

Plainsboro Township
Prelim./Final Site Plan
w/parking variance
Application: P23-04
Memo Date: 10/24/2023
Meeting Date: 11/07/2023

DRC Project Review Memo

Name of Applicant: Plainsboro Plaza Owner, LLC

Property Owner: Same

Type of Application: Preliminary/Final Site Plan with parking variance

Name of Project: Chase Bank Pad Site Project at Plainsboro Plaza

Property Location: Block 1602, Lot 5

Zone: GB-General Business

Present Use of Property: Commercial/Retail Center (Plainsboro Plaza)

Adjacent Land Uses:

North:	Scudders Mill Road
South:	Townhouse and Single Family (Village Residential)
East:	Schalks Crossing Road
West:	Amtrak Main Line

BACKGROUND & PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed second pad site at Plainsboro Plaza (Plaza) was the subject of a Master Plan amendment adopted by the Planning Board in October 2022 and an ordinance amending the GB-General Business Zone adopted by the Township Committee in August 2023. The property currently contains an existing pad site with drive-up facility occupied by a CVS pharmacy store. The proposed Master Plan amendment and GB Zone amendment were intended to allow the addition of a second pad site to be used for a retail, personal service, office, or a bank use.

The applicant is seeking Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan approval to construct a Chase Bank as the second pad site at the Plaza. The proposed bank will contain approximately 3,432 square feet of floor area and will have a single building mounted drive-up ATM (no teller window proposed) and a possible future walk-up ATM near the building's main entrance. In addition to the bank building, the project includes parking, lighting, landscaping and signage.

As part of the application, the applicant seeks a variance from the parking requirements in §85-44A of the Township Code to permit a total of 947 spaces to serve the existing shopping center (228,294 sq. ft.), in addition to the proposed bank, where 1,266 spaces are required and 1,030 spaces currently exist (See "Variance Justification" provided with the application).

WAIVER OF SITE PLAN CHECK LIST SUBMISSION ITEMS

The applicant has submitted the required preliminary and final site plan review checklist (Form 14). A total of twelve site plan review checklist waivers, with a brief description and justification provided for each. The staff has reviewed the requested waivers and are of the opinion that such waivers are reasonable and recommend that they be granted.

STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. COMPLIANCE WITH GB ZONE STANDARDS

1. The proposed development complies with the standards related to drive-through facilities in the GB Zone pursuant to §101-52R 1) through 6).
2. According to the zoning tabulations provided by the applicant's engineer, Sheet OLV of the site plan indicates compliance with the GB Zone bulk standards pursuant to §101-59 through 62 (Lot and Improvement Coverage, Floor Area Ratio, and Building Height) of the GB Zone regulations.

B. PARKING, CIRCULATION, AND TRAFFIC ISSUES

1. The proposed development generally complies with the standards related to the GB Zone pursuant to §101-63A) through F). The applicant's engineer shall discuss the parking evaluation and conclusions that have been submitted to the Board in support of the applicant's request for a variance from the parking requirements found in §85-44A.
2. The proposed development for the Chase Bank pad site at Plainsboro Plaza generally complies with the general design requirements set forth in §101-64.1A) through F). The applicant's engineer shall discuss the traffic analyses and conclusions that have been submitted in support of this application.
4. The proposed plan provides sidewalk connections from the bank to the existing sidewalk along the south entrance drive to the Plaza from Schalks Crossing Road. The applicant has also provided pedestrian crossing warning signs on both sides of the subject driveway, to alert drivers to the possible presence of pedestrians crossing the driveway.
5. The applicant is required to provide adequate bicycle storage facilities serving the new bank. The applicant's plans (Sheet L1.2) show what appears to be a single bike rack located to the right of the main entrance to the bank building, yet the plan detail for the bike rack on Sheet L3.0 notes that two Bola bike racks are proposed to be mounted to a concrete slab. An alternative to bikes being stored on the main walkway along the front of the building, where they could

conflict with pedestrians, and based on how cyclists are likely to access the bank, staff recommends that a two or three bike storage system be installed on a small concrete pad located off the proposed walkway south of the ATM service drive next to the bank.

