



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

PRIMARY REVIEWER: Joseph Albinus, Planner

SUBJECT: Special Use Permit – 527 Coffeen Street

DATE: October 29, 2026

Request: Special Use Permit to Allow an Office Use in a Neighborhood Mixed Use District

Applicant: [REDACTED]

Proposed Use: Offices

Property Owner: [REDACTED]

Submitted:

Application Form: Yes	8 ½" x 11" Copy of Tax Map: Yes
Cover Letter: Yes	County Planning Board Review Required: No
A Sketch of the Site to Scale: Yes	SEQRA: Unlisted Action

Overview: The applicant proposes to open an Office in the existing structure on the subject parcel. The proposed storefront is currently a Unique E-Cigs Vape Shop, which would leave by the time the proposed Office use is put in. The applicant does not plan any exterior renovations other than new panel shutters, relocating a handicap accessible ramp and a new door on the side of the building. The cover letter mentions a new front porch, but the applicant has indicated that they will not be constructing the front porch until later. The applicant also proposes a single dwelling unit on the second floor. The dwelling unit is allowed however the office use requires a Special Use Permit in the NMU District. There will also be interior renovations that require a Building Permit.

The Zoning Ordinance defines an Office use as follows:

“A building or portion thereof used primarily for conducting the affairs of a business, profession, medical or health practitioner, service, industry, or government and generally furnished with desks, tables, files, and communication equipment. No manufacturing processes, retail sales, construction, or warehousing occurs on the premises.”

Site Plan Approval: This proposal will not require Site Plan Approval. Section 310-104 of the Zoning Ordinance identifies the following as exempt from Site Plan Review:

“B. Additions or expansion to existing buildings when the proposed addition or expansion does not exceed 500 square feet of the gross floor area of the existing building unless the new use is going to require additional parking.”

The proposed renovations to the structure meet the criteria for the exemption listed above.

Special Use Permit Standards: Article XI of the Zoning Ordinance empowers the Planning Commission to issue Special Use Permits after holding a Public Hearing and reviewing the application against the Special Use Permit Review Criteria.

Section 310-116 of the Zoning Ordinance contains the Special Use Permit Review Criteria that the Planning Commission is tasked with considering. Below is a list of all nine criteria and Staff’s conclusions for each criterion. The following represent Staff’s professional comments only and do not necessarily represent the final position of the Planning Commission, which must reach its own determinations.

A. The proposed use will be consistent with the purposes of this Chapter and the requirements of the zoning district in which it is located.

The stated purpose of the Neighborhood Mixed Use District, per the Zoning Ordinance is as follows:

“The NMU district creates vibrant corridors on arterial and collector roads at the edges of residential neighborhoods that allow for a mix of residential dwelling unit types, commercial services, parks, and community facilities. These are generally found on radial streets with higher traffic volumes. This district reflects the walkable and historic nature of Watertown’s neighborhoods. Commercial uses in the NMU District typically reflect a neighborhood-scale design and complement the dense residential neighborhoods in the adjacent R districts.”

The proposed use is consistent with this purpose, as the existing property is a converted residential space. The proposed business would occupy the first story of the existing building. The built environment would remain unchanged.

B. The proposed use's compatibility and consistency with the goals and recommendations of the City of Watertown Comprehensive Plan, Complete Streets Ordinance and other approved City plans and programs.

The City's adopted Comprehensive Plan recommends the future land use for 527 Coffeen Street as Light Industry. The Comprehensive Plan's vision for the character area is below:

Light Industry: "This Character Area is designed to diversify and strengthen the local economic base by allowing for light manufacturing, assembly, and fabrication, including small scale or specialized industrial operations and offices. These areas recognize Watertown's existing light industrial uses such as the industrial park and are adjacent to the railroad. Buildings are often multi-story with on-site parking for automobiles and/or trucks."

The proposed use is compatible with the other commercial and office uses adjacent to the property and will not create a nuisance to the adjacent businesses or affect the properties surrounding it. The exterior architecture and built environment will not change. This proposal is in harmony with the Comprehensive Plan.

C. The impact on the nature and character of the surrounding neighborhood, natural environment, historic district, or corridor in which it is located.

The proposed use will have a minimal impact on the surrounding corridor. There is an existing Office Use across the street from the subject parcel. The existing parcel is not in a historic district and there are no nearby environmental features.

D. The overall impact on the site and its surroundings, considering environmental, social, and economic impacts of traffic, noise, dust, odors, release of harmful substances, solid waste disposal, glare, or any other nuisances.

The proposed use would have minimal impact on the surrounding environment and will not create any negative impacts per the items listed above.

E. Restrictions and/or conditions on design of structures or operation of the use (including hours of operation) necessary either to ensure compatibility with the surrounding uses or to protect the natural resources of the City.

The applicant has proposed operating hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday – Friday which is similar to business hours of other nearby commercial and office uses, such as the following examples:

1. Allergy Care PLLC: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Weekdays.
Closed Weekends
2. Auto Shine: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Weekdays and Weekends

Adjacent uses to the east, south and west consist of single family residential uses. To the north, across Coffeen Street, there is another office use, Allergy Care PLLC.

This review did not identify any significant detrimental effects to any of the surrounding properties.

F. The adequacy and accessibility of essential public facilities and services, such as streets, parking spaces, police and fire protection, drainage structures, refuse disposal, water and sewer, and schools.

The maximum number of spaces allowed within a Neighborhood Mixed Use parcel is 16 parking spaces. The existing 9 parking spaces are adequate for the proposed Office use and fall well below the maximum allowed in a Neighborhood Mixed Use district. A sidewalk exists along the front of the primary building, and an ADA accessible ramp is present leading into the front of the building. The use is not expected to generate a significant amount of pedestrian traffic.

G. The proposed use's impact on traffic congestion, impairment of pedestrian safety, or capacity challenges to Level of Service on existing streets, considering their current width, surfacing, and condition, and any improvements proposed to be made to them by the applicant.

A new Office Use proposed for a currently occupied storefront is exceedingly unlikely to have an adverse effect on the vehicular Level of Service on Coffeen Street

H. The impact on adjacent historic resources as formally recognized by the New York State and Federal Registers of Historic Places.

The subject property is not adjacent to any formally recognized historic resources. The nearest historic resource is Taylor Flats, currently operating under the name of Black River Apartments, which is over 150 feet away at 550 Coffeen Street.

I. In reviewing the adequacy of the Supplemental or General Regulations as they may relate, the Planning Commission may impose more restrictive conditions.

This standard allows the Planning Commission to impose more restrictive conditions after review of this application. Any comments or additional conditions should be stated at the Planning Commission meeting.

Parking and Vehicular Circulation: The applicant is not proposing any additional parking or change to vehicle circulation. All customers and some employees will access the parcel using the entrance facing Coffeen Street. There is an additional entrance that can be used by employees at the rear of the building. The site also has well under the maximum number of allowed parking spaces in a Neighborhood Mixed Use parcel, which is 16 spaces. This parcel only has 9 which is under 60 percent of the maximum.

Landscaping and Buffers: The site currently contains a 22' +/- long front yard along the north property line, a 22' +/- wide buffer along part of the western edge of the parcel, and a large greenspace along the southern portion of the parcel. These areas contain a mix of lawn areas, shrubs and trees. Since there are no changes proposed to the site and the proposal does not require Site Plan Approval, no additional landscaping or buffering is necessary.

SEQRA: The project is considered an Unlisted Action under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The applicant has completed Part 1 of the Short Environmental Assessment Form. The Planning Commission will be required to complete Part 2 and make a determination of significance prior to making a decision on the requested Special Use Permit.

Other: If the Special Use Permit is granted by the Planning Commission, the applicant must obtain the following permits, at a minimum, from the Bureau of Code Enforcement: a Building Permit for any interior renovations or alterations and a Sign Permit for the replacement of the existing sign.

Summary: The following should be discussed by the Planning Commission and included as contingencies in the motion for approval of the Special Use Permit:

1. The applicant shall obtain a Building Permit and Sign Permit from the Bureau of Code Enforcement prior to any renovations or construction.

Public Hearing: As noted above, the Planning Commission is required to hold a public hearing on the Special Use Permit application within 62 days of Planning Staff deeming it complete. Planning Staff has deemed the application complete and has scheduled a public hearing for Tuesday, November 3, 2025, at 5:20 p.m. during the Planning Commission meeting to hear public comments on the proposed Special Use Permit.

