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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 19, 2025

Mr. Kyle Detweiler, Borough Manager
Borough of Ambler
131 Rosemary Avenue
Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002

Re: MCPC #25-0169-001
Plan Name: Ambler Crossings - Phase 2
(93-unit multifamily development on a 4.61-acre lot)
Situate: 201 South Maple Avenue
Borough of Ambler

Dear Mr. Detweiler:

We have reviewed the above-referenced land development plan in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on August 20, 2025. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, John Zaharchuk, proposes to redevelop an irregularly shaped 4.61-acre lot in the borough. The subject property is currently accessible via South Chestnut Street; however, the submitted site plan establishes access through the existing parking area of a neighboring apartment complex (the Crossings at Ambler Station). The applicant proposes a total of 93 dwelling units throughout 4 floors, with 61 one-bedroom units and 32 two-bedroom units (note: both 92 and 93 dwelling units are noted in the provided material). The gross floor area of the proposed building is 109,255 square feet. The proposed development site is located within the OC Office Campus District and the RO Redevelopment Overlay District. Multifamily use is not permitted within either the OC or RO District; however, mixed-use with a multifamily component is permissible.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

MONTCO 2040 – A SHARED VISION

Montgomery County's Comprehensive Plan designates this portion of the community as a 'Town Center' in the future land use plan. Town Centers are traditional downtown areas with a mix of retail, institutional, office, and residential uses. These centers are pedestrian-oriented, with buildings built close to sidewalks and often attached. Buildings should be designed with a wall-to-window ratio that reflects existing historic structures in the area and should generally have a vertical orientation. Parking should be located to the rear of buildings. A central park or green should be created within developments within a Town Center. When taking into account

the existing Ambler Crossings with the proposed Phase II, the overall development is generally consistent with the goals for a multifamily residential development within a town center.

AMBLER BOROUGH'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE (2013)

The borough's comprehensive plan called for the creation of a Redevelopment Overlay District to promote Transit-Oriented Development adjacent to Ambler Station. The district was ultimately created via a zoning map and ordinance amendment and has seen subsequent edits at various points since its creation. The plan states that, "the intent of this district is to permit Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) that is compact, mixed-use, and pedestrian-friendly while encouraging mass-transit ridership." The proposed multifamily residential development is in conflict with the goal for the Redevelopment Overlay District as a mixed-use area; however, it would provide a substantial number of new dwelling units in close proximity to transit and, as such, should promote transit ridership. The borough is currently preparing an update to their comprehensive plan, and the forthcoming comprehensive plan may offer a new or revised vision for this area.

RECOMMENDATION

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

REVIEW COMMENTS

INCONSISTENCIES WITH THE ZONING ORDINANCE

The proposed development plan is inconsistent with several regulations of the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant must either seek variance relief from the Zoning Hearing Board or secure amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to address these inconsistencies. The relevant sections of the Zoning Ordinance and an explanation regarding noncompliance are included below.

1. § 27-2703. E(3)(b)1. states that "dwelling units shall be located on the second story and above." The submitted development plan provides multifamily dwelling units on the ground floor of the proposed building.
2. § 27-2703. E(3)(c) requires nonresidential use as part of a transit-oriented development. The submitted development plan provides multifamily dwelling units throughout the entire building and, as such, does not provide for a nonresidential use.
3. §27-2703. E(4)(a)1. requires that a transit-oriented development be located "within 800 feet of an active or proposed commuter rail station." The development site appears to be located greater than 800 feet from the Ambler Station platform.
4. § 27-2703. E(4)(a)2. states that a transit-oriented development "shall provide for a mix of nonresidential uses and residential dwelling units within a mixed-use building or mixed-use buildings, which shall be within a unified development." The submitted development plan provides multifamily dwelling throughout the entire building and, as such, does not provide for mixed-use.
5. § 27-2703. E(4)(b)3. requires a minimum frontage occupation of 90%. It is unclear if this requirement is applicable to this development proposal given the unique location and irregular shape of the lot proposed for development.

6. § 27-2703. E(4)(b)5. permits a maximum build-to line of 15 feet. It is unclear if this requirement is applicable to this development proposal given the unique location and irregular shape of the lot proposed for development.

