

November 11, 2019

Middlesex Borough Planning Board
1200 Mountain Avenue
Middlesex, NJ 08846

Attn: Karen Wick, Planning Board Clerk

Re.: RG Middlesex, LLC
First Planning Review
Block 353, Lots 1.01 and 1.02

Redevelopment Plan for Block 353, Lots 1.01 and 1.02 – (Former Union Carbide Tract)

Dear Board Members:

We are in receipt of the above-referenced development application seeking preliminary and final major site plan approval to redevelop the former Union Carbide tract into a warehouse and distribution facility. As proposed, one building would contain 400,000 +/- square feet of warehouse and office space.

In connection with the above-referenced application, we have reviewed the site plans, consisting of 21 sheets that were prepared by Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc. The plans are dated 7/8/19 and revised through 9/4/19.

Architectural plans were prepared by Mitchell and Hugeback Architects, Inc. and are dated 9/4/19. The drawings consist of 2 sheets.

We also reviewed a Traffic Impact Study prepared by Langan Engineering, dated September 26, 2019.

1. Description of the Proposed Development and Compliance with Borough Development Regulations

- a. The development proposal appears to comply with all the core requirements of the Redevelopment Plan. No major deviations are required from the Redevelopment Plan.

2. Planning Considerations

a. Completeness

1. The plans are complete from a planning perspective.

b. Zoning.

1. Warehouse and distribution facilities are principal permitted uses in the Redevelopment Plan.
2. The subject tract consists of two lots, which adhere to the minimum tract size requirements. A deed of lot consolidation shall be prepared as the proposed building is located on two lots.

c. General

1. As with all applications, we ask that the applicant provide operational testimony associated with the site, which includes but is not limited to the anticipated number of employees, hours of operation, as well as the ability for the tract to accommodate vehicular, truck, truck delivery and pedestrian traffic. In this context, it appears that the buildings are proposed to be constructed on speculation.
2. The applicant shall comment on the materials stored in the building. The applicant shall clarify as to whether any hazardous materials will be stored on-site.

d. Circulation/Parking.

1. We have reviewed the Traffic Impact Study prepared by Langan Engineering as well as the site plan.
2. Parking. The proposed amount of off-street parking for the site is regulated by the Redevelopment Plan and not Section 248 of the Borough's Code. Given that the amount of parking associated with a warehouse project may vary significantly by use, i.e., a fulfillment center vs. a traditional warehouse facility, the Redevelopment Plan required parking to be based upon demand studies. As it appears that the applicant intends on receiving site plan approval without a tenant or tenants in mind, such information has not been provided. Accordingly, it appears that the applicant cannot comply with the Redevelopment Plan requirements. For this reason, the Board may wish to consider the granting of preliminary approval only until such information is furnished.
3. Parking 2. For this reason, the amount of parking and loading bays appears to be designed on maximizing the amount of available land on the tract. The planning concern is that parking and loading spaces may be constructed that are not needed or used by any future tenant/tenants. Testimony shall be provided by the applicant regarding this issue. We do note that 58 car parking spaces are proposed to be land banked.
4. The applicant should clarify the proposed improvements to Baekland Avenue that are proposed by Piscataway Township and any further improvements proposed by the applicant.

5. A five-foot wide sidewalk along Baekland Avenue is provided, which is consistent with the Redevelopment Plan.

e. Lighting.

1. We have reviewed the lighting plans on sheets LL01 and LL501. The plans provide mounting heights, details and illumination levels indicating light intensities for the tract. From a planning perspective, we find the lighting levels to be acceptable.

f. Landscaping/Screening/Fencing.

1. The site is located within an industrial area of the Borough and is well removed from residential properties. Accordingly, there is no need from a planning perspective to provide perimeter screening or buffering. Landscape design is intended to provide aesthetic appeal to the proposed distribution facility. We further note that on-site landscaping in this context should be designed to meet aesthetic objectives, while recognizing the industrial location.
2. Sheets LP101 and LP501 depict the landscape plans and plant species selection. Proposed plantings consist of 534 trees, 318 shrubs and 569 grasses. The plantings are located along the Baekland Avenue street edge, around and within parking lots, the building base and surround the proposed stormwater basins. We take no exception to the landscape plan. However, we ask that the applicant provide testimony as to the visibility or lack of visibility of parked cars and trucks from River Road. The applicant should also discuss the visibility of the trash enclosures from surrounding properties.
3. A deviation is be required from Section 5.6.6 of the Redevelopment Plan, which states if a waste disposal location is located outside of a building, the location shall be separated from associated off-street parking areas and screened from view from said off-street parking areas, internal and external streets, and adjacent uses by building walls or extensions thereof, fencing, and/or landscaping. The waste disposal location shall be large enough to accommodate a steel-like, totally-enclosed trash container and an appropriate number of recycling bins. Two unscreened "potential" enclosures are proposed within a parking area on the south-facing side of the building.
4. Irrigation. The Redevelopment Plan recommends that irrigation be provided. It does not appear that irrigation is proposed. Rather, a two-year maintenance guarantee is proposed.
5. The applicant shall clarify all site fencing and provide details.

g. Architectural/Signs.

1. The applicant proposes to finish the building similarly to industry trend for a building constructed of tilt up panels. Here, several neutral tones are proposed to break up the long building facades.
2. The applicant proposes two monument signs along Baekland Avenue. Each sign would be six feet in height and have 50 sq. ft. of sign area. A detail of the proposed signs shall be added to the site plan set.
3. The applicant shows the sign plate location for two 250 square foot building mounted signs on the northern and western facing building elevations. It appears that the size and location of the proposed signs are in compliance with the Redevelopment Plan. However, the applicant shall confirm that the mounting height of the building-mounted signs do not exceed 35-feet in height.

h. Other.

1. We note that Section 5.10.1, was recommended by the Planning Board to require a 100,000-foot minimum tenant size. This office never received further action from the Mayor and Council requesting this change during the second reading of the Redevelopment Plan (Ordinance). We ask if the applicant is acceptable of this requirement?
2. The applicant shall clarify all outside agency approvals.
3. The application is subject to a redevelopment agreement with the Borough.

Should you have any questions, please contact us.

Very truly yours,



Planning Consultant

cc: Kelly M. Carey, Esq., Board Attorney (via email)
Robert Bucco, PE, Planning Board Engineer (via email)
Barrie Palumbo, Zoning Officer (via email)
Richard Goldman, Esq., Applicant's Attorney
Richard Burrow, PE, Applicant's Engineer
Mark Hugeback, AIA, Applicant's Architect