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Planning Commission

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Scott France, AICP
Executive Director

June 11, 2026

Ms. Beth Gooch, Director of Administration and Community Development
Franconia Township
671 Allentown Road
Telford, Pennsylvania 18969

Re: MCPC #26-0134-001
Plan Name: Grace Community Church Sanctuary Addition
(2 Lots comprising 6.02 acres)
Situate: Allentown Road (S.R. 1001) and Souder Road (S.R. 1005)
Franconia Township

Dear Ms. Gooch:

We have reviewed the above-referenced preliminary land development plan in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on May 19, 2026. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

Grace Community Church of Bux/Mont, Inc. has submitted a preliminary land development and lot consolidation plan for 144 Allentown Road, located at the corner of Allentown and Souder Roads. The plan would combine two lots (34-00-00277-00-4 and 34-00-00277-10-3) totaling 6.02 acres, to permit construction of a 5,200-square-foot sanctuary and related parking. The Allentown Road parcel is zoned Village Commercial (VC) and currently includes the church office building, parking for 8 to 10 vehicles, access driveway off of Allentown Road, and several small garage structures. The existing two-story stone office building would remain, while the accessory structures, parking, and access driveway would be removed. The Souder Road parcel is zoned Limited Industrial (LI) and is proposed to contain a new access drive from Souder Road and a larger parking area to serve the sanctuary. The western edge of the lot proposes a new conservation easement (totaling 1.834 acres) which encompasses the woodland area along a tributary to Skippack Creek. In 2016, the Franconia Township Zoning Hearing Board granted a variance allowing religious use on both the VC and LI parcels.

As noted above, the property spans the LI and VC Zoning Districts and is proposed to be rezoned entirely to VC through a zoning map amendment. This review letter is contingent upon approval of that amendment.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The Future Land Use Element of the 2015 Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan identifies this property as within a Designated Growth Area. In addition, this area of the township is identified as a Designated Growth Area in the Future Land Use Plan of the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, Montco 2040: A Shared Vision.

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 issue(s) that the applicant and Franconia Township may wish to consider prior to final plan approval. Our comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

ZONING

The property is split between the Limited Industrial and Village Commercial Zoning Districts and is proposed to be rezoned entirely to Village Commercial through a zoning map amendment. This review letter and the comments below are contingent upon approval of that amendment. Public notice of the amendment should be provided before the land development review process.

PEDESTRIAN/TRAIL CONNECTIVITY

Grace Community Church is located across Allentown Road (S.R. 1001) from the R-175 Residential 60,000 SF District and the MRD Mixed Use Residential Overlay District, which includes an existing residential development with sidewalk connections to the northeastern corner of Allentown Road and Banbury Drive/Souder Road. These sidewalks also connect to the Banbury Mopac Trail along Skippack Creek. We recommend that the township and applicant coordinate with PennDOT to evaluate a new pedestrian crossing at the existing traffic signal on Allentown Road. This crossing would connect the proposed sidewalks and improve pedestrian access between the residential neighborhood and the church/Village Commercial District. The applicant should also consider how internal walkways can connect to this intersection from within the site.

The 2024 Franconia Township Trails Map also identifies a proposed trail alignment along Allentown Road and Souder Road. The township should consider how this land development could help advance that planned local trail connection.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT:

The plan proposes a 1.834-acre conservation easement over the woodland area along a tributary to Skippack Creek to protect the riparian buffer at the western edge of the site. While this easement is commendable, the plan does not clearly identify its terms or the future easement holder. The applicant and township should clarify these details before plan approval.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal, but we believe that the suggested revisions above will better achieve Franconia Township's planning objectives.

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 (*26-0134-001*) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

Douglas Maisey, Senior Planner
douglas.maisey@montgomerycountypa.gov - 610-278-3737

c: Grace Community Church of Bux/Mont. Applicant
Rachel Buch, PE, Applicant's Representative
John Medendorp, Chmn., Township Planning Commission
Eric Wert, Esq., Township Solicitor
Russell Dunlevy, Township Engineer
Joseph A. Zadlo, Township Planner
Nidhi Mehra, PennDOT
Mirlene Saintval, PennDOT
Fran Hanney, P.E., PennDOT

