

July 12, 2021

Mr. Steven Kleppin, AICP
Planning and Zoning Director
City of Norwalk
125 East Avenue, Room 223
Norwalk, Connecticut 06856

Subject **Response to Comments – Preliminary Traffic Impact and Assessment – Jimmy John’s Sandwich Shop, 295 Westport Avenue, Norwalk, Connecticut**

Dear Mr. Kleppin:

We are pleased to provide a response to a memorandum prepared by the City Director of Transportation, Mobility and Parking dated June 23, 2021 for the proposed Jimmy John’s Sandwich Shop to be located at 295 Westport Avenue.

Below, each comment made in the memorandum is addressed and exhibits are provided and referenced when necessary.

1. *Comment A (Operations)* -- *It is our understanding that the proposed Jimmy John’s will accommodate several functions including a drive-thru, short-term pick-up and a walk-up window. As there are many other uses on Site which share the parking lot and are dependent on the existing counter-clockwise traffic circulation around the building, Jimmy John’s proposed operations have the potential to adversely impact Site traffic circulation.*

Response A (Operations) - The proposed operations have been simplified to mitigate concerns about site traffic. The walk-up window and proposed six short-term parking spaces have been eliminated. At the site, Jimmy John’s customers can either park and walk in or use the drive-thru lane. Customers can place orders in the following ways: in store; by phone or online for in-store pickup; at the drive-thru; and by phone or online for delivery.

A bike rack is now proposed in lieu of proposed parking spaces.

Please see the revised site plan attached as “Exhibit A – Revised Site Plan and Signage”.

2. *Comment B (Queuing)* – *While it was indicated that up to five (5) vehicles can queue from the pick-up window to the end of parking along the building frontage; it should be noted that the queuing lane can only accommodate up to three (3) vehicles from the menu board/speaker location before traffic flow within the Site is adversely impacted.*

A preliminary review of other existing Jimmy John's drive-thru's in New York suggests much more significant queuing lanes are necessary to accommodate operations. For example, one Jimmy John's reviewed had up to 130 feet between its pick-up window and menu board/speaker location and did not share a parking lot with any other uses. Another Jimmy John's drive-thru provided approximately 60 feet between its pick-up window and menu board/speaker board location and another 65 feet to accommodate queuing before adversely impacting site traffic circulation. A final location reviewed, appeared to have 65 feet between its pick-up window and the menu board/speaker location and another 55 feet to accommodate queuing before adversely impacting site traffic circulation. Based on a review of this application, the approximate queuing lane for this Site is significantly less than similar developments. TMP remains concerned that drive-thru queuing could adversely impact site traffic circulation and ultimately traffic operations on Westport Avenue. The Applicant should provide mitigation through a revised Site Plan as further outlined in this memorandum.

Response B (Queuing) – Based on discussions with the Jimmy John's staff, the identified stores referenced in the City memorandum are stores that are almost 10 years old and likely some the first stores that Jimmy John's built with drive-thru lanes.

Over the last ten years, Jimmy John's has found that the most efficient way for them to operate drive-thru stores is to place the menu board three vehicles behind the drive-thru window. The vehicle at the drive-thru window is receiving their food/paying while the second vehicle from the window is having their order finished/consolidated and the third vehicle from the pick-up window is ordering at the menu board. This is the required layout and format for Jimmy John's drive-thru windows at all new drive-thru restaurants as it has been found to be the most efficient way to run their operations. They have found that adding additional space between the drive-thru window and menu board will only slow things down by messing up the three-step system. This three-step operation coincides with the 90-second process for a customer and is based on measurements conducted by Jimmy John's at other locations, including during their peak hours.

Sample store layouts received from Jimmy John's staff are attached as "Exhibit C – Drive Thru Example #1" and "Exhibit D – Drive Thru Example #2". Exhibit C is a store just built last year that reflects this new drive-thru setup. Exhibit D is one of Jimmy John's highest volume stores, which has had no issues with this setup.

Jimmy John's is in the process of opening stores throughout Connecticut and across the country and each of these stores are following the same criteria and requirements.

