TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN
Board of Adjustment
Agenda
Thursday, October 22, 2026

1. **SUNSHINE LAW**
2. **ROLL CALL**
3. **MINUTES**
4. **RESOLUTION**
5. **DISCUSSION**
6. **HEARINGS**

a) **TAWHEED DAHWAH CENTER / ZBA-24-00017**

Amended Preliminary and Final Site Plan plus Relief of Condition in which the applicant is proposing construction of a 19,350sqft place of worship at 630 South Middlebush Road, Somerset; Block 37.02 Lot 46.03 in zone A

DL 10/01/2026

https://www.franklintwpnj.org/committees-commissions/zoning-board-of-adjustment/application-material/tawheed-dahwah-center-zba-24-00017/-fsiteid-1#!/

CARRIED from OCTOBER 15, 2026 – no further notification required

THIS MATTER WILL BE HEARD AT 6:30PM AT 475 DeMOTT LANE, SOMERSET IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

EC report 02.17.26 ng.docx
TRC REVISED report 09.10.26.pdf
SCPB 09.08.26.pdf
D&R 03.17.25.pdf

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

memo

TO: Christine Woodbury – Secretary to Franklin Township Planning and Zoning Boards

FROM: Tara Kenyon, AICP/PP – Sustainability Coordinator, Franklin Township

DATE: February 17, 2026

RE: Comments from Franklin Township Environmental Commission
Tawheed Dahwah Center
630 South Middlebush Road, Somerset
(Block 37.02 – Lot 46.03)
File #: ZBA-24-00017

At its regularly scheduled meeting of October 8, 2025, the Franklin Township Environmental Commission ("EC') reviewed the resubmission of the above-referenced project. The following comments are submitted for consideration by the Franklin Township Zoning Board of Adjustment:

- According to P.L. 2021, c.171 ("The Electric Vehicle Charging Station Act"), the EC finds that 7 EV Make-Ready parking spaces are required by the applicant for the proposed 158 parking spaces. Completed Electric Vehicle charging stations must be installed over a six-year period (1/3 at time completion of construction, 1/3 within 3 years of completion of construction, and the remaining 1/3 at within 6 years of completion of construction).

  It is further recommended that EV Charging Stations and Make-Ready parking spaces alternate by one parking space throughout the parking lot (example: parking space #1, #3, and #5 are prepared as Make-Ready parking spaces, or have an EV Charging Station installed. Parking spaces #2, #4, and #6 are not prepared for EV charging). This will allow multiple users to easily use the chargers without having to wait for a long period of time.

- Cool Roof technology or implementation of a Green Roof should be investigated by the developer. Large roof spaces are ideal for this type of green infrastructure, which significantly reduces indoor temperatures and peak electricity demands, slows the formation of smog and air pollution, and lessens the effects of urban heat islands.

- 88 trees onsite are proposed for removal, producing the requirement of 430 trees for replacement. The applicant proposed to replace 238 of those replacement trees onsite. The EC recommends that more of the existing trees be preserved, or that more replacement trees be replanted, onsite. Any trees replaced onsite should be replaced with tree species that are native to New Jersey.

- Pervious pavement is recommended for the parking areas and interior accessways. Pervious pavement allows rainwater to infiltrate through the surface to underlying soil, stone, and gravel. Additionally, pervious pavement melts now quickly, meaning that less intervention (salt, brine) is needed.

- Anti-idling signs should be placed at various locations around the site, specifically in consistent increments across the parking lot, and on the door and/or window of the office.

- The EC requests that the applicant provide a list of amendments made to plans and supporting documents with all future resubmissions. This will assist the EC's Site Plan Committee in its required review.

Please contact me with any questions at Tara.Kenyon@franklinnj.gov or 848-203.1857. Thank you!

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Franklin Township

Somerset County, New Jersey

Township Technical Review Committee (TRC)

MEMORANDUM

To: Zoning Board of Adjustment

From: Technical Review Committee (TRC)

Date: **September 10, 2026**

Re: Tawheed Dahwah Center – Amended Preliminary and Final Site Plan + Relief of Condition (ZBA-24-00017)[1]
630 South Middlebush Road (B 37.02,0 Lot 46.03)

Site and Project History/ Description

The site is currently occupied by a single-family dwelling and is located within the A (Agricultural) zoning district. The southerly two- thirds of the site is forested while the northerly one-third of the site is open field. A wetlands area exists in the far southeasterly potion of the site. Surrounding land uses consist of preserved farmland to the north and east, single-family homes to the west fronting South Middlebush Road and Township open space to the south.

The 15.96-acre subject site is the location of an approval for *Dada Bhagwan Vignan Institute* (Docket ZBA-19-00040) for construction of a 21,083 square feet house of worship. By resolution memorialized on 1/20/2022 the application received "d(3)" Conditional Use and "c" Variance Relief along with Preliminary Site Plan Approval subject to a total of 39 conditions of approval. The approved application consists of the following:

[1] Applicants represented by attorneys, engineers and/or architects (or other such professionals) are expected to use the video display system available in Council Chambers to project hearing exhibits. Use of the video display systems greatly improves visibility of these exhibits for the Board, the public and the Township's video broadcast of the hearing. In order to use the video display system, please bring a computing device capable of utilizing a HDMI connection. A cable is provided, however adapters are not so please make sure you have the required adaptors to connect to HDMI if necessary.

- Construction of a 21,083 square foot place of worship including a 6,864 square foot worship area (as well as ancillary areas such as a warming kitchen, rest room, storage, 2,533 square foot basement, etc.).
- 157 parking spaces provided in two parking areas
- Access to South Middlebush Road is proposed via a proposed driveway (which was required to be re-located further north and away from a residential neighbor).
- Associated site modifications include utility extensions, grading and drainage modifications, and site lighting and perimeter site landscaping/ fencing.
- A 5-foot tall monument sign is proposed near the site's entrance on South Middlebush Road.
- The existing 2-1/2 story dwelling is proposed to remain.
- The development would be served by on-site well and septic

Places of worship are a permitted conditional use in the A zone. Applicable conditional use requirements are found in Section 112-37.

