



CITY OF CONCORD
New Hampshire's Main Street™
Community Development Department
Planning Division

Staff Report for Planning Board

Meeting on August 20, 2025
Project Summary – Conditional Use Permit

Project: Concord Hospital Freestanding Wayfinding Signage (2025-075)
Property Owner: Capital Region Health Care Corporation
Applicant: Spectrum Signs & Graphics
Project Address: 250 Pleasant St
Tax Map Lot: 734Z 24

Determination of Completeness:

To determine completeness of a conditional use permit application without a companion site plan or subdivision application, the Board shall consider the requirements of Sections 14.02 and 36.14(1) of the Site Plan Regulations, the written recommendation of the Planning Division, and any written communications from the applicant, abutters, and parties of interest; **however, no hearing shall be opened nor shall testimony be received on a determination of completeness.** If it is determined that the application is complete, the Board shall then open the public hearing on said application. An application which is determined to be incomplete may be revised and resubmitted to a subsequent meeting of the Board for another determination of completeness.

The Planning Division reviewed the application for completeness based upon the criteria of the Site Plan Regulations and concluded that the application contains sufficient information and detail for a full review and action by the Board.

Based upon the Planning Division's review of the application, the Planning Division recommends that the Board move to:

- **Determine the application complete;**
- **State that the project does not meet the criteria for a development of regional impact per RSA 36:55; and**
- **Open the public hearing.**

Project Description:

As part of a comprehensive campus-wide wayfinding upgrade designed to improve public safety, traffic flow, and visitor experience, the applicant requests a conditional use permit to allow for an additional freestanding sign, pursuant to Section 28-6-9(c)(4) and Section 28-9-4(b) Conditional Use Permits, where there is more than one building on a lot, at 250 Pleasant Street, in the Institutional (IS) District. Both signs are in-kind replacements of existing signage and are situated at primary entry points to the campus.

Compliance:

The following analysis of compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and Site Plan Regulations is based on a 4-page narrative, submitted July 9, 2025; a 1-sheet Concord Hospital – Wayfinding Signage plan, dated

July 1, 2025, prepared by Spectrum Signs & Graphics; a 1-sheet FS-M-02-D Emergency Main Entrance Sign plan, dated April 16, 2025, with revisions through July 7, 2025, prepared by Spectrum Signs & Graphics; a 1-sheet FS-M-01-S 4-Way Main Entrance Sign plan, dated May 21, 2025, with revisions through June 18, 2025, prepared by Spectrum Signs & Graphics; and, 4 existing conditions photos submitted July 9, 2025.

1. Project Details and Zoning Ordinance Compliance:

Zoning District: Institutional (IS) District
Existing Use: Medical Facility/General Hospital
Proposed Use: No change
Overlay Districts:
Flood Hazard (FH) District: None
Shoreland Protection (SP) District: None (Per City GIS)
Historic (HI) District: None (Per City GIS)
Penacook Lake Watershed (WS) District: None (Per City GIS)
Aquifer Protection (AP) District: None (Per City GIS)
Wetland: None
Wetland buffers: None

Zoning Code Item	Required (IS)	Existing
Minimum Total Area	25,000 square feet	Information not provided
Minimum Buildable Land	1,250 square feet	Information not provided
Minimum Lot Frontage	150 feet	Information not provided
Minimum Front Yard	30 feet	Information not provided
Minimum Rear Yard	30 feet	Information not provided
Minimum Side Yard	25 feet	Information not provided
Maximum Lot Coverage	75%	Information not provided
Maximum Building Height	45 feet	Information not provided

- 1.1 The Planning Division conducted a zoning compliance review of the submittal and determined that the conditional use permit application for an additional freestanding sign is compliant with the Zoning Ordinance. Staff notes that both freestanding signs are proposed for internal illumination, which is not permitted in the Institutional District; however, a variance application was submitted on July 8, 2025, for a hearing by the Zoning Board of Adjustment on August 6, 2025, to allow for internally illuminated signage where it is not otherwise allowed.

2. General Comments:

- 2.1 Section 6.01(4) *Conformity with Zoning* requires compliance with the Zoning Ordinance at the time the abutter notifications were mailed. Staff notes that abutter notifications were sent on August 4, 2025. On July 8, 2025, the applicant applied for a variance application to allow internal illumination for the signs. The case was heard and approved by the Zoning Board of Adjustment on August 6, 2025.
- 2.2 Section 34.02 *Minimum Information* requires the fee, application, and narrative addressing the specific criteria for the use permit requested, as well as the general criteria for the issuance of a conditional use permit. The fee and application were submitted as required, and both the specific and general criteria for approval are addressed in Item 6 of this staff report.
- 2.3 Section 34.04 *Independent Application* states that where no subdivision or site plan approval would otherwise be required, the application and review procedure for conditional use permit

applications shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Site Plan Regulations for a minor site plan application with respect to the requirements for the submittal of abutters notices, public notice, determination of completeness, public hearings, and timing of decisions by the Planning Board. Section 34.05 *Application Requirements* immediately follows and provides the requirements for a complete application, stating that the requirements contained in Section 14.02 *Design Review Phase* shall be used to determine if conditional use permit applications without a companion site plan application are complete. Accordingly, staff utilized the procedures for a minor site plan application in the processing of the stand-alone conditional use permit application and requirements contained in Section 14.02 *Design Review Phase* in the review for determining completeness.

- 2.4 Section 34.05(4) authorizes the Clerk to determine that certain requirements of Section 14.02 may not be relevant for the particular circumstances of the site or proposed use, for which a conditional use permit is requested. There are a number of items missing from the site plan. However, given that the application is only for a conditional use permit to allow for a second additional freestanding sign where there are multiple buildings on a lot, most of the required information is irrelevant. The irrelevant items are noted below.

- Section 12.01(1)(b) *Title Block* name and address of owner;
- Section 12.01(1)(d) name, address, and seal of the licensed professionals who prepared the plan;
- Section 12.02(2) *Scale*;
- Section 12.03 *Plan Certification*;
- Section 12.04 *Location Plan*;
- Section 12.05 *Vicinity Plan*;
- Section 12.06 *Plan References*;
- Section 12.07 *Wetland Delineations*;
- Section 14.02(2) *Project Statement*;
- Section 14.02(3)(a);
- Section 14.02(3)(b)(i),(ii), (iv), (v), (vii), (ix), (x), and (xi);
- Section 14.02(3)(c), (d), and (e);
- Section 14.02(4) (a), (b), (e), (f), (g); and
- Section 14.02(5) *Site Utility and Drainage Layout Plan*

3. Site Plan Regulations Determination of Completeness:

The items below are missing from the submittal and **the Site Plan Regulations REQUIRE the items for the application to be deemed complete (unless a waiver from the requirement is otherwise approved).**

- 3.1 The required information is present, partially present enough for review, or not relevant to the application as noted in Item 2.4 above, thus allowing for the application to be deemed complete.

Site Plan Regulations Compliance:

The submittal was found to be compliant with all other sections of the Site Plan Regulations except as listed below, noting that the items below are missing as required for full compliance but are **not required for the determination of completeness.**

- 3.2 The title block on the 1-sheet Concord Hospital – Wayfinding Signage plan; the 1-sheet FS-M-02-D Emergency Main Entrance Sign plan; and, the 1-sheet FS-M-01-S 4-Way Main Entrance Sign plan, are all listed as page 1. These sheets need to be considered as though they are a 3-sheet plan set, and shall be numbered with the wayfinding signage plan left as page 1, and the other two listed sequentially as page 2 and page 3 in the title block accordingly.

- 3.3 Provide the Planning Board Approval Block on the 1-sheet, wayfinding signage plan. Staff can provide a template as a .pdf, .dwg, or .jpg, if requested.



4. Variances:

- 4.1 A variance to permit internally illuminated signage where it is otherwise not allowed was granted by the Zoning Board of Adjustment on August 6, 2025.
- 4.2 A variance to permit 85.75 square feet of freestanding signage where only 40 square feet is allowed was granted by the Zoning Board of Adjustment on August 6, 2025.

5. Waivers:

- 5.1 No waivers are requested.

6. Conditional Use Permits:

- 6.1 The applicant requests approval for a conditional use permit pursuant to Section 28-6-9(c)(4) and Section 28-9-4(b) *Conditional Use Permits* of the Zoning Ordinance to allow an additional freestanding sign where more than one building is on a lot.

The applicant addressed the required criteria for Section 28-9-4(b) *Conditional Use Permits* as follows:

- A. The use is specifically authorized in this ordinance as a conditional use;

Review: The applicant states: “Per Section 28-6-9(c)(4), additional freestanding signage is permitted on a lot with multiple buildings through the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit.”
Staff concurs with the applicant’s finding.

