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Planning Commission

Montgomery County • PO Box 311
Norristown, PA 19404-0311

610-278-3722
planning@montgomerycountypa.gov

Scott France, AICP
Executive Director

April 17, 2026

Ms. Sara Jarrett-Eaton, Manager
Souderton Borough
31 West Summit Street
Souderton, Pennsylvania 18964-1693

Re: MCPC #20-0082-006
Plan Name: Taco Bell Drive-Thru at Towne Gate Shopping Center
(1 lot comprising 20 acres)
Situate: East Broad Street at North School Lane
Souderton Borough

Dear Ms. Jarrett-Eaton:

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 April 7, 2026. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, School Lane Development, LLC, is in the process of redeveloping the site of the former Souderton Area High School into Towne Gate Commons. Some portions of the site are built and occupied, while other portions of the site are under construction or yet to be built. The portion of the site involved this land development application is in Phase 2B.2 and when completed will include townhomes, mixed-use buildings, commercial space, a day care, a food establishment, a neighborhood park, public plaza, new internal roads, landscaping, stormwater management, and lighting. The site is located in Souderton's MUR – Mixed-Use Redevelopment Zoning District.

The applicant's plan was previously approved by the borough; however, the applicant proposes to change a 6,525-square-foot commercial retail building to be a 2,447-square-foot Taco Bell restaurant with a drive-through and 17 parking spaces. A fast-food restaurant is permitted-by-right in this district; however, one drive-through facility on the site is permitted by conditional use. The applicant received a zoning variance for multiple drive-through facilities on the site and conditional use approval for this proposed drive-through facility.

The parking adjacent to this commercial building was previously approved at 22 spaces. This revised plan reduces the proposed parking by 5 spaces to a total of 17 in that area. Bicycle parking is also shown near the proposed Taco Bell building.

We reviewed proposals for earlier phases of this project on May 14, 2013; November 20, 2013; April 11, 2014; October 15, 2014; and August 30, 2017. We previously reviewed a sketch plan for this phase on June 25, 2018. We previously reviewed this phase on May 11, 2020 and September 25, 2020. We reviewed previous revisions to the approved plan on May 1, 2023 and October 21, 2024. We reviewed the conditional use application associated with this proposal on November 19, 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

In our review of the conditional use application, the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) recommended it not be approved and the variance not be granted. Should the borough consider this land development application, we have identified the following issues that the applicant and the borough may wish to consider prior to final plan approval. Our comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

ZONING

A. Loading. The screening for the loading area does not meet the requirement of §1210.A. The applicant indicated they will be seeking zoning relief for this requirement. Additionally, §1210.A requires service and loading areas shall be located to the side and rear of the building, yet the proposed orientation sets the stated loading area to the front of the building. We recommend the front of Taco Bell be oriented to face Broad Street, leaving the loading area to the side and rear of the building.

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT

A. Site Design Standards. Front façades of buildings are required to be oriented toward existing or proposed streets with the primary entrance in the front façade per §420.1.B.3. As Broad Street is an existing street and highly trafficked, we recommend the front façade of Taco Bell face Broad Street. In the alternative, the applicant should consider an equally well-designed façade for that building face.

A. Architectural Requirements:

   A. Corner buildings are required to be treated as having multiple front façades, with one entrance located on each façade per §420.4.B.2. This building is on the corner of Souder's Way and Broad Street but the elevations show only one entrance. The applicant should consider adding another entrance.

   B. It is not clear from the architectural designs submitted whether the facades facing the street and parking lot meet the requirement of 30% window area for the first floor. (§420.4.E.1.) We recommend the applicant supply dimensional calculations demonstrating that they are meeting this requirement.

C. The entire site should have a common, coherent architectural and signage theme throughout, as well as complementary roof features. (§420.4.F.1., §420.4.G., §420.4.J.1., and §420.5.) We suggest the applicant explain how the architecture, materials, colors, and signage contribute to a coherent design throughout Towne Gate Commons.

B. Signage Standards:

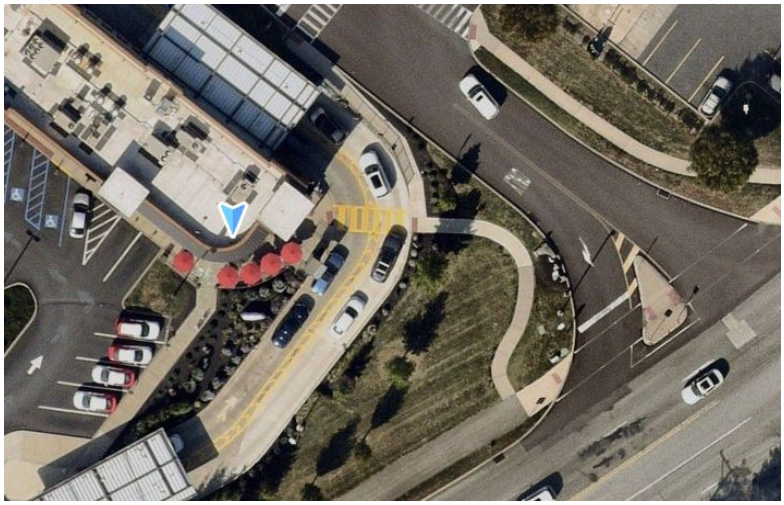
A. Every street address must be clearly visible on the front and rear of each building, per §420.5.B. The applicant should consider adding the street address to the exterior elevations.

