



January 25, 2023

Borough of Raritan  
22 First Street  
Raritan, NJ 08869  
Mr. Lou Gara, Administrative Zoning Official

Re: **Valley Wellness Operations and Parking Plan Prepared for the Borough of Raritan**

Dear Mr. Gara:

Enclosed please find Valley Wellness, LLC's Operations and Parking Plan that we are submitting as part of, and in support of, our application for site plan approval and our request for a variance as to parking as an expanded alternative treatment center ("ATC").

Regards,

*Sarah E. Trent*

Sarah E. Trent, Esq  
Chief Executive Officer  
Valley Wellness, LLC

**SUMMARY CHART**

<i>GENERAL INFO</i>	
<i>Name</i>	Valley Wellness, LLC
<i>Store Address</i>	407 Route 202, Raritan, NJ, 08869
<i>Contact Info</i>	Sarah Trent, sarah.trent@gmail.com, 305-613-9015
<i>Hours of Operation</i>	10am to 6pm – 7 days a week
<i>Total floor area of store</i>	2676 SF
<i>Sales and waiting area</i>	946 SF
<i>EMPLOYEES</i>	
<i># full-time employees</i>	3
<i># part-time employees</i>	13
<i># VW employees on-site</i>	7
<i>SECURITY GUARDS</i>	
<i>Security Guards</i>	1 guard on site during all hours of operation, included above
<i>PATIENTS</i>	
<i>Est. # of trans per day</i>	150, 50 medical, 100 personal use
<i>AUTO PARKING</i>	
<i># VW employees</i>	7
<i># VW dedicated patient spots</i>	2
<i># VW additional AU customers max</i>	3
<i># Uneda employees</i>	3
<i># Uneda dedicated spots</i>	2
<i># Uneda additional customers max</i>	5
<b><i># parking at peak</i></b>	<b>22</b>
<i>BIKE PARKING</i>	
<i># Bicycle parking on site</i>	2



## **BACKGROUND**

Valley Wellness, LLC f/k/a Middle Valley Partners, LLC was founded in 2018 by Sarah Trent who is the Managing Member and CEO of the Company. Sarah owns 55% of the Company. 24% of the Company is made up of other investors – none of which own more than 4% in total. There are eight additional officers of the Company that act in an advisory capacity to the CEO. Valley Wellness is qualified as a Women Business Enterprise under New Jersey State Law and Sarah operates the business and is in charge of day-to-day operations. The structure and ownership of Valley Wellness has not changed since we last appeared in front of the planning board.

Dating back to 2018 Valley Wellness has been preparing to operate a medical cannabis dispensary in Somerset County. In August 2019 Valley Wellness applied to the Department of Health, Medical Marijuana Program, to operate the above business. Due to litigation the evaluation process was delayed, and finally in December 2022 Valley Wellness was awarded a provisional permit by the State. Over the course of the last 13 months, Valley Wellness applied for and obtained site plan approval for the medical Alternative Treatment Center (“ATC”) along with corresponding construction permits, built out the facility, completed construction, obtained state approval to open, and in fact opened to serve medical patients.

Currently, Valley Wellness is open from 10 AM – 6 PM on the weekdays and until 4 PM on the weekends. We are seeing an average of 35 patients a day and have an average of 4 employees on site during operations, including the security guard. Valley Wellness held a Grand Opening celebration on December 9, 2022, where over 50+ people were on site coming and going from the facility via neighboring side streets. We have built relationships with the police department and fire officials and are dedicated to being good community partners.

Below is Valley Wellness’ (1) Operations Plan and (2) Parking Projections. In summary, Valley Wellness projects serving 150 patient/customers per day with a maximum of 7 employees on site. Based on the data obtained and reported on by the French Parrello Parking Report (attached) Valley Wellness is confident in its ability to maintain patient and customer parking, for both itself and Uneeda Appliance, upon becoming and expanded ATC.

Valley Wellness understands the importance of utilizing operational tools to ensure that we continue to be a good community partner and neighbor.

## **OPERATION PLAN**

*Introduction* – Valley Wellness will always prioritize medical patients. Specifically, upon entering our facility there will be two queues – one for patients and the other for personal-use. Appropriate signage will be used and partitions in place clearly distinguishing the two lines. Dedicated staff will be scheduled and trained to serve and accommodate patients before personal-use customers. Patient’s will be accommodated in the same manner they are now, by completing new patient paperwork and verification of their state MCP card credentials.