South Middlebush Road is a Township-designated Scenic Corridor.[2] The site is located within the Six Mile Run State and National Register historic district.[3]

The Board's 2022 resolution granted Preliminary Site Plan approval (i.e., which requires the applicant to return to the Board for Final Site Plan approval) along with the following variances:

- Section 112-37.D(1) - Number of Parking Spaces / 457 parking spaces required and 157 approved
- Section 112-37.E - Parking location / The majority of the parking shall be located at the rear of the main structure, with no more than 10% of the total parking located at the from entrance for handicapped accessibility, weddings and funeral services and parking is proposed to be located in front of the building
- Section 112-37.G - Building Setback-Rear / 200 feet is required - 130 feet approved
- Section 112-37.K(1) and (2) - Buffer / 15 feet of heavily landscaped buffer with six foot high board-on-board fence or 25 feet of heavily landscaped buffer or approved equivalent and buffer requirements not fully satisfied in certain areas including along rear property line.
- Section 112, Attachment 5:1 - Signage / Area of 25 square feet permitted and 67.5 feet proposed.

[2] Per Section 112-37.C, places of worship are limited to 5,000 square feet when located along a Township-designated scenic roadway unless such roadway is under state or county jurisdiction (i.e., a larger roadway). Since South Middlebush Road is under County jurisdiction, this application is not subject to the 5,000 square foot limitation.

[3] The site is not within a Township historic district thus the application is not subject to review by the Township Historic Preservation Advisory Commission.

The figures below show the location of the site as well as the surrounding area:

Amended Application

The revised submittal from Tahweed Dahwah Center, the current owner of the site, is described below:

- The building is in the same general location as the previous application (revised as required by the Board's resolution).
- The overall square footage of the building would be reduced from 21,082 square feet to 19,350 square feet, however the worship area would be increased in size from 6,864 square feet to 7,981 square feet worship area (which increases the proposed occupancy in the worship area and the required parking)
- The site plan has been updated in various respects to address conditions imposed by the Board including certain building setbacks required by the Board, alignment of the driveway and perimeter buffering.
- The building architecture has been modified to accommodate a different religious practice.

The applicant is applying for the following approvals from the Board:

- **Final Site Plan Approval -** See section of this report entitled *"Status - Conditions of Current Approval"* which addresses site plan related conditions of approvals as well as the report of the Board engineer.

- **Relief of Conditions** - See section of this report entitled *"Status - Conditions of Current Approval" which addresses conditions of approval related to site operations, number of congregants, etc.*
- **"C" Variance(s)** – see section of this report entitled *"'C' Variances"*

"C" Variances

Part D of the Site Plan Application indicates that "C" variances are being sought in association with the application for Final Site Plan approval. An attachment to that form appears to indicate required variances for: parking; size of the sign and rear yard setback. However, variances are *not* required for size of the sign and rear yard setback as these variances were granted in associated with the Preliminary Site Plan approval. **A new variance, however, is required for parking due to the increase in the size of the worship area (and the resulting increase in required parking):**

As part of Ordinance No. 4509-26 (effective August 6, 2026) the Township updated the parking requirements for places of worship as shown below

> ***One parking space per every three seats. One seat shall be considered 22 inches in calculating the capacity of pews or benches. In the event there is no fixed seating provided, parking shall be provided at one parking space for every three persons of permissible occupancy, per applicable code, of all proposed assembly areas (e.g., worship area, fellowship room, etc.). at the largest anticipated gathering or a minimum of one parking space for every 15 square feet of worship area. ~~at the largest anticipated gathering or a minimum of one parking space for every 15 square feet of worship area.~~***

The ordinance explains the reason for this update as follows:

> ***The parking requirement for places of worship is proposed to provide a more consistent requirement of 1 parking space for every 3 persons in proposed assembly areas. This is the standard parking requirement for places of worship in municipal zoning ordinances. The existing parking requirement of 1 parking space for every 15 square feet essentially equates to an occupancy level of 1 person for every 5 square feet where occupancy limits, per code, range from 1 person for every 15 square feet to 1 person for every 45 square feet (depending on the circumstances/ layout). In summary, the existing parking requirement of 1 parking spaces per 15 square feet is not in-line with occupancy codes and assumes occupancy levels many times more than permitted by code.***

Based on the *prior* parking requirement, the Preliminary Site Plan received a parking variance of 457 parking spaces required where 157 parking spaces were proposed based on a worship area of 6,864 square feet. Based on an increased worship area size of 7,891 square feet the *current* application for Final Site Plan Approval *originally* required a parking variance of 532 parking spaces where 157 parking spaces are proposed.

However, these figures change under the new ordinance as shown in the table below which shows

the required number of parking spaces under both the prior and current parking requirements for both the Preliminary Site Plan (with a 6,824 square foot worship area) and the Final Site Plan (with a 7,891 square foot worship area).

As shown in the table, under the *updated* parking requirements, the Preliminary Site Plan application would have complied with the new parking requirement (153 spaces required where 157 were proposed), while a variance is still required for the Final Site Plan application (177 spaces required where 157 are proposed). The variance for the Final Site Plan application is triggered solely by the increase in the size of the worship area from 6,864 square feet to 7,891 square feet.

	Worship Area (square feet)	Permitted Occupancy per Code (1 person/ 15 square feet)	Required Parking		Proposed Parking
			Previous Ordinance (1 space/ 15 SF)	Revised Ordinance (1 space per 3 people of permitted occupancy)	
Preliminary Approval	6,864	458	457	153	157
Current Proposal	7,981	532	532	177	157

While the updated parking requirement provides a more appropriate parking requirement (based on applicable occupancy codes for the assembly area), consistent with parking requirements for places of worship commonly found in municipal zoning ordinances, there remain a number of occupancy- and parking-related issues that the Board may wish to have resolved to their satisfaction:

- **As indicated above, the proposed increase in the size of the worship (from 6,864 to 7,891 square feet) actually triggers the need for a parking variance under the updated parking requirement (177 required – 157 proposed)**
- **The applicant has presented widely varying figures on the intended occupancy of the worship area – an early exhibit showed boxed-out areas representing occupancy totaling 458 (same as in the Preliminary application despite the now proposed increase in the size of the worship area) while a later exhibit showed only "150 rugs" in that same space.**
- **The larger place of worship, by Code, would permit a larger occupancy (532) at any one time than is permitted by the limits of the septic system (458 throughout the course of a day).**
- **The permitted occupancy of the worship area remains much larger than their stated congregation size.**
- **There remains the concern that if the applicant where to hold multiple services during the course of the day they could significantly exceed the limits of the septic (again - the limit is *not* 458 at any one time – it is no more than 458 *through the course of the day*).**

NOTE: Based upon staff review of prior places of worship, the parking requirement is calculated based upon on an understood occupancy limit of 1 person per 15 square feet in the worship area, per code. If the Applicant and/or the Objector wish to dispute this occupancy limit they would need to present information from a qualified professional. If so, they would need to do so in advance of the hearing

on 10/24/26 to provide staff the time/opportunity for review.

