

November 12, 2025

Via E-mail (jvite@westorange.org)

Township of West Orange Planning Board
66 Main Street
West Orange, NJ 07052

Attn.: Jamilet Baquerizo Vite – Board Secretary

**RE: ENGINEERING REVIEW FOR TRADER JOE'S EAST, INC.
WEST ORANGE PLANNING BOARD APPLICATION No. PB 25-10
457 MT. PLEASANT AVENUE (BLOCK 157, LOT 5)
TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE, ESSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
MATRIX NO. 23-1345-018**

Ms. Vite:

As requested, Matrix New World Engineering, Land Surveying and Landscape Architecture, PC (Matrix) has reviewed the Planning Board application and supporting documentation for the above-referenced site. Matrix has prepared a technical engineering review of the proposed improvements at the subject parcel. It shall be noted that our review of the project is limited to site/civil engineering only. Matrix defers all planning matters, including but not limited to, bulk and/or use variances, conformance with the master plan and ordinances, etc. to the Board's Planner.

As provided by your office, Matrix has received and reviewed the following documents for this project:

- Township of West Orange Application form for the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment, dated July 31, 2025
- Set of engineering plans consisting of nineteen (19) drawings entitled "Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan for Proposed Retail Store, 457 Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Township of West Orange, Essex County, New Jersey, Map 87, Block 157, Lot 5" prepared by T. Lam, PE of Bohler Engineering NJ, LLC, revised September 17, 2025
- Set of architectural plans consisting of five (5) drawings entitled "Trader Joe's, 471 Mt. Pleasant Avenue, West Orange, NJ" prepared by Jeffrey T. Taylor of Jeffrey Taylor Architects, dated September 9, 2025
- "ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey, Block 157, Lot 5, 457 Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Township of West Orange, Essex County, State of New Jersey" prepared by James D. Sens, PLS of Control Point Associates, Inc., dated November 20, 2023, revised August 5, 2025
- "Traffic Statement for Proposed Retail Store" prepared by Paul B. Going, PE and David W. Fahim, PE of Traffic Planning and Design, Inc., dated September 19, 2025
- "Stormwater Management Report, prepared for Proposed Retail Store" prepared by Tung-To Lam, P.E., Bohler Engineering NJ, LLC, dated August 2025

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Matrix understands that the Applicant for this application is Trader Joe's East, Inc., 160 Federal Street, Floor 12, Boston, MA 02111, and the Owner for this application is Diener Mt. Pleasant Associates Ltd., 25 Main Street, Suite 200, Hackensack, NJ 07601. As per the Township's Zoning Map (last revised 2020), the subject parcel (Block 157, Lot 5) is located in the 'B-2' (Retail Business) zone along Mt. Pleasant Avenue, also known as NJ State Highway No. 10, approximately 388 feet north and east of the intersection of that roadway with Pleasant Valley Way, Essex County Highway No. 636. The Property is currently improved with an approximately 29,187 SF one-story commercial building previously occupied by multiple retail tenants ("Main Building"), an approximately 3,254 SF one-story commercial building occupied by one retail tenant, as well as existing parking area and landscaping improvements. Retail stores and multiple principal uses are permitted in the B-2 zoning district. The subject property is approximately 3.71 acres or 161,597 SF. The Applicant proposes to refit and occupy approximately 18,767 square feet of commercial space within the Main Building for conversion into a Trader Joe's Retail Store.

The Applicant proposes the addition of twenty-two (22) new parking spaces to be situated on the western portion of the site in replacement of the greenhouse outdoor sales area used by previous tenant Metropolitan Plant Exchange. Additionally, the existing parking in front of the Main Building will be reconfigured to provide additional parking stalls. Ancillary improvements such as curbing, paving, landscaping and lighting are also proposed. In connection with the application to the Township of West Orange Planning Board, these improvements require preliminary and final major site plan approval, together with Tree Removal and Replacement approval, Soil Removal approval and "c" bulk variances.

Below is a summary of the proposed building fit-out:

1. General

- 1.1. The ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey indicates that most of the westerly and northwesterly property line is bound by the West Branch (incorrectly labelled as the South Branch) of the Rahway River. The Survey also indicates that a significant portion of the parcel is with the Flood Hazard Area of the River and to a lesser extent the River's Riparian Buffer impacts the site. A small portion within the rear of the parcel near Mt. Pleasant Place is a wetlands buffer. The Applicant shall provide testimony on the impact of the proposed improvements on these environmental features and the need to apply to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection for any permits.
- 1.2. Two different addresses are used in the application: 457 Mt. Pleasant Avenue and 471 Mt. Pleasant Avenue. Which is the correct one for Trader Joe's?

2. Demolition

- 2.1. The Applicant shall provide testimony as to the intention to remove, demolish, or otherwise modify any existing exterior site elements for the proposed development.

3. Site Plan

- 3.1. The Applicant shall provide testimony regarding the existing site conditions, proposed improvements, and conformance with applicable ordinances and regulations.