6. The applicant shall provide pedestrian crossing stripping across the service drive, denoting such pedestrian crossing, and shall install a pedestrian crossing warning sign to alert drivers using the service drive of the possible presence of pedestrians crossing the drive.
7. The applicant is proposing to provide two (2) Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations; one will be located to serve an accessible parking space and the other will be located to serve a non-accessible space. The EV spaces provided shall count as being equivalent to four (4) required parking spaces and shall be recognized as Publicly-Accessible EVSE per the Township's EV regulations. Such parking spaces shall specifically comply with §101-13.8F(4)a-f and §101-13.8F(5) a, b, and d. 1) through 3) of the Township Code.
8. In 2021, the Township Police Department performed a Motor Vehicle Accident Analysis for the Plainsboro Plaza Site and noted that accidents within the Plainsboro Plaza and specifically the front parking lot along Schalks Crossing Road accounted for 24% of all "backing" accidents within the Township between 2016 and 2021. The "backing" accidents documented at the front parking lot of Plainsboro Plaza within the report were primarily located in the parking lot of the Dunkin' Donuts, McDonalds, et al. At that time improvements such as the widening of the parking area by 3 to 5 feet to provide an increased aisle width for vehicle maneuvers and geometric modifications of the parking area exit near the Post Office were discussed with the property owner in an effort to improve the conditions at the site. The applicant shall discuss how this matter will be addressed and the timing for making such improvements to this area.

C. LANDSCAPING AND LIGHTING ISSUES

Landscaping

1. The applicant shall revise the plans to provide additional four-season screening along the west side of the access drive in accordance with §101-64.1H.
2. The applicant is proposing to remove six (6) deciduous trees, which unavoidably conflict with improvements associated with the project. The six trees removed range in size from nine inches to twelve inches in caliper. In place of these six trees, the applicant is proposing to plant seventeen (17) trees ranging from 2½ to 3-inch caliper.
3. Staff recommends reducing the grouping of five (5) QAC (Sawtooth Oak) along the circulation drive, as well as reducing both groupings of two (2) BN (River Birch) and two (2) LT (Tulip) to a single tree each, as soil volume is a limiting factor, and these are all large trees that require adequate space to establish and thrive.

4. Staff recommends incorporating additional native shrub species on the site. Proposed SLP (Little Princess Spirea) can be substituted with a comparable alternative and LM (Liriope) can be reduced in quantity to include other perennials and grasses, such as St. John's Wort, Ninebark, Sweetspire, Coral Bells, Sedum, Blue Grama Grass, etc.
5. The plans provide for native red-twigs dogwood along the circulation drive; however, there is concern with the proposed quantity of just one (1) species for this area. The applicant shall provide additional shrub species to provide greater diversity.

Lighting

1. The applicant has proposed to install three twenty-five foot tall light pole fixtures with a shoebox type luminaire (250 watt metal halide lighting element). Staff recommends that the lighting elements used be LED and not metal halide.
2. Since GB Zone design standards are intended to merge design elements of the Village Center with Plainsboro Plaza, the applicant shall consider including some traditional freestanding light fixtures along the bank's front elevation; for example, consider removing the proposed pole light fixture along the front of the bank, replacing it with two traditional freestanding light fixtures, one located where the pole fixture is proposed and one located immediately to the right of the ATM service drive. Staff recommends that the traditional fixtures installed utilize LED lighting technology and be similar in appearance to those used on the neighboring PNC Bank property. The final photometrics and fixture details shall be subject to the review and approval of Planning Board staff.
3. The applicant's plans lack specific details regarding building mounted lighting fixtures. All such fixtures installed shall be such that they do not create glare or other illumination that could adversely affect the nearby residential area. Details for all building mounted lighting shall be submitted to the Planning Board staff for further review.

