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MEMORANDUM

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

From: *Ryan MacNeill, PE
Planning Board Engineer*

Date: *February 27, 2026*

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 #2
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 Preliminary/Final Site Plan drawings (16 sheets) prepared by Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS with Jarmel Kizel Architects and Engineers Inc. of Livingston, New Jersey and bearing a latest revision date of January 29, 2026.
- A set of unsigned architectural plans (5 sheets) prepared by Matthew B. Jarmel, RA with Jarmel Kizel Architects and Engineers Inc. and bearing a latest revision date of January 29, 2026.

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NJ CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORIZATION NO. 24GA28359000 (CME)
NJ CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORIZATION NO. 24GA28412500 (ARTHEON)

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- A print of a Title & Topographic Survey (1 sheet) prepared by Michael T. Lanzafama, PE, PLS, PP with Casey & Keller Incorporated of Millburn, New Jersey and bearing a latest revision date of July 21, 2010.
- A Stormwater Management Report prepared by Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS with Jarmel Kizel Architects and Engineers, Inc. dated October 22, 2025 and bearing a latest revision date of January 28, 2026. Included in the Stormwater Management Report is a Subsurface Soil Investigation & Foundation Recommendation Report prepared by Atulkumar N. Shah, PE, PP with ANS Consultants, Inc. of South Plainfield, New Jersey dated September 3, 2024.
- A Stormwater Maintenance Plan and Field Manual prepared by Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS with Jarmel Kizel Architects and Engineers, Inc. dated January 28, 2026.
- A list of Proposed Waivers and Additional Proposed Variance.
- A copy of a January 27, 2026 letter from Atulkumar N. Shah, PE, PP with ANS Consultants, Inc. to the West Orange Planning & Development Department which addresses the steep slope requirements in §25-28 of the Township Code.
- A copy of a January 29, 2026 letter from Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS, PP to the West Orange Planning & Development Department which addresses the comments in our December 22, 2025 review memorandum.

In addition to the above, our office previously received the following information as part of the original submission for this application:

- 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.
- 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 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 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.



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- 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 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:

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The property in question is an irregularly shaped tract which is located on the northeast 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 to 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 1,200 sf 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.



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- 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, 2 compact 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. 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.*
2. 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. In his January 29, 2026 letter, Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS, PP states that Brian Feeney with the Historical Preservation Commission issued an e-mail on December 29, 2025 which states that the property is not located within a historic district and is not a designated Local Historic Landmark. A copy of this e-mail must be submitted to the Planning Board and our office.
3. The Applicant should address the Board regarding the anticipated hours of operation for the proposed commercial uses at the site.
4. The Applicant should address the Board regarding whether the proposed parking spaces will be assigned to each unit.
5. The Applicant should address the Board regarding how deliveries to the site will be handled.
6. The Applicant should address the Board regarding the anticipated times for the trash and recyclables pickup.



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7. Sheet C-300 shows that the trash room on the southerly side of the building will be connected to the sidewalk along the Northfield Avenue frontage of the site. The Applicant should provide testimony to the Board regarding how the trash will be conveyed to the refuse truck. Our office is concerned about the refuse truck parking along the side of Northfield Avenue while being loaded with trash and/or recyclables.
8. 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.
9. Sheet C-100 of the site plan drawings 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.
10. The Applicant is proposing the development on steep slopes greater than 10%. We note that the Applicant has submitted a Subsurface Soil Investigation & Foundation Recommendation Report prepared by Atulkumar N. Shah, PE, PP dated September 3, 2024 as well as a January 27, 2026 letter from Atulkumar N. Shah, PE, PP which addresses the steep slope requirements in §25-28 of the Township Code. The Applicant should provide testimony to the Board regarding compliance with the steep slope requirements in the Township Code.
11. Sheet C-300 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. In his January 29, 2026 letter, Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS, PP states that the Applicant is requesting a variance from this requirement.
12. It shows on sheet SD-101 of the architectural plans that a mail room is proposed off the lobby on the ground floor of the building. The Applicant must obtain approval from the West Orange Postmaster for the use of the proposed mailroom.

