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## Memorandum

DATE: June 27, 2022

TO: Members of the Plainfield Planning Board

FROM: Malvika Apte, PP, AICP - Planning Board Planner *MA*

CC: Daniel White, Planning Board Secretary  
Peter Vignuolo, Esq., Board Attorney  
Drew M. Di Sessa, PE, PP, CME, Board Engineer  
Valerie Jackson, Director, Department of Economic Development  
N'Dela Costley, City of Plainfield Zoning Officer  
Lawrence A. Calli, Esq. - Applicant's Attorney  
Robert J. Colucco, PE, Applicant's Engineer  
Brian M. Taylor, AIA, Applicant's Architect

**RE: *Planning Review # 1***  
***Application # PB-2022-16***  
***Applicant: 1112 North Urban Renewal, LLC***  
***Location: 1112-1118 North Avenue, Plainfield, NJ 07060***  
***Block and Lot: Block 402, Lot 5***  
***Zone: TODN – North Avenue Redevelopment Plan / TSC Trainside***  
***Commercial District***

FILE NO.: HPFP0402.02

As per your request our office has reviewed the following documents in connection with the above referenced application:

- Transmittal letter prepared by Calli Law, LLC dated May 18, 2022;
- Application form received by the City on May 23, 2022;
- Application for Waiver Request dated May 18, 2022;
- Execution Copy of an Escrow Agreement between the Applicant and the City of Plainfield, undated;
- Political Contribution Disclosure Statements for the Applicant, Applicant's attorney, Applicant's engineer, and Applicant's architect;
- Corporate Ownership Disclosure form for 1112 North Urban Renewal LLC;
- W-9 Form for Applicant;
- Official Search for Municipal Liens for Subject Property dated May 19, 2022;



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- Copy of Drainage Statement prepared by Dynamic Engineering Consultants, PC dated May 12, 2022;
- Copy of “Traffic Impact Study Prepared for: 1112 North Avenue, LLC Proposed Multi-Family Building” prepared by Dynamic Traffic dated May 9, 2022;
- Four (4) pages of “Trash Generation Calculations for: 1112-1118 North Avenue Plainfield, New Jersey” prepared by Taylor Architecture and Design dated April 20, 2022;
- One (1) page of “Sanitary Sewer Flow Analysis” prepared by Dynamic Engineering dated June 15, 2022;
- Response letter prepared by Dynamic Engineering Consultants, PC dated June 16, 2022;
- One (1) sheet of “Boundary and Topographic Survey” for the subject property, prepared by Dynamic Survey, LLC, dated May 6, 2021 and last revised December 13, 2021;
- Seventeen (17) sheets of architectural plans entitled “New Apartment Building 1112-1118 North Avenue, Plainfield – New Jersey” prepared by Taylor Architecture & Design dated May 11, 2022 and last revised June 10, 2022;
- Thirteen (13) sheets of “Preliminary and Final Site Plan for 1112 North Avenue, LLC Proposed Multi-Family Building” prepared by Dynamic Engineering dated May 12, 2022 and last revised June 14, 2022.

## **1. Proposed Application**

The applicant, 1112 North Urban Renewal, LLC has submitted an application to the City of Plainfield Planning Board seeking preliminary and final site plan approval along with any required variances and waivers in order to re-develop the subject property (Block 402 Lot 5). The applicant is seeking to develop the property into a multi-family residential development consistent with the TODN – North Avenue Redevelopment Plan adopted by the City of Plainfield for this area.

The current proposed project includes the demolition of the existing commercial or industrial structure on the subject lot, and the construction of a five-story apartment building with residential amenities on the first floor and apartments on the upper four floors. A total of 55 apartment units are proposed, consisting of 5 studio units, 41 one-bedroom units, and 9 two-bedroom units. The ground level will include 54 parking spaces covered by the building. Applicant also proposes an amenity deck on the second floor which will include a pool and outdoor lounge areas. The five studio apartments range in size from 590 square feet to 776 square feet, where 500 square feet is required. The one-bedroom units range in size from 825 to 1,169 square feet, where 750 square feet is required. And the two-bedroom units range from 1,364 to 1,677 square feet, where 1,000 square feet is required.



