



MEMORANDUM

To: *Chairman and Members of the
West Orange Planning Board*

From: *Ryan MacNeill, PE For
John J. Hess, PE, PP, CME
Planning Board Engineer*

Date: *December 22, 2025*

Re: *Application No. PB 25-11
525 Northfield Ave., LLC
Preliminary and Final Site Plan and Conditional Use with 'C' Variances and
Tree Removal Permit - Review #1
525 Northfield Avenue
Block 159.04, Lots 1.01
Our File: 115.WRP0159.V02 (60001)*

CC: *Geniece Gary-Adams – Director of Planning & Development/Zoning Official
Zayibeth Carballo, PE, PLS, PP, CME, CFM, CFS – Municipal Engineer
Malvika Apte, PP, AICP – Planning Board Planner
Diana McGovern, Esq. – Planning Board Attorney
525 Northfield Ave., LLC – Applicant
Marsha M. Moore, Esq. – Applicant's Attorney
Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS – Applicant's Engineer
Matthew B. Jarmel, AIA, MBA – Applicant's Architect
Craig W. Peregoy, PE – Applicant's Traffic Engineer
Michael Pronesti, PLS – Applicant's Surveyor*

Our office has received for review the following documents which were submitted in support of the above referenced application for Preliminary and Final Site Plan and Conditional Use approval with "C" Variances and Tree Removal Permit approval:

- A set of unsigned Preliminary/Final Site Plan drawings (15 sheets) prepared by Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS with Jarmel Kizel Architects and Engineers, Inc. of Livingston, New Jersey dated October 22, 2025.
- A set of architectural plans (5 sheets) prepared by Matthew B. Jarmel, AIA, MBA with Jarmel Kizel Architects and Engineers, Inc. dated October 20, 2025.
- A print of a Boundary and Topographic Survey (1 sheet) prepared by Michael Pronesti, PLS with Pronesti Surveying, Inc. of Cedar Grove, New Jersey dated May 14, 2025.



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- A Traffic Impact Study prepared by Craig W. Peregoy, PE, and Connor Hughes, PE with Dynamic Traffic of Chester, New Jersey dated November 10, 2025.
- A Stormwater Management Report prepared by Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS with Jarmel Kizel Architects and Engineers, Inc. dated October 22, 2025.
- A Stormwater Maintenance Plan and Field Manual prepared by Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS with Jarmel Kizel Architects and Engineers, Inc. dated October 22, 2025.
- A NJDEP Flood Hazard Area Applicability Determination (File No. 0722-25-0001.1) dated February 21, 2025.
- A completed Application Form dated November 3, 2025.
- A completed Site Plan/Subdivision Checklist.
- A completed Sustainability Checklist Form.
- An Attachment to Application which summarizes the project and lists the variances that are being requested by the Applicant.
- A Conditional Use Statement which describes the conditional use that is being requested by the Applicant.
- A Verification of Taxes & Sewer Charges Paid from the Office of the Tax Collector dated November 10, 2025 which states that the taxes are paid until October 31, 2025 and the 2025 sewer charges are paid in full.
- A List of Owners within 200 Feet of Block 159.04, Lot 1.01 from the Office of the West Orange Tax Assessor dated October 30, 2025.
- A Disclosure Statement from 525 Northfield Ave., LLC dated November 3, 2025.
- A Disclosure Statement from Astro Management Group Inc. dated November 3, 2025.
- A Disclosure Statement from Arbol by Gomes LLC dated November 3, 2025.
- A completed Consent of Owner dated November 3, 2025.
- A completed Application for Tree Removal and Replacement Permit dated November 13, 2025.
- A completed Checklist for Tree Removal Construction Applications/Projects.
- A list of trees proposed to be removed on the subject property.

