a community growth area.
- Interim Footprint Allowance – 8,000 sq.ft. w/ planning commission approval
- Maximum Footprint Allowed – 10,000 sq. ft. subject to additional criteria w/ planning commission approval

The proposed footprint of the central building in this Concept Site Plan is 4,800 s.f and thus does not require special consideration by the Planning Commission.

- All of the buildings in this project are oriented to show their access/entry features to the public street or private internal drive or court. The concept plan maintains human-scaled architectural elements as illustrated in the conceptual architectural elevations for the renovations.

- Although specifics regarding materials and finishes will be determined at the time of Site Plan review, the visualization material typically submitted for the Concept Plan generally provides information related to building shape, height, massing and window and door placement. The Applicant has submitted elevations and several three-dimensional renderings of Phase 1, as well as Phases 2 & 3. Development. Staff has been working with the Applicant to ensure building design and finishes that are internally cohesive and respectful of the structures in the vicinity of the Site.

- Proposed building heights are established to match the existing house on Parcel 97.

**Dimensional Regulations (Height and Setbacks)**

Per §1-19-7.500(B)(3) the VC district provides for the establishment of dimensional standards on a site-by-site basis, using adjoining and facing buildings as a guide. The proposed setbacks, as illustrated, appear to be in keeping with the spirit of the VC district and will serve to reinforce a more pedestrian-friendly local streetscape.

**Findings/Conclusions**
Based upon the review and analysis as provided above, Staff finds that the Concept Site Development Plan meets the intent of the Development Standards within the VC zoning district. Staff will continue to work with the Applicant as the project moves through the final site development plan process to address all outstanding items as discussed within the Staff Report. Staff anticipates that the application will meet the site plan review criteria as set forth in §1-19-3.300.4 including items related to site development, transportation, parking, public utilities, natural features, and common areas.
Other Applicable Regulations

**Forest Resource – Chapter 1-21:**
Concept Site Plan review triggers the submission of a Forest Stand Delineation (FSD), which identifies areas for reforestation, afforestation, and priority areas for conservation, including retention of specimen trees (trees over 30 inches in diameter at breast height).

This development is subject to FRO. A FSD has been submitted and is conditionally approved. The site contains approximately 0.06 acres of forest cover in the rear of the site. There are two specimen trees within this small forest area. Neither the forest nor the two specimen trees are proposed to be impacted by this proposed development. A third specimen tree (39” Sugar Maple) is located a few feet to the east of the existing house in the front of the property and is proposed to be removed. This maple is in poor condition, with visible signs of decay and a strong likelihood that the inside of the trunk is partially hollow. This tree occupies a space that is between the on-site house and the neighboring house. Its condition and close proximity to two existing structures makes this a hazardous tree. Hazardous trees do not require a modification for removal. Staff supports the removal of this tree.

A Combined Preliminary/Final FRO plan must be submitted when the site plan application for this project is submitted. The Combined Preliminary/Final FRO plan must receive approval prior to site plan approval, and FRO mitigation must be provided prior to applying for grading or building permits, whichever is applied for first.

**Historic Preservation – Chapter 1-23:**
No existing historic or cultural resource is affected by the proposed Site Plan. Consideration of Phase 3 activity would warrant an effort to address the treatment of the existing 19th century residence on Parcel 96.

**Findings/Conclusions**
The Applicant is required to address these other applicable regulations as part of the Site Development Plan approval process moving forward after this Concept Site Development Plan has been approved.
RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve this Concept Site Development Plan with the following conditions to be addressed at Site Development Plan application.

1. Applicant will work with Staff to finalize the design of the common plaza and green areas so that they are functional at Phase 1 of the development and continue to function adequately with the construction of any future phases of this project.

2. The Applicant shall refine the design of pedestrian paths on the Site to allow pedestrians to move safely and easily between the primary structures, parking areas (on- and off-site), and adjoining later phases (2 & 3) of the overall project contemplated by the Applicant on Parcels 98, 97, and 96.

3. The driveway through the Site should be narrowed to reduce the amount of pavement surface on the Site.

4. No Site Development Plan which is based on this approved Concept Site Development Plan may be approved by the Planning Commission until such time as the Health Department concurs that all water and sanitary sewerage issues have been addressed adequately by the Applicant.

5. A Combined Preliminary/Final FRO plan must be submitted when the site plan application for this project is submitted. The Combined Preliminary/Final FRO plan must receive approval prior to site plan approval, and FRO mitigation must be provided prior to applying for grading or building permits, whichever is applied for first.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

MOTION TO APPROVE
I move that the Planning Commission APPROVE Concept Site Development Plan #SP06-04 (AP-15003, FRO 15023) for the proposed Casabella Commons with conditions as specified in the Staff Report.