STATE OF DELAWARE
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
OFFICE OF STATE PLANNING COORDINATION

July 24, 2024

James Pennewell
7 Front Street
Wyoming, DE 19943, DE 19943

RE: PLUS review – 2024-06-01 Caesar Rodney School District Site Feasibility

Dear Mr. Pennewell:

Thank you for meeting with State agency planners on June 26th to discuss Caesar Rodney School District's school site feasibility. According to the information received, you are seeking review of a proposed school site to accommodate growth within the Caesar Rodney School District totaling 207.87 acres zoned AC (Agricultural Conservation).

Please note that changes to the plan, other than those suggested in this letter, could result in additional comments from the State. Additionally, these comments reflect only issues that are the responsibility of the agencies represented at the meeting. **The developers will also need to comply with any Federal, State, and local regulations regarding this property. We also note that Kent County is the governing authority over this land, therefore the developers will need to comply with any and all regulations/restrictions set forth by the County.**

Strategies for State Policies and Spending

The proposed school site is located in unincorporated Kent County within the growth zone. It is located in Level 1 and Level 2 investment areas, which is consistent with the 2020 Strategies for State Policies and Spending.

Investment Level 1 reflects areas that are already developed in an urban or suburban fashion, where infrastructure is existing or readily available, and where future redevelopment or infill projects are expected and encouraged by State policy. Investment Level 2 reflects areas where growth is anticipated by local, county, and State plans in the near-term future. Because development in Levels 1 and 2 is consistent with the 2020 Strategies for State Policies and Spending, the Office of State Planning Coordination supports the continued review of this proposed site by completing the school site feasibility review and approval process in partnership with the Department of Education (DOE).

Code Requirements/Agency Permitting Requirements

Department of Transportation (DelDOT) – Contact Stephen Bayer 302-760-4834

- DelDOT has no concerns as to the feasibility of this proposal as described in the PLUS application and at the PLUS meeting.

- Once a final site plan is developed the District will still need to obtain all necessary reviews and approvals.

DART First State – Contact Jared Kauffman 302-576-6062

- Improve the existing pair of stops on State Street to ADA standard (IDs 3076 and 3090). Both stops should be improved as Type 2 (5x8) stops.
- A pair of new stops are needed on Sorghum Mill Road. Both stops can be constructed as Type 2 (5x8) pads.

Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) – Contact Beth Krumrine 302-735-3480

Wetlands and Waterways
Maps from the Statewide Wetlands Mapping Project indicate the potential presence of non-tidal forested wetlands in the northern and southeast portions of the site**.** A perennial stream, called Cypress Branch, is also located on the site. The application indicates that wetlands have not been delineated. The preliminary plan proposes to avoid wetland areas and the stream.

- All wetland boundaries and perennial streams must be included on site plans.

- If plans change, state permits from the DNREC Wetlands and Waterways Section may be necessary if dredge, fill, or structures are proposed in tidal wetlands, streams, or State Subaqueous Lands.

- A delineation of waterways and wetlands may be required, to be completed by a qualified professional hired by the landowner. For a list of consultants and engineers who can conduct wetland delineations, please contact the DNREC Wetlands and Waterways Section at 302-739-9943.

- If plans change, Federal permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may also be necessary if dredge or fill is proposed in non-tidal wetlands or streams. A delineation of waterways and wetlands may be required, to be completed by a qualified professional hired by the landowner. In certain cases, permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers may trigger additional certifications from DNREC (Coastal Zone Federal Consistency

Certification and 401 Water Quality Certification). Work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine the appropriate permitting requirements if federal permits are required.

State Contact: DNREC Wetlands and Waterways Section at (302) 739-9943.
Website: https://dnrec.delaware.gov/water/wetlands/
Federal Contact: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Dover Office) at (267) 240-5278.
Website: https://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/Contacts/

Stormwater Management
The project proposes greater than 5,000 square feet of land disturbing activities and will be subject to Delaware's *Sediment and Stormwater Regulations*.

