

January 10, 2020

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Jillian Dierks, Planner, Department of Building & Planning

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN – 396 W. Lancaster Avenue, Haverford, Chase Bank, Ward 4, LD# 3845.

Proposal

The applicant, Todd Samms, seeks Preliminary Land Development Plan approval on behalf of JP Morgan Chase Bank, N.A., for the following:

- Demolition of the existing building;
- Construction of a one-story bank with a 3,028 sq. ft. footprint;
- Construction of 15 parking spaces;
- Construction of a drive-up ATM machine;
- Reconstruction of all existing sidewalks along the property frontage ranging in width from six feet to 11 feet; and
- Installation of a stormwater management system, which includes a surface detention basin/rain garden.

The plan shows a two-way entrance and exit from Haverford Road Station, a two-way entrance and exit from W. Lancaster Avenue and a one way exit to Old Railroad Avenue.

The proposal is illustrated on the attached 29 sheet plan set dated July 15, 2019, last revised November 21, 2019, prepared by Core States Group. Also submitted were architectural elevations prepared by Core States Group dated June 19, 2019, last revised December 17, 2019. A landscape plan prepared by Lawrance Lesser, dated July 15, 2019, last revised November 21, 2019.

Property Description

The 18,150 sq. ft. (0.41 acre) property is located along Lancaster Avenue in Haverford. It is bound by Haverford Station Road on the west, Old Railroad Avenue to the south and west and Lancaster Avenue to the north. The property is zoned C-1. The property is currently improved with a one-story retail building, a surface parking area and two curb cuts to Lancaster Avenue and one curb cut to Haverford Station Road. Old Railroad Avenue contains parking meters on both sides adjacent to this site. One side of the street contains two hour parking meters and the other side contains 12 hour meters.



Montgomery County Planning Commission Review

The County review letter is attached. The County generally supports the applicant's proposal. The County recommendations have been either addressed on the attached plan or have been incorporated into the issues below as well as the recommended conditions of approval. The Zelkova tree referenced in the County's letter was evaluated by the Township Arborist and recommended for removal and replacement as the trunk has a large cavity which is resulting in the decline of the tree.

Environmental Advisory Council

The EAC reviewed the application at their October 22, 2019 meeting and expressed concern with the use of a drive-up ATM as it results in car idling and expressed support for an ATM attached to the building. The EAC also made comments on the Landscape Plan which have been addressed in the attached plan set.

Zoning

The following table details the bulk, area and setback requirements for the existing and proposed conditions.

<u>C-1 Zoning District</u> - Commercial Buildings not utilized for dwelling purposes		Existing	Proposed
Minimum Net Lot Area	NA	22,861 sq. ft.	22,861 sq. ft.
Minimum Lot Width	NA	176 ft.	176 ft.
Maximum Building Area (% and sq. ft.)	60%	33% (7,725 sq. ft.)	13% (3,028 sq. ft.)
Minimum Front Yard	10 ft.	14 ft. on Lancaster Ave. 11 ft. on Haverford Station Rd. 17 ft. on Old Railroad Ave.	10 ft. on Lancaster Ave. 17 ft. on Haverford Station Rd. 45 ft. on Old Railroad Ave.
Minimum Side Yard & Aggregate Side Yard	10 ft.	NA	NA
Minimum Rear Yard	25 ft.*	NA	NA
Maximum Impervious Surface (% and sq. ft.)	70%	95% (21,757 sq. ft.)	69% (15,769 sq. ft.)
Maximum Building Height	35 ft.	26 ft.	26 ft.
Buffer Area	20 ft.	0'	0'
Parking	1 space per 200 sq. ft. of building area	31 Spaces	15 Spaces**

*existing non-conforming.

**2,853 sq. ft. / 200 sq. ft. = 15 spaces. Building area used in the calculation is not inclusive of restrooms or janitor closet.

Issues

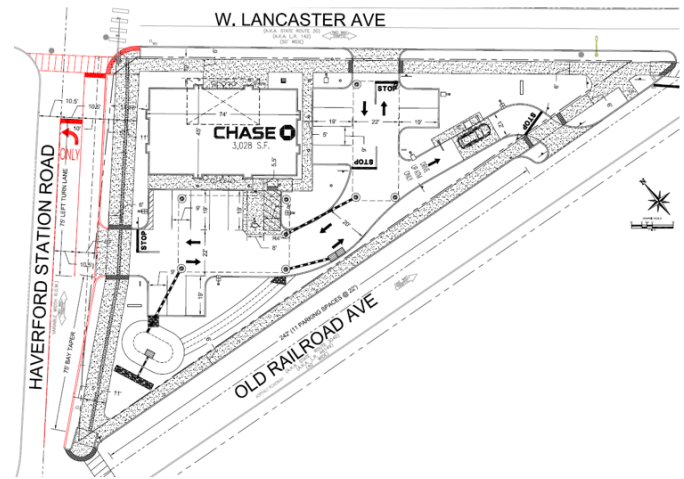
1. Transportation & Access Improvements

The site is located at an important intersection that facilitates access to regionally significant institutions, a regional train line, the local Haverford Station Commercial District, and the outlying residential neighborhoods. The site is shown on the Prioritized Pedestrian Improvement Map of the Comprehensive Plan as a Priority 2 Area. Therefore, it is important to provide safe access to the site from as many points as possible and as many modes of transportation as possible.

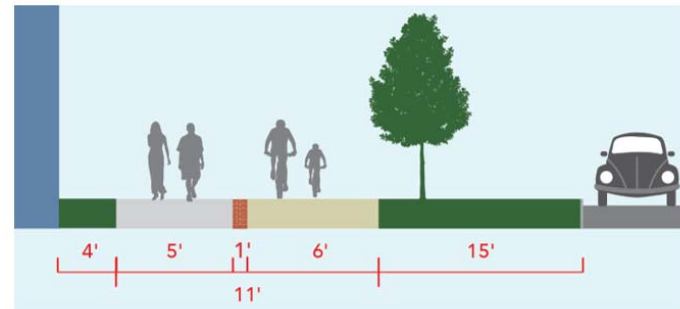
Vehicular: The Planning Commission should be aware that PennDOT has plans to install left turn lanes on all four approaches at the Lancaster Avenue and Haverford Station Road intersection adjacent to this site. Although the time line for PennDOT constructing the lanes has not been released, the construction will likely occur after the new bank is complete. Therefore, staff felt it was important to consider the roadway improvements in the design of the site.

In his review, the Township Engineer recommended that additional right of way be offered on Lancaster Avenue and Haverford Station Road to enable the future left-turn lanes to be constructed. This is requested due to the poor level of service at the northbound Haverford Station approach. With this project, the applicant has only agreed to provide additional right of way on Haverford Station Road. Staff notes that the additional right of way needed on Lancaster Avenue may be acquired by PennDOT at a future date.

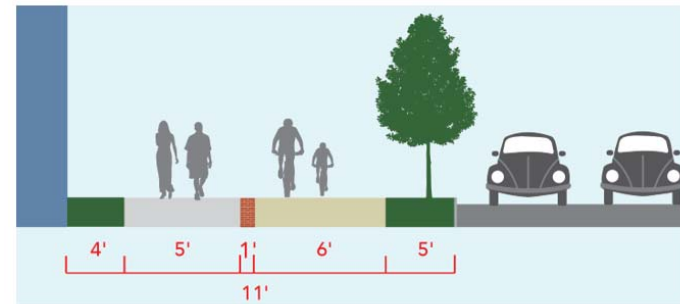
Bicycle: Residents reached out to staff with an interest in facilitating a safer bicycle connection through the commercial district from Haverford College to the Haverford Train Station and Bryn Mawr College. Staff supported the inclusion of multi-modal transportation elements and worked with the applicant and the Traffic Safety Unit of the Lower Merion Police Department to include a multi-purpose path adjacent to the public sidewalk along Haverford Station Road. The paved area along Haverford Station Road is 11 feet wide which contains a six-foot path and a four-foot-wide sidewalk which are separated by a one foot wide stamped concrete strip.