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## 2. Completeness

The application was submitted to the Planning Division on May 18, 2022. A Technical Review Committee was conducted virtually on June 8, 2022. The application was then determined to be capable of being deemed complete on June 9, 2022.

The following items were noted as missing or incomplete in our June 9, 2022 Completeness Review #1:

- a. **§17:8-2.B.3:** Copy of any protective covenants and deed restrictions related to the subject property. ***Applicant must confirm whether or not any such covenants or restrictions exist. This item is incomplete.***
- b. **§17:8-2.B.6:** All requisite escrow deposits and fees. ***We defer to the Board Secretary to determine compliance with this item.***
- c. **§17:8-2.B.9a:** Key map...indicating all streets and zone districts within 600 feet of the subject property. ***The TODN – North Avenue Redevelopment Plan has been identified on sheet 2. This item is complete.***
- d. **§17:8-2.B.9b:** Name, address, and phone number of applicant and property owner. ***This information has been provided on the cover sheet of the site plan. This item is complete.***
- e. **§17:8-2.B.9h:** Location, dimensions and use of all existing and proposed structures, showing the height, building area, pedestrian and vehicular entrances and fire escapes. ***Pedestrian entrances to the building have been identified on site and architectural plans. This item is complete.***
- f. **§17:8-2.B.9i:** Delineation of flood hazard areas. The subject property is located in FEMA Zone AE, a special flood hazard area. ***This is identified on the submitted survey. While a call out note is included on sheet 5 of the site plans, the flood hazard area should be more clearly indicated.***
- g. **§17:8-2.F.7:** Location of off-street parking and loading areas, vehicular/pedestrian ingress and egress with directional traffic flow indicators, truck movement wheel base templates, sight triangle easements, fire lanes, stall dimensions and pavement surface type. ***Pedestrian ingress/egress from building and typical parking stall dimensions have been indicated in the site and architectural plans. Truck movement diagrams have been provided in the architectural plans. This item is complete.***
- h. **§17:8-2.F.9:** Computation of required storm water detention volume and specification of minimum volume to be detained subsurface as part of a complete site drainage and grading plan. ***Applicant's engineer has provided a statement indicating that they believe the project is exempt from New Jersey Stormwater Management standards***



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***due to the project resulting in a decrease in impervious coverage. We take this to be a waiver request. We defer to the Board Engineer to determine if this is required.***

- i. **§17:8-2.F.14:** Location, type, and volume of refuse storage and recycling facilities. ***A document entitled “Trash Generation Calculations” has been provided, and details of refuse storage have been provided on the plans. This item is complete.***
- j. **§17:8-2.F.18:** A sign plan for all existing and proposed signs. ***Two signs are proposed. Additional comments are noted in the Review sections below.***
- k. **§17:8-2.F.19:** Type and quantity of expected sanitary discharge. ***A “Sanitary Sewer Flow Analysis” has been provided. This item is complete.***
- l. **§17:8-2.G.1-5:** Final site plan requirements. ***These are taken to be waiver requests at this time.***
- m. **Redevelopment Plan §7.1:** “Only the redeveloper formally designated by the City of Plainfield or its designee can undertake redevelopment activity in the redevelopment zone to which this Plan relates.” The Applicant has submitted the Execution Copy of an “Escrow Agreement” between it and the City for the purpose of negotiating a Redevelopment Agreement. ***Applicant shall provide an update on the status of these negotiations and when they expect a final agreement and designation to be approved by the City.***

### **3. Subject Site and Surrounding Land Uses**

The subject property, identified as Lot 5 in Block 402 and consisting of 31,248 square feet (or 0.717 acres), is currently fully developed with a one-story commercial or industrial building and asphalt pavement. The property is subject to the TODN – North Avenue Redevelopment Plan, most recently revised November 4, 2021. The Plan specifically supersedes the Plainfield Land Use Ordinance.

The subject property is located northeast of downtown Plainfield, immediately adjacent to the Netherwood Train Station serving the southbound tracks of NJ Transit’s Raritan Valley Line. The property fronts along North Avenue to the northwest, with the railroad right-of-way immediately to the rear (southeast). Immediately adjacent to the site to the southwest is the parking lot for the Netherwood Train Station, while immediately to the northeast is the United States Post Office Netherwood Station. Immediately across North Avenue from the property is a residential neighborhood of single-family dwellings, while just west of the property is Seidler Field. The south side of North Avenue is a commercial and industrial corridor.

Review of NJ-GeoWeb Application shows that the property is listed as known contaminated site with an active LSRP oversight (PI Number G000014987). The remedial level is noted as “C2: Formal Design – known source or release with GW [groundwater] contamination”. Applicant shall provide testimony regarding their knowledge of the contamination, the process of remediation,



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and how this will affect the construction of the project. Review of the National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) indicates the site is located Zone AO, a Special Flood Hazard Area. ***The application will need to be reviewed by the City's Floodplain Manager.***



Frontage of subject property along North Avenue  
 Source: Google Maps Street View (image taken June 2021)

**4. Zoning Review**

- a. Use: The Applicant is proposing a five-story apartment building with studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units over residential amenities and parking on the ground floor. The Redevelopment Plan for properties in the TSC District of the Redevelopment Area permits apartments over commercial, but also permits “residential use on the ground floor”. This is assumed to mean residential uses on the ground floor with apartments above. The proposed use therefore complies with the Redevelopment Plan.
- b. Bulk Regulations: The table below provides the bulk requirements for the TODN – North Avenue Redevelopment Plan TSC District and the compliance of the proposed development with these requirements. The subject property is located immediately adjacent to the TSA Train Station Area of the Redevelopment Area, which determines the set of standards that apply to the development.

Bulk Regulations TODN – North Avenue Redevelopment Plan TSC Trainside Commercial District			
	TODN-North Ave TSC	Existing	Proposed
Minimum Lot Area (sq. ft.)	20,000	31,248	31,248



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<b>Bulk Regulations TODN – North Avenue Redevelopment Plan TSC Trainside Commercial District</b>			
	<b>TODN-North Ave TSC</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Minimum Front Yard Setback (ft.)	0	0	3.7
Maximum Front Yard Setback (ft.)	5	4.3	3.7
Minimum Side Yard Setback (ft.)	5	0.9	5
Minimum Combined Side Yard Setback (ft.)	20	60	20
Minimum Rear Yard Setback from Property Line (ft.)	10	0	10
Maximum Building Coverage	90%	59.1%	82.5%
Maximum Impervious Coverage	90%	98.6%	88.3%
Density (du/acre)	100	0	76.4
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	3.85	0.59	3.30
Maximum Building Height	70	22	66.4
Maximum Number of Stories	6	1	5
Stories within the First 20' from Property Line	4	1	<b>5 (V)</b>
Minimum First Floor Height (ft.)	12	18.4	21
Minimum Open Space	5%	0%	24.3%
<b>(V) Variance</b>	<i>(e) Existing Non-Conformity</i>		

- (i) The Applicant requires one variance from the bulk standards of the Redevelopment Plan. The Plan permits a maximum of four (4) stories within the first 20 feet of the front property line. The proposed building has five (5) stories within 20 feet of the property frontage. ***This does not comply and a variance is required.***

## 5. Additional Standards

- a. Parking: The Redevelopment Plan requires one parking space for every one-bedroom or two-bedroom unit. Since studio apartments act as one-bedroom units, the development requires 55 parking spaces for the 55 residential units. Only 54 parking spaces are proposed. A total of 23 spaces (ten to the rear/southerly side of the parking area, and 13 to the westerly side of the parking area) are not completely covered by the building above. With the EVSE and Make-Ready credit for six (6) spaces noted below, the number of calculated spaces increases to 60. ***This complies.***



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b. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations:

