

April 4, 2022

Town of Ashland  
Planning Department  
Attn: Peter Matchak, Town Planner/Director  
101 Main Street  
Ashland, MA 01721

**Re: Planning Board Site Plan Review and Special Permit Application  
McDonald's Restaurant  
225 Pond Street  
Ashland, MA**

Dear Members of the Planning Board:

On behalf of McDonald's USA, LLC, please find the enclosed Planning Board Application for Site Plan Review and Special Permit as part of the proposed site improvements of the McDonald's Restaurant located at 225 Pond Street. In support of this application, please find enclosed the following documents:

- Eight (8) copies of the cover letter/ project narrative;
- Four (4) copies of the Signed Site Plan Review Permit Application;
- Four (4) copies 24"x36" copy of "Site Development Plans", prepared by Bohler Engineering, dated 1/14/22, revised through 3/16/22;
- Eight (8) 11"x17" copies of "Site Development Plans", prepared by Bohler Engineering, dated 1/14/22, revised through 3/16/22;
- Four (4) copies of the Certified Abutter's List from the Assessor's Office
- Eight (8) copies of the owner Authorization Letter
- Check in the amount of \$775 made out to "Town of Ashland" for the Site Plan Review Application Fee
- Check in the amount of \$2,000 made out to "Town of Ashland" for Peer Review Deposit
- Check in the amount of \$400 made out to "Town of Ashland" for Special Permit Application Fee

In an effort to improve their existing drive-thru operations McDonald's is proposing to reconfigure the existing single order point drive-thru with a dual order point configuration consisting of two lanes and two order points. The dual order point drive-thru improvements are proposed to manage existing drive-thru operations more efficiently. The order taking process is improved by adding the dual order points and eliminating the single order point, which is currently a pinch point in the drive-thru operations. The anticipated effect is reduced customer wait times and a better management of the existing drive-thru stacking. As such, the proposed drive-thru layout is anticipated to provide an improvement to the existing stacking conditions and drive-thru operations. To accommodate the proposed layout, the parking count will be reduced by twelve (12) spaces (55 existing; 43 proposed; minimum 20 spaces required). The proposed site improvements will result in an overall decrease in impervious coverage by approximately 105 square-feet. No changes to the existing building, site access, surface water drainage, lighting, or utilities are proposed as part of the project.

As part of the proposed drive-thru improvements a total of two (2) digital menu boards and two (2) digital pre-browse boards are proposed where there is only a single digital menu board and single digital pre-browse board existing today. The proposed and existing boards are approximately 20 and 10 square-feet each, internally illuminated, and are designed to change intermittently based on time of day, changes in meal offerings, and prices. The digital technology allows the operations team to modify the menu board items from within the restaurant and not have to go out into drive-thru traffic to manually change the boards providing an improvement to employee safety. Based on discussions with the Planning Department and per Section 5.3.6 of the Zoning Ordinance requiring internal sign illumination to be

steady, the proposed digital menu and pre-browse boards require the granting of a Special Permit by the Planning Board.

Per MassGIS and record plans, there are wetland resource areas and an underground culverted perennial stream proximate to the site to which a portion of the property is located within the 200' riverfront buffer of. Based on discussions with the Conservation Agent no additional permitting is required through the Conservation Commission as the majority of site, other than pavement striping, is located outside the buffer area. No changes to the existing drainage system are proposed and the project is anticipated to result in approximately a 105 square-foot reduction in impervious area, decreasing or matching peak flow rates generated on site today. Based on this limited scope of work we have submitted a waiver request to the Conservation Commission from the Stormwater Management By-Law, requiring a Stormwater Management Permit for projects "subject to Site Plan Review". This is anticipated to be reviewed at the 3/28 Conservation Commission meeting.

It is notable that the proposed site improvements also require a Special Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals for expansion of the existing drive-thru use. A Special Permit Application was submitted and reviewed by the Zoning Board of Appeals at their 3/8/22 and 3/22/22 meetings but has been continued again to a 4/12 agenda.

In reviewing Section 9.4.6 we believe the proposed site improvements are in line with the required Site Plan Review Criteria as outlined below:

1. *Minimize use of wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains and hilltops*

The proposed project does not require any work within existing wetlands or floodplains, nor does it propose work within areas of steep slopes or hilltops.

