



**Design Review Board
Regular Meeting
June 11, 2025, 9:00 AM**

Agenda

1. Call to Order

- 1.1. Attendees, please use meeting courtesy. Virtual attendees are asked to mute microphones when joining the meeting. Participants may be muted by the Town Clerk and meetings will be recorded.

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the public has the right to view/listen to the discussion only. At their discretion, the Finance Committee may allow participants to voice questions or provide comments on the topics under discussion. Written comments may be submitted via email to Legislative@townoflaplata.org. Individuals wishing to address the Town Council may sign up in advance on the Town's website (Public Communications) or on the meeting sign-up sheet.

Click the link below to join the meeting:

[Join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 288 211 854 181

Passcode: G3mXgo

1.2. Call to Order

1.3. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Approval of Minutes

- 2.1. Approval of minutes from meeting on March 12, 2025

3. Matters of Discussion and Review

- 3.1. DRB-0001-2025 Starlite Media Electronic Messaging Display

4. Matters of Information

4.1. Staff Report

4.2. Town Council Report

5. Adjourn

- 5.1. Adjournment



TOWN OF LA PLATA

**305 Queen Anne Street
Post Office Box 2268
La Plata, Maryland 20646**

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

DATE: June 11, 2025

TO: Honorable Chair and Members of the Design Review Board

FROM: Don Dooley, Director of Planning

APPLICANT: Starlite Media

OWNER: Phillips Edison

PROJECT LOCATION: 100 Shining Willow Way, La Plata, Maryland (La Plata Plaza)

SUBJECT: **DRB 01-2025**

REQUEST: To amend the Common Sign Plan for the La Plata Plaza (North) Shopping Center for the purpose of legalizing the installation of two (2), previously installed, electronic reader boards in the Shopping Center.

BACKGROUND

The property owner previously installed two (2) electronic messaging boards/signs within the La Plata Plaza (North) Shopping Center in late 2023/early 2024 without the benefit of permits. The La Plata Code Enforcement Department subsequently issued a *Notice of Violation* to the management of the La Plata Plaza (North) Shopping Center on February 21, 2024. The Shopping Center Management was advised that the signage must either be removed, or they must obtain permits from the town of La Plata for their installation and use. However, since the electronic messaging boards/signs are not identified as authorized signage in the La Plata Plaza (North) Common Sign Plan, the property owner elected to modify their Common Sign Plan for the Center to permit their use and operation. DRB 01-2025 was subsequently submitted to the Town, by the property owner's sign contractor (Starlite Media), in January 2025 for the Design Review Board's review and consideration.

DISCUSSION

Both electronic messaging boards/signs (Signs "A" and "B") are 62-7/16-inches high by 35-inches wide (16.33 square feet). Both signs are flush mounted against the masonry

wall of the La Plata Plaza (North) Shopping Center. Sign "A" is located at the northern corner of the center, adjacent to Little Cesar's Pizza. Sign "B" is located between the

Safeway Supermarket and the Mattress Warehouse tenant (see Exhibit "A" in the applicant's amended Common Sign Program).

Under the draft revisions to the Common Sign Plan for the La Plata Plaza (North) Shopping Center, the applicant is proposing to add *Section IX (Shopping Center Electronic Messaging Displays)*. No other changes are proposed to the document. As drafted, Section IX reads as follows:

"IX. Shopping Center Electronic Messaging Displays

Electronic Messaging Displays may be installed in La Plata Plaza to support the Plaza and its tenants by displaying critical public messaging (health, safety, weather, and emergency alerts), public and community service announcements, a plaza directory, tenant/plaza promotions, advertisements for goods and services sold in La Plata Plaza and other related messaging to encouraging shopping at La Plata Plaza changing no less than every five minutes and shall be allowed as follows.

1. Type. The Electronic Messaging Displays will be installed on the walls and blend in with the current architecture of La Plata Plaza. The Electronic Messaging Displays will not interfere with or clash with current tenants and Plaza signage and will only be illuminated during business hours of La Plata Plaza. The illumination brightness will comply with all the Town of La Plata requirements.

