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MONTGOMERY COUNTY
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MONTGOMERY COUNTY • PO BOX 311
NORRISTOWN, PA 19404-0311

610-278-3722
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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 1, 2025

Mr. Christopher Leswing, Director of Building & Planning
Building & Planning Department
Township of Lower Merion
75 East Lancaster Avenue
Ardmore, Pennsylvania 19003

Re: MCPC #18-0320-007
Plan Name: Bala Cynwyd Shopping Center
(2,584 sq. ft. commercial on approximately 19.91 acres)
Situate: City Avenue (north)/Belmont Avenue (west)
Lower Merion Township

Dear Mr. Leswing:

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 September 19, 2025. We forward this letter as a report of our review and recommendations.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Federal Realty, proposes to construct a 2,584-square foot building addition to an existing pad site building at the Bala Cynwyd Shopping Center with an attached covered patio area of 1,212 square feet. The trash enclosure, currently in the location of the proposed building addition, will be relocated across the south drive in a separate parking area. The previously approved plan for this site included a 3,748-square foot parklet at the intersection of West Drive and South Drive. With the proposed building addition, the parklet in this location will be reduced to 228 square feet and a new parklet totaling 3,800 square feet is shown towards the rear of the site along a pathway that connects to the intersection of Belmont Avenue and St. Asaph's Road. Additional improvements shown at this time include modifications to several parking areas and parking islands, ADA curb ramps and crosswalks. The property is located in the township's CAD-BCR City Avenue District-Bala Cynwyd Retail zoning district. An updated landscape plan was received from township staff on September 30, 2025.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The City Avenue District area of Lower Merion Township is identified as a Regional Mixed-Use Center in the Future Land Use Plan of the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*. Regional Mixed-Use Centers are intensely developed suburban cores with significant retail, office, and residential land uses. The proposed development will create additional active commercial space and create an enlarged public

gathering space, as part of the ongoing mixed-use development, which is generally consistent with the goal to "encourage development and transformative investment where infrastructure already exists."

The Land Use Element of the 2016 Lower Merion Township Comprehensive Plan identifies the City Avenue District area as a Regional Center which is the primary growth area within the township. The proposed development will create additional centrally-located active commercial space and an enlarged public gathering space, as part of the ongoing mixed-use development, which will help advance the goal of the Regional Center "to transform the predominant auto-oriented, office-based environment into a more functionally diverse live/work/shop environment and a pedestrian-friendly district."

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 Lower Merion Township may wish to consider prior to moving forward. Our review comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

ZONING ORDINANCE COMMENTS

Based on the information provided, we have identified the following items related to the Lower Merion Township Zoning Ordinance that we feel should be addressed as part of any future land development submissions associated with this proposal:

A. Minimum Building Height. Section 155-6.7.C.(2)(a) states that "the minimum height of any building shall be two stories and no less than 28 feet above grade." It appears that the applicant proposes a single-story building addition.

B. Development Design Standards. Section155-6.7.H. states that the development design standards provided in §155-6.6.I. shall also apply to the CAD-BCR District. Additional information may be helpful to determine compliance with the development design standards, as applicable. For example, §155-6.6.I.(5)(c)[5] states that "building corners at intersections of public streets shall be visually emphasized through design features […]." The proposed building addition will be located at the intersection of two proposed roads as shown on the City Avenue Official Map. Therefore, additional information regarding the design of the building addition as viewed from both frontages may be helpful.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS

We encourage the applicant to explore incorporating electric vehicle charging infrastructure into their project. Land development is the most efficient time to add the electrical infrastructure needed to serve electric vehicle charging stations.

BICYCLE PARKING

Several bike racks are shown around the site; however, no bike racks were identified closest to the proposed building addition. We encourage the applicant to provide bike parking closer to the primary entrance of the proposed commercial building addition for the convenience of future patrons.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the proposed development; however, we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve the township's planning objectives for commercial 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 (#18-0320-007) on any plans submitted for final recording.

