

City of Cleveland Heights Board of Control

STAFF REPORT FOR THE MARCH 2, 2021 SPECIAL MEETING

TO: Members of the Board of Control

FROM: Eric Zamft, Director of Planning; Karen Knittel, Assistant Director of Planning

CC: William Hanna, Law Director; Tim Boland, Director of Economic Development

DATE: March 2, 2021

SUBJECT: BOC 2021-01: MetroHealth Medical Center 10 Severance Circle, S-1 Mixed-Use District, requests approval of Amendment to the Detailed Development Plan, conditional use permit, and reduction of parking to construct a 79,000 s.f., 100-bed behavioral health hospital & construct an additional 12-bed behavior health patient unit in the existing hospital, reconfiguration of the west parking lot and requesting a reduction in the required parking per Code Chapters 1111, 1115, & 1121, 1143, 1161 & 1166. *This special meeting of the Board of Control is for preliminary public hearing review and referral to the Planning Commission.*

SITE CONTEXT

Anchor Health Properties/MetroHealth (the "Applicant") owns property within Severance Town Center, at 10 Severance Circle (the "Site" or "Facility"). The Site, as with all lots located within the Severance Town Center, is within the Severance S-1 Mixed-Use Zoning District. To the west is the New Song Church; to the east are woods and the former Millikin School; to the south are single-family homes along Severn Road, separated from the Site by 150-foot-deep woods.

SITE APPROVAL HISTORY

This property was long operated by Kaiser Permanente and, briefly, by HealthSpan which bought all of Kaiser Permanente's Ohio properties. MetroHealth Medical Center took over in 2015.

- *BOC March & April 1996 (Resolution 96-1, 96-2 & 96-3):* Kaiser Permanente was granted approval of a Detailed Development Plan to erect a two-story (with partial third level below the main level) approximately 140,000 gross-square-foot Specialty Services Hub Building for the provision of medical service. A parking variance and variance to the sign regulations were also granted.
- *BOC 2005-01:* Kaiser Permanente Medical Center was granted approval of a Detailed Development Plan for the construction of a 49,000 s.f. addition to house a new emergency department, a clinical decision unit and future ambulatory surgical center, a 15-foot tall sound barrier, and parking lot reconfiguration. A parking variance was also granted.
- *BOC 2014-01:* HealthSpan was granted variances to sign regulations for two (2) freestanding identification ("ID") and instructional signs to direct patrons to and around the Site.
- *BOC 2017-02:* MetroHealth was granted approval of a Detailed Development Plan and conditional use permit to construct a 12,000 s.f., 12-bed micro-hospital in the previously unfinished area of the existing building, along with a new electrical building, generator, oxygen tank, and fuel tank south of the East parking lot.
- *BOC 2018-01:* MetroHealth was granted variances to the sign regulations for two (2) ID signs and eight (8) directional signs.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Applicant proposes to construct a new 100-bed, 79,000 s.f. behavioral health hospital on the existing East parking lot, an 8,107-s.f. build-out on the second floor of the existing building to accommodate a 12-bed behavioral health patient unit, a new generator and fuel tank, loading dock, landscaping and screening, patio and patient courtyard area, infrastructure, as well as parking (the "Project"). The new building would require a redesign of the East parking lot, resulting in an overall reduction in parking spaces on the Medical Center campus.

The Project is proposed to occur in phases:

- The first phase would be to construct a new parking lot loop road within the boundaries of the existing Site
- The second phase would be to construct the foundations, steel framing, and the new building
- The third phase would be to rework the parking lot configuration to align with the new building

The Project would involve the following approvals from the Board of Control:

- Conditional use approval for the proposed expanded hospital use [per Section 1143.02 for the S-1 District, based upon Section 1131.02 for the hospital use]
- Approval of a variance for the reduction of parking [per Section 1161.05]
- Amendment to the Detailed Development Plan [per Section 143.12(h)(2)]¹