- A Sediment and Stormwater Plan must be developed, then approved by the appropriate plan review agency prior to any land disturbing activity taking place on the site. For this project, the plan review agency is the DNREC Sediment and Stormwater Program.

- Additionally, to address federal requirements, construction activities that exceed 1.0 acre of land disturbance require Construction General Permit coverage through submittal of an electronic Notice of Intent for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activity. This form must be submitted electronically https://enoi.dnrec.delaware.gov/, select Construction Stormwater General Permit) to the DNREC Division of Watershed Stewardship, along with the $195 fee.

- Schedule a project application meeting with the appropriate plan review agency prior to moving forward with the stormwater and site design. As part of this process, you must submit a Stormwater Assessment Study.

Plan review agency and stormwater contact: DNREC Sediment and Stormwater Program at (302) 739-9921. E-mail: DNREC.Stormwater@delaware.gov.
Website: https://dnrec.delaware.gov/watershed-stewardship/sediment-stormwater/

Wastewater Disposal Systems – Large Systems
For wastewater conveyance offsite by way of a new sewer connection, flow rates exceeding 2,500 gallons of liquid waste per day will require a Wastewater Pollution Collection and Conveyance (WPCC) permit from the Commercial and Government Services section.

Contact: DNREC Commercial and Government Services section at (302) 739-9948.
Website: https://dnrec.delaware.gov/water/commercial-government/

Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) – Contact Milton Melendez 302-698-4500

- No Delaware Department of Agriculture code or regulations apply to this PLUS project.

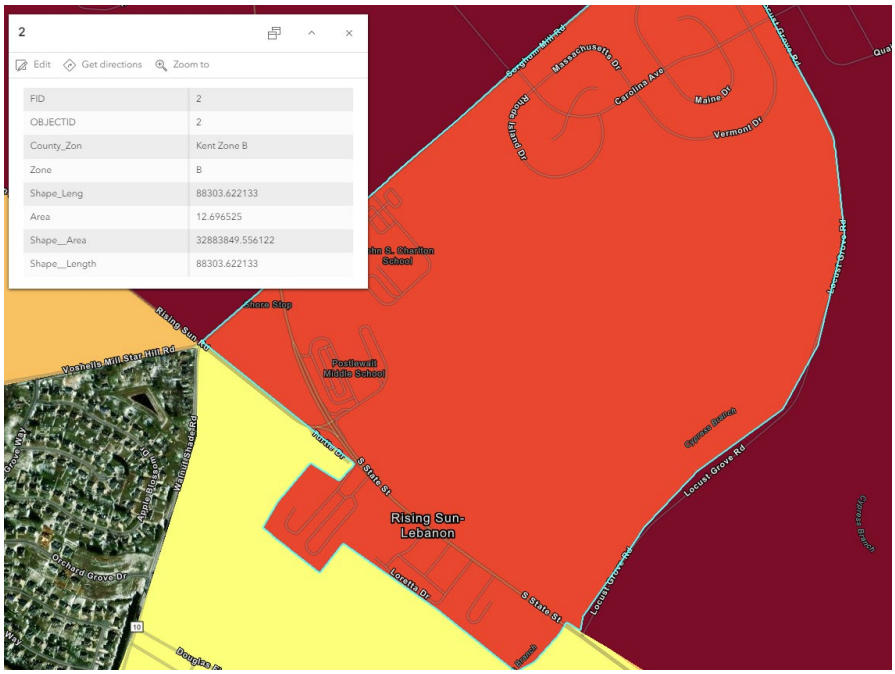
Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) – Contact Phillip Cane 302-659-2325

Proposed Project Parcel Flood Concern

- This parcel is located within an area of **Minimal Flood Concern of 1,000 years or greater**.

Parcel Status within County Evacuation Zone Location

- The parcel is located within Kent County's Evacuation Zone B.



