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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION**

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JODY L. HOLTON, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 22, 2019

Mr. Christopher Leswing, Director of Building & Planning
Building & Planning Department
Township of Lower Merion
75 East Lancaster Avenue
Ardmore, Pennsylvania 19003

Re: MCPC #19-0217-001
Plan Name: 390 W. Lancaster Avenue – Chase Bank
(3,028 sq. ft. commercial on approximately 0.50 acres)
Situate: Haverford Road (east)/south of Lancaster Avenue
Township of Lower Merion

Dear Mr. Leswing:

We have reviewed the above-referenced land development plan in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on August 16, 2019. We forward this letter as a report of our review and recommendations.

BACKGROUND

The applicant proposes to demolish all existing improvements on the 0.5-acre site and construct a 3,028-square foot bank building with a freestanding drive-through ATM kiosk near the intersection of Old Railroad Avenue and Lancaster Avenue. Additional improvements shown at this time include 15 surface parking spaces, stormwater management facilities, sidewalks, and landscaping. Vehicular access is shown from both Lancaster Avenue and Haverford Road with an additional, one-way exit driveway onto Old Railroad Avenue for vehicles exiting the drive-through ATM. The property is located in the township's C1 Commercial zoning district.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The Haverford area of Lower Merion Township is identified as a Town Center in the Future Land Use Plan of the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*. Town Centers are traditional downtown areas with a mix of retail, institutional, office, and residential uses. The proposed building



placement is generally consistent with the statement that “development should be built to the sidewalk or close to the sidewalk, with doors that open to the sidewalk and clear windows along the street.” In addition, the redevelopment of this site is generally consistent with the goal to “encourage development and transformative investment where infrastructure already exists.”

The Land Use Element of the 2016 Lower Merion Township Comprehensive Plan identifies Haverford as one of the township’s Neighborhood Main Streets. The proposed redevelopment of this site will include significant landscaping which is generally consistent with the recommendation to “promote street trees, commercial greening and landscaped setbacks.”

RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) generally supports the applicant’s proposal. However, in the course of our review we identified the following issues that we feel should be addressed prior to moving forward with the land development. Our review comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

ZONING ORDINANCE COMMENTS

Section 155-78.A.(5) of the township’s zoning ordinance states that “where a C1 Commercial District abuts a residence district, there shall be a buffer along the district boundary line within the C1 Commercial District, the depth of which shall be at least 20 feet.” A portion of the proposed internal driveway nearest to Old Railroad Avenue is shown within the portion of the site labeled as the 20-foot buffer. We defer to the Township Zoning Officer to determine if the current driveway placement complies with the buffer area standards.

VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

The proposed driveway into the site from Lancaster Avenue, which is a State road, is shown less than 120 feet east of the signalized intersection of Lancaster Avenue and Haverford Station Road. In addition, a one-way exit driveway from the drive-up ATM is shown on to Old Railroad Avenue, which is also a State road. We encourage the applicant to proactively coordinate with PennDOT regarding the proposed location of their driveways onto State roads in order to determine if any additional traffic controls may be beneficial.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

We commend the applicant for proposing to improve pedestrian circulation in this section of the Haverford commercial area by creating a six-foot wide sidewalk on all sides of the site, with a grass strip separating the sidewalk from the more heavily traveled roads of Lancaster Avenue and Haverford Station Road. In order to further enhance pedestrian access to and from the site, we encourage the applicant to work with the township and PennDOT to explore installing a high-visibility crosswalk across Haverford Station Road near Old Railroad Avenue.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

We commend the applicant for proposing to preserve an existing tree located near the intersection of Lancaster Avenue and Old Railroad Avenue as part of their landscape plan. However, we encourage the applicant to coordinate with the township to ensure that all appropriate precautions are taken to minimize damage or disruption to the root system of this established tree during the construction process.

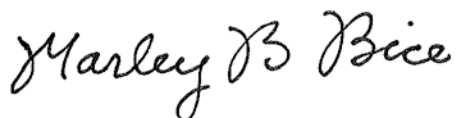
CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal to construct a new bank building; however we feel that our recommendations will better achieve the township's goals for commercial development.

Please note that the review comments and recommendations contained in this report 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. A paper copy bearing the municipal seal and signature of approval must be supplied for our files. Please print the assigned MCPC number (#19-0217-001) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



Marley Bice, AICP, Principal Planner
610-278-3740 – mbice@montcopa.org

c: Core States Group, Applicant's Engineer
Gilbert P. High, Jr., Esq., Twp. Solicitor
Ernie B. McNeely, Twp. Manager
Edward P. Pluciennik, P.E., Twp. Engineer
Fran Hanney, PennDOT

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