MATERIALS SUBMITTED

- February 10, 2021 Cover Letter
- February 10, 2021 Board of Control Application Form
- Statement on Conformance with General Standards for Conditional Uses
- February 22, 2021 Site Plan Clarification Responses from Hasenstab Architects
- January 29, 2021 Parking Study by Walker Consultants
- Board of Control Plan Review Set (prepared by Hasenstab Architects unless otherwise noted):
 - Cover Sheet (sheet COVER), last dated 2/10/2021
 - Overall Site Plan (sheet C1.0), last dated 2/10/2021
 - Existing Conditions Plan (sheet C2.0), last dated 2/10/2021
 - Site Plan (sheet C3.0), last dated 2/10/2021
 - Utility Plan (sheet C4.0), last dated 2/10/2021
 - Grading Plan (sheet C5.0), last dated 2/10/2021
 - Site Development Plan (sheet SD-1), last dated 2/10/2021
 - Photometric Plan, prepared by Karpinski Engineering (no sheet number), last dated 2/10/2021
 - Level 1 & 2 Life Safety Plans – New Addition (sheet A0-1), last dated 2/10/2021
 - Safety Plans – New Addition (sheet A0-4), last dated 2/10/2021
 - New Addition Floor Plans (sheet A2-1), last dated 2/10/2021
 - Level 2 E.D. & M.O.B. Floor Plan (sheet A2-3) last dated 2/10/2021
 - Preliminary Concept Renderings (sheet A4-0), last dated 2/10/2021
 - Site Context Photos (sheet A4-0.1), last dated 2/10/2021
 - Exterior Elevations (sheet A4-1), last dated 2/10/2021
 - Building Sections (sheet A5-1), last dated 2/10/2021

¹ Note that Section 1143.10(f) states: "Approval by the Board of Control of a detailed development plan shall not become effective unless and until it has been approved by Council. If Council takes no action in approving or disapproving the plan within thirty (30) days from receipt of certification of approval by the Board of Control, the action of the Board of Control in approving the proposal shall become in full force and effect."

ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

CONDITIONAL USE: Uses at Severance Town Center are regulated by the *Revised Preliminary Land Use Plan for the Severance Town Center District*, revised and adopted in 2001 (Ord. 51-2000(PD)). The Site is in the "Perimeter Sub-District" and abuts an 'A' Single-Family District, where uses permitted or conditionally permitted in the C-1 Office or MF-2 Multiple-Family Zoning Districts may be permitted or conditionally permitted, subject to the approval of the Board of Control (the "BOC"). In the C-1 District, a 'Hospital' is conditionally permitted [Section 1131.02(b)(9)]. Therefore, the proposed expansion of the hospital use is conditionally permitted at this location. This Perimeter Sub-District requires that a 150-foot-deep buffer zone be maintained between Severance Town Center and the adjacent single-family district. The purpose of this requirement is to preserve and enhance the wooded character of the area within the buffer zones.

PARKING: Chapter 1161 provides the City's Off-Street Parking and Loading Requirements. Section 1161.03 details the number of parking spaces required by use (of the Principal Building). "Hospital" requires two (2) spaces per room; "Office, medical office, animal clinic and financial establishments" requires one (1) space for each 300 s.f. of floor area. Given that the Site is interconnected in terms of its parking utilization, the Applicant calculated the overall parking required as being 700 spaces. However, the Applicant retained a third-party parking consultant (Walker Consultants) to conduct a parking needs assessment of the campus, including a supply and demand analysis for both current and future projections. The parking needs assessment concluded that in both the current and future conditions, the actual demand for parking is much lower than is required. The Applicant has, therefore, requested approval in the reduction of required parking spaces to 402 spaces. Section 1161.05 provides the ability to reduce the required spaces. Planning staff is supportive of this request based upon the Walker Consultants parking needs assessment.

In addition, in order to increase the amount of open and landscaped areas, the Applicant is proposing to landbank 86 spaces. Per Section 1161.058, "The Zoning Administrator may permit land banking of up to thirty percent (30%) of the required parking spaces" subject to a number of criteria. The Director of Planning, as Zoning Administrator, finds that the 86-landbanked spaces would meet these criteria and would be less than 30% of the required parking spaces. Planning staff is supportive of the landbanking; however, per Section 1161.058(f), a condition of any approval should be that "The Zoning Administrator, on the basis of increased parking demand for the use, may require the conversion of all or part of the land banked area to off-street parking spaces."

Finally, the Walker Consultants parking needs assessment offered a number of recommendations; these recommendations focused on: 1) restriping, 2) better plowing after snow events, 3) pavement repair, 4) improved signage, and 5) creation of remote employee parking spaces. Staff is supportive of these recommendations and suggests that they be integrated into the Project.

