



TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

66 MAIN STREET, WEST ORANGE, N.J. 07052

Department of Planning and Development

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TO: Zoning Board Members

FROM: Paul Grygiel, AICP, PP, Township Planning Director

DATE: May 13, 2020

RE: **PB-20-02/Green Essex Partners Urban Renewal Entity, LLC**
Block: 155; Lots: 40.02, 42.01 and 42.02; Zone: Executive Drive Multi-Family Residential (Essex Green-Executive Drive Redevelopment Plan)
100 and 200 Rooney Circle
Seeking preliminary and final major site plan approval to construct a multi-family residential development

INTRODUCTION

The applicant is proposing to construct a 425-unit multifamily residential development on two properties currently developed with office buildings. The proposed development complies with the regulations of the Essex Green-Executive Drive Redevelopment Plan ("the Redevelopment Plan") which was adopted in 2019, including setting aside dwelling units for low- and moderate-income households. No variances are being requested to permit the proposal, as described below.

LAND USE

The subject property encompasses 18.31 acres. It consists of two lots currently developed with office buildings, which have a total floor area of 203,171 square feet. Other office buildings are located to the west at 300 Executive Drive and to the northeast at 10 Rooney Circle. A vacant parcel is located directly to the east followed by Essex Green shopping center. The Cambria and Courtyard hotels are also located to the east, along with other commercial and office uses. A



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PSE&G electric transmission right-of-way borders the subject property on the south. There are detached single-family homes located to the southwest and attached single-family homes located to the south across the PSE&G right-of-way.

SUBMISSIONS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SIGNED BY</u>	<u>DATE/REVISION</u>
Site Plan (29 sheets)	Zachary E. Chaplin, P.E.	5/7/20
Tree Location Survey (2 sheets)	Philip A. McEntee, Jr., P.L.S.	4/22/20
Landscaping Plan (2 sheets)	Zachary E. Chaplin, P.E.	4/29/20
Tree Removal Plan (1 sheet)	Zachary E. Chaplin, P.E.	4/29/20
Truck Turn Exhibit (5 sheets)	Jeffery A. Martell, P.E.	4/28/20
Sustainability Memorandum	Zachary E. Chaplin, P.E.	5/8/20
Architectural Plans (22 sheets)	Minno Wasko Architects and Planners	3/19/20
Traffic Engineering Evaluation	Eric L. Keller, P.E., P.P., LEED AP	3/19/20
Stormwater Management Report	Zachary E. Chaplin, P.E.	5/7/20
Report of Geotechnical Investigation	Nejm E. Jundi, P.E.	12/31/19

VARIANCES REQUIRED

None. The following table outlines compliance with the applicable development regulations:

	Required	Provided
Minimum Lot Area	80,000 square feet	797,407 square feet
Minimum Setback to Block 155, Lot 26.01 (PSE&G Property)	15 feet	43.6 feet
Min. Setback to Block 155, Lot 40.03	15 feet	25.0 feet
Min. Setback to Block 155 Lot 40.04	75 feet	255.5 feet
Min. Setback to all other lots / rights-of-way	0 feet	9.7 feet
Maximum Building Height ¹	Four habitable stories ²	Four habitable stories
Maximum Residential Gross Density (Entire District)	24 units per acre	23.2 units per acre
Maximum Lot (Impervious) Coverage	65% ³	53.9%



¹ Parking structures and Garages are excluded from the calculation of habitable stories, but in no case may any parking structure exceed the height of the principal structure to which it is adjacent or attached

² Architectural features such as pitched roofs, gables, domes, steeples, etc. shall be permitted. Projections for roof equipment shall be permitted provided they are screened with a solid or decorative shield and do not exceed fifteen (15') feet in height above the roof deck.

³ Where permeable paving systems are proposed, subject to the approval of the Township Engineer, the areas with permeable paving shall be calculated as 75% impervious. For instance, a parking area and plaza paved with a permeable paving system that equals 20% of the lot area shall be calculated as 15% impervious coverage for purposes of the maximum coverage calculation as it pertains to these district standards.

The proposal also complies with the Redevelopment Plan requirements for the minimum number of off-street parking spaces, as 819 spaces are required for the residential development and 820 spaces are provided, including garage spaces.

DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposal

As noted, the subject property is developed with two office buildings and other improvements. The existing office buildings are proposed to be demolished. Certain parking areas and an existing pond are proposed to remain. The property generally slopes downward from east to west.

The Redevelopment Plan which regulates development on the subject property and other properties in the Essex Green-Executive Drive Redevelopment Area, and notes the following regarding the development regulations for the subject property:

The purpose of the Executive Drive Multi-Family Residential District is to permit the redevelopment of the existing office buildings at 100 and 200 Executive Drive into a multi-family residential development. The district is approximately 18.3 acres in area. The envisioned development will consist of one or more types of multi-family housing in multiple buildings with an affordable set-aside. The redevelopment is also intended to include the provision of a public dog park as an amenity for the neighborhood and community at large.

The proposed development includes 425 dwelling units in three buildings. Fifteen percent of the units (64 units) will be affordable to low- and moderate-income households, as required by the Redevelopment Plan. This site is part of the Township's proposed affordable housing compliance plan. The breakdown of units by bedroom type is as follows:



	Market-rate	Affordable	Total
One-bedroom	149	13	162
Two-bedroom	173	38	211
Two-bedroom plus den	39	0	39
Three-bedroom	0	13	13
TOTAL	361	64	425

Building A is the largest of the three buildings. It is located at the southern end of the site and contains 304 dwelling units. This building's height varies due to the topography. Buildings B and C are located in the northeast corner of the property. Building B has 59 dwelling units and Building C has 62 dwelling units.

