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Planning Commission

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Scott France, AICP
Executive Director

August 20, 2026

Mr. Robert Habgood, Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning
Cheltenham Township
8230 Old York Road
Elkins Park, Pennsylvania 19027

Re: MCPC #25-0039-003
Plan Name: The Enclave at Melrose Phase 3
(2 lots comprising 115 acres)
Parcel ID: 31-00-01258-00-7 and 31-00-01255-23-5
Situate: 7600 Tookany Creek Parkway, Ashmead Road, and Front Street
Cheltenham Township

Dear Mr. Habgood:

We have reviewed the above-referenced land development proposal in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on August 6, 2026. We forward this letter as a report of our review. We reviewed earlier phases of this development on October 10, 2025 and March 20, 2025. We reviewed revisions to the township's zoning ordinance that apply to this site on July 19, 2024 and October 22, 2025.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Melrose Development, LLC, has submitted a Preliminary/Final Plan for Phase 3 of the redevelopment of a former golf course, the Melrose Country Club. The full 115-acre site (parcels 31-00-01258-00-7 and 31-00-01255-23-5) is proposed to be transformed into a mix of residential, institutional, commercial, and community uses.

This development is located in the MU-3 Mixed-Use Zoning District. The MU-3 district has base zoning along with three classes of special exception uses. This development is a Class 3 use, with special exception approval received from the township's Zoning Hearing Board on October 30, 2024, and a revised approval received on March 18, 2025. The October 30, 2024 special exception grants the applicant approval of a mixed-use development with 172 (unrestricted) townhomes, an additional 134 age-restricted townhomes (306 total townhomes), and 24 age-restricted apartments. Although there was a revised approval on March 18, 2025, the plan submitted does not include a revised total number and type of dwelling units. It appears from the plan set that the new total is 12 twin houses and 351 townhouses, in two sizes, some of which will be age restricted.

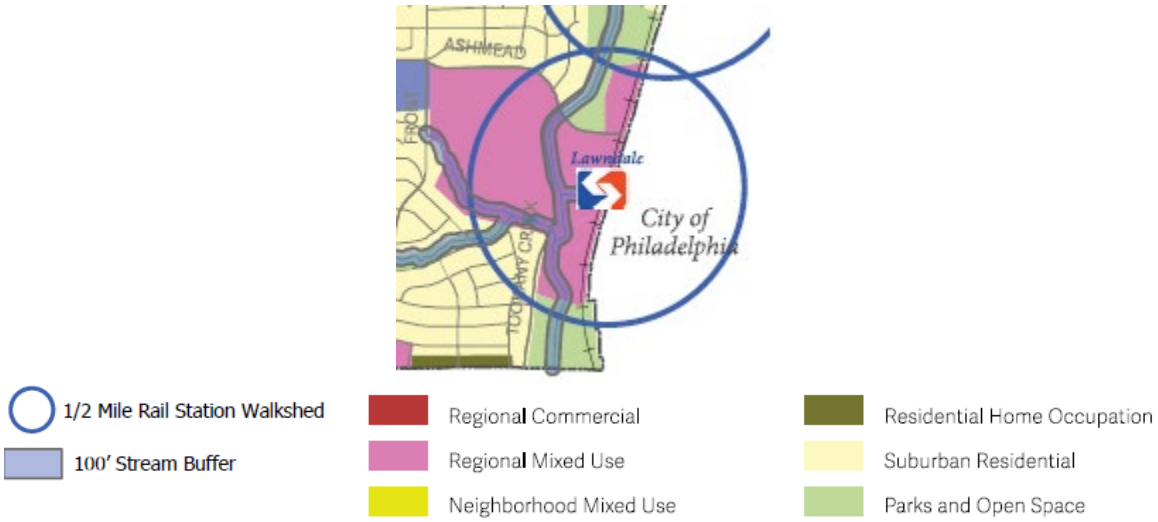
The institutional uses consist of 80 assisted living apartments and 30 traumatic brain injury care living units. The applicant also proposes a medical office building, commercial retail in two buildings, and three outdoor swimming pools with an accessory building. Several public plazas are included, totaling 1.58 acres.

