

New category

§267-82. Corporate Office Parks (COP)

These uses may be granted in the CI and LI zoning districts. A corporate office park shall be developed in accordance with the provisions of this article.

A. Purpose. Corporate Office Park development standards are established to provide for a park like employment center of high technology industries, research and development facilities, corporate and business offices, limited retail, service and residential uses. It is intended that this development option is to provide higher design standards and a more flexible approach to development in industrial zoning districts.

B. Objectives

(1) To attract corporate office locations in desirable areas in the County which have a positive affect on economic development and professional job opportunities.

(2) To maximize the attractiveness of and to enhance the visual appearance through preservation of significant natural features.

(3) To provide enhanced performance standards in corporate office parks, which establish a high quality of design.

(4) To assure compatibility of the proposed land use with internal and surrounding uses by incorporating innovative standards of land planning and site design.

(5) To reduce traffic congestion by encouraging the clustering of buildings near internal streets, the provision of service uses and the development of pedestrian networks to reduce dependence on single occupant automobiles and to better accommodate such transportation alternatives as transit service and carpooling in a project.

C. Eligibility. Corporate Office Parks shall have a minimum parcel size of 250 acres located in the CI or LI districts. Corporate Office Parks may be permitted on parcels less than 250 acres if contiguous to an existing Corporate Office Park.

(1) The project shall have direct access to one or more MAJOR Collector or higher functional classification roadways as defined by the Harford County Transportation Element.

FOH: Just the category "collector" can include down to a Minor Rural Collector Road. A project of this size requires a larger road.

(2) The project must be located within a Priority Funding Area INSIDE THE DEVELOPMENT ENVELOPE.

FOH: One needs to be careful about where PFAs are located and specify inside the envelope as opposed to Rural Villages. This is probably overkill, but is an assurance none the less.

(3) The project must utilize public Water and Sewer service.

D. Height Requirements

(1) Maximum building heights of a structure in a Corporate Office Park development shall be 4 stories.

(a) Maximum building heights of a structure in a Corporate Office Park development may be increased to a maximum of 6 stories if the impervious surface standards are met :

| STORIES | CI | LI |
|---------|-----|-----|
| 1 - 4 | 85% | 85% |
| 5 - 6 | 55% | 55% |

E. Development Standards

(1) Vehicular circulation.

(a) Loading and service areas shall be separated from the pedestrian and employee parking areas. Service areas shall be located away from roadways to the greatest extent possible.

(b) The internal vehicular circulation system must follow a pattern of intersection streets that provide alternative routes. Cul-de-sacs are discouraged.

(c) Points of external access and alignments of internal roadways must facilitate use of public transit. This may include rights of way sufficient for bus pull outs and bus shelters as well as transit easements on private streets.

(d) A comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle circulation system must link all uses with the intent of minimizing walking distances and reducing dependence on the private automobile for internal travel and external access.

(e) Transit alternatives and Transportation Demand Management strategies must be provided which achieve a goal reduction of auto trips for Corporate Office Park developments of 10% below the peak hour trip generation rates as identified in the ITE trip generation manual (current edition). These strategies include carpooling incentives, transit/bus services, vanleasing and flexible work schedules.

(2) Parking Standards

(a) All parking areas must be effectively buffered from adjacent roadways and adjoining residential areas, through the use of berms, plantings or the depression of parking areas below surrounding grades

(b) Parking areas should be broken up into lots of no more than 150 cars, the lots should be separated by landscaped islands.

(c) The number of parking spaces provided and overall design and layout of parking lots must be in accordance with Section 267-26 (off-street Parking and Loading) of the Harford County Code.

(d) No direct access to any lot is allowed from a collector or higher functional classification road as defined in the Harford County Transportation Element Plan.

(e) All access points from a Corporate Office Park shall be consolidated wherever feasible.

(3) Landscaping

(a) Facilities for refuse disposal shall be enclosed by solid walls incorporated into the design of the buildings. Landscaping shall be installed around the perimeter.

(b) Existing trees shall be retained and incorporated into the landscaping and site design to the greatest extent possible. Every effort should be made to avoid formality in plantings except, as it may be integral to an architectural concept. Emphasis should be placed on the natural grouping of groves of trees and every opportunity should be taken to emphasize or take advantage of natural terrain features.

(c) Islands and other landscaping alternatives shall be incorporated into parking areas to add visual interest. The use of islands, perimeter or roof top gardens designed and landscaped to serve as bioretention facilities is encouraged.

(4) Building design standards

(a) An architectural rendering of the building façade and elevations of the structures shall be submitted to the Department of Planning and Zoning as part of the site plan approval process.

(b) Architecturally harmonious materials, colors, textures and treatments shall be used for all exterior walls within the Corporate Office Park. All sides of the building are to be built with finish materials including but not limited to brick, natural stone, and ornamental block

(c) Mechanical equipment should be located within the building or within a mechanical equipment penthouse. If mechanical equipment is located on the roof or is free standing on the site, it must be effectively screened from view by means fully compatible with the architecture. Mechanical equipment must be screened from view from all sides.

(d) Outdoor storage is prohibited.

(5) Accessory/Auxiliary Uses – are uses intended for the primary use of employees and/or clients of the ~~principle~~ principal use.

(a) Uses and structures which are normally and customarily incidental to any of the principal uses permitted in the LI zoning district.

(b) Retail and service uses may be incorporated into the overall project for up to 20% of the gross square footage not to exceed 100,000 square feet .

(c) Residential uses may be permitted provided that:

[1] No more than 40% of the gross square footage of the project is occupied by such uses.

[2] The residential units are incorporated as part of the building(s).

(d) Accessory/Auxiliary uses must be integrated into the overall design of the project.

(e) The Zoning Administrator must approve an overall development plan that allocates the amount of square footage for each use.

(6) Lighting

(a) The lighting fixtures shall be designed to assure compatibility with the building style.

(b) Lighting shall be designed, installed and maintained in a manner not to cause a glare or reflection on adjacent residential lots.

(7) Open Space

(a) Corporate Office Parks shall include a minimum of 30% of the parcel area preserved as vegetated open space. The buffer yards, and perimeter landscaping shall be included in the calculation of open space, so long as a minimum width of 25 feet is maintained.

(8) Signage. Signage shall be considered an integral part of the design and shall incorporate the architectural elements and materials utilized. In all instances, consideration shall be taken to ensure each sign does not restrict sight distance for motor vehicle operators.

(a) An overall signage plan and architectural renderings of the signs shall be submitted as part of the site plan approval process. The signage shall be compatible in quality, style, color and materials to the building(s). Creative modifications to the standard signage package used by large corporations and innovative sign lighting is strongly encouraged

(b) Freestanding identification signs shall be limited to 1 sign for each road frontage. The maximum size of any sign shall not exceed 50 square feet. The maximum height of the signs shall not exceed 10 feet and signs must be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the road right-of-way line.

(c) Signs to identify the use of an occupant shall be designed as part of the architectural design of the building and attached thereto, not exceeding one square foot for each horizontal linear foot of wall facing on the street on which the sign faces.

(d) Directional information signs shall be adequately provided and design coordinated.

(e) The following types of signs shall not be permitted for any project located in a Corporate Office Park development:

[1] Billboards.

[2] Revolving, rotating or changing-light-intensity or changing-color signs.

[3] Temporary or portable signs.

F. Modifications. The Zoning Administrator may approve modifications to the approved plans for the Corporate Office Park, provided that the overall theme and intent of the project remains intact. Should modifications constitute a substantial change to the project, the Zoning Administrator may require the Applicant to hold additional public meetings and/or may require the Development Advisory Committee review the amended project. FOH: Recommend this section be deleted. The key words here are “substantial change” to the project. What constitutes a “substantial change.” Who decides if the requested changes are “substantial” or minor? This terminology has been the crux of many a disagreement because it’s in the DAC/subdivision regulations as well and if P&Z doesn’t want to send a developer back through the process and subject him to more opposition, they can just say the changes were not substantial enough to warrant going back to DAC.