Status - Conditions of Current Approval

The condition of the Board's approval are identified in *italics*. Staff evaluation of the status of each condition is identified in **bold.** *(Note: Conditions 1, 2, 3, 36, 37 and 39 are general conditions of approval required of all applications and thus need not be addressed in this report.)*

4. *Compliance with the staff and consultant reports which includes conditions of the approval granted by the BOARD herein, except as specifically modified or waived herein*. **Refer to separate reports from the Board engineer and the County Health Dept.. Compliance with other staff reports previously satisfied or addressed herein**.

5. *The plan shall incorporate the changes reflected in Exhibit A-7, Exhibit Overall Plan Option A, last revised 02/02/21 prepared by The Reynolds group, Inc, Exhibit A-9, "Colorized Dimension Plan Sheet 4 of Site Plan" prepared by The Reynolds Group Inc. dated October 21, 2021 and Exhibit A-10, Colorized rendering of the Landscape Plan Sheet 6 of the Site Plan, prepared by The Reynolds Group Inc. dated October 21, 2021*. **Satisfied. Submitted plans incorporate the changes reflected in the cited exhibits. For the Board's reference the exhibit provided at the end of this memo reflects the site layout and buffering conditions required by the Board.**

6. *The House of worship shall be shifted to be 130 feet from the rear property line. In that setback area shall be provided a 10-feet high berm with twenty-eight (28) 8-foot evergreen trees (in 2 staggered rows).* **Partially satisfied. Plans revised to comply. The grading of the berm should be revised per the engineer report.**

7. *The House of worship shall meet the 75-foot side yard setback requirement. The trees shall remain in the area specified at the house of worship/ Snyder property line with the tree removal plan updated accordingly. Additional evergreens shall be added where practicable to supplement the existing vegetation to remain*. **Satisfied. Plans revised to comply.**

8. *The site plan shall provide 6-foot high (deer fence style) fence along rear property line on two sides adjoining the building. The fence shall start along the rear property line at the edge of the wetlands buffer and extend along the side property line in the area of the building and parking lot (i.e., it would extend up to the location where the side property line makes a 90-degree bend to the north*) **Satisfied.**

9. *The proposed parking lot closest to the Warwick's properly shall be relocated to be at least 100 feet from their property line. Further, the site plan shall provide planted evergreen hedge at parking lot towards front neighbor on South Middlebush Road to further block the view of the cars and any headlight impact. All existing trees along the Warwick's property line shall be preserved and 6-8 foot tall evergreens shall be planted where there are gaps in between the existing trees which that the buffer would comply fully with the ordinance*. **Satisfied.**

Plans modified to comply.

10. *The site plan shall propose to remove the current driveway to the property along with the pipe at the street. The driveway shall be over 300 feet from the Warwick's property line. The relocated driveway shall be posted for no parking*. **Satisfied. Plans modified to comply. Plans modified to comply.**

11. *Lighting along the re-located driveway shall be limited to the area of the curb cut at South Middlebush Road and at the internal intersections which provide access to the parking lots*. **Satisfied. However, one (1) light is also proposed in the bend in the access drive (which the staff would recommend).**

12. *Site lighting shall be revised to comply with the 15-foot height limitation and shall be LED*. **Satisfied.**

13. *The site plan shall identify the additional plantings (6-foot high evergreens) to be placed where the existing driveway will be removed*. **Satisfied. Plans modified to comply.**

14. *Proposed street trees shall be setback to ensure adequate sight distance along South Middlebush Road at proposed driveway*. **Satisfied.**

15. *The relocated driveway, only, shall be used as the construction entrance. The existing driveway shall never be used for construction access. Appropriate modifications to the plan shall demonstrate how this would be accomplished*. **Partially satisfied. Notes to this effect added to the plans. Condition should be repeated in any subsequent resolution of Board approval. The Soil Erosion & Sediment Control Plan should be revised to include notes demonstrating compliance with this condition.**

16. *The proposed parking lot lights shall be on a timer and separate circuits so that they will be lit only when necessary. Further, the parking lot and driveway lights shall not be used when the facility is not in use. When not in use, site lighting shall be limited to minimal necessary security lights. Appropriate details and notes shall be added to the plans*. **Notes to this effect added to lighting plan. Condition should be repeated in any subsequent resolution of Board approval.**

17. *Sign lighting shall be LED and shall only be lit when the facility is in use*. **Note to this effect added to lighting plan. Condition should be repeated in any subsequent resolution of Board approval.**

18. *The sign shall comply with the applicable setback*. **Satisfied.**

19. *Access to the existing house shall be from the proposed parking area closest to the house of worship*. **Satisfied.**

20. *Applicant shall abide by any standards imposed by the NJDEP regarding tree clearing limitations for time of year as they may apply to this site*. **Note to this effect added to plan. Condition should be repeated in any subsequent resolution of Board approval.**

21. *The applicant agrees to maintain the trees and buffer screening to ensure their long-term health and survival for at least five years and notwithstanding the expiration of any required bond for such maintenance*. **Note added to this effect added to the plan. Condition should be repeated in any subsequent resolution of Board approval.**