Jimmy John's is absolutely committed to its differentiating factor of being "Freaky Fast" (more on this in "Response 1A" below) and wouldn't open the store in Norwalk if the queuing lane, as it is designed, would not operate efficiently and safely. Jimmy John's is also committed to the Shopping Center and working with the Property Owner, as well as the City to ensure that motorists do not back-up into the "Do Not Block the Box" area as shown on "Exhibit A – Revised Site Plan and Signage", keeping the area and entrance drive from Westport Avenue open and free of waiting vehicles at all times.

3. Comment C (Revised Site Plan and Traffic Flow) – Additionally, the revised Site Plan should clearly identify how all of Jimmy John’s proposed activities will take place given the small footprint of the building/Site. While Andriopoulos Design Associates submitted a “Tenant Drive-Thru Concept #1” as part of Hardesty & Hanover’s response to TMP comments, it does not address how the drive-thru, short-term pick-up, walk-up window will interact and not adversely impact the counter-clockwise circulation around the Site which is also utilized by the other businesses and critical to their operations. It is critical that proposed uses operations do not adversely impact traffic circulation within the Site as it could have negative impacts on Westport Avenue.

Response C (Revised Site Plan) – Please see “Response A (Operations)” and please note that “Exhibit A – Revised Site Plan and Signage” and “Exhibit B – Layout and Drive-Thru” should be referred to as the most up-to-date proposals.

Please note that the existing Shopping Center layout and traffic flow has been in place for many years and accommodated a drive-thru bank in the proposed Jimmy John’s location. It’s expected that the current counterclockwise traffic flow for all tenants on the east and west sides of the building will not be adversely impacted since this condition has existed without any issues for many years with a drive-thru bank and the store front use. However, in “Response 1F” below, recommendations are provided to guide a motorist through the rear of the building and on both sides of the building to access the front of the building, which is a two-way traffic aisle.

4. Comment 1A –The Applicant shall provide a revised Site plan which validates the proposed operations and provides assurances that the proposed drive-thru and Site configuration/layout will not adversely impact Site traffic circulation or Westport Avenue during peak hours. While sales data and speed of service data was provided, it was based on averages which are susceptible to variation during the sandwich shop’s busiest periods. The proposed Site plan does not appear to have contingencies to accommodate the busiest periods of the drive-thru. Please address.

Response 1A – Please see “Response A (Operations)” and “Response B (Queuing)”. Further, we would like to note that Jimmy John’s has an extensive track record in completing an order for a customer in a 90 second process – being “Freaky Fast” is the crucial differentiator of this sandwich concept. Jimmy John’s is able to accomplish this through the following ways:

- Simplified menu and ingredients – Jimmy John’s only has one type of cheese (Provolone) and minimal selections of deli meats. They don’t serve any hot sandwiches and the only thing that is being baked is the bread.
- Systems and procedures – Jimmy John’s is only able to be so fast and fresh because they have an opener (typically the General Manager) who is in the store for about four hours prior to opening slicing the meats and produce for the day, baking the morning bread, and setting up the cold table for speedy operations. During peak hours, the cold table is staffed with three employees. The first person on the line is called the bread starter, and their job is to cut, gut, and mayo the sandwich. The second person pulls the meat required in the correct order so that they are ready to place it on the sandwich (along with any vegetables) as soon

as the bread starter is finished. They then pass it to the sandwich wrapper, who wraps, labels, and bags it and hands it to the drive-thru window employee.

- Training – Jimmy John’s has a rigorous training program to ensure that each store (franchised or corporate) is able to meet the brand standards for speed. Each store must have a certified manager in-store at all times. To become certified, a manager must attend a two- to three-week training program in Champaign, IL at the end of which they must be able to make a sandwich on French bread (with some modifications) in 30 seconds and a sandwich on wheat bread (with some modifications) in 45 seconds. To be a bread starter in any store, you must be able to demonstrate that you can cut, gut, and apply mayo perfectly to a sandwich in under 20 seconds.

Jimmy John’s should not be compared to a fast-food restaurant, such as a McDonald’s and certainly not a Chick-fil-A, as Jimmy John’s has both demonstrably faster service and far less drive-thru traffic than those concepts. The extensive studies conducted by representatives for Jimmy John’s clearly show that the proposed queuing lane at the proposed Norwalk store can accommodate customer activities during the peak lunchtime period, as presented in their analyses and information previously submitted to the City. The 90-second average delivery for a sandwich to a customer at drive-thru lanes was measured during the pandemic, which pushed many more of their customers to the drive-thru than is typical. Jimmy John’s is confident that the 90-second process to place an order and deliver a sandwich will accommodate peaks within the peak lunchtime time period, as well as other peak periods for the store.