- (i) Per the “Ordinance Authorizing and Encouraging Electric Vehicle Supply/Service Equipment (EVSE) & Make-Ready Parking Spaces”, 15% of required off-street parking spaces for residential units in a multi-family or mixed-use development shall be prepared as Make-Ready spaces. Since 55 parking spaces are required by the Redevelopment Plan for the proposed development, 8.25 Make-Ready spaces are required, which round up, by Ordinance, to 9 spaces. According to calculations and the site plan on sheet 4 of 13 of the preliminary and final site plan, 9 EVSE or Make-Ready spaces are proposed. ***This complies.***
- (ii) The Ordinance also requires that one-third of Make-Ready spaces must be supplied with EVSE prior to occupancy. This equals three (3) spaces. Another 3 parking spaces must be provided EVSE within three years of the Certificate of Occupancy being issued, and the final 3 spaces must be supplied with EVSE within six (6) years of the CO being issued. At least one of the electric vehicle spaces must be handicap accessible. According to the site and architectural plans, three spaces are to be provided with EVSE prior to occupancy of the building, with one of these spaces being ADA-accessible. ***This complies.***
- (iii) Per the Ordinance, EVSE or Make-Ready spaces shall count as two (2) parking spaces for the purposes of determining compliance with parking requirements, but shall not amount in a reduction of more than 10% of total required parking. This amounts to a credit of 6 spaces (out of the nine EVSE/Make-Ready spaces proposed).

c. Screening of Parking Area: Per Additional Standards for the TSC district of the TODN – North Avenue Redevelopment Area, parking areas on the first floor shall be appropriately screened with a faux wall. Screening is provided for the front of the property, as residential amenities and utilities are located between the parking area and North Avenue. However, per the architectural plans no screening is provided on the other sides of the parking area. In part this appears to be because a total of 23 spaces (ten to the rear/southerly side of the parking area, and 13 to the westerly side of the parking area) are not completely covered by the building above, and would be visible from outside the property. ***Applicant shall confirm whether any screening of the parking area on the sides and rear of the lot are proposed. If not, the lack of screening does not comply and a variance is required.***

d. Parking Stall Size: The Redevelopment Plan requires nine foot by eighteen foot (9' x 18') parking stalls. According to the site and architectural plans, the parking stalls meet this requirement. ADA-accessible spaces also meet requirements for their stall size.



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- e. **Apartment Floor Areas:** *Per the architectural floor plans, all apartments meet the floor area requirements of the Redevelopment Plan for residential unit floor areas.* The five studio apartments range in size from 590 square feet to 776 square feet, where 500 square feet is required. The one-bedroom units range in size from 825 to 1,169 square feet, where 750 square feet is required. And the two-bedroom units range from 1,364 to 1,677 square feet, where 1,000 square feet is required. Applicant's architect should confirm apartment type average sizes during the hearing and provide the averages on the architectural plans.
- f. **Sustainable Design:** Per the Additional Standards for the TSC district of the TODN – North Avenue Redevelopment Area, sustainable design practices and LEED certifiable buildings are strongly encouraged. Per the architectural roof plan, a section of the westerly roof is proposed for “future solar panels.” Applicant shall provide testimony regarding when these solar panels are proposed to be installed. Applicant should discuss any other sustainable practices being utilized and if LEED certification is an option.
- g. **Signage:** Two wall-mounted signs are proposed, one along the northerly building façade (the front of the building facing North Avenue) and the second on the westerly side of the building (facing the Netherwood Train Station parking lot). Both signs are 2 feet wide by 30 feet tall. Per the additional standards of the Redevelopment Plan, all signs must be in compliance with the Plainfield 2018 Signage Design Standards. The table below summarizes the compliance of the proposed signs with the Standards.

Type of Sign	Permitted	Proposed
<b>Wall Signs</b>		
Number of Signs	1 (for businesses without a rear entryway)	<b>2 (V)</b>
<b>Wall Sign # 1 – Northerly face along North Avenue frontage</b>		
Area of Sign	10% of the total façade of the building = 10% x 8,296 sf = 829.6 sf	60 sq. ft. (2 ft x 30 ft.)
Maximum Projection	9 inches	<b>TBD</b>
Max. Height	2 ft	<b>30 ft (V).</b>
Lighting	Internally or externally	Externally
Colors	No more than three	Aluminum (exact color to be confirmed)
<b>Wall Sign # 2 – Westerly face (toward train station)</b>		
Area of Sign	10% of the total façade of the building = 10% x 7,626 sf = 762.6 sf	60 sq. ft. (2 ft x 30 ft.)
Maximum Projection	9 inches	<b>TBD</b>





