MONTGOMERY COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

NEIL K. MAKHIJA, CHAIR
JAMILA H. WINDER, VICE CHAIR
THOMAS DIBELLO, COMMISSIONER

WWW.MONTGOMERYCOUNTYPA.GOV

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

MONTGOMERY COUNTY • PO BOX 311
NORRISTOWN, PA 19404-0311

610-278-3722
PLANNING@MONTGOMERYCOUNTYPA.GOV

SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 15, 2025

Ms. Jamie Worman, Assistant Township Manager
Lower Gwynedd Township
1130 North Bethlehem Pike
Post Office Box 625
Spring House, Pennsylvania 19477

Re: MCPC #25-0092-001
Plan Name: Gwynedd Mercy HS Trail Conditional Use
Situate: Sumneytown Pike (cross street: Evans Road)
Lower Gwynedd Township

Dear Ms. Worman:

We have reviewed the above-referenced conditional use plan as you requested on May 5, 2025. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School, is proposing to install a pedestrian bridge that would connect the high school building and the track and field facilities. The bridge would cross wetlands and riparian corridor buffer area along a tributary of the Trewellyn Creek. The township's zoning permits crossing over the riparian buffers by conditional use approval, provided that there are no reasonable engineering alternatives (per § 1298.17(c)). The property is located in the A-Residential Zoning District.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The proposal is generally consistent with the county's comprehensive plan*, MONTCO 2040: A Shared Vision,* which shows the area located in the "Suburban Residential" future land use area. Suburban Residential areas consist primarily of single family homes and institutional uses. Development should match the character of the surrounding neighborhood and environmentally sensitive land should be preserved.

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 conditional use approval. Our comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

CONDITIONAL USE

We feel that the proposed trail would create a useful pedestrian connection through the campus and that conditional use approval would be appropriate.

A. Riparian Corridor Buffer Landscaping. We recommend that the applicant plant vegetation along the new wood edge and within the riparian buffer in order to protect against invasives that may more easily overtake in recently exposed areas. The township requires in the zoning that wetlands, streams, and riparian buffers that are destroyed by development "shall be replaced elsewhere on the site… so that the total predevelopment area shall not be reduced" (§ 1298.17(c)).

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve Lower Gwynedd's planning objectives for development in the riparian buffer area.

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 (25-0092-001) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

Claire Warner, Senior Community Planner
Claire.Warner@montgomerycountypa.gov – 610-278-3755

c: Christen Pionzio, Applicant's Representative
Woodrow & Associates, Applicant's Representative
Mimi Gleason, Township Manager
Craig Melograno, Chairman, Planning Commission

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

ATTACHMENTS A & B

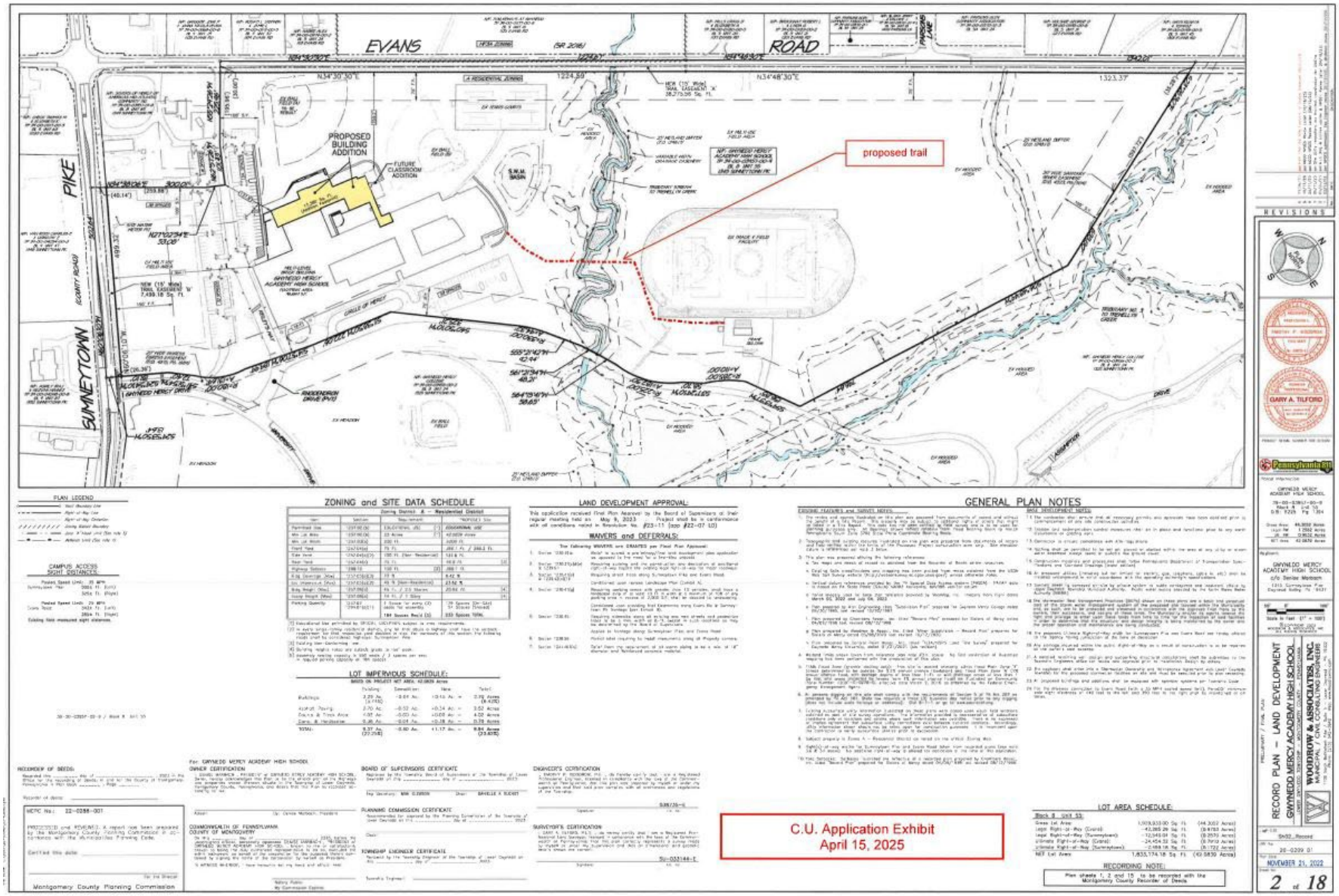


Gwynedd Mercy High School
Trail Conditional Use
MCPC#250092001

Montgomery County Planning Commission

0 250 500 1,000 Feet

N


EVANS ROAD
PIKE
SUMNEYTOWN
PROPOSED BUILDING ADDITION
FUTURE CLASSROOM ADDITION
proposed trail
ZONING and SITE DATA SCHEDULE
LAND DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL:
WAIVERS and DEFERRALS:
GENERAL PLAN NOTES
LOT IMPERVIOUS SCHEDULE:
LOT AREA SCHEDULE:
C.U. Application Exhibit
April 15, 2025
RECORD PLAN – LAND DEVELOPMENT
GWYNEDD MERCY ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL
WOODROW & ASSOCIATES, INC.
NOVEMBER 21, 2022
2 of 18