

**TOWN OF MANCHESTER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

TO: Maria Cruz, Town Clerk

FROM: Megan Pilla, Principal Development Planner *MP*

DATE: April 23, 2024

RE: Proposed Zoning Regulation Amendment (REG-0002-2024)
Signage for Medical Services

Hartford HealthCare Corporation proposes to amend the Town zoning regulations to add a subsection to Article IV, Section 13 to permit a limited exception to the maximum signage limitation for medical services.

Enclosed, please find a copy of the proposed text changes, the submitted narrative, and 2 copies of the legal notice for the May 6, 2024 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting at which this application will be discussed.

Please date stamp this memo, as well as one copy of the enclosed legal notice, and return them to the Planning Department for our records.

mp/kw

Encls.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT
TO MANCHESTER ZONING REGULATIONS**

**Hartford HealthCare
March 2024**

New text is shown in *bold & italics*
No text has been deleted

ARTICLE IV GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 13 SIGNS¹

(NEW) 13.10.06.04 Medical clinic, medical office and medical services building adjoining or abutting across the street a restricted access highway and zoned General Business may erect a wall sign facing the restricted access highway and not exceeding 200 square feet.

¹ Repealed and replaced with new version 1/4/16; effective 1/25/16



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Hartford
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March 21, 2024

Mr. Eric Prause, Chairman, and Commission Members
Manchester Planning and Zoning Commission
Town of Manchester
494 Main Street, PO Box 191
Manchester, CT 06045

Re: Zone Text Amendment: Application to Amend Article VI, Section 13 of the Zoning Regulations; Hartford HealthCare Wall Signage, 376 Tolland Turnpike, Manchester

Dear Chair Prause and Commission Members:

On behalf of our client, Hartford HealthCare Corporation (“HHC”), we are pleased to submit the enclosed application to amend Article VI, Section 13 of the Town of Manchester Zoning Regulations (the “Regulations”) to allow certain signage for medical care facilities located along limited access highways in a manner similar to motels and gasoline service stations. HHC is filing this application in connection with proposed updated signage for its facility at 376 Tolland Turnpike to increase its visibility and presence in the community.

HHC enhances access to healthcare throughout Connecticut. Its care-delivery network offers a unified high standard of care in crucial specialties at hospital and ambulatory healthcare centers, such as in Manchester, located in towns and cities across Connecticut. HHC’s Manchester location at 376 Tolland Turnpike provides a range of medical services to Manchester residents and patients. HHC’s healthcare centers are an essential component of its health care delivery network and making sure healthcare center locations are clearly marked with signage easily visible and known to the public is, of course, an equally important requirement.

Under Manchester’s existing signage requirements in the Zoning Regulations, HHC is limited to a maximum wall sign area of 32 square feet because its building is located in the General Business zone and within 50 feet of the street (Tolland Turnpike). *See* Regulations § 13.01.01. But for the setback limitation, HHC could otherwise have a sign area of up to 456 square feet based on the linear footage of the face of the building. As a result, HHC currently has a small wall sign with very low visibility. *See Exhibit A* (photos obtained from Google maps street view depicting the low visibility of the current HHC sign).

We understand the intent of the setback limitation on sign size as applied to typical properties oriented across the street from each other, for example; however, HHC's site is unusual because there are no other parcels between it and I-84, but it technically does not "adjoin" I-84 because Tolland Turnpike intervenes. *See Exhibit B* (aerial parcel view showing the location of the intervening Tolland Turnpike). Manchester's existing sign regulations provide several exceptions to various signage requirements for certain uses that "adjoin" restricted access highways, such as I-84. For example, motels and gasoline service stations are allowed to have larger free-standing signs that would otherwise be permitted if the parcel were "adjoining" the highway. These exceptions make sense because they provide useful information to the public for the location of these services and the signs are situated along the highway corridor. Medical services are similar, if not more important, services, and there is a public interest in knowing and easily finding the location of such services.

HHC would like to replace a portion of its current sign with a similar wall sign to aid patients and the general public. *See Exhibit C* (example of 120.5 square foot draft wall sign). HHC previously applied for a variance for relief from the 32-foot maximum sign area limit. Even though the HHC property is essentially abutting I-84, except for the intervening Tolland Turnpike, the Zoning Board of Appeals denied the variance application for lack of hardship. As a result, we are proposing a text amendment to the Regulations that would provide a very limited, but worthy, exception to the maximum signage limitation for medical services located in a manner that would not interfere with the intent of the existing setback requirement.

Specifically, we propose the following, narrowly-tailored text amendment of the exception:

(NEW) Article IV, Section 13.10.06.04: Medical clinic, medical office and medical services building adjoining or abutting across the street a restricted access highway and zoned General Business may erect a wall sign facing the restricted access highway and not exceeding 200 square feet.

