

Planning & Real Estate Consultants

Memorandum

To: Township of Berkeley Heights TRC **Planning Board**

From: Keenan Hughes, AICP, PP

Date: 07/27/2022 **UPDATED 9/16/22**

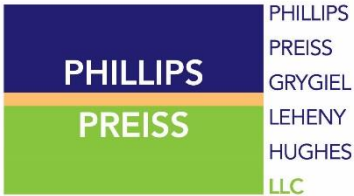
Re: The District – Block 4102, Lot 1; Block 4301, Lots 1.011 & 1.012

Our office is in receipt of and has reviewed the following documents submitted by the applicant:

- Architecture Plans prepared by Minno Wasko, July 7, 2022 **UPDATED September 7, 2022**
- Preliminary and Final Site Plan for The District prepared by Langan, July 7, 2022. **UPDATED September 7, 2022**
- Landscape Architecture Plan for The District prepared by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, July 7, 2022. **UPDATED September 6, 2022**
- Traffic Impact Study for The District, prepared by Langan, July 8, 2022.
- Environmental Impact Statement, prepared by Langan, August 17, 2022.
- Stormwater Management Report, prepared by Langan, July 7, 2022. **UPDATED August 31, 2022**

Background on TRC Review Process

The applicant had an initial meeting with the TRC on January 12, 2022 during which a high-level overview of the District concept was presented. Following the submittal of the subject site plan application, the applicant met with the TRC on July 29, 2022. The TRC provided feedback on a number of issues and requested additional information and plans. A third TRC meeting was held on August 26, 2022 at which point the TRC deemed the application complete. The following reflects our initial TRC review comments. The **bold typeface** indicates the status of each comment.



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Compliance Review

The subject property is located in the MU: Mixed Use Zone. The intent of the MU Zone is:

to provide a flexible zoning framework that will facilitate the transformation of a traditional suburban office park into a commercially viable, integrated multi-use facility that provides work, residential, hospitality, retail, entertainment and recreation opportunities. The MU Zone shall be developed so as to ensure a functionally and physically interconnected variety of land uses and open spaces, including outdoor recreational amenities.

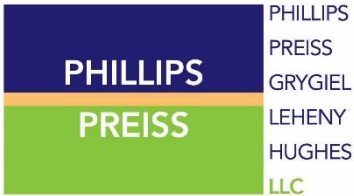
The plans for The District contemplate a mix of uses connected by a network of open space and amenity areas, which is consistent with the purpose and intent of the MU Zone.

The application complies with all applicable use and bulk requirements for the MU zone. Based on our office's review of the application, no variance relief is required.

Questions and Discussion Items [updated in bold typeface]

Access and Circulation

1. The applicant should provide testimony regarding the overall circulation and access plan for the site. In particular, the overall layout seems to lack a clear entrance point or gateway that would create a sense of arrival for visitors to The District. Some rendered perspectives of the entrance points to the District would be helpful. **This issue was addressed in the third TRC meeting. Applicant should also address in testimony to the Planning Board.**
2. Is any directional/wayfinding signage proposed for the site? This may help in addressing the above comment. **Applicant has added directional/wayfinding signage to the plans.**
3. What is the pedestrian access to The District from a visitor parking in the existing surface lots to the south (near 300 building). **Addressed through testimony to the TRC.**
4. What is the pedestrian path for a grocer customer parked in the North Deck? **Addressed through testimony to the TRC.**
5. The 6,070 sq. ft restaurant proposed in building N2 (N2-F) indicates loading / trash will take place within proximity to proposed dedicated handicapped and EV parking spaces and pedestrian path used to access North Deck. Applicant should provide testimony that the size of the space provided for loading / trash



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will be sufficient for the restaurant and that conflicts between loading / trash activities and address potential conflicts with pedestrians and parking activity in this area. **Addressed through testimony to the TRC.**

Architecture

6. It appears that several loading and back-of-house areas are unscreened and will be visible from outside the District. **Applicant should provide testimony to the Planning Board.**
 - a. Loading for grocery for Building N3 (north elevation)
 - b. Loading area for Building N2 (north elevation)
 - c. Parking garage and loading area for Building S1 (south elevation)
 - d. Loading area for Building S2 (south elevation)

7. Would it be possible to add openings, murals or arch details to break up the blank wall areas on east, west and south elevations of Building S2 (BOH and loading area)? **Addressed through testimony to the TRC and reflected on revised plans.**

8. An Event Space and a Private Dining Room are indicated on sheet A-26 of the architectural plans. Will these spaces be primarily associated with the bowling alley, the brewery / restaurant or other use? **Addressed in testimony to the TRC.**

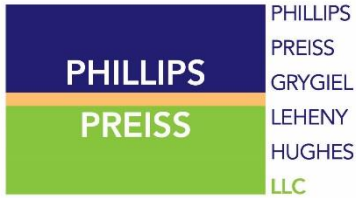
9. While the square feet of building S2 (proposed entertainment and brewery building) is listed on sheet CS-101 ($\pm 38,720$ Sq. Ft. footprint and $\pm 81,930$ Sq. Ft. overall) the square feet of each proposed component of this building (brewery, beer garden, restaurant, event room and private dining room, bars and lounges, bowling alley, etc.) is not provided on sheets A25-A29. Please provide. **Addressed.**

10. Details of all proposed signage should be provided. **Applicant has identified potential signage locations for individual tenants. However, details will not be available until tenants are identified at which point applicant will apply to Township for sign permits. Testimony should be provided to the Planning Board.**

11. There are some discrepancies in the residential unit breakdown in the various plans and reports. Please clarify. Adjustments may slightly alter parking calculations but will not alter the compliance with parking requirements. **Addressed in revised plans.**

Overall Site Plan and Landscape Design

12. The proposed planting palette is appropriate. Please confirm landscaped areas will be irrigated. **Addressed in testimony to the TRC.**



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13. We defer to the Township Engineer, but additional details for the installation of the various furnishings within the open space areas may be required. **Defer to Township Engineer.**
14. Sheet CS-101 indicates “Food Truck seating” in the plaza between proposed building S1 and existing building 300 Connell. What are the anticipated locations of the food trucks and how will they access this area? **Addressed in testimony to the TRC.**
15. Additional clarity is requested concerning the proposed outdoor conference rooms on sheet A-33, specifically their siting, orientation, and integration / relationship with surrounding plaza and existing and proposed buildings and uses. **Addressed in testimony to the TRC.**

Additional comments

16. **Applicant should provide testimony to the Planning Board regarding the potential phasing of the project.**
17. **Applicant should provide testimony regarding potential improvements to the intersection of Twin Falls Road and Diamond Hill Road to limit cut-through traffic.**
18. **Union County Connects is in the early stages of planning an integrated trail system within Berkeley Heights that could potentially connect the District trail system to other portions of the community. Applicant should provide testimony regarding its willingness to coordinate with Union County Connects, the Township and other stakeholders on a trail connection from the District to a larger trail system should it be constructed in the future.**
19. **All required affordable units will be administered by the Township’s Administrative Agent pursuant to all applicable affordable housing rules and regulations.**