D. SIGNAGE ISSUES

1. The applicant has proposed wall mounted internally illuminated LED channel letters signs, to be installed on the east, west, and north elevations of the bank building. No such signs are proposed on the south elevation facing the PNC Bank property and the residential area to the southwest of the proposed bank. The proposed signs appear to be in compliance with the sign regulations and consistent with the types of signs included in the approved Plainsboro Plaza Comprehensive Sign Plan. Staff encourages the applicant to consider reverse channel letters as opposed to the outward illumination channel letters proposed. The applicant shall provide documentation that the building mounted signs proposed comply with the sign lighting standards in §101-158H (3), (4) and (5) of the Township Code.
2. The applicant's plan includes minor signage on the face of the ATM to be installed on the building. Staff takes no issue with such signage.

3. In addition to the proposed building mounted signs, the applicant intends to install wayfinding signs utilizing the existing structures installed previously at the Plaza for this purpose. The applicant also proposes to install sign panels identifying the Chase Bank on the existing pylon signs along Schalks Crossing Road and Plainsboro Road, subject to the standards set forth in the approved Plainsboro Plaza Comprehensive Sign Plan (P13-11). Planning staff will review these signs in association with the permits required for such signs (pylon signs only).
4. The detail drawings on the plans do not include a detail for the two proposed "ATM access only" signs. Such signs shall conform with the Princeton Forrestal Center or PFC Type 2 sign detail, which requires that the signs be mounted at the top of a three inch square sign post painted black. The sign shall be mounted directly to the post with the rear of the sign blades painted black to match the post. Revised the plans to include this information.
5. As noted under paragraph B. 7. above, there are signage and pavement marking requirements associated with the provision of publicly-accessible EV spaces. Refer to §101-13.8F(4) a. and §101-13.8F(5) a, b, and d. 1) through 3) of the Township EV regulations for such requirements.

E. GRADING, DRAINAGE, AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ISSUES

1. The proposed improvements will disturb in excess of 1-acre and therefore the project is considered a 'Major Development' under the Township's Stormwater Control ordinance. However, the project is proposing a reduction of impervious coverage by approximately 0.07 acres and accordingly stormwater management facilities are not required. The applicant's engineer shall refer to Technical Appendix A for all technical comments related to grading, drainage, and stormwater management.

F. SANITARY SEWER AND SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL ISSUES

1. All sanitary sewer piping and appurtenances shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of Veolia North America, Inc. and the Plumbing Subcode Official.
2. The applicant has proposed to provide a masonry dumpster enclosure. The site plan shall be revised to include the dimensional details of the enclosure. The proposed enclosure will be serviced from the parking lot drive aisle located immediately to the west of the bank site. The architect's plan for the enclosure lacks details regarding the gate system on the enclosure. Staff recommends the enclosure gate, including the hinges, be made of a high-quality durable, decorative metal material. To ensure compliance with the standards found in §101-64.1E and K of the GB Zone, the final details associated with the dumpster enclosure (including gate) and related landscaping, shall be subject to Planning Board staff review and approval.
3. The proposed dumpster enclosure shall be properly sized to fully contain the dumpster containers (trash and recyclables) that will be needed to serve the solid waste needs of the proposed bank. No trash shall be stored in the dumpster containers inside the enclosure that would at any time be visible from outside the

enclosure. Other than when the dumpsters are being emptied, the gates on the enclosure shall be kept closed at all times. No waste storage, including additional dumpster containers, shall be permitted outside the proposed dumpster enclosure.

4. The applicant's plan shows a decorative trash container and bench to the right of the main bank entrance door. Planning Board staff take no issue with the proposed location or details of the bench and trash container.

G. POTABLE WATER AND FIRE PROTECTION ISSUES

1. The applicant shall discuss whether or not the proposed water main will be privately owned or owned by New Jersey American Water. If the water main is to be owned by NJAW, the applicant is responsible for obtaining approval from New Jersey American Water and providing the required easements for same.
2. The applicant shall provide test data and calculations demonstrating the required domestic fire demands and pressures can be provided from the existing water main.
3. All water distribution system improvements shall be installed in accordance with the requirements of the water utility and the Plumbing Subcode Official.
4. The design of the on-site water distribution system shall be adequate to provide fire protection as per ISO standard, Fire Suppression Rating Schedule, or per AWWA M31, Manual of Water Supply Practices.

H. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

1. The applicant's plans (Sheet CE-2) include a nearly inconspicuous note referring to a future walk-up ATM located to the left of the bank's main entrance. Since the proposed building elevations do not include any details regarding this future improvement, the installation of such facility shall be subject to future Planning Board staff review and approval.
2. One of the iterations of the applicant's plans for the proposed dumpster enclosure included a structure identified as a "Remote Utility Mount." The details regarding this structure, including its location and general appearance (color), other than its height (6½ ft. tall), were not provided. If such structure is still contemplated by the applicant, the plans shall include such information.
3. The proposed utility improvements shall require a Right of Way Permit Application prior to utility work commencing within the Schalks Crossing Road right of way.

I. CONSTRUCTION ISSUES

1. While the applicant's architectural plans for the building refer to colors and some materials, the applicant shall explain how their proposal specifically complies with the language in §101-64.1B.5 of the GB Zone regulations that require the following:

Natural materials such as wood and masonry are recommended. High quality man-made siding materials are permitted. Stucco or similar treatments are prohibited on the pad site buildings.

2. The applicant shall discuss the anticipated timing of the construction of the proposed development.
3. All structures, including the proposed EV charging station electrical improvements, are subject to review by the Township Construction Official.
4. The following construction notes shall be added to the plan:
 - a. "Prior to the commencement of construction, a detailed sequence of construction and contractor's staging plan shall be provided to separate and manage construction traffic and public traffic. This will further establish contractor's work and staging areas for each phase of construction, and shall include but not limited to items related to the placement of construction office and/or construction trailers, outdoor equipment and materials storage, safety and security fencing, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, installation of underground utilities, parking area construction and construction related signage."
 - b. "Prior to the commencement of work, including initial site clearance and grading, a hauling plan shall be submitted to the Township for review and approval for the movement of any construction materials or demolition debris on roadways leading from the Township border and vice versa."

J. AGENCY APPROVALS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

1. The applicant shall discuss the need for approvals from outside agencies, including the following:
 - a. Freehold Soil Conversation District
 - b. New Jersey American Water (NJAW)
 - c. Veolia North America, Inc. (formerly Suez/Princeton Meadows)
 - d. Middlesex County Planning Board
 - e. All other agencies having jurisdiction
2. Copies of applications and approvals, certifications, permits or letters of no interest, waivers or exemptions, as may be required, shall be provided as a condition of final approval and prior to release of the approved site plan and site disturbance.

3. Township offices and staff that may have review jurisdiction involving this application or improvements related thereto, include:
 - Dept. of Planning and Zoning:
Contact Ron Yake, Planner and Zoning Officer at 799-0909, ext. 1503.
 - Planning Board Engineer's Office:
Contact Louis Ploskonka, CME Associates at 732-727-8000.
 - Dept. of Code Enforcement/Building Division:
Contact Brian Miller, Construction Official at 799-0909, ext. 1203;
and Keith Thedinga, Fire Official at 799-0909, ext. 1208.

Any approval shall be conditioned upon: A) the submission of revised plans in accordance with the above comments, as well as additional detailed comments to be provided based upon a review of the various reports and plans prior to final site plan approval; B) proof of approval, waiver or exemption from all agencies having jurisdiction; C) the construction of off-site improvements if deemed necessary by the Township Committee; D) the payment of any outstanding escrow fees and property taxes; and E) the applicant's engineer providing the Township with an estimate for the cost of improvements in order that the performance guarantee and inspection fee can be calculated.

MLUL Clock:

Application Completeness:	November 27, 2023
Planning Board Action:	March 26, 2024

APPENDIX TO

APPLICATION P23-04

DRC REVIEW MEMO

FOR

PRELIMINARY/FINAL MAJOR SITE PLAN

Plainsboro Plaza Chase Bank
Block 1602, Lot 5
Plainsboro Plaza Owner, LLC

October 24, 2023

A. Site Plan Comments

1. The Site Layout Plan shall be modified as follows:
 - a. The proposed curb shall be clearly depicted, and callouts provided for same.
 - b. The proposed pavement hatching shall be modified to clearly depict the proposed improvements.
 - c. Dimensions depicting the width of the proposed sidewalk shall be provided.
2. The Construction Detail Sheets 1 & 2 shall be modified as follows:
 - a. The Concrete Sidewalk Detail shall be modified to provide 6" thick NJDOT No. 57 stone base course.
 - b. ADA ramp details shall be provided depicting slopes and grades.
 - c. The Type 'B' Inlet Detail shall be revised to include 6" thick 3/4 clean stone subgrade the extent of the footing, have the footing consist of Class 'B' concrete and remove the note for Class 'D' concrete, and provide an N-Eco curb piece. Additionally, an NJDOT Bicycle Safe Grate shall be provided on the detail.
 - d. The Stop Line Marking Detail shall be labeled and shown, and all the traffic striping shall be thermoplastic.
3. The Site Demolition Plan, sheet CE-1, shall be revised to include removal of existing curb for the proposed installation of the Chase Bank pad site.

B. Traffic, Parking, Signage, Pedestrian and Circulation Issues

1. The width of the proposed pedestrian crosswalk shall be labeled.
2. Diagonal striping is proposed at 6" Maximum width. Per MUTCD, this shall be a minimum of 12" and a maximum of 24". The gap between the diagonal stripes shall not exceed 2.5 times the width of the diagonal lines. The plan shall be revised accordingly.
3. The Applicant's Engineer shall revise the proposed bypass lane to be a minimum of 11-feet wide.
4. The Applicant's Engineer shall propose one-way and/or do not enter signs to discourage vehicles from entering the drive-through area in the wrong direction.

C. Grading, Drainage, and Stormwater Management Issues

1. The Site Grading Plan shall be modified as follows:
 - a. Spot grades shall be provided on the plan where proposed curb meets existing curb showing matching elevations between same.

- b. Top of curb and bottom of curb spots grades shall be provided at all points of curvature and points of tangency along the proposed curb line.
- c. The proposed spot grades along the northern curb line appear to be less than the minimum requirement of 0.50% and shall be revised.
- d. The grading along the southerly curb line opposite the Chase Bank pad site appears to have slopes greater than 5% to the west along the proposed sidewalk and slopes greater than 14% to the east along the proposed sidewalk. The grading shall be revised to depict slopes less than 5%. Additionally, spot grades shall be provided along the depressed curb of the ADA ramp at this location.
- e. The depressed curb for the ADA ramp southeast of the Chase Bank pad site near the entrance appears to not show the curb flush with the pavement. Additionally, depressed curb spot elevations are not depicted across other ADA ramps. The Applicant's Engineer shall revise the grading to show the top of depressed curb flush with the adjacent pavement.
- f. The proposed grading along grass areas appears to provide a slope less than the 2.0% minimum slope requirement. A minimum slope of 2.0% shall be provided along all grass areas.
- g. Some of the proposed contours appear to be missing a label on the proposed plan. The proposed contours shall be labeled so they are more clearly depicted.

2. The proposed storm sewer profiles on the Construction Details 1 Plan, sheet CE-8, shall be revised to include all utility crossings with dimensions to ensure adequate clearance is provided in the proposed condition. Proposed inlet B INL-I-2 shall be revised on the profiles to include the roof drain invert connecting into the proposed inlet. Additionally, the inlet grates shall be revised to be shown flush with proposed grade as depicted on the profiles.

3. The limit of disturbance area shall be added to the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, sheet CE-5.

4. The Engineering Report shall be modified as follows:

- a. The rainfall distribution used in the hydrologic computations shall be revised to NOAA Region D.
- b. The Applicant's Engineer shall provide pre- and post-condition inlet drainage area maps, as well as hydraulic routing calculations to the 25-year storm event for the proposed storm sewer to ensure that same is adequately sized. Also, the 100-year storm event surcharge and freeboard elevations of all drainage systems shall be established per §85-28.C of the Township Code.

D. Sanitary Sewer Issues

1. The Applicant's Engineer shall verify the proposed sanitary sewer pump station is necessary to service the proposed building. Additionally, same shall verify the proposed

sanitary sewer lateral connection is to an existing sanitary sewer main and not an existing sewer lateral. If the proposed sanitary sewer lateral connection is to an existing sewer lateral, the Applicant's Engineer shall obtain approval from Veolia North America, Inc. and/or the Plumbing Subcode Official.

2. The Applicant's Engineer shall clarify "FTP" pipe being proposed for the sanitary sewer force main.
3. Proposed rim and invert elevations of all proposed sanitary sewer cleanouts and manholes shall be provided on the Site Drainage & Utility Plan, sheet CE-4. Additionally, the Applicant's Engineer shall include the building sanitary sewer connection invert for clarity and add the depth of the proposed sanitary sewer lateral connection to the existing sewer system on the plan.
4. A profile of the proposed sanitary sewer system shall be provided on the plans and shall include all utility crossings with dimensions to ensure adequate clearance is provided in the proposed condition.

E. Water Issues

1. The Applicant's Engineer shall provide a thrust block and cap at the end of the water main extension.
2. A detail of the proposed connection to the existing water main shall be provided on the plans.
3. A profile of the proposed water main shall be provided on the plans and shall include all utility crossings with dimensions to ensure adequate clearance is provided in the proposed condition.

F. Landscaping Issues

1. Revise the plans to remove the planting pit detail on Sheet L2.0, as it does not apply to this site.
2. Revise the plans to indicate the location for the proposed HVAC units and transformers, to ensure they are adequately screened.

G. As-Built Plans

As-built grading plans are required to be submitted by the developer to the Township Engineer's Office prior to occupying the site. As a minimum the following shall be provided:

- i. **Storm System:**
 - a. Provide as-built pipe sizes, types and classes; manhole and inlet rims, grates, and inverts; and detention basin, subsurface piping, grading, flow channel, and outlet structures.
 - b. A certification shall be provided from the storm water subsurface recharge and storage facilities design engineer indicating that the subsurface recharge and storage facilities have been constructed in accordance with the final plans and specifications and that the facilities will function as originally designed prior to site occupancy.
- ii. **Roadway Systems:**
 - a. Provide as-built of access drive and aisles relative to the top of curb, gutter, and centerline elevations at 50' intervals and all returns, high points and low points prior to occupancy.
- iii. **Buildings:**
 - a. Submit as-built grading plans for each phase of the building(s) prior to the issuance of certificates of occupancy.
- iv. **Parking Areas:**
 - a. Where parking area slopes are less than 1% provide as-built top of curb and gutter elevations at breaks and angle points and sufficient pavement elevations to establish positive drainage to the nearest storm system.
- v. **Water Distribution System:**
 - a. Provide copies of the as-built plans as required by the operating utility company providing the water service, but no less than the location and size of water meter pits, water mains, valves, fire department connections and fire hydrants.

vi. Sanitary Sewer System:

- a. Provide as-built location, size, slope, material and inverts of all pipes, manholes and pumping stations, or as may be required by the operating utility company providing such service.