Pursuant to Section 8-3 of the Connecticut General Statutes, we submit that the proposed amendment is consistent with the purposes of the Regulations and will advance the goals and objectives stated in the Manchester Plan of Conservation and Development ("POCD"). In particular, recognizing that the healthcare industry employs the vast majority of Manchester residents and is a leading job sector in Manchester, *see* POCD at 42, and that the healthcare "sector is likely to continue to grow," POCD at 50, the POCD reflects a stated goal of "retain[ing] existing industry clusters in...healthcare[.]" POCD at 51. Similarly, recognizing the importance of access to healthcare, the POCD contains several stated goals relating to public services, including healthcare, encouraging investment in the public service infrastructure. *See* POCD at 92-95. Overall, the POCD recognizes the importance of the healthcare industry to Manchester, and thus encourages supporting the healthcare industry.

Mr. Eric Prause, Chairman

March 21, 2024

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The proposed text amendment will advance the goals of the POCD by allowing HHC to enhance its presence in the community, thereby allowing it to grow and continue to support the needs of Manchester and its residents. The change will enhance Manchester's reputation as an attractive location to healthcare providers seeking locations for their facilities.

Please keep in mind that if you approve our text amendment application, the Commission will not be allowing a broad exemption, rather, it will be furthering the purpose of the Regulations to ensure that signage is "sufficient for the uses intended[]" and "necessary to protect the public safety, convenience and property values." Regulations § 13.01.

We look forward to presenting this application to the Commission at its earliest possible meeting. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Matthew Ranelli

Matthew Ranelli

Enclosures

cc: David Webber, Esq., Senior Counsel, Hartford HealthCare (via email)
Jason Laabs, Hartford HealthCare (via email)