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES & CIRCULATION

1. The applicant is proposing a sidewalk width of four feet throughout the development; however, we would recommend that sidewalks throughout the development be no less than five feet in order to ensure that a two-way path of travel is accommodated for pedestrians.
2. We recommend that sidewalk be added along the westernmost side of the building, between the building and the property line, in order to connect the southern and northern parking areas. Without this connection, residents would be required to walk through the building or through the parking lot on the adjacent property in order to access the other side of the building. The proposed landscaping would offer an inviting pedestrian experience in this corridor.
3. If the applicant intends to abandon the driveway access easement that connects the lot to S Chestnut Street, as appears to be indicated by the plan, the impervious surfacing should be removed and the area should be restored with suitable vegetation. If intended to remain for future use or to preserve another interested party's/parties' access to this area, the existing access should be blocked with a functional gate or removable bollards; emergency responders should be provided with a key to access any such controlled access. If the borough has an interest in maintaining access, a suitable improvement plan should be discussed with the applicant.

EMERGENCY ACCESS

The borough should ensure that emergency response vehicles, such as ambulances and fire trucks, are able to safely access all sides of the proposed building. The provided "truck turn plan" (sheet 19) illustrates that emergency vehicles must navigate the parking areas of the existing Crossings at Ambler Station in order to access the development site. The borough may wish to request additional detail from the applicant in order to demonstrate that emergency access is adequately accommodated.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

1. Due to the unique circumstances associated with constrained site such as this, it is recommended that on-site stormwater infiltration opportunities be provided to the greatest extent possible. Where possible, curb cuts to allow stormwater to enter and infiltrate the parking lot landscaping islands should be provided. Please refer to MCPC's publication "Sustainable Green Parking Lots" (2016) for more information on how to promote on-site stormwater infiltration.
2. Stormwater management must take into account the underlying soil conditions, including the potential for contamination from the legacy of industry in this area of the borough. Any stormwater conveyance system must not allow contaminants to enter the public stormwater system. The borough may wish to request additional information on how the applicant intends to mitigate any such soil contamination.

INCONSISTENT UNIT COUNT

Unit counts of both 92 and 93 are included in the submitted material. The 'overall schematic plan' prepared by NextChapter Architects includes the unit breakdown table included below, while the application, transportation impact study prepared by TPD, and the site plan set prepared by Holmes Cunningham, LLC, indicate that 92 total dwelling units are proposed.

	UNIT A 1-BEDROOM	UNIT B 2-BEDROOM	UNIT B1 2-BEDROOM	UNIT C 2-BEDROOM	**TOTAL**	SQUARE FOOTAGE
1ST FLOOR	13	2	1	5	**21**	28,288 SF
2ND FLOOR	16	2	0	6	**24**	26,989 SF
3RD FLOOR	16	2	0	6	**24**	26,989 SF
4TH FLOOR	16	2	0	6	**24**	26,989 SF
TOTAL	**61**	**8**	**1**	**23**	**93**	109,255 SF

The applicant should confirm the correct unit count on all documents and, further, must ensure that associated requirements and studies are in alignment with this figure (e.g., parking requirements, trip generation counts, etc.).

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal, but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve Ambler's planning objectives for transit-oriented 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 (#25-0169-001) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

Timothy Konetchy

Timothy Konetchy, Senior Community Planner
Timothy.Konetchy@montgomerycountypa.gov - 610.292.4917

c: John Zaharchuk, Summit Realty Advisors, Applicant's Representative
Glenn Kucher, Borough Code Officer
John Oswald, Chair, Borough Planning Commission
Al Comly, Vice Chair, Borough Planning Commission
Carol DiPietro, Secretary, Borough Planning Commission
Jessica Buck, District Manager, MCCD