22. *The 30-space bank of spaces closest to the Warwicks shall be landbanked*. We offer the following comments:
    - **Based on the result of the traffic and parking testimony, the Board may wish to re-visit whether these spaces should continue to be landbanked.**
    - **If landbanking continues to be proposed, the site plan should be revised to delineate both the land banked condition (curb line should be revised, grading should be revised, and final material in the land banked condition should be provided) and full build out of the proposed improvements if the land banked parking is constructed including but not limited to striping and signage, grading, landscaping and lighting. In addition, the following note must be added to the plan, "The spaces identified as "prop. banked spaces" shall not be constructed unless authorization for such improvement is provided from the Township Zoning Officer, or unless the Township Zoning Officer requires that such spaces be constructed should conditions warrant, or by the Township's approval through the change of tenant. In the event that the Zoning Officer determines that conditions require improvement of all or a portion of these spaces, such spaces shall be constructed within 6 months of the Zoning Officer's determination weather permitting. In such an event, the Zoning Officer may consult with the appropriate Township staff with respect to related plan amendments."**

23. *All utilities will be underground (no poles)*. **Note to this effect added to the site plan. Condition should be repeated in any subsequent resolution of Board approval.**

24. *The plans shall be revised to comply with the reports of the Township staff and engineering consultant*. **Duplicative with condition #4 above.**

25. *Applicant shall agree to Title 39 to allow Township enforcement of "no parking" along the site driveway and other areas outside of delineated parking spaces*. **Applicant should be required to make application, upon full build-out, for a Subtitle 1 Chapter 5 Title 39 enforcement ordinance to allow the Police Department to enforce chapter 4 of the State Motor Vehicle Code (moving violations). Condition should be repeated in any subsequent resolution of Board approval.**

26. Use and occupancy of the facility shall be consistent with that testified to by the applicant and as indicated in Exhibit A-8, "Schedule and attendee report":

- *Saturdays – 3 times/ month – 11a-8p – 75 to 100 attendees*
- *Sunday – once/ month – 10a-2p – 50 to 75 attendees*
- *Saturday – once/ month – 9a-9p – 125 to 140 attendees*

High holy days – twice a year spring/ summer
- *Friday – 6p-10p – 150 to 175 attendees*
- *Sunday – 9a-9p – 225 to 250 attendees*
- *Saturday – 9a-9p – 225 to 250 attendees*.

The submittals indicate that there will be five (5) daily sessions with between 50-60 people during typical services, up to *70-80* people during Ramadan) and up to *150* people during special events.

Staff questions these figures (particularly the number during the services): if no more than 80 people will attend services (even on Ramadan) – why does the proposed worship area have a proposed occupancy of *458* people? This needs to be explained ince impacts of the proposal (including septic and traffic) may change significantly based on the actual number of congregants. See comments on condition #27, as well.

27. *No more than 458 people may occupy the building throughout the course of a day (consistent with the limitation imposed by the site's septic system approval).*

- **Staff offers the same caution offered with respect to condition #26, above – if only 80 congregants are expected why does the worship area have an occupancy of 458 people? As indicated, the 458-person capacity is not just the capacity at any one time – it is the total number of people who may be in the building *throughout the course of the day.* With up to five (5) services a day and a proposed occupancy in the worship area of 458 people, staff has significant concerns that the building is being designed in a manner that would allow the 458-person daily occupancy to be significantly exceeded (which would exceed the design capacity of the septic system).**

- **Further, the architectural plans have been revised to add two (2) classrooms (that were not on the prior approval). What are these classes for and when would they be used? For example, if these classes are intended to be used for religious education for children while the adults are praying how might that affect the occupancy limit?**

28. *No renting of the facility to member or outside parties may occur*. **The applicant has not requested any modification to this condition and the "Statement of Proposed Use of Property" reiterates that the facility "will not be rented out or used by outside organizations." Condition should be repeated in any subsequent resolution of Board approval.**

29. *No conduct of wedding, funerals, etc. may occur*. **The site plan notes that this condition**

"is to be reviewed with Board" and the "Statement of Proposed Use of Property" indicates that weddings and funerals would take place on site.

30. *There shall be no use of outside speakers or other amplified sound.* **The applicant has not requested any modification to this condition. The "Statement of Proposed Use of Property" indicates that "there will be no outdoor activities that will involve loud music, loud noise or a large congregation of people." The applicant should clarify whether that statement includes no use of outsides speakers or other amplified sound.**

31. *The applicant shall submit for a Special Event Permit for each of the high holy days events for review by Township events including a determination of whether traffic safety would need to be provided by the Township Police*. **The applicant has not requested any m odification to this condition. Condition should be repeated in any subsequent resolution of Board approval.**

32. *There shall be no outside events, festivals, etc. with the exception of the procession during the two (2) high holy days events*. **The "Statement of Proposed Use of Property" indicates that the applicant will "apply for a Special Event Permit for high holy days… that will draw a larger than normal crowd" but provides no further clarification.**

33. *The spiritual leader of [the house of worship] shall be allowed to stay at the house on the Site when he visits the country and house of worship, but no one else shall be permitted to stay there.* **The applicant has not requested any modification to this condition. The "Statement of Proposed Use of Property" indicates that the spiritual leader (Imam) will be the only person to reside in the house. Condition should be repeated in any subsequent resolution of Board approval.**

34. No parking shall be permitted anywhere on the Site except in the parking lot provided. **Staff further recommends that fire lane striping be added to the plan supplementing the proposed 'No Parking Lane Signage'. Condition should be repeated (as amended) in any subsequent resolution of Board approval.**

35. *The color of the building for the house of worship should be painted in earth tones on all four sides of the façade*. **The following comments are offered with respect to the new architectural plans:**

    - **Architectural plans do not identify building colors so compliance with condition #35 (use of earth tone colors) cannot be confirmed. The applicant needs to address in testimony and revise the plans accordingly.**

    - **The applicant should present testimony and exhibits (at a minimum color rendered building elevations but preferably 3D renderings) demonstrating the appearance of the building and should address consistency with the intent of the Scenic Corridor Ordinance.**

- **The applicant needs to address the use of the large glass fiber reinforced concrete (GFRC) element on the top of the building (on the front and sides). Internet research suggests that this material is used to allow backlighting and/or ambient glow from internal lights to shine outward from the building. It is noted that the Board imposed the condition for earth tone colors in order to have the building blend with its environs (as per the Scenic Corridor Ordinance). Use of this element could work against that intent.**