C. TRAFFIC COMMENTS

1. It shows on sheet C-300 that 46 tandem parking spaces are proposed on the ground floor. We note that tandem parking spaces are not permitted in the B-2 District. Therefore, the Applicant should address the Board regarding why tandem parking spaces should be permitted at the site. In his January 29, 2026 letter, Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS, PP states that each pair of tandem parking spaces will be assigned to a single unit so that they will operate similar to a single family home with a driveway/garage combination.
2. The Applicant should address the Board regarding their plans to provide assigned parking spaces at the site. If assigned parking is proposed, then details of the proposed signage must be added to the plans.
3. The parking spaces that will be set aside for the commercial use must be clearly identified on the plans and the appropriate signage provided.



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4. The Applicant should clarify if any of the proposed parking spaces will be set aside for visitors. If so, then the visitor spaces must be clearly identified on the plans and the appropriate signage provided.

D. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT COMMENTS

1. The proposed development will result in the disturbance of more than 0.5 acres. 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.
2. As required for major developments, the Applicant must submit an Environmental Site Analysis to the Board as required by §25-29.10c2 of the Land Use Regulations. In his January 29, 2026 letter, Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS, PP states that the Applicant is requesting a waiver from this requirement.
3. As required by §25-29.14 of the Land Use Regulations, the Applicant must file a stormwater permit application with the Township. In his January 29, 2026 letter, Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS, PP requests that the submission of a stormwater permit application be a condition of approval.
4. The Applicant proposes to collect the stormwater runoff from the majority of the roof and parking areas and discharge it into the Turtle Brook culvert which traverses the site. A small portion of the roof runoff at the southwest corner of the building will be collected and discharged into the County drainage system in Sheridan Avenue at the intersection with Northfield Avenue. It states in the Stormwater Management Report that the project will result in a reduction of the impervious cover at the site by 3,265 sf.
5. As required by §25-29.3a2 of the Land Use Regulations, the stormwater management system must be designed to meet the minimum standards for groundwater recharge, stormwater quality and stormwater runoff quantity by incorporating green infrastructure.

We note that since this site was previously developed, the Applicant is exempt from the groundwater recharge requirements. In addition, since there will not be a net increase of motor vehicle surface, the Applicant is not required to address stormwater runoff quality requirements.

6. As required by §25-29.4s3(b) of the Land Use Regulations, the design engineer must demonstrate through hydrologic and hydraulic analysis that there is no increase, as compared to the pre-construction condition, in the peak runoff rates of stormwater leaving the site for the current and projected two-, ten- and 100-year storm events and that the increased volume or change in timing of stormwater runoff will not increase flood damage at or downstream of the site.

Based on our review, we find that the Stormwater Management Report demonstrates that there will be no increase in the peak rates of runoff and no increase in the volume runoff under the post development conditions. Therefore, the proposed design complies with the Ordinance.



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7. As required by §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. In his January 29, 2026 letter, Anthony Facchino, PE, PLS, PP states that this requirement is not applicable as they have a reduction in impervious cover and will not be increasing the runoff rate or volume at the design points.

The Applicant should address the Board to set forth the reasons why a waiver of this requirement should be granted.

8. It remains for the civil and architectural plans to be revised to show how the roof runoff will be connected to the proposed stormwater piping shown on the Utility Plan.
9. The Utility Plan shows several drainage pipes which end at a cleanout. The purpose of these pipes must be clarified as no flow is shown entering these pipes.
10. The length of the proposed trench drain must be shown on the Utility Plan.
11. The Stormwater Maintenance Plan and Field Manual should be revised to stipulate that the Applicant must obtain a stormwater maintenance permit from the Township and the permit shall be renewed each year, no later than January 1, as stipulated in §25-29.13d of the Land Use Regulations.
12. The Stormwater Maintenance Plan and Field Manual should be revised to stipulate that a detailed inspection and maintenance report shall be submitted annually, no later than January 1, to the Engineering department as stipulated in §25-29.13e of the Land Use Regulations.
13. 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. The Applicant has addressed all of our prior landscaping comments.

F. LIGHTING COMMENTS

1. The Applicant has addressed all of our prior lighting comments.

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.