



MEMORANDUM

TO: PLANNING BOARD

FROM: CHRISTOPHER SPENCER, COMMISSIONER
CHIEF PLANNING OFFICIAL

DATE: DECEMBER 17, 2019

SUBJECT: PLASMA DONATION CENTERS

WAITING AREA

During the November 26, 2019 Planning Board meeting, the topic of Waiting Rooms for a Blood Plasma Donation Center was discussed. The proposal before the Planning Board includes a use specific standard of a waiting room that is a minimum of 500 square feet. However, after further research, it appears that 500 square feet may be seen as arbitrary, since the amount allocated on a per person basis varies greatly depending on the type of seating. As an example, fixed auditorium seating typically requires 10 square feet per person while with lounge type seating, 30 square feet per person is more typical. The total square footage needed varies greatly based on a number of factors including the seating configuration and the number of patrons it would need to accommodate at any given time. Both of these factors will also vary based on the applicants' overall business plan and daily work flow. Neither the overall size of the waiting area, the square footage allocated per person, nor the number of persons it could accommodate is something that the zoning rules should or could accurately predict or prescribe.

Nowhere in our USDO is there another use where the City prescribes the size of waiting rooms or other ancillary spaces within a building. Rather than trying to be prescriptive in terms of the size of a waiting room, it is recommended that through the Conditional Use Permit process, the Planning Board require applicants to clearly demonstrate the adequacy of the facility to handle the flow of donors from the time of arrival until they depart the facility, in a way which ensures that there is no outdoor queuing.

In determining the adequacy of the waiting area, a number of factors should be considered. Among these, but not necessarily exclusive are:

- Number of expected donors per day;
- Percentage of donors that are scheduled versus expected walk-ins;
- Restroom facility (building code related);
- Number of employees and where in the facility are they typically situated;
- Screening area and expected screening time;
- Medical work-up area and typical time required;
- Donation Beds and expected donation time required; and
- Post donation time, prior to departure.

Applicants should be able to demonstrate the overall work flow from the time the facility opens and begins to work with the first donors, until the last donor has completed their donation and is cleared to leave the facility. This work flow should clearly demonstrate the adequacy of the facility at each stage of the donation process, throughout the typical day. It should also demonstrate an action plan for addressing a greater influx of donors than expected without creating a negative impact on nearby uses.

STORAGE AREAS

The storage of all materials, supplies, or plasma, must be completely within the proposed facility. Applicants must clearly demonstrate how this will be accomplished, including when materials and supplies are delivered, when plasma products are picked up, and when and how both regular trash and recycling as well as any biohazardous waste are removed from the premises.

PARKING

Through the Conditional Use Permit process, the Planning Board, with the assistance of the Department of Planning and Development, should apply the parking ratio that is closest to the proposed use as noted in Section 375-4(E)(1)(e) Parking for Unlisted Uses. In addition, the Planning Board may choose to consider the maximum number of patrons and staff that will be at the Center at any given time. Typical reductions for public transit and other should be based on Section 375-4(E)(3) Parking Alternatives and Adjustments. By applying these standards, it should ensure that the use does not create a negative impact on nearby uses in terms of parking.

BUFFERS OR SETBACKS

Through the Conditional Use Permit process, the Planning Board should be able to consider the siting of a Plasma Donation Center in a way which eliminates any external impacts to surrounding residents, nearby businesses, or adjacent land uses. Requiring a buffer or setback should only be considered in the USDO when there is clearly a rational basis for such a setback, such as noise or other external impacts.

BUFFERS MAP

The Buffer Maps that are being provided (as requested) by the Planning Board are not reflective of a number of uses, and therefore provide an incomplete picture of where a Blood Plasma Donation Center would be allowed based on certain setback requirements. As noted, there needs to first be a rational basis for the set back or buffer from another use. Furthermore, a setback from a use, versus a zoning district is impossible to do with any degree of accuracy. Residential uses are permitted in any mixed use zone, schools or educational uses are not always known and may locate within a storefront, and churches or religious uses can and do occur in locations other than churches and are not always known. Therefore, there are too many variables and unknowns to provide any accuracy in mapping a buffer from a use, rather than a zoning district.

PROPOSED CHANGE

Based on the rationale noted in the first section (Waiting Area), it is recommended that the following changes be made to the proposed Use Specific Standards:

Facilities shall include a waiting and departure lounge sufficient in size, ~~but a minimum of five hundred (500) square feet,~~ to accommodate all scheduled donors within ~~one~~ a half-hour of their appointment as well as the required time after their appointment. ~~and one hour after,~~ as well as Such a waiting room shall also accommodate any anticipated drop-in customers. ~~Such waiting areas shall include restroom~~ Restroom facilities shall be provided based on applicable building codes for the classification of the facilities and be open at least ~~one~~ a half-hour prior to the opening of the center for the use of waiting patrons.

Facilities shall include a waiting and departure lounge sufficient in size to accommodate all scheduled donors within a half-hour of their appointment as well as the required time after their appointment. Such a waiting room shall also accommodate any anticipated drop-in customers. Restroom facilities shall be provided based on applicable building codes for the classification of the facilities and be open at least a half-hour prior to the opening of the center for the use of waiting patrons.