Proposed building materials include manufactured stone veneer, cementitious panels, composite metal panels, composite wood panels, aluminum and concrete. Vinyl windows and shingle roofs are also proposed. Architectural mesh screens are proposed on the exterior of the parking garage adjacent to Building A. The buildings have both flat and pitched roofs.

A swimming pool and amenity area is proposed between two wings of Building A. Other exterior amenities include benches, seating areas and a fire table. Interior amenities in Building A include a club room, a game room, a fitness center, a media center, and a private dining room. In Building C, interior amenities include a club room, a game room, a fitness center, and a media center.

A total of 820 parking spaces are proposed for the residential portion of the development, while 819 spaces are required. A parking garage with 570 spaces is proposed adjacent to Building A. Surface parking spaces are proposed adjacent to and between Buildings B and C, and 21 garage parking spaces are proposed within each of these two buildings. The garage spaces are individual private garages with a parking space in front of each one in a tandem parking arrangement.

Sidewalks are located throughout the development, with a connection to Rooney Circle at its intersection with Executive Drive. A shuttle pickup area is provided at the front entrance to Building A.

A dog park is proposed at the northern end of the development, as required by the redevelopment plan. A separate parking lot with 57 spaces is provided for the dog park.

According to the Tree Removals Plan (Sheet C20), there are 255 trees proposed to be removed and 185 trees are proposed to remain. Of the trees to be removed, 142 are classified as "dead/dying due to emerald ash bore disease" and 20 are deer damaged. New plantings are proposed throughout the property, including 195 trees, 93 evergreen trees, 560 shrubs and various grasses and other plantings.



Issues and Comments

At the April 14, 2020 Township of West Orange Site Plan Review Advisory Board (SPRAB) virtual meeting, a number of site plan and design issues were raised that the applicant indicated it would address. It appears all of those issues have been addressed in the revised plans and supplemental application materials, with one possible exception discussed below. The issues that were raised at that meeting were listed in a memorandum I prepared dated April 14, 2020, and included the following:

- Sustainability
- Pedestrian circulation
- Shuttle service/jitney connection
- Automobile and truck circulation
- Architectural plans
- Tree removal
- Buffer area along southern property line
- Pond
- Dog park

One potential outstanding issue relates to shuttle service. The Redevelopment Plan requires the redeveloper to “work with the Township to supplement or expand the Jitney service if necessary” and to provide “a shuttle from within the development to the Essex Green Bus Stop ... to coordinate with the Jitney and to provide access to the shopping center and bus at other times of the day.” The applicant should provide additional information about coordination with the Township’s jitney service as well as its own shuttle proposal.

The Redevelopment Plan cites the Township’s Master Plan Circulation Plan Element, and in particular its amendments to incorporate “Complete Streets” the principles, which promote the creation of a comprehensive, integrated, connected street network that safely accommodates all users. Specifically, the Redevelopment Plan states:

“Site circulation improvements shall include provision of sidewalks or similar pedestrian pathways, protections for pedestrians at crosswalks and sidewalks, bicycle paths and routes, bicycle racks, and other site circulation best practices for multi-family residential, commercial, and office sites.” (page 35)

The applicant is addressing pedestrian circulation on its property, but it is recognized coordination with the Township and the property owner of Essex Green shopping center will be



required to link the two developments. The applicant's engineer notes the following in a May 8, 2020 letter to the Planning Board:

"The applicant is providing new sidewalks throughout the site as well as along the property side of Executive Drive from the entrance to the parking garage at the rear of the property to its connection with Rooney Circle. The applicant agrees to work with the Township and the owner of the Essex Green shopping center for the creation of a crosswalk from the west side of Rooney Circle at Executive Drive to the east side of Rooney Circle in the area of Shoprite. The goal of such crosswalk is to provide for a pedestrian connection between the shopping center and the Executive Drive redevelopment consisting of the proposed residential development, dog park and 300 Executive Drive office building. Note that the applicant does not own the property on either side of Rooney Circle in the anticipated location of the crosswalk, so it can only use best efforts to achieve same. The sidewalks and paths within the site also provide a pedestrian connection between all three residential buildings as well as a pedestrian connection to the proposed dog park."

A similar off-site connection should be considered from the office building at 300 Executive Drive to allow its tenants and guests to connect to the proposed sidewalk network within the proposed development. As Executive Drive is a private road, improvements would require coordination between the property owners to add a crosswalk and sidewalks connecting to 300 Executive Drive.

The applicant should provide more information regarding bicycle parking and other facilities for bicyclists, including for residents as well as visitors. It appears that there are not any exterior bicycle parking facilities in the project and interior bicycle parking is only provided in the garage adjacent to Building A.

Testimony should be provided regarding pedestrian connections from the two northern buildings, particularly Building C, to Building A, as the only proposed shuttle stop in the development is proposed next to Building A.

One issue that was not raised at the SPRAB meeting is proposed lighting within the dog park. The site plan shows 20-foot tall light fixtures within the large dog park, which abuts Buildings B and C. The applicant should discuss the need for lighting within the dog park, the intended timing for these lights to operate, and if there is a need for such lighting, whether different pole heights and/or designs could be provided. It is noted the Redevelopment Plan requires the design of the dog park to "be reviewed and approved by the Township Council."





Development entrance from Rooney Circle



Looking south on Rooney Circle – location of suggested potential sidewalk and crosswalk



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Looking south from Executive Drive



Looking east from near the southern property line



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PSE&G electric transmission lines on Block 155, Lot 26.01



Looking west from existing parking lot towards 200 Executive Drive office building





Existing office buildings to be removed and pond in between them



Existing pond, which will remain



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Stream below pond viewed from Executive Drive



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