5. *Comment 1B – It appears that two of the three existing drive-thru lanes will be decommissioned and reconfigured to accommodate curbside pick-up. If the existing footprint of the building is to remain; how will the six (6) proposed parking spaces for pick-up to the east of the drive-thru lane be configured? It also appears hard infrastructure (an island), which previously separated the multiple drive-thru lanes, will need to be removed to accommodate curbside pick-up. This should clearly be identified on the plans. Finally, there does not appear to be any hard infrastructure proposed to separate parking spaces designated as curbside pick-up from drive-thru traffic. Please address.*

Response 1B – As noted above in “Response A (Operations)”, the curbside pick-up and the related proposed parking spaces have been removed, which eliminates the need to create a pedestrian connection immediately adjacent to the drive-thru lane. The updated site plan, which is attached as “Exhibit A – Revised Site Plan and Signage”, shows the elimination of these six parking spaces and the two drive-thru lanes, which previously accommodated the bank use of the building. Separation between the parking aisle and the drive-thru lane can be either a painted flush island or, if determined appropriate by the City, a raised asphalt island. However, it is our opinion that the painted flush island is sufficient since there will no longer be vehicles parking immediately adjacent to the drive-thru window and there is no longer a need to physically separate the two. Further, a bike rack is now proposed in this location.

6. *Comment 1C – All proposed parking spaces (specifically the curbside pick-up) should be clearly dimensioned on the plans and meet City Standards. While it is difficult to determine from the “Tenant*

Drive-Thru Concept #1,” the proposed parking spaces appear to be only 7’6” wide. Additionally, any signage or pavement markings to delineate these spaces should be shown on the plans.

Response 1C – See responses above.

7. *Comment 1D – How will curbside pick-up operate to minimize conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles? How will curbside pick-up be accessed?*

Response 1D – See responses above.

8. *Comment 1E – The walk-up window should be identified on this Site Plan and any necessary accommodations to make it accessible to pedestrians. The walk-up window did not appear to be addressed in the “Store Layout” figure included with the Application materials.*

Response 1E – See responses above.

9. *Comment 1F – The Revised Site Plan should include all relevant traffic control, parking, and wayfinding signage on the proposed to ensure orderly and efficient traffic flow on-site.*

Response 1F – Refer to the attached “Exhibit A – Revised Site Plan and Signage” which conceptually shows traffic control signing and pavement markings throughout the site, including way finding-type signage to further support the existing ONE-WAY, counterclockwise circulation pattern at the Shopping Center, which has been in place for many years. It has been found that this circulation pattern, with two drive-thru uses on either end of the existing building operated without any difficulty, traffic delays or pedestrian conflicts. The proposed pavement marking and signing plan only support and improve the circulation and clarity of the counterclockwise, one-way format as noted above. There is a continuous one-lane aisle on each of the building, except the front of the building, which is a two-way aisle and will remain as a two-way aisle format.

10. *Comment 1G – The circulation area to the rear of the building, particularly along the Dry Cleaners, is restricted. It is our understanding that loading/unloading routinely takes place here which could adversely impact traffic circulating around the building. Please address.*

Response 1G – As noted above, the one-lane travel aisle on three sides of the building, as it has been for many years, will remain unchanged. All tenants are obligated to not block this travel lane and use the paved area immediately behind the building and next to their rear access to their store. The Dry Cleaners tenant is obligated, as all of the tenants, not to block this travel lane and not only for customers; however, for emergency vehicles. It is also understood that the vast majority of the Dry Cleaners’ deliveries and pick-ups occur prior to the 10:00 A.M. opening of the Jimmy John’s Store.

11. *Comment 1H – It is indicated that the Application no longer includes the conversion of the access drive on Wolfpit Avenue and that it will remain one-way as it exists today. The Application should provide a vehicle turning template for this driveway and its current configuration should be reviewed*

(width of the curb cut reduced as necessary) to prevent it from informally being utilized as a two-way driveway and also reduce the speeds of vehicles entering the site. All relevant signage and pavement markings should be updated to re-enforce this one-way operation.

