

**BENECKE ECONOMICS  
8410 SANCTUARY BOULEVARD  
RIVERDALE, N.J. 07457**

August 13, 2020

Township of Verona Planning Board  
600 Bloomfield Ave  
Verona, New Jersey 07044

RE: Depot & Pine Redevelopment Area Redevelopment Plan,  
Block 2301, Lots 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19 Verona, N.J.

Dear Planning Board Members,

I have reviewed the above mentioned application for a subdivision and preliminary site plan including the Engineering Plan (14 sheets) prepared by ESE Consultants dated July 14, 2020, Landscape Plan (4 sheets) prepared by Melillo and Bauer Associates dated July 15, 2020, and Architectural Plan (10 sheets) prepared by Wallace, Roberts & Todd dated July 15, 2020, Traffic Assessment Letter (5 sheets) prepared by Maser Consulting P.A. dated July 6, 2020, and the Stormwater Management Report (238 sheets) prepared by ESE Consultants dated July 10, 2020. This office offers the following planning comments for your review and consideration.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant is seeking a subdivision and preliminary site plan approval to construct a multi-family residential development consisting of 3 residential buildings containing ninety-five 100% COAH affordable housing units as well as associated common and amenity space, surface parking, stormwater management structures and related improvements. The one-, two- and three-bedroom units will be distributed among the three residential buildings, and the income levels must be implemented pursuant to UHAC (Uniform Housing Affordability Controls). The proposal also includes a shed for use by the development's management and a sign to identify the development.

The project consists of the plan outlined in the "First Amendment to the Depot and Pine Redevelopment Area Redevelopment Plan" under Ordinance No. 2020-04 adopted February 24, 2020, comprising approximately 2.5 acres including Block 2301, Lots 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16 on the former Cameco site as well as an additional approximate 2.6 acres at Block 2301, Lot 17, 18 and 19, known as the former Poekel site, outlined in the "Second Amendment to the Depot and Pine Redevelopment Area Redevelopment Plan" under Ordinance No. 2020-14 adopted June 25, 2020.

## PLANNING COMMENTS

1. The maximum improved lot coverage in the A-2R Multi Family – Mid Rise Redevelopment Overlay Zone is 80% while the proposed building coverage is 57.2%.
2. The minimum front yard setback of an accessory building is 20 feet while the proposed setback of the accessory shed is 10 feet. However, this does not require a variance pursuant to Ordinance No. 2020-04 the “First Amendment to the Depot and Pine Redevelopment Plan” adopted February 24, 2020, which permits two sheds not having a combined area of greater than 200 square feet which may be placed within the yard setback buffer area, but not less than three feet from any side yard or rear yard boundary.
3. The Board Engineer should review lighting and construction details, as well as confirm that the stormwater management demonstrates compliance with the Verona Township Land Use Regulations, Essex County Land Development Regulations, NJDEP Stormwater Rules at N.J.A.C. 7:8 and the Standards for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control in New Jersey.
4. The landscaping plan appears thorough and well-executed, particularly the use of existing vegetation where possible, as well as the placement of a bioretention area with a raingarden mix in the middle of the parking lot. We would like to hear what, if any, fencing will be used to enclose the playground area as it is adjacent to the parking lot and Linn Drive.
5. The façade building materials listed in the architecture plans including formed metal cladding and vertical composite flat-board siding appear to be of sufficient quality and aesthetics and in line with materials used in market rate multi-family residential buildings. Lastly, the use of shared unit balconies as well as private balconies where possible are an increasingly important element in apartment buildings.
6. As the “Traffic Letter” dated July 6, 2020 states, the proposed development would generate a maximum of 45 new peak hour trips, which is less than the 100 or more peak hour trips that NJDOT and ITE define as a significant increase in traffic. Furthermore, given that the site is accessible by both Linn Drive and Pine Street, the effect of the approximate 45 new peak hour trips is further diminished as it is distributed between the two entrances.

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REDEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMICS**

This office would like the opportunity to ask questions of the applicant's expert witnesses and provide additional comments at the time of the hearing. We would also like to ask questions of the professionals pertaining to the applicant's process of obtaining a final site plan, understanding that it may be dependent upon NJHMFA financing.

This office offered these comments for your consideration. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact me via phone: 917-423-5905 or email: [chelsea.gleis@gmail.com](mailto:chelsea.gleis@gmail.com). Thank you for the opportunity to assist the Board on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Chelsea L. Gleis, M.U.P. (Columbia University), P.P.  
City Planning Board - Consulting Planner

CC: Ashley Neale, Board Secretary  
Greg Mascera, Esq., Board Attorney