OBJECTIVES OF PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS: Title Five of the Zoning Code contains the rules and regulations with regards to Special Districts within the City of Cleveland Heights. The S-1 Mixed-Use District is one of those Special Districts and is considered a "Planned Development". The Objectives of the Planned Development Regulations are located in Chapter 1141.01 and presented below, along with staff commentary with regards to these objectives and the Project:

- (a) **Objective** – *To provide an opportunity for new and innovative development in areas of the City where there is vacant land or in areas which have special characteristics or special redevelopment opportunities as designated in this City's Strategic Development Plan approved by Council.*

Staff commentary – The hospital expansion represents new and innovative development within Severance Town Center, an area that presents special redevelopment opportunities as designated in the City's Strategic Development Plan. The use itself will expand the offering

of medical services to City residents and is anticipated to create an additional 155 Full-Time Employees (FTE).

(b) **Objective** – *To protect residential and commercial property values.*

Staff commentary – The expansion of the hospital and the provision of additional medical services in the community should protect and enhance residential and commercial property values. In addition, the existing 150-foot buffer between the hospital and the adjacent residential uses will be maintained.

(c) **Objective** – *To safeguard the aesthetics of the City's residential and commercial neighborhoods.*

Staff commentary – The new hospital building will utilize the same materials and basic design principles of the previously approved hospital facility. The Proposed Materials (masonry and glazing) will match the existing materials to blend into the existing facility and safeguard the aesthetics of the adjacent residential and commercial neighborhoods. That being said, the new hospital building requires the approval of the Architectural Board of Review (the "ABR").

(d) **Objective** – *To encourage sustainable development and practices.*

Staff commentary – Constructing a new building in the already existing East parking lot and not on undeveloped land is sustainable. Where appropriate, the Project will implement efficient systems and sustainable design features. In addition, the new emergency access roadway will remain once it is constructed, which is more sustainable and efficient than a temporary access roadway. The Project also proposes to landbank parking spaces, allowing the trees/landscaping to remain until if/when parking demand increases and the spaces are required. Finally, the hospital expansion will create jobs, which will add to the City's economic sustainability.

(e) **Objective** – *To promote both residential and commercial development and, where appropriate, mixed use development in order to maximize the City's potential tax base and its provision of services.*

Staff commentary – The new hospital building will create jobs, which will not only help to increase the City's tax base, but will also allow for additional local discretionary spending from the increased number of employees at the Site. In addition, the new hospital building would provide expanded medical services, which is a desirable service to City residents.

(f) **Objective** – *To ensure that such creative and flexible development complies with the foregoing objectives by requiring a Project Plan for all Planned Developments and establishing a review process to ensure that all development is consistent with the approved plan.*

Staff commentary – The Site and Project are within the S-1 District, which follows a detailed review process. The Board of Control must evaluate the proposed use and Project and how it complies with the existing *Revised Preliminary Land Use Plan for the Severance Town Center District*.

(g) **Objective** – *To protect residential neighborhoods from commercial encroachment.*

Staff commentary – The Project maintains the 150-foot buffer between the non-residential uses on Severance Circle and the residential neighborhoods that are adjacent. The existing evergreen trees on a berm will continue to prevent neighbors from seeing the new building and equipment, as well as help to act as a noise barrier. In addition, the new building has been designed to follow the aesthetics of the existing hospital building. Additionally, the Project will add an emergency generator to the Site adjacent to their existing generator. The generator will be located within a chain-link fence enclosure, similar to the existing condition, and the location is screened by the existing earth mound and buffer zone of mature tree growth. MetroHealth has confirmed that there are regulatory requirements for

monthly testing of the generators and the self-test of the generators on the Site (both the existing and new) will occur once monthly between the hours of 5 a.m. and 8 a.m. for approximately ½ hour.

STANDARDS FOR CONDITIONAL USES: *Title Seven of the Zoning Code includes the regulations for conditions uses within the City of Cleveland Heights. Section 1151.02 discusses the general standards for all conditions uses. These standards are presented below, along with staff commentary with regards to these standards and the Project:*

- (a) **Standard** – *That the conditional use will be in general accord with the purpose, intent and basic planning objectives of this Zoning Code, and with the objectives for the district in which located;*

Staff commentary – The expansion of the hospital conditional use is in general accord with the purpose, intent, and objectives of the Zoning Code and the objectives of the S-1 Mixed Use District (as listed in Code section 1143.01). Notably that the Site promotes high standards of appearance, stabilizes and improves property values, and provides income taxes to the City from the MetroHealth employees. The use does not require much in the way of City services. Finally, the conditional use project is an extension of the previously approved hospital facility and will serve as an example of investment and revitalization within Severance Town Center. Staff believes that the proposed use will be beneficial to the health, safety, comfort, convenience and general welfare of the community.