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



Grace Community Church
Sanctuary Addition
MCPC#260134001

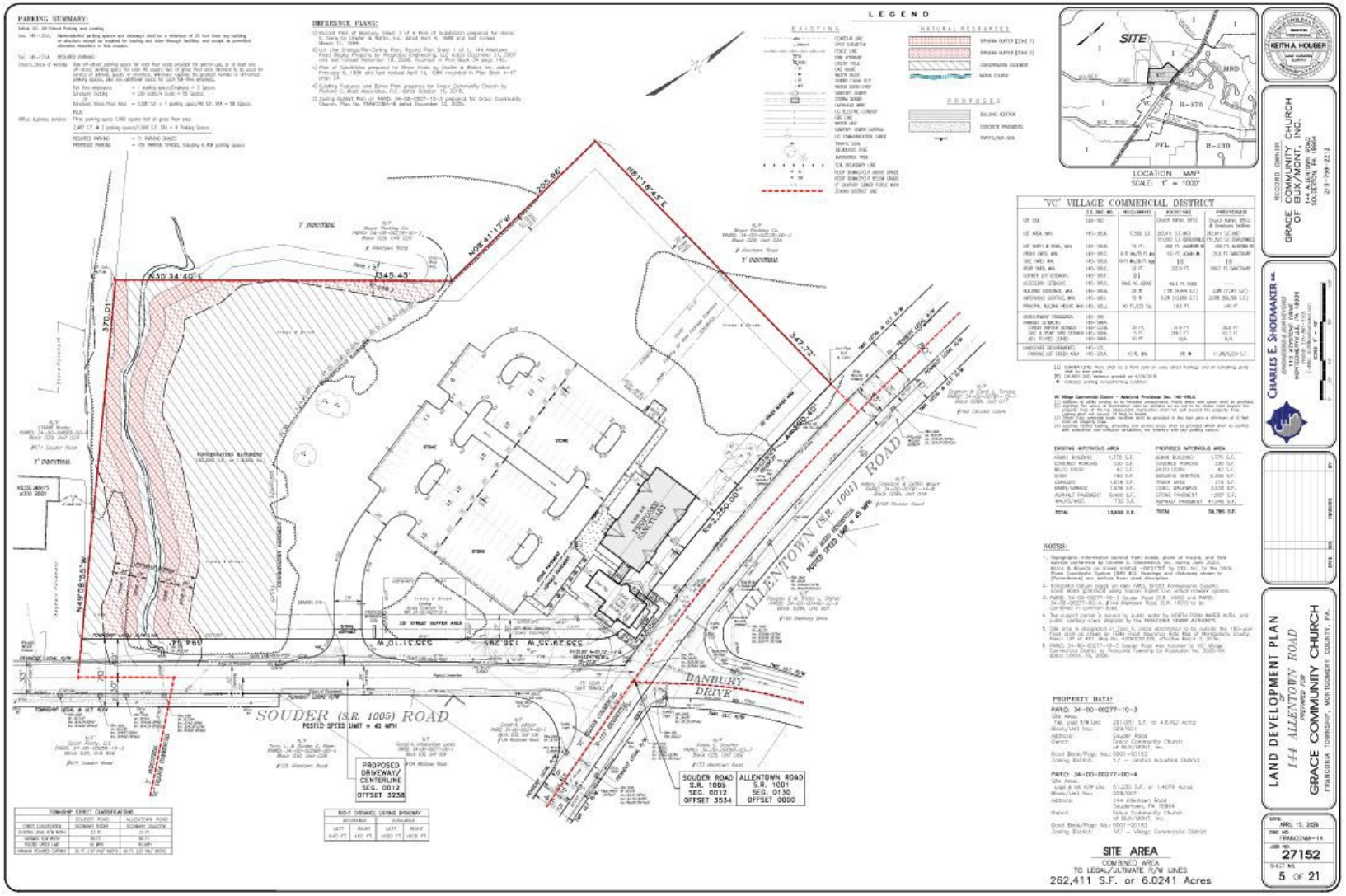
Montgomery County Planning Commission

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Aerial photography provided by Nearmap


LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN
144 ALLENTOWN ROAD
PREPARED FOR
GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH
FRANCONIA TOWNSHIP, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA.
GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF EMMANUEL INC.
144 ALLENTOWN ROAD
SOUDERTON, PA. 18964
215-799-2212
CHARLES E. SHOEMAKER INC.
APRIL 15, 2026
FRANCO19MA-14
27152
5 OF 21
SITE AREA
COMBINED AREA
TO LEGAL/ULTIMATE R/W LINES
262,411 S.F. or 6.0241 Acres
LOCATION MAP
SCALE: 1" = 1000'
LEGEND
SOUDER (S.R. 1005) ROAD
ALLENTOWN (S.R. 1001) ROAD
BANBURY DRIVE
PROPOSED DRIVEWAY/ CENTERLINE SEG. 0012 OFFSET 3258
SOUDER ROAD S.R. 1005 SEG. 0012 OFFSET 3534
ALLENTOWN ROAD S.R. 1001 SEG. 0130 OFFSET 0000
"VC" VILLAGE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
PROPERTY DATA:
PARCEL 34-00-00277-10-3
PARCEL 34-00-00277-00-4
PARKING SUMMARY:
REFERENCE PLANS:
NOTES: