



MEMORANDUM

CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK
PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
245 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 305, WATERTOWN, NY 13601
PHONE: 315-785-7741 – FAX: 315-782-9014

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Michael A. Lumbis, Planning and Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Conceptual Site Plan Discussion – 376 Butterfield Avenue

DATE: February 26, 2026

Request: Preliminary consultation and discussion regarding a conceptual site plan for a proposed 136-unit housing development at 376 Butterfield Avenue, Parcel Number 14-17-103.110.

Applicant: Mark Crandall of GYMO, D.P.C. on behalf of Jake Johnson Properties

Proposed Use: Dwelling, Apartment Building/Complex

Property Owner: MSP Realty, LLC

Project Overview: Jacob Johnson of Jake Johnson Properties proposes to construct a 136-unit, market rate housing development at 376 Butterfield Ave. The site, located at the dead end of Butterfield Ave., is a vacant, 10-acre property that was previously the Watertown City School District’s administrative office building. Mr. Johnson is in the process of purchasing the property, along with a 16-acre parcel located directly to the south of the subject parcel, from MSP Realty, LLC. He proposes to build the project in phases. Phase 1 would include 32 apartments, followed by 24 units in Phase 2 and 80 units in Phase 3.

The parcel is currently zoned Residential. The proposed use, as defined in the City’s Zoning Ordinance, is Dwelling, Apartment Building/Complex, which is not allowed in the Residential District. The definition of the proposed use is “any building or combination of low-rise buildings on the same parcel that contains five or more dwelling units”.

In discussions with Mr. Johnson and his design team from GYMO, D.P.C., Staff discussed the possibility of rezoning the parcel to a Planned Development District (PDD) to accommodate the proposed development. The purpose and intent of a PDD is to address unique situations where the dimensional and use requirements of the Zoning Ordinance do not fit with the intended project.

PDD’s must have unique characteristics and circumstances of geography, topography, surrounding development, special goals and objectives of the community, and other factors. PDD’s are intended to encourage innovations in land development so that the growing demands of the community may be met with greater flexibility and variety in type, design and layout of sites and buildings and by the

conservation and more efficient use of open spaces and other amenities generally enhancing community life.

Approval Process: The process for creating a PDD is similar to the zone change process, although several criteria, as outlined in Section 310-123 of the Zoning Ordinance, must be considered by the Planning Commission, City Council and City Staff. Creating a PDD requires submitting a preliminary application and sketch plan for the City Council to consider. If accepted, the City Council must refer the proposal to the Planning Commission who shall consider the proposal based on criteria listed in the Zoning Ordinance.

Once the proposal is formally referred to the Planning Commission, the applicant must submit a formal application with final plans and specification for the development. The formal application requires the submission of several items, similar to a site plan application, including a topographic map, a site plan depicting roadways, sidewalks, building locations, utility information, open space, landscaping, lighting and other information. After review, the Planning Commission may make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the proposal, after which the City Council may vote after holding a public hearing.

County Infrastructure Grant Program: The City has been exploring a partnership with Jefferson County to apply for funding through Empire State Development's County Infrastructure Grant Program to help support the project. The program supports county led infrastructure projects across the State, with enhanced awards for projects that support the creation of housing.

The City and County are proposing an application to this program that would partially pay for infrastructure improvements directly related to the development of this housing project. The proposed project, *The Butterfield Avenue Infrastructure Upgrade and Extension Project*, involves water, storm sewer and sanitary sewer improvements in the 300 Block of Butterfield Ave. The City is proposing a 1,600-foot replacement/extension of an 8" water main from Cosgrove St. to Marra Dr., a 780-foot replacement of a 30" sanitary sewer and construction of 1,070 feet of new storm sewer.

In addition to supporting this new development, the project will support the City's efforts to reduce stormwater from entering the Western Outfall Trunk Sewer (WOTS) system during heavy rain events, improving system performance and helping to prevent overflows. Improvements to the overall WOTS system will enable the City to support additional housing development and economic development, which is currently constrained in the southwest section of the City due to ongoing issues with the sewer system. The project will also upgrade decades old water mains that are nearing the end of their useful life.

The applicant has submitted the attached letter and conceptual site plan with the intent of introducing the project, beginning discussions on the approval process and to obtain preliminary feedback from the Planning Commission regarding the site layout and creating a PDD.

