

**ADDENDUM TO APPLICATION OF BANK OF AMERICA
REBRANDING SIGNAGE VARIANCE REQUEST**

VARIANCE REQUEST

Bank of America (“BOA” or the “Bank”) operates a branch bank at the corner of Easton Avenue and Worlds Fair Drive just southeast of the Route 287 Easton Avenue exit ramp. This particular site is unique because it is a busy location with limited access. The entrance to the bank is from Worlds Fair Drive. A driver coming from the 287 direction that misses the turn for Worlds Fair Drive would go around the block for about 1.6 miles (Cedar Grove Lane to Pierce Street to Worlds Fair Drive) and then enter the bank site before it gets to Easton Avenue again. A driver coming north on Worlds Fair that misses the entrance would take the same 1.6-mile loop to get back to the Bank entrance.

The Bank is in the process of updating its branches throughout the country consistent with its new national branding. Changes at this location will consist of exterior maintenance including new bollard sleeves, new white trim paint and new signage. The proposed new signage is a replacement pylon sign in front of the bank on the Easton Avenue side, a new wall sign in the white gable area facing Easton Avenue, a replacement wall sign on the Worlds Fair Drive side of the building and a new wall sign on the rear of the building (opposite from Easton Avenue).

The replacement pylon sign will be an in-kind replacement in the same location as the existing sign and accordingly does not need variances for its location or height.

BOA requests several variances from the signage criteria in Section 112 Attachment 5 of the Franklin Township Ordinance to permit the three proposed wall signs. Specifically, the Ordinance allows wall signs on each building side with an entrance which in this case is Easton Avenue and Worlds Fair Drive. A variance is requested to allow a sign on the rear of the building so people driving north on Worlds Fair Drive know to turn into the bank before they get to Easton Avenue.

In addition, the Bank requests sign variances for all three wall signs to exceed the maximum allowable sign area of 30 square feet. Two of the sign variances are de minimus increases over the allowable area at 30.99 square feet and allow the bank to use the standard letter size and spacing that have been determined to make the signs readable. The new sign in the building gable will be 63.2 square feet in area. This sign size has been determined to be more readable from the busy road and fits aesthetically into the existing building façade. It should be noted that the gable sign area is the area of a single rectangle that encompasses the letters and the flag logo which includes a large amount of white background space.

In addition, to the area variances the Bank requests a variance to allow the building gable sign to be 4.7 feet high where the Ordinance allows a maximum vertical dimension of 3 feet. This additional height allows the Bank to stack the flag logo over the letters to fit nicely into the existing building façade.

All of the proposed changes and variances received a favorable endorsement from the Franklin Township Historic Preservation Commission on March 7, 2023.

The Municipal Land Use Law (“MLUL”), N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70c.(1), authorizes the Planning Board to grant such variances from the zoning ordinance where the strict application of the regulation would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties to or exceptional hardship upon the developer of property, or, under N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70c.(2), where the purposes of the MLUL would be advanced by a deviation from the zoning ordinance requirements and the benefits of the deviation substantially outweigh any detriment. Additionally, in determining whether to grant the variance the Board must find that it will not cause substantial detriment to the public good and would not substantially impair the intent and purpose of the zone plan and zoning ordinance.

This proposal meets the standards for both a c(1) hardship variance and a c(2) “flexible c” variance. The variance application advances a purpose of the MLUL by promoting a desirable visual environment through creative development techniques and good civic design and arrangement. To deny the requested variances would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties to and exceptional hardship upon the Applicant because of the limited and unique access to the Bank.

There are no anticipated detriments to approving the variance request. The signs are tastefully designed and appropriately sized for this location. Signage is needed on the third side of the building to identify the Bank before the driver passes the entrance. The grant of the variance would not result in a substantial detriment to the public good or substantially impair the intent and purpose of the zone plan and zoning ordinance. Accordingly, the Zoning Board is empowered to grant the requested variances.