- (b) **Standard** – *That the establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort or general welfare;*

Staff commentary – The expansion of the hospital conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort, or general welfare. The conditional use project is an extension of the previously approved hospital facility and will provide valuable behavioral health medical services in addition to medical services already offered at this location.

- (c) **Standard** – *That the conditional use will be designed, constructed, operated and maintained so as to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity, and that such use will not essentially change the character of the same area;*

Staff commentary – The expansion of the hospital conditional use will utilize the same materials and basic design principles of the previously approved hospital facility. The proposed materials (masonry and glazing) will match the existing materials to blend into the existing facility and maintain the current character of the area. The Site will continue to be maintained and will continue to operate so as to be harmonious with the area. Ambulances entering the Site will continue to not be permitted to sound their sirens on the Site.

- (d) **Standard** – *That the conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood;*

Staff commentary – The expansion of the hospital conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity, nor substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood. The new hospital building has been designed to reflect the aesthetics of the existing hospital building. In addition, it has been sited to maintain the 150-foot setbacks (buffer zones) of fully mature wooded areas on the east and south property lines along with utilizing the existing earth mounded topography to further screen adjacent neighborhoods.

(e) **Standard** – *That the establishment of the conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district;*

Staff commentary – The expansion of the hospital conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the Severance Town Center district. The new hospital building is an extension of the previously approved hospital facility and will match its current activity and traffic patterns within the character and boundaries of its current property lines.

(f) **Standard** – *That adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or necessary facilities have been or are being provided;*

Staff commentary – The expansion of the hospital conditional use will provide adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, and necessary facilities for operation. The Project will utilize the existing access drive location and upgrade utility service and drainage as identified and required.

(g) **Standard** – *That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets;*

Staff commentary – The expansion of the hospital conditional use will provide ingress and egress designed to minimize traffic congestion on public streets. The Project will utilize the existing turning lane and access/entrance drives. An independent parking study performed by Walker Consultants confirmed that parking and traffic demand will be less than required by the Zoning Code.

(h) **Standard** – *The establishment of the conditional use should not be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community by creating excessive additional requirements at public cost for public facilities such as police, fire and schools;*

Staff commentary – The expansion of the hospital conditional use will not be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community by creating excessive additional requirements at public cost for public facilities such as police, fire, and schools. The Project will be a \$42 million investment within the City of Cleveland Heights and the Severance Town Center district. The Project is estimated to provide an additional 155 Full-Time Employees (FTE) to the existing hospital facility, resulting in an increased income tax revenue for the City. Additionally, the Project will be a secured (locked) facility and utilize well-trained MetroHealth security officers on the Site, minimizing any needs for public safety responses. The existing facility has already been approved for an Emergency Department, which currently provides emergency medical services for the Cleveland Heights community. The Emergency Department will be maintained and remain operational as a part of the Project.

(i) **Standard** – *That there is minimal potential for future hardship on the conditional use that could result from the proposed use being surrounded by uses permitted by right that are incompatible.*

Staff commentary – It is not anticipated that there would be future hardship on the hospital conditional use that could result from it being surrounded by uses permitted by right that are incompatible.

(j) **Standard** – *That the conditional use shall address the sustainability guidelines of Section 1165.06;*

Staff commentary – The expansion of the hospital conditional use addresses many of the sustainability guidelines of Section 1165.06, as follows:

- *Historic preservation and adaptive reuse of existing structures* – a component of the Project involves an 8,107-s.f. build-out on the second floor of the existing building to accommodate a 12-bed behavioral health patient unit. This reuse of an underutilized space is important to the City's sustainability.