Future Turn Lane Concept

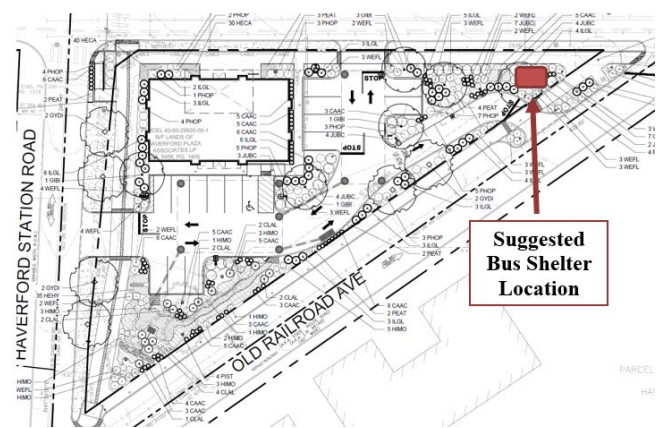


Pre-Turn Lane Construction



Post Turn Lane Construction

Public Transportation: The SEPTA stop for Bus Routes 105 & 106, which provide bus service from Paoli to the 69th Street Transportation Center is currently located at the corner of Haverford Station Road and Lancaster Avenue adjacent to the Wells Fargo property. Staff recommends the applicant investigate with SEPTA the possibility of relocating the stop to the eastern portion of the subject property while including a bus shelter. This would be an improved use of the space and would provide a more comfortable experience for transit users which has been proven to increase ridership.



Pedestrian: The plan shows the installation of two new crosswalks along Old Railroad Avenue which will facilitate better connections within the commercial district and Haverford College.

2. Architectural Elevations

Given that this zoning district does not include architectural design standards, staff's objective when reviewing the proposed architecture was to ensure that the design and materials complement the existing commercial district and adjoining historic neighborhood as well as facilitate views into the building of active uses. The applicant has been receptive to staff's requests, most notably replacing proposed exterior stucco with brick. Staff has the following additional design suggestions for the applicant to consider:

Views of Active Uses: Portions of the building along the northeastern (Lancaster Avenue) and southeastern elevations contain faux windows as they house activities that are not conducive to use of windows with clear glass such as bathrooms and back of house operations. Staff has reviewed the proposed floor plan, and while maintaining the exact footprint adjusted the interior uses so that the less active uses that require faux windows are concentrated toward the back of the building. Staff has included a copy of a potential revised interior layout which is attached to this memo.

Pyramidal Roof: The front elevation of the building shows a pyramidal roof above the entry way. This feature appears to be purely decorative. Staff feels that the appearance of the building would be improved by removing this portion of the roof and has provided an illustration below.



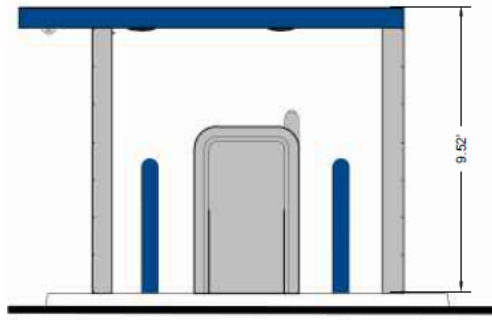
Proposed with pyramidal roof.

Front Elevation: Staff recommends the applicant investigate reducing the height of the proposed water table to two feet, as that height is commonly used in traditional main street design including the Bryn Mawr Village District and the MUST District.



Staff rendering with pyramidal roof removed.

Drive-up ATM: Staff would like to reduce the visibility of the drive-through use along the commercial corridor and would like to work with the applicant to improve the appearance of this feature so that it is complementary to the proposed building with respect to the materials it is constructed with. Staff recommends that the sides be constructed of brick and the logos be minimized. Staff also recommends the applicant work with staff to screen the views of the ATM with landscaping.



3. Landscape Plan

The landscape plan shows a significant increase in plant material for the site and the inclusion of a rain garden. Staff has included some species substitutions in the recommended conditions of approval. Staff has also included a condition requiring routine maintenance of the required plant material.

4. Relief

The applicant seeks the following relief:

A. Subdivision & Land Development Code Section, 135-7, to not provide a Tentative Sketch Plan.

- The applicant has worked with staff since the submission of the application in July 2019 to address site concerns. For this reason, staff supports the requested relief.

B. Stormwater Management & Erosion Control Code 121-4.B.2.a.1, to not recharge the increase in volume of stormwater runoff generated by the proposed development due to low infiltration rates.

- The present submission does not provide the code required recharge for the increase in runoff volume from the proposed development for the twenty-five (25) year storm considering the predevelopment ground cover condition as meadow. The applicant seeks relief from this requirement due to poor percolation conditions. The Township Engineer supports this relief since the development reduces the amount of impervious surface on the property by more than twenty (20%) percent.

5. Action

The Planning Commission must take the following actions for this application:

- Provide a recommendation on the Preliminary Land Development Plan.
- Provide a recommendation on the following relief.
 - A. Subdivision & Land Development Code Section, 135-7, to not provide a Tentative Sketch Plan.
 - B. Stormwater Management & Erosion Control Code 121-4.B.2.a.1, to not recharge the increase in volume of stormwater runoff generated by the proposed development due to low infiltration rates.