EXHIBIT A
Street View from Tolland Turnpike



Street View from I-84 East



EXHIBIT B

Parcel View

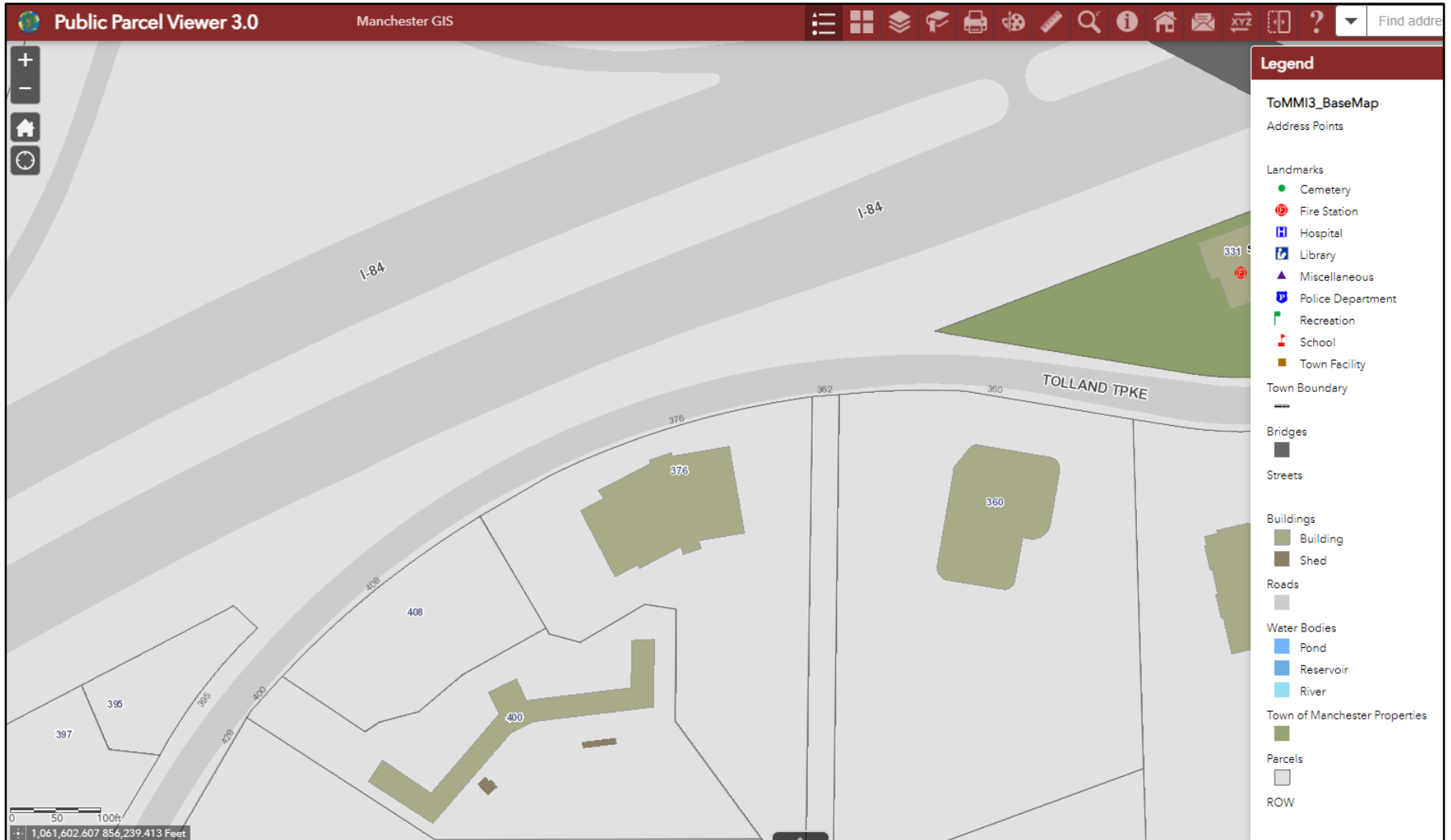


EXHIBIT C

Example of 120.5 Square Foot Draft Wall Sign

QTY-1

Sign Specifications

Code:

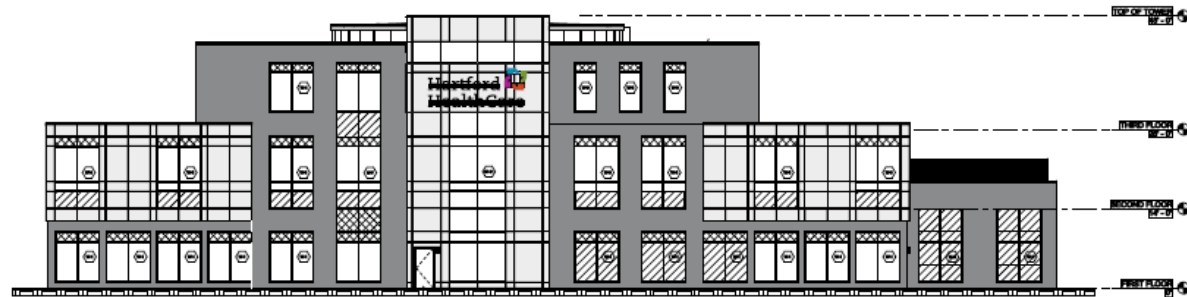
Based on allowances (please see previous page) and GIS notes:
152 If frontage equals to a total allowance of **456 sqft of signage**.

Rear Elevation:

Existing Sign: 120.5 sqft
(to Remain)
Balance = 335.5 sqft

Front Elevation:

Proposed Sign: 120.5 sqft
(same as rear)
Remain SF or Surplus = 215 sqft



**TOWN OF MANCHESTER
LEGAL NOTICE**

The Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing on May 6, 2024 at 7:00 P.M., both virtually and in person in the Lincoln Center Hearing Room, 494 Main Street, Manchester, Connecticut, to hear and consider the following petition:

HARTFORD HEALTHCARE CORPORATION – Zoning Regulation Amendment (REG-0002-2024) – Applicant requests to amend the Manchester Zoning Regulations to add a subsection to Article IV, Section 13 to permit a limited exception to the maximum signage limitation for medical services.

At this hearing interested persons may be heard, either in person or virtually via Zoom, and written communications received. This meeting will be shown live on Cox Channel 16 and streamed live at <http://www.channel16.org/CablecastPublicSite/watch/1?channel=1>. Individuals who wish to speak at or attend the virtual meeting must complete a Request to Attend Virtually form, available at <https://manct.us/meeting>, by 4:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. These individuals will need to join the Zoom meeting and will be allowed to speak when directed by the Chairman. Zoom meeting information will be sent to individuals who complete a Request to Attend Virtually form. Only individuals who complete a Request to Attend Virtually form will be allowed to join the Zoom meeting. A physical location and electronic equipment will be provided for the public to use if a written request is received at least 24 hours in advance, via email to pzccomments@manchesterct.gov, or by mail to the Planning Department, 494 Main Street, P.O. Box 191, Manchester, CT 06045-0191.

Individuals may also submit comments in writing to the Planning and Economic Development Department via email to pzccomments@manchesterct.gov, or by mail to the Planning Department, 494 Main Street, P.O. Box 191, Manchester, CT 06045-0191. All written comments received by 4:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting will be presented and recorded as part of the hearing.

A copy of the proposed zoning regulation amendment may be reviewed online at <https://www.manchesterct.gov/Government/Departments/Planning-and-Economic-Development>; by contacting the Town Clerk's office at townclerkdept@manchesterct.gov or (860) 647-3037 to request a PDF by email; or in the Planning and Economic Development Department, 494 Main Street, during regular business hours, 8:30 – 4:30, Monday through Friday. Information about this application will be available online at <https://Manchesterct.gov/pzc> by the Friday before the hearing.

Planning and Zoning Commission
Eric Prause, Chair

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Planning and Zoning Commission
Eric Prause, Chair