To enter the facility, a personal-use customer must show their identification card to a Valley Wellness employee for that employee to confirm that the customer is at least 21 years old. A Valley Wellness employee will again verify the customer's age at the point-of-sale when collecting tender.

Menus and product availability will also be prioritized for patients. Using our Point-of-Sale software, Dutchie's threshold settings, stock limits will be placed on all items ensuring availability for patients. When a SKU's stock drops to a pre-designated level, the SKU will be removed from the personal-use menu and only remain on the patient menu. Threshold settings and stock limits will be routinely evaluated to ensure appropriate patient access to high-demand products.

Hours of Operation - The current hours of operation are 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM Monday-Friday and 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM on Saturday and Sunday. The Borough Ordinance permits Valley Wellness to be open between 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM daily.

Valley Wellness would immediately extend its operating hours to accommodate medical patients. Over the course of the week, 14 hours will be designated for medical only services. These hours will be posted online and listed on the Valley Wellness phones message recording. Our planned hours, once beginning personal-use sales, will be:

- 8am to 10am – medical only hours; 7 days a week
- 10am to 7pm – medical and personal-use hours; 7 days a week.

Security – Valley Wellness prioritizes the safety and security of its patients, staff, neighbors, and the surrounding community. We toured both the Raritan Police Department and Fire Officials prior to opening. During our Grand Opening ceremony, we reached out to the Police Department and secured an off-duty police officer to ensure that operations would run smoothly that day.

Valley Wellness has gone above and beyond in meeting The Cannabis Regulatory Commission's required criteria. Our establishment has contracted with AVS Security for 24/7 monitoring and alert services. We have selected Genetec, widely considered the best commercial security software, to operate our top-of-the-line camera and access control system.

During all hours of operation there is dedicated and trained on-site security. Building Security Service has been contracted to provide security services and is available to provide immediate additional coverage if requested. Valley Wellness plans to supplement this with part-time, in-house, non-armed security personnel as well. Ample security coverage is always ensured, scheduled, and evaluated based upon dispensary busy hours and operating needs.

Parking for Valley Wellness Patients – Two designated parking spots will be marked within our lot as "Valley Wellness Medical Patients Only." We anticipate serving a maximum of 50 patients per day on average, which is double what we currently see. Our planned, proposed, operating hours will have us open for 11 hours per day. This means we can expect to see an average of less than 5 patients per hour. As each returning patient transaction takes less than 10 minutes to complete, a single parking space could accommodate up to 6 patients per hour. Having 2 planned parking spaces, and seeing less than 5 patients per hour, is more than ample designated parking and ensures spaces will always be available for our medical patients.



*Parking for Uneeda Customers* – Two designated parking spots will be marked for Uneeda customers only.

*Parking for Uneeda and Valley Wellness Employees* – Valley Wellness anticipates 7 employees on site and Uneeda having 2 employees and the box truck on site – for a total of 10 employee spots.

*Parking for Personal Use* – Personal use customers will have access to the remaining spots in the lot on a first come first served basis.

Valley Wellness will continuously monitor the parking lot during the first days and weeks of personal use sales and will be ready to employ/staff a parking attendant if needed. Based on the number of projected transactions per day we do not anticipate needing a parking attendant.

*Facility Access* – All public access to the facility will occur through the front entrance where the security guard will be stationed and controlling access to the dispensary waiting area. The waiting area is separated from the sales floor by a second controlled access door. Deliveries, both product and cash will occur at the receiving door, on the side of the building.

*Checking In* – Upon Entry, signage will be displayed informing patients and customers to separate into their appropriate lines. Security and Valley Wellness employees will be trained to provide instruction for those walking up to the establishment. The patient line will always be prioritized and served before attending to the personal-use line.

*Placing an Order* – Patients and customers will be able to purchase product and pick it up in multiple ways:

1. Walk into the store and place the order via a tablet in the waiting area or dispensary while the receptionist is verifying their information. Enter the dispensary sales floor and pick up the order.
2. Place an online order ahead of time, this includes the ability to schedule your pickup time within a 15-minute window. Walk into the store, be checked-in by the Receptionist and enter the dispensary sales floor to pick up the order.
3. Valley Wellness will institute curbside pick-up from your vehicle.
4. Valley Wellness plans to institute home delivery by utilizing an Electric Vehicle.