Response 1H – The attached updated plan indicates the section of pavement area in the rear access drive from Wolfpit Avenue into the Shopping Center to be removed. In addition to reducing the amount of pavement and modifying the radii on either side of the driveway along Wolfpit Avenue, appropriate traffic control signing is now included to better define this access drive as entrance only and restricting all exiting movements from the Shopping Center to Wolfpit Avenue. This should address the concern that this driveway has been functioning as a two-lane, two-way access drive in the past.

12. Comment 1I – *The Applicant shall be responsible for completing/improving the sidewalk connection (to concrete) along the northerly curb of Westport Avenue between their westerly site access drive and Wolfpit Avenue and installing an ADA accessible crosswalk across Wolfpit Avenue in order to improve pedestrian connectivity to the site.*

Response 1I – The replacement of this sidewalk should have been part of the recently completed CTDOT roadway improvements. However, it is our opinion that as part of the recent road improvements the intent was to have pedestrians cross Westport Avenue at the new crosswalk at the traffic signal at the site west access driveway to reach the sidewalk located on the south side of Westport Avenue to continue to the west and avoid crossing Wolfpit Avenue. There is no sidewalk on the north side of Westport Avenue west of Wolfpit Avenue. Wolfpit Avenue is a wide approach roadway to Westport Avenue, with a small center median. It actually would not be the preferred location to cross. Based on this evaluation, we would not want to extend the concrete sidewalk to Wolfpit Avenue since the pedestrian would be left at a place with no additional sidewalks.

13. Comment 1J – *The Applicant should provide accommodations for bicycle parking within the site.*

Response 1J – Refer to the Updated Site Plan, which shows the location of a bike rack in the area of the previously located drive-thru lanes for the former bank use.

In summary, the above responses to comments hopefully will assist the City in its ongoing review of this Application. It is our opinion and that of the Property Owner and Applicant that this sandwich shop should not be compared to a fast-food restaurant, such as Chick-fil-A or McDonald's. Its level of business throughout the day and also during peak periods is significantly lower than a fast-food restaurant and its transactions times are significantly faster. For those reasons, we are confident that the two-vehicle queuing space for pick-up and the three vehicle queuing space for placing an order is more than adequate to accommodate the needs of the shop, without negative impacts to the internal circulation of the Shopping Center and certain not impacting Westport Avenue traffic flow. However, the Applicant and Property Owner are committed to address these conditions so that this will not occur during the lunch peak hour to ensure motorists do not back-up to the entrance drive to Westport Avenue at any time. Those vehicles will be directed to park in a parking space and walk into the shop. Also, as noted above, the walk-up window to pick-up orders has been eliminated and; therefore, this parking lot will function like any other typical Shopping Center parking lot.

Mr. Steven Kleppin, AICP

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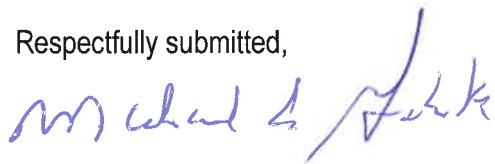
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However, we offer additional pavement markings and signing, which is provided in the attached "Exhibit A – Revised Site Plan and Signage". Specific information for the drive-thru lane is provided in the attached "Exhibit B – Layout and Drive-Thru".

Summary of Exhibits

- Exhibit A – Revised Site Plan and Signage
- Exhibit B – Layout and Drive-Thru
- Exhibit C – Drive Thru Example #1
- Exhibit D – Drive Thru Example #2

