State of New Jersey
DELAWARE AND RARITAN CANAL COMMISSION
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STAFF REPORT

DRCC #: 26-1454F
DATE: August 31, 2026
PROJECT NAME: 15 Cranbury Road -- Residential Apartment Development
Latest Submission Received: August 21, 2026

Applicant:
400 Steps, LLC
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Engineer:
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ACT Engineers, Inc.
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Project Location:

Road	Municipality	County	Block(s)	Lot(s)
15 Cranbury Road	West Windsor Township	Mercer	5	19

Jurisdictional Determination:

Zone B	Major	Nongovernmental

Subject to Review for:

Drainage	Visual	Traffic	Stream Corridors
X			X

Documents Received: Site Plans (28 sheets) dated March 22, 2023, revised July 9, 2026; Stormwater Management Report dated March 28, 2023, revised July 9, 2026; prepared by ACT Engineers, Inc.

THIS STAFF REPORT IS ISSUED AS A GUIDE TO APPLICANTS IN COMPLYING WITH DRCC REGULATIONS. IT IS NOT AN APPROVAL. NO CONSTRUCTION SHALL BEGIN UNTIL A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL HAS BEEN ISSUED.

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The application is complete and shall be presented to the Commission for their action with a staff recommendation of approval at the September 16, 2026, meeting based upon the following analysis:

Existing Conditions: The project site is a 3.8-acre lot located in the Princeton Junction neighborhood of West Windsor Township, northeast of the intersection of Princeton-Hightstown Road and Cranbury Road, approximately 1.95 miles southeast of the Delaware and Raritan Canal and within Commission Review Zone B.

The project site is bounded by the Amtrak/NJ Transit Northeast Corridor Rail Line to the north, areas of woods along with some single-family residential developments to the east, a retail shopping center development to the south, and by Princeton-Hightstown Road followed by a municipal parking lot and railroad related infrastructure to the west.

In the existing condition, the site is developed with a former retail shopping center consisting of an abandoned two-story retail building, an abandoned one-story retail building, parking areas for both buildings, and a stormwater basin in the northern corner of the property. According to the applicant's submission, impervious surface coverage in the proposed condition totals 105,063 square feet (4.57 acres) and is visible on aerial imagery dating to 2002.

A review of historic aerial imagery indicates that for much of the 20th century the project site was vacant land. The retail shopping center to the south, along with the project lot, were the subject of Commission certificates of approval (DRCC #87-1454 and DRCC#14-1454A). In 2022 the Commission approved a project to demolish the existing site improvements and construct four residential apartment buildings consisting of 144 units (DRCC #21-1454B). A major modification to that approval was approved by the

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Commission in 2025 (DRCC #24-1454D). However, this project, and the modification thereto, was not constructed and the underlying certificate of approval expired on August 18, 2026.

Proposed Project: The applicant proposes the demolition of the existing improvements and the construction of a four-story, 108-unit residential apartment development, along with associated surface and garage parking areas, concrete sidewalks, paver patio, exterior lighting, landscaping, electric vehicle chargers, trash/recycling enclosure, conversion of a surface detention basin to a surface infiltration basin, and other site amenities.

The project would result in the creation of 21,260 square feet (0.49 acre) of impervious surface coverage, and the disturbance of approximately 169,884 square feet (3.9 acres) of land.

Stream Corridor: The project site is located within the Millstone River Watershed area. The Millstone River and Bear Brook are located to the north of the property. Based upon a review of the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) of the area, the floodplain of the Millstone River and Bear Brook are within 100-feet of the northeast end of the property.

For this project, the Commission defines "stream corridor" to mean the Millstone River and Bear Brook, the 100-year floodplain associated with the Millstone River and Bear Brook, and all of the land within a 100-foot buffer adjacent to the 100-year flood line associated with the Millstone River and Bear Brook. A Commission stream corridor map has been submitted by the applicant. The submitted stream corridor map confirms that the northeast end of the property is located within the defined Commission stream corridor.

Based on a 100-year floodplain elevation of 64 feet NAVD, the applicant had accurately plotted the limits of the stream corridor onsite. Although a Commission stream corridor is present onsite, the applicant has designed the project so that no intrusions are proposed within the corridor. Therefore, this project is not subject to stream corridor impact review pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:45-9.1(a).

Stormwater Runoff Quantity: The property generally slopes in a northeasterly direction. An existing drainage system is located in the parking lot that covers approximately 40 percent (%) of the site. Stormwater runoff from the site, as well as portions of the neighboring properties to the south, is presently being detained by the basin located in the northern corner of the property. The proposed improvements would result in an overall increase in the amount of impervious surface coverage onsite, which in turn would result in an associated increase in stormwater runoff when compared with the existing conditions if unmitigated.

The submitted application proposes to control stormwater runoff flow and volume through the incorporation of best management practice (BMP) measures, consisting of an existing aboveground detention basin that is proposed to be modified to a surface infiltration basin, as well as three sections of porous pavement. The modified basin (Basin B) is located in the northern corner of the property and would be converted to a surface infiltration basin as part of this project application to address stormwater quantity control. These adjustments would include modifications to the outlet control structure, construction of a

retaining wall, and regrading of the basin to increase its storage capacity. The proposed porous pavement sections would be located around the outside of the proposed apartment building. All of the stormwater BMP outflows would be controlled by outlet control structures.