2. Number and Size. No more than two (2) Electronic Messaging Displays will be installed at La Plata Plaza. Each Electronic Messaging Display will be sized appropriately for internal La Plata Plaza messaging (sixty-two and seven 16th inches in length and a width of 35 inches) not to exceed sixteen- and one-half square feet of surface area per Electronic Messaging Display.

3. Location. The Electronic Messaging Displays shall be integrated into the design of the La Plata Plaza and be installed on the walls in strategic locations, which are subject to the following provisions:

A. The Electronic Messaging Displays will be installed in full compliance with ADA, existing tenant signage restrictions and any other signage regulations.

B. The Electronic Messaging Displays are subject to the owner's approval prior to installation and any future relocation.

C. The Electronic Messaging Displays shall be located as shown on the attached applicant's site plan (Exhibit "A") hereinafter incorporated by reference.

D. Any future relocation of the approved electronic messaging boards shall be reviewed and approved by the La Plata Director of Planning, prior to relocation, to ensure compatibility with the design of the La Plata Plaza and consistency with the provisions of the Common Sign Plan for La Plata Plaza.

E. If any Electronic Messaging Displays are removed, the applicant shall be responsible

for repairing all holes and any damage to the walls because of the Electronic Messaging Displays being affixed to the building. The repair work shall be inspected and approved by the La Plata Director of Planning.

4. The Electronic Messaging Displays will be installed so that they are not viewable by adjacent properties and shall be oriented for viewing within the La Plata Plaza.

5. The Electronic Messaging Displays will not have moving graphics or pictures which could distract drivers.”

ANALYSIS

As proposed, both electronic messaging boards are intended to be used to display public messages (i.e., health, safety, weather, and emergency alerts), public and community service announcements, a plaza directory, tenant/plaza promotions, advertisements for goods and services sold in La Plata Plaza and other related messaging to encourage shopping at La Plata Plaza. The electronic signs will not change messages less than every five (5) minutes to prevent any pedestrian or vehicular distraction caused by the signs.

At present, staff is unaware of any electronic messaging boards/signs in Town that are being used within a shopping center in a similar fashion as the applicant's proposal. However, under Article VIII, Section 191-68 (Prohibited signs) of the La Plata Sign Ordinance, there is no affirmative provision that prohibits such signage. The only “suggested” reference to changeable copy signs is stated in the Town's Community Design Guidelines on Page 15 (Limits of Illumination). It states, in part,

“The light from any illuminated sign or from any light source, including the interior of a building, should be so shaded, shielded or directed that the light intensity or brightness will not adversely affect surrounding or facing premises, nor adversely affect safe vision of operators of vehicles moving on public or private roads, highways or parking areas. Light shall not shine or reflect onto residential properties.

Generally, signs that have blinking, flashing or fluttering lights, or other illuminating devices which have a changing light intensity, brightness or color, or which are so constructed and operated as to create an appearance or illusion of writing or printing, are not permitted. An exception may be made by the DRB, particularly for movement showing the date, time and temperature [emphasis added]. Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as preventing the use of lights or decorations related to religious and patriotic festivities. Beacon lights or search lights will not be permitted as a sign or for advertising purposes.

No exposed reflective type bulbs and no strobe lights or incandescent lamps which exceed fifteen (15) watts should be used on the exterior surface of any sign so as to expose the fact of the bulb, light or lamp to any public street or adjacent property.”

Although an electronic messaging board/sign inherently creates the physical *“illusion of writing or printing,”* staff believes that the applicant’s messaging boards/signs will not distract pedestrians or vehicular traffic, nor will they cause any, adverse, impact to the aesthetics of the Shopping Center given their location. Staff’s reasoning is that both messaging boards/signs will only change copy every five (5) minutes, the signs are limited in size (16 square feet) and they are not located within the parking lot of the Shopping Center to cause distractions. Likewise, there will be no moving graphics/pictures displayed on the message boards/signs. The messaging boards/signs will also be setback at least 75 to 100 feet from any public right-of-way to avoid vehicular distractions. Lastly, staff has suggested a condition of approval that the messaging boards/signs do not exceed an illumination intensity equal to 15 watts, consistent with the Community Design Guidelines for an illuminated sign surface.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Design Review Board approve DRB 01-2025, with conditions.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- 1) Suggested Conditions of Approval for MSP 01-2025
- 2) Amended Common Sign Program (with Exhibit “A”) for the La Plata (North) Shopping Center)
- 3) Messaging Board/Sign Detail