Respectfully submitted,



Michael A. Galante
Director of Traffic
Hardesty & Hanover, LLC

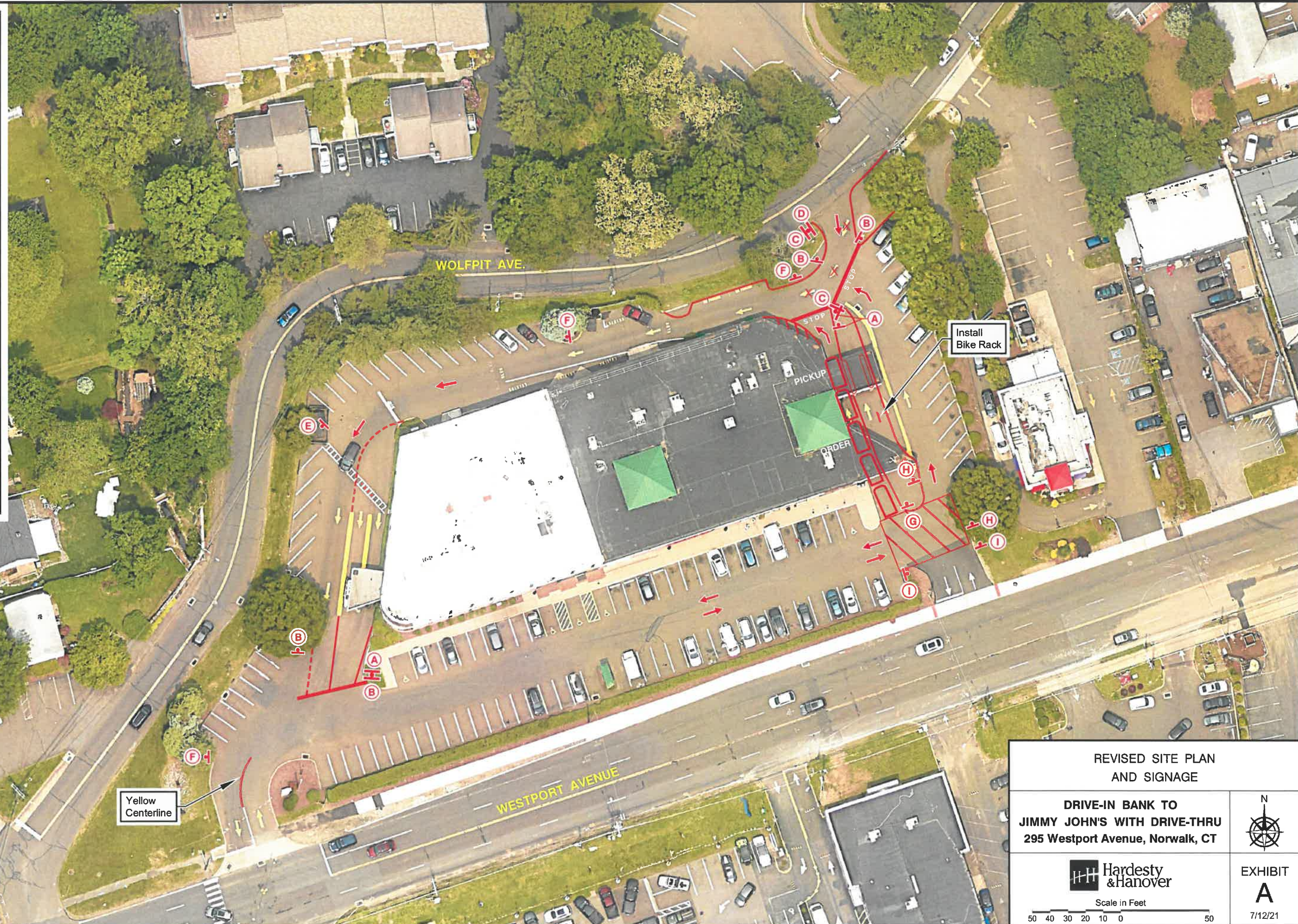
Enclosure

cc: James Travers
Garrett Bolella, P.E.
Alan Webber
John Ryan, Esq.

SIGN LEGEND

- (A)
- (B)
- (C)
- (D)
- (E)
- (F)
- (G)
- (H)
- (I)

NOTE:
All Signs and Pavement Markings Must Conform to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.



REVISED SITE PLAN AND SIGNAGE

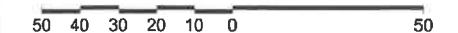
DRIVE-IN BANK TO JIMMY JOHN'S WITH DRIVE-THRU
295 Westport Avenue, Norwalk, CT