2. *Minimize obstruction of scenic views;*

No scenic views will be obstructed as a result of the proposed site improvements.

3. *Preserve unique natural or historical features;*

The proposed site improvements are limited to within the existing limits of pavement and not anticipated to impact any natural or historical features.

4. *Minimize tree, vegetation and soil removal and grade changes;*

The proposed site improvements are limited to within the existing limits of pavement. The proposed work includes minor grade changes to ensure proper drainage and compliance with ADA regulations. Approximately 105 square-feet of additional pervious area will be created as a result of the proposed site improvements and new landscaping provided as shown on sheet C-701.

5. *Maximize open space retention;*

The proposed site improvements are limited to within the existing limits of pavement. Approximately 105 square-feet of additional pervious area will be created as a result of the proposed site improvements and new landscaping provided as shown on sheet C-701.

6. *Screen objectionable features from neighboring properties and Roadways;*

A new landscape area is proposed along the Northern property line containing a row of arborvitae to provide additional screening to the adjacent property.

7. *Consideration shall be given to the impacts of the project on town services and infrastructure;*

No significant impacts to town services or infrastructure are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

8. *Electric, telephone, cable television, gas, water, sewer, drainage and other such utilities shall be underground except in cases of extreme physical and environmental constraints;*

No changes to the existing utilities on site. Proposed electric service to the drive-thru features will be provided via underground conduits.

9. *Exposed storage areas, machinery, service areas, truck loading areas, utility buildings and structures and other unsightly uses shall be set back or screened to protect the neighbors and those using public ways from objectionable features. Such areas shall not impede the flow of traffic on public ways;*

The project proposes no changes to the existing storage areas, utility structures, and loading areas. No utility buildings are located on site.

10. *When applicable, the site plan shall show measures to reduce and abate noise generated from the site that will impact surrounding properties;*

The proposed drive-thru speakers contain technology that adjusts the volume based on the surrounding ambient noise and a row of arborvitae is proposed to provide the will provide further noise reduction to the adjacent property.

11. *The site plan shall comply with all zoning requirements for parking, loading, signage, dimensions and environmental performance standards and all other provisions of this By-law;*

The proposed site plans are in compliance with all requirements of the Zoning Bylaw.

12. *The site plan shall be consistent with the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and other applicable specific plans adopted by the Planning Board*

The project proposes is consistent with the Comprehensive plan.

In reviewing Section 9.3.2 we believe the propose site improvements are in line with the required Special Permit Criteria to permit the proposed digital drive-thru features as outlined below:

1. *Community needs served by the proposal*

The granting of a Special Permit, will support McDonald's to move forward with the proposed site improvements which will provide continued employment opportunities and tax revenue to the Town, and will also provide an enhanced customer experience to patrons in the community. As such, we believe that social, economic, and community need will only benefit from the proposed redevelopment.

2. *Traffic flow and safety, including parking and loading*

The overall proposed site improvements are intended to better manage the existing site traffic and drive-thru queueing on site resulting in reduced customer wait times and improved patron experience. The granting of a Special Permit to permit will not have a negative impact on the traffic flow, safety, parking or loading operations.

3. *Adequacy of utilities and other public services*

No changes to the existing utilities are proposed as part of the project.

4. *Neighborhood character and social structures*

The existing McDonald's restaurant with drive-thru use will be maintained as part of the proposed site improvements. No negative impacts to the neighborhood character or social structures is anticipated as a result of the granting of a Special Permit.

5. *Impacts on the natural environment*

No negative impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed digital drive-thru features.

6. *Potential fiscal impact, including impact on town services, tax base, and employment*

The granting of a Special Permit to permit will support McDonald's to move forward with the proposed site improvements which will provide continued employment opportunities and tax revenue to the Town, and will also provide an enhanced customer experience to patrons in the community. As such, we believe that social, economic, and community need will only benefit from the proposed redevelopment.

We trust the provided information is sufficient for your review and we look forward to discussing the project at the next available Planning Board Meeting. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us at 508-480-9900.

Sincerely,

BOHLER ENGINEERING



Eric G. Dubrule



Daniel Allen