



# MEMORANDUM

## City of Watertown Planning Office

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**TO:** Norman J. Wayte II, Chairman, Planning Board

**FROM:** Kenneth A. Mix, Planning and Community Development Coordinator

**SUBJECT:** Site Plan Approval – 1500 Block Washington Street, Samaritan Senior Village

**DATE:** May 19, 2011

**Request:** Site Plan Approval for the construction of a 231,073-square foot, 288-bed senior living facility on the 1500 block of Washington St., Parcels Number 13-23-101, 13-23-102.1, and 13-23-104.

**Applicant:** Patrick J. Scordo, P.E. of GYMO, P.C. on behalf of Samaritan Medical Center

**Proposed Use:** Multifamily senior living facility

**Property Owner:** Watertown City School District, City of Watertown, and Samaritan Medical Center

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### Submitted:

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Property Survey: Yes

Preliminary Architectural Drawings: Yes

Site Plan: Yes

Preliminary Site Engineering Plans: Yes

Vehicle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan: Yes

Construction Time Schedule: Preliminary

Landscaping and Grading Plan: Yes

Description of Uses, Hours & Traffic Volume: Yes

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SEQRA: Unlisted Action

County Planning Board Review Required: Yes

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### Zoning Information:

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District: Commercial (after Zone Change)

Maximum Lot Coverage: None

Setback Requirements: None

Buffer Zone Required: Yes, 5-15 feet along northern and eastern site boundaries

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**Overview:** The applicant has submitted updated materials for the Samaritan Senior Village. Since the last meeting, three consultant studies have been performed: wetlands & endangered species, traffic, and archaeological. These reports are available in the City Planning office for review, and will also be posted online. The applicant also revised the site plan documents to reflect changes required by the points of summary listed in the May 3, 2011 Staff Report.

**Parking & Traffic:** A Traffic Engineering Report was performed by Jim Napoleon Associates. According to their calculations, the project will produce an additional 991 vehicles per day at the southern driveway entrance. This amount of additional traffic is not expected to have any negative impact on the level of service on Washington Street, the Senior Village driveway, or Hudson Lane.

The northerly driveway will be reserved for use by delivery and emergency vehicles only, and signage will be posted declaring this.

**Pedestrian Circulation:** Extending the perimeter sidewalk to Washington Street at the southwestern corner of the site was determined to be problematic, requiring construction on the adjacent parcel (not owned by SMC). The applicant believes the sidewalks along the southern edge of Samaritan Medical Plaza to be sufficient for pedestrian traffic between SMP and the Senior Village. They do not wish to add an additional path along the eastern margin of the driveway spur, entering the northerly side of the SMP parking lot.

The applicant should specify installation of a 6 inch sidewalk, a concrete or asphalt apron, and a drop curb across the widened delivery entrance.

A detail of the handicap ramp should be provided.

Public access to the trail system behind Wiley School from Washington Street should be preserved. There is an informal route now. A trail was put in along Hudson Lane as part of the Summit Wood project to connect to it. A condition of the sale of parcel 13-23-102.100 to SMC from the City is that a trail easement will be retained by the City. The location of the easement has not been agreed to yet. To connect to the school property an easement will also be needed across the land SMC is purchasing from the School District. The site plan does not show an easement, though it does show the location of the existing trail. The most recently proposed easement location is shown on the Survey & Topographic Maps (sheets EX101 and EX102). The topography within the proposed easement location will probably be unsuitable for a hiking/biking trail.

**Grading, Drainage and Utilities:** A dumpster enclosure has been proposed adjacent to the loading docks on the northern side of the proposed building. The Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is still outstanding. The applicant expects completion by June 13, 2011—and will provide the City with a copy once available.

The applicant should consider a drop curb entrance to National Grid's utility easement near station 8+00 on the main driveway. National Grid will access the utility easement for maintenance occasionally and would be forced to drive over a full height curb as proposed.

The applicant must specify what is being done with the 10" concrete storm pipe near the proposed Stormwater Management Pond #1. A connection to the proposed or existing storm sewer system must be provided. Also specify what the outlet of Stormwater Management Pond #1 is connected to, and move the proposed grading of the northerly handicap ramp to provide an unobstructed view of the connection.

Relocate the existing catch basin on the northerly side of the proposed delivery entrance 20 feet to the north, so that it is out of the entrance. Another option would be to shift the entrance 20 feet south.

All storm sewer connections to existing City owned catch basins must specify rubber booting, water tight connection. Revise detail 5 on sheet C502 to reflect this requirement.

**Water:** The applicant has proposed that water be delivered to the site via a new 2,800 foot length of 10" main, stretching from the Town of Watertown water tower through Town land, and entering the site from the south. After consultation with the applicant's engineers, the Water Department and Engineering Department have agreed that this is the best solution. The City Council has met and accepted the concept. This plan will still require the approval of the Town of Watertown and the NYSDOH.

A fire hydrant just east of the 4-story building was moved to the west side of the parking lot.

**Sensitive Area Investigative Reports:** The applicant submitted Sensitive Areas Investigative Reports including a Wetlands Jurisdictional Delineation Report and an Archaeological Survey. Sensitive Areas have been cleared of impact, however the US Army Corps of Engineers must still make a Wetland Jurisdictional Determination. If the site is deemed non-jurisdictional, no further action is necessary. If it is determined jurisdictional, the Corps will have to permit the project and ensure mitigation of any negative effects. The applicant has requested that the Board approve the site plan conditional on satisfaction of Corps of Engineers wetland permitting requirements.

A ditch within the site has been identified as a potential breeding area for the Lyre-tipped Spreadwing Damsel fly. This is not a threatened or endangered species, however its breeding population has been declining, and it may qualify as a NYS "rare species" in the next few years. The identification was based on an unverified observation in 2007. The actual presence of the species cannot be verified until early July when the adults emerge from their larval stage.

The ditch in question lies between the 3-story section of the project and the northeasterly corner of the existing Samaritan Medical Plaza. It will not be completely destroyed by the construction, but significant disturbance is likely.

**Landscaping:** In our previous report, we requested additional landscaping to comply with the Planning Board's Landscaping and Buffer Zone Guidelines. Included were additional street trees on the south side of the main entrance from Washington Street to the proposed parking lot. The applicant has concerns about planting in this area because the area is within a National Grid gas and electric right-of-way and there are easement restrictions regarding vegetation. Given the restrictions, planting within the easement areas will not be required. However, after Station 8+00, the driveway entrance leaves the easement area and there are no restrictions on planting trees.

The previous report also recommended trees along the south side of the secondary access from Washington Street to the driveway spur leading to Samaritan Medical Plaza. The applicant has explained that this area is a bedrock cut making the planting of trees problematic.

Finally, the previous report requested that street trees be added to the new parking lot island located on the south end of the Samaritan Medical Plaza parking lot. The applicant has responded that this area will be adjacent to a new storm sewer, restricting the planting of trees. Assuming the trees would be planted in the center of the traffic island, a row of trees in this area would be offset 6' +/- from the storm sewer, which is more than adequate. In addition, there is over 2' of cover on top of the storm sewer that will be located beneath the asphalt on the opposite side of the curb from the planting locations. Since most tree

roots grow within the top 18"-24" of soil and given the fact that the sewer is under the pavement on the outside of the curb, it is unlikely that the roots will cause any damage to the storm sewer in the future. To be cautious, smaller maturing trees (with smaller root systems) from the list provided in the Guidelines could be specified for this area.

**Summary:** The following lists key issues that should be addressed:

1. The trail easement is still unresolved. The most recently proposed location is shown on the submitted Survey and Topographic Maps. The applicant must finalize the easement location before the purchase of City owned land can be completed, and it should be a condition of Site Plan Approval.
2. The Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan will not be available until June 13, 2011. The Site Plan approval should be conditioned on SWPPP submittal prior to the start of construction activities.
3. The proposal for water supply is unresolved at this point. Site Plan Approval should be conditioned upon the Town of Watertown and NYSDOH approving the new supply line.
4. The US Army Corps of Engineers must make a Wetland Jurisdictional Determination. The applicant wishes the Board to approve this application contingent upon a non-jurisdictional determination from the Corps.
5. The Lyre-tipped Spreadwing Damselfly habitat identified (but not yet confirmed) on the site will likely be disturbed. The species is not listed by state or federal authorities.
6. Street trees should be added on the south side of the main driveway entrance from Station 8+00 to the parking area.
7. Street trees should be added in the new parking lot island located on the south end of the Samaritan Medical Plaza parking lot.
8. Specify installation of a 6 inch sidewalk, a concrete or asphalt apron, and a drop curb across the new widened delivery entrance.
9. Provide a detail of the handicap ramp.
10. Consider a drop curb entrance to the National Grid easement for maintenance access.
11. The applicant must specify what is being done with the existing 10" concrete storm pipe located near the proposed stormwater management structure #1. A connection to the existing or proposed storm system is required.
12. The applicant must specify what the outlet for proposed stormwater management structure #1 is connected to. Move the grading of the northerly handicap ramp to provide a clear view of the connection.
13. The applicant must relocate the existing catch basin just north of the new entrance 20 feet further north, or move the driveway 20 feet south.
14. The applicant must specify rubber-booted, water-tight connections to all existing City catch basins. Revise the detail on sheet C502 to show this.

Cc: Planning Board Members  
City Council Members  
Robert J. Slye, City Attorney  
Justin Wood, Civil Engineer II  
Patrick J. Scordo, P.E.