



July 2, 2024

File No. 2024-00402

David Boelker, Zoning Officer
Borough of Phoenixville
351 Bridge Street, 2nd FL
Phoenixville, PA 19460

Reference: Preliminary/Final LD Plan - Second Plan Review
375 Morgan Street
Tax Map Parcel Number: 15-9-572

Dear Mr. Boelker:

As requested, Gilmore & Associates, Inc. has reviewed the information listed below with regards to the Preliminary/Final Land Development plan for 375 Morgan Street, dated March 4, 2024, with a revision date of **June 20, 2024**, prepared by Wilkinson Apex. The site consists of TMP 15-9-572, is approximately 0.5 Acres and is in the Town Center (TC) District. The site has frontage along Morgan Street and Walnut Street, with vehicular access to an existing parking lot (upper and lower) from both Morgan Street and Walnut Street. The land development plan proposes to renovate the existing building, including a vertical addition, converting it into a mixed-use building for a total of twenty-nine (29) residential units, associated parking, and site improvements. The site will be served with public water and public sewer.

We offer the following comments for your consideration. This is the second review of the Preliminary/Final Plans. Any previous comments which have been addressed have been removed and any **new comments are in bold**.

1. Existing Conditions and Surrounding Land Use

- a. The existing land use is currently warehouse. The site consists of an existing 4-story building fronting Morgan and Walnut Street, with upper and lower parking lots, entrance drives and concrete stairs connecting the lots.
- b. The site is surrounded by commercial, residential, industrial, and institutional use. To the east is residential and industrial uses. To the south is residential and institutional uses. To the west and north there are commercial uses along with residential (apartments) across Walnut Street to the northwest.

2. Compliance with Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan (PRPC) 2021 and Chester County Comprehensive Plan

- a. The proposed land use is generally consistent with PRCP 2021, as it “concentrates growth within established development zones” and cooperates regionally by counteracting “the various pathologies of sprawl”.
- b. As per the Future Land Use Map of the *Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan* dated 2021, the site is categorized as Mixed Use. The proposed land use of the development is generally consistent with the Phoenixville Regional Comprehensive Plan.

- c. The proposed land use is generally consistent with the *Landscapes 3 Chester County Comprehensive Plan* adopted November 29th, 2018, as it concentrates growth in the most appropriate areas and calls for reinvestment in urban centers with a diversified mix of land use.

3. Use Regulations

- a. As per ZO §27-303, the site is in the Town Center District (TC) with a development objective “to complement and enhance the historic character of the streetscapes and built environment.” The applicant should be prepared to demonstrate how this project addresses these objectives.

4. Dimensional Requirements

- a. As per ZO §27-403.5, identified by the primary point of ingress/egress of a structure, the primary façade of dwellings and nonresidential buildings shall be oriented parallel to/facing existing streets when present, and to new streets when being proposed. When abutting more than one street, the primary shall be oriented towards the street of higher classification or if both streets are of the same classification, the more trafficked street. The plans propose a primary entrance on the façade, facing internally towards the parking lot with no primary point of ingress/egress proposed along Morgan Street. (The stairs to the door appear to be a utility access to the sprinkler room.) Further discussions with the Borough are needed to determine how the project addresses this requirement. **The response indicates that “the previously shown ingress and egress point off Morgan Street has been removed and replaced with a higher level balcony amenity and ground level landscaping, lawn, with a bench for aesthetic enhancement.” The aesthetic enhancement and improvements along the façade fronting Morgan Street significantly help to address this requirement.**

