

**The Stop & Shop Supermarket Company LLC  
Block 701, Lot 3  
404 Springfield Avenue  
(a/k/a 410 (Rear) Springfield Avenue)  
Berkeley Heights, New Jersey**

**Written Use Plan  
Stop & Shop Online Pick-up  
Revised May 19, 2021**

The Stop & Shop Supermarket Company LLC (“Stop & Shop”) is implementing throughout its stores “Stop & Shop Delivery & Pickup,” a curbside online pickup arrangement whereby customers who place online orders can quickly and conveniently pick them up at the store without exiting their vehicle. For the Stop & Shop store in Berkeley Heights, this involves the installation of eight (8) single-faced signs designating certain parking spaces for “Delivery & Pickup.” These signs were installed pursuant to a temporary zoning permit under Zoning Application ZA-20-690, but Stop & Shop was advised by the Zoning Officer that an application to the Planning Board would be required in order for them to become permanent. Therefore, Stop & Shop has submitted this application.

**Overview**

Stop & Shop Delivery & Pickup is an e-commerce order and pickup solution provided to customers who are looking for the convenience of shopping for groceries online but may not want to have delivery and would rather order and pick up their order at the store.

**Order Process**

- Customer goes online and selects the store they would like to pick up their order from, along with the pickup time, then completes their order. Payment is 100% online and not tendered at the store.
- Once the order is placed, it is routed to a team of associates in the store who select the items ordered and stage the order in a dedicated staging room for pickup.
- The customer arrives during the selected pickup time and pulls into a dedicated pickup space that is clearly marked for customer parking. The customer then calls the number provided on the signs at each dedicated parking space, tells the store personnel the number of the parking space in which they are parked (signs are numbered #1 through #8), and the attendant brings the customer’s order out to their car.

## **Operational Goals**

- Customer feedback has shown that when customers wait more than five (5) minutes to receive their orders, customer confidence begins to deteriorate. Thus, parking spaces for online pickup are selected for their proximity to the building exit, balanced against the need to provide convenient parking for in-store customers.
- The goal is to process 15-20 orders per hour. Hours of operation are 8am-9pm daily. Projected volume is used to determine the appropriate number of parking spaces needed to turn customer orders each hour without incurring backups.
- Parking space selection is determined balancing the needs of both in store customers, on line customers, and associate safety. The goal is to not take the primary row of customer parking in front of an entrance but to take spaces in an adjacent row to allow for speed to the customer and protect associate safety.
- Data shows that ~70% of customers who use this service are already shopping within the store and just shift to online ordering. These customers would already be frequenting the store and occupying parking spaces while they shop. This service aims to have those customers arrive and depart in five (5) minutes, thereby freeing up other spaces for customers much more quickly than would be the case if an online customer shopped in person instead.

## **Site Plan Application**

The eight (8) single-faced signs designating certain parking spaces for “Delivery & Pickup” constitute directional signs under the sign definitions in § 5.2<sup>1</sup> of the Township of Berkeley Heights Municipal Land Use Procedures Ordinance (the “Ordinance”). The Property is located in the Downtown Development (DD) District, in which directional signs not exceeding three (3) square feet in total area “are **allowed by permit** within the Township of Berkeley Heights provided that they conform to all of the relevant provisions of this ordinance and the property permit has been issued by the Zoning Officer.” § 5.4.2.4 (emphasis added). The proposed directional signs measure three (3) square feet.

This provision notwithstanding, § 10.1.2.B. provides that “[no] changes shall be made to a site, regardless of cost, which would alter the conformance of the site with the previously-approved Site Plan.” Any sign necessarily changes the site and renders it out of full conformity with the approved Site Plan. Given this

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<sup>1</sup> A “directional sign” is defined as “[a] sign or structure used to indicate the direction of pedestrian or vehicular traffic flow.” § 5.2.

conflict within the code, Stop & Shop was advised that site plan approval would be required in order for the customer pickup signs to become permanent.

In view of the minor nature of the proposed signage, this application should be classified as a Minor Site Plan in accordance with § 10.1.3.B. of Ordinance, which provides that “[u]pon written request of an applicant for Preliminary Site Plan Approval, the Planning Board may, at a public meeting, by resolution stating the justification, classify the site plan application as a Minor Site Plan and waive the requirement of notice and public hearing for the site plan application.” It further provides that “[a]n application shall only be classified as a minor site plan if it meets all of the following criteria” which are set forth below followed by the Applicant’s response describing the manner in which each is satisfied:

1. There are no variances required from any provision of this Ordinance;

*RESPONSE: The proposed directional signs are fully conforming. No variances are required.*

2. There is no change in the nature of the use of the site;

*RESPONSE: The site will continue to operate as a shopping center, with the anchor tenant remaining Stop & Shop.*

3. There is no change to the exterior elevations of any buildings, other than changes in signage;

*RESPONSE: No changes to the exterior elevations of any buildings are proposed.*

4. Any increase in impervious surface coverage does not exceed 1,000 square feet or 5% of the existing impervious surface coverage, whichever the lesser;

*RESPONSE: No changes in impervious coverage are proposed.*

5. Any increase in the required number of parking spaces does not exceed five.

*RESPONSE: This application does not change the required number of parking spaces. Since ~70% of customers who use the online ordering and customer pickup service are already shopping within the store, parking demand will be reduced as shopping trips of longer duration are replaced by customer pickup visits with a target duration of no more than 5 minutes for customers to receive their orders.*

In view of the above, this application should be classified as a Minor Site Plan, and the requirement of notice and public hearing should be waived.

### **Submission Waiver Requests**

The Township does not have a checklist for Minor Site Plans. Instead, applicants must apply for preliminary site plan approval, and as outlined above, request that the application be classified as a Minor Site Plan in accordance with § 10.1.3.B. of the Ordinance. As a result, the applicant must follow the checklist for major site plans which requires substantial, detailed information that is not pertinent or not necessary in view of the improvements proposed being limited to directional signage. Therefore, Stop & Shop seeks submission waivers from each of the items noted as “No” on the “Checklist – Site Plan.” Those items are not needed in order for the Planning Board to make an informed decision concerning this application.

### **Compliance with the Ordinance**

As noted, this application complies with the Ordinance. No variances are required.

### **Conformity with Master Plan**

The Township of Berkeley Heights Master Plan, September 2007, is the most recent master plan. It devotes substantial attention to the Downtown Business District, and recommends implementation of design standards which now appear in § 19-5.1 *et seq.* of the Ordinance. The design standards address a variety of topics, including building architecture and streetscape improvements. The portions concerning signage are focused on building signs and on monument identification signs. Directional signs are not specifically addressed, and therefore the proposed signage is not inconsistent with the Master Plan.