Planning Commission Action: Prior to voting on the request, the Planning Commission is responsible for holding the public hearing and reviewing each of the Special Use Permit criteria found in Section 310-116 of the Zoning Ordinance and highlighted in bold text above. After reviewing the criteria and completing the SEQRA review, the Planning Commission will be free to make a decision on the request. The Planning Commission shall not issue a Special Use Permit unless it finds that the proposed use will satisfy the criteria listed above.

cc: Planning Commission Members
Dana Aikins, Code Enforcement Supervisor
[REDACTED]
Thomas Compo, P.E. City Engineer



10/22/2026, 12:11:13 PM

City Boundary

ROADS

Parcels

1:1,128
0 0.01 0.01 0.02 mi
0 0.01 0.02 0.04 km
New York State, Microsoft, Vantor

Above: A satellite view of the subject parcels highlighted in blue and their surroundings.

Site Photos:



Above: Picture of the proposed office front from the front, looking west.

Below: Picture of the proposed office front from the rear, looking north.





Above: Picture of the nearby Taylor Flats, from front yard looking west. Sign included for scale



October 9, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: 527 Coffeen Street Watertown, NY 13601

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a licensed Real Estate Broker and the owner of [REDACTED] in Watertown, NY. I have been a successful Broker in the area since 2012. I have submitted this request to the planning board with the goal of obtaining approval to relocate my real estate brokerage from my current location at [REDACTED] to 527 Coffeen Street Watertown, NY. The current owner/occupant of this property is Unique Cigs Vape Shop and I am in the middle of purchasing the building. Anticipated closing sale date is November 6, 2026. I am purchasing the building in the name of my leasing company, [REDACTED]

Once the building is under my new ownership, I plan to operate my brokerage on the main level of the building. A real estate brokerage keeps normal business hours, Monday-Friday 9-5 and weekends and evenings as needed. We have a small brokerage consisting of less than 10 agents who all work part-time. I am the only full-time agent of the brokerage.

The upstairs apartment unit will be rented out to a tenant. At this time, I plan to have my [REDACTED] renting the unit while [REDACTED]

Inside the commercial space on the main level, I plan to paint, remove the old kitchen equipment, and put in all new luxury vinyl plank flooring. The outside of the building will be "spruced up" with new panel shutters, a new front porch and overhang, and a relocated handicap accessible ramp and door on the side of the building. All drawings have been attached to this email and have also been sent to Code Enforcement for their review once I own the building. I also plan to erect a small tasteful approved sign in front of the building and remove the current signage.

I look forward to this opportunity and will do what is needed to make the building more presentable and bring a professional longstanding business to the community.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration

[REDACTED]



City of Watertown
SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION FORM

City of Watertown, Planning and Community Development Dept.
245 Washington Street, Room 305, Watertown, NY 13601
Phone: 315-785-7741 Email: planning@watertown-ny.gov

Received:

PROPERTY INFORMATION:

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 527 Coffeen Street Watertown, NY 13601
TAX PARCEL NUMBER: 221800-007-000-0009-104-000-0000 7-09-104.000 JA

PROPOSED USE (describe fully; attach additional sheets if necessary):

Real estate office on main floor with separate upstairs apartment rental.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

APPLICANT NAME:

APPLICANT MAILING ADDRESS:

PHONE NUMBER:

E-MAIL:

PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION (if different from applicant):

PROPERTY OWNER NAME:

PROPERTY OWNER MAILING ADDRESS (if different from subject parcel):

PHONE NUMBER:

E-MAIL:

CHECKLIST (please include all of the following in addition to this application form):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☒ Cover Letter* | ☒ Tax Map with subject parcel highlighted* |
| ☒ Site Drawing* | ☐ State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) form* |
| ☒ \$125 application fee * | ☐ Electronic Copy of Entire Submission (PDF Preferred) |

*See appendices for further information

Applicant Signature:

