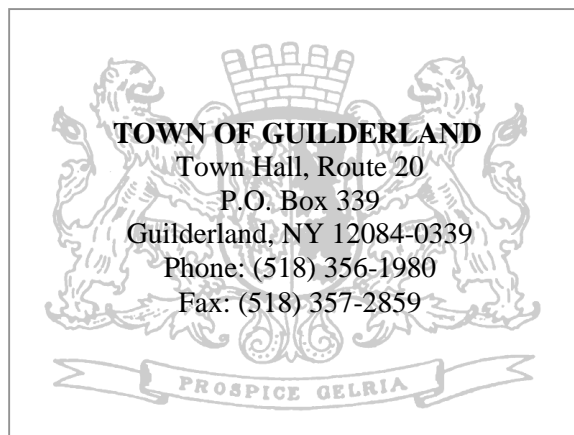


PETER G. BARBER
SUPERVISOR



STEPHEN J. FEENEY
CHAIRMAN
PLANNING BOARD

MEMORANDUM

TO: Stephen J. Feeney, Chairman
& Town Planning Board

FROM: Kenneth Kovalchik, AICP, Town Planner

DATE: January 25, 2021

SUBJ: 2060 Western Avenue (Star Plaza) – Westside Donut Ventures, LLC
Site Plan Review Associated with a Special Use Permit to Install a Drive-through on an Existing Dunkin Donuts Building.

Background

The applicant is proposing to install a drive-through lane, with associated menu board and drive-through window, on an existing Dunkin Donuts building (Star Plaza) located on 0.48 acres in the General Business (GB) District. To accommodate the proposed drive-through the applicant is proposing the following site modifications:

1. The existing two-way drive-aisle on the east side of the site will be reconfigured to a one-way drive-aisle.
2. The drive-aisle entrance will be located on the northwest side of the building and exit on the northeast side of the building.
3. The drive-through menu board will be located on the west side of the building and pick-up window located on the east side of the building.
4. New curbing and striping will be installed within the drive-through lane.
5. New direction markings (arrows, "Stop", "One Way", "Do Not Enter") will be installed in the asphalt surface to assist vehicles entering and exiting the drive-through lane.
6. A new accessible parking space will be provided on the north side of the building.
7. A new trash enclosure will be provided on the southwest corner of the site.

Albany County Planning Board

The application was reviewed by the Albany County Planning Board (ACPB), and in a recommendation dated December 23, 2020 the Board recommended to modify the local approval to include:

1. The ACPB recommends that the one-way accesses parallel to the drive-through be evaluated since the current direction will create more cars passing through the front of the store.
2. The ACPB also recommends that the Town of Guilderland Planning Board consider adding stop signs at the three-way intersection at the proposed trash enclosure.

2001 Dunkin Donuts Drive-through Special Use Permit Application

A prior special use permit application was submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) in 2001 proposing to install a drive-through at this Dunkin Donuts location. Town staff, Planning Board and the 20 Mall provided comments on the application, but the applicant did not pursue obtaining Special Use Permit approval from the ZBA. Town staff, Planning Board and 20 Mall expressed concerns with the proposal, as follows:

The Town Engineer stated the traffic flow along the rear of the building will have three lanes; the drive-through, and two lanes for the plaza. The proposed layout will have the center of these lanes driving between two lanes of opposing vehicles. Without a physical separation of the drive-through and the other lanes, there is a high probability for traffic accidents. In general, it is likely that the proposed layout will make this area of the plaza more confusing and hazardous to vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

The Town Planner expressed concerns with poorly defined travel lanes, insufficient queuing for the drive-through lane and lack of required green space.

The General Manager of 20 Mall wrote a letter to the Planning Board, which stated they support the project, however expressed concerns with stacking of vehicles, the length of time to place and pick up orders, accessible parking location and that there should be parking restrictions for commercial type vehicles.

The Planning Board reviewed the application in February 2001 and echoed the concerns expressed by Town staff. The Planning Board made a recommendation not to recommend the site plan review to the ZBA based on awkward traffic movements the drive-through would create and the traffic hazard the drive-through would create.

The 2001 complete comments from the Town Engineer, Town Planner, 20 Mall and Planning Board minutes are enclosed for your review.

Town Planner Comments:

Although the 2020 application has been slightly modified there are still concerns with this Special Use Permit application when compared to the 2001 application. A summary of those concerns are as follows:

1. There is no bypass lane provided in the drive-through lane. Typically, a bypass lane is provided in a drive-through lane to allow vehicles to exit the lane if they decide not to use the drive-through once entering the lane.
2. Only 3 vehicles are allowed to queue in the drive-through lane, from the menu board back to the entrance to the drive-through lane, and only 6 vehicles are allowed to queue between the menu board and pick-up window. Data should be provided from at least 3 other Dunkin Donuts locations in the area with information to be provided as follows:
 - How many vehicles are typically queued in the drive-through lane from the menu board going back during the AM Peak Hour.
 - How many vehicles are typically queued in the drive-through lane from the pick-up window to the menu board during the AM Peak Hour?
 - What is the average amount of time a vehicle waits at the pick-up window to receive their order during the AM Peak Hour?
 - During the AM Peak Hour what is the average number of vehicles that use the drive-through lane?
3. What is the existing number of vehicles that enter/exit this Dunkin Donuts location during the AM Peak Hour?
4. What is the estimated conversion rate of existing customers that enter the building to place an order to using the drive-through lane during the AM Peak Hour?
5. Tight turning radius for vehicles entering and exiting the drive-through lane will make it difficult for larger vehicles to enter and exit without having to use the opposing lane to complete their turn.
6. Vehicle conflict area at the entrance to the drive-through lane, for vehicles approaching in multiple directions and vehicles exiting the drive-through lane.
7. What type of truck is used to make deliveries to this location and where does the truck park when offloading goods? It appears the delivery vehicle would block a drive-aisle no matter where the vehicle was staged. The delivery vehicle would not be able to park on the east side of the building as that drive-aisle is proposed to be reduced to one-way. If the delivery vehicle parks on the north side of the building it would block vehicles from entering/exiting the drive-aisle lane.
8. The applicant is requesting to further reduce the number of parking spaces from 25 spaces to 22 spaces, where 45 spaces are required.
9. The applicant should provide calculations for lot coverage to confirm they are in compliance with the 75% maximum lot coverage requirement in the GB District.

Town Designated Engineer

The Town will be utilizing the services of a Town Designated Engineer due to site layout issues and concerns.

cc: J. Coons, Tom Remmert, Town Designated Engineer