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Type of Sign	Permitted	Proposed
Max. Height	2 ft	<b>30 ft (V).</b>
Lighting	Internally or externally	Externally
Colors	No more than three	Aluminum (exact color to be confirmed)

- (i) As the Applicant is proposing two (2) signs for the residential use where only one (1) sign is permitted (since there is no rear entryway for which the second sign is needed), **a variance is required.**
  - (ii) The projection of the channel lettering shall be confirmed.
  - (iii) The height of the proposed signs, per the architectural plans, is 30 feet, where the Standards permit a maximum height of 2 feet. **Variances are required for both signs.**
  - (iv) The material of the sign lettering is noted as aluminum in the architectural plans. The color of the lettering shall be confirmed.
  - (v) Applicant should be prepared to discuss if the signs will provide the street address or development name.
- h. **HVAC and Mechanical Equipment:** The roof plan on sheet A1.107 of the architectural plans indicates an area for rooftop equipment and condensers. This area is screened by a four-foot (4') high aluminum equipment screen. Applicant shall confirm that this screen will be visually impervious. Applicant shall also confirm if central air conditioning and heating is proposed for the entire building or if apartment units are provided
- i. **Fencing:** The only fencing proposed is four-foot decorative aluminum fencing around a proposed “dog run” on the westerly side of the building. This fencing complies with the requirements of the Redevelopment Plan. **Applicant shall confirm whether any existing fencing is proposed to remain.**
- j. **Retaining Walls:** The site plans indicate that a retaining wall is proposed for the southern corner of the property (closest to the train station). Per Appendix B.13 of the Redevelopment Plan, the City Engineer may be required to review the proposed wall prior to issuance of development permit. We defer to the Board Engineer to provide further comment.
- k. **Curb Cut:** The proposed curb cut is 34.5 feet wide where the maximum permitted is 26 feet wide, per Appendix C.8. **A variance is required.**
- l. **Parking Lot Landscaping:** As the parking area is located under the proposed building, the Planning Board, per Appendix D.2 of the Redevelopment Plan, may require a contribution



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by the Applicant to the Plainfield Shade Tree Fund in lieu of requiring parking islands. Applicant shall confirm they are open to this option.

- m. Street Trees: Per the Redevelopment Plan (pg. 28) street trees are to be provided in accordance with City's Streetscape Design Manual. We defer to the Board Engineer and Shade Tree Commission to determine compliance.
- n. Pool: We recommend a security fence around the outside area devoted to the pool and pool deck meeting the requirements of §17:9-47 of the Land Use Ordinance. It appears from the architectural plans that a fence is proposed around the pool, however, this shall be clarified during the hearing and details (e.g., height, graphic detail, gate detail, etc.) of proposed fencing added to the plans. Additionally, we recommend the fencing be located as to allow pool chairs and tables around the pool.
- o. Bike Storage: There is a Bike Storage room on the ground floor of the building, within the parking area. This storage room provides space for six (6) bicycles. This is satisfactory. Applicant should provide rack detail in the construction details of the site plans.
- p. Flood Damage Prevention: The subject property is located in FEMA Zone AE, a special flood hazard area. **The application is subject to review by the Plainfield City Floodplain Manager.**

## 6. Design Standards and Comments

- a. Architectural Design: As the site is next to the Netherwood Train Station (serving the south-bound Raritan Valley Line), careful attention should be given to the architectural design of the exterior of the building. Testimony should be provided demonstrating how the building meets the design standards of the Redevelopment Plan and provides a visually appealing experience for those going to or coming from the train station, including providing for pedestrian interest, orientation and emphasis of entrances, architectural variety with continuity.
- b. Flat Roof Treatment: Per the Design Standards of the Redevelopment Plan, architectural features are to be provided when a flat roof is proposed, and must include a parapet wall with cornice and frieze. A parapet wall is included in the design, and it appears a cornice and frieze have also been provided. Applicant shall confirm and demonstrate these features or a design waiver would be required.
- c. Streetscape: The Redevelopment Plan includes a chapter (Chapter 5.0) that provides a Proposed Circulation Element with circulation and streetscape design requirements. We defer to the Board Engineer to determine compliance with these standards.



