

Franklin Township

Somerset County, New Jersey



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

Planning – Zoning – Affordable Housing
Planning Board – Zoning Board of Adjustment

Municipal Building
475 DeMott Lane
Somerset, NJ 08873
732.873.2500
Fax: 732.873.0844
www.franklintwpnj.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Board

FROM: Mark Healey, PP/ AICP
Director of Planning/ Senior Zoning Officer

DATE: March 30, 2021

RE: *AACTFR Property, LLC - Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan w/ "c" Variance - 401 Cottontail Lane - Block 517.01 Lot 8.06 (PLN-21-00006)*

As requested, I have reviewed the following documents relative to the above referenced preliminary and final site plan application:

- 24-sheet set of site plans, prepared by Dynamic Engineering, dated 1/21/21
- 2-sheet set of architectural plans, prepared by M+H Architects, dated 1/21/21

SITE DESCRIPTION

The 6.9-acre property fronts on the westerly side of Cottontail Lane within the Business and Industry (B-I) zone. The site is currently undeveloped, is largely tree-covered and contains a stream and wetlands areas with associated regulatory buffers in the rear portion of the site. The surrounding area is comprised of warehouses, light industrial uses, office buildings and other uses permitted in the B-I zone.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant seeks approval for the construction of a 100,125 square foot warehouse consisting of 95,565 square feet of warehouse space and 4,500 square feet of office space. The applicant proposes a 62-space car parking area on the southerly side of the building accessed via a two-way curb cut on Cottontail Lane. A 14-bay loading area is proposed to the rear of the building which would be accessed via a two-way access drive on the northerly side of the building. The rear portion of the site (comprising the 100-foot DRCC stream corridor buffer) would remain undisturbed.

The proposal requires the following approvals from the Township Planning Board:

- *Preliminary and Final Site Plan*

- "C" Variances:
 - *Min. front yard setback (parking lot):* 50-feet required - approx. 48 feet proposed
 - *Number of Building-Mounted Signs:* One sign permitted - two proposed

REVIEW COMMENTS

1. As indicated above, the site plan requires a slight variance from the 50-foot front yard parking lot setback (roughly 48 feet proposed). The applicant should either revise to comply or propose appropriate mitigation (e.g., landscape hedge along the front of the parking space closest to the frontage).
2. The site plan requires relief from Schedule 6 which requires 1 tree for every 2,000 square feet of paved area (39 trees required - 31 trees of qualifying size are proposed on the plan). It would appear that there is opportunity on site for the application to comply or more nearly comply. To the extent any shortfall remains, the applicant would need to justify relief to the satisfaction of the Board.
3. Per Chapter 222 and the calculations on the plan, the tree replacement requirement is 566 trees with 31 qualifying trees proposed (leaving a deficit of 535 trees). Per the requirements of Chapter 222 the applicant should explore additional opportunities to plant more replacement trees on-site. There would appear to be some opportunity for that. The remaining deficient would be addressed via payment-in-lieu to the Township tree fund per the ordinance.
4. The applicant should explore changes to the plans consistent with Section 112-33.6.B which indicates that effort should be made to provide a portion of the required landscaping within the interior of the site (e.g., parking lot islands).
5. The site layout is consistent with §112-33.6.C which indicates that loading docks, truck parking, and other service functions should be located in a manner than minimizes their view from adjoining roadways. The dock area is located to the rear of the building.
6. The architectural plans comply with §112-33.6.D as the sides of the building facing and visible from adjoining roadways are designed and finished the same as other sides of the building.
7. The applicant should demonstrate compliance with §112-33.6.E which indicates that mechanical equipment should be screened from view from adjoining roadways and that any such screening is architecturally integrated with the building through materials, color, texture, shape, size, and with design features, such as facade parapets.
8. The applicant should address §112-33.6.F which requires that such applications "appropriately take into consideration non-automotive modes of transportation" including "convenient and safe interconnection of sidewalks between parking areas and building

entrances within the site and extending to the street. Sidewalks should be provided along the site frontage. Site plans should incorporate bicycle parking as well as electric vehicle charging stations."