Hardesty & Hanover

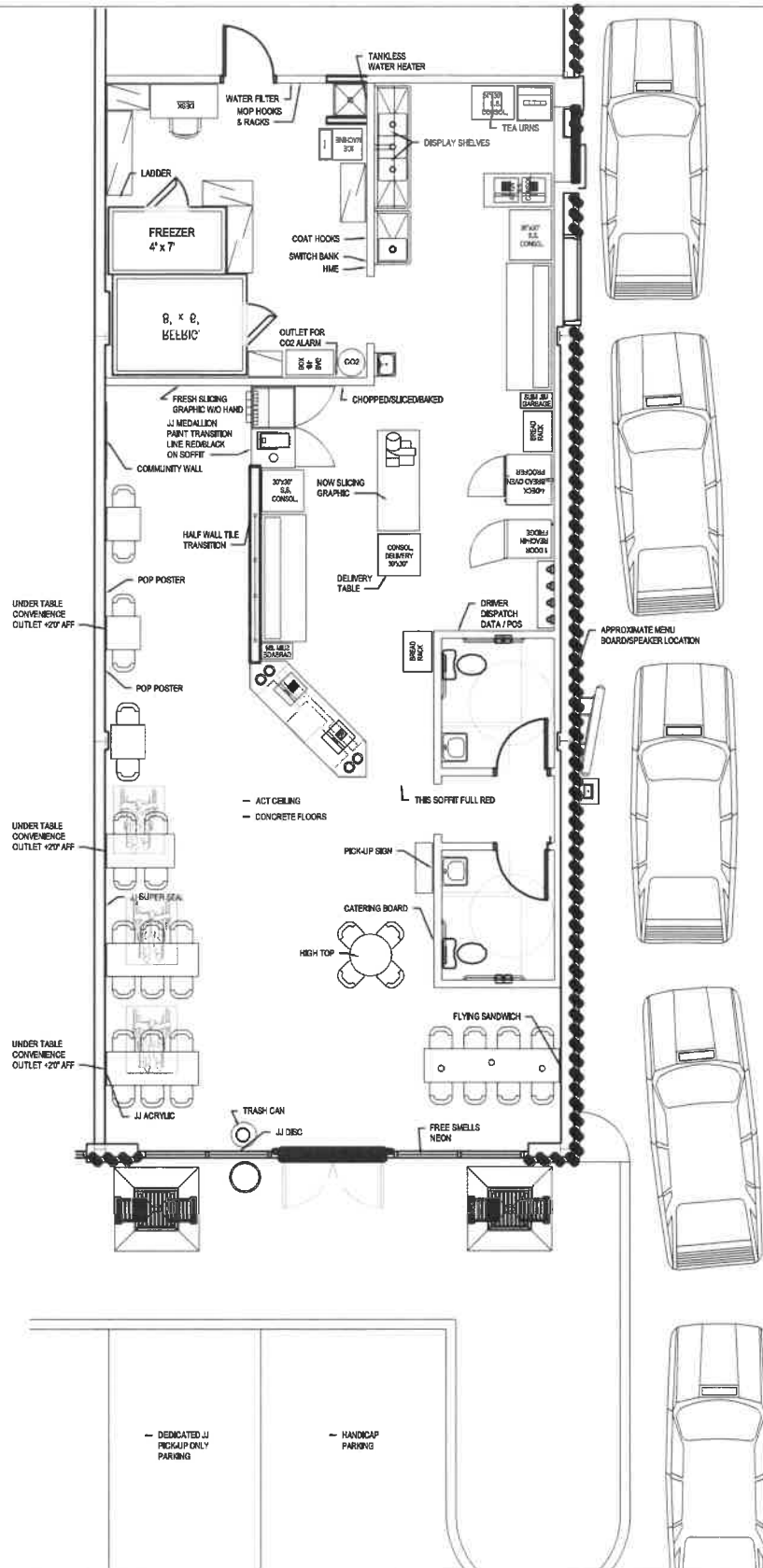
EXHIBIT A

Scale in Feet



7/12/21

Exhibit B



DATE: 4-16-2021
 DRAWN BY: CA
 SEAT COUNT: 34
 LEASABLE SQ. FT.: XXXX SF
 USABLE SQ. FT.: ~2412 SF
 SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"