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- d. Residential Amenities: Amenities in the building include an entrance lounge, dog wash, and mail/package room on the ground floor. The second floor includes a gym and the amenity deck with pool. The amenity deck meets the open space requirements of the Redevelopment Plan.
- e. Move In/Move Out: While there is no commercial use proposed with this project, residents of the apartment units will need to load and unload as they move out or move in. Sheet A6.001 of the architectural plans provide the circulation path for two specific move-in vehicles (a small U-Haul truck or a U-Haul van). Applicant shall provide testimony regarding how residents moving in to the building will be informed of the type of move-in vehicle to be utilized.
- f. Dog Run: A 490 square foot dog run is proposed as an outdoor amenity space for residents of the building. Applicant shall discuss if this is large enough for multiple dogs to use at the same time, and how access will be restricted to only residents.
- g. Washer/Dryer: All units are equipped with washer/dryer units. This is satisfactory.
- h. Tenant Storage Space: There is a total of 1,275 square feet of "Tenant Storage" areas in the top three floors of the building, plus 1,358 square feet of "Storage" on the ground floor. Applicant shall clarify if the ground floor storage is for tenant storage or building maintenance storage. Applicant shall also clarify how tenant storage will be divided amongst the units and how access will be secured.
- i. Netherwood Walkway: An about five foot wide unpaved path is provided to the rear of the building. It does not appear that this is intended to be a pedestrian path running parallel to the Raritan Valley railroad tracks, the so-called "Netherwood Walkway" connecting properties in the TSC to the Netherwood Train Station as described at **§17:9-52B.B.2**, as a proposed retaining wall blocks the westerly end of the path (closest to the train station). A paved path providing access to the train station was provided to the rear of the property just south of the Netherwood Train Station (at 1000 North Avenue), in an application granted final approval by the Planning Board December 19, 2019. Applicant shall be prepared to discuss if it is possible to provide for a path related to the Netherwood Walkway along the rear of the property.
- j. Refuse/Recycling Plan: The architectural plans include a Trash Removal plan on sheet A6.002. This (and the site plan) indicate that the ground floor trash room with refuse compactor system is proposed to be located near the northeast corner of the building. A trash chute extending and accessible from trash chute rooms on the second through fifth floors will allow residents to dispose of their trash. The trash will end up in the compactor system. After compaction, trash will be pushed into a two cubic yard (2 CY) container. Two other 2 CY containers will be provided in the ground floor trash room, one for commingled



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recyclables and one for paper and cardboard. The Trash Generation Calculations indicate that trash and recycling will be picked up once (1) per week, although this number may be adjusted based on need.

- (i) The trash vehicle is proposed to be a pick-up style flatbed truck with hydraulic mechanism to lift and haul away the trash container. This should be confirmed.
- (ii) Applicant should provide a will-serve letter or agreement with a waste hauler (PMUA or alternate service) as a condition of approval.

## **7. Redevelopment Plan**

The proposed project in general appears to be consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the TODN – North Avenue Redevelopment Plan, especially promoting transit oriented development and activity. However, the lack of retail or commercial space on the first floor of the building is not fully in keeping with the vision of the Trainside Commercial Zone section of the redevelopment area (see page 15 of the Redevelopment Plan). Applicant should be prepared to provide testimony demonstrating how the project meets the goals and vision of the Redevelopment Plan.

## **8. Planning Comments**

- a. The applicant will require six variances from the requirements of the Redevelopment Plan. Testimony should be provided addressing each of the required deviations and variances.
- b. The Board has the authority to grant deviations and variances where the purposes of the Plan and Ordinance would be advanced by a deviation from the strict requirements of these, and the benefits of the deviation/variance would outweigh any detriments.
  - i. Benefits – The benefits should be those where the community will benefit, and not just the applicant.
  - ii. Detriments – The detriments considered for a proposed deviation should focus on how the deviation may impact the intent of the plan and the character of the surrounding community.
- c. We defer to the Board Engineer regarding drainage, storm water, traffic impact analysis and other engineering issues related to the site.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any planning related questions at [mapte@cmeusa1.com](mailto:mapte@cmeusa1.com).

MA/nf