Discharges have been analyzed at one specific point-of-analysis, which is located downstream of the existing detention basin. The stormwater measures have been designed so that the post-construction peak runoff rates for the 2-, 10- and 100-year storm events will be no greater than 50%, 75% and 80%, respectively, of the preconstruction peak runoff rates.

The submitted calculations utilized the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Technical Release No. 55 (TR-55) hydrologic methodology, NOAA Region C unit hydrograph rainfall distribution, standard peak rate factor and current New Jersey 24-hour rainfall frequency data for Mercer County to compute peak runoff flow rates and volumes. The post-developed peak flows were calculated by creating separate pervious and impervious hydrographs for post-developed conditions and combining to develop total post-developed hydrographs.

Based upon a review of the calculations submitted, Commission staff has been determined that the proposed stormwater management measures would provide sufficient peak flow attenuation to and comply with the specific runoff quantity standards at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.6(a)1.

Water Quality: The Commission requires that all proposed full-depth pavement, including newly constructed and reconstructed parking and access drives that are being renewed, shall comply with water quality standards at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.7. This includes reduction of the post-construction load of total suspended solids (TSS) in stormwater runoff generated from the water quality design storm by a rate of 80% of the anticipated load from the developed site, expressed as an annual average. Non-vehicular travel surfaces (i.e., building roofs, plaza/amenity areas, sidewalks, etc.) are not subject to stormwater runoff quality requirements.

Based upon the submitted application, new parking and access road drive pavement areas are being proposed onsite. The submitted stormwater design proposes to treat for water quality by incorporating a combination of stormwater BMP measures, including one surface infiltration basin, and three sections of pervious pavement.

As noted above, the existing surface detention basin (Basin B) located at the northern corner of the property is proposed to be modified as part of the current project to address water quality requirements. Specifically, Basin B would be converted to a surface infiltration basin as part to address the water quantity requirement. This infiltration basin has been designed to completely infiltrate the volume generated by the water quality design storm. Pursuant to the NJ Stormwater BMP Manual, surface infiltration basins that are designed in accordance with specific criteria can provide a TSS removal rate of 80%.

Three porous pavement sections are proposed throughout the parking areas located around the building. Pervious pavement systems designed in accordance with the NJ Stormwater BMP Manual are assigned an 80% TSS removal rate.

The subsurface soil conditions meet the minimum permeability rate for the use of an infiltration system. The applicant has submitted data from test pits, and soil profile logs, located within each BMP footprint, where hydraulic conductivity testing was performed. In addition, this analysis was also used to determine the estimated seasonal high-water table (ESHWT) elevation at the location of each BMP. Results from the testing yielded permeability rates that either meet or exceed the minimum design criteria for an infiltration BMP measure and will be designed with the minimum required separation from the ESHWT elevation. However, there were some areas that were not tested. In these areas the applicant proposes soil replacement to meet the minimum permeability standard.

Therefore, Commission staff have determined that the stormwater quality measures have been designed in compliance with the requirements at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.7.

Groundwater Recharge: The Commission regulations require that stormwater management measures maintain 100% of the average annual preconstruction groundwater recharge volume for the site, or that any increase of stormwater runoff volume from pre-construction to post-construction for the 2-year storm is infiltrated. The proposed development of the site would result in an increase in the amount of existing impervious surfaces associated with new buildings, parking and access drives. This increase in impervious surface coverage onsite could result in an associated decrease in the amount of groundwater recharge as compared to the existing conditions if unmitigated.

A groundwater recharge analysis calculation (NJDEP GSR-32 spreadsheet) has been submitted, which demonstrates that the annual groundwater recharge deficit for the entire site is 22,900 cubic feet. The stormwater report notes that to mitigate for this deficit, runoff from the proposed project will be infiltrated back into the ground through the use of BMP measures consisting of three porous pavement sections. The proposed BMP measure has been designed to infiltrate more than the annual groundwater recharge deficit.

Therefore, Commission staff have determined that the project is in compliance with the groundwater recharge requirements at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.5.

Non-Structural Methods: The Commission requires that nonstructural stormwater management strategies be incorporated into the stormwater design of a development project. To assist in determining that sufficient non-structural stormwater management strategies have been incorporated into the project site design "to the maximum extent practicable," the NJDEP Nonstructural Strategies Point System (NSPS) spreadsheet has been completed for this project. The NSPS results indicate that the ratio of proposed to existing site points (140%) is greater than or equal to the required site points ratio (87%). Therefore, the project has proposed non-structural measures that are adequate, and the project is designed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.4.

Stormwater Management Maintenance Plan: A stormwater management operation and maintenance plan document has been prepared and submitted for the BMP elements

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proposed for the apartment building project. The plan includes maintenance details for the proposed stormwater BMP measures, including an aboveground surface infiltration basin and a pervious pavement system. The plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.8.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval.

Sincerely,

John Hutchison
Executive Director

c. Mercer County Planning Board
West Windsor Township Planning Board

Please refer to the Commission project number (DRCC #) when making a submission, a resubmission, or transmitting project correspondence or documents.