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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 10, 2024

Mr. Rich Manfredi, Manager
Abington Township
1176 Old York Road
Abington, Pennsylvania 19001-3713

Re: MCPC #24-0179-001
Plan Name: LifeCycle Abington
(7,565 square feet of office development on 1 lot comprising 0.61 acres)
Situate: 1329 Old York Road
Cross Street: Keith Road
Abington Township

Dear Mr. Manfredi:

We have reviewed the above-referenced land development in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on August 12, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

Birth Center dba Lifecycle Womancare, the applicant, has submitted a land development plan for an expansion of an existing medical office building (currently 6,655 square feet). The applicant would demolish a portion of the building and add 6,513 square feet of new building area. The new building would comprise 7,565 square feet of gross floor area.

The site is the location of an existing, three-story masonry/frame building. There is also a stone wall and 4 foot wooden fence that would be removed. This would include a two-story building addition on the front with a footprint of 979 square feet and a two-story addition to the rear of the existing building with a footprint of 2,141 square feet.

The applicant received a special exception and variances from the zoning ordinance's requirements for the following:

1. Special Exception for an expansion of a nonconforming medical office use [§1906].
2. Variance to allow overnight accommodations [§2103.F-2.2].
3. Variance to allow fewer than the required number of parking spaces [§2304.F.2].

4. Variance to allow grade changes and encroachment within the tree protection zone [§2401.A.2.d(2)(a)].
5. Variance to allow vehicles and equipment associated with the proposed construction to enter the required tree protection zone [§2401.A.2.d(2)(b)].
6. Variance to allow less than the required 15-foot buffer along the property line [§2403.B.3.a].
7. Variance to allow a dumpster enclosure without a surrounding 3-foot wide planting area [§2403.C.6.b(1)].

The proposed development would bring the building into conformance with the front yard setback requirement and the required parking setback from the building. The tract is located in the R-4 High Density Residential zoning district. The site is served by public water and sewer. The plans are dated August 1, 2024.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The proposed improvements are somewhat consistent with *MONTCO 2040: A Shared Vision, The Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan*, although it would be more consistent if it (1) had a sidewalk connecting the building to the sidewalk along Old York Road, and (2) had more buffering, and (3) had shared parking and vehicular access with adjacent land uses. The comprehensive plan shows the project is located in the "Community Mixed Use" future land use area. Offices are one of the primary land uses in this category.

The proposed improvements are also generally consistent with the Abington Comprehensive Plan of 2007, which places the location in the "Institutional—School, Churches" future land use category. However, it should be noted that the plan notes the importance of pedestrian walkways in commercial corridors.

RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) generally supports the applicant's proposal, however, in the course of our review we have identified the following issues that the applicant and township may wish to consider prior to final plan approval. Our comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

TRANSPORTATION

A. Sidewalk – We recommend that a sidewalk be constructed that connects the building entrance to the sidewalk along Old York Road. Currently there is an asphalt walk connecting the building to the street, but the applicant proposes to remove it. We note that zoning requirements for districts allowing commercial development require that buildings be connected to the street with a pedestrian link [Article XXV]. Technically, this does not apply to the applicant's site because it is located in the R-4 Residential District; however, In the interest of improving pedestrian safety and access, we recommend that the building be connected to the Old York Road sidewalk with an on-lot sidewalk. The adopted Old York Road Corridor Improvement Study states that "sidewalks should

provide direct access into buildings fronting the corridor…[1] (p.118).“ Montgomery County’s Walk Montco (2015) plan notes that, to be more walkable, office buildings should be “visually appealing to walkers and directly accessible from the street[2] (p.18).”



Existing walk connecting building to sidewalk on Old York Road

B. Loading – If a loading area is to be provided, it shall be designed consistent with §146-28.D.

C. Right-of-Way - The plan states that the legal right-of-way for Old York Road is 64 feet and the right-of-way, “per Ref. Map #3” is 80 feet. What is the map that is being referred to? The ultimate right-of-way shall be shown [§146-11.A].