Parcel Status within the 10-mile Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) for the Salem Nuclear Power Plant

- The parcel **is not** located within the 10-mile EPZ for the Salem Nuclear Power Plant.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) – Contact Carlton Hall 302-736-7400

There is high potential for pre-Contact archaeological sites in the project area. Cypress Branch runs the southern project area. The project area is composed of well-drained soils. These are

considered favorable environmental conditions for past human occupation. There is also high potential for historic archaeological sites in the project area. According to historic maps and aerials, there were at least three homes in the project area. Due to known occupation, there is high potential for sites relating to such. Our Office recommends an archaeological survey prior to any ground disturbance. If any project or development proceeds, the developer should be aware of the Unmarked Human Burials and Human Skeletal Remains Law (Del. C. Title 7, Ch.54). If there are any questions, inquiries, or concerns, feel free to contact the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office for assistance at 302-736-7400**.**

Delaware State Fire Marshall's Office – Contact Duane Fox 302-739-4394

This document is for information purposes only and does not constitute any type of approval from the Delaware State Fire Marshal's Office. This Agency has no objection regarding the Feasibility Plan. The information provided below shall be considered when plans are being designed.

Fire Protection Water Requirements:

- Water distribution system capable of delivering at least 1,000 gpm for 1-hour duration, at 20-psi residual pressure is required. Fire hydrants with 800 feet spacing on centers. (Education and Assembly)
- Where a water distribution system is proposed for the site, the infrastructure for fire protection water shall be provided, including the size of water mains for fire hydrants and sprinkler systems.

Fire Protection Features:

- All structures over 10,000 square feet aggregate will require automatic sprinkler protection installed.
- Buildings greater than 10,000 square feet, 3-stories or more, over 35 feet, or classified as High Hazard, are required to meet fire lane marking requirements.
- Show Fire Department Connection location (Must be within 300 feet of fire hydrant), and detail as shown in the DSFPR.
- Show Fire Lanes and Sign Detail as shown in DSFPR.

Accessibility

- All premises, which the fire department may be called upon to protect in case of fire, and which are not readily accessible from public roads, shall be provided with suitable gates and access roads, and fire lanes so that all buildings on the premises are accessible to fire apparatus. This means that the access road to the subdivision from South State

St, Locust Grove Rd, and Sorghum Mill Rd must be constructed so fire department apparatus may negotiate it.

- Any dead-end road more than 300 feet in length shall be provided with a turn-around or cul-de-sac arranged such that fire apparatus will be able to turn around by making not more than one backing maneuver. The minimum paved radius of the cul-de-sac shall be 38 feet. The dimensions of the cul-de-sac or turn-around shall be shown on the final plans. Also, please be advised that parking is prohibited in the cul-de-sac or turn around.
- The use of speed bumps or other methods of traffic speed reduction must be in accordance with Department of Transportation requirements.
- The local Fire Chief, prior to any submission to our Agency, shall approve in writing the use of gates that limit fire department access into and out of the development or property.

Gas Piping and System Information:

- Provide type of fuel proposed and show locations of bulk containers on plan.

Required Notes:

- Provide a note on the final plans submitted for review to read "All fire lanes, fire hydrants, and fire department connections shall be marked in accordance with the Delaware State Fire Prevention Regulations"
- Proposed Use
- Alpha or Numerical Labels for each building/unit for sites with multiple buildings/units
- Square footage of each structure (Total of all Floors)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Construction Type
- Maximum Height of Buildings (including number of stories)
- Note indicating if building(s) is/are to be sprinklered
- Name of Water Provider
- Letter from Water Provider approving the system layout
- Provide Lock Box Note (as detailed in DSFPR) if Building is to be sprinklered
- Provide Road Names, even for County Roads

Recommendations/Additional Information

This section includes a list of site-specific suggestions that are intended to enhance the project. These suggestions have been generated by the State Agencies based on their expertise and subject area knowledge. **These suggestions do not represent State code requirements.** They are offered here in order to provide proactive ideas to help the applicant enhance the site design, and it is hoped **(but in no way required)** that the applicant will open a dialogue with the relevant agencies to discuss how these suggestions can benefit the project.

Department of Transportation (DelDOT) – Contact Stephen Bayer 302-760-4834

- As the District progresses with this process, please feel free to contact DelDOT for information and assistance available through our Safe Routes to School program.

Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) – Contact Beth Krumrine 302-735-3480

Forested Wetlands/Key Wildlife Habitat
Maps from the Statewide Wetlands Mapping Project indicate the potential presence of forested wetlands in the northern and southeast portions of the site. These forested areas, along with Cypress Branch and surrounding areas, are mapped as a Key Wildlife Habitat in the Delaware Wildlife Action Plan. They are part of a larger wetland/forest complex that supports an array of plant and animal species across the landscape.

- As proposed, conserve Key Wildlife Habitat to the maximum extent practicable and negative impacts should be minimized.

- For erosion control, use materials that are biodegradable and that do not include plastic netting or have welded-joint poly-based matting. Wildlife entanglement is well documented in netted, synthetic rolled erosion control products.

- Design the project to exclude curbs. If road curbing is part of the design, select curbing that allows small animals, such as turtles and salamanders, to climb out of the roadbed (Type 2 or Cape Cod curbing).

- Use wide, open bottom box culverts to allow for passage of amphibians.

- Maintain habitat connections to undeveloped open space, which are especially important for species movement across the landscape.

Contact: DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife, Species Conservation and Research Program at (302) 735-3600. Website: https://dnrec.delaware.gov/fish-wildlife/conservation/

Buffer Zones

- Maintain an upland buffer of at least 100 feet along all wetlands, including those containing existing forest or natural vegetative cover.

- Vegetated buffer zones placed adjacent to waterways and wetlands help improve water quality by reducing sediment and pollutants loads. Vegetated buffers are not equivalent

to setbacks, as residential lots, walkways, and stormwater management facilities should not be contained within the vegetated buffer zone.

- Vegetated buffer zones should be left undisturbed during construction and should be identified outside of the Limit of Disturbance on the engineering plans. In some instances, stormwater outfalls, conveyances, and emergency spillways may cross through these zones, and will require temporary disturbance during construction.

- Maintain vegetated buffer zones as either grasslands/meadows or forest. Buffer zones should be planted exclusively with native trees and plants. Native plants are well-suited to our climate and require limited maintenance. They also provide an increasingly important role in the survival of native birds and beneficial insects whose habitat is shrinking due to development and climate change.

- Grass cutting for vegetated buffer zones if maintained as meadow should not occur between April 1st to July 31st to reduce impacts to nesting birds and other wildlife species that utilize meadows and grasslands for breeding habitat.

Contact: DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife, Species Conservation and Research Program at (302) 735-3600. Website: https://dnrec.delaware.gov/fish-wildlife/conservation/

Stormwater Management

- Where the site and soil conditions allow, integrate runoff reduction techniques including infiltration basins, bioretention (rain gardens), filter strips, and pavers to encourage on-site stormwater infiltration and reduce runoff.

- As proposed, preserve existing trees, wetlands, and passive open space.

Plan review agency and stormwater contact: DNREC Sediment and Stormwater Program at (302) 739-9921. E-mail: DNREC.Stormwater@delaware.gov.
Website: https://dnrec.delaware.gov/watershed-stewardship/sediment-stormwater/

Drainage

- All existing drainage ditches on the property should be evaluated for function and cleaned, if needed, prior to the construction of the project.

- Environmental permits or exemptions may be required by the County Conservation District (Standard Plan), the DNREC Sediment and Stormwater Program (eNOI/NOT), Army Corp of Engineers, and/or DNREC Wetlands and Waterways Section prior to clearing and/or excavating ditch channels.

