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MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

November 8, 2024

Henry Sekawungu
Director of Planning and Zoning
Cheltenham Township
8230 Old York Road
Elkins Park, PA, 19027

Re: MCPC #24-0219-001
Plan Name: Cedarbrook Plaza Bank of America
1 lots comprising 33.52 acres
Situate: Cheltenham Avenue near East Durham Street
Cheltenham Township

Dear Mr. Sekawungu:

We have reviewed the above-referenced land development in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on October 10, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

Cedarbrook Plaza Shopping Center is proposing to add a Bank of America building with drive through where there is currently only a drive through ATM. The new building and drive through lanes would replace 54 parking spaces and change the circulation in this portion of the parking lot. The applicant proposes to add a pedestrian connection from the building to the sidewalk so that pedestrians can better access the site.

The property is located in the C-1 Commercial zoning district. The proposed use, a bank with accessory drive-through, is a permitted use in this district. The entire site is 33.5 acres, but only 0.5 acres are proposed to be disturbed for this project.

The applicant sought dimensional relief from the township's zoning hearing board and received dimensional relief from section 295-2502.D.2 in May 2024. This allows the maximum building coverage to go beyond the 25% permitted in the district.

RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) generally supports the applicant's proposal, however, in the course of our review we have identified the following issues that the applicant and the township may wish to consider prior to final plan approval. Our comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICLE CIRCULATION

A. Pedestrian Access. We commend the applicant for adding a crosswalk, steps, and a pathway to the sidewalk. We encourage the owner of the property to continue to improve pedestrian circulation throughout the entire shopping center.
    a. Navigating the Drive-Through Area. We encourage the applicant to consider how pedestrians will navigate through the drive-through lanes if they wish to continue walking toward the main structures of the shopping center. We encourage the applicant to consider a crosswalk across the front of the drive-through lanes.
    b. Future improvements. With multiple SEPTA bus stops along the frontage and homes across the street, many shoppers arrive on foot and need to navigate grade changes and large parking areas to access their destinations. There are many additional opportunities for pedestrian improvements and we hope that the owner of this property will consider future improvements to safety and comfort for pedestrians navigating the shopping center.
B. Vehicle Circulation. We suggest the applicant consider making the bypass lane adjacent to the drive-through lanes two-way. Although this would mean the loss of additional parking spaces, we think it is likely that some vehicles entering the site will try to drive that direction anyway, so it may be beneficial to allow for that circulation pattern.

LANDSCAPING

A. Street Trees. The applicant has requested a waiver from the street tree requirement due to the property owner's desire to maintain visibility to the stores. There are very few trees along the frontage of this property. We suggest that the applicant be required to provide the street trees. Although one tree is required for every 30 linear feet of frontage, the ordinance (§260-48.D) allows for trees to be spaced unevenly along the frontage. The applicant could space the trees to still allow large gaps for viewing of the full shopping center.
B. Parking Islands. The applicant proposes to eliminate two existing landscaped parking islands. Two additional islands are proposed, but these are not shown to have any plant materials. Although they are outside of the proposed leasing area, the new islands should contain plant material such as trees.

ZONING RELIEF

A. Building Coverage. The zoning hearing board decision allows the applicant to go to 25.1% building coverage on the site. However, the zoning table on the plan set submitted shows a proposed building coverage of 26.2%. The applicant may need to resolve this issue.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

A. Requested Waivers. We recommend that the applicant and the township consider the very limited opportunities that an existing developed site has to improve stormwater management systems. This proposed construction offers a significant opportunity to improve the current conditions of least some stormwater management. While we recognize that the entire site is currently developed and this proposal would reduce overall impervious coverage slightly, we recommend careful consideration of any waivers that would eliminate the need for the applicant to make improvements to the existing stormwater system.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal. Please note that the review comments and recommendations contained in this letter are advisory to the municipality and final disposition for the approval of any proposal will be made by the municipality.

Should the governing body approve a final plat of this proposal, the applicant must present the plan to our office for seal and signature prior to recording with the Recorder of Deeds office. Please print the assigned MCPC number (*#24-0219-001*) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

Chloe Mohr, AICP, Principal Planner
chloe.mohr@montgomerycountypa.gov – (610) 278-3739

c: David Tshudy, Applicant
Matt Landrow, Applicant's Representative
Alyson Elliott, Township Manager
Roger A. Phillips, P.E., Township Engineer
Thomas Cross, Chair, Township Planning Commission
Adam Schantz, Montgomery County Planning Commission
Jessica Buck, District Manager, Montgomery County Conservation District
Scott Burton, PennDOT
Paul Lutz, PennDOT
Fran Hanney, P.E., PennDOT
Michael McGahee, SEPTA
Jennifer Dougherty, AICP, SEPTA
Harley Cooper, SEPTA

Attachment A: Aerial Image of Site
Attachment B: Reduced Copy of Applicant's Proposed Site Plan

ATTACHMENTS A & B

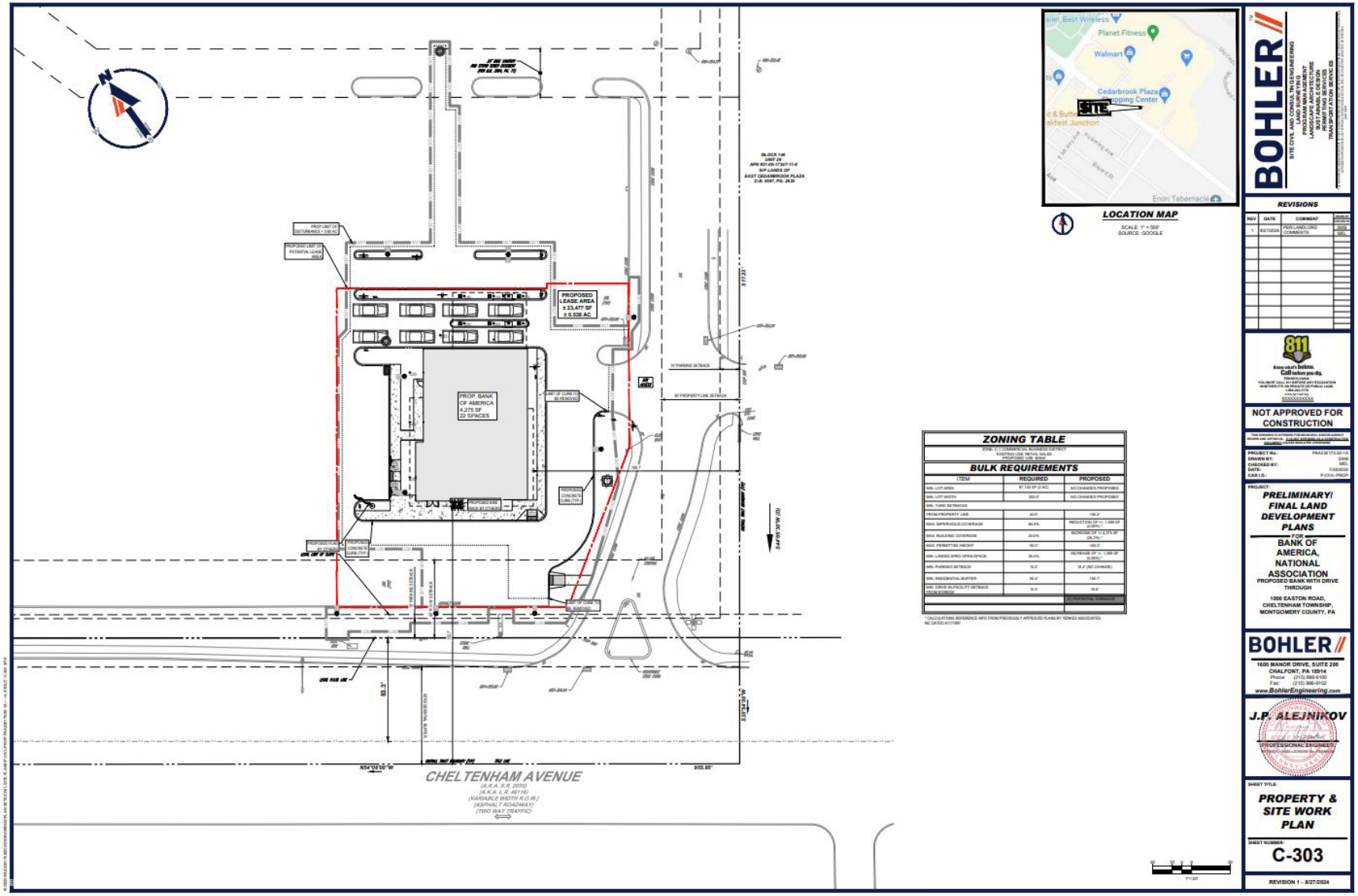


Bank of America
MCPC#240219001

Montgomery County Planning Commission
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(p) 610 278-3722 (f) 610 278-3941
www.montcopa.org/plan.com
Aerial photography provided by Nearmap

0 150 300 600 Feet

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PROPOSED LEASE AREA
± 23,477 SF
± 0.539 AC
PROP. BANK OF AMERICA
4,275 SF
22 SPACES
CHELTENHAM AVENUE
(A.K.A. S.R. 2039)
(A.K.A. L.R. 46156)
(VARIABLE WIDTH R.O.W.)
(ASPHALT ROADWAY)
(TWO WAY TRAFFIC)
LOCATION MAP
SCALE: 1" = 500'
SOURCE: GOOGLE
Planet Fitness
Walmart
Cedarbrook Plaza
SITE
ZONING TABLE
BULK REQUIREMENTS
ITEM
REQUIRED
PROPOSED
BOHLER
REVISIONS
NOT APPROVED FOR CONSTRUCTION
PRELIMINARY/ FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS
FOR
BANK OF AMERICA, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
PROPOSED BANK WITH DRIVE THROUGH
1000 EASTON ROAD,
CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP,
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA
1600 MANOR DRIVE, SUITE 200
CHALFONT, PA 18914
J.P. ALEJNIKOV
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER
PROPERTY & SITE WORK PLAN
C-303
REVISION 1 - 8/27/2024