



July 1, 2021

South Kingstown Planning Board
Town of South Kingstown
180 High Street
Wakefield, RI 02879

RE: Major Land Development / Change to an Approved Plan
(Amended Previously Submitted Letter Dated May 28, 2021)

Dear Members of the South Kingstown Planning Board,

The Westerly Community Credit Union would like to seek approval from the South Kingstown’s Planning Board on adding 8 parking spaces to its existing parking lot. The Credit Union’s facility is located at 4979 Tower Hill Road within the Route-1 Special Management District Section 605.10 - Map and Lot 58-1/99.

The Credit Union completed construction of the 24,791 sq/ft facility in October of 2018. The building primarily consists of a bank branch and office space for about 18,000 sq/ft with the remainder being a staff lounge, gym, and file storage. Over the past three years the company has been growing and believes parking will become a barrier to fully occupying the building in the coming years.

In 2020, the Credit Union conducted research on purchasing vacant land on Kelley Way (Lot 57-2/57 and 57-2/58). On November 24, 2020, the Credit Union brought a pre-application before the Town of South Kingstown’s Planning Board. It was determined in February 2021 that due to safety and cost concerns this plan would be disposed of and the Credit Union would seek alternative solutions.

In place of that larger scale project, the Credit Union instead is seeking a smaller expansion of parking within its existing lot. This 8 space expansion is tailored to meet the parking needs into the future and is limited enough to not alter previously performed traffic studies. Additionally, we are looking to use pervious parking materials to not affect previously performed stormwater runoff calculations. We understand the Special Management Districts standards and have addressed each below.

Article 7 Section 711.C: Offices, public or professional administration or service buildings, banks, financial institutions, and similar uses - 1 parking space for each 350 sq/ft of floor area.

WCCU Comment: *The Credit Union installed 51 parking spaces to meet this requirement which was the minimum for a building of its size. This was meant to maximize the landscaping and lawn areas of the lot.*

Article 6 Section 605.15: At least fifteen (15) percent of the land suitable for development in the Special Management District shall be designated as open space.

WCCU Comment: *The Credit Union lot size is 2.06 acres (89,734 sq/ft) X 15% = 13,460 sq/ft required for open space. Currently 0.95 acres (41,382 sq/ft) or 45% is covered by impervious surface (parking, building). The remainder is well manicured lawn, gardens, and a stormwater filtration basin. There is a ‘landscape buffer zone’ located in the front of the building where the 100-foot Route-1 setback is located. This area itself is 16,251 sq/ft.*



The proposed 8 parking spaces should reduce the open space by 2,000 sq/ft in added impervious surface. This would still allow for greater than 15% of open space (16,251 – 2,000 = 14,251 sq/ft)

Article 6 Section 605.7: No new principal building shall be located within one hundred (100) feet of the state highway line of US Route 1 or Kelley Way (or any highway access easement granted to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation). No parking area or access drive, except required principal access streets or driveways, if allowed, shall be located within this 100-foot setback unless the planning board finds that such parking area or access drive can be totally hidden from view by motorists on US Route 1 or Kelley Way. Such screening shall be accomplished by lowering the elevation of such parking area or drive by a significant amount below the grade of US Route 1 or Kelley Way, which, in combination with grading, landscaping, stone or masonry walls, or a combination thereof, will have the effect of completely preventing views of such facilities from US Route 1 or Kelley Way.

WCCU Comment: *The location for the proposed 8 parking spaces will be screened by the difference in the elevation between Route 1 and the Access Road and additional vegetation.*

The Credit Union has been working with James Rabbit and Jason Parker over the last few months on this parking expansion and we appreciate their assistance and guidance. With their recommendation a sight line analysis was created as well as a revised landscaping plan.

The landscape proposed for the expansion of the parking considers several factors: (1) the need for a screening function from Route 1/Tower Hill Road; (2) the requirement for deer resistant plant materials; (3) a desire for a seasonally interesting plant palette.

(1) Although the view of the proposed parking spaces is limited from Route 1/Tower Hill Road due to the existing grades, the proposed landscaping is staggered such that additional filtering of the spaces will take place. A mix of evergreen and deciduous trees, shrubs and perennials are proposed in visually overlapping plant beds.

(2) Although the impact of deer browse varies each year depending on the severity of the winter and other factors, the plant materials chosen are based on past experiences and several published studies, including a bulletin produced by Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension entitled "Landscape Plants Rated by Deer Resistance", which has proven to be a consistently accurate predictor of deer damage.

(3) Coordination with Credit Union and landscape architect indicated that the current plant palette in the area was lacking in seasonal interest, and a desire for more color was requested. The plants chosen bloom at different time periods or have colorful/evergreen foliage to enhance the view of the space for staff, patrons, and passers-by.

During the Pre-Application Planning Board Meeting on Tuesday, June 22nd there were a few recommendations made that the Credit Union took the following action on:

1. Provide, in writing, a statement that the Credit Union will not seek any additional parking on the property (58-1/99) after this 'Change to Approved Plan' is approved.
 - a. A letter to that affect is included in this package.
2. Consider adjusting the vegetation selected to provide a taller screening of the proposed parking spaces.

- a. Vegetation has been modified to include taller species that maintain foliage year-round. Additionally, the parking will be labeled as 'compact car'. This will help ensure no large or tall vehicles utilize the spaces. Lastly, we believe this difference in elevation between Route 1 and the spaces helps to augment the screening.
3. Consider installing a large piece of structured art or alike to augment the screening of the parking spaces.
 - a. Given that art, and its interpretation, is so subjective the management of the Credit Union decided to modify the vegetation plan instead.
4. Try to work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to improve and beautify the State owned property between Route 1 and the Access Roadway.
 - a. The Credit Union has attempted this in the past and found RIDOT to be unreceptive to improvements, even as simple as more regular mowing and tree trimming. The Credit Union again has reached out and has received little feedback. Our communication is included in this package.

This package contains the following:

South Kingstown Town Related Documents

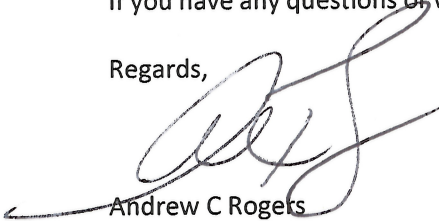
- Project Review Application Form
- Owner Authorization Form
- Project Team Form
- Payment for Project Application
- List of Abutting Property Owners

Project Plan and Research

- Parking Lot Layout
- Route 1 to New Parking Sight View Perspective
- Landscaping Plan
- Pervious Parking Material Plans, Erosion and Sediment Control
- Long Term Operation and Maintenance Plan
 - Permeable Pavement Maintenance Checklist
 - Vacuum Sweeping Guidance
 - Example Maintenance Agreement
- Addition of an illuminated flagpole

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please let me know by calling 401-486-3091.

Regards,



Andrew C Rogers
Chief Operating Officer

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