Attachments: A. Aerial Image of Site
B. Applicant's Submitted Site Plan

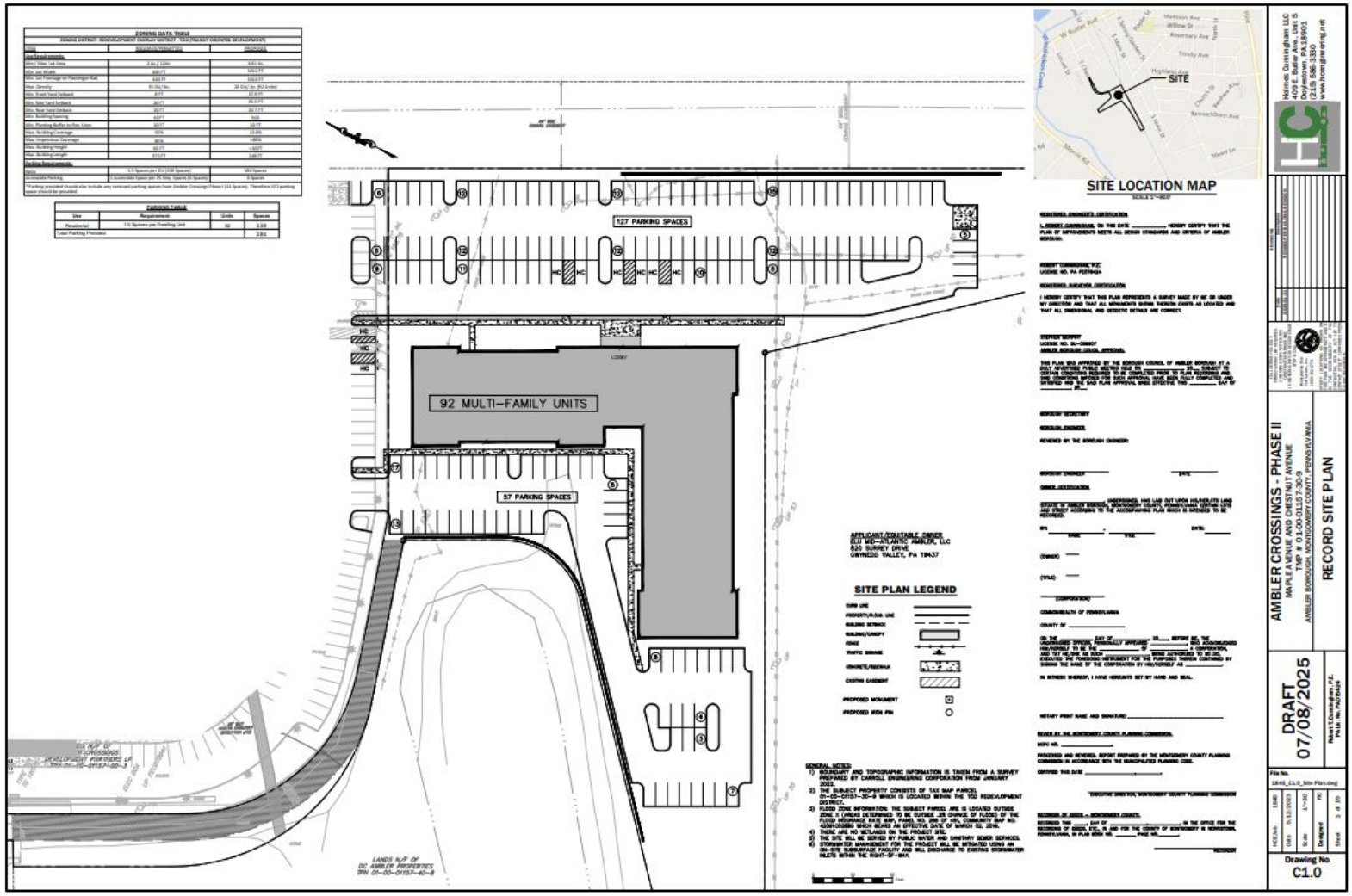


Ambler Crossing - Phase 2
MCPC#250169001

Montgomery County Planning Commission
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Aerial photography provided by Nearmap

0 100 200 400 Feet

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ZONING DATA TABLE
PARKING TABLE
127 PARKING SPACES
92 MULTI-FAMILY UNITS
57 PARKING SPACES
SITE
SITE LOCATION MAP
SITE PLAN LEGEND
GENERAL NOTES:
AMBLER CROSSINGS - PHASE II
MAPLE AVENUE AND CHESTNUT AVENUE
RECORD SITE PLAN
DRAFT
07/08/2025
Drawing No.
C1.0