Phase 3 of the plan includes 52 townhomes at the corner of the site near the intersection of Ashmead Road and Front Street, the two retail buildings, and the community pools.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

CHELTENHAM'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Cheltenham Township adopted a new comprehensive plan in July 2026. The plan designates these parcels as Regional Mixed Use, envisioned as "community focal points that typically have a significant institutional or commercial element along with residential uses. They may also include parks and open spaces, especially regionally significant parks and open spaces that attract visitors." This proposal is largely consistent with the comprehensive plan, as it includes several institutional uses, a small commercial area, and the community pools along with residential. The pools, when in season, will function as regionally significant recreational amenities that attract visitors. A stronger commercial area would make the proposal an even better fit with the future land use vision from Cheltenham's new comprehensive plan.



RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) generally supports the applicant's proposal; however, in the course of our review we have identified several key issues that we believe should be resolved prior to final plan approval. Our comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

PLAN SUBMISSION AND ZONING REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Plan Information. Some required elements appear to be missing from plan set. For example, the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) of Cheltenham Township requires that

preliminary plans include the number of dwelling units, description of special exception approvals, and the number of open spaces" (§260-15.B.(11).(b & C). and (12)). This information and other required elements should be included, or a waiver should be requested from the requirements.

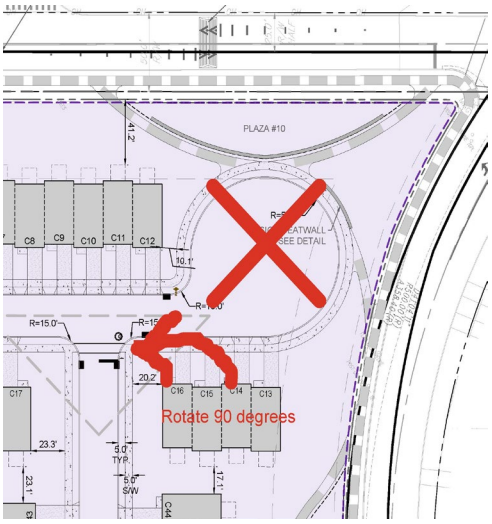
B. Required Mix of Uses. The zoning ordinance requires a mix of uses, grouped into three categories. That is not shown on this plan set. Note that the mix of uses requirement is based on floor area ratio (FAR), rather than gross square footage of land area. The applicant should include calculations that demonstrate compliance with the mix of uses requirements in the zoning ordinance (§295-1505.C.(1).).

C. Ordinance Requirements for Plazas. Several zoning ordinance requirements govern plaza design. Plazas must make up at least 5% of total site area, and "shall include a defining central element, such as a large fountain, sculpture, gazebo, pond, or similar feature. They shall also be improved with a variety of other amenities, such as small fountains, public art, shade trees, trash containers, benches, decorative pedestrian lights, trellises, and/or other similar features. The specific layout and design of required plazas shall be reviewed as part of any subsequent land development submittals, not the special exception." (§295-1505.E.(5).f).) While the master plan submitted identifies that the site is 38.2% open space and plaza area. It is not clear which plazas are part of the 5% minimum plaza area requirement and whether those meet the applicable design requirements for plazas on site.

CIRCULATION

A. Vehicle Circulation.

1. Cul-de-Sac. A cul-de-sac has been added between where Road G and Road Z intersect near the corner of Ashmead Road and Front Street. It is not clear what purpose this cul-de-sac serves. The interior roads may be able to form a regular intersection without a need for the cul-de-sac. Eliminating the cul-de-sac would reduce impervious surface and allow for a community open space amenity at the corner. If the cul-de-sac can be eliminated, we would recommend rotating townhomes C13-C16 90 degrees to align with Road G.



2. Raised Intersection. We commend the applicant on the inclusion of a raised intersection where Road A and Road D intersect. This pedestrian safety measure at this location, close to a plaza and the pools, will help encourage walking and keep pedestrians safe.

B. Parking. Although we often support the use of reserve parking, in this case it seems like the three new pools are likely to draw significant vehicle traffic from the eastern half of Cheltenham Township during the summer months. We would recommend the applicant and the township work together using data from the current usage of Conklin Pool parking lot to determine if other on-site parking locations can accommodate the volume of cars likely to visit these new pools during the summer months. It may make sense to develop the parking at the same time as the rest of this project.

C. Trails. We commend the applicant on the inclusion of a high-quality pathway along Ashmead Road and a trail mostly built to circuit trail standards where the regional Tookany Creek Trail is proposed.

1. Golf Cart Paths as Trails. It is not clear whether the golf cart paths that are included as part of the trail network are adequate for the functions they are to perform. Do they meet accessibility requirements for trails? Are they adequate widths where they are proposed to be included as part of the Circuit Trail system? Are they in good condition for future years of trail usage? Note that Circuit Trail standards require a minimum of 10 feet in width.
2. Doubled Pathways at Plazas. In some locations an asphalt pathway goes around behind a small plaza while another pathway goes in front of the plaza (such as behind townhome C47). If the pathway does not connect to anything interior to the site, it may not be necessary to have both pathways in these locations.

SITE USES AND LAYOUT

A. Housing Variety. Montgomery County supports providing a variety of housing options for communities. While townhomes are a popular type of housing, we are sorry to see the loss of the previously proposed small apartment building on this site. Housing variety benefits communities by providing more options for price points, size, and configuration of dwelling units.

B. Commercial Space.

1. Location. The commercial space will likely be more successful and profitable if located closer to the corner of Ashmead Road and Front Street, or at least closer to Front Street for more visibility of passersby.
2. Amount. Cheltenham Township has a goal in its comprehensive plan to increase its commercial tax base. The reduction in retail area on this site conflicts with that goal. There is still some potential for synergistic commercial spaces that are compatible with the elementary school, residential uses, and the pool.

C. Parking. Note that for Use G-8: Twin Houses, single-car garages shall not be utilized as required parking spaces. There are 12 twin house dwelling units shown on the plan set. It is not clear whether their garages are being counted as parking spaces or not.

GRADING, STORMWATER MANAGEMENT, AND LANDSCAPING

A. Swale Behind Townhomes. Townhomes C1 through C12, proposed along Front Street with access from Road Z, have a steep slope down from Front Street to their backyards. A swale is proposed through the yards to carry stormwater across Road F to two stormwater basins. We are concerned that the proposed swale may not be large enough to handle the runoff from a large storm, thus potentially causing flooding behind these townhomes. A swale that was large enough to contain the runoff adequately would be too large for the backyards of these homes. We suggest revisiting the grading and stormwater management for this area to see if a better solution can be found to manage water runoff behind townhomes C1 through C12.

B. Stormwater Basins Adjacent to Parking. Two stormwater basins (identified as numbers 9 and 10 on the plan set) are proposed along Front Street with very steep sides. There appear to be parallel parking spaces right up to the edge of the basins. For safety, a retaining wall or fence may need to be added between the parking spaces and the basins.

C. Naturalization. We recommend the applicant consider further opportunities to naturalize stormwater basins, swales, and slopes with native plants. Additional plantings can help to slow the rate of water

flow and improve water quality as the water is eventually discharged to the stream and wetland areas on this property.

D. Street Trees.

1. Townhomes. Proposed townhomes C1 through C52 have longer blocks of townhomes (up to six) without street trees than the townhomes on the rest of the site. We recommend that the applicant consider adding street trees midway through the blocks of townhomes for shade and natural beauty throughout the development.
2. Pool. We also recommend including more trees close to the pool area, if possible. The pools and surrounding areas will be mostly paved surface. Additional trees will help to keep that area cooler and provide shade.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve Cheltenham Township's planning objectives for mixed use 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 (*#25-0039-003*) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

Chloe M. Mohr, AICP, Principal Planner II
Chloe.Mohr@MontgomeryCountyPA.gov – (610) 278-3739

c: Anthony Caponigro, Applicant's Representative
Alyson Elliott, Assistant Township Manager
Thomas Cross, Chair, Municipal Planning Commission
Roger A. Phillips, P.E., Township Engineer
Edward Diasio, Township Solicitor
Adam Schantz, Senior Planner, Montgomery County Planning Commission

Attachments: A. Aerial image of site
B. Reduced copy of applicant's proposed site plan



Enclave at Melrose Phase 3
MCPC#250039003

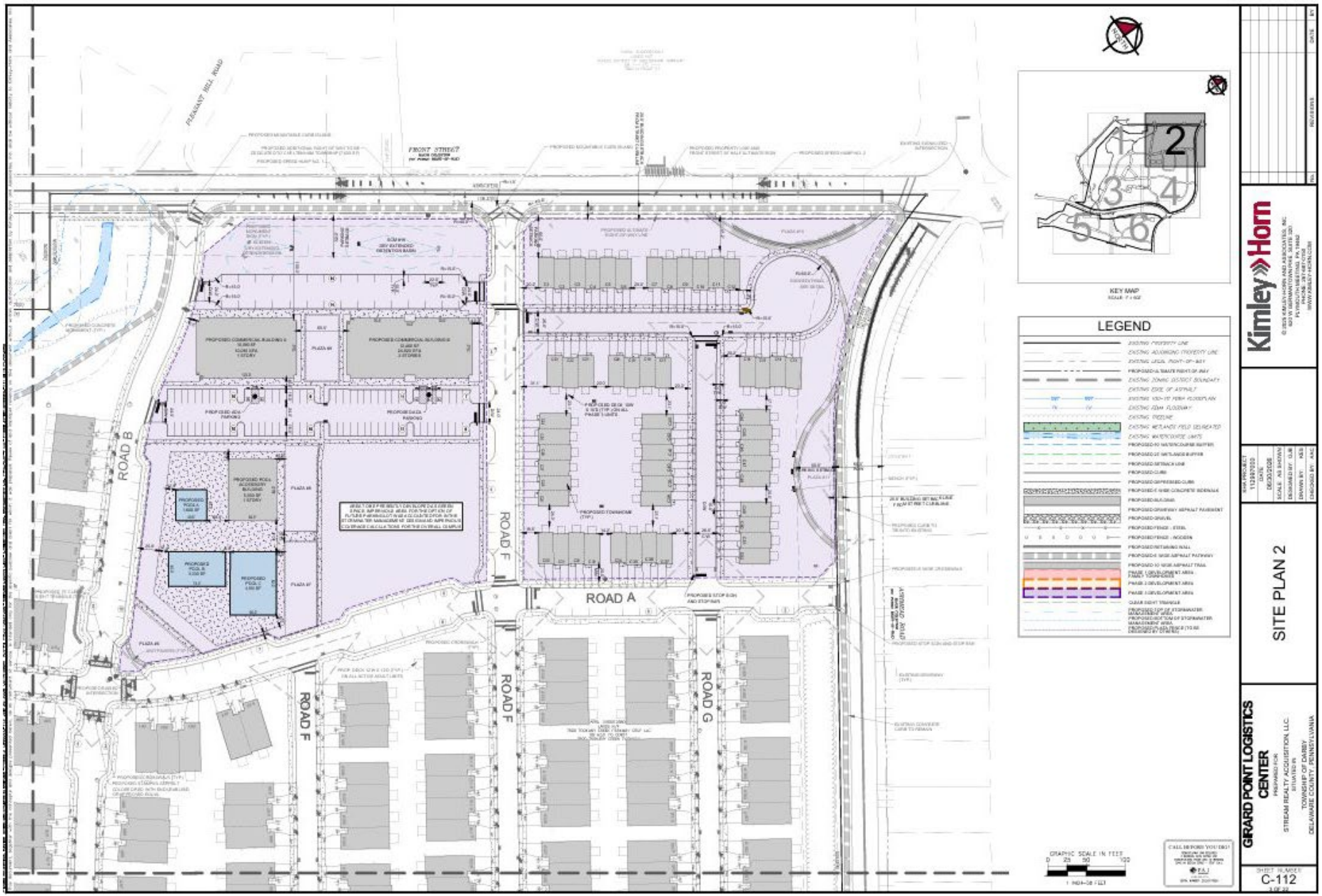
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www.montcopa.org/plan.com

Aerial photography provided by Nearmap


PLEASANT HILL ROAD
FRONT STREET
ROAD A
ROAD B
ROAD F
ROAD F
ROAD F
ROAD G
KEY MAP
SCALE: 1" = 600'
LEGEND
GRAPHIC SCALE IN FEET
0 25 50 100
1 INCH = 50 FEET
Kimley»Horn
GIRARD POINT LOGISTICS CENTER
PREPARED FOR
STREAM REALTY ACQUISITION, LLC.
SITUATED IN
TOWNSHIP OF DARBY
DELAWARE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
SITE PLAN 2
SHEET NUMBER
C-112