



architects + engineers

119 Cherry Hill Road, Ste 110
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March 20, 2026

Via Email: dcarpinelli@veronanj.org

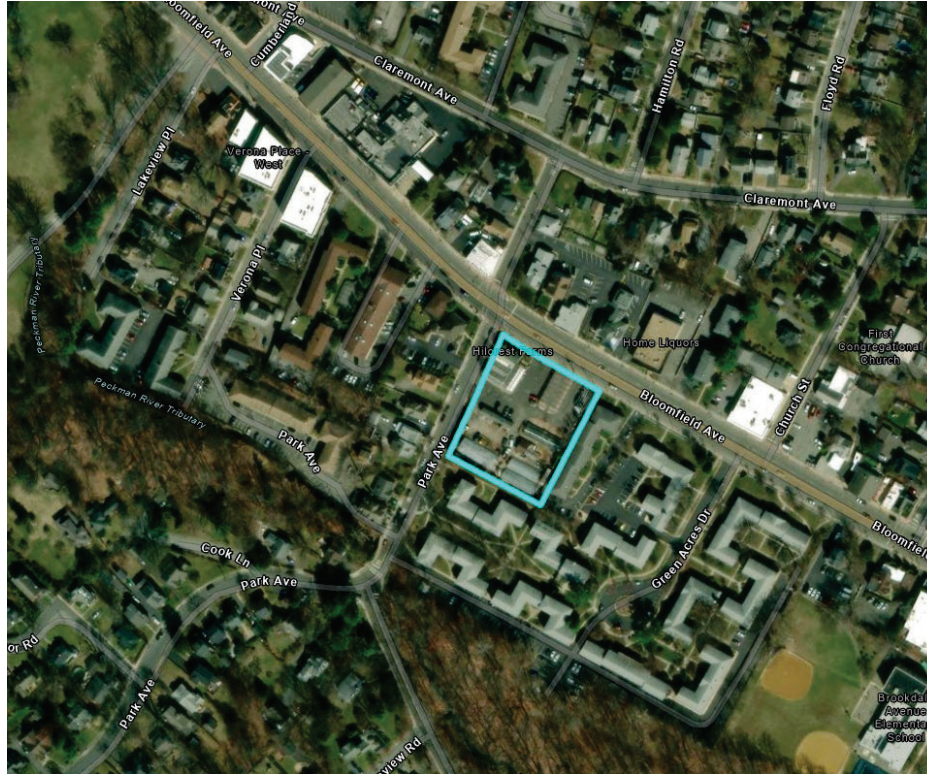
Dolores Carpinelli
Township of Verona
600 Bloomfield Avenue
Verona, New Jersey, 07044

**Re: Filoso Family LLC
Planning Board Application – Mixed-Use Building
383 Bloomfield Avenue
Block 708, Lot 1
H2M Project No.: VROT2402**

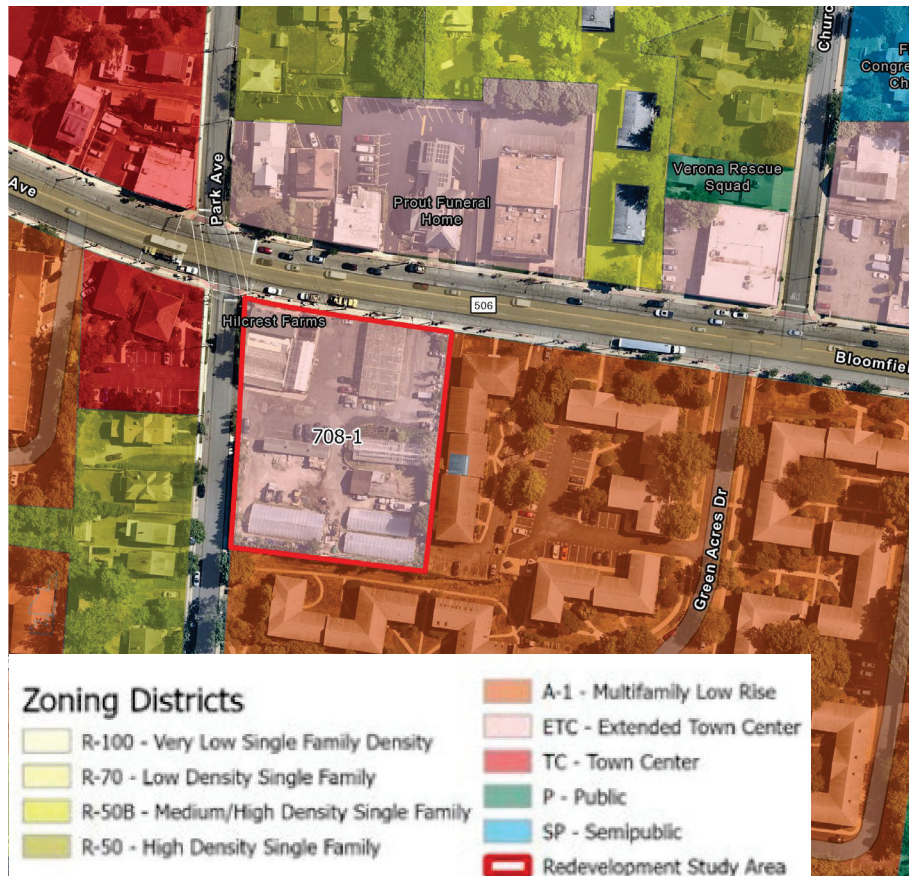
Dear Board Members:

In preparation of this review letter, I have reviewed the application materials referenced below, the Township Ordinance, the Redevelopment Plan, and Master Plan.

- Engineering Response Letter, prepared by Anderson Consulting Services LLC, dated January 27, 2026 in response to Boswell Engineering letter, dated January 15, 2026
- Response Letter, prepared by Anderson Consulting Services LLC, dated January 27, 2026 in response to Boswell Engineering Review of Stormwater Management Report, dated January 13, 2026
- Architectural Comment Response Letter, prepared by Gregory Switzer Architecture, P.C., dated February 12, 2026 in response to Boswell Engineering letter, dated January 15, 2026
- Soil Logs Report, prepared by Anderson Consulting Services LLC
- Stormwater Management Report, prepared by Anderson Consulting Services LLC, revised January 28, 2026
- Stormwater Management Facilities Operations & Maintenance Manual, prepared by Paul W. Anderson, P.E., P.P., revised February 4, 2026
- Traffic Impact and Parking Assessment, prepared by Dynamic Traffic, LLC, dated February 11, 2026
- Vehicle Circulation Exhibit, prepared by Dynamic Traffic, LLC, consisting of one (1) sheet and dated February 11, 2026
- Earthquake Analysis Plans, prepared by Anderson Consulting Services LLC, consisting of seven (7) sheets and dated September 15, 2025
- Architectural Plans, prepared by Gregory Switzer Architecture, P.C., consisting of eleven (11) sheets and last revised February 3, 2026
- Site Plan set, prepared by Anderson Consulting Services LLC, consisting of eight (8) sheets and last revised February 3, 2026



- 1. Project/Application.** The proposal is for Block 708, Lot 1, located at the intersection of Bloomfield Avenue and Park Avenue, in the Township of Verona, Essex County, New Jersey. As seen in the above image, the property is a corner lot which fronts the eastbound side of Bloomfield Avenue and is bound by Park Avenue to the west. The property is developed with a two-story wood-frame commercial building (“principal building”) and several accessory structures. The property is also characterized by an asphalt parking lot to the east and to the rear (south) of the principal building. The applicant is proposing to demolish all current structures located on the property, including the six (6) greenhouses, one (1) one-story masonry building, one (1) two-story masonry frame building, one (1) one-story frame building, two (2) sheds, one (1) trailer, and all existing trellis structures, concrete ramps and walkways. The applicant is proposing to replace this by constructing one (1) four-story mixed-use building consisting of 33 dwelling units, and ground floor will be reserved for a variety of commercial uses. The application includes plans for site signage and off-street parking to meet the Township’s off-street parking requirements. The uses in the proximity include multi-family residential to the south and to the east, single-family residential to the west, and commercial uses to the north and west, along Bloomfield Avenue.



2. Zone District. The property was designated as a Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area, and a Redevelopment Plan was prepared for the same. As seen in the above image, the underlying zone is within the Extended Town Center (ETC) zone with the Redevelopment Plan as an overlay. As such, any development must follow the use and bulk regulations set forth in the 383 Bloomfield Avenue Redevelopment Plan (the “Redevelopment Plan”). As per Section 2.5 of the Redevelopment Plan, where zoning issues are not specifically addressed, the zoning ordinance will continue to prevail. The permitted uses as per the 383 Redevelopment Plan are as follows

4.1.1. Permitted Uses:

- a. Dwelling Units above the ground floor
- b. Art Gallery
- c. Art Studio
- d. Artisanal Workshop
- e. Brewpub
- f. Commercial Office Use
- g. Learning Center
- h. Personal Services
- i. Restaurants
- j. Retail Sales
- k. Retail Services
- l. Any combination of the above-listed uses.

4.1.2. Accessory Uses and Structures:

- a. Off-street parking.

- b. Amenity space for use by the occupants of the dwelling units, including but not limited to lobbies, fitness centers, lounges, dog wash facilities, outdoor kitchens, outdoor seating, rooftop terraces, storage spaces.
- c. Shared amenity spaces for use by occupants of the Dwelling Units, and commercial spaces such as, but not limited to, outdoor seating and walking paths.
- d. Outdoor dining associated with restaurant use may be provided anywhere within the Mixed-Use Development so long as it is located on the street level. Outdoor dining is not required to be located directly in front of the restaurant space it is associated with. For example, outdoor dining may be located in front of a retail use.
- e. Sidewalk café in accordance with Section 150-7.22.
- f. Residential amenity for the enjoyment of the residents.
- g. Utility rooms.
- h. Refuse and recycling enclosures.

The applicant requires variances and waivers as detailed in the table and the comments below.

3. **Affordable Housing Compliance.** Verona Township's adopted Housing Element and Fair Share Plan ("HEFSP") and the Redevelopment Plan requires the applicant to provide a minimum of five (5) affordable housing credits. Pursuant to Section 4.4 of the Redevelopment Plan, affordable housing credits can be satisfied through special needs housing and/or family housing, with at least one three-bedroom unit set-aside for family housing. The HEFSP states that the Redevelopment Area, referenced as Hillcrest Farms/ 383 Bloomfield Avenue, will provide the five (5) affordable housing credits through "one (1) 3-bedroom affordable family unit and a minimum of four (4) special needs bedrooms." The applicant has identified two (2) special needs units, consisting of one 3-bedroom unit and one 2-bedroom unit in the architectural plans and one (1) 3-bedroom affordable family unit.

The one (1) 3-bedroom affordable family unit will provide one credit. The remaining four will be satisfied through special needs housing. A bedroom within a supportive housing unit counts as credit towards affordable housing; therefore, this mechanism will provide a total of five bedrooms, while four are required. Testimony should be provided clarifying whether one of the bedrooms will be for a caregiver with the remaining four as living spaces for residents with special needs. In any event, should four bedrooms be utilized to house residents with special needs, then the plans comply with the affordable housing requirements.

APPLICATION VARIANCES AND EXCEPTIONS

Ordinance Requirement	Standards Required as per Redevelopment Plan	Existing	Proposed	Compliance
Minimum Lot Area	1 acre (43,560 sqft)	53,550 sqft	53,550 sqft	Compliant
Minimum Lot Width	210 ft	216.8 ft	216.8 ft	Compliant
Max. Density	27 dwelling units/acre	N/A	Total 33 units	Compliant
Minimum Front Yard Setback (Bloomfield Avenue)	10 ft	9.8 ft	10 ft	Compliant
Minimum Front Yard Setback (Park Avenue)	20 ft	2.9 ft	31.9 ft to Pergola 44.0 ft to Building	Compliant
Minimum Side Yard Setback	30 ft	9.3 ft	32.9 ft	Compliant
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	30 ft	8.0 ft	30.0 ft	Compliant
Max. Building Coverage	40%	23.0%	39.0%	Compliant
Max. Impervious Coverage	80%	81.7%	76.4%	Compliant
Maximum Building Height	4 stories ^{1/} 50 ft	23.9 ft	4 stories/ 48.75 ft	Compliant
Parking Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-residential: 1.8 Parking spaces per unit • Special Needs/Supportive Housing: 0.25 spaces per unit • Non-residential Uses: (1 space per 250 sqft) 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31 Residential Apartments: 55.8 Spaces • Two (2) Special Needs Apartments: 0.5 Spaces • Retail 4,050 sqft: 16.2 spaces • Make Ready EV (10% reduction in Required parking) = 7 spaces Total required: 66 Spaces	See Comment 3 under General Planning Comments.
Affordable Housing Credits	5 credits: Four (4) Special Needs/Supportive bedrooms One (1) 3-Bedroom Family Unit	N/A	One (1) 3-bedroom and one (1) 2-bedroom special needs housing One (1) 3-bedroom Family Unit	Compliant
Landscaped Buffer	15 Foot Landscaped Buffer	N/A	11.5 Landscaped Buffer	Not compliant
Fencing	6-Foot Privacy Fence	N/A	Chain-link fence	Not compliant

1. As per the Redevelopment Plan, the Building height must be “four stories following the change in topography on the site, from Bloomfield Avenue towards the rear property line along Park Avenue, with the fourth floor stepped back to reduce the impact of the massing.” The plans provide terraces and are compliant.

VARIANCE / WAIVER COMMENTS

1. Landscaped Buffer. Section 5.3 of the Redevelopment Plan sets forth the buffer requirements discussed as follows:
 - a. A 15-foot landscaped buffer is required along residential zones and uses. Such buffer should include a visual screen designed to produce dense cover consisting of evergreen or evergreen-type hedges or shrubs, spaced at intervals of not more than five feet. The applicant is proposing an 11.5 landscaped buffer along the westerly property line. The applicant should provide testimony as to the inability to provide the required 15-foot landscaped buffer and impact of the variance on the neighboring residential property.
 - b. Fencing. A six-foot tall privacy fence is required along with plantings. As per the Architectural Plans and the Site Plans, the applicant is proposing to move the existing chain-link fence located in the neighboring property to the west. Specifically, Sheet #1 of the site plans note that the applicant proposes to “remove and relocate existing chain link fence to 6” inside the property line.” This does not comply with the buffer requirement, which specifies a privacy fence. Examples of privacy fences are board-on-board fence, wooden solid fence, and vinyl fence. Additionally, no privacy fence is proposed along the rear or southerly property line. Testimony should be provided regarding non-compliance with this requirement of the Redevelopment Plan.
3. Retaining walls. Section 150-7.12 of the zoning ordinance sets forth the standards for retaining walls wherein no retaining wall shall exceed four feet in height along the front yard. The applicant is proposing a 4.5-foot wall along Park Avenue, thereby requiring variance relief pursuant to NJSA 40:55D-70(c). The plans note that decorative railing would be selected by the architect. Testimony should be provided regarding the placement of the same in accordance with Section 150-7.12.C. of the ordinance. Testimony should be provided in support of this variance requirement. We defer to the engineer for comments regarding groundwater drainage and other engineering concerns.

GENERAL PLANNING COMMENTS

1. Architecture. The floor plans for Unit #12 on the second floor, propose a 10' by 14'4" den and a 9'8" by 12' bedroom. The den seems larger than the bedroom, clarification should be provided regarding this room size difference.
2. Building Design. The applicant is proposing brick and fiber-cement board and batten siding along portions of the exterior façade. The applicant is required to specify the shade of the brick and color of the fiber-cement board and batten siding. The applicant is proposing fiber-cement siding or stucco along the certain areas of the east elevation. Testimony should be provided regarding the color of the same.
3. Parking Minimums. The applicant is proposing a total of 33 units, of which two units would be used for special needs housing and the remaining 31 units would be family housing with ground floor commercial. The Redevelopment Plan sets forth a standard of 1.8 parking spaces per residential unit, 0.25 spaces per unit for the special needs housing, and one space per 250 square feet for the non-residential uses in the redevelopment area. The total required parking is as follows:
 - a. 1.8 parking spaces per unit for 31 units = 55.8
 - b. 0.25 parking spaces per unit for the two (2) special need units = 0.5
 - c. One (1) parking space per 250 square feet so for a total of 4,050 sq. ft.=16.2
Total required parking = 72.5 or 73 spaces
 - d. Pursuant to the mandatory EV ordinance (P.L. 2021, c.171) referenced in Section 4.6(7)(d) of the ordinance, at least 15% of the required off-street parking for a residential development or mixed-use development containing five units shall be make-ready, with one-third or three parking spaces to have EVSE installed. Based upon this requirement, the applicant is required to provide at least eight make-ready spaces with three spaces having EVSE installed. From the plans, it appears that the applicant is proposing seven spaces and therefore, is two spaces shy (at least 15% of 55.8=8.37 or 9). Testimony should be provided to clarify the same and the two additional