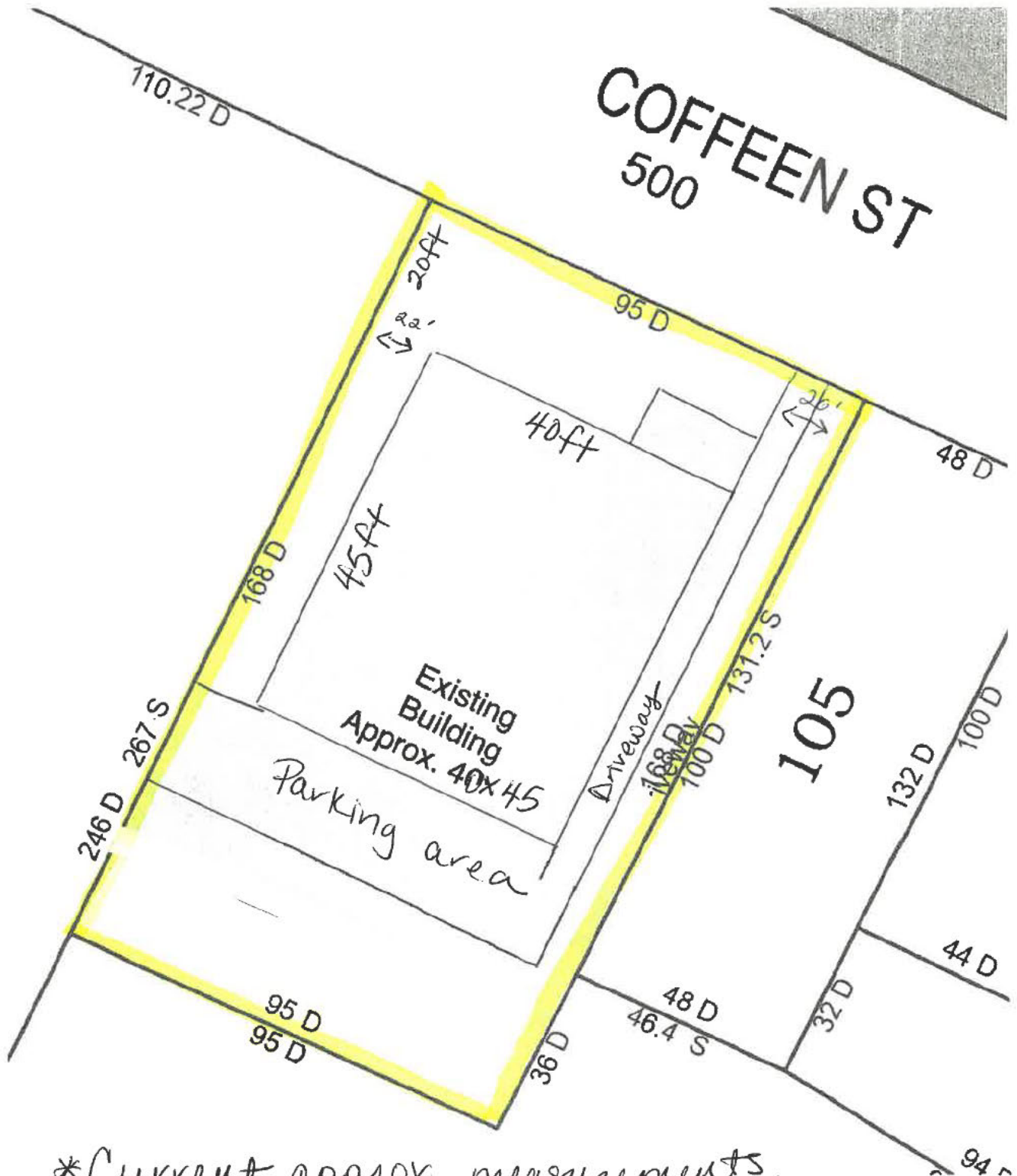
Date:

10/9/20

Property Owner Signature (if different)

Date:

527 Coffeen Street



*Current approx. measurements.
No modifications will be made
to size of structure or grounds.

