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 16, 2025

Henry Sekawungu, Director of Planning and Zoning
Cheltenham Township
8230 Old York Road
Elkins Park, PA 19027

Re: MCPC #25-0085-001
Plan Name: Cedarbrook Middle School Building Additions
1 lots comprising 34.11 acres
Situate: Longfellow Avenue and Rock Creek Drive at SR 309
Cheltenham Township

Dear Mr. Sekawungu:

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 17, 2025. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Cheltenham School District, proposes to incorporate two building additions onto Cedarbrook Middle School. They also propose to reconfigure parking around the building, ultimately adding one additional parking space. The proposal also includes improvements to two subsurface stormwater detention/infiltration beds. The entire site is approximately 34 acres (parcel ID# 31-00-17962-00-7).

The school is located in the C-2 Commercial Zoning District and is a non-conforming use. The building additions will have a footprint of 18,972 square feet. Along with other improvements, the overall impervious coverage on the site will increase by only 13,330 square feet, due to the removal of some driveway and pavement areas.

RECOMMENDATION

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

REVIEW COMMENTS

LANDSCAPING

A. Tree Selection. The applicant proposes to plant 14 hawthorn trees on the site. While this is an attractive species of tree, these trees typically have 1–3-inch thorns. Because this location is a middle school, we recommend that the applicant choose an alternative tree species without thorns.
B. Parking lot aisle planting. The applicant proposes to eliminate a drive aisle between two small parking areas on the west side of the building. An existing center landscape aisle will be extended across the current drive aisle. Some shrubs are proposed in the new portion of the landscape island. We encourage the applicant to design the landscaping throughout the entire landscaped island so that the appearance of the whole island is consistent and attractive in appearance.
C. Entryway Shrub Replacement. A row of small shrubs is proposed to be removed on the northwest side of the property near stormwater infiltration bed UG2. We recommend that the applicant replace these shrubs with new shrubs of the varieties that the applicant is already proposing to include in other locations on the site. This would be a small addition to the proposal that would help to beautify this prominent portion of the school property near the main entrance.
D. Planting on Slopes. It appears that some of the proposed landscaping on the ball field side of the new drive aisle is proposed to be planted on slopes. Plants are often beneficial to slopes, reducing erosion and maintaining grading. However, a detail sheet showing how to properly plant trees on slopes with this grading should be included in the plan set.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

A. Management Capacity. We note that impervious coverage is proposed to be increased by 13,330 square feet on the site. Stormwater management needs to be improved to handle the additional runoff from these improvements. We defer to the borough engineer to assess whether the proposed post-construction stormwater management will handle this additional runoff.

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 sustainable 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 (*#25-0085-001*) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

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

c: Chester Valley Engineers, Inc., Applicant's Representative
Alyson Elliott, Township Manager
Thomas Cross, Chair, Township Planning Commission
Roger A. Phillips, P.E., Township Engineer
Edward Diasio, Township Solicitor
Adam Schantz, Community Planner, Montgomery County Planning Commission
Jessica Buck, District Manager, Montgomery County Conservation District

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

ATTACHMENT A: AERIAL IMAGE OF SITE



Cedarbrook Middle School
Building Additions & Renovations
MCPC#250085001

Montgomery County Planning Commission

0 150 300 600 Feet

N

Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
PO Box 311 Norristown PA 19404-0311
(p) 610 278-3722 (f) 610 278-3941
www.montcopa.org/planning
Aerial photography provided by Nearmap

ATTACHMENT B: REDUCED COPY OF APPLICANT'S SITE PLAN