B. Per 420.5.C, standardized or corporate signage that does not relate to building architecture or the wayfinding and informational signage program is discouraged. The borough and applicant should collaborate to find a signage option that best meets the requirements of the ordinance and the needs of the applicant.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

A. The applicant is admitting to higher anticipated traffic than originally planned. We request that the township and applicant work together on a mutually agreed solution for transportation infrastructure improvements to meet this demand, including sidewalks so that residents or visitors of Towne Gate Commons can safely and comfortably access the restaurant.

B. We recommend that more direct pathways be designed for pedestrians who will access the Taco Bell via Broad Street. It may be appropriate to provide a pedestrian cut-through from Broad Street, across the queueing lane for the drive-through, to the building entrance. The current configuration requires pedestrians on Broad Street to either walk entirely on the sidewalk around the development's vehicular entrance or walk across the grass and the drive-through lanes without a crosswalk. Additionally, it may be helpful to provide a more direct path to a building entrance with a crosswalk through the drive-through lane for pedestrians entering from Souder's Way.



A fast-food restaurant with drive-through facilities in Towamencin Township, featuring a path from the street and crosswalk across the drive-through lane

C. We recommend a crosswalk from the adjacent parking lot to the Taco Bell to help pedestrians cross the drive lane safely. The applicant has indicated they will add a crosswalk.

STREETSCAPE

A. Development Entrance. This proposal would result in the primary entrance of the development on a highly trafficked street to be flanked by drive-through facilities. This contradicts the stated intent of the MUR district, which includes: "Promote development that is primarily designed to be walkable and bikeable, rather than automobile oriented."

B. Building Orientation. The Taco Bell is proposed to be oriented with the most visible building faces facing Broad Street being devoid of windows and architectural features. The stated intent of the MUR district includes: "Ensure context-sensitive design that complements and is consistent with the borough's existing historic character, neighborhoods, streetscapes, and buildings." The intent of the district and redevelopment is to orient the front of buildings towards their frontage on the external streets, not align the primary or sole entrances internally. We recommend a building design that presents towards and provides an entrance to those on Broad Street.



The side of the building (left) and the rear (right) that are the most visible to Broad Street

LANDSCAPING

The site plan depicts landscaping screening on the retaining wall to the north of the proposed restaurant building. This screening is proposed for approximately the length of the building. The applicant should consider continuing the landscaping along the retaining wall to the end of the parking lot to complete the screening of this area.

CONCLUSION

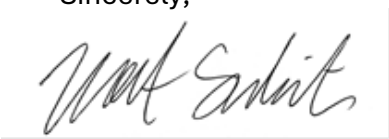
We wish to reiterate that the applicant's proposal conflicts with the intent of the zoning district and overall goals of the Towne Gate Commons development.

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 (*#20-0082-006*) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



Matt Lubitz, Senior Planner
matt.lubitz@montgomerycountypa.gov – 610-278-3738

c: Santhini Sampath, Applicant
Gregg I. Adelman, Esq., Applicant's Representative
Susan A. Rice, P.E., Applicant's Engineer
John A. Torrente, Borough Solicitor
Geoffrey Attanasio, PE, Borough Engineer
Ed Huber, PLS, Chair, Borough Planning Commission

