

June 26, 2024

Mayor Andrew J. Nowick
Lambertville City Hall
18 York Street
Lambertville, New Jersey 08530

**Re: Ordinance 11-2024 Consistency Review
Planning Board for the City of Lambertville**

Dear Mayor Nowick:

As you are aware, I represent the Planning Board for the City of Lambertville (the “Board”). On June 5 and 19, 2024, the Board met to perform a consistency review pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7 on the City’s recently introduced Ordinance 11-2024. Ordinance 11-2024 introduces an Amended Redevelopment Plan related to the Lambertville High School Redevelopment Area.

By a vote of 6-3, the Board determined the Amended Redevelopment Plan to be **inconsistent** with the City’s current Master Plan. Among other aspects of the 2019 Master Plan Reexamination Report that were considered, the Board reviewed the Goals and Objectives identified in the City’s 1995 and 1998 Land Use Plan Element, which remain in effect. As required by law, Board provides the following findings, recommendations, and comments regarding the Amended Redevelopment Plan, which the Board believes will assist in making it consistent with the Master Plan:

- **FINDING 1** - PRESERVE THE HISTORIC INTEGRITY OF THE CITY: The Board finds that the Amended Redevelopment Plan does not impact any historic structures within the Redevelopment Area and is therefore **CONSISTENT** with this goal the Master Plan.

- **FINDING 2** - ENCOURAGE NEW PUBLIC PARK AREAS THROUGHOUT THE CITY FOR PASSIVE AND ACTIVE RECREATIONAL AREAS: The Board finds that there will be dedicated conservation easements for open space. The Amended Redevelopment Plan is therefore **SUBSTANTIALLY CONSISTENT** with this objective of the Master Plan.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** The Board recommends the creation of public access easements dedicated to public use which should be incorporated into any

redevelopment agreement(s) encompassing the area. The Board also recommends that more specificity be provided as the process continues regarding areas to be set aside for public parks, if any, in terms of area, location, and use.

- **FINDING 3** – FACILITATE ACCESS TO A VARIETY OF HOUSING TO MEET THE INCOME, AESTHETIC AND OTHER PERSONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE CITY’S PRESENT AND FUTURE POPULATION: The Amended Redevelopment Plan proposes to increase the maximum number of homes that may be developed on this site from 139 to 200 and proposes to increase the required minimum number of affordable dwellings by the plan from 28 to 40. The Board therefore finds that the Amended Redevelopment Plan is therefore **CONSISTENT** with this objective of the Master Plan.

- **FINDING 4** – SEEK LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS OF PARKING AND TRAFFIC CONGESTION, PARTICULARLY TRUCK TRAFFIC: Phase 1 of the Amended Redevelopment Plan proposes the construction of 166 new dwelling units and Phase 2 proposes the construction of 30 to 34 additional dwelling units. This will produce several hundred additional vehicles traveling in and out of the Redevelopment Area. The Board finds this increase in vehicle traffic excessive and therefore **INCONSISTENT** with this objective of the Master Plan.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** The Board recommends a traffic study be conducted of the Redevelopment Area in consideration of the proposed development.

- **FINDING 5** – ENCOURAGE A GREATER DIVERSITY OF PERSONAL SERVICE RETAIL OPPORTUNITIES IN APPROPRIATE AREAS THROUGHOUT THE CITY AND ENCOURAGE A BALANCE OF RESIDENTIAL AS WELL AS COMMERCIAL USES IN THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT: The Board finds that the Amended Redevelopment Plan is **CONSISTENT** with this objective of the Master Plan.

- **FINDING 6** – PROMOTE COMMERCIAL, LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AND OFFICE USES IN APPROPRIATE AREAS THROUGHOUT THE CITY: The primary type of development proposed by the Amended Redevelopment Plan is residential. The Board finds that the Amended Redevelopment Plan is **CONSISTENT** with this objective of the Master Plan.

- **FINDING 7** - PRESERVE AND PROTECT ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, FLOOD PLAINS, WETLANDS AND STEEP SLOPES: The Board finds that the Amended Redevelopment Plan is **INCONSISTENT** with this goal of the Master Plan with respect to the steep slope disturbance provisions. The Master Plan encompasses the steep slope standards that were adopted in 1995. The Lambertville High School Redevelopment Plan that was adopted in 2018 lessened those standards and made them less onerous for developers. The steep slope standards proposed by this Redevelopment Plan are even less onerous than the 2018 standards. The Board has therefore determined that the proposed steep slope standards in the Amended Redevelopment Plan do not further the goals of the Master Plan.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** The Board recommends that the current steep slope standards contained in the Land Development Ordinance be incorporated into the Amended Redevelopment Plan.

- **FINDING 8** - MAINTAIN A HEALTHY BALANCE OF LAND USE DEVELOPMENT AND OPEN SPACE TO PROTECT EXISTING PUBLIC ACCESS AND ENCOURAGE FUTURE PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE RIVER WHILE PRESERVING ITS NATURAL ASSETS: The Board finds that the Amended Redevelopment Plan contains adequate open space planning and is therefore **CONSISTENT** with this goal of the Master Plan.