As this is the first time the City is considering a zoning change to a PDD under our new Zoning Ordinance, a copy of Article XII, Planned Development District, from the Zoning Ordinance is attached for your review. The article contains information on the purpose and intent of PDDs, the process for changing to a PDD, the criteria for consideration as well as submittal requirements.

cc: Thomas Compo, City Engineer
Mark Crandall, GYMO, D.P.C.
Jake Johnson, Jake Johnson Properties



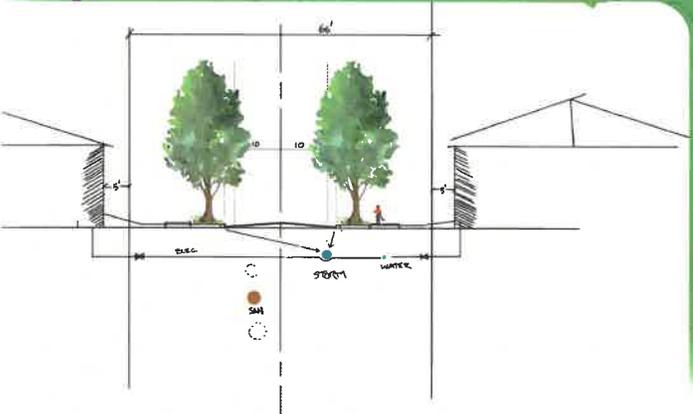
Phase 1
 4 (8 UNIT) 32 UNITS
 NEW CITY STREET AND UTILITIES
 36 PARKING SPACES
 WALKING TRAIL

Phase 3
 10 (8 UNIT) 80 UNITS
 80 PARKING SPACES

Phase 2
 3 (8 UNIT) 24 UNITS
 80 PARKING SPACES

Approximate Wetlands

100' Buffer



GYMO
 Architecture ■ Construction Management
 Engineering ■ Land Surveying

GRAPHIC SCALE
 1" = 40' ±

NORTH BY DATUM

Butterfield Development

1.21.2026
 SK 1

ARTICLE XII
Planned Development District

§ 310-121. Purpose and intent.

- A. Planned development districts are for exceptional settings and situations where the dimensional and use requirements of this chapter do not fit with the intended project.
- B. Planned development districts shall have unique characteristics and circumstances of geography, topography, surrounding development, special goals and objectives of the community, and special factors pertaining to public health and safety, permanence of buildings, aesthetics, and intrinsic as well as extrinsic values of property.
- C. The planned development district regulations and procedures may apply to parcels of relatively small size as well as large-scale development, depending upon the nature of the proposed uses and improvements and their relationship with other surrounding uses and the overall characteristics of the area's location.
- D. Planned development districts are intended to encourage innovations in land development and renewal techniques so that the growing demands of the community may be met with greater flexibility and variety in type, design and layout of sites and buildings and by the conservation and more efficient use of open spaces and other amenities generally enhancing community life.
- E. Applications shall support sustainable land use and development practices, efficient use of land, public services, and utilities.
- F. Projects intending to meet an underserved need in the community or benefit the community at large are encouraged.

§ 310-122. Proposals.

- A. Planned development districts shall comprise at least one acre of land, shall have more than one use as shown on the Use District Table, may not be used to create off-premises signs, and shall not exceed the sign requirements of the underlying district.
- B. A planned development district may be proposed by a private person or entity, the Planning Commission, City staff, the City Council, or by any other public body, public benefit corporation, development agency or government, whether or not actual development of the proposal is to be carried out by the proponent or under sponsorship of the proponent.
- C. Any person, corporation, partnership, or association having an ownership interest in a proposed district, or any group of owners united in interest, acting jointly and in pursuant to any agreement to carry out the proposal in separate ownership, may propose a planned development district in accordance with the procedures hereinafter established.
- D. A parcel, parcels, district or site proposed for a planned development district need not be under single ownership where the proposed development consists of a group of structures or improvements capable of being developed separately but in accordance with a single, unitary plan, and in which the separate owners indicate their express intentions to enter into such private agreements between or among themselves as will facilitate their mutual enterprise, and assure its completion as planned to the satisfaction of the City.

§ 310-123. Criteria for consideration.