We have reviewed the information submitted in support of this application and offer the following comments:



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A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The property in question is an irregularly shaped tract which is located on the southeastern corner of the intersection of Northfield Avenue (CR 508) and Sheridan Avenue. It is located in the B-2 General Business District and has an area of 110,205 sf or approximately 2.53 acres. The property is currently occupied by an existing commercial building, a train car, and a paved parking lot. The existing 2-story building was previously occupied by a restaurant, lounge, and banquet hall (The Essex House). Access is provided to the site from Northfield Avenue (CR 508) to the south and Sheridan Avenue to the west. Further, the existing paved parking lot currently provides 171 parking spaces including 2 handicap accessible parking spaces.

The Applicant is seeking Preliminary and Final Site Plan and Conditional Use approval with "C" Variances and Tree Removal Permit approval to demolish the existing commercial building and associated site improvements and construct a 4-story, 52,940 sf, mixed-use building. The proposed mixed-use building consists of the following:

- The first floor will contain the lower-level parking garage, residential lobby, leasing office, building storage and utility rooms, a commercial space, and tenant amenities including an amenity/co-working space and a zen garden. Access to the lower-level parking garage is provided via a driveway from Northfield Avenue (CR 508).
- The second floor will contain the upper-level parking garage, residential apartments, and tenant amenities including a lounge, club room, and amenities deck. Access to the upper-level parking garage is provided via a driveway from Northfield Avenue (CR 508) as well as internal access through the lower-level parking garage.
- The third floor will contain residential apartments and tenant amenities including a gym and amenities deck.
- The fourth floor will contain residential apartments.
- The combined parking areas for the development consists of a total of 178 parking spaces, including 46 tandem parking spaces, 6 handicap accessible parking spaces and 30 EV parking spaces.
- The development contains a total of 105 apartment units, including 21 affordable housing units. There are 2 studio units, 82 one-bedroom units, 16 two-bedroom units, and 5 three-bedroom units.
- A retaining wall and landscaping along the mixed-use building is proposed.

B. DESIGN COMMENTS

1. Based on our review, we find that the following items from the Township's Site Plan/Subdivision Checklist must be addressed:
 - a) Item #46 – *Solid waste management plan.*
 - b) Item #49 – *Vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns.*



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2. The Applicant has requested the following submission waivers from the Site Plan/Subdivision Checklist:
 - a) Item #31 – *Existing and proposed contour intervals based on U.G.S. & G.S. datum. Contours to extend at least 200' beyond subject property.*
 - b) Item #45 – *Landscape plan & details prepared by a professional landscape architect.*
 - c) Item #52 – *Plans and legal documents for compliance with West Orange COAH Ordinances.*
3. The Applicant has requested the following variances with this application:
 - a) A front yard setback of 2.4 feet is proposed, whereas a minimum of 30 feet is required.
 - b) A side front yard setback (corner lot) of 0.4 feet is proposed, whereas a minimum of 25 feet is required.
 - c) A lot coverage of 67.5%, whereas a maximum lot coverage of 60% is allowed.
 - d) A building coverage of 48.0%, whereas a maximum building coverage of 40% is allowed.
 - e) A building height of 38.5 feet and 3 stories, whereas a maximum building height of 35 feet and 2.5 stories is allowed.
 - f) 198 parking spaces are proposed (178 parking spaces plus EV credit of 20 spaces), whereas 200 parking spaces are required.
 - g) A residential buffer of 13.6 feet is proposed, whereas 50 feet is required.
 - h) Disturbance of steep slopes greater than 25% is proposed, whereas no disturbance is permitted within these slopes. In addition, disturbance of steep slopes between 20-24.99% is proposed at 29.0% of the total area of these slopes on-site, whereas a maximum of 20% disturbance of these slopes is permitted.
 - i) Tree removal is proposed on steep slopes, whereas no tree removal is permitted.
4. The eastern portion of the proposed building appears to be located within an AE Flood Hazard Area and Floodway. The plans should be revised to show the flood hazard area and floodway to demonstrate that the proposed development complies with the Township's flood regulations. In addition, a note should be added to the plans indicating that approval from the Township's Floodplain Administrator will be obtained prior to construction.
5. The plans referenced within the NJDEP Flood Hazard Area Applicability Determination should be submitted to the Board for review.
6. It appears that the subject property is located within the St. Cloud Historic District. Therefore, the Applicant shall obtain approval from the Township's Historic Preservation Commission for the proposed development.