- All precautions should be taken to ensure the project does not hinder any off-site drainage upstream of the project or create any off-site drainage problems downstream by the release of on-site storm water.

Contact: DNREC Drainage Program at (302) 855-1930.
Website: https://dnrec.delaware.gov/drainage-stormwater/

Water Quality
This site lies within the St. Jones River Watershed. Surface water quality in this watershed does not meet Federal and/or State Water Quality Standards and a Pollution Control Strategy is in place for this watershed.

- Implement vegetated buffers with a width of at least 100 feet around all water features on or adjacent to the site.

- Reduce impervious surfaces on the project site by eliminating areas of impervious pavement and/or using pervious pavement where practicable. Break up large parking lots with planted islands.

- Reduce stormwater runoff by integrating infiltration basins, bioretention (rain gardens), filter strips, and by preserving existing trees, wetlands, and passive open space.

- Reduce the necessity for nutrient application by maintaining open space as meadow or forest planted exclusively with native plants. Native plants are well-suited to our climate and require limited maintenance.

Contact: DNREC Division of Watershed Stewardship's Watershed Assessment Section at (302) 739-9939. Website: https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/watershed-stewardship/

Special Flood Hazard Area
According to the newest Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), the southeast portion of the site is situated within a Special Flood Hazard Area, specifically within the mapped 100-year floodplain (1% annual chance of flooding). The Special Flood Hazard Area identified on the site lies within zone AE. In lands contained within the 100-year floodplain, the National Flood Insurance Program's floodplain management regulations must be enforced through the local floodplain ordinance, which can have higher standards. The southeast portion of this site is also situated within the moderate risk floodplain, or 500-year floodplain (0.2% annual chance of flooding), identified as zone X.

- As proposed, locate all structures outside of the floodplain.

Contact: DNREC Shoreline and Waterway Management Section at (302) 739-9921.
Website: https://dnrec.delaware.gov/watershed-stewardship/waterways/floodplains/

Sustainable Practices

- Incorporate nonmotorized connectivity and install bicycle racks where feasible to help facilitate non-vehicular travel modes for students, staff and faculty.

- Consider installing electric vehicle charging stations for visitors, students, staff, and faculty. Installation costs can vary significantly depending on the parking and electricity distribution at a given location, so it is often easier and cheaper to plan for the installation at construction, rather than doing costly retrofits later. The DNREC Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy offers rebates of up to 80% of the cost of the charging station for public properties. These programs address climate change goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving overall air quality (https://dnrec.delaware.gov/climate-coastal-energy/clean-transportation/).

- Consider using renewable energy infrastructure such as solar or geothermal to reduce energy costs and further reduce pollution created from offsite generation. Grant funds and incentives are available for Delmarva Power customers through the DNREC Green Energy Fund, which includes several funding types through the state's major electric utilities ((https://dnrec.delaware.gov/climate-coastal-energy/renewable/assistance/).

- On large expanses of impervious surfaces and asphalt, design parking areas to include trees for shading.

- Consider planting stands of native trees. Native trees improve air, water, and soil quality. Planting and nurturing trees is also a nature-based solution to reducing the greenhouse gases that drive climate change. In addition, native trees have an increasingly important role in the survival of native birds and beneficial insects whose habitat is shrinking due to development and climate change.

- Consider planting select areas with meadow comprised of native species. Native plants are well-suited to our climate and require limited maintenance. They also provide an increasingly important role in the survival of native birds and beneficial insects whose habitat is shrinking due to development and climate change. Mowing in these areas should not occur between April 1st to July 31st to reduce impacts to nesting birds and other wildlife species that utilize meadows and grasslands for breeding habitat.

- Use efficient Energy Star rated products and materials in construction and redevelopment. Energy efficient appliances use less energy over time. This saves consumers and businesses money, while also helping to reduce pollution from power generation.