ATTACHMENT NO.1

SUGGESTED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR MSP 01-2025 (LA PLATA PLAZA (NORTH) SHOPPING CENTER COMMON SIGN PROGRAM

- 1) All previously approved version(s) of the La Plata Plaza (North) Shopping Center shall be deemed null and void and shall be replaced with the approved Common Sign Plan approved by the La Plata Design Review Board on June 11, 2025.
- 2) The applicant shall obtain all necessary building and electrical permits for both electronic messaging board/signs installed in the La Plata (North) Shopping Center prior to the operation of each sign.
- 3) The applicant shall demonstrate to the Director of Planning that the lighting intensity of the electronic messaging boards shall not exceed an illumination intensity equal to 15 watts, consistent with the La Plata Community Design Guidelines. The Common Sign Program shall be amended to include this provision under Section IX (Shopping Center Electronic Messaging Displays) prior to the issuance of any permits for the messaging boards/signs.
- 4) The property owner shall content, in writing, to these conditions of approval prior to the issuance of any permits for the legal installation and use of any of the approved electronic messaging boards/signs.

-END-

Common Sign Plan Application

Design Review Board Approved: _____

Property Name and Address:

La Plata Plaza North Shopping Center
100 Shining Willow Way
La Plata, MD 20646

Phillips Edison and Company (PECO) in conjunction with the Town of La Plata has established a comprehensive sign plan for all tenants and owners within the property of La Plata Plaza North Shopping Center (La Plata Plaza) at 100 Shining Willow Way, La Plata Maryland.

This document contains the information and specifications for signage allowable under the current Town of La Plata, Maryland Sign Code. Specifically, Section 191-70 Common Sign Plans". Any sign type allowed by the Town Code not stated in this Common sign plan may be approved if it meets the common elements in the plan and is approved by the owner.

I. Purpose

This plan was established to provide all tenants and property owners with La Plata Plaza , a cohesive plan for the style and uniformity of their signs. This plan will allow tenants and property owners of La Plata Plaza to identify their property with signage expressing their individuality and brand within parameters defined by PECO and the Town of La Plata. This will ensure that all the signs within La Plata Plaza maintain consistency enhancing the overall appearance of the Plaza.

II. Property

La Plata Plaza North is located at the NEC of Shining Way and Route 301 in La Plata Md. There is one entrance directly into the property from Rt. 301 and two (2) entrances from Shining Way. There are two (2) separate out lots on the property, each with their own, independent freestanding building. There is a 25,600 square foot multiple unit retail building towards the rear of the property.

III. Detached Property Signage

A detached, property identification pylon sign is placed at the main entrance to the shopping plaza along Rt. 301 and will consist of one double-faced, 20' tall, freestanding structure which may be up to 100 square feet of signage. It is placed on the Southeast corner of the entrance of Shining Way. Tenant panel lettering to be 8" tall, 2157 red with 7328 white background, single line and center justified.

IV. Directory Signage

1. A two to three tenant directory sign listing the tenant of the out lots. It is placed on the Southeast corner of the entrance of Shining Willow Way. Tenant panel lettering to be 8" tall, 2157 red with 7328 white background, single line and center justified.
2. Each commercial business tenant is entitled to a tenant panel area on the property monument sign (Double Sided Monument Sign). Each tenant panel lettering will be 8" tall, 2157 red with 7328 white background, single line and center justified.

V. Building Signage

1. Multiple unit retail building: The 25,600 square feet building along the rear of the property, currently designated for multiple retail units, may be allowed one square foot of signage for each linear foot of leased building frontage which may be up to 75 square feet per Town Sign Regulation, Commercial Highway District, Town of La Plata.
2. Tenants building sign must be located at the main entrance doorway to the tenant space, if they comply with the standards of this plan, or if already created, comply with the standards of the previous sign plan and the Town of La Plata Sign Code.
3. Out lots: Each freestanding building on an out lot may be allowed up to 75 square feet of the building signage per Town Code, Sign Regulation, Commercial Highway District, Town of La Plata.

VI. Static Sign Guidelines:

1. Materials: All signage shall be manufactured using a combination of natural and composite materials as necessary. Sign face material will typically be manufactured in an aluminum faced composite material with acrylic or vinyl applied. Supports can be made of metal or wood materials.
2. Color Scheme: Property identification and attached signage will be limited to three (3) colors (2157 red, 2114 blue, and 2447 white) except for where its colors are included as part of a federally registered trademark. The return color and face trim cap is factory finished gloss black. The acrylic face color is 2157 red, 2114 blue, 2447 white vs. beige.
3. Lighting: All building signage for single tenant and multi-tenant buildings must be internally illuminated, face lit-channel letters, logos, shapes, and is to be constructed of aluminum with translucent acrylic faces.
4. Lettering: Lettering will be 12" to 30" in height. Letter style/font may match the tenant's federally registered trademark design. If the tenant does not have a federally registered trademark design, the letter style will be of an all-upper case Helvetica block style font. If a tenant has a logo/emblem incorporating face colors, the logo/emblem may be displayed as part of the tenants allotted signage as long as:

- A. The primary channel letter signage follows all the criteria listed above.
- B. The logo/emblem may be up to 35% of the total sq. footage used by the tenant for signage.
- C. The logo/emblem's trim and returns are factory finished gloss black.

5. Additional guidelines for tenants in the multi-unit retail building:

Tenants in the multi-unit retail building must install their signage on self-contained raceways painted to match the color of background façade. Their signage must be centered in the designated sign band area over their individual unit. The maximum letter height of signs for single unit tenants is 24", 30" for multi-unit tenants. The sides of any sign cannot be within 12' of the lease line. If a tenant occupies more than one unit, the sign must be centered in the designated sign band area between two columns closest to their main entrance. Rear service doors will have tenant name and address placed at a standard height of 5'-9" from final grade in one consistent color, black or white, not to exceed 1 square foot.

VII. Additional Sign Requirements:

- 1. Establishment of allowable area of signage for existing and future tenants: Signage area shall be determined by the Owner and in accordance with Town of La Plata Code limitations.
- 2. Non-Compliant Signs: All non-compliant signs will be brought into compliance when a new tenant is proposed or when a tenant is proposed or when a tenant replaces a sign, as well as the amount and location of on-premises signage to be allocated to each tenant under the plan.

VIII. Sign Application Guidelines:

- 1. Sign applications must be approved by PECO prior to submittal to the Town of La Plata. The PECO sign permit process does not take the place of or release the applicant from Town of La Plata sign permit requirements, and the Design Review Board (DRB) process. No sign may be installed prior to first receiving approval from PECO and then the Town of La Plata.
- 2. The PECO sign application must include the following items:

A. Certificate of Insurance:

The contractor responsible for installing the new signage must provide a certificate of liability insurance including workers compensation, which meets PECO's required limits. The certificate must be named Phillips Edison & Company Ltd. and the landlord's designated legal entities as additional insured entities.

B. The Sign Plan

- 1. The sign plan must include a detailed drawing on the letterhead of a sign company/architect/contractor or tenant and include the e-mail address, phone number, and contact name of the installer.

2. The drawing must show the dimensions of the façade sign band, and the signage as located on the façade sign band meeting the required placements and setbacks as outlined above.
3. The drawing must include a side view mounting detail, indicating UL approved raceway, photocell operated internal illumination, voltage and location of the junction box. The drawing should be color or indicate all colors as proposed for the sign.
4. The drawing must note the number of penetrations into the façade required to support the sign. Damage caused by the sign may be deducted from the tenant's deposit. Any damage more than the deposit shall be the tenants responsibility.
5. All sign plans must include dimensions, location and color.

