

Shore Health updates QA on freestanding emergency dept.

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CENTREVILLE — Officials from Shore Health System and the University of Maryland Medical System briefed the Queen Anne's County Commissioners on Tuesday on the project to build a freestanding emergency department building at U.S. Route 50 and Nesbit Road, Grasonville.

Meanwhile, the commissioners introduced a growth allocation petition for a portion of the 14.7-acre property. Approval is needed by the State critical area commission to change the critical area designation for about 6.5 acres of the property from resource conservation area to intense development area.

County Commission President Gene Ransom said construction of the emergency department can start before the growth allocation is approved because the new critical area designation pertains to a different part of the 14.7-acre tract. The growth allocation petition also will be reviewed by the Queen Anne's County Planning Commission.

To have the emergency department built by the end of 2010, construction would have to start this summer, said Rick Dunning, senior vice president of facilities, planning, design and construction for UMMS. The project is a joint effort by UMMS, Shore Health System and the county. Joseph Ross, SHS chief executive officer, estimated construction would take 14 to 18 months, depending on weather.

Design details were reviewed by Eileen English, project architect, with Hord Coplan Macht, Baltimore, and Tom Davis, civil engineer, with

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Gene Ransom, president,
Queen Anne's Co. Commission

Davis, Moore Shearon & Associates, Centreville. The planned 16,500-square-foot emergency department could be expanded in the future by 6,800 square feet, said English. She said the concept design still is under way for the two medical office buildings, which would be built in the second and third phases of the project.

"We've been working real hard in hand with all the departments in the county," said Davis.

The county is paying for the extension of public water and sewer services and road improvements for the project. Davis said the stormwater management system for the emergency department project will include "bioretention facilities" around the building.

In response to a question from Commission Carol Fordonski, Davis said a pervious concrete parking lot won't be built for the emergency department, but pervious concrete is being considered for the parking areas for the medical office buildings.

"This is going to be a top shelf quality project," said Ransom. He said UMMS will follow stricter environmental standards that the county has not yet put in place.

The new facility will be a freestanding emergency department, which is

different than an urgent care clinic, because "we can accept ambulances, where others can't," said Chris Mitchell, SHS director of outpatient emergency services.

Mitchell said the freestanding emergency department will be able to send patients to hospitals by ambulance or helicopter. It will be open 24 hours a day, year-round.

"There's synergy in this because this (freestanding emergency department) will be a great site for student nursing," said Mitchell.

A county news release said Ransom is optimistic about the positive economic impact of the project, called the Queen Anne's County Medical Park.

"The emergency room and the medical campus associated with it will bring about 500 new jobs to Queen Anne's County," said Ransom.

The county signed the contract to acquire the land for the stand-alone emergency department in January 2008. In May 2008, the county commissioners approved a memorandum of understanding with UMMS outlining operational requirements and land uses.

The emergency department will have 11 treatment rooms, two triage rooms and on-site imaging services.