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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 12, 2026

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

Re: MCPC #25-0255-001
Plan Name: 1208-1224 N Bethlehem Pk
(1 lot comprising approximately 9.24 acres)
Situate: Meetinghouse Road (cross street: Dekalb Pike (west)/Sumneytown Pike (south))
Lower Gwynedd Township

Dear Ms. Worman:

We have reviewed the above-referenced conditional use subdivision and land development as you requested on December 15, 2025. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, PRP Property Management LLC, is proposing a lot consolidation and land development consisting of 45 twin, triplex, and townhouse dwelling units. The proposal would consolidate six parcels that are bordered by North Bethlehem Pike to the west, Cedar Hill Road to the east, and Route 309 to the north. The proposed development would be accessed by a driveway on North Bethlehem Pike and a driveway on Cedar Hill Road and have one internal road connecting the two access drives, around which the units would be located.

The property is located in the A-1 Residential District and currently contains a commercial nursery and four single-family detached residences that front onto Cedar Hill Road. We reviewed a previously submitted zoning ordinance and map amendment that would impact this site in a letter dated October 14, 2025. The zoning map amendment would expand the Lower Pike Overlay (LPO) District to cover this property. In anticipation of the zoning amendments being adopted, our review letter provides comments on the proposed development based on the proposed LPO 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 Area" future land use area where single-family attached homes are a primary use. Denser and more compact development should occur in Suburban Residential Areas that are next to centers with significant non-residential development. New development should match the character found in the immediate neighborhood. Trees, steep slopes, wetlands, and other sensitive land should be preserved. Appropriate landscaping, buffers, and street trees should be provided. Recreation facilities and central open space should also be provided.

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

LOWER PIKE OVERLAY

The LPO District currently covers the area of Bethlehem Pike that is south of the Sumneytown Pike/Norristown Road intersection in an area characterized by a mix of offices, commercial shopping centers, and residential homes and neighborhoods. The character of the roadway and surrounding land uses north of the Norristown Road/Sumneytown Pike intersection is different from southern portion that the LPO District covers. Based on our interpretation of the LPO District, we feel that the proposed development does not fit the character of the other areas within the LPO District.

A. District Intent. We recommend that the township considers the intent of the LPO District when reviewing the proposed development. Based on the uses and density permitted in this district, it is our understanding that the LPO District is intended to encourage the revitalization of Bethlehem Pike through mixed-use development.

B. Conditional Use. All uses are subjected to conditional use approval by the Board of Supervisors to ensure that the design meets the general design requirement to create a "fully integrated...project, including, but not limited to, building size, shape, materials and fenestration, signs, streetscape furniture, landscaping, lighting, hardscape and colors" (per § 1271.09 (a)). We encourage the township to use the conditional use hearing as an opportunity to make additional design elements part of the condition of the approval. The governing body has the right to consider the particulars of a property, including the shape and location. We recommend the applicant provide an illustration of the streetscape for the conditional use hearing.

SITE DESIGN

We wish to provide recommendations related to the site design that should be considered when reviewing the proposed land development. For best practices on townhouse design, we suggest referencing the MCPC

guidebook Building Better Townhouse Communities. In addition, we suggest that design standards, such as those listed below, could be addressed in a more comprehensive review and update of the LPO District.

A. Building Design and Orientation. In other areas of the LPO District, we would suggest that the buildings be oriented towards the street to enhance the streetscape of a mixed-use corridor. However, these sections of North Bethlehem Pike and Cedar Hill Road are more residential in character. With this distinction in mind, we recommend considering the orientation of the townhouses, and how the front or rear façades of the townhouses would interact with the street.

1. *Cedar Hill Road Frontage*. We recommend that the applicant design the rear facades of the attached units to be just as visually interesting as the front facades of the units. The proposal would change the character of Cedar Hill Road. While we support the development of new residential units in general, we also encourage design of new residential developments to be sensitive to the surrounding context.

2. *Number of Units per Building*. We recommend removing one of the units from the four-unit row of townhomes on Cedar Hill Road. While the rest of the proposed development includes two- and three-unit buildings that can generally fit a carriage house design, the four-unit building along Cedar Hill Road does not fit aesthetically with the scale of the rest of the development.

B. Vehicular Transportation. The property is located on S.R. 2018 Bethlehem Pike. Due to the proposal's location, we recommend coordinating with John Gallagher at PennDOT as part of the Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) process.

1. *Parking Design and Location*. We recommend removing some of the overflow parking spaces to create more open space and room for buffering. The proposed zoning text amendment would revise the parking requirements for residential uses in the LPO District to require three parking spaces per dwelling unit, excluding garage space, one of which shall be available for overflow parking. The proposed amendment includes provisions for overflow parking to be in reserve for construction if needed in the future, and that must be in accordance with the requirements of Section 1294.07.

i. *Overflow Parking.* We recommend removing some of the overflow parking spaces, which could be constructed at a later date, if it is determined that they are necessary. The property would have vehicular access from Bethlehem Pike and the internal road would be parallel to Bethlehem Pike. Overflow parking is shown located within the 40-foot front yard setback between the access road and Bethlehem Pike, which would detract from the visual character by interrupting the line of sight with parked cars. We recommend removing those 11 parking spaces, to be constructed in the future if needed. Removing those parking spaces would create more space to plant additional trees along Bethlehem Pike.

ii. *Street Trees between Residential Driveways*. We recommend considering the townhouse design and orientation to allow for street trees and a better pedestrian environment. Based on the concept plan, it appears that the front entrances of the units would face the internal street network. Driveways for each of the units would also be accessed from that internal road network, creating a residential street lined with driveways and parked cars, and with little space for sidewalks or street trees. Double-wide driveways leave little room for trees and other

plantings, which could result in a development in need of greenery to soften the appearance of the buildings, driveways, and parked cars. We suggest that before proceeding to engineering, the applicant plans for the placement of utilities to ensure that there is sufficient space to include trees without conflicts with utilities.

D. Pedestrian Connectivity. The plan shows sidewalks along North Bethlehem Pike and Cedar Hill Road, which we commend; however, there are no pedestrian connections internal to the site.

1. *Sidewalks*. We recommend the applicant create an internal pedestrian network to allow people to walk safely to the sidewalk or to other areas within the development. The addition of walking paths could create active and passive recreation opportunities for future residents.

2. *Trail Connections*. We recommend considering the connectivity impact of the local trails on the residents of the proposed development, as well as current residents. The Spring House Shopping Center is located less than one-half mile from the property and can be accessed by the existing South Trewellyn Trail. The proposed development presents an opportunity to create a pedestrian and bicycle connection across Bethlehem Pike to the shopping center. We encourage the applicant to explore how a safe pedestrian connection could be made from the proposed sidewalks on Cedar Hill Road and Bethlehem Pike to the local trail network.

E. Common Open Space. We recommend that the applicant consider how some common open space could be integrated into the development, such as along Cedar Hill Road or at the center of the development, that could be accessed by walkways. The LPO District does not have common open space requirements for residential developments. We encourage the township to consider an open space requirement to the LPO District for future developments.

F. Stormwater Management. The stormwater management plan for the proposed development includes a combination of surface and subsurface basins. We commend the addition of surface basins as part of the stormwater management for the development.

1. *Maintenance Agreement*. There should be an operations and maintenance plan to clearly define who is going to maintain and be responsible for the integrity of the basins and to define who is responsible for all facilities which must be managed throughout the course of the basins' lifetime.

2. *Surface Basins*. We recommend that the surface basins should be naturalized to support a healthy ecosystem. The township's subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) requires that stormwater management facilities, including detention basins, meet the standards of the Stormwater Management Ordinance (SALDO § 1230.32).

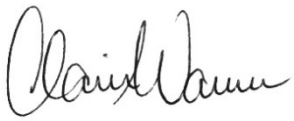
CONCLUSION

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 along the Bethlehem Pike corridor.

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 (MCPC #25-0255-001) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



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

c: PFP Property Management, LLC, Applicant
David Shafkowitz, Applicant's Representative
Mimi Gleason, Township Manager
Craig Melograno, Chairman, Planning Commission
Neil Stein, Esq., Township Solicitor
Chad Dixson, Twp. Traffic Engineer
John Gallagher, PennDOT
Fran Hanney, PennDOT

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



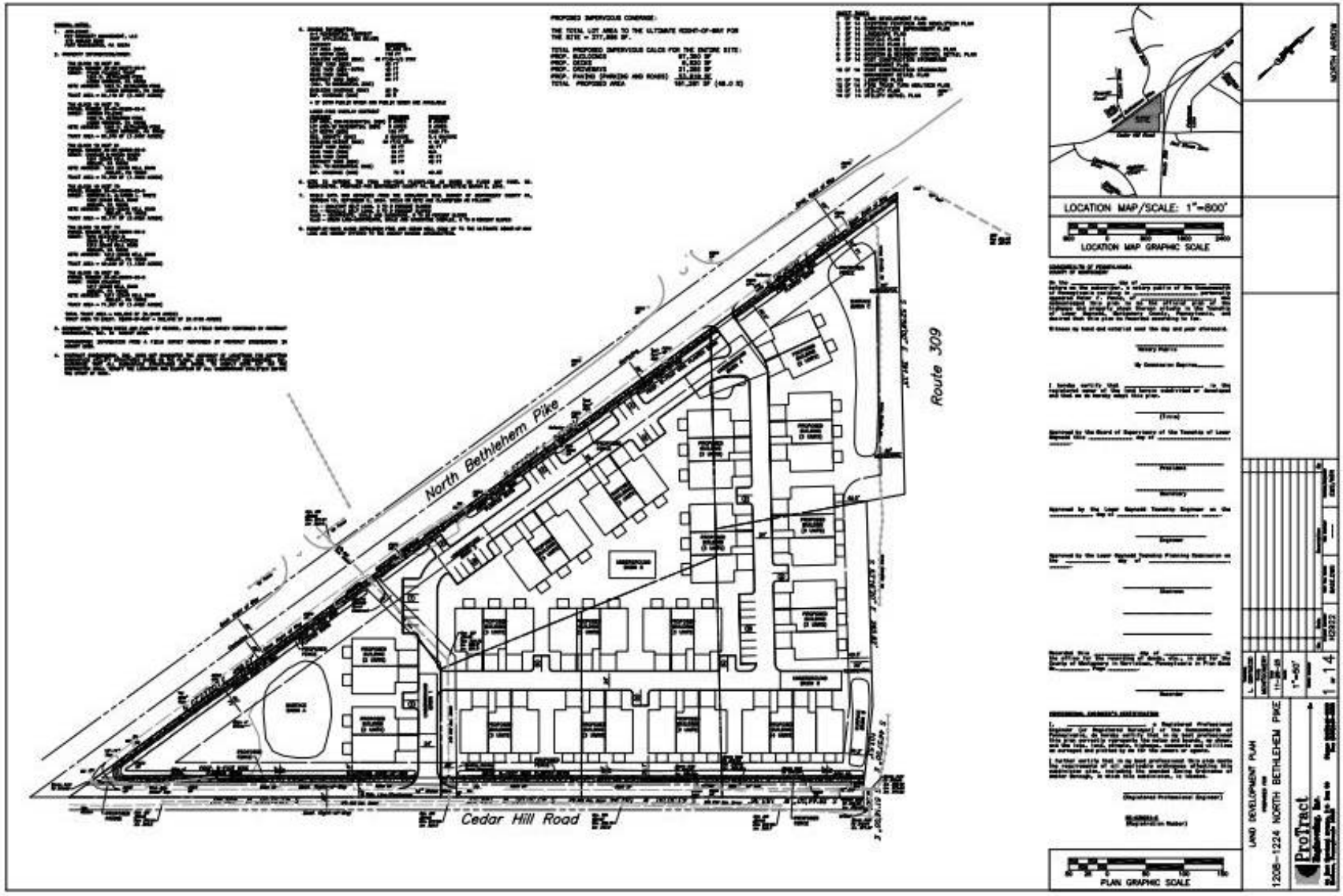
1208-1224 North Bethlehem Pike
MCPC#250255001

Montgomery County Planning Commission

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


North Bethlehem Pike
Route 309
Cedar Hill Road
LOCATION MAP/SCALE: 1"=800'
LOCATION MAP GRAPHIC SCALE
PLAN GRAPHIC SCALE
LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN
1208-1224 NORTH BETHLEHEM PIKE
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