C. Signage approval or denial

1. Tenant or tenant's contractor will receive written notification of approval or denial of their PECO signage permit.
2. Denied permits will specifically outline the areas of noncompliance and must be resubmitted for further review and approval.
3. Approved permits are approved for installation. The installer must contact the PECO regional manager to coordinate the installation. A copy of the drawings, stamped and approved by the regulatory authority, should be submitted to PECO when available.
4. All signage must be installed prior to opening.
5. Approved signage must be installed no later than 30 days after the turnover of space. Failure to install the sign within 90 days of turnover of space will require reapplication.

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Attachments:

Submitted Common Sign Plan for La Plata Plaza

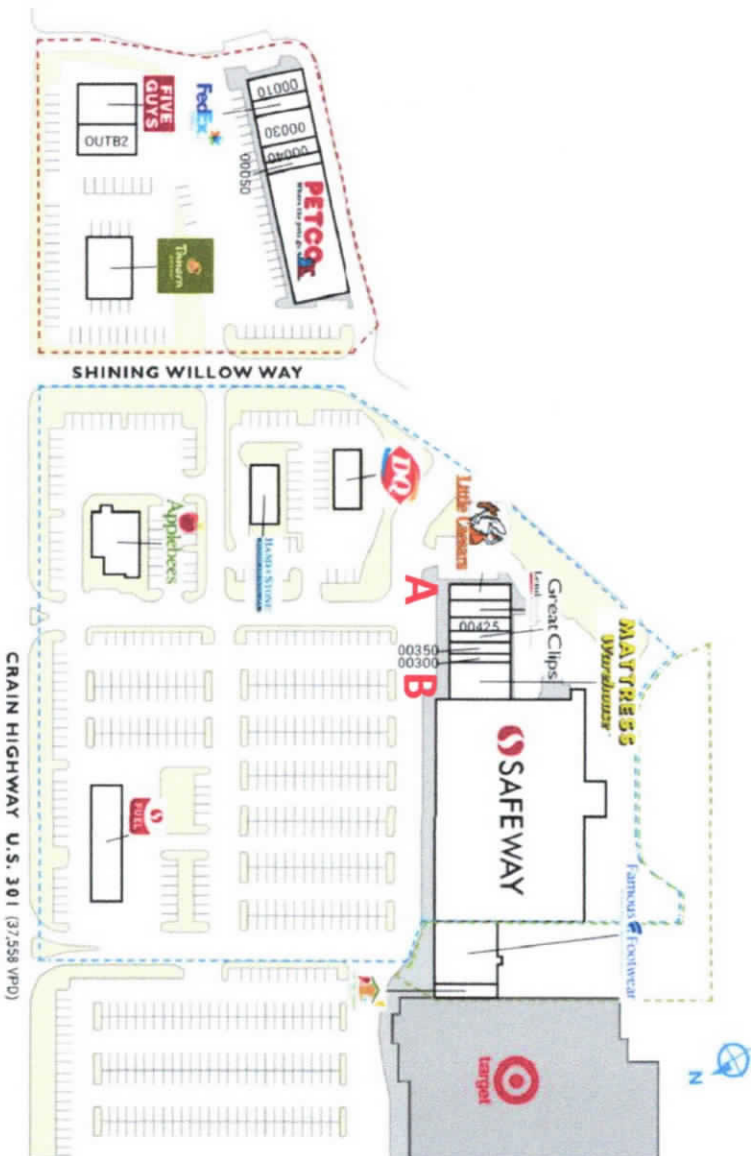
Exhibit A

LAPLATA PLAZA

301 Shining Willow Way | La Plata, MD 20646

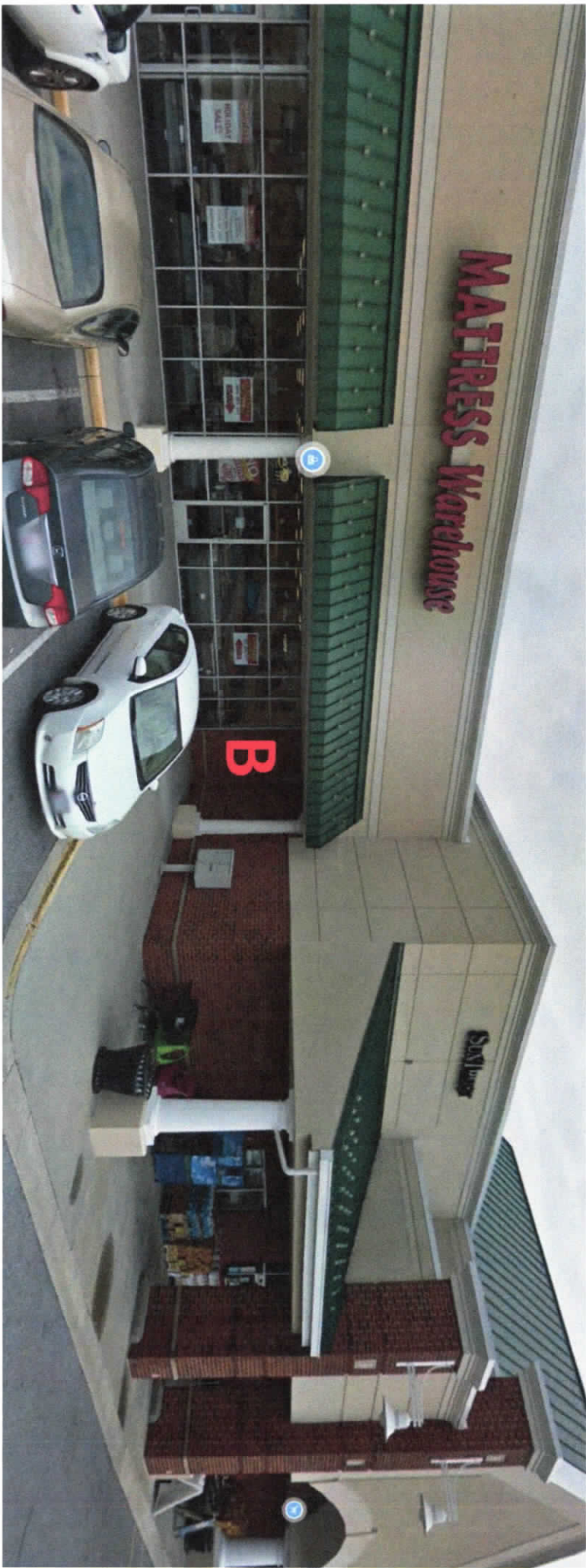
SPACE	TENANT	SQ. FT.
FUEL	Safeway Fuel	
OUT1	Applebee's	5,200 SF