required EV spaces should be added to the plans. Additionally, testimony should be provided regarding complying with the required installation of the EVSE on three spaces.

- e. As mentioned above, the total required parking is 73 spaces but with the 10% EV Credit reduction it reduces to 65.7 or 66.
- f. The applicant is providing 63 spaces on site with three on-street parking spaces. Please note that these on-street parking spaces are not existing spaces but were created due to the closure of the existing ingress/curb cuts on Bloomfield Avenue. These three spaces must be used only by the non-residential uses in the redevelopment area. Additionally, on-site parking spaces must be demarcated for commercial uses to comply with Section 4.6 of the Redevelopment Plan.

A total of 66 parking spaces is provided, which meets the parking requirements. We defer to the engineer for additional site plan related comments.

- 2. Loading. The Redevelopment Plan requires one loading space to service the development. This may be either on-site or on street. Testimony should be provided regarding the provision and location of the same.
- 3. Signage. Section 4.8 of the Redevelopment Plan sets forth signage standards. Based on the submitted plans, it appears that only one sign is proposed at the intersection of Bloomfield Avenue and Park Avenue. From the site plans, it appears to meet the setback requirements and from the architectural floor plans, it appears to meet the size requirement. Testimony should be provided if any sign lighting is proposed.
- 4. Lighting. Regarding the proposed lighting we have the following comments:
 - a. Sheet SP-4 of the site plans show the footcandle levels and in that the footcandles along the southern property line is at 0.0 but along the eastern property line it ranges from 0.1 to 0.3. It is recommended that the proposed lighting should be adjusted to have 0.0 footcandles along the eastern property line as well.
 - b. The plans show lighting along the eastern driveway and parking area. Sheet 11 of 11 of the architectural plans and Sheet 4 of 8 show a decorative light fixture. Will that fixture be along this side of the parking lot? In other words, testimony should be provided if decorative lights are proposed along the driveways and parking areas.
 - c. The plans (Sheet 4 of 8) show 45" bollard light detail. Will that be along the pedestrian pathway?
 - d. Will the lighting under the building be timed or motion activated?
- 5. Trash Enclosures and Recycling. Section 5.7 of the Redevelopment Plan sets forth standards for trash enclosures. From the site plans, and especially the details on Sheet 11 of 11 of the architectural floor plans, it appears that the enclosure shall be of the same materials. Testimony should be provided regarding the type and color of the enclosure. Regarding the dumpster gate location, with respect to the two parking spaces abutting the two sides of the enclosure, testimony should be provided regarding the ability of a garbage truck to pick up the receptacles without causing any detriment to the parked vehicles. Additionally, testimony should be provided regarding the pickup times and duration during the week. Will this be used by the retail businesses as well?
- 6. Repurposed wrought iron railing. The site plans depict a repurposed wrought iron fence. This is along the driveway from Park Avenue in the front yard. Testimony should be provided regarding the height of the same and whether it complies with Section 150-7.3 of the zoning ordinance.
- 7. Mechanical Equipment. The architectural plans show roof top HVAC with a screened enclosure. Testimony should be provided that the screening will not be visible from the street level along both Bloomfield Avenue and Park Avenue.

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H2M reserves the right to provide additional comments as we continue through the review of this application. If you have any further questions regarding the above letter, please contact the undersigned at (862) 207-5900 extension 2285.

Very truly yours,

H2M Associates, Inc.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sanyogita Chavan".

Sanyogita Chavan, PP, AICP
Practice Leader – Land Use Planning

cc: Peter Ten Kate, P.E. (email only)
Greg Mascera, Esq. (email only)