38. *Applicant shall obtain final site plan approval from the BOARD prior to any construction.* **Applicant has applied for Final Site Plan approval in this submittal.**

Additional Comments

- **Staff recommends that the applicant consult with the Board Attorney with respect to the notice – specifically the degree to which the proposed relief of conditions should be addressed in the notice.**

- **South Middlebush Road is under Country jurisdiction. In our opinion, it is imperative to receive the County review letter prior to the hearing.**

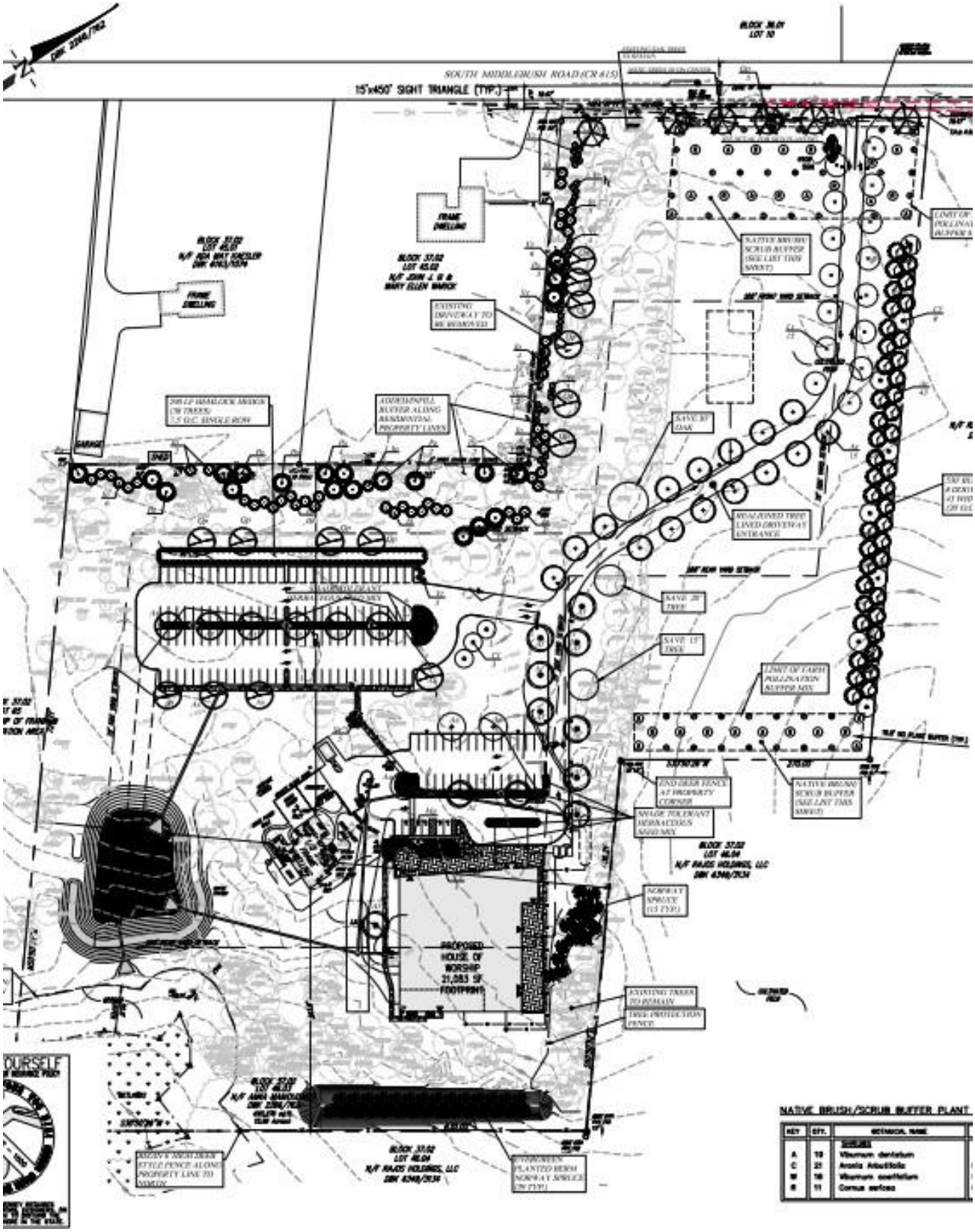
- **Per Chapter 222, Trees, the plans indicate a shortfall of 192 replacement trees. The payment-in-lieu will need to be provided prior to site plan sign off.**

- **The plan needs to demonstrate how building height was measured. Per the ordinance, "building height" is measured as the "vertical distance measured from the average elevation of the finished grade at the front of the building to the highest point of the roof" and per Section 112-28.A building height does not include parapets extending above the roof that are 5 feet or less in height. Provide necessary**

calculations on the plan

- **As a place of worship, the development is exempt from payment of the affordable housing development fee.**

Exhibit referenced in Resolution:



COUNTY OF SOMERSET PLANNING BOARD

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September 8, 2026

Mr. Robert Thomas, Chairman
Franklin Township Zoning Board of Adjustment
475 DeMott Lane
Somerset, NJ 08873

RE: TAHWEED DAHWAH CENTER
BLOCK 37.02 – LOT 46.03
FL 1128:005-25S
FL 1128:006-25S
630 SOUTH MIDDLEBUSH ROAD, CR#615

Dear Mr. Thomas:

This office and the office of the County Engineer have reviewed the information submitted for the above referenced project. The 15.6 acre tract is located on South Middlebush Road, County Route #615. The reviewed information consists of the following documents:

- "Amended Preliminary/Final Site Plan for Proposed House of Worship, Block 37.02, Lot 46.03, 630 South Middlebush Road (CR 615), Township of Franklin, Somerset County, NJ" dated October 17, 2019 and last revised January 6, 2025, prepared by Reynolds Group.

- Cover letter entitled "Re: Tahweed Dahwah Center (TDC) (Formerly DBVI), Site Plan application, South Middlebush Road, County #FL 1128:004-21S, TRG #14-001-5" dated August 28, 2025, and prepared by Reynolds Group.

- "Traffic Impact Study for Tawheed Dahwah Center, Block 37.02, Lot 46.03, 630 South Middlebush Road (CR 615), Township of Franklin, Somerset County, NJ" dated August 11, 2025 and prepared by Dolan & Dean.

The project proposes a 19,350 square foot house of worship on a 15.96 acre tract on South Middlebush Road (CR 615) adjacent to the Snyder Farm. The previously proposed project consisted of the construction of a 21,083 square foot house of worship, known as the Dada Bhagwan Vignan Institute (DBVI). The hours of worship have changed, and the proposed driveway location has changed.

The Somerset County Planning Board deems this application incomplete until the following requirements have been satisfactorily addressed:

Traffic Impacts

The County Planning Board is currently awaiting a report from the County Engineer's office to determine if the proposed project will have any impact on traffic and site access along South Middlebush Road (CR 615); such report including any requirements pertaining thereto to offset the project's impact on the traffic and site access will be forthcoming as a supplemental County Planning Board report.

Title Sheet and Plan Requirements

The phone numbers of all applicable utility companies shall be added to the title sheet.

Access and Frontage Requirements

1. The plans shall include a detailed intersection-grading plan for the proposed driveway at the intersection of South Middlebush Road (CR 615). The grading plan shall be drawn at 1"=20'. The intersection grading plan shall include the following information:

    a) Bottom of curb elevations at the PC, PT, and midpoint of the curb return. A minimum cross slope of 2 percent is to be held between the existing edge of pavement and the PC of the curb return.

    b) Additional spot elevations shall be shown in the intersection area to ensure proper drainage of the intersection.

    c) Elevations are to be shown on the plan to illustrate the profile of the County road in the area of the proposed intersection. The elevations are to be used in conjunction with the profile of the proposed access road to ensure a smooth profile for the proposed curb returns.

    d) Bottom of curb elevations shall be provided at the midpoints of the curb returns of the proposed site driveway and at the right of way line in order to confirm that the slope of the driveway is less than 6% for the entire driveway apron for the portion within the County right-of-way.

2. A vehicle circulation plan must be submitted that shows a truck safely entering and exiting the site without hitting the curb or crossing into the opposing lane of traffic. The truck size for this analysis should be determined based on the maximum truck size that is anticipated at the proposed development. Please note that the minimum truck size that the access driveway must accommodate shall be a "Single Unit Truck" (SU-30) as defined in AASHTO *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*.

3. The following Somerset County construction details shall be added to the plans: Standard Construction Notes for Road Improvements, Square Tube Sign Support, Signage & Striping Notes.

4. Somerset County's Road Widening with Curb detail shall be added to the plans and a note shall be added indicating that the pavement specifications shown are to be used for the driveway in the County right-of-way.

Once the review of the Traffic Impacts is complete, additional Access & Frontage requirements may be set forth.

Clear Sight Requirements

1. The line of sight from the proposed access drive shown on Sheets 2 and 4 of the plans is inconsistent with the criteria presented in the County's *Public Works Handbook*. The length of the line of sight shall be revised to be shown for a minimum distance of 10 times the design speed. The speed limit on South Middlebush Road (CR 615) is indicated to be 45 MPH as per installed signage on the road. The design speed is typically 5 MPH greater than the posted speed limit. Therefore, the plans shall be revised to show a sight distance of 500 feet looking in both directions from the site driveway and to note that all sight obstructions shall be cleared.

2. The line of sight shall be determined by establishing a line between the following two points. The first point represents the location of the driver's eye for a vehicle stopped 15 feet from the edge of the traveled way within the egress lane of the proposed driveway. The traveled way is defined as the white edge line, curb line, or the edge of pavement. The second point is the center of the front bumper of an approaching vehicle on South Middlebush Road (CR 615) from the northbound and southbound directions.

3. If the lines of sight encroach onto an adjoining property, the applicant shall acquire the necessary easement(s). All property lines shall be shown within the area of the sight areas. The procedures presented in the County's Land Development Review Resolution are to be followed in the acquisition process.

4. The plans shall be revised to show all existing and proposed vegetation along South Middlebush Road (CR 615).

Right-of-Way Requirements

The plans shall be revised to show the physical centerline of South Middlebush Road (CR 615). South Middlebush Road (CR 615) is classified as a Minor Arterial in the County Master Plan with a right-of-way width of 66 feet. A right-of-way dedication of 33 feet from the physical centerline of the road is to be shown along the entire frontage of the subject site. The area that is being dedicated must be clearly identified on the plan as "Area Dedicated to Somerset County for Roadway Purposes". The right-of-way dedication shall be recorded separately by deed in the County Clerk's Office as well as being shown on the Filed Map.

A metes and bounds description of the dedication that is signed and sealed by a Professional Land Surveyor shall be submitted for review and acceptance to the Office of the County Engineer. The metes and bounds description must describe the dedicated area to the centerline

of the County Road. Once accepted, the signed and sealed original metes and bounds description shall be incorporated into the executed deed that transfers the right-of-way to Somerset County. The original copy of the executed deed shall be returned to this office for filing with the County Clerk. All executed deeds shall be submitted with the applicable executed resident/nonresident tax forms and tax payment as required. Specifically, P.L. 2004 c.55 requires nonresident individuals, estates and trusts that sell New Jersey real property to make an estimated New Jersey gross income tax payment on the gain from such sale. Additional information and forms are available from the Division of Taxation's website at www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation.

The plans shall be revised to show monuments to be set along the new right-of-way line.

Historic Impact Review

The site is listed within the National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places Six Mile Run Historic District. Details and requirements for the Historic Impact Review can be found in the County's Land Development Review Resolution.

The site is also located within the boundary of the Millstone Valley Scenic Corridor Byway.

Stormwater Management Requirements

Since the outfall pipe from the proposed infiltration / detention basin discharges toward the rear of the subject property near a wetlands area, it is requested that the Township handle the review of the stormwater management plans and the bonding and inspection of the stormwater management facility for this proposal.