9. The applicant should address §112-33.6.G., as applicable, which encourages appropriate accommodation for pick-up/ drop-off area(s) for ride hailing services, bus and/or shuttle.
10. The application requires from certain requirements (e.g., avg./min. ratio and max./min. ratio) from the lighting requirements of Section 112-33.2. The applicant should provide justification to the satisfaction of the Board.
11. The applicant should note that, per ordinance, directional signs are limited to 3 square feet in area and shall contain no corporate logos or other corporate identification.
12. Development of the site would be subject to payment of non-residential development (COAH) fees equal to 2.5% of equalized assessed value.

Figure 1: Site Location

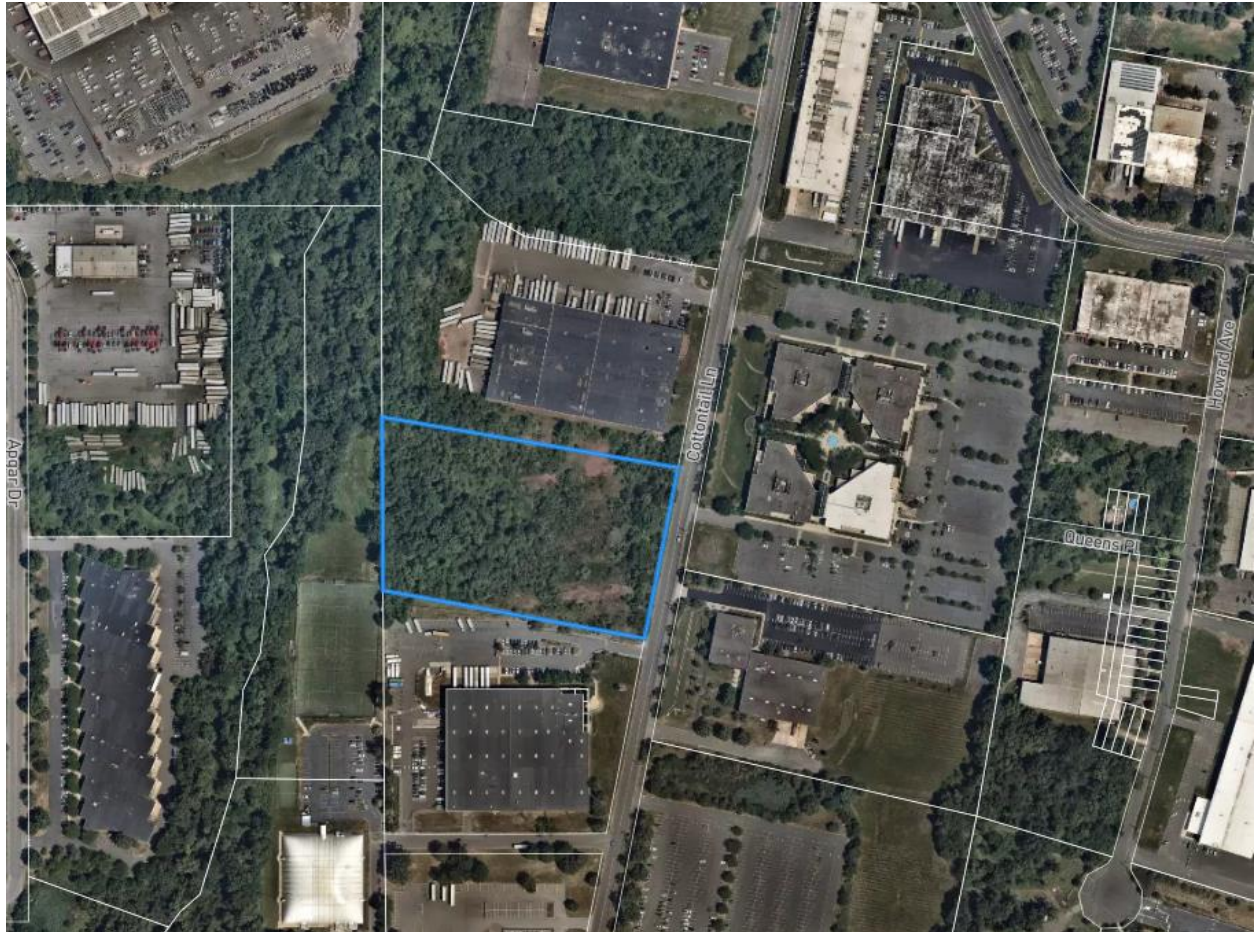


Figure 2: Site and Surrounding Area



Figure 3: Cottontail Lane Site Frontage