We offer online and phone consultations to patients and customers that want to speak to a patient care attendant prior to arriving at the dispensary. We also offer online and phone consultations with our in-house licensed pharmacist to assist patients. These appointments can be scheduled via our website and by calling the dispensary directly.

*Filling Orders* – Valley Wellness operates a fulfillment station behind the dispensary counter where all orders are filled, whether online, or directly in the store. Valley Wellness has the continuous ability to fill order placed online. This has already shown a decrease the amount of time a patient is inside of the store. Our patients are, on average, inside of the store for 10 minutes.



New patients, who must go through an extra check in step, require a few extra minutes. While returning patients typically take less time. We expect this turn over time to remain the same, while our processes will become more streamlined over time, we will also be seeing more patients/customers.

Once an order is placed, Valley Wellness receives the order as a printed ticket, via Dutchie, within our fulfillment work room. The printed ticket is clearly marked as ‘Medical’ or ‘Personal-Use’. Valley Wellness written policies will require employees to prioritize orders for medical patients, before filling personal-use orders.

Valley Wellness fills orders using a fulfillment station model. All orders, whether placed ahead of time online, or directly in the store, are filled in a secured room behind the dispensary counter. Once any order is placed, it is received as a printed ticket, via Dutchie, within our fulfillment work room. The printed ticket will be clearly marked as ‘Medical’ or ‘Personal-Use’ to differentiate order types. Valley Wellness written policies will require employees to prioritize and fill orders for medical patients first, before filling personal-use orders.

Using the fulfillment station model gives us the ability to have dedicated staff continuously filling and verifying orders ahead of the transaction being performed. This has already shown to expedite transaction time, decrease in the amount of time a patient is inside of the store and thus a decrease our parking demand.

Check Out – Designated registers with assigned staff will be assigned daily for conducting and prioritizing patient transactions. This staff member will be available for any impromptu patient consultations and for answering additional patient questions. Once a patient’s order is filled and ready for pickup, these stations will always first conduct the patient transaction prior to performing any personal-use sales.

Product Delivery and Cash Management – Product deliveries currently occur approximately 2 times per week and will remain the same. Cash pick-ups occur once a week and will increase to 2-3 times per week if approved as an Expanded ATC. We will work with the adjoining appliance store to schedule trash pick-up at the same time, utilizing the same service to cut down on the impact that may have on parking. Delivery times will vary for security reasons. Product will be transported into the facility through the secure side entry taken directly to the vault. Cash will be taken out through the same door.

Preventing Nuisance – Valley Wellness believes that an effective plan to mitigate nuisance behaviors on the surrounding community requires both prevention and corrective action.

Prevention: Patients visiting the facility for the first time will go through an intake process where they receive a primer on regulations surrounding cannabis; how to safely consume, store, and transport their product; and information regarding strains, dosage, and desired effects. All patients will be required to review and sign an agreement, in which they certify that they understand that the ability to utilize Valley Wellness’s store is contingent on respect for the surrounding neighborhood. Public consumption, littering, loitering, disturbance of the peace and other nuisance behaviors are not tolerated and practicing them will eliminate the opportunity for future visits.

Corrective Action: Security personnel will diligently monitor the exterior of the facility to ensure that patients or other members of the public are not engaging in nuisance behaviors. Public consumption of cannabis or other drugs, disturbances of the peace, lewd behavior, harassment, and undesirable behaviors are all strictly prohibited. All security personnel will undergo rigorous training in de-escalation techniques. When appropriate, law enforcement will be notified. Patients and customers who behave in such a manner will not be granted access to the facility in the future. Public consumption of cannabis is strictly prohibited.

*Additional Considerations* – Valley Wellness has implemented the following, which will continue to assist in the reduction of our parking demand.

- a. Operational strategies, including a fulfillment station model as described above, encouraging online orders.
- b. Bike racks that enable employees and patients to travel from surrounding areas.
- c. A commitment to supporting sustainable transportation methods be employees and patients.

Valley Wellness compiled and currently provides up-to-date transportation information explaining commuter options to all employees by posting in break room: “Getting Around Raritan Info”, bike parking in town, other pedestrian and bike friendly places, and train schedules. We provide patients and others with sustainable transportation information on our website, including how to arrive by train, bus, and bike.

The dispensary is accessible through a variety of bus and train lines. Raritan is one of the stops on the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line. With eighteen stops throughout central New Jersey, the Raritan Valley Line services a wide area of the State and connect to Newark Penn Station. The Raritan train stop is .3 miles from Valley Wellness, and the bus line options described below also provide patients access to the train stop.