The following criteria shall be addressed by the applicant and considered by the City Council, City staff, and the Planning Commission for all PDD proposals:

- A. That the proposal cannot be achieved with the strict application of the dimensional and use requirements of this chapter.
- B. That the proposal substantially conforms to the City's Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans, to regional comprehensive plans, and to other expressions of municipal development policy.
- C. That there is a need for the proposed development in the proposed location and that there is a reasonable probability of economic success of the proposal.
- D. That the existing character of the neighborhood will not be adversely affected and that adequate safeguards are provided to limit possible detrimental effects of the proposed development on adjacent properties and on the neighborhood in general.
- E. That there is ample provision for water, sewer, storm- and surface water drainage and other utilities.
- F. That there is adequate availability of schools, police and fire protection, parks and recreational facilities and other community facilities and public services.
- G. That there are no social, economic, environmental or cultural consequences likely to follow the proposed development that are not consistent with desirable community standards or public policy.
- H. That natural areas are maintained and protected as part of the proposed development.
- I. That the location, height and bulk of buildings and structures on the site are in proportion to each other and relate well to other structures and visual perspectives in the vicinity.
- J. That careful attention has been given to the patterns of pedestrian and bicycle circulation and to the effective use and design of open spaces, landscaping, exterior facade and amenities.
- K. That vehicular access is adequate to and within the site, that parking and loading spaces are adequate and well located relative to the uses and structures to be served, that there are no conflicts between vehicular traffic and the other uses and activities proposed.
- L. That the proposed installation of driveways, lighting, signs, landscaping, fencing, screening, and other site details is generally in harmony with the proposed structures, with adjacent properties, with the rights and interests of the general public, and with the design qualities and objectives suggested by this chapter and the Planning Commission.

§ 310-124. Proposal procedure.

- A. PDD adoption requires an amendment to this chapter and Map(s); chapter amendments are discretionary acts of the City Council.
- B. Before any subdivision approval, site plan approval or building permit is issued by the City, the applicant or their authorized agent shall apply for and secure approval of such PDD in accordance with the procedures of this section.
- C. Planned development district proposals may be made at the earliest planning stage practical to allow time for a complete evaluation and to allow for the consideration of alternative plans or methods, to

assess the full impact and consequences of the proposal, to formulate modifications or conditions as may be needed. The Planning Commission or the City Council may, from time to time, promulgate such guidelines, rules and regulations as may be deemed necessary for the orderly presentation and processing of such proposal in addition to those contained in this article. Such guidelines may also establish permanent or temporary priorities on the type, location, or scale of development proposals.

- D. All proposals for planned development districts shall be submitted directly to the City Planning and Community Development Department.
- E. Proposals shall include information regarding the proposed mix of uses, development density and scale, infrastructure improvements, community amenities and retained natural areas. A sketch plan drawn to scale is required. The City Planning and Community Development Department may ask for additional information, including but not limited to:
 - (1) Delineation of the various residential areas, indicating for each such area:
 - (a) General extent, size, and composition in terms of total number of dwelling units.
 - (b) Approximate percentage allocation by dwelling unit type (i.e., single unit, two-unit, townhouse, multiunit).
 - (2) The location of any nonresidential uses and the approximate square footage of all nonresidential uses.
 - (3) The general outlines of the interior roadways, sidewalk systems, and open space.
 - (4) A location map showing existing uses and names of owners of abutting lands.
 - (5) If the development is to be phased, a general indication of how the phasing is to proceed.
- F. City staff, or its professional consultants, as the case may be, shall prepare a professional opinion regarding the verification of data shown in the proposal, the proposal's relationship with this chapter and with the Comprehensive Plan, the possible effects of the proposal upon the surrounding properties, the general harmony with the essential character of the area, the aesthetic and design qualities of the proposal, and such other factors or considerations as may be appropriate in considering the merits of the proposal.
- G. After review by City staff, the proposal shall be forwarded to the City Council for its consideration. If accepted, the City Council shall refer the proposal to the Planning Commission who shall consider the proposal and make findings based on the criteria listed in this article.
- H. Upon the applicant's submission of all final plans and specifications for the development, the matter shall be placed on the agenda of the Planning Commission at its next regular meeting.
- I. In considering the final plans and specifications for a development in a planned development district, the requirements for lot area, lot width, building coverage, building heights and other bulk, density or parcel specifications of this chapter, or the other physical requirements of this chapter shall be observed as general guidelines, and may be more or less restrictive in accordance with the recommendations of the City Planning and Community Development Department, or professional consultant(s), or in accordance with criteria or guidelines promulgated or adopted from time to time by the Planning Commission. In its review, the Planning Commission shall consider the following:
 - (1) A topographic map.