**STORE LAYOUT
(FUELED DESIGN)**



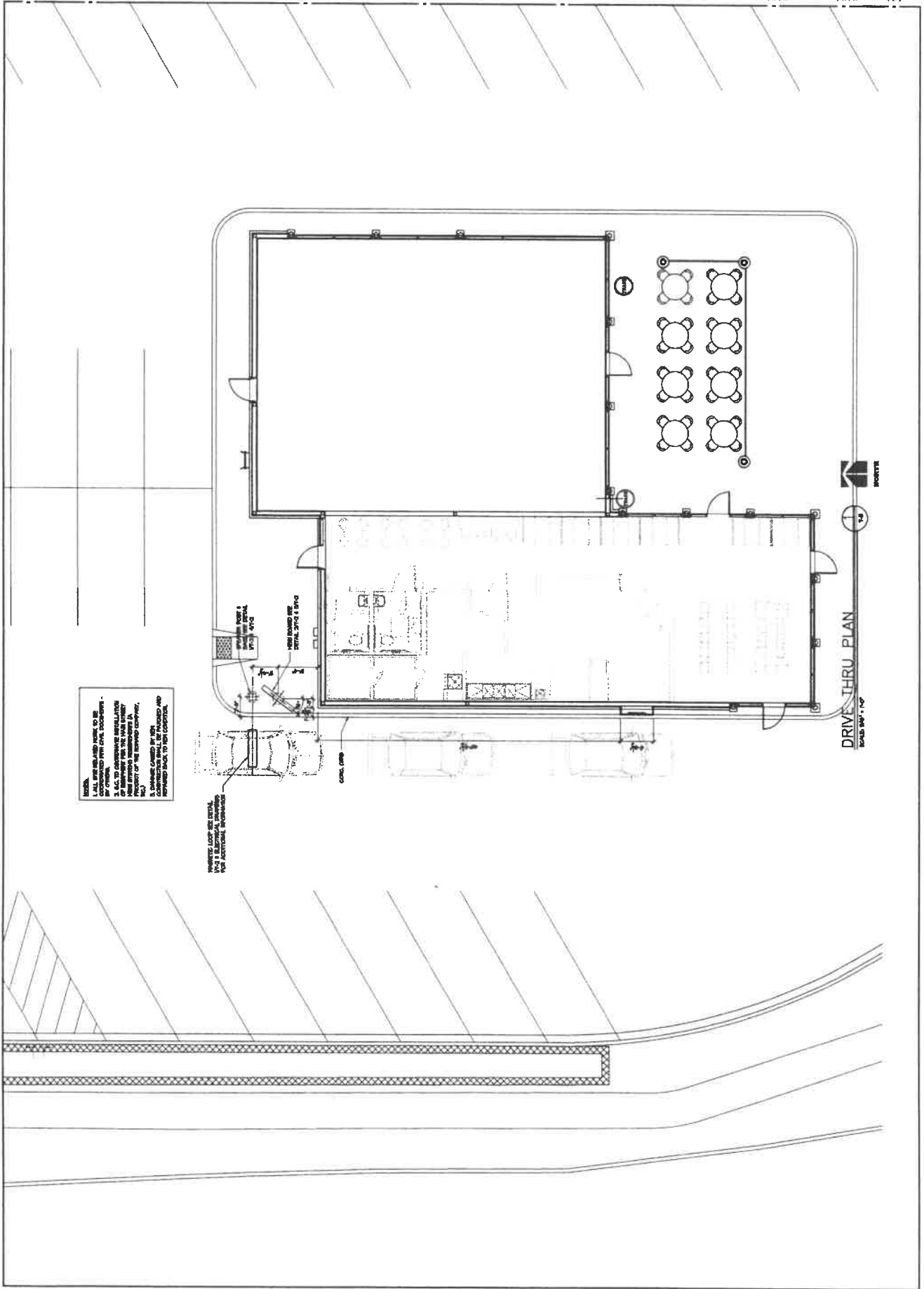
**JIMMY JOHN'S
SANDWICHES**

STORE JJ 4241
 Norwalk, CT

JIMMY JOHN'S
 FRANCHISE, LLC.
 2212 FOX DRIVE
 CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820

PH: 217-356-9900
 FAX: 217-359-2956

Exhibit D



NOTES:
 1. ALL DIMENSIONS SHALL BE TO FACE UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
 2. ALL TO COMPLETION INSTALLATION UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
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REMOVE EXISTING WALL AND RECONSTRUCT WITH 8\"/>

INSTALL NEW DRIVE THRU WINDOW AND SERVICE COUNTER WITH 8\"/>

DRIVE THRU PLAN
 SCALE 1/8\"/>

