



TOWNSHIP of HOPEWELL
MERCER COUNTY

201 WASHINGTON CROSSING – PENNINGTON ROAD
TITUSVILLE, NEW JERSEY 08560-1410

PROJECT / APPLICATION

BLOCK:

LOT:

ADDRESS:

PROJECT NAME:

REVIEW REPORTS

CONTENTS

Memorandum

To: Hopewell Township Planning Board
From: Francis J. Banisch III, PP/AICP
Date: January 21, 2025
Re: Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision and Site Plan
Venue at Hopewell
Block 93; Lots 19, 20, 45.01, and portion of 60 (Scotch Road and Nursery Road)
IMF-C Zone

1.0 MATERIALS REVIEWED FOR THIS REPORT

- Hopewell Township Planning & Zoning Board Application, checklist, and attachments.
- Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision & Site Plans of Venue at Hopewell, prepared by Bowman Consulting Group, Ltd., dated June 25, 2024, revised through December 18, 2024, containing 171 sheets.
- Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision Plat, prepared by Bowman Consulting Group, Ltd., dated May 17, 2024, containing 13 sheets.
- Boundary and Topographic Survey, prepared by Bowman Consulting Group, dated October 15, 2019, containing 13 sheets.
- Architectural Plans, prepared by Holiday Architects, dated March 14, 2024, containing 39 sheets.
- Environmental Impact Statement prepared by Envirotactics, dated June 20, 2024.
- Traffic Impact Study prepared by Langan Engineering & Environmental Services, Inc., dated May 6, 2024.
- Community Impact Statement prepared by Richard B. Reading Associates, dated April 15, 2024.
- Mark Kataryniak, PE, PTOE, January 8, 2025 Engineering Review 1- Venue at Hopewell Preliminary & Final Major Subdivision and Site Plan, Block 93, Lot 19, 20, 45.01, 46 & p/o 60

2.0 NATURE OF APPLICATION

- 2.1 Lots 19, 20, 45.01, and a portion of 60 consist of approximately 185 acres and contain agricultural lands and wooded stream corridor areas. The property is zoned Inclusionary Multi-Family and Commercial (IMF-C) District.

- 2.2 The proposed development will encompass a majority of the site outside of stormwater management and buffer areas.
- 2.3 The project will include 600 units, of which 20% will be deed restricted for affordable housing. The development will consist of:
- 272 three-bedroom single-family dwellings
 - 118 two-bedroom duplex units
 - 90 condominium units; 45 two-bedroom and 45 one-bedroom
 - 120 one-bedroom apartments (deed restricted)
- 2.4 Facilities to support the development are situated in the east-central portion of the lot and include:
- Clubhouse and pool
 - 1 tennis court
 - 1 playground
 - 4 pickleball courts
 - 2 bocce ball courts
 - Dog parks
- 2.5 Additional site improvements include boulevard access to Scotch Road, walkways throughout the complex, stormwater management basins, landscaping, lighting and related site improvements.

3.0 VARIANCES REQUESTED

- 3.1 The applicant is not seeking any use or bulk variances. However, as noted in Mr. Kataryniak's review, along Road G which accesses Nursery Road, the single-family dwellings are located 69 feet from the road, where 75 feet is required (§17-174.h.2).

4.0 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 4.1 The proposed site plan currently includes 120 deed-restricted multi-family rental units. The site plans and community impact statement state that all units are to be one-bedroom. However, the floor plans indicate a mix of 60% one-bedroom and 40% two-bedroom. The IMF-C ordinance requires a bedroom and income split in accordance with the Uniform Housing Affordability Controls (UHAC) regulation.
- 4.2 Under UHAC (§ 5:80-26.3, (c)): Age-restricted low-and moderate-income units may utilize a modified bedroom distribution. At a minimum, the number of bedrooms shall equal the number of age-restricted low-and moderate-income units within the affordable development. *The standard may be met by creating all one-bedroom units* or by creating a two-bedroom unit for each efficiency unit.
- 4.3 Additionally, a table should be added to the site plan that details the number and locations of moderate-income, low income and very low-income affordable units within the development as well as any proposed phasing as outlined in the ordinance.

5.0 PLAN REVIEW COMMENTS

- 5.1 The site includes sidewalks throughout the development. Given the number of units and mix of residential unit types and their associated parking areas and driveways, are there proposed traffic calming measures to provide safe pedestrian access across the roadways and parking areas? This is of particular concern along routes to recreational spaces such as play areas, dog parks, outdoor active recreation spaces, and the clubhouse area.
- 5.2 The proposed landscaping includes shade trees, ornamental trees, evergreen trees, and shrubs and groundcover which line the parking areas, residential units, recreation areas and driveways. The interior of the site shows typical residential development landscaping with shade trees, foundation plantings, ornamentals and shrubs. Larger evergreen trees are located around trash enclosures and utility areas.
- 5.3 The applicant should provide testimony regarding the total site landscaping. We recommend additions to landscaped areas along Scotch Road and within the interior of the site, around the apartment buildings.
- 5.4 The southern portion of the development is adjacent to existing residential uses along Nursery Road. There are some linear plantings here, however, additional buffering in this area could better shield the new development from these homes.
- 5.6 No landscaping has been identified at the main Scotch Road entrance. The applicant should detail any proposed landscaping and lighting at the main entrance.
- 5.7 The applicant should provide testimony regarding the lighting impacts, in particular, how lighting in the parking lot areas will affect adjoining properties.
- 5.8 Dumpster enclosures are not identified on the site plan for the market rate apartment area. Will these buildings without dumpsters include interior trash compactors and how will trash and recycling be removed? Is there a need for additional dumpsters or other enclosures?
- 5.9 The applicant should provide testimony regarding signage, including any monument or freestanding signs, to ensure they comply with the ordinance.
- 5.10 The applicant should provide testimony regarding the sufficiency of parking. Are the number of spaces provided adequate to meet the needs of the affordable and market apartment areas? Is the parking in the vicinity of the recreation facilities adequate? Will the single-family homes have adequate off-street parking, and is on-street visitor parking to be permitted?

- 5.11 We have communicated over the past few days with the applicant's design team regarding improvements needed to the plans as submitted. We understand that one of the affordable apartment buildings will contain a multi-purpose community space with an outdoor patio.
- 5.12 The recreation center and building provide diverse facilities and opportunities, including a clubhouse, a pool and outdoor courts. We understand that residents are often troubled by the sounds emanating from pickleball play. Has this proven to be a problem at other neighborhoods built by Lennar? Are there any landscape features that exist or that could be installed to attenuate this effect?
- 5.13 Will the residents of the affordable units have access to all recreation facilities? Will there be a separate charge for such access?
- 5.14 What is the extent of the common open space in the vicinity of the market and affordable apartments and what facilities will be located in these common areas? At a minimum, benches, an improved pathway and picnic tables should be provided for such areas.
- 5.15 Any approval by the Planning Board should be conditioned on approval by any other agency having jurisdiction.

cc via email: Katie Ronollo, for distribution to Planning Board members, Professionals and applicant

TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Planning Board

FROM: Environmental Commission Members

DATE: 01/21/2025

RE: Block 93 Lot 19, 20, 45.01, 46, & p/o 60 **US Home (The Venue)**
Work Address: 61 & 137 Nursery Road, Scotch Road, Nursery Road
Zoning District: IMF-C
Application Type: Major Subdivision - Preliminary & Final Site Plan

We are writing to inform you of our comments regarding the subject application, which is scheduled to be reviewed by the Planning Board.

During our Environmental Commission meeting on Date, members Paul Kinney, Rex Parker, Vanessa Sandom, Andrew Plunkett, Kirsii Bhasin, Mark Bean, Mike Aucott, Donald Hirsh and Uma Purandare reviewed and discussed the subject application together with Jim Bash.

We have the following environmental concerns regarding the proposed project:

The commission needs substantially more information from the applicant to address concerns about housing density, stormwater runoff, and wetland impacts. The EC holds serious concerns about the potential negative impacts of the application and requires more details. A presentation by either the township engineer or the property owner and its representatives would be acceptable.

The EC requests that the PB extend the application deadline so as to provide the EC with additional information.

Please consider our comments during your review.

Respectfully submitted: Paul Kinney, Chair

cc: J. Bash, U. Purandare, EC Members

TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Board Members

FROM: Environmental Commission Members

DATE: 02/26/2025

RE: Block 93 Lot 19, 20, 45.01, 46 & p/o 60 **US Home Corp (The Venue)**
61 NURSERY RD., SCOTCH RD., NURSERY RD., NURSERY RD., 137
NURSERY RD.
Zoning District: IMF-C
Application Type: Preliminary and Final Site Plan

We are writing to provide our comments regarding the subject application, which the Planning Board is scheduled to review. During our Environmental Commission meeting on 02/18/2025, members Paul Kinney, Rex Parker, Andrew Plunkett, Kirsi Bhasin, Mark Bean, Mike Aucott, and Donald Hirsh reviewed and discussed the application with Jim Bash.

We have the following environmental concerns regarding the proposed project:

- A. The EC requests that US Home Corp/Lennar replace the following non-native plants with approved woody plants per the township ordinance, which can be found at <https://ecode360.com/37073064#36110201>.
 - Norway Spruce
 - Thuja 'Green Giant'
 - Leatherleaf Viburnum
 - European Hornbeam
 - Kentucky Coffeetree
- B. US Home Corp/Lennar was unable to demonstrate compliance with two Hopewell Township ordinances: Sections 15-6 Complete Streets and 17-77 Bikeways.
 - 1. **15-6 Complete Streets.** The EC notes that the plan review comments include the following concern: “What are the proposed traffic calming measures to provide safe pedestrian access across the roadways and parking areas?” To ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, the EC recommends an engineering review of the streets and parking areas.
 - 2. **17-77 Bikeways.** The EC offers the proposal below to bring the application into compliance with the Bikeways ordinance with minimal modification to the current application/plan.

Please consider our comments during your review.

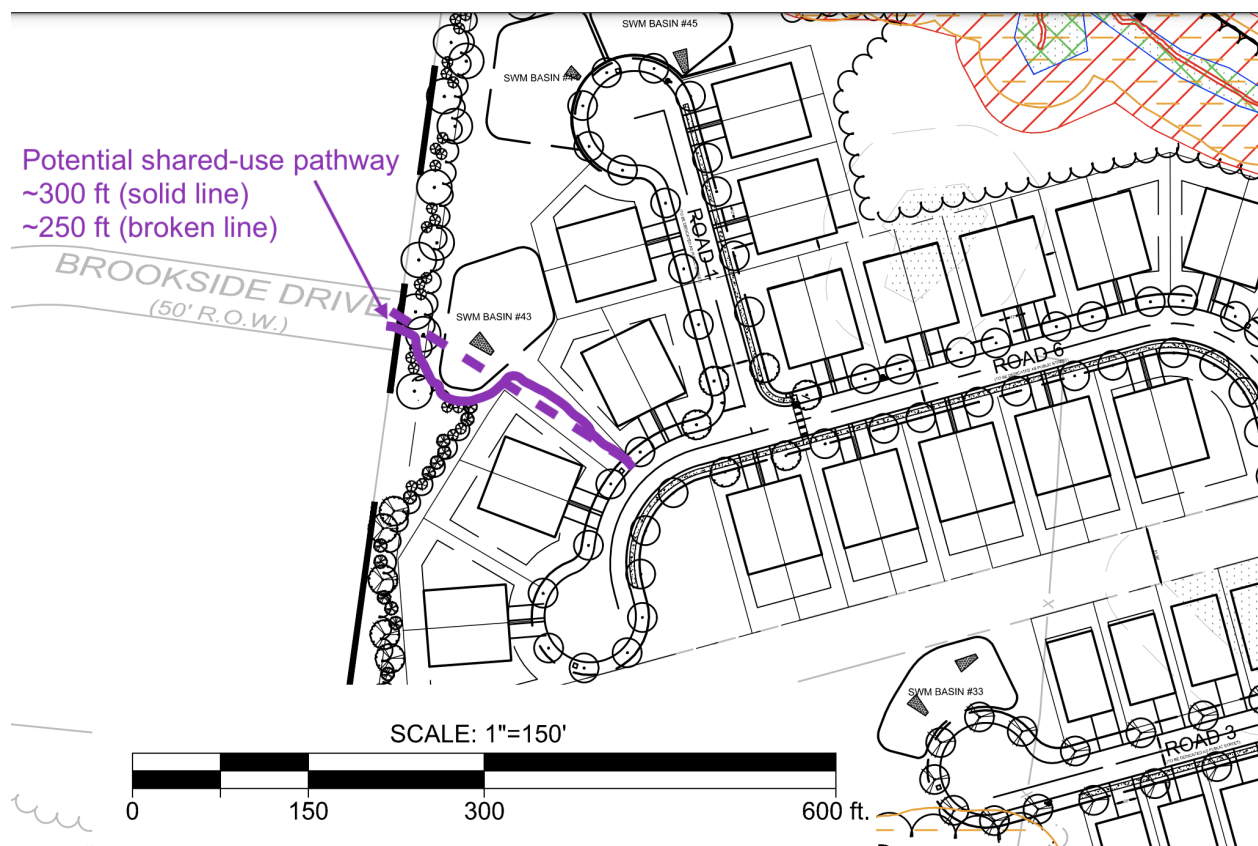
Respectfully submitted: Don Hirsh, Secretary

cc: J. Bash, U. Purandare, EC Members

The Hopewell Township municipal code book includes ordinance §17-77 Bikeways which states, in part, that “Bikeways shall be required at the Planning Board's discretion in any new development depending on the development's location in relation to schools, recreation areas, shopping facilities and other populated areas, or its location with respect to any overall bike route plan adopted by the Planning Board. Bicycle traffic shall be separated from motor vehicle and pedestrian traffic as much as possible.” Representatives of Lennar/US Home Corp were unable to identify bikeways in their current plan for The Venue that comply with this ordinance. The EC recommends bikeways/shared-use pathways to connect The Venue to the two adjacent residential neighborhoods: the neighborhood southeast of Jacobs Creek Road (Jacobs Creek) and Hopewell Parc - South (Hopewell Parc). These connecting pathways are shown below in purple and are superimposed on excerpts from the revised plans submitted by Lennar/US Home Corp on 02/13/2025. Estimates of the pathway lengths are also indicated.

The western connector joins Road 6 in The Venue development with the stub road Brookside Drive in the Jacobs Creek neighborhood. If the shape of SWM Basin #43 were adjusted to permit a straight path between the two streets, this connector could be shortened from approximately 300 to 250 feet (broken line).

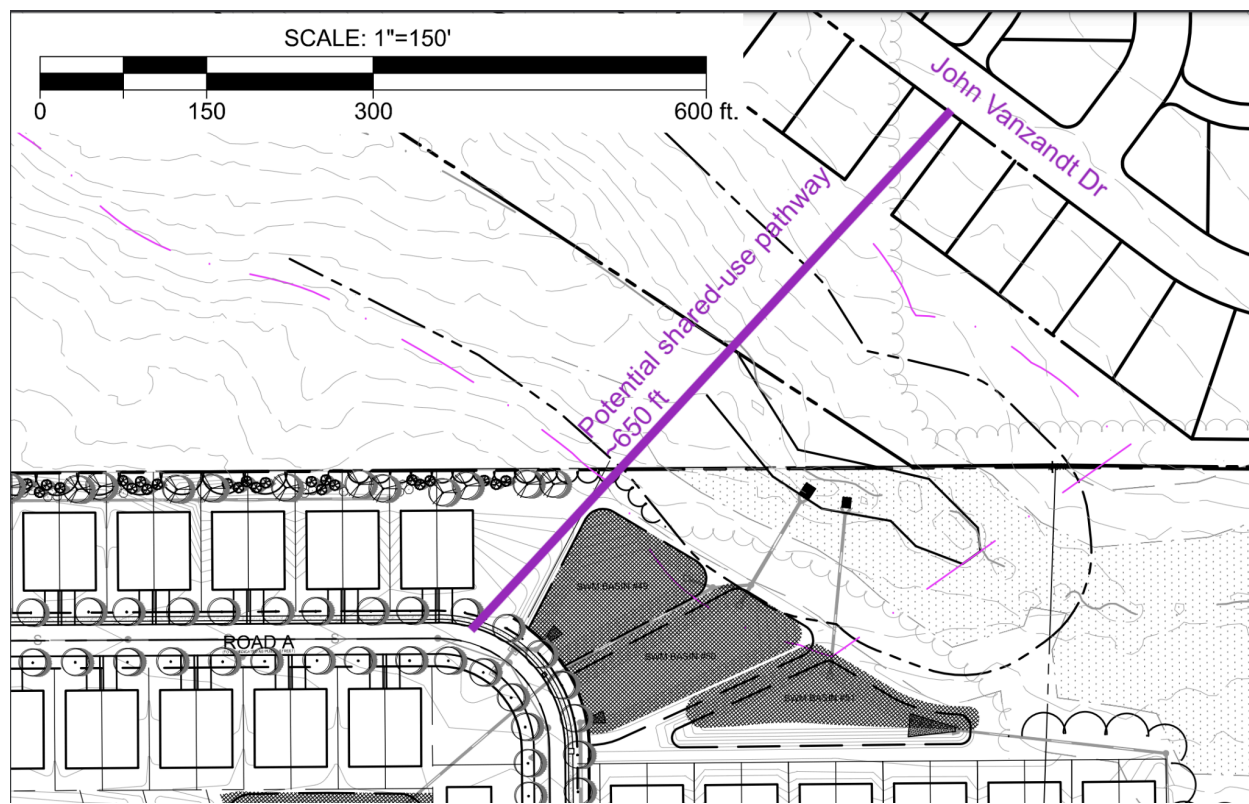
The Venue - Western Connector - Road 6 to Brookside Drive



Original Source: B93 L19 Venue-PLANS REVISED 2.13.25 - Page 12

The northern connector (see below) joins Road A in The Venue development with John Vanzandt Drive in Lennar's own development, Hopewell Parc. The EC notes that the pathway appears to cross an NJDEP-designated wetland, in which case General Permit 17 or 17A would be required. These permits require that the total area disturbed be under one-quarter (0.25) acre. An 8-foot-wide pathway that is 650 feet in length would cover an area of 5,200 sq. ft. or 0.12 acre. Furthermore, only a portion of the pathway shown below would be within the NJDEP-designated wetlands area.

The Venue - Northern Connector - Road A to John Vanzandt Dr



Original Source: B93 L19 Venue-PLANS REVISED 2.13.25 - Page 8

While The Venue development connects to Scotch Road, we do not endorse bike lanes attached to Scotch Road as a substitute for the northern connector shown above. Scotch Road between The Venue and Hopewell Parc has a posted speed limit of 45 mph. (See below.) Furthermore, the proximity of The Venue to the Scotch Road/I-295 interchange suggests that some cars may exceed this speed. In the 2020 publication *Cyclist Safety*, the World Health Organization notes that “As the average traffic speed increases, so too does the likelihood of a crash... The likelihood of a fatal injury to a cyclist increases 11 times with vehicle speeds above 64.4 km/h [40 mph].”¹

¹ Cyclist safety - An information resource for decision-makers and practitioners, 2020, World Health Organization, ISBN 978-92-4-001369-8 (electronic version)
<https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/336393/9789240013698-eng.pdf>

We note that the bikeways/shared-use pathways shown above are only recommendations, and we defer to Lennar/US Home Corp in their final location. However, to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the Bikeways ordinance, we recommend that bikeways be installed between The Venue and its adjacent neighborhoods and separated from motor vehicle traffic.

As a representative from Lennar/US Home Corp noted in his presentation to the EC on 02/18/2025, an age-restricted development like the Venue offers older adults the opportunity to live close to their adult children and grandchildren residing in Hopewell Parc. The creation of shared-use pathways between the Venue and the adjacent Jacobs Creek and Hopewell Parc neighborhoods would provide a safe route for grandchildren to visit their grandparents and vice versa. It would also promote the health of the residents and their sense of connection to the broader community.



TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Planning Board

FROM: Environmental Commission Members

DATE: April 16, 2025

RE: US Home, LLC-Deer Valley Tract AKA-The Venue, Preliminary/Final Site Plan
Block 93, Lots 19_20_45.01 Nursery & Scotch Roads

We are writing to inform you of our comments regarding the subject application, which is scheduled to be reviewed by the Planning Board.

During our Environmental Commission meeting on April 15, 2025, members Paul Kinney, Rex Parker, Andrew Plunkett, Kirsi Bhasin, Mark Bean, Mike Aucott, Donald Hirsh, and Uma Purandare reviewed and discussed the subject application together with Interim Township Engineer Jim Bash.

We have the following environmental concerns regarding the proposed project:

The current plan places housing in an area of contiguous forest, in the NW corner of the property. The EC recommends that the housing plan be reworked to reduce the impact on the contiguous forest. This corresponds to section K and portions of sections H and L in the key map of the applicant's submission. The EC reserves the right to comment on any future submissions or plan revisions that the applicant makes.

Please consider our comments during your review.

Respectfully submitted: Donald Hirsh, Secretary

cc: J. Bash, U. Purandare, EC Members