- *The use of sustainable design and architecture, such as the use and/or incorporation of green roofs or white roofs, solar panels, wind turbines and other alternative energy efficient systems, and LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) or LEED-equivalent structures* – Where appropriate, the Project will implement efficient systems and sustainable design features.
- *Incorporation of passive solar building and site design, where the design of the structure and the layout of the lots within the development collect solar energy in the form of heat in the winter and minimize heat in the summer* – The new building has been sited to take advantage of the sun's solar path to maximize natural light into patient areas. Additionally, new tree plantings, in combination with the existing buffer zone of mature shade tree growth, provide an effective strategy for managing the summer/winter solar energy cycles for both the building and parking surfaces.
- *Where the development requires the demolition of existing structures, recycling and reuse of building materials from demolished structures* – Not applicable, the Project does not involve the demolition of any existing structures.
- *Site design that incorporates public safety initiatives, such as strategies advocated by Transportation Demand Management, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and Safe Routes to School* – The Site is already dedicated to healthcare functions and the new building will utilize existing transportation infrastructure. A third-party parking study has been performed and confirmed traffic demand will not exceed existing Facility's capabilities. The Project has incorporated a site design that follows principles of CPTED. The new building creates a central visitor parking area defined on three sides by buildings with three (3) separate building entrances (MOB, ED, & BH). This configuration centralizes visitor activity, allows for enhanced visualization from all sides, and provides more opportunity for casual observation of the public visitor areas from multiple common areas and all main building entry points. Additionally, the loop drive provides egress to all sides of the building for emergency traffic along with staff parking. Constant activity will occur along the route with building support traffic, emergency vehicle traffic and staff shift change activity allowing for constant casual observation opportunities on all sides of the facility. The Safe Routes to School initiative is not applicable to the Project.
- *Preservation of natural features where the design of the site provides more usable and suitably located open space and natural amenities. The use of conservation easements is encouraged* – The new building has been sited to maintain the 150-foot setbacks (buffer zones) of fully mature wooded areas on the east and south property lines along with utilizing the existing earth mounded topography to further screen adjacent neighborhoods. The Project also proposes to landbank parking spaces allowing the trees/landscaping to remain until if/when parking demand increases and the spaces are required.
- *Innovative stormwater management techniques that exceed the performance standards required by the Ordinance and the City Code, and reduce the amount of impervious surface on the site* – The Project is proposing an additional underground stormwater detention system to enhance the existing system to reduce the rate of stormwater discharge. This system will utilize infiltration to minimize the volume of stormwater runoff that will be discharged into the City system. Additionally, a third-party parking study has been performed and confirmed traffic demand will not exceed existing facilities capabilities and also that actual parking demand will be less than required by the Zoning Code. Therefore, the Project is only providing parking to meet the actual demand and is requesting approval for reduction of required parking spaces. Additional parking spaces have been identified as 'land-banked' to maintain natural environments and reduce impervious surfaces while providing options to accommodate any future demand.
- *Additional public infrastructure improvements in addition to the minimum required by the planned development overlay, such as new or repaved streets, provision of bicycle paths, installation of gutters and sewers, new public transit stations, and traffic control devices to improve traffic flow* – The Site is already dedicated to healthcare functions

and the new building will utilize existing transportation infrastructure. A third-party parking study has been performed and confirmed traffic demand will not exceed existing facilities capabilities. Improvements to public infrastructure are not included in this project.

- *Community amenities such as public art, places to congregate such as plazas, malls, gardens, outdoor seating, and pedestrian and transit facilities* – The Project includes the creation of a patio and patient courtyard area.
- *Additional open space and recreational amenities such as recreational open space and playgrounds, including athletic fields, dog parks, and natural water features and conservation areas above that required by the Ordinance* – The Project involves the landbanking of 86 parking spaces that helps to create additional open space on the Site.
- *Provision of car or bicycle sharing facilities on-site* – The Project includes a covered bicycle parking area.

(k) **Standard** – *That the conditional use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located as well as the specific supplemental conditions set forth in Chapter 1153.*

Staff commentary – The expansion of the hospital conditional use will conform to applicable regulations of the S-1 District contained in Chapter 1143 and the specific supplemental conditions for hospitals contained within Chapter 1153.

APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

The following steps and approvals are necessary for the Project:

- Board of Control preliminary public hearing and referral to Planning Commission – Anticipated on March 2, 2021 at 5:00 PM
- ABR preliminary review public hearing – Scheduled for March 2, 2021 at 7:00 PM
- Community meeting held by Applicant – Scheduled for March 4, 2021 at 7:00 PM
- Planning Commission public hearing, review, and potential recommendation to Board of Control – Anticipated for March 10, 2021 at 7:00 PM
- Board of Control public hearing #2 and consideration of approval of Project (e.g., conditional use permit, variance for reduction of parking, and amendment to Detailed Development Plan) – Anticipated for March 11, 2021 at 5:00 PM
- City Council consideration of approval of Board of Control action – Anticipated for March 15, 2021 at 7:00 PM
- ABR public hearing #2 and consideration of approval – Anticipated for March 16, 2021 at 7:00 PM

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of Control refer the proposal to the Planning Commission for a full review. Should the Planning Commission offer a positive recommendation, staff will provide additional review and a recommendation to the Board of Control for the anticipated March 11, 2021 meeting.