Performance Guarantee and Inspection Fee

Pending the finalization of the plans, the applicant's engineer shall submit a cost estimate for all work to be performed within the County right-of-way. The estimate must reflect the County's unit price list. The performance guarantee and inspection fee will be calculated from the estimate.

Pre-construction Requirements

Prior to the commencement of any construction or disturbance in the County right-of-way, the following issues must be addressed.

1. The performance guarantee and inspection fee for the improvements under County jurisdiction must be submitted.

2. Two complete sets of construction plans that have been embossed with the County's acceptance stamp must be on file in the County Engineer's Office. The County's acceptance stamp must be on the title page.

3. The contractor must be in possession of a Road Opening Permit issued by the County Department of Public Works. In the event that the County road in the area of the proposed improvements has been resurfaced and/or reconstructed, the applicable moratorium for road openings will be enforced by Somerset County. It is solely the applicant's responsibility to properly coordinate the installation of utilities, roadway improvements and road closures with any pending County projects.

4. A separate road-opening permit is required for the utility connections in the County right-of-way.

5. A pre-construction meeting must be arranged with the County Department of Public Works.

6. The acceptance of traffic control plans and detour plans is not included as part of the County Planning Board processing of this application. All traffic control measures to be implemented in connection with improvements under County jurisdiction must be reviewed and accepted by the appropriate entities prior to construction.

This report reflects comments from the County Planning Board and the office of the County Engineer (908) 231-7024. Should you have any questions, please contact the appropriate individual listed below.

Sincerely,

Nora Fekete
Supervising Planner

Philip Kao
Principal Engineer, Land Development Section

cc: Christine Woodbury, Franklin Township Board Secretary
Tahweed Dahwah Center via email
Brian D. Schwartz, Esq. via email
Dolan and Dean Consulting Engineers, LLC, via email
F. Mitchel Ardman, PE, The Reynolds Group via email
State Historic Preservation Office, Mail Code 501-04B, State of New Jersey, Dept. of Env. Protection, PO Box 420, Trenton, NJ 08625-0420 via US mail
Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition, PO Box 96, Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553 via US mail
Raritan Millstone Heritage Alliance, Inc., PO Box 5583, Somerset, NJ 08875-5583 via US mail
DRCC via email

STAFF REPORT

PLEASE REFER TO DRCC # WHEN SUBMITTING ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

DELAWARE AND RARITAN CANAL COMMISSION

DRCC #: 25-5486A
DATE: March 17, 2025
PROJECT NAME: 630 South Middlebush Avenue -- Tawheed Dawah Center
Latest Submission Received: March 5, 2025

Applicant:
Tawheed Dawah Center
630 South Middlebush Road
Somerset, NJ 08873
raj_memon2003@yahoo.com

Engineer:
F. Mitchel Ardman, P.E.
The Reynolds Group, Inc.
575 Route 28
Raritan, NJ 08869
mardman@reynoldsgrp.com

Project Location:

Road	Municipality	County	Block(s)	Lot(s)
630 South Middlebush Road (Somerset County Route No. 615)	Franklin Township	Somerset	37.02	46.03

Jurisdictional Determination:

Zone B	Major	Nongovernmental

Subject to Review for:

Drainage	Visual	Traffic	Stream Corridors
X			

THIS STAFF REPORT IS ISSUED AS A GUIDE TO APPLICANTS IN COMPLYING WITH DRCC REGULATIONS. IT IS NOT AN APPROVAL. NO

RECEIVED
AUG 29 2025
By ZBA 240017

DRCC#: 25-5486A
DATE: March 17, 2025
PROJECT NAME: 630 South Middlebush Road -- Tawheed Dawah Center

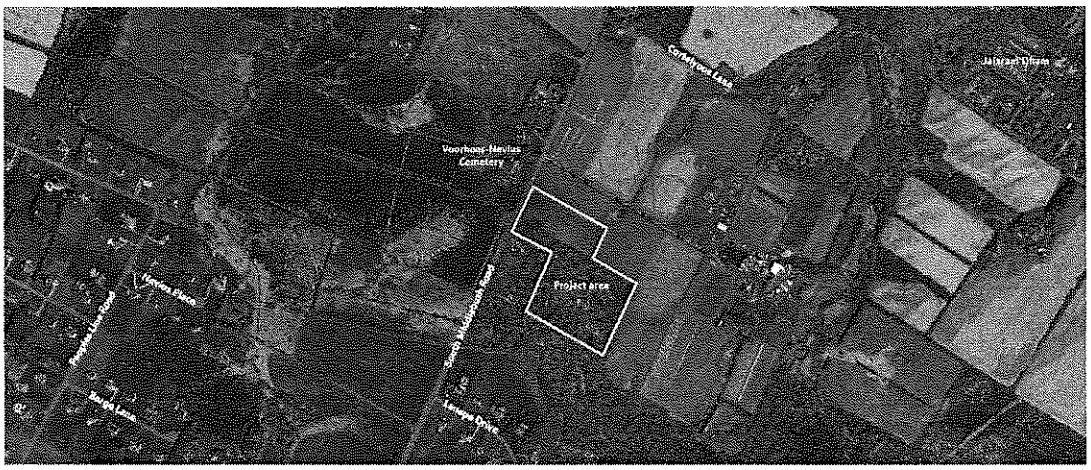
CONSTRUCTION SHALL BEGIN UNTIL A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL HAS BEEN ISSUED.

Documents Received: Site Plans (15 sheets) dated October 17, 2019, revised January 6, 2025; Stormwater Impact Report dated October 2019, last revised March 2025, prepared by The Reynolds Group, Inc.

Staff comments continued below.

The application is incomplete. It is staff's opinion that the proposed project has been designed in compliance with the Commission's technical requirements. However, notice of county and municipal approvals must be submitted before the application can be deemed complete and presented to the Commission for their decision.

Existing Conditions: The project site is a 15.96-acre lot located on the easterly side of South Middlebush Road in the Township of Franklin, Somerset County, approximately 1.93 miles east of the Delaware and Raritan Canal and within Commission Review Zone B.



The site is surrounded by farmland to the north, east, and west, as well as residential development to the south. In the existing condition, much of the site is forested with some cultivated areas. The site also contains an existing single-family residential dwelling, a shed, a gravel driveway, and a parking area, including 0.57 acres of impervious surface coverage.

