State of New Jersey
DELAWARE AND RARITAN CANAL COMMISSION
PRALLSVILLE MILLS | 33 RISLER STREET | P.O. BOX 539
STOCKTON, N.J. 08559-0539
www.nj.gov/dep/drcc

STAFF REPORT

DRCC #: 26-6262A
DATE: March 24, 2026
PROJECT NAME: 444 Route 31 -- Automobile Service Building
Latest Submission Received: March 24, 2026

Applicant:
John J. Novak
444 Route 31
West Amwell, NJ 08530
johnnovak9451@gmail.com

Engineer:
Eric B. Rupnarain, P.E.
Goldenbaum Baill Engineering, Inc.
1509 Route 179, Unit C
Lambertville, NJ 08530
ebr@gbamail.com

Project Location:

Road	Municipality	County	Block(s)	Lot(s)
444 N.J. State Highway Route No. 31	West Amwell Township	Hunterdon	21	9

Jurisdictional Determination:

Zone B	Major	Nongovernmental

Subject to Review for:

Drainage	Visual	Traffic	Stream Corridors
X			

Documents Received: Site Plans (7 pages) dated February 26, 2024, revised February 27, 2026; Stormwater Management Report (98 pages) dated February 27, 2026, prepared by Goldenbaum Baill Engineering.

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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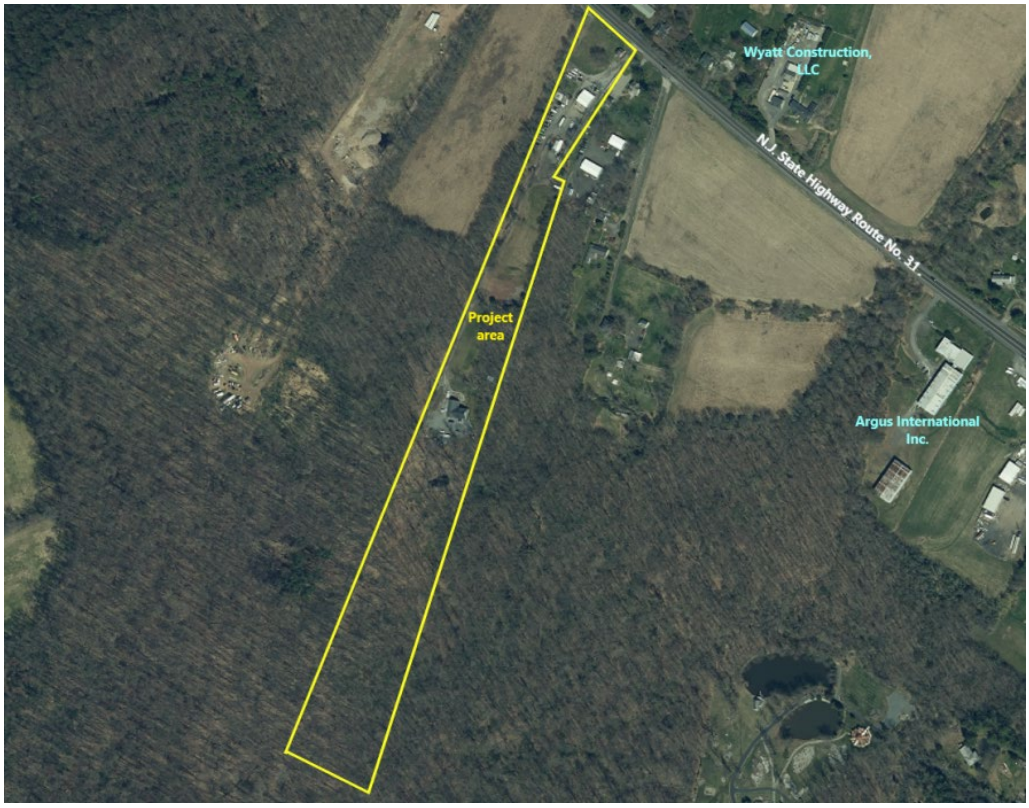
The application is complete and shall be presented to the Commission for their action with a staff recommendation of approval at the April 15, 2026, meeting based upon the following analysis:

Existing Conditions: The project area is a 12.3-acre lot located on the southbound side of N.J. State Highway Route No. 31 (Route 31) in West Amwell Township, Hunterdon County, approximately 5.3 miles northeast of the Delaware and Raritan Canal and within Commission Review Zone B.



The project site is bounded by woods to the west, south, and east, with commercial developments located along Route 31 to the north. There are no streams or mapped watercourses on the site, the nearest being a tributary of Stony Brook located approximately 505 feet to the east.