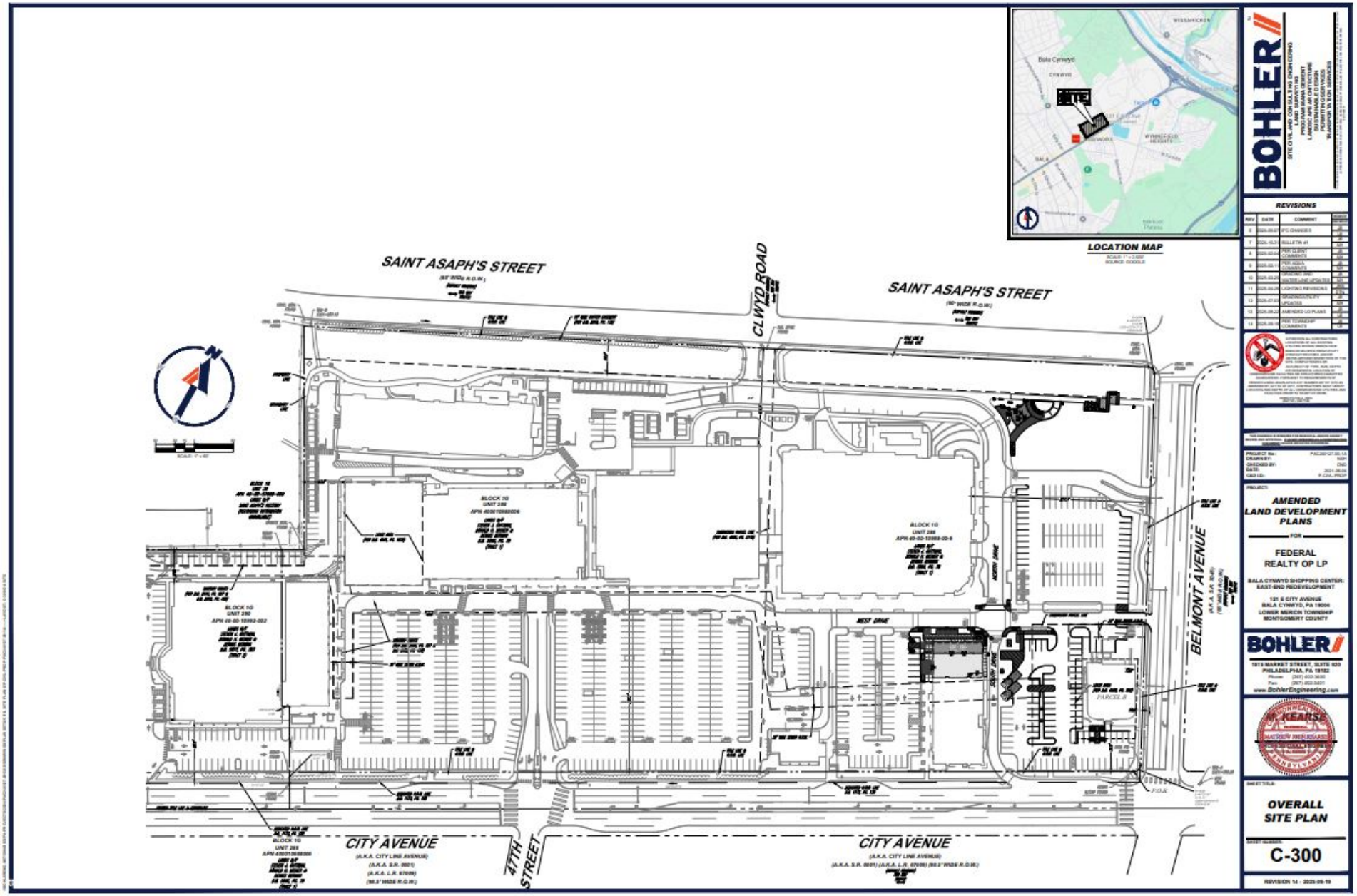
Sincerely,

Marley B Bice

Marley Bice, AICP, Community Planning Assistant Manager
610-278-3740 – marley.bice@montgomerycountypa.gov

c: George W. Broseman, Esq., Applicant's Representative
Gilbert P. High, Jr., Esq., Twp. Solicitor
Ernie B. McNeely, Twp. Manager
Jody Kelley, Twp. Secretary
Joseph Mastronardo, P.E., Twp. Engineer
Charlie Doyle, Twp. Asst. Dir. of Planning
Colleen Hall, Twp. Senior Planner
Greg Prichard, Twp. Hist. Preserv. Planner
Holly Colello, Twp. Planner
Sarah Carley, Twp. Planner
Angela Forney, Twp. Planning Technician

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


SAINT ASAPH'S STREET
CLWYD ROAD
SAINT ASAPH'S STREET
LOCATION MAP
BELMONT AVENUE
CITY AVENUE
47TH STREET
CITY AVENUE
BOHLER
REVISIONS
AMENDED LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS
FEDERAL REALTY OP LP
BALA CYNWYD SHOPPING CENTER: EAST-END REDEVELOPMENT
121 E CITY AVENUE
BALA CYNWYD, PA 19004
LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
BOHLER
OVERALL SITE PLAN
C-300



Bala Cynwyd Shopping Center
MCPC#180320006

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

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