- **FINDING 9** - ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN: The Board finds the Amended Redevelopment Plan **SUBSTANTIALLY CONSISTENT** with this objective of the Master Plan.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** The Board recommends a reevaluation of the entire road network within the Redevelopment Area.

- **FINDING 10** - ENCOURAGE TREE PLANTING AND MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING TREES IN ORDER TO ENHANCE NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY: The Board finds that the Amended Redevelopment Plan to be inadequate regarding tree planting and maintenance and is therefore **INCONSISTENT** with this objective of the Master Plan.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** The Board recommends exploration of the option of reforestation of the ash tree blight within the Redevelopment Area as well as developer contributions to the Shade Tree Fund. This provision should be incorporated into any redevelopment plan(s) encompassing the area.
- **FINDING 11** - STRIVE TO PRESERVE THE NATURAL, SCENIC, HISTORIC, AESTHETIC ASPECTS OF THE COMMUNITY AND ITS ENVIRONMENT: The Board finds that the Amended Redevelopment Plan is **INCONSISTENT** with this goal of the Master Plan because the current viewshed within the Redevelopment Area will be substantially disturbed by the proposed development.
 - **RECOMMENDATION:** The Board recommends that the current viewshed be preserved. The current sight lines, geographical views and topographic character must not be disturbed, interrupted or obscured by the proposed development. This requirement should be incorporated into any redevelopment agreement(s) encompassing the Redevelopment Area.
- **FINDING 12** - PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: Due to the lack of clarity regarding recreational activities, facilities or opportunities for young people, the Board finds that the Amended Redevelopment Plan is **INCONSISTENT** with this goal the Master Plan.
 - **RECOMMENDATION:** The Board recommends further clarification and identification of possible recreational opportunities for young people.
- **FINDING 13** - ENCOURAGE THE FORMATION OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH THE COUNTY AND ADJOINING MUNICIPALITIES FOR THE PROVISION OF NEEDED SERVICES IN THE REGIONAL AREA: The Board finds that the Amended Redevelopment Plan is **SUBSTANTIALLY CONSISTENT** with this objective of the Master Plan.
 - **RECOMMENDATION:** The Redevelopment Area borders the Township of West Amwell. The Board recommends that the City formally communicate with West

Amwell to discuss the formation of any cooperative development agreements which may be necessary for the provision of basic resources and services needed for the Redevelopment Area.

- **FINDING 14** - FOSTER REGIONAL PLANNING WITH ADJOINING MUNICIPALITIES TO ACHIEVE COMMON OBJECTIVES IN A COMPLEMENTARY-RATHER THAN COMPETITIVE-MANNER: The Board finds that the Amended Redevelopment Plan is **SUBSTANTIALLY CONSISTENT** with this objective of the Master Plan.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** The Board again recommends formal communication with the Township of West Amwell in furtherance of this objective.

- **FINDING 15** - IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (“ADA”), PROMOTE EQUAL ACCESS FOR ALL PEOPLE TO FACILITIES AND STRUCTURES THROUGHOUT THE CITY: The Board finds that the Amended Redevelopment Plan is **SUBSTANTIALLY CONSISTENT** with this goal of the Master Plan.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** The Board recommends the incorporation of sidewalks and traffic lights designed to provide safety for pedestrians who do not have a vehicle to get to and from other areas of the town, thereby encouraging connectivity with the greater Lambertville community.

- **FINDING 16** - ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY DESIGN GOALS SO THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE SURROUNDING CHARACTER OF BUILDINGS, STREETScape, AND STRUCTURES AND THE PRESERVATION OF PROPERTY VALUES: The Board finds that the Amended Redevelopment Plan is **CONSISTENT** with this goal of the Master Plan.

- **FINDING 17** - ADOPT STATE RECYCLING GOALS AS CITY GOALS FOR RECYCLING: The Board finds that the Amended Redevelopment Plan is **CONSISTENT** with this goal of the Master Plan.

Furthermore, the Board recommends the incorporation of the most stringent stormwater management requirements and standards into the Amended Redevelopment Plan. For example, under Section Z-1500.4 of the proposed Stormwater Control Ordinance, the Developer shall be required to utilize the option that is most stringent. Also, the Board recommends that the Amended Redevelopment Plan incorporate a requirement that all existing downstream storm sewer systems that will capture the proposed runoff from the Redevelopment Area be analyzed to ensure that the systems have capacity for the additional runoff. If the capacity in the existing systems is insufficient, then the Developer shall either improve the existing systems or retain additional runoff on-site so that the existing systems have sufficient capacity. Finally, the Board recommends that the Amended Redevelopment Plan incorporate a requirement that the latest NOAA rainfall data be utilized, even if the data has not been officially adopted by the City or State.

If you have any further inquiries, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Respectfully,

/s/ Scott D. Salmon, Esq.
Scott D. Salmon, Esq.

cc: William P. Opel, Esq., City Attorney
Planning Board for the City of Lambertville
Crystal Lawton, Planning Board Secretary