Walking friendly distances include those within ¼ mile. “A basic imperative of New Urbanism is supporting an urban design that is able to satisfy the residents’ needs in a manner that is quick and easily accessible for a pedestrian – namely within a five-minute walking distance.” Valley Wellness is a 4-minute walk from the Raritan Train Station.

Valley Wellness offers bicycle parking for employees and patients and offer monetary voucher for bike purchase if that employee agrees to utilize the bike rack.

Finally, Valley Wellness will install at least one electric vehicle charging station. This station can be used by customers of Uneeda or Valley Wellness during the day, and in the future, charge a Valley Wellness delivery vehicle overnight.

**PARKING PROJECTIONS**

# of Patients per Day	# of AU Customers per Day	total Transactions per Day	AVG Patients per HOUR	AVG AU Customers per HOUR	AVG Transactions per HOUR
50	100	150	5	11	16

At 10 mins per transaction AVG spots occupied	If 50% Surge at Peak Times AVG spots occupied	TOTAL VW PARKING DEMAND
3	4	<b>11</b>
	<i># of Patients</i>	<i># of AU</i>
	1	3

Parking Space Allocation At Peak Times	
<b># of Spaces in Lot</b>	<b>23</b>
VW Employees	7
VW Dedicated Patient Spots	2
VW Additional AU Customers	3
Uneda Employees	3
Uneda Dedicated Parking	2
Uneda Additional Customers	5
<b>Total Spots Occupied</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Open Spots Available</b>	<b>1</b>

*Valley Wellness Projections* – Valley Wellness is currently, after almost two months of operations, seeing an average of 35 patients a day. Nearly 50% of those patients are now repeat customers. The last time that Valley Wellness appeared in front of the planning board we estimated that we would see at full capacity, 83 patients a day – and that was because personal use sale had not been approved to begin in NJ.



Now that personal use sales occur at nearly every other dispensary in the State, our expected and actual patient count is lower. The Cannabis Regulatory Commission has acknowledged the declining rate at which patients are renewing their medical cannabis cards, in part due to personal use sale beginning.

Now, Valley Wellness expects to see an average of 50 patients a day and 100 personal use customers for a total of 150 transactions a day. Live operations over the past two months have demonstrated our patient projections for growth and roughly 10-minute turn-over times are accurate.

Other Expanded ATC's – In addition to the above projections, Valley Wellness engaged a traffic engineer, French Parrello and Associates in 2022 and now again in 2023 – to monitor parking demand at two existing medical dispensaries in the State, and now again at the same dispensaries since they have converted to become Expanded ATC's.

The substance of the old (2022) FPA Parking Report indicated low patient parking demand with quick patient turnover times, which supported Valley Wellness' request for a variance in 2022. While the current FPA report naturally finds increased parking demands on expanded alternative treatment centers, those findings in combination with counts at our facility, continue to demonstrate Valley Wellness' ability to maintain parking on site.

Between approximately December 15, 2022, and January 15, 2023 French Parrello conducted parking counts at the same two dispensaries that were the subject to the 2022 Report. At AYR Dispensary, located at 2536 US-22 in Union FPA found the current parking demand to be 1 vehicle per 310 SF of GFA now that they are an expanded ATC serving adult use customers. That increased from 1 vehicle per 715 SF of GFA when they were a medical ATC. At Rise Dispensary located at 196 3rd Ave in Paterson, FPA found the current parking demand increased to 1 vehicle per 70 SF of GFA from 1 vehicle per 255 SF of GFA. FPA took the average of these parking demands - 1 vehicle per 140 SF of GFA – which is less onerous than the current Raritan Ordinance.

## **CONCLUSION**

There are 23 parking spots at the site, in addition to one extra parking space for EV charging – making for a total of 24 spots.

As noted by FPA in the attached Parking Report, the previously estimated peak parking demand of 7 vehicles for the appliance store footprint should be revised to be 10 vehicles. Based upon Valley Wellness' projections of seeing 150 patients/customers a day, FPA estimated a peak parking demand of 11 vehicles will be generated by the expanded alternative treatment center, resulting in a total estimated peak parking demand of 21 vehicles at the site.

Valley Wellness is confident that the 23 parking spaces at the site in addition to the EV charging station will be adequate to service the estimated peak parking demand at the site.