LANDSCAPING

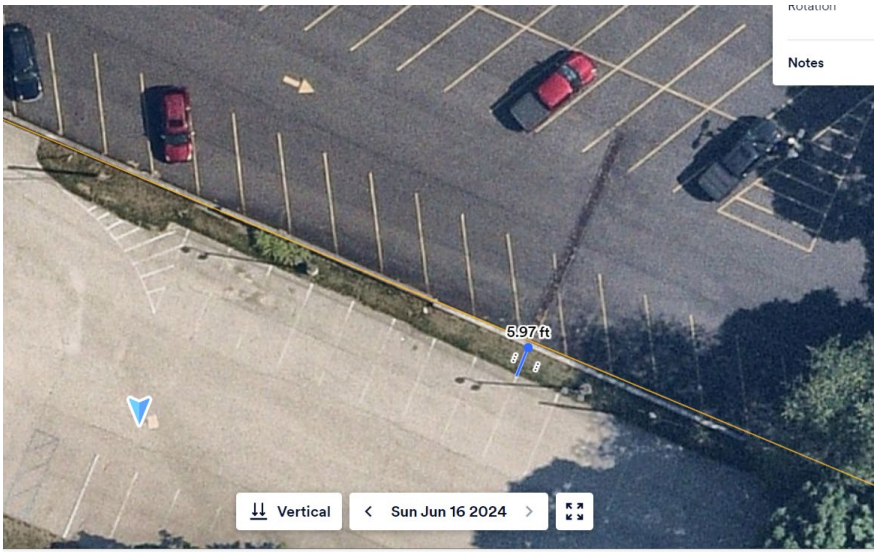
[1] Old York Road Corridor Improvement Study (2010): https://www.abingtonpa.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/3130/635991672709600000

[2] Walk Montco (2015): https://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9839/Walkability-Plan_Final_web-version?bidId=

A. Street Tree – We recommend that a canopy tree providing a reasonable amount of shade be used for a street tree, rather than the proposed Eastern Redbud.

B. Tree Preservation – The plan shall identify stand-alone trees with calipers of 10 inches or greater, measured at a point four feet above grade, with indication of which trees are to be removed and which are to remain. Are any trees of 10 inch caliper or greater proposed for preservation? [§146-11.B] The applicant is using existing trees toward some of the planting requirements.

C. Parking Lot – There is approximately six feet of grass area between the applicant's parking lot and the northern property line. The applicant is not required to plant anything additional there due to existing nonconforming conditions and zoning relief obtained. However, we suggest planting small shrubs or ornamental grasses in defined areas along this grass strip; this would help provide a modest buffer, provide plantings with ecological value, improve the appearance of the site, and increase green stormwater infrastructure.



Area where additional (small) plantings could be added.

BUILDING DESIGN

A. Architectural Plans -- Tentative front, side, and rear architectural plans are required [§146-11]. It would also be helpful for the dumpster enclosure to be illustrated.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve the township's planning objectives for medical office development.

Please note that the review comments and recommendations contained in this report are advisory to the municipality and final disposition for the approval of any proposal will be made by the municipality.

Should the governing body approve a final plat of this proposal, the applicant must present the plan to our office for seal and signature prior to recording with the Recorder of Deeds office. A paper copy bearing the municipal

seal and signature of approval must be supplied for our files. Please print the assigned MCPC number (*#24-0179-001*) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



Mike Narcowich, AICP
Community Planning Assistant Manager II
610.278.5238 – michael.narcowich@montgomerycountypa.gov

c: Birth Center dba Lifecycle Womancare, Applicant
Kate McHugh, Applicant's Representative
Khaled R. Hassan, P.E., Pennoni, Township Engineer
Michael P. Clarke, Esq., Rudolph Clarke, LLC, Township Solicitor

Attachment A: Aerial Image of Site
Attachment B: Reduced Copy of Applicant's Proposed Site Plan

ATTACHMENT A



LifeCycle Abington
MCPC#240179001

Montgomery County Planning Commission

0 50 100 200 Feet

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www.montcopa.org/plancom
Aerial photography provided by Nearmap

ATTACHMENT B

