



**PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

Prepared by: Kevin L. Small, AICP, RLA
Dept. of Planning & Community Development

Date: February 25, 2026

Meeting Date: March 5, 2026

General Information

Applicant: MacPhail Crossing, LLC

Owner/Operator: RVG Development (owner of Lots A & E, Parcel 268)
Frankel Properties LLC (owner of Lot D, Parcel 268)

Status of Applicant: Owner (Parcel 268 – Lots A & E)

Location: 540, 550 & 560 W MacPhail Road (MacPhail Crossing)

Lot/Building Size: The development site consists of three parcels totaling 12.05 acres and consisting of 116,863 gross square feet of commercial space.

Requested Action: The Applicant requests:

1. A Site Plan approval for the existing development following the partition of the former Dick's Sports into two establishments.
2. A Special Development approval for a Shopping Center use
3. Landscape Plan approval to add interior parking lot trees
4. Parking space dimensions incorporating previously approved compact spaces are an existing non-conforming use and setbacks/buffers between internal property lines require a waiver from the Planning Commission.

Zoning: B-3, General Business

Existing Land Use: Retail/Service Development

Surrounding Land Use & Zoning: The project area is an existing development located at the intersection of W MacPhail Road and MD Route 24. The adjoining Town properties are zoned B-3 to the north and west of the site and R-3 to the east of the property (across S Atwood Road) within the Town. The adjoining property to the south (across W MacPhail Road) is located within the jurisdiction of Harford County and zoned R-2. Properties to the north and west are developed with various retail and service uses. The land to the east is a residential townhouse development. The property to the south is the existing MVA facility.

Comprehensive Plan: The Bel Air Land Use Plan shows the development site and the surrounding land designated as *Commercial*. The land in Harford County to the south is designated as *Low Intensity* on the current Harford County Land Use Plan.

Zoning History: The property was annexed into the Town in 1994 and received approval for two big box commercial establishments in June of the same year. This approval was modified over the years as new uses were incorporated into the development. The structure accommodating Patient First was added to the project in 2003 expanding the development to what exists today.

Applicable Regulations: Applicable sections of Chapter 165 Development Regulations are as follows:

- Article III (Sect. 165-32. B-3 District);
- Article VII (Sect. 165-51. Parking and Loading; and, Sect. 165-53 Performance Standards and Development Guidelines);
- Article VIII Landscaping Standards (Sect. 165-54 through Section 165-61);
- Article XI Permits and Procedures (Sect. 165-82 Building Permit)
- Article XII Appeals; Variances; Special Exceptions; Special developments (Sect. 165-94 Special Developments);

- Article XVI Subdivision and Site Development (Sect. 165-117 through 165-118);
- Permitted Use Tables, Table 3-6, Retail Uses; and,
- Lot Requirement Tables, Table 165-32, B-3 General Business District

Public Utilities & Services: Public utilities are currently provided to site.

Transportation: West MacPhail Road and S Atwood Road are classified as Commercial Collectors in the Town of Bel Air Comprehensive Plan. MD Route 24 is an Expressway. Traffic Analysis is not required since no expansion is proposed.

Environmental Assessment/Physical Characteristics: Plumtree Run is a mapped environmentally sensitive area north of the proposed development. The site has been developed for many years and is generally level, while gently sloping down to Plumtree Run. There is protected forest on the site in association with Plumtree Run. A graphic depiction of the forest area can be found on the Record Plat (liber 91, folio 92). The perimeter of the site has landscape buffering associated with the rear service area including an existing board on board fence. There are landscape islands within the parking area. These are proposed to receive shade trees to meet the existing code. The site has no proposed expansion, so storm water management is not proposed.

Landscaping, Lighting & Amenities: The plan has proposed 36 shade trees within existing parking islands and no other landscape is required.

Because there is no proposed expansion to the development, a public art amenity is not required.

Performance Standards: The general performance standards in Section 165-53.B apply. The performance standards for Retail uses, Section 165-53.H(1), Service Uses, Section 165-53.I(1) and Shopping Center use, Section 165-53.H(2)(c) apply.

Architectural Review: Because there is no proposed expansion, architectural elevations are not required.

Analysis:

The Applicant is requesting approval for a 116,863 square foot one story Shopping Center. This is an existing development and there is no proposed expansion to the current space. For many years, this development existed as three uses and did not require additional review until the former Dick’s Sporting Goods establishment was divided into two uses.

By adding a fourth use, the development is now defined as a Shopping Center in the Town code and would have performance standards specific to that use. Approval of the shopping center use will also address several non-conformities within the development such as:

- One directory sign on Lot D that provides advertising for all the parcels – this would be considered a billboard and prohibited under current code, however, a shopping center allows for advertising of all establishments within the project area.
- Property lines that crisscross the site without a three-foot setback or any buffering would be permitted by waiver.
- Compact parking spaces were previously permitted and have since been removed from the Town code.

Approval of a Shopping Center use would enable accommodation of new businesses without Planning Commission review provided these uses are permitted in the B-3 (General Business) zoning category.

LANDSCAPE

Existing street trees and a landscaped buffer are found along S Atwood Road and W MacPhail Road. Section 165-59.A(2) requires a three-foot setback from a right-of-way and a planting buffer equaling one planting unit per twenty-five feet of parking abutting a public road. This requirement is met by the existing vegetation.

With 576 parking spaces, the Parking Lot Interior Tree requirement is fifty-eight (58) major deciduous trees, see Section 165-59.B(3). 22 existing trees and 36 proposed trees equaling 58 trees are shown on the attached development plan to satisfy the Town code requirement.

SITE

Parking is located throughout the site, with the majority located along the western side of the center. Based upon the new designation, the parking requirement will be based upon a shopping center under 400,000 square feet equal to 1 space per 250 gross square feet which existing parking currently exceeds by over 100 spaces.

Recommendations:

Special Development for a Shopping Center Use

The Special Development for Shopping Center Use is based upon the following findings of fact that the applicant has adequately demonstrated the proposed Shopping Center Use:

- [a] The project provides a unified arrangement of buildings, service areas, parking and landscaped areas.
- [b] The project is designed with regard to the topography and other natural features.
- [c] Materials, massing and facade design for the project are harmonious with the character of the neighborhood.
- [d] The internal circulation system is designed to minimize through traffic and traffic conflicts within the project.
- [e] Safe pedestrian movement and the provision of pedestrian walks within the parking lot and surrounding the building perimeter is considered.
- [f] All establishments have vehicular service access either from an individual service drive or from a common service yard.
- [g] All such service areas, loading, trash removal, compaction or similar activities are segregated from public areas and screened from public view.
- [h] Any part of a lot not used for buildings or other structures or paved for off-street parking, loading and maneuvering areas, drives and pedestrian walks or incidental outside storage are landscaped and properly maintained.
- [i] All parking lots, loading areas and outdoor storage areas are separated with buffer yards of at least 10 feet from any adjacent residential districts. Parking is adequate for peak demand for the existing and proposed uses at the time.
- [j] Signs to identify the use of an occupant are designed as part of the architectural design of the building and attached thereto. Proposed signage is submitted with the preliminary plan and is subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission.
- [k] Directional and informational signs are adequately provided and design coordinated.
- [l] Center management is responsible for providing on-site security service.
- [m] A traffic and parking study was not required because no additional commercial space is proposed.
- [n] Vehicular access to the subject property is not by means of any street internal to a subdivision for single-family dwellings.

Site Plan

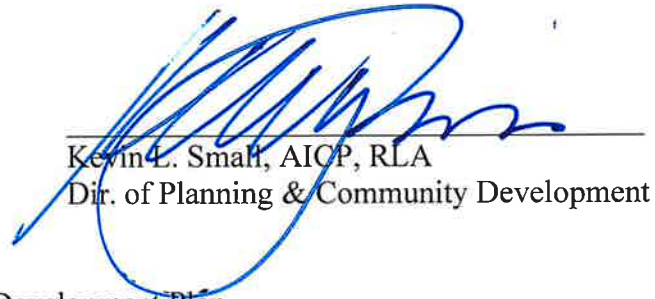
At a minimum, approval of the preliminary Site Plan is conditioned on the following:

1. Prior to Final Use & Occupancy, submission of a Final Site Plan for signature incorporating comments from this staff report, and the following comments:
 - a. Minor drafting changes to correct errors on the development plan

Landscape Plan

At a minimum, approval of the Landscape Plan is conditioned on the following:

1. Submission of a Final Landscape Plan for signature which may be incorporated into the Final Site Plan and installation of all proposed landscape.



Kevin L. Small, AICP, RLA
Dir. of Planning & Community Development

Attachments: Site/Landscape/Special Development Plan
Performance Standards
List of Equitable Owners

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