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NEW YORK, NY

October 29, 2021

Chairman Dewey Burluson  
and Members of the Planning Board  
Borough of Hillsdale  
380 Hillsdale Avenue  
Hillsdale, NJ 07642

Regarding: **Block 1105, Lot 4, Borough of Hillsdale**  
**441 Hillsdale Ave.**  
**Minor Site Plan with Bulk Variances Application PZ-10-21**  
**Applicant & Owner: 441 Hillsdale Ave., LLC**

Dear Chairman Burluson and Members of the Board:

We are in receipt of a Minor Site Plan application that was submitted to the Borough on September 31, 2021. The applicant also submitted engineering plans and architectural drawings.

The engineering plans are prepared by Page Consultants and consist of ten sheets dated September 14, 2021 with two sheets revised to September 17, 2021 as follows:

- Drawing 1 of 10 entitled, "Cover Sheet," revised to September 17, 2021.
- Drawing 2 of 10 entitled, "Existing Conditions Plan."
- Drawing 3 of 10 entitled, "Proposed Site Plan," revised to September 17, 2021.
- Drawing 4 of 10 entitled, "Grading & Utility Plan."
- Drawing 5 of 10 entitled, "Soil Erosion Plan & Details."
- Drawings 6 & 7 of 10 entitled, "Signage Plan I."
- Drawing 8 of 10 entitled, "Elevations & Signage Plan."
- Drawing 9 of 10 entitled, "Lighting & Landscaping Plan."
- Drawing 10 of 10 entitled, "General Details."

This application is to appeal an August 3, 2021 denial of the Zoning Official. The applicant is seeking approval to locate a Chipotle restaurant in the location of a former restaurant. Minor Site Plan approval is required.

### **General Site Description**

The original site plan application for Friendly's was approved by the Planning Board on March 19, 1968 with plan dated December 1967. Subject Lot 4 is improved with a one-story brick building, associated parking, a freestanding sign, and other associated improvements. The building had previously housed a Friendly's restaurant. The lot contains 22,250 SF (0.51 acre) and is located in the Commercial/"C" Zone District (7,500 SF minimum lot size).

The property is located at the southeastern corner of the Hillsdale Avenue/Washington Avenue intersection. Washington Ave. curves around the property so that lot has frontage on Hillsdale Ave. on the north side, and Washington Ave. on the west and southern sides. One-way access into the site is permitted from Hillsdale Ave., and both access into and out of the lot is permitted from Washington Ave. at the southern end. Lot 4 is adjacent to the commuter parking area on the eastern (right) side.

### **The Application**

The applicant proposes to locate a Chipotle restaurant re-purposing the existing building. The existing steps, a concrete trash pad and air conditioning units with pads that are located behind the building are proposed for removal. A new concrete access sidewalk is proposed in front of the building, between the building and the parking spaces.

The interior of the existing building is proposed for renovation to accommodate the new "fast – casual" restaurant. It appears that customers will order from a counter and eat their food at tables in the restaurant, or take the food "to go." Table service or an exterior order/menu board are not proposed.

The applicant proposes to reconfigure the existing parking area and install a new parking lot. The proposed lot will contain 18 parking spaces, of which two spaces will be barrier-free and an additional two spaces will be assigned for mobile order pick up. Access to Hillsdale Ave. will be permitted from the northern end of the lot, with "right turns only" turns permitted out of the site. Left turns are not permitted out of the Hillsdale Ave. exit. Entrance into and out of the site is permitted on the southern end of the property, with no restrictions on turning directions.

The restaurant is a permitted use in Hillsdale's Commercial Zone. Thirteen parking spaces are required per the zoning ordinance, but the applicant is providing 18 total spaces.

Wall signs are proposed on the north, south and west elevations. A digital pick up area is located behind the building and a clearance bar is located over the pickup lan. Exit and entrance signage is proposed at the exits and entrances.

It appears that there are no bulk variances required in connection with the application.

A “Drive Through Restaurants” is defined as one which patrons purchase food and receive same “via a drive-through window.” There is no proposed on-site menu or order boards typically found with drive-through lanes. Two “mobile pick-up parking spaces” are provided on site. *The Board must make a determination whether this application is for a Drive-Through restaurant.*

### **Completeness Review**

The application is considered a Minor Site Plan and has been reviewed against the requirements contained in Land Use Section 310-87 for a Minor Site Plan approval. The following items are deficient:

1. 310-87E(13): Existing drainage within 500 ft.

Since this is a well-developed area of the Borough, we believe a waiver for the above is appropriate. Based on the submitted materials, the application is complete and can be scheduled for a public hearing conditioned on receiving a *waiver request* for the above item.

### **General Comments**

1. The application materials state that the hours of operation will be 10:45 AM to 10 PM, and that the restaurant will have 30 seats and nine employees. An outdoor pick up window & parking will be available for orders placed in advance.
2. The plans indicate that the square footage of the freestanding sign is “TBD.” An exact sign size is needed to confirm that the sign meets ordinance requirements.

Section 310-61B limits freestanding sign height to 8 ft. If the existing sign is retained, and the sign message is changed, it is considered pre-existing. The applicant should provide information on whether the existing sign conforms to this requirement.

3. The Signage Plan indicates a ‘drive-through.’ The applicant should clarify whether a drive-through is proposed for the subject property. If so, it appears that a use variance is needed and the application would actually be classified as a Major Site Plan. Drive-through restaurants are not permitted in the Borough.
4. The applicant should provide testimony that the entrance and exit signs meet the requirements contained in Section 310-61.

5. The bulk table should be revised to include a front yard setback from Washington Ave.

6. Dimensions are required for the parking stalls and barrier-free spaces.

7. The sidewalk along Washington Avenue currently enters to the SE corner of the existing parking lot. The proposed site plan does not carry the sidewalk to the new curblines and should be addressed.



8. Surface runoff of the parking lot drains to a single inlet at the SE corner of the property. The new curbing and island will cut-off flow. This must be topographically verified by the site engineer as to where surface runoff is going to be collected to avoid a winter icing hazard. An additional inlet may be warranted.

9. The signs for the two barrier-free parking spaces should be bollard-mounted. This will ensure vehicles do not over-run the curblines.

The concrete curb stops should be removed from the barrier-free parking as they are a tripping hazard to pedestrians and often get displaced by snow plowing.

10. Only two site lights appear proposed. Additional site lighting may be warranted based on the photometrics shown on Dwg. 9. The site currently utilizes two, utility pole-mounted flood lights.

11. The Landscaping plan should accurately reflect the existing shade trees along Washington Avenue to avoid planting conflicts. We defer the planting selection to the Environmental Commission. The island at the barrier-free space may be better served with Sargent Junipers than small boxwoods. Is there any landscaping proposed for the new SE island other than the arborvitae row?

12. If a new sanitary sewer connection is proposed below the grease interceptor, a clean out at the right-of-way line is required for municipal maintenance.

13. All sidewalks in disrepair along the building frontage must be replaced at the time the new driveway is constructed.

14. The applicant must verify that the parking lot surface is safe for public/commercial use.

We trust that these comments will assist the Board members in their review of the application materials.

Very truly yours,

C. P. STATILE, PA

(original signed)

Christopher P. Statile, P.E.  
Planning Board Engineer

CPS/mr  
cc: Holly Schepisi, Applicant's Counsel  
Page Consultants, Engineer  
441 Hillsdale Ave., LLC, Applicant  
1120.052/Site Plans