OUT2	Hand & Stone Massage and Facial Spa	3,000 SF
OUT3	Dairy Queen	2,500 SF
OUTB1	Five Guys	2,500 SF
OUTB2	Horizon Family Dental Care of La Plata	1,900 SF
SHADI	Target	
00010	Cellular Connection	2,400 SF
00020	FedEx Office	2,000 SF
00030	Ka'riibbean Fire	3,200 SF
00040	LabCorp	1,800 SF
00050	MY Nails Salon LLC	1,200 SF
00060	Petco	15,000 SF
00070	Panera Bread	5,000 SF
00080	Wild Birds Unlimited	1,400 SF
00090	Famous Footwear	6,600 SF
00100	Safeway	57,860 SF
00200	Mattress Warehouse	4,000 SF
00300	Dragon Nails	880 SF
00350	The UPS Store	1,120 SF
00400	Great Clips	1,200 SF
00425	MyEyeDr.	1,600 SF
00450	Lendmark Financial Services	1,600 SF
00500	Little Caesars	1,600 SF
TOTAL SQ. FT.		123,561

- SITE LEGEND**
- Available
 - Leased (not occupied)
 - Site Boundary
 - Occupied
 - Owned by Others



DISCLAIMER - This site plan is for general information purposes only and is not intended to constitute representations and warranties by Landlord as to the ownership of the real property depicted herein or the identity or nature of any occupants thereof.





ATTACHMENT 3

Rosewick Crossing Shopping Center Smart Board Dimensions