- 3.2. A total of 187 parking stalls are proposed which includes ADA compliant stalls and EV stalls. The applicant shall provide testimony as to the adequacy of this number of stalls or if any variances are required.
- 3.3. It appears that some sections of the parking lot and some sections of circulation driveways do not have either block or concrete curb along their perimeters as required by Ordinance 25-12.1.B.
- 3.4. An existing fence is depicted along the easterly property line, where it abuts residential uses, as required by Ordinance 25.12.1.B. The Applicant shall provide testimony as to the condition of this fence. Any deteriorated sections will need to be replaced/repaired.
- 3.5. New parking areas to the south and west of the Main Building will receive milling and a pavement overlay or a complete pavement reconstruction. The Applicant shall provide testimony on the condition of the pavement in the remainder of the existing parking areas and circulation driveways and propose any repairs/improvements where necessary.
- 3.6. A new 10 foot by 10 foot trash enclosure is depicted on the easterly side of the Trader Joe's building. Are there any plans to eliminate the two dumpsters that are shown in the northeasterly corner of the property?
- 3.7. Two cart corrals are provided adjacent to the Trader Joe's entrance to server shoppers entering the facility. Where to exiting shoppers place their carts? No corrals are depicted in the parking areas.
- 3.8. The Applicant shall provide testimony regarding the parking lot striping and whether such will be repainted. One set of directional arrows at the easterly Mt. Pleasant Avenue driveway is proposed to be repainted.
- 3.9. The Applicant shall provide testimony regarding the intention to install any ground signage, including but not limited to, monument signage, exterior building signage, sign boards, etc.

4. Grading, Drainage and Stormwater Management

- 4.1. Ordinance 2918-25 adopted on May 20, 2025 classifies this project as a Major Development. Consequently the plan shall address both water quantity and water quality standards. The Stormwater Management proposes to achieve these standards using porous pavement in the reconstructed parking area on the westerly side of the Main Building. However, this stormwater management facility is located within the Flood Hazard Area (FHA) of the West Branch of the Rahway River. The Applicant shall provide testimony as to how this facility will operate and perform when inundated with flood water from the River.
- 4.2. Since improvements will be constructed within the River's Flood Hazard Area, permits will be required from the NJDEP. Also the Township, through the Municipal Engineer's office, shall issue a permit to the Applicant for compliance with the Township's Stormwater Management Regulations.
- 4.3. The West Branch of the Rahway River along this parcel's westerly and northwesterly property line needs to be cleaned of debris and overgrown vegetation.

5. Soil Erosion & Sediment Control

- 5.1. A Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan was prepared as part of the site plan submission. This Plan shall be approved by the Hudson Essex Passaic Soil Conservation District.
- 5.2. The soil stockpile area appears to adversely impact access to existing store fronts. Another location should be considered.

6. Site Lighting

- 6.1. The Applicant shall provide testimony regarding the site's compliance with Township Ordinance §25-14, related to lighting levels. The Applicant shall review the need for replacement or supplemental lighting to meet the minimum lighting level criteria in §25-14.3 particularly behind the Main Building as well as to its east, while minimizing light spillover onto adjacent properties. Should additional lighting improvements be required, the Applicant shall provide a lighting plan to depict the characteristics of the additional proposed lighting, as well as a photometric analysis to demonstrate compliance with minimum illumination requirements. Additionally, the plan shall be revised to depict any existing light poles on-site that will remain, particularly those that may be behind the building and on the driveway to Pleasant Valley Way.

7. Landscaping and Buffers

- 7.1. The Applicant shall provide testimony regarding existing vegetation, and any related removals, replacements, or new planting areas. The Applicant shall also confirm the presence of required buffers as the property abuts residential zones.

8. Utilities

- 8.1. The Applicant shall provide testimony on utility service lines, laterals, connections, or associated appurtenances that are proposed for the new facilities. The Applicant shall clean and televise the existing sanitary lateral and any roof drainage laterals intended to be reused prior to construction.
- 8.2. The Applicant shall provide testimony regarding the need to construct any above- or below-grade improvements for utility services.

9. Traffic, Traffic Maintenance and Parking Maintenance

- 9.1 The Applicant shall provide a Traffic Maintenance and Parking Maintenance Plan depicting how traffic and circulation patterns and parking for those retail facilities that remain will be maintained during the constructions period.
- 9.2 Vehicle access, egress and turn restrictions shall remain as previously approved.
- 9.3 There appears to be a small inconsistency between the number of parking stalls on the Site Plan and the number of stalls specified in the traffic report.

10. Inspection Escrow

- 10.1 The Applicant shall prepare a construction cost estimate for the site improvements for the purpose of computing the amount of funds to be placed in escrow for site inspections.

We thank you for the opportunity to be of service to the Township of West Orange Planning Board. Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions or comments regarding this review at (973) 703 5989 or via e-mail at llepore@mnwe.com.

Sincerely,

Leonard Lepore

Leonard R. Lepore, PE
Project Engineer

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Enclosures

Copy to: Dennis Petrocelli, PG – Matrix
Michael Soltys, PE – Matrix
Sean Savage, PE – Matrix