- B. If completed as proposed by the applicant, the development in its proposed location will comply with the requirements of this article, and with the specific conditions of standards established in this ordinance for the particular use;

Review: The applicant states: “the proposed signage supports the intent of the Ordinance by maintaining an orderly and efficient signage system while enhancing the safety and clarity of traffic circulation within a complex medical campus. It also aligns with Master Plan objectives regarding accessibility, safety, and public infrastructure.”. **Staff notes that the application, as proposed, would not comply with the standards established by the ordinance. However, on August 6, 2025, the applicant went before the Zoning Board of Adjustment and received two variances: to allow internal illumination, and to allow for a greater amount of freestanding sign area. With the received variances, staff concurs that the proposed application, if completed, will comply with the requirements of both this article, and the ordinance.**

- C. The use will not materially endanger the public health or safety;

Review: The applicant states: "...these signs are being installed to reduce traffic confusion and improve navigation, particularly for emergency vehicles and first-time visitors. **Staff concurs with the applicant's finding.**

- D. The use will be compatible with the neighborhood and with adjoining or abutting uses in the area in which it is to be located;

Review: The applicant states: "the signs are in-kind replacements of existing signage that has long been part of the campus infrastructure." **Staff concurs with the applicant's findings.**

- E. The use will not have an adverse effect on highway or pedestrian safety;

Review: The applicant states "Improved signage contributes positively to public safety and user experience." **Staff concurs with the applicant's finding.**

- F. The use will not have an adverse effect on the natural, environmental, and historic resources of the City;

Review: The applicant states: "no new disturbance to wetlands, streams, or surface water features; the signs are to be installed in existing landscaped areas and do not impact natural buffers, high-slope zones, or conservation land; and, no changes to topography or grading are proposed. **Staff concurs with the applicant's findings.**

- G. The use will be adequately serviced by necessary public utilities and by community facilities and services of a sufficient capacity to ensure the proper operation of the proposed use, and will not necessitate excessive public expenditures to provide facilities and services with sufficient additional capacity.

Review: The applicant states: "existing utilities, structures, curb cuts, and vehicular access points have been accounted for in the sign placement. **Staff concurs with the applicant's findings.**

7. Architectural Design Review:

- 7.1 At the meeting held on August 5, 2025, the Architectural Design Review Committee recommended that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted with the following conditions: that an opaque background be placed behind the "Langley Parkway" panel on SP-0612-2025 in accordance with Section 5.4(C) of the architectural design guidelines; a suggestion that the text "Langley Parkway" panel on SP-0612-2025 be replaced with "Main Entrance"; and, a suggestion that the wayfinding arrows be big enough to be recognizable.

8. Conservation Commission:

- 8.1 Conservation Commission review is not required for this application.

9. Recommendations:

- 9.1 Staff recommends that the Planning Board **adopt the findings of fact**, which include information provided in staff reports; the applicant's submission materials; testimony provided during the public hearing; and/or other documents or materials provided in the public hearing.

Based on the adopted findings of fact, staff recommends that the Planning Board makes the motion outlined below:

- 9.2 **Grant conditional use permit approval** to allow a second freestanding sign at Tax Map Lot 734Z 24, addressed as 250 Pleasant Street, based on the evidence provided showing that the

criteria of Section 28-9-4(b) have been, or will be met, with the following precedent and subsequent conditions:

(a) **Precedent Conditions** – to be fulfilled within two years and prior to signature of the conditional use permit plat by the Chair and Clerk of the Planning Board, unless otherwise specified.

1. Revise the conditional use permit plat as follows:

a. The page number in the title block of the wayfinding signage plan left shall be left as page 1, while the page number in the title block of the Emergency Main Entrance Sign plan and the 4-Way Main Entrance plan shall be numbered sequentially as pages 2 and 3 respectively.

b. Provide the Planning Board Approval Block on the 1-sheet, wayfinding signage plan.

2. Upon notification from the Planning Division that the project complies with the precedent conditions, Zoning Ordinance, and Site Plan Regulations, deliver to the Planning Division for signature one full-size or 11x17 conditional use permit plan set.

(b) **Subsequent Conditions**

1. The applicant is responsible for compliance with the municipal code, Site Plan Regulations, and Construction Standards and Details, including obtaining necessary variances, waivers, and conditional use permits.

Prepared by: ATB