

**Plainsboro Township**

Prelim./Final Site Plan

w/ parking variance

Application: P23-04

Memo Date: 12/13/2023

Meeting Date: 1/16/2024 1/31/24

## Planning Board 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: 10 Schalks Crossing Road (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 3,478 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 DRC/staff has reviewed the requested waivers and are of the opinion that such waivers are reasonable and recommend that they be granted.

#### **DRC/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 complies with the general design requirements set forth in §101-64.1A) through F). The applicant's engineer shall discuss the analyses and conclusions that have been performed in support of this application.
3. 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.
4. 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.

## C. LANDSCAPING AND LIGHTING ISSUES

### Landscaping

1. The applicant is proposing to remove six (6) deciduous/shade trees, which unavoidably conflict with improvements associated with the project. The trees removed range in size from nine (9) inches to twelve (12) inches in caliper. In place of these trees, the applicant is proposing to plant fifteen (15) deciduous/shade trees and thirteen (13) ornamental trees ranging in size from 2 to 3-inches caliper.

### Lighting

1. The applicant has proposed LED fixtures as previously recommended; however, the proposed Lanterra flood light fixtures are indicated to direct lighting both up and downwards. Revise the fixture to direct lighting down only, to reduce light pollution and ensure compliance with Dark Sky standards.
2. Since GB Zone design standards are intended to merge design elements of the Village Center with Plainsboro Plaza, the applicant has agreed to include some traditional freestanding light fixtures along the bank's front elevation. The final photometrics and fixture details of the proposed lighting shall be subject to the review and approval of Planning Board staff.
3. The applicant has proposed two (2) CLW2, Cooper wallpack fixtures; however, ordering information has not been specified for this light fixture. The catalog cut indicates two (2) different housing styles, full cut-off lens and refractive lens models. Staff does not recommend the refractive lens due to potential glare issues on the site. Revise the plans to indicate the full ordering information for providing the full cut-off lens model.

## D. SIGNAGE ISSUES

1. The applicant has proposed wall mounted internally illuminated LED reverse channel letters signs (halo-lit), to be installed on the front, rear, and right side elevations of the proposed building. Such letters shall be all white (including the returns), with the octagonal bank logo in all Chase Bank blue. No building signs are proposed on the left side elevation of the building facing the PNC Bank property and the nearby residential area, except minor signage on the face of the drive-up ATM. The proposed signs are in compliance with the sign regulations and consistent with the types of signs included in the approved Plainsboro Plaza Comprehensive Sign Plan. 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. 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 subject to the standards set forth in the approved Plainsboro Plaza Comprehensive Sign Plan (P13-11). While the Plaza includes a pylon sign on Plainsboro Road by the PNC Bank which could include Chase Bank signage, the applicant's plans do not include that information. Planning Board staff will review the final sign details in association with the permits required for the pylon sign panels.
3. As noted under paragraph B.4. 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 less than 1-acre and therefore the project is considered a 'Minor Development' under the Township's Stormwater Control Ordinance. 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 proposed enclosure will be serviced from the parking lot drive aisle located immediately to the west of the bank site. The details of the exterior treatment of the enclosure are not noted on the plans submitted to Planning Board staff for final review other than the reference to the walls of the enclosure being eight inch concrete masonry units (CMU), and to an undefined note ("ST-4") included on the elevations of the enclosure. The exterior treatment of the enclosure shall be compatible and complimentary to the exterior materials on the bank building. To ensure compliance with the standards found in §101-64.1E, H and K of the GB Zone, the final details of 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.
5. The Applicant's Engineer shall discuss the need for the proposed sanitary sewer pump station to service the proposed building and verify that 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.

#### **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. 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. While the floor plan for the building (Sheet A1.0.0) shows a proposed egress door on the rear elevation, the rear elevation drawing on Sheet A2.2.0 does not show this same egress door, but instead it shows electrical equipment at

that location. The applicant shall revise the plans to address this apparent inconsistency.

3. The elevation drawings for the bank identify some equipment along the face of the building. Such equipment shall, if possible, be screened and/or painted to blend in with the colors used on the proposed building.
4. The proposed utility improvements shall require a Right-of-Way Opening Permit Application prior to utility work commencing within the Schalks Crossing Road right-of-way.

## **I. CONSTRUCTION ISSUES**

1. The applicant shall discuss the anticipated timing of the construction of the proposed development.
2. All structures, including the proposed EV charging station electrical improvements, are subject to review by the Township Construction Official.
3. The following construction notes have been 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:**

<b>Application Completeness:</b>	<b>November 27, 2023</b>
<b>Planning Board Action:</b>	<b>March 26, 2024</b>

**APPENDIX TO**

**APPLICATION P23-04**

**PLANNING BOARD REVIEW MEMO**

**FOR**

**PRELIMINARY/FINAL MAJOR SITE PLAN**

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

**December 13, 2023**

**A. Site Plan Comments**

1. The Construction Detail Sheets 1 & 2 shall be modified as follows:
  - a. ADA ramp details shall be provided depicting slopes and grades.

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

1. The Applicant's Engineer shall revise the proposed bypass lane to be a minimum of 11-feet wide.
2. A detail shall be provided for the W16-7PL/R sign noted on the Site Layout Plan.

**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. Some spot grades are missing where proposed curb meets existing curb along the southerly most curb ramp opposite the Chase Bank pad site, the northerly most curb tie-in at Inlet B-4, and the westerly curb tie-in near the dumpster pad location.
  - b. The proposed spot grades along the northern curb line appear to be less than the minimum requirement of 0.50% and shall be revised.
  - c. 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.
  - d. The grading along the curb line of the proposed ADA ramps shall provide spot elevations where the proposed depressed curb transitions to full depth curb.
  - e. 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.
  - f. The proposed grading along the entrance to the proposed dumpster enclosure shall be revised to provide a minimum slope of 0.5% away from same.
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.

3. The Engineering Report shall be modified as follows:

- a. 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 has removed the sanitary sewer force main callout on the Site Drainage & Utility Plan, sheet CE-4, and shall clarify the type of pipe being proposed for the sanitary sewer force main on the plan.
2. 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.
3. 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 detail on the plans.
2. 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. 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 invert of all pipes, manholes and pumping stations, or as may be required by the operating utility company providing such service.