Short Environmental Assessment Form

Part 1 - Project Information

Instructions for Completing

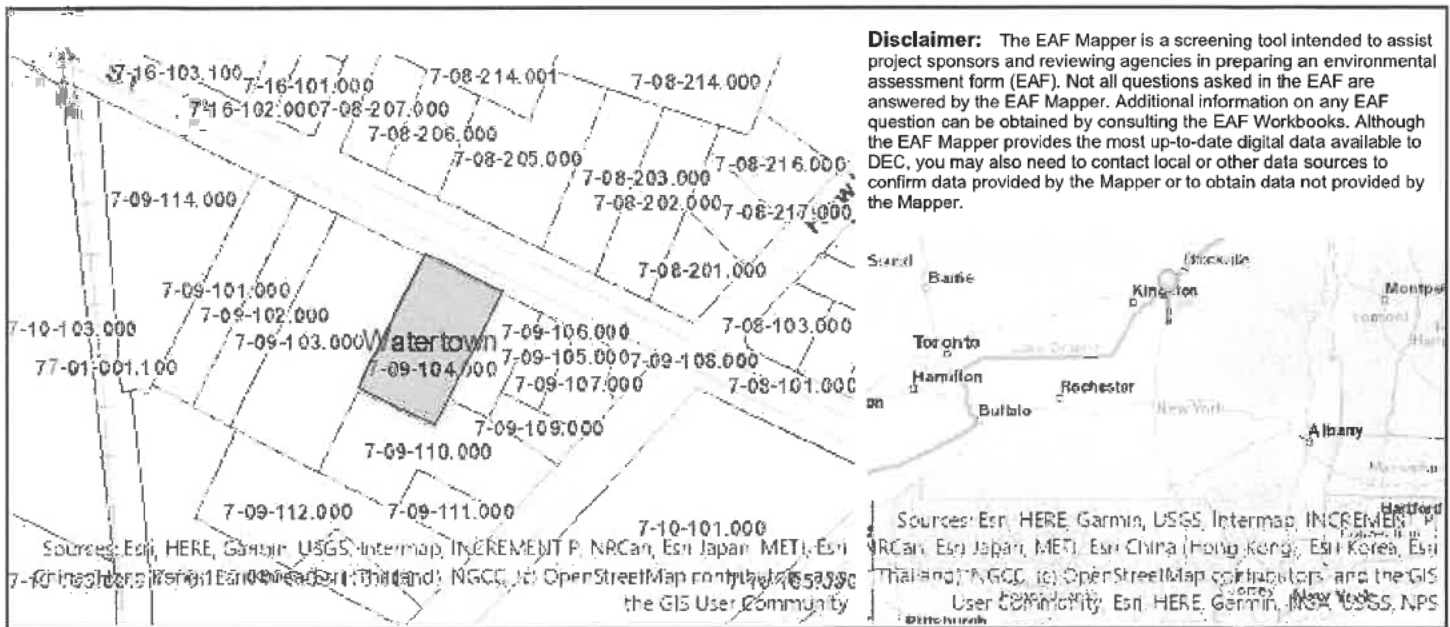
Part 1 – Project Information. The applicant or project sponsor is responsible for the completion of Part 1. Responses become part of the application for approval or funding, are subject to public review, and may be subject to further verification. Complete Part 1 based on information currently available. If additional research or investigation would be needed to fully respond to any item, please answer as thoroughly as possible based on current information.

Complete all items in Part 1. You may also provide any additional information you believe will be needed by or useful to the lead agency; attach additional pages as necessary to supplement any item.

Part 1 – Project and Sponsor Information			
Name of Action or Project: 527 Coffeen Street - Special Use Permit			
Project Location (describe, and attach a location map): 527 Coffeen Street, Watertown, NY 13601			
Brief Description of Proposed Action: Opening a real estate brokerage. I am purchasing the building and moving my current brokerage into the existing building.			
Name of Applicant or Sponsor: <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 20px;"></div>		Telephone: <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 20px;"></div>	
		E-Mail: <div style="background-color: black; width: 150px; height: 20px;"></div>	
Address: <div style="background-color: black; width: 150px; height: 20px;"></div>			
City/PO: Watertown		State: New York	Zip Code: <div style="background-color: black; width: 50px; height: 20px;"></div>
1. Does the proposed action only involve the legislative adoption of a plan, local law, ordinance, administrative rule, or regulation? If Yes, attach a narrative description of the intent of the proposed action and the environmental resources that may be affected in the municipality and proceed to Part 2. If No, continue to question 2.		NO ☒	YES ☐
2. Does the proposed action require a permit, approval or funding from any other government Agency? If Yes, list agency(s) name and permit or approval:		NO ☒	YES ☐
3. a. Total acreage of the site of the proposed action?		<u>0.37</u> acres	
b. Total acreage to be physically disturbed?		<u>N/A</u> acres	
c. Total acreage (project site and any contiguous properties) owned or controlled by the applicant or project sponsor?		<u>0.37</u> acres	
4. Check all land uses that occur on, are adjoining or near the proposed action:			
☒ Urban ☐ Rural (non-agriculture) ☒ Industrial ☒ Commercial ☒ Residential (suburban) ☐ Forest ☐ Agriculture ☐ Aquatic ☐ Other(Specify): ☐ Parkland			

5. Is the proposed action,	NO	YES	N/A
a. A permitted use under the zoning regulations?	☐	☒	☐
b. Consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan?	☐	☒	☐
6. Is the proposed action consistent with the predominant character of the existing built or natural landscape?	NO	YES	
	☐	☒	
7. Is the site of the proposed action located in, or does it adjoin, a state listed Critical Environmental Area?	NO	YES	
If Yes, identify:	☒	☐	
8. a. Will the proposed action result in a substantial increase in traffic above present levels?	NO	YES	
	☒	☐	
b. Are public transportation services available at or near the site of the proposed action?	☐	☒	
c. Are any pedestrian accommodations or bicycle routes available on or near the site of the proposed action?	☐	☒	
9. Does the proposed action meet or exceed the state energy code requirements?	NO	YES	
If the proposed action will exceed requirements, describe design features and technologies:	☐	☒	
<hr/>			
10. Will the proposed action connect to an existing public/private water supply?	NO	YES	
If No, describe method for providing potable water: _____	☐	☒	
11. Will the proposed action connect to existing wastewater utilities?	NO	YES	
If No, describe method for providing wastewater treatment: _____	☐	☒	
12. a. Does the project site contain, or is it substantially contiguous to, a building, archaeological site, or district which is listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, or that has been determined by the Commissioner of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places?	NO	YES	
	☐	☒	
b. Is the project site, or any portion of it, located in or adjacent to an area designated as sensitive for archaeological sites on the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) archaeological site inventory?	☒	☐	
13. a. Does any portion of the site of the proposed action, or lands adjoining the proposed action, contain wetlands or other waterbodies regulated by a federal, state or local agency?	NO	YES	
	☒	☐	
b. Would the proposed action physically alter, or encroach into, any existing wetland or waterbody?	☒	☐	
If Yes, identify the wetland or waterbody and extent of alterations in square feet or acres: _____			
<hr/>			

14. Identify the typical habitat types that occur on, or are likely to be found on the project site. Check all that apply:		
☐ Shoreline ☐ Forest ☐ Agricultural/grasslands ☐ Early mid-successional ☐ Wetland ☒ Urban ☒ Suburban		
15. Does the site of the proposed action contain any species of animal, or associated habitats, listed by the State or Federal government as threatened or endangered?	NO	YES
Indiana Bat, Northern Long-...	☐	☒
16. Is the project site located in the 100-year or 500-year flood plain?	NO	YES
	☒	☐
17. Will the proposed action create storm water discharge, either from point or non-point sources? If Yes,	NO	YES
a. Will storm water discharges flow to adjacent properties?	☒	☐
b. Will storm water discharges be directed to established conveyance systems (runoff and storm drains)?	☒	☐
If Yes, briefly describe:		
18. Does the proposed action include construction or other activities that would result in the impoundment of water or other liquids (e.g., retention pond, waste lagoon, dam)?	NO	YES
If Yes, explain the purpose and size of the impoundment:	☒	☐
19. Has the site of the proposed action or an adjoining property been the location of an active or closed solid waste management facility?	NO	YES
If Yes, describe:	☒	☐
20. Has the site of the proposed action or an adjoining property been the subject of remediation (ongoing or completed) for hazardous waste?	NO	YES
If Yes, describe: The property has not been the subject of remediation for hazardous waste but the NYS DEC environmental site database includes parcels in the general vicinity that have been the subject of remediation for hazardous waste, which is why this box is checked.	☐	☒
21. Is the project located within, or within 1/2 mile of, a disadvantaged community?	NO	YES
	☐	☒
If No, could impacts from the project affect a disadvantaged community?	☒	☐
If Yes to either question in 21, answer the following question.		
a. Identify the potential pollution impacts of the project, either direct or indirect, that may occur within the disadvantaged community (e.g., wastewater discharges, air emissions, noise, odors, solid or hazardous waste generation or management):		
The parcel is already developed and therefore there are no anticipated impacts to the disadvantage community.		
I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE IS TRUE AND ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE		
Applicant/sponsor name:	Date: 10/9/2026	
Signature:	Title: Broker	



Part 1 / Question 7 [Critical Environmental Area]	No
Part 1 / Question 12a [National or State Register of Historic Places or State Eligible Sites]	Yes
Part 1 / Question 12b [Archeological Sites]	No
Part 1 / Question 13a [Wetlands or Other Regulated Waterbodies]	Digital mapping data are not available or are incomplete. Refer to EAF Workbook.
Part 1 / Question 15 [Threatened or Endangered Animal]	Yes
Part 1 / Question 15 [Threatened or Endangered Animal - Name]	Indiana Bat, Northern Long-eared Bat
Part 1 / Question 16 [100 or 500 Year Floodplain]	Digital mapping data are not available or are incomplete. Refer to EAF Workbook.
Part 1 / Question 20 [Remediation Site]	Yes
Part 1 / Question 21 [Disadvantaged Community]	Yes