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7. The Applicant should address the Board regarding the anticipated hours of operation for the proposed commercial uses at the site.
8. The Applicant should address the Board regarding whether the proposed parking spaces will be assigned to each unit.
9. The Applicant should address the Board regarding how deliveries will be handled to the site.
10. The Applicant should address the Board regarding the anticipated times for the trash and recyclables pickup.
11. The Applicant should address the Board regarding whether any of the EV parking spaces are make-ready. If so, the Applicant should provide testimony to the Board regarding the timeline to convert the spaces from make-ready to EVSE.
12. Sheet C-100 of the civil plans notes that no easement exists for the existing culvert that extends through the center of the property. The Applicant should address the Board regarding the ownership of the culvert. Further, the plans should be revised indicating any proposed modifications to the existing inlets along the culvert.
13. The Applicant is proposing the development on steep slopes greater than 10%. Therefore, the Applicant is required to submit the exhibits as specified in § 25-28.7b of the Land Use Regulations, which include but are not limited to:
 - a) Identification of soil types on the property, with specific reference to highly erodible soils.
 - b) Plans and specifications for any retaining walls, steps, or other soil protective structures proposed.
 - c) A stabilization and revegetation plan.
 - d) A maintenance plan to ensure that the slope is maintained in a safe and stable condition over the years.
14. The survey reference on the civil plans should be revised to include the date of the survey.
15. There is a discrepancy between Sheet C-001 of the civil plans, the Stormwater Maintenance Plan and Field Manual, and the application regarding the identity of the Owner and the Applicant. This discrepancy must be resolved.
16. The Zoning Schedule on sheet C-002 of the civil plans should be revised to demonstrate that the effective lot area is being utilized as described in §25-28.8d of the Land Use Regulations.
17. It appears that a portion of the existing sidewalk along the site frontages is damaged. Our office recommends that any damaged sidewalk should be replaced for safety reasons.
18. The civil plans should be revised to provide Belgian block curbing along Sheridan Avenue to match existing conditions.



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19. Sheet C-300 of the civil plans should be revised to have a "no left turn" sign at the egress of the easterly driveway.
20. It appears that on sheet C-300 of the civil plans that there is a proposed pedestrian walkway at the northwesterly corner of the development connecting to the parking lot. Our office recommends extending the walkway to connect to the sidewalk on Sheridan Ave.
21. Sheet C-300 of the civil plans shows a driveway adjacent to Block 159.05, Lot 1, which is within a residential district. As per §25-12.1i of the Land Use Regulations, each entrance or exit from parking areas shall be at least 50 feet from any residential district. The plans should be revised or relief requested.
22. Sheet C-300 of the civil plans should be revised to separately call out the locations of the standard handicap parking signage and van-accessible handicap parking signage.
23. Sheet C-300 of the civil plans should be revised to show the location of the EV parking spaces charging stations and signage.
24. The following details should be added to the plans:
 - a) Concrete Sidewalk.
 - b) Detectable Warning Surface.
 - c) Striped hatching.
 - d) Belgian block curb.
25. The "Concrete and Apron Detail" on sheet C-900 of the civil plans should be revised to note the width of the concrete sidewalk and the slope of the concrete sidewalk and apron.
26. The "ADA Parking Space Striping" detail on sheet C-900 of the civil plans should be revised to note that the space and access aisle shall have a maximum slope of 2%.
27. The "Pedestrian Crosswalk Detail" on sheet C-900 should be revised to match the crosswalk layout shown on sheet C-100.
28. The "Do Not Enter" sign and "One Way" sign details have been provided on sheet C-900 of the civil plans. However, these signs are not shown on sheet C-100. Revise plans accordingly.
29. The "Traffic Sign Mounting Detail" on sheet C-900 of the civil plans must be revised to have a minimum height of 7 feet from grade to bottom of sign and have a breakaway post.
30. The "Pavement Strip Treatment" detail on sheet C-900 of the civil plans references County details. The applicable County details should be added to the plan set.
31. Sheet SLP-1 of the civil plans should be revised to relocate the survey reference for clarity purposes.



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C. TRAFFIC COMMENTS

1. The Applicant should address the Board regarding whether the proposed tandem parking is permitted within the B-2 District.
2. The Applicant should address the Board regarding whether the use of the proposed amenities including the zen garden, amenity/co-working space, gym, lounge, and club room will be restricted to apartment tenants only.
3. There is a discrepancy between sheet C-002 of the civil plans and the traffic impact study regarding the parking space requirement for the commercial use and the total required parking spaces for the development. The discrepancy must be resolved.
4. The loading space shown on sheet C-300 of the civil plans must be revised to demonstrate that the space has a length of 40 feet and 14 feet of overhead clearance.

D. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

1. The civil and architectural plans must be revised to show the location, diameter, material, slope and invert of the proposed roof leaders and how the collected roof runoff gets discharged off-site.
2. The grading on sheet C-400 of the civil plans must be revised to show the parking lot north and east of the commercial space will have positive drainage off of the site.
3. The varying invert elevations of the trench drain on sheet C-500 of the civil plans should be revised to reflect the proposed slope within the trench drain as shown in its respective detail on sheet C-902 of the civil plans.
4. The rim elevations of Inlet D1 and F1 on sheet C-500 of the civil plans should be revised to match the proposed grade elevation as depicted by the proposed contours.
5. The "Manholes, Precast (Storm)" detail on sheet C-901 of the civil plans should be revised as there is overlapping text within the detail.
6. The "Type B Inlet" detail on sheet C-901 of the civil plans should be revised to indicate a 6" head to match the adjacent 6" curb reveal.
7. The "Trench/Backfill Section" detail on sheet C-902 of the civil plans must be revised to comply with the pavement restoration standard in §20-1.5g of the Township Code. Specifically, noting the time duration to let the asphalt trench settle and the procedures of milling and paving the restoration area afterwards.
8. The Stormwater Management Report described how the proposed development complies with the State's Stormwater Management Standards (NJAC 7:8). The report must be revised to demonstrate that it complies with the requirements set forth in §25-29.14 of the Land Use Regulations, as this ordinance has more restrictive regulations.
9. The proposed development will result in the disturbance of more than 0.5 acre. As a result, this project is classified as a Major Development and is subject to the stormwater management requirements set forth in §25-29.4 of the Land Use Regulations.



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10. As required for major developments, the Applicant must submit an Environmental Site Analysis to the Board as per §25-29.10c2 of the Land Use Regulations.
11. It appears that the stormwater runoff drains, directly or in indirectly, into a water with a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for TSS and an impaired water that is listed under New Jersey's Integrated Water Quality Assessment Report. The Applicant must demonstrate that the development complies with § 25-29.4r2iii and iv of the Land Use Regulations.
12. The Applicant shall file a stormwater permit application as per §25-29.14 of the Land Use Regulations.
13. As per §25-29.4s2 of the Land Use Regulations, the site shall be designed to manage, through on-site retention, the retention storm, (or 1/2 of the projected two-year storm per square foot, as reflected in Table 6) at the site or on contiguous properties in common ownership.
14. The Applicant proposes to address the stormwater runoff quantity standards by reducing the peak flow rates from the current and projected 2-, 10-, and 100-year storm events. The Stormwater Management Report notes an increase in volume for the post-development condition and states that this will not cause any flood damage downstream. The Applicant has not provided enough information to demonstrate that the site complies with the stormwater runoff quantity standards set forth in §25-29.4s3 of the Land Use Regulations.
15. Within the Stormwater Management Report, the time of concentration calculation within the "Summary for Subcatchment E1A-B: E1A & E1B Disturbed" and "Summary for Subcatchment E3: E3" must be revised to have the first 100 feet be calculated as sheet flow.
16. Within the Stormwater Management Report, the time of concentration of 5 minutes for the roof was provided without calculations. The Applicant must provide calculations for this time of concentration.
17. The routing in the Stormwater Management Report must be revised to analyze impervious and pervious areas separately.
18. The Storm Sewer Tabulation within Appendix C of the Stormwater Management Report is not legible and must be revised for review.
19. The drainage area maps need to be revised to extend the drainage areas from the front lot lines to the limits of disturbance within the Northfield Avenue and Sheridan Avenue Rights-Of-Way.
20. The drainage area maps need to be revised to correctly draw the time of concentration path. The paths currently shown are not drawn perpendicular with each of the contour lines.
21. The drainage area maps need to be revised to show all of the time of concentration paths referenced in the routing analysis. In addition, the path must be labeled showing the sheet flow, shallow concentrated flows, and open channel flows.



