



29 S. State Street Westerville, Ohio 43081

# MEMO

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**TO: Westerville Planning Commission**

**DATE: 2/18/2021**

**RE: Treatment Facility**

Members of the Planning Commission should be aware that the applicant's use creates specific challenges which might not be addressed in the proposed application. The below issues are based on our department's collective professional training, knowledge, and experience. For these reasons, the Police Department objects to granting the proposed application as submitted.

By definition, in-patient substance abuse rehabilitation centers are occupied by people struggling with addiction. In our experience, these uses attract additional people struggling with addiction to the area. The applicant has not stated how clients will enter this rehabilitation facility – whether clients will be court-ordered, family-initiated, or voluntarily accepted. Involuntarily admitted clients may have a higher incidence of walking away from the property. Even some voluntarily admitted clients may believe they have completed treatment before a professional has determined that they have done so and walk away.

Similarly, the applicant has not stated their discharge procedures. While some facilities involuntarily hold clients until a pre-appointed turnover to another care provider or family, other facilities may discharge clients to the street front without transportation to another area.

Discharged and walk-away clients may walk into adjacent properties while still under the influence of the drugs for which they were admitted or treatments administered on-site. The walk-away could be looking for money, transportation, drugs, or other criminal activity. The immediately adjacent properties to this specific site include single family residential, a day care, a church, and a nursing home. The site is also in close proximity to an elementary school and a park, both of which are situated in residential neighborhoods. These adjacent uses are not only unprepared for, but also

uniquely susceptible to disturbances and harm by walk-away clients. Similar facilities also generate frequent police runs for disturbances. Although the police department is planning to move to the immediately adjacent building, responding officers are on patrol throughout the city, and not always in the police station. Allowing this property on this site creates unique burdens for the police department in that the public will expect immediate responses to the adjacent building, yet this is not possible with common police practices. The applicant has also not provided any information on additional security, whether by onsite staff or outside contractors.

In our professional experience, similar uses have lesser impacts when they are located in entirely commercial areas – areas with more business activity and further removed from the aforementioned neighborhood uses. For these reasons, the Police Division strongly objects to the use as proposed on this site. For most treatment facilities and even emergency rooms it is not a question of if you have walk-aways; it is a question of how often. Questions ahead of the meeting can be directed to staff for response.