- Use structural paint coatings that are low in Volatile Organic Compounds to help protect air quality. Air pollution from new construction is generated through the use of maintenance equipment, paints, and consumer products like roof coatings and primers.

- Use recycled materials, such as reclaimed asphalt pavement, to reduce heat island effects on paved surfaces, prevent landfill waste, and lower material costs.

Contact: DNREC Division of Climate, Coastal & Energy at (302) 735-3480.
Website: https://dnrec.delaware.gov/climate-coastal-energy/

Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) – Contact Phillip Cane 302-659-2325

Population

- The county has a population density of 310.20 persons per square mile based on the US 2020 Census report; an increase from 2010 at 271.30 persons per square mile. The specific census block(s) the project is located on has a total population of 191 persons, though, with development, this will undoubtedly change. The 19 adjacent blocks aggregated bring the area to a total population of 1,376 persons.

FEMA National Risk Index

- The FEMA National Risk Index is an online mapping application that identifies communities most at risk to 18 natural hazards: Avalanche, Coastal Flooding, Cold Wave, Drought, Earthquake, Hail, Heat Wave, Hurricane, Ice Storm, Landslide, Lightning, Riverine Flooding, Strong Wind, Tornado, Tsunami, Volcanic Activity, Wildfire, and Winter Weather. The FEMA National Risk Index is calculated by multiplying the Expected Annual Loss times the Social Vulnerability and dividing that by the Community Resilience.

Expected Annual Loss
× Social Vulnerability
÷ Community Resilience
= Risk Index

- According to FEMA's National Risk Index, the parcel **is** considered **relatively low** for overall natural hazards risks.

- Community Resilience is a consequence reduction risk component and a community risk factor that represents the ability of a community to prepare for anticipated natural hazards, adapt to changing conditions and withstand/recover rapidly from disruptions. Social Vulnerability is a consequence-enhancing risk factor that represents the susceptibility of social groups to the adverse impacts of natural hazards.

- Its community resilience is rated at **relatively high** whereas its social vulnerability is rated as **relatively low.**

Renewable Energy Commitment

- Regarding energy use and consumption, the census tract utilizes **electricity** as the predominant fuel type for heating purposes, though oil and propane gas come in a close second and third respectively.

- DEMA strongly encourages the use of renewable energies and high-efficiency appliances and utilities. Regarding utilities, DEMA suggests incorporating 90% series furnaces/HVAC systems; the closer to 99%, the better, as well as A/C units of 20 Seer or greater. DEMA recommends using tankless water heaters, and battery backup systems for sump pumps to reduce potential water damage from power failure. Lastly, DEMA encourages the integration of modern and emerging technologies, such as the potential for electric vehicles in garages/parking lots, green roofs or solar panels where applicable and allowable, and the like.

- Lastly, in reference to the evacuation zone, DEMA recommends the zone's designation and the information behind it be made readily available to all persons on the parcel, which can be done by simply placing a sign or having pamphlets readily accessible.

Following receipt of this letter and upon filing of an application with the local jurisdiction, the applicant shall provide to the local jurisdiction and the Office of State Planning Coordination a written response to comments received as a result of the pre-application process, noting whether comments were incorporated into the project design or not and the reason, therefore.

Approval Process

School sites must be approved by the Secretary of Education, the Director of OMB, and the Director of the Office of State Planning Coordination. The *Strategies for State Policies and Spending*, the information contained within this PLUS letter, and other factors will be considered when the Secretary and the two Directors make the determination about whether or not to approve a school site.

Once the District decides on a school site or sites to pursue for approval, the district must submit a letter requesting approval for the site(s) to the Department of Education. The letter should be directed to the DOE staff responsible for the Capital Program. The letter should

contain a tax parcel ID number, PLUS review number, and all relevant information regarding the site and the proposed school.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project. If you have any questions, please contact me at 302-739-3090.

Sincerely,



David L. Edgell, AICP
Director, Office of State Planning Coordination