In the existing condition, the site consists of several buildings, including two two-story residential dwellings, a detached garage, a barn, an existing automobile repair shop, a shed, and areas of concrete, pavement, and gravel. The applicant's submission indicates that impervious surface coverage in the existing condition totals 86,586 square feet (1.99 acres). A review of historic aerial imagery using the NJ-GeoWeb online mapping tool indicates that several of the above-mentioned improvements were constructed subsequent to January 11, 1980.

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Proposed Project: The applicant proposes to construct a 3,200 square-foot, five-bay, automobile service building over an area of existing gravel. The applicant's submission indicates that 0.77 acres of impervious surface coverage was added to the site after 2010. This project intends to remove 0.31 acres of existing gravel. As a result, the development plan will address the 0.46 acres of impervious surface added to the site after 2010. Therefore, the proposed site will result in 1.68 acres of impervious surface coverage and the disturbance of approximately 0.96 acres of land.

Stream Corridor: The project site is located within the Stony Brook watershed area. Stony Brook is located approximately 500 feet north of the subject site property. The Stony Brook is not tributary to the Delaware and Raritan Canal.

At the downstream limit of the site, Stony Brook has an upstream drainage area of 50 acres or more. The 100-year floodplain elevation for Stony Brook is identified by an existing FEMA study. Based on this information, Commission staff finds the proposed developed portions of the site are located more than 100 linear feet from the 100-year floodplain of Stony Brook. Therefore, the project is not subject to a stream corridor impact review pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:45-9.1(a).

Stormwater Runoff Quantity: The project site lot generally slopes toward the north and to Route 31. In the existing condition, there are no surface attenuation stormwater management best management practices (BMPs)located onsite. Discharges have been analyzed at one point-of-analysis, located along the northern property line at Route 31. The submitted application proposes to control stormwater runoff flow and volume in this drainage area using a surface detention basin with an outlet control structure. The applicant has provided engineering calculations verifying that for stormwater leaving the site, the post-construction peak runoff rates for the 2-, 10- and 100-year storm events will be no greater than 50, 75 and 80 percent (%), respectively, of the pre-construction peak runoff rates.

The submitted calculations utilized the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Technical Release No. 55 (TR-55) hydrologic methodology, Standard unit hydrograph rainfall distribution and current New Jersey 24-hour rainfall frequency data for Hunterdon County to compute peak runoff flow rates and volumes. Therefore, Commission staff determines that the application includes acceptable stormwater management measures that would provide sufficient attenuation to comply with the specific stormwater runoff quantity standards at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.6.

Water Quality: The Commission requires that all proposed pavement parking and access drives 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.

Based upon the submitted application, 0.46 acre of motor vehicle surface require water quality treatment. This application proposes to direct 0.49 acre of motor vehicle surface to three Aqua-Ponic™ biofiltration systems.

The proposed Aqua-Ponic™ biofiltration systems are manufactured treatment devices (MTDs). A MTD is a proprietary stormwater treatment system used to address the stormwater quality impacts of land development. MTDs rely upon a variety of mechanisms to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff. A MTD must possess a certification letter from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to be accepted for use, and shall be sized in accordance with its published verification report. There are three types of MTDs currently certified by the DEP: hydrodynamic sedimentation (HDS) devices, filtration devices, and subsurface settling ponds. When designed in accordance with this chapter, the TSS removal rate is either 50% or 80%. The adopted TSS removal rate for the proposed filtration MTD is 80%. Therefore, the project is in compliance with the specific water quality standards 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 pre-construction 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 applicant's submission indicates the onsite soils have characteristics of a Hydrologic Soil Group (HSG) Type "D" soil and, therefore, do not provide recharge. The submitted stormwater management report includes subsurface geotechnical investigation documentation confirming the HSG for the site. Therefore, the specific groundwater recharge requirements at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.5 have been addressed.

Non-Structural Methods: To determine if the development includes sufficient non-structural stormwater management strategies have been incorporated into the project site design "to the maximum extent practicable," the 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 (90%) does not exceed the required site points ratio (97%).

Commission staff notes that the submitted NSPS spreadsheet incorrectly indicated that the stormwater runoff quality compliance was met using only non-structural strategies and measures. However, MTDs are considered structural BMP measures. Nevertheless, the applicant has provided other sufficient non-structural stormwater management strategies into the project design. These strategies include green infrastructure BMP practices, the maintenance of existing drainage patterns, and the maintenance of the volume of stormwater generated from the site when compared to the development onsite in the existing condition. Therefore, Commission staff determines that the project has been designed in accordance with the specific nonstructural stormwater management standards at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.4.

Stormwater Management Maintenance Plan: The applicant has submitted a stormwater management maintenance plan for the site. The submitted plan has been prepared in accordance with the specific requirements at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.8.

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Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval.

Sincerely,

John Hutchison
Executive Director

c. Hunterdon County Planning Board
West Amwell Township Planning Board

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