

# Bowman

September 2, 2021

Weston Graves, VP Design & Construction  
Trademark Property Company  
1701 River Run, Suite 500  
Fort Worth, TX 76107

**RE:   Redevelopment Plan Amendment  
      For Medical Use  
      Bridgewater Commons  
      Township of Bridgewater, Somerset County  
      BCG File No. 081230-01-001**

Dear Mr. Graves:

As requested in discussion with the project team and the feedback received from the Bridgewater Planning Board at its meeting on August 24, 2021, we have prepared this letter report to address your request to amend the Bridgewater Regional Center Zone Redevelopment Plan. As has been indicated, Crate & Barrel intends to vacate their building and the Summit Medical Group (SMG) has indicated interest in occupying this building in its entirety.

The current zoning for the Bridgewater Regional Center does not permit medical use and this letter report is to provide technical information regarding the proposed addition of medical use as a permitted use at the Crate & Barrel site. First, we would like to describe SMG's operations and plans for this building and how these operations would be compatible and complementary to the existing retail shopping center uses within this zone. We will then describe the parking and traffic aspects of this proposal as compared to the current retail shopping center.

SMG is the largest and oldest physician-owned multi-specialty medical practice in New Jersey. They are headquartered in Berkeley Heights and have over 80 medical practice locations in New Jersey. Their medical offices are generally open Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 5 PM. This proposed facility at Bridgewater Commons is anticipated to include doctor's offices, advanced imaging, orthopedics, physical therapy, laboratory services, pain management, primary care and other medical specialties including, but not limited to, gastroenterology, endocrinology, cardiology and pulmonology. It is also possible that SMG may place an ambulatory surgery center in this facility but specific practices and services are based upon the needs of the communities and their patients.

There are no changes to the building exterior that are proposed other than "frosting" windows in certain ground-level areas for patient privacy as well as new building signage. In addition, Tenant

will modify current revolving entrance doors to automatic sliding doors and/or traditional swing entry doors compliant with codes and regulations. It is not anticipated that there will be any modifications to the site improvements. Should the Tenant seek any modifications to the site, unless they can be addressed administratively, they would file an amended site plan application with the Township, which would follow all of the established policies and procedures of the Township. At this stage of the process, Mall Management is seeking to amend the Redevelopment Plan for the Bridgewater Regional Center Zone to permit medical uses.

Medical uses are permitted in a number of existing commercial (and other) zones within the Township, including much of the Route 22 corridor. The most recent master plan reexamination was dated April 23, 2018 and examined a number of objectives and discussed the various aspects of each of seven (7) objectives as to how they have changed since this last reexamination, identify specific changes and provide recommendations.

This Reexamination Report recognized that there remains a strong desire to "improve and fortify the appeal of the Township" (Objective 1). The report goes on to state that "Bridgewater Township should continue to maintain and improve its ... commercial sector without creating undue intrusion from traffic, noise, light and degraded air quality." It further states in Objective 1, "As often the case, changes in land use and adjustments to lifestyle needs can occur swiftly ... assumptions and policies must acknowledge and respond to these changes circumstances."

The impending vacancy of the Crate & Barrel store creates a void in a very prominent location in the Village portion of the mall. On-going impacts of the pandemic and societal changes in the retail marketplace have changed the landscape of potential tenants for this sized building. The opportunity to attract the Summit Medical Group to this location will improve the visual and economic benefit to the Township for this prominent location along Route 22. There has been a trend to locate medical facilities in and near retail shopping centers as these retail facilities are a focal point of community activity, creating a synergistic environment.

This location is ideal for creating a synergistic environment, the medical office space will result in a population of employees and patients that can patronize the existing retail stores and restaurants within The Village during the week without additional traffic or parking demands, strengthening the walkability of The Village. Also, given that the medical uses are primarily a Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM use, there are opportunities to utilize the parking areas proximate to this building during peak restaurant and retail periods of evenings and weekends to address any periodic peak parking demands.

Specifically, as to parking, in the Bridgewater Regional Center Zone ("BRC Zone") where regional shopping centers are permitted, parking is required at 4 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross leasable area. The Village contains a total of 92,466 square feet which yields a parking demand of 370 parking spaces, whereas 535 parking spaces are provided. Medical office space

has a higher parking requirement as set forth in Section 126-169 of the Township ordinance, at 4.5 spaces per 1000 square feet.

The existing Crate & Barrel store contains 34,218 square feet which would yield a parking requirement of 154 parking spaces. The remaining shopping center space of 58,248 square feet would have a parking requirement of 233 parking spaces, for a total parking requirement of 387 spaces. While this is an increase in the parking requirement of 17 spaces over an all shopping center use, it remains well below the 535 parking spaces provided. Also, as stated before, the parking spaces proximate to the subject building would be available for use on weekday evenings and on weekends as the medical offices would be closed or at a very limited occupancy.

To provide some perspective on the likely parking demands for The Village, we have also examined the parking demands based upon the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Parking Generation, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. These parking demand data are based upon a compilation of studies of other similar type facilities. For a medical office use of the size proposed, the ITE data calculates the peak parking demand would be 110 spaces, compared to the Township's requirement of 154 spaces. Therefore, the Township's parking requirement is conservative. As for a shopping center, on a December Friday (the peak of the peak), the ITE data calculates the peak parking demand would be 220 spaces, similar to the Township's parking requirement of 233 parking spaces.

Therefore, it is our professional opinion that there is more than sufficient parking within The Village to accommodate both the medical office and the remaining retail shopping center demands. Again, as stated previously, the parking spaces proximate to the medical office building, would also be available for use on weekday evenings and all day on weekends. The proposed change to permit medical offices within this zone would not unduly burden the site, and in fact would make more parking available during peak retail times.

As to traffic generation, we have prepared a Trip Generation Summary, Table 1, based upon data contained in the ITE Trip Generation Manual, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. As shown in Table 1, there is a small increase in traffic during the AM peak hour, but decreases during the PM peak hour, Saturday peak hour and both daily and Saturday daily volumes. Although there is a small increase during the AM peak hour, the overall volumes into The Village are approximately half of what are experienced during the PM and Saturday peak hours. Traffic volumes along Commons Way during the AM peak hour are also approximately half of what the volumes are during the PM and Saturday peak hours. Therefore, there is more than sufficient capacity at the intersection of Crossing Boulevard with Commons Way to accommodate the traffic generated by the proposed medical office use.

In summary, it is our professional opinion that the addition of medical use to the permitted uses within the Bridgewater Regional Center Zone would support and encourage the objectives of the Township's Master Plan as set forth in the 2018 Reexamination Report. The occupancy of this soon to be vacant retail building by the Summit Medical Group would maintain and enhance the

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vibrancy of The Village at Bridgewater Commons. Further, the proposed medical use would not burden the parking supply at The Village nor create traffic, noise or air quality issues within this commercial zone. It would create synergies between the existing shopping center uses and the medical office, with the employees and patients patronizing these retail businesses.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,  
BOWMAN CONSULTING GROUP, LTD.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric L. Keller".

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