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22. There is an existing drainage ditch to the east of the existing driveway fronting Northfield Avenue which conveys stormwater runoff from the parking lot to the street. This is not depicted in the Stormwater Management Report. The Existing Drainage Area Map depicts all stormwater runoff from the parking lot to the inlets directly connected to the 72" culvert. Revise report accordingly.
23. The Proposed Drainage Area Map must be revised labeling drainage area "P1 Pervious".
24. The Stormwater Maintenance Plan and Field Manual should be revised to comply with the stormwater license and inspection requirement set forth in §25-29.13 of the Land Use Regulations.
25. The Stormwater Maintenance Plan and Field Manual and any future revisions shall be recorded upon the deed of record for each property on which the maintenance described in the maintenance plan must be undertaken. Prior to recording, the form of the deed must be reviewed and approved by the Planning Board attorney and our office.

E. LANDSCAPING COMMENTS

1. Pursuant to § 28-8, trees shall be replaced on a one-to-one basis, ideally on the same lot or elsewhere in town. According to the 'Tree Removal Schedule' on Sheet C-100, 77 trees are proposed to be removed, whereas no new shade trees are proposed. Plans should identify where compensatory plantings will be installed or note that the Township's Tree Replacement Fund will be subsidized with approval from the Township Forester.
2. Revise the plans to indicate the proposed disposition for all open areas, such as lawn, stone, mulch, etc., to prevent confusion during construction.
3. Our office recommends that if deer pressure is high, rigid plastic open mesh trunk guards to prevent the irreparable damage from buck rub, and that burlap around root ball should be removed upon planting.
4. Revise the 'Deciduous Tree Planting' detail, and 'Evergreen Tree Planting' detail to have a note that states that tree staking and rigid plastic open mesh trunk guards shall be removed from the plantings after two calendar years.
5. Revise plans to reduce number of 'Pink Knockout Roses' and diversify plant selection for south and west side foundation plantings. Our office recommends adding 'Compact Inkberry Holly – Ilex glabra 'Compacta'', 'Merlot Sweetspire – Itea virginica 'Merlot'', and 'Encore Azalea – Rhododendron Encore'.
6. Revise the plans to include details and layout for the proposed 'Zen Garden'
7. Sheet SLP-1 of the civil plans must be revised to mark the trees to be removed as per §25-28.7a4 of the Land Use Regulations.

F. LIGHTING COMMENTS

1. Revise the plans to indicate the proposed color and finish for all proposed fixtures and poles. Also, indicate timers and hours of operation.



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2. Sheet C-700 of the civil plans should be revised to include isolux pattern details for the proposed lights, including a scale and graph.

The Applicant is hereby advised that any revised plans or other documents submitted to the Board should be accompanied by a cover letter which addresses each of the comments in this review letter and also details any other changes that have been made to the plans as these may not be readily apparent.