5. Landscape and Buffer Requirements/Lighting

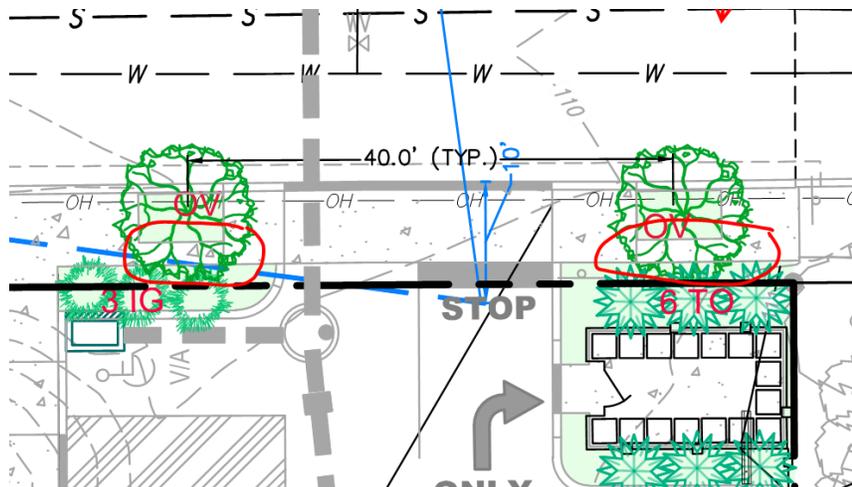
- a. As per ZO §27-406.2. F, permanent or pad-mounted mechanical equipment, such as air conditioning and heating units, shall be screened from public views of the property using fencing, walls, landscaping, or a combination thereof. Plans should be revised to include screening details to demonstrate compliance with this requirement. **The response indicates that “solid black iron fence for equipment screening coupled with enhancements to the proposed landscaping to maximize screening” is proposed. There is a detail (sheet 10 of 14) that shows a 5-foot high “Trex Seclusions” fence (tan). Plans should be revised to include a detail for the “solid black iron privacy fence” including height of “privacy fencing” to demonstrate compliance with this section of the ordinance.**
- b. As per ZO §27-406.2. G, views of plumbing vent pipes, electric/phone/cable terminals, and utility meters in front yards and on front building facades shall be screened or partially screened to help mitigate views of this equipment. Plans should include screening and/or foundation planting along Morgan Street to demonstrate compliance with this section of the ordinance. **Five (5) deciduous shrubs have been added to the foundation planting along Morgan Street including a fence to screen the equipment. The height of the fence is not specified. Plans should be revised to include type, height and details of the proposed fence to demonstrate compliance with this section of the ordinance.**
- c. As per SALDO §22-417.3.C, a raised and or curved planting strip shall be required for residential parking lots of not more than 20 cars each, with the sections separated by raised and or curbed landscaped planting strips a minimum of 9 feet wide. **The response indicates “that the parking lot has been designed with three “sections” of parking, all of which contain less than 20 vehicular spaces, therefore the provisions of §22-417.3C are not applicable. Per discussions with the**

Borough Planning Commission and Consultants, emphasis has been placed on maximizing the landscape space at the street frontage/ends of the parking lot to provide ample buffering". Because there are no raised or curbed planting strip /landscape island separations proposed internally and there are more than twenty (20) spaces proposed, a waiver would still need to be requested from this requirement.

- d. As per SALDO §22-428.9, all plantings along buildings shall have no less than forty-percent evergreen shrub material. Plans propose only deciduous shrubs along the foundation planting facing Morgan Street. Plans should be revised to include evergreen plantings in this area to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the ordinance.

6. General Comments

- a. Postage station/cluster box location have not been addressed on the plans. We defer to the postmaster on this item. However, if the location will be outside, the plans should be revised to show the proposed location and detailed information of amenities provided including accessibility concerns. **The response indicates that the mailbox cluster is shown near the stairs to the parking lot entrance to the building. Details of the mailbox cluster shall be coordinated with the postmaster prior to construction.**
- b. The Schedule of Proposed Landscape (sheet 9 of 14) shows three (3) CC *Carpinus caroliniana*, and three (3) species of groundcover/perennials (*Hemerocallis 'Stella de Oro'*, *Carex Pennsylvanica*, and *Carex appalachia*), that are not shown on the plan. These discrepancies should be corrected to match the plan.
- c. The sidewalk proposed along Walnut Street appears to be less than two (2) feet wide where the trees surrounds are proposed. Further discussions with the Borough are needed to determine how this plan addresses this concern.