- (2) A location map showing existing uses and names of owners of abutting lands.
 - (3) Delineation of the various residential areas, indicating for each such area general extent, size, and composition in terms of total number of dwelling units.
 - (4) Approximate percentage allocation by dwelling unit type (i.e., single unit, two-unit, townhouse, multiunit).
 - (5) Description of the intended market structure.
 - (6) All development height and bulk standards; and calculation of percent of permeable area.
 - (7) The location of any nonresidential uses and the approximate square footage of all nonresidential uses.
 - (8) The general outlines of the interior roadways and sidewalk systems, intended road ownership, and all existing rights-of-way and easements, whether public or private.
 - (9) Delineation of open space, trails or recreational areas.
 - (10) A utility system, including sanitary sewers, stormwater sewers, and water, electric, gas and telephone lines, and any facilities required for stormwater treatment.
 - (11) A landscape plan showing the materials to be used and their treatment for private and common open space.
 - (12) Signage and lighting plans. All lighting must be LED, and must be directional, so as not to spill on neighboring properties.
 - (13) Enough information on land areas adjacent to the proposed PDD to show the relationships between the proposed development and adjacent areas, including adjacent buildings, land uses, zoning classifications, densities and intensities, circulation systems, public facilities, and floodplains, wetlands, and other natural resource areas.
 - (14) The proposed treatment of the perimeter of the PDD, including land use restrictions, setbacks, landscaping, and other measures, such as screens, fences and walls.
 - (15) Evidence of how the applicant's proposed mix of land uses meets existing community demands.
 - (16) A general statement as to how common open space is to be owned and maintained.
 - (17) If the development is to be phased, a general indication of how the phasing is to proceed.
 - (18) Evidence of the applicant's financial competence to carry out the plan.
- J. The Planning Commission may seek public input from the community on the application by conducting a public hearing. Such public hearing shall be advertised in the City's official newspaper or, if there is none, in a newspaper of general circulation in the City at least five days before the public hearing.
- K. The Planning Commission may adopt a resolution recommending to the City Council that the parcel be rezoned to the designated planned development district and shall transmit such resolution and the other supporting materials related to the proposal to the City Council. The resolution may contain conditions, restrictions, or limitations that the Planning Commission deems requisite to its recommendation.

- L. If the Planning Commission declines to recommend rezoning, or in the event that the Planning Commission does not act upon the proposal within a period of 90 days after the date that the complete application has been submitted as determined by both the City Planning and Community Development Department and the Planning Commission, the applicant may submit the proposal directly to the City Council with a request that said City Council consider the proposal upon its own motion. The applicant shall, in such instance, make full disclosure to the City Council of the reasons for Planning Commission's failure or refusal to approve. Before taking final action upon such proposals, the City Council shall hear and consider any statements or opinions of the Planning Commission as to the merits of the proposal or reasons for its failure or refusal to approve.

§ 310-125. Procedures before City Council.

- A. Upon receipt of a resolution of the Planning Commission recommending an ordinance amendment to include a PDD, the City Council shall proceed in accordance with the amendment provisions of § 310-99.²
- B. Referral to the Planning Commission of the proposed amendment shall be deemed waived unless a substantial change in the proposal shall occur after the date of the Planning Commission recommendation.
- C. The proposed zoning amendment shall include direction as to when further site plan review, subdivision review, or other approvals are required.

§ 310-126. Expiration or abandonment.

- A. If development authorized by the Planning Commission in a planned development district has not been commenced and diligently pursued within 24 months from the date when the final plans and specifications were approved by the City Council, the City Council may, upon its own motion, institute an amendment to rezone such planned development district back to the underlying use district as provided on the Use District Map pursuant to the amendment provisions of this chapter.
- B. Parcels with an active PDD may choose to abandon a PDD and develop in accordance with the provisions of the underlying zoning.

§ 310-127. Changes and amendments.

- A. Any changes to an approved planned development district that are determined to be exempt from site plan review pursuant to this article may be approved by the City Planning and Community Development Department and do not require further approval by the City Council or Planning Commission.
- B. Any changes or minor amendments to an approved planned development district may be reviewed and acted upon by the Planning Commission through the site plan review processes.
- C. Changes or amendments to an approved planned development district that are determined by the City Planning and Community Development Department to be beyond the scope of the Planning Commission's authority shall still be reviewed by the Planning Commission, but such changes shall not become effective until approved by the City Council in accordance with the amendment provisions of this chapter.

1. Editor's Note: This subsection was adopted by the City Council 2-21-2023 with the incorrect reference. The correct reference is § 350-53, which sets forth procedures for amendment of the text of the Zoning Ordinance or amendment of the Zoning Map.

§ 310-128. Existing planned development districts.

Any planned development district, existing at the time of the adoption of this chapter, and shown on the Zoning Map, may continue to be used for such purposes as delineated in the ordinance that established such district. Development must continue to occur based on the district plan that was approved as part of the PDD establishment. Any changes or amendments to the approved uses or district plan must follow the changes and amendments provisions of this article.

§ 310-129. (Reserved)