Proposed Project: The applicant proposes to construct a 19,350 square-foot House of Worship, a septic system, an access drive, two parking areas, a stormwater management system, and associated infrastructure. The existing single-family dwelling and a small portion of the existing driveway will remain. The project will result in 2.88 acres of impervious surface coverage in the proposed condition and the disturbance of approximately 6.21 acres of land on the site.

Stream Corridor: The project site is located within the Millstone River (below Carnegie Lake) watershed area. Nine Mile Run is located approximately 1,624 feet east of the property line, and Cross Brook is located approximately 2,430 feet to the east. Both streams are tributary to Six Mile Run. Six Mile Run does not flow into the Delaware and Raritan Canal. Commission staff finds that the site is not located within 100 feet of a 100-year floodplain associated with a watercourse that drains more than 50 acres. Therefore, the project is not subject to a stream corridor review pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:45-9.1.

Stormwater Quantity Runoff: Runoff from the developed portions of the site has been divided into three separate points of analysis:

- Drainage area 1: A 7.16-acre parcel and this area currently drains toward the southeast corner of the site and toward existing wetlands.
- Drainage area 2: A 4.70-acre parcel and this area drains northeast; and
- Drainage area 3: A 4.10-acre parcel and this area drains west toward South Middlebush Road.

Drainage area 1 will drain developed portions of the site (2.95 acres) toward a surface infiltration basin. The proposed system is designed to attenuate all storm events up to and including the 100-year storm event. This system and undeveloped portions of the 7.91-acre drainage area discharge toward the existing point of analysis.

Drainage area 2 will drain developed (1.03 acres) and undeveloped portions (3.58 acres) of the site toward the existing point of analysis. The applicant is proposing to revegetate portions of the cultivated land with native deciduous shrubs and grasses within the drainage area.

Drainage area 3 will drain developed (0.45 acres) and undeveloped portions (3.5 acres) of the site toward the existing point of analysis. The proposed system is designed to attenuate all storm events up to and including the 100-year storm. The applicant is proposing to revegetate portions of the cultivated land with native deciduous shrubs and grasses within the drainage area.

The applicant has provided engineering calculations verifying that for stormwater leaving the site within each drainage area, the post-construction peak runoff rates for the 2-, 10-, and 100-year storm events will be no greater than 50, 75, and 80 percent (%), respectively, of the pre-construction peak runoff rates. The submitted calculations utilized the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Technical Release No. 55 (TR-55) hydrologic methodology, standard unit hydrograph, Type C rainfall distribution and current New Jersey 24-hour rainfall frequency data for Somerset County to compute peak runoff flow rates and volumes. The hydrology calculations include U.S. Department of Agriculture National Engineering Handbook methodology. Therefore, the Commission has determined this application is compliant with the specific stormwater runoff quantity standards of N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.

Water Quality: The Commission requires that all proposed impervious surfaces, both gravel and paved areas intended to carry vehicle traffic, shall comply with water quality standards in accordance with Commission regulations at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.7. This includes reduction of the post-construction load of total suspended solids (TSS) in stormwater runoff generated from the water quality design storm by a rate of 80% of the anticipated load from the developed site, expressed as an annual average.

Based upon the submitted application, approximately 1.59 acres of new and reconstructed pavement area will be created on site. Most of the pavement areas will be directed to a surface infiltration basin. The basin can provide a maximum of 80% TSS removal by completely infiltrating the volume of water generated during the water quality design storm through 6.0 inches of K-5 sand. The remaining pavement areas will be graded to sheet flow over existing wooded areas. This forested filter strip is classified to provide 80% TSS removal. As a result, the applicant is proposing to provide 80% TSS removal for all pavement areas.

Commission staff has confirmed the proposed basin is designed to the guidelines listed within the New Jersey Stormwater Best Management Practice (BMP) Manual, since the applicant has provided a groundwater mounding analysis for the basin that justifies the basin will infiltrate the water quality design storm volume within 72 hours. Therefore, Commission staff has determined this application is compliant with the specific water quality standards at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.7.

Groundwater Recharge: The Commission's regulations require that stormwater management measures maintain 100% of the average annual pre-construction groundwater recharge volume for the site, or that any increase of stormwater runoff volume from pre-construction to post-construction for the two-year storm is infiltrated.

A groundwater recharge analysis calculation (NJDEP GSR-32 spreadsheet) has been submitted, which demonstrates that the annual groundwater recharge deficit for the entire site is 107,463 cubic feet. To infiltrate the post-development recharge deficit, a surface infiltration basin is proposed. According to the spreadsheet, a BMP effective depth of 3.3 inches is required for the basin's 9,429 square-foot surface area. The proposed effective BMP depth is 10 inches. Therefore, the project is in compliance with the groundwater recharge requirements at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.5.

Non-Structural Methods: The Commission requires that non-structural stormwater management strategies be incorporated into the stormwater design of a development project.

To assist in determining that sufficient non-structural stormwater management strategies have been incorporated into the project site design "to the maximum extent practical," a NJDEP Nonstructural Strategies Point System (NSPS) spreadsheet has been completed for this project. The NSPS results indicate that the ratio of proposed to existing site points (107%) is greater than the required site points ratio (104%). Therefore, based upon the results of the NSPS spreadsheet analysis, the project has proposed non-structural measures that are adequate, and the project is designed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.4.

Stormwater Management Maintenance Plan: The applicant has submitted a stormwater management maintenance plan for the site. The submitted plan has been prepared in accordance with the specific requirements of N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.8.

Additional Information Required:

1. Staff notes that the applicant is required to submit two copies of the Commission's Conservation and Maintenance Agreement, with original signatures on both copies. This document is available on the Commission website: https://www.nj.gov/dep/drcc/pdf/DRCC%20C&M%20Agreement%20(2020).pdf

2. The Commission requires notice of municipal and county approvals.

Staff Recommendation: Staff does not recommend approval at this time.

Sincerely,

John Hutchison
Executive Director

c. Somerset County Planning Board
Franklin Township Planning Board
Brian D. Schwartz, Esq. (bschwartz@shotlaw.com)