- d. The minimum size specified for American Elm, Hop hornbeam and American arborvitae on the plant Schedule (sheet 9 of 13) appear to be the mature size of the plant. Plant sizes on the Schedule should be revised to show the minimum size of the plant at the time of planting.

7. Market Analysis

- a. The Market Analysis indicates that there is a \$203.2 million market for total sales, with a potential for \$273.4 million within a 5-minute drive from the property and cites a retail market analysis report by ESRI Business Analyst as the data source. ESRI Business Analyst is a subscription-based service, so we are unable to corroborate this information. The Market Analysis should be expanded to provide additional data to support this conclusion.

8. Community and Fiscal Impact Analysis

- a. The Fiscal Impact Analysis indicates that the demographic multiplier for the number of school aged children per 1- and 2-bedroom unit is determined by the anticipated rental price; however, the Fiscal Impact Analysis does not provide a source or justification for the \$1,400 monthly rent for 1-bedroom and the \$2,000 monthly rent for 2-bedroom. The Fiscal Impact Analysis does not indicate whether the proposed rental rates are economically viable for existing or new residents. The Fiscal Impact Analysis should be revised to indicate a source for the proposed rental rates, or an indication that the rental rates are viable for residents.
- b. On page 5, under Table C, the Fiscal Impact should be revised to calculate the 511-tax revenue increase based on the projected minimum income required to rent the proposed residential units.
- c. The Fiscal Impact Analysis does not indicate if tax impacts are expected due to conversion of the commercial use to residential. The Analysis should be expanded to indicate whether positive or negative fiscal impacts based on all proposed uses within the building.
- d. The Fiscal Impact Analysis indicates that the total population of the Borough is 19,354 residents. The American Community Survey 5- Year Estimates 2018-2022 indicate that the total population of the Borough is 18,723 residents. The Fiscal Impact Analysis should be revised to reflect the current U.S. Census Data.
- e. According to the Chester County Board of Assessment, the Millage Rate for Phoenixville Borough in 2024 is 8.32. The report indicates that the millage rate for local property taxes is 9.14. The Fiscal Impact Analysis should be revised to reflect the Phoenixville Borough Millage Rates for 2024.
- f. The Fiscal Impact Analysis should be revised to include the per quarter residential trash fee of \$110 as indicated in the Borough of Phoenixville Master Schedule of Fees effective March 12, 2024.
- g. On Page 5, Table C Anticipated One Time Revenues indicates a Commercial Building Permit Cost. The Fiscal Impact Analysis indicates that the building is previously commercial but does not indicate the commercial use is continued. The Fiscal Impact Analysis should provide clarification on the proposed use(s) of the building.
- h. On Page 5, Table C Anticipated One Time Revenues indicates that the Water Connection Fee is \$1,250 per DU. According to the Borough of Phoenixville Master Schedule of Fees effective March 12, 2024, the connection of 11-25 units is \$1,250 per DU and the connection of 26 units or more is \$1,000 per DU. The proposal indicates the building has 29 dwelling units. The Fiscal Impact Analysis should provide clarification on the number of new water connections.
- i. On page 5, Table C Anticipated Continual Revenues, it is unclear the source of the Per Resident/ Household/ Unit Wastewater, Water and 511 Tax Revenue data. The Fiscal Impact Analysis should be revised to include sources for the per resident/household/unit data within Table C on page 5.

- j. In conjunction with any resubmission, the applicant must provide a response letter using the same numbering system and explaining how each comment has been satisfactorily addressed.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 610 587-8811 or by email ablank@gilmore-assoc.com.

Sincerely,



Adrienne L. Blank, R.L.A.
Landscape Architect
Gilmore & Associates, Inc.

ALB/sl

cc: Owen Hyne, P.E., C.E.A., Remington & Vernick Engineers (Owen.Hyne@rve.com)