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



Taco Bell Drive-Thru
at Towne Gate Shopping Center
MCPC#200082006

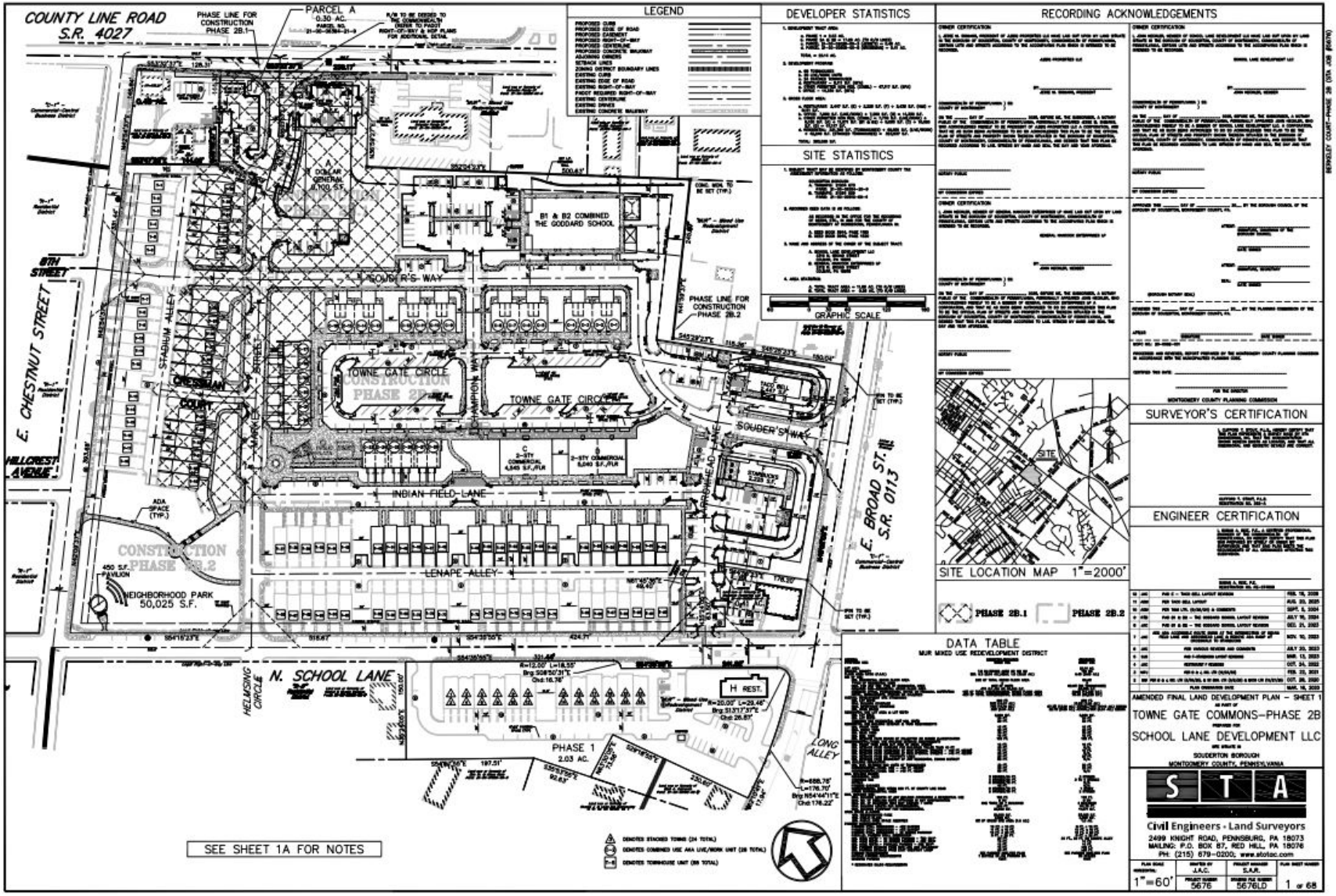
Montgomery County Planning Commission

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Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
PO Box 311 Norristown PA 19404-0311
(p) 610-278-3722 (f) 610-278-3941
www.montcopa.org/plan.com

Aerial photography provided by Nearmap


COUNTY LINE ROAD
S.R. 4027
PHASE LINE FOR CONSTRUCTION PHASE 2B.1
PARCEL A
0.30 AC.
PARCEL NO. 21-00-04364-21-9
R/W TO BE DEEDED TO THE COMMONWEALTH (NOTICE TO PLEDGE RIGHT-OF-WAY & ROP PLANS FOR ADDITIONAL DETAIL)
LEGEND
DEVELOPER STATISTICS
SITE STATISTICS
RECORDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
B1 & B2 COMBINED THE GODDARD SCHOOL
SOUDER'S WAY
TOWNE GATE CIRCLE
CONSTRUCTION PHASE 2B.2
TOWNE GATE CIRCLE
PHASE LINE FOR CONSTRUCTION PHASE 2B.2
GRAPHIC SCALE
8TH STREET
E. CHESTNUT STREET
HILLCREST AVENUE
STADIUM ALLEY
CHESSMAN COURT
CHAMPION WAY
FIELDHOUSE LANE
E. BROAD ST. (RT. 113) S.R. 0113
INDIAN FIELD LANE
LENAPE ALLEY
ADA SPACE (TYP.)
450 S.F. PAVILION
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 50,025 S.F.
CONSTRUCTION PHASE 2B.2
N. SCHOOL LANE
HELMSING CIRCLE
H REST.
PHASE 1 2.03 AC.
LONG ALLEY
SEE SHEET 1A FOR NOTES
SITE LOCATION MAP 1"=2000'
PHASE 2B.1
PHASE 2B.2
DATA TABLE
MUR MIXED USE REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATION
ENGINEER CERTIFICATION
AMENDED FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN – SHEET 1
TOWNE GATE COMMONS–PHASE 2B
SCHOOL LANE DEVELOPMENT LLC
SOUDERTON BOROUGH
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
S T A
Civil Engineers • Land Surveyors
2499 KNIGHT ROAD, PENNSBURG, PA 18073
MAILING: P.O. BOX 87, RED HILL, PA 18076
PH: (215) 679-0200; www.stotac.com
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