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Scott France, AICP
Executive Director

October 14, 2026

Mr. Scott Hutt, Assistant Township Manager
Hatfield Township
1950 School Road
Hatfield, Pennsylvania 19440

Re: MCPC #26-0191-001
Plan Name: Laudenslager Senior Apartments
(114 units comprising 3.23 acres)
Parcels ID: 35-00-02215-00-9, 09-00-01228-00-5
Situate: Cowpath Road (PA Route 463) (west)/Fairgrounds Road (south)
Hatfield Township and Hatfield Borough

Dear Mr. Hutt:

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 July 13, 2026. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

Our office has received a set of plans for review that pertain to planned improvements on a 3.23-acre property zoned B Residential (Hatfield Township)/R-1 Residential (Hatfield Borough) located at the intersection of Cowpath Road (PA Route 463) and Laudenslager Road. The subject tract is bisected by the municipal boundary between Hatfield Township and Hatfield Borough and therefore lies within two municipal jurisdictions.

Elon Affordable Housing, LLC, the applicant, proposes the development of Laudenslager Senior Apartments Phase I, a new affordable housing community comprised of 114 multifamily units in three buildings ("Existing Building #1", "Proposed Building #1", "Proposed Building #2").

Other ancillary improvements include the construction of surface parking areas, internal access drives, sidewalks, landscaping, utilities, and stormwater management facilities. The development is designed to provide age-restricted housing within a planned residential setting, with buildings arranged around a network of private roadways and pedestrian connections that provide access throughout the site, supporting the proposed development and ensuring compliance with applicable municipal requirements.

As indicated on the applicant's engineer's plans, the Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) previously granted a series of variances to facilitate the redevelopment of the property as a senior apartment community. The approved relief permits building coverage in excess of the 20 percent maximum permitted by the Zoning Ordinance and allows impervious coverage to exceed the district's required 40 percent limit. The ZHB also approved a variance to permit a building height exceeding 35 feet and more than 2.5 stories, thereby enabling the proposed multifamily building to exceed the underlying dimensional standards. In addition, relief was granted from the established parking standard of two parking spaces per dwelling unit, allowing the development to provide a reduced parking ratio. Last, the township approved a variance extending the period before a nonconforming use is deemed abandoned, thereby preserving certain nonconforming-use rights associated with the property. These approvals collectively provide the zoning relief necessary to accommodate the applicant's proposed apartment development while recognizing the site's existing conditions and development constraints.

In addition, we report that the applicant is requesting two waivers associated with the proposed development. First, relief is sought from the stormwater management grading standards of Chapter 242 to permit 3:1 embankment slopes where the ordinance generally limits cut slopes to 4:1. Second, a waiver is requested from the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) buffering requirements in Chapter 250 to permit a screening fence in lieu of required vegetative buffering along a portion of the southern property line where sufficient planting width is unavailable.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

We commend the applicant and municipal officials for their efforts to expand affordable housing opportunities in the County. The proposed development is generally consistent with the Montco 2040 Comprehensive Plan and our Montgomery County 2026 Housing Blueprint. The proposed development expands housing opportunities in an established community, supports efficient use of existing infrastructure, and contributes to a broader range of housing choices that meet the needs of current and future residents. These outcomes align with county objectives to increase housing availability, promote sustainable growth patterns, and foster vibrant, inclusive communities.

Primarily, the proposed plan aligns with the objectives and themes of the comprehensive plan. The property is in a designated growth area, and according to the Future Land Use Plan, the subject tract is classified as a Suburban Residential Area. The plan states that Suburban Residential Areas "are residential areas which depend on automobiles for transportation and often have extensive landscaping on individual properties. These areas will have a variety of housing types, with single-family detached homes the most prominent type."

Development within Suburban Residential Areas should be designed to complement the character and housing types of the surrounding neighborhood while preserving important natural features such as trees, wetlands, steep slopes, and other environmentally sensitive lands. New development should incorporate appropriate landscaping, buffering, street trees, and open space, including recreation facilities where appropriate. Overall, development should promote attractive, well-landscaped, and connected neighborhoods that balance housing opportunities with environmental stewardship and community character.

RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) supports this proposal; however, during our review, we found the following issues that the applicant and officials in each municipality may want to consider before granting final plan approval.

REVIEW COMMENTS

GENERAL COMMENT

A. Intermunicipal Review and Coordination. We note that the subject property extends across the municipal boundary between the township and the borough. As such, development occurring on the tract may be subject to the jurisdiction, zoning regulations, subdivision and land development requirements, and approval processes of both municipalities. The applicant should clearly identify the location of all proposed improvements relative to the municipal boundary and demonstrate compliance with the applicable ordinances of each municipality. Coordination between the municipalities is encouraged to ensure that access, circulation, utilities, stormwater management facilities, open space, easements, and other site improvements function cohesively and are supported by appropriate agreements where improvements cross municipal boundaries. Consistent review and coordination among the affected municipalities will help ensure orderly development of the site and avoid potential conflicts in design, construction, operation, and long-term maintenance.

CIRCULATION ISSUES

A. Loading/Unloading/Delivery Functions. The plans lack designated loading/unloading areas for deliveries, service vehicles, or short-term drop-offs. It is recommended to provide adequate on-site facilities to avoid blocking access drives, parking, or pedestrian routes. Without dedicated spaces, routine activities such as package and food deliveries may occur in parking areas or along drives, causing conflicts with vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The applicant should revise plans to include clearly marked off-street loading areas that allow safe vehicle access without obstructing parking or pedestrian routes.

B. Vehicle Encroachment. Parking spaces adjacent to the sidewalk do not include concrete wheel stops or other measures to prevent vehicle overhang. Without such measures, parked vehicles may extend onto the sidewalk, partially obstructing it, reducing the available pedestrian clear width, and potentially affecting ADA-compliant access. The applicant should demonstrate how the required sidewalk width will be maintained free of vehicle encroachment.

C. Pedestrian Safety. The proposed stormwater detention basin includes proposed 3:1 side slopes that directly abut a sidewalk and pedestrian circulation area adjacent to “existing Building #1.” While 3:1 slopes may be acceptable from an engineering standpoint, their proximity to a pedestrian route raises safety concerns. The relatively steep embankment may increase the risk of slips, trips and falls, particularly during wet weather, winter conditions, maintenance activities, or when the basin temporarily conveys or stores stormwater. The applicant should consider additional safety measures, such as fencing, guardrails, a landscaped buffer, a widened separation area, or flatter side slopes adjacent to pedestrian facilities, to enhance user safety and create a more comfortable and forgiving environment.

OPEN SPACE ISSUES

A. Outdoor Amenity Area. The proposed residential development does not appear to include any designated common outdoor open space, gathering areas, or resident amenities such as seating areas, courtyards, plazas, pocket parks, or similar features. Outdoor amenity areas provide opportunities for passive recreation, social interaction, and community building while enhancing the overall livability of residential development. The absence of such spaces may limit residents' opportunities to gather, recreate, and enjoy usable outdoor areas on the site. The applicant should consider incorporating a centrally located, readily accessible amenity area designed for active and/or passive recreation, which may include features such as benches, landscaping, walking paths, lawns, plazas, or other improvements that serve future residents. This recommendation is consistent with planning best practices that encourage the use of common open spaces as focal points for community interaction and resident enjoyment.

DESIGN ISSUES

A. Parking Allocation and Designation. The plan should clearly identify and designate parking spaces intended for residents, visitors, and on-site staff or property management personnel. Differentiating these parking areas helps ensure that adequate parking remains available for each user group and reduces the potential for conflicts between residents, guests, maintenance personnel, and management staff. Designated visitor parking can improve convenience for guests and service providers while helping to prevent visitor vehicles from occupying spaces needed by residents. Similarly, reserving spaces for management and maintenance staff can support efficient site operations and ensure that personnel have reliable access to the property when responding to resident needs, performing routine maintenance, or addressing emergencies. Clearly identifying these spaces on the plan can also assist property management with parking enforcement and long-term parking management.

B. Building Access “Proposed Building #2”/ADA Parking Spaces. The plans indicate that the accessible parking spaces are separated from the “Proposed Building #2” building entrance by an access drive. While a marked pedestrian crosswalk is proposed, additional measures should be considered to enhance visibility and pedestrian safety at the crossing location. Given that the route will be used by individuals with mobility impairments, the crossing should be clearly delineated and designed to maximize driver awareness through appropriate signage, pavement markings, and other traffic-calming measures as warranted. The applicant should demonstrate that the accessible route provides a safe, direct, and convenient connection between the accessible parking spaces and the building entrance while minimizing pedestrian-vehicle conflicts.

C. Building Access “Proposed Building #2”/Frontage. According to the submitted plan, a 4-foot-wide planting strip between the sidewalk and the curb, running the length of the frontage of “Proposed Building #2,” is proposed. The proposed grass landscape strip between the parking area and the building-frontage sidewalk may enhance the development's residential character by providing additional green space and buffering pedestrians from adjacent vehicular areas. However, pedestrian circulation patterns should be considered to ensure residents have direct, convenient access between parking areas and building entrances. The applicant’s engineer should evaluate whether supplemental, paved pedestrian connections through the landscape strip are warranted at building entrances and other high-traffic destinations to accommodate anticipated pedestrian travel patterns and minimize damage to landscaped areas.

D. Proposed Electric Vehicle (EV) Parking Spaces. The plan designates four proposed electric vehicle spaces and three parking spots as potential EV-convertible spaces near "Proposed Building #1." We identify two issues: how these EV-reserved spaces will function and whether EV charging infrastructure will be added in the future.

If EV charging spaces are reserved exclusively for electric vehicles, those spaces may remain vacant during periods when few EVs are present while conventional vehicles are searching for parking. This can reduce the functional efficiency of a parking lot, particularly at apartment complexes, where parking demand may be high.

The plans should clarify the intended operation and management of the proposed EV parking spaces. Specifically, the applicant should indicate whether the spaces are reserved exclusively for EVs, or available for general parking if not occupied by an EV. Consideration should also be given to "EV parking" signage, enforcement, user access, and future demand to ensure that the spaces function as intended and do not create parking inefficiencies or conflicts among residents, employees, or visitors.

Although charging stations are not currently planned, the applicant should also discuss with municipal officials the possibility of installing EV charging facilities in the future. If such facilities are planned, the applicant should demonstrate that there is sufficient space and infrastructure to install charging equipment, including charger placement, electrical connections, equipment protection, and pedestrian pathways. Future charging stations should be positioned and designed to avoid conflicts with sidewalks, accessible routes, parking operations, and landscape features. Addressing these considerations early in land development can help prevent future site modifications and ensure that EV charging facilities, if added later, are integrated safely and efficiently.

E. Parking Lot Greening. Several parking rows contain long uninterrupted runs of parking spaces without interior landscape islands. The applicant should evaluate opportunities to introduce additional planting islands throughout the parking lot, even if doing so reduces the overall parking supply. Interior landscape islands provide important aesthetic, environmental, and functional benefits by reducing the visual impact of expansive paved areas, creating locations for shade trees, mitigating heat buildup, improving stormwater management, and enhancing the pedestrian experience. Additional landscape islands would contribute to a greener parking lot design and help balance vehicular accommodation with site sustainability and overall development quality.

ZONING ORDINANCE COMPLIANCE

A. Required Off-Street Loading and Unloading Facilities (*§282-190*). The plan does not show a designated off-street loading and unloading area. It is unclear how loading activities will be carried out on-site. According to the Zoning Ordinance, an off-street loading and unloading space must be provided and be completely separate from parking spaces. The plan should clearly mark this loading area. The applicant's engineer should review and confirm how they will meet this requirement to the satisfaction of municipal officials. Revisions or updates to the plan may be needed.

MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER

A. Proposed Access to Adjacent Properties. The submitted plan depicts an existing vehicular connection from the subject tract to an access driveway that traverses across adjacent properties (County Parcels 09-00-01630-00-8 (*Lands of Morasco*) and 09-00-01225-00-8 (*Lands of Pletscher*)). While interconnected access can improve circulation and enhance emergency access, the township should

confirm that adequate legal mechanisms are in place to ensure continued long-term use of the connection. The applicant should provide documentation demonstrating that a recorded cross-access easement exists or propose a cross-access agreement that establishes perpetual access rights and identifies maintenance responsibilities. The applicant should also evaluate whether the connection can safely accommodate anticipated traffic volumes and whether future development of either adjacent property could adversely affect the continued operation of the shared access arrangement.

B. Highway Occupancy Permit. Because the property fronts Cowpath Road (PA Route 463), a roadway under PennDOT jurisdiction, the applicant should contact PennDOT District 6 to determine whether a Highway Occupancy Permit, an amended permit, or other access approval is required for the proposed redevelopment and change in use. The existing driveway locations alone across the frontage of the subject tract do not necessarily exempt the project from PennDOT access permitting requirements.

WAIVER REQUESTS

A. Proposed Stormwater Facilities. The applicant requests a waiver to permit stormwater basin side slopes steeper than those required by the SALDO. While such relief may be warranted where site constraints limit the available area for stormwater management facilities, steeper slopes can increase maintenance challenges, erosion potential, and safety concerns for both future residents and maintenance personnel. The municipality should request documentation demonstrating that reasonable alternatives, such as retaining walls, underground stormwater management facilities, distributed BMPs, basin reconfiguration, or other site design modifications, were evaluated prior to seeking the waiver. If the waiver is granted, consideration should be given to enhanced stabilization measures, maintenance access provisions, and appropriate safety treatments, particularly where the basin is accessible to pedestrians or located near existing or proposed buildings.

B. Property Buffer. The applicant requests relief from the required landscape buffer and proposes an opaque fence in lieu of the required plantings. While the fence may provide immediate visual screening, municipal officials should evaluate whether the proposed alternative adequately satisfies the intent of the buffer requirements. Our office advises you that a fence may help screen views but may be less effective at mitigating noise, light spill from elevated fixtures, and the visual impact of larger buildings, especially when screening above fence height is desirable. Moreover, fences require ongoing maintenance and eventual replacement. Damaged sections can reduce screening effectiveness, whereas healthy vegetation often improves with maturity. This issue is particularly important where the fence serves as the sole buffer.

   If the waiver is granted, consideration should be given to ensuring that the proposed fence and any supplemental landscaping provide an equivalent level of screening and long-term compatibility with adjacent properties.

CONCLUSION

We reiterate that the MCPC generally supports this application; however, we recommend that municipal officials consider the issues raised in this letter.

Please note that the review comments and recommendations in this report are advisory to the municipality, and final disposition on 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 before 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 (*26-0191-001*) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

Kevin Chavous

Kevin Chavous, ASLA, SITES AP, LEED AP, WELL AP, CNU-A, AICP CUD
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610.278.3731 e-mail kevin.chavous@montgomerycountypa.gov

c: Elon Affordable Housing, LLC, Applicant
T & M Associates, Applicant's Engineer
Aaron Bibro, Township Manager, Hatfield Township
Jaime Snyder, Borough Manager, Hatfield Borough
Katie Vlahos, Assistant Borough Manager, Hatfield Borough

Attachments: A. Aerial View of Site
B. Reduced Copy of Applicant's Plan



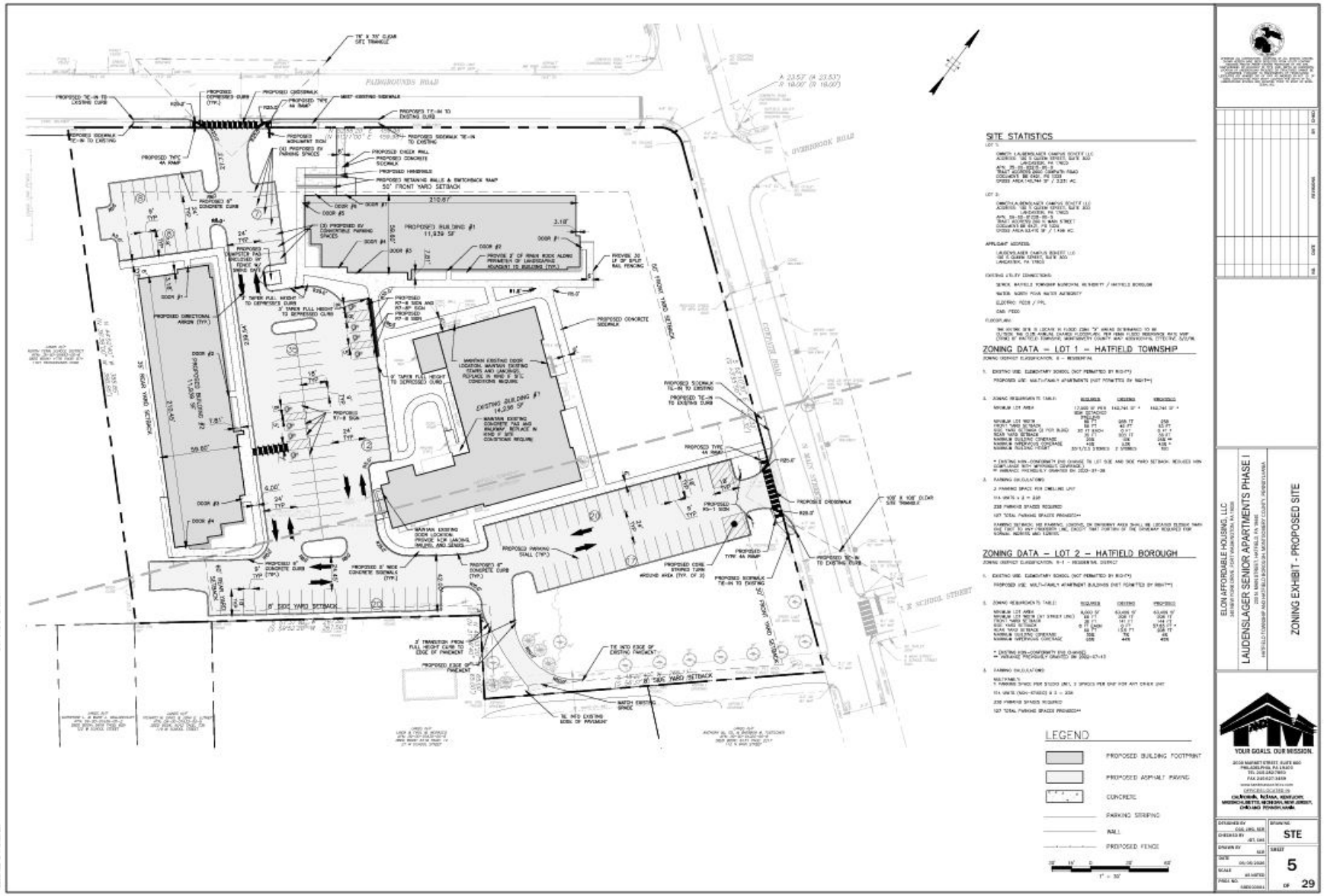
Laudenslager Senior Apartments
MCPC#260191001

Montgomery County Planning Commission

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Aerial photography provided by Nearmap


SITE STATISTICS
ZONING DATA – LOT 1 – HATFIELD TOWNSHIP
ZONING DATA – LOT 2 – HATFIELD BOROUGH
LEGEND
PROPOSED BUILDING FOOTPRINT
PROPOSED ASPHALT PAVING
CONCRETE
PARKING STRIPING
WALL
PROPOSED FENCE
1" = 30'
ELON AFFORDABLE HOUSING, LLC
LAUDENSLAGER SENIOR APARTMENTS PHASE I
ZONING EXHIBIT - PROPOSED SITE
YOUR GOALS. OUR MISSION.
STE
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