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Scott France, AICP
Executive Director

October 22, 2026

Ms. Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning and Development
Municipality of Norristown
235 East Airy Street
Norristown, Pennsylvania 19401-5048

Re: MCPC #26-0009-002
Plan Name: Norristown Centre Retail (Condo #3)
(1 lot comprising 1.89 acres)
Parcel ID: 13-00-23624-10-9
Situate: Markley Street (E) and W. Johnson Hwy. (S)
Municipality of Norristown

Dear Ms. Musonye:

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 September 25, 2026. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Mahuva Realty, LLC, proposes to redevelop a vacant parcel within the Norristown Centre complex. The site is located within the Municipality's Commercial Retail (CR) zoning district. The majority of the 1.89-acre property is paved; approximately 0.25 acres of the property's southwest corner is vegetated with grass. The applicant proposes to remove all existing impervious surface as part of the redevelopment.

The building proposed is 13,579 square feet and features 6-units – five retail units and a sixth unit used as a drive-through restaurant with a patio for outdoor dining. Outdoor dining is a conditional use per Section 320-255 of the Zoning Code. The applicant has submitted an application for conditional use approval as part of the proposal.

The site has approximately 375 feet of frontage along West Johnson Highway and is bordered by driveways that facilitate access into the larger complex. The mix of existing uses within the Norristown Centre complex includes: a Dunkin Donuts with a drive-thru window; a Royal Farms convenience store and gas station; a drive-through car wash; and a large office complex that is anchored by the PennDOT Driver License Center.

The Norristown Zoning Hearing Board granted two variances at its meeting on June 23, 2026. The applicant received a variance to provide only one loading berth instead of the three required. A variance was also granted to permit the applicant to enlarge the freestanding sign near the entrance to 36 square feet from a maximum of 15 square feet, and to provide six wall signs instead of one, each being 35 square feet instead

of 12 square feet. Per Section 320-328, illuminated signs in the CR District are not permitted. The applicant is requesting seven waivers; three relate to requirements for the parