**STAFF ANALYSIS**

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| **STAFF PERSON:** | Ben Loppacker, Planner I |
| **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:** | November 18, 2026 |
| **PROJECT:** | SE-2026-00021 Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital Medical Office Building |
| **PARCEL IDs:** | 07800-00-00-020M4, 07800-00-00-031I0 |

**Proposed special exception to waive the 30-foot maximum front setback requirement in County Code § 18- 4.20.**

PROPOSAL

The applicant requests a special exception to waive the maximum front setback required by County Code § 18-4.20 as it applies to Parcel ID 07800-00-00-020M4 and Parcel ID 07800-00-00-031I0. The County Code requires commercial districts to have a maximum front setback of 30 feet. However, County Code § 18-4.20(A)(2) allows any maximum front setback to be increased by special exception to accommodate low impact design, unique parking or circulation plans, or a unique target market design.

Currently, the site has a Major Amendment under review (SDP-2026-00076) to construct a new three-story 90,000 square foot medical office building, improvements to the existing CAT bus stop, and associated parking with the proposed medical office building. This special exception request is for the new three-story medical office building to be set back up to 56.8 feet from Martha Jefferson Drive. The applicant is proposing for the new parking area to be between the daycare building and the right- of-way. The purpose of this configuration is to provide cohesive connectivity to the existing hospital building and parking structure and provide adequate covered pedestrian access to the adjacent hospital.

## CHARACTER OF THE AREA

Though the property is 13.39 acres in total, this proposed special exception would be limited to the proposed medical office building project area, which is approximately 2.18 acres. The property is zoned Planned Development Mixed Commercial ( PDMC) and is subject to ZMA200100015. The property has frontage on both Peter Jefferson Parkway and Martha Jefferson Drive. The surrounding area is all zoned PDMC, with existing commercial buildings were built prior to the County' s current commercial maximum setback requirement.

## ANALYSIS OF SPECIAL EXCEPTION REQUEST

Under County Code § 18-33.9(A), factors, standards, criteria, and findings, however denominated, in the applicable sections of the Zoning Ordinance, are to be considered in special exception applications. The Board of Supervisors does not need to make specific findings in order to approve this special exception. Though County Code § 18-4.20(A)(1) provides for an administrative increase in certain maximum front setbacks, not all of its criteria are met:

1. *The maximum front setback shall be increased to the depth necessary to avoid existing utilities, significant existing vegetation, steep slopes, perennial and intermittent streams, stream buffers, public spaces and public plazas shown as such on an approved site plan or subdivision plat, to satisfy a condition of a certificate of appropriateness, and in circumstances where there are multiple buildings on the same lot and prevailing development patterns. On any parcel with multiple main buildings, at least one main building shall meet the maximum setback.*

   The main hospital building located on the parcel does not meet the maximum setback. The prevailing building pattern within the PDMC is buildings set back farther than 30 feet from adjacent roads, with the majority being set back over 90 feet from adjacent right-of-way. This proposal would situate the proposed medical office building 56.8 feet away from Martha

Jefferson Parkway, which would be closer to meeting the maximum setback requirements of the PDMC district than the surrounding structures in the neighborhood.

A special exception may instead be considered under County Code § 18-4.20(A)(2):

2. *The maximum front setback may be increased by special exception to accommodate low impact design, unique parking or circulation plans, or a unique target market design.*

   The increase in maximum front setback may be achieved through a special exception. In this circumstance, existing circulation patterns and the location necessary for parking, given the medical office building use and need to provide covered pedestrian access from the proposed office building to the Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital, are sufficient circumstances to grant a special exception.

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**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment D) to approve a special exception to modify the front-maximum setback requirement on the subject parcel, with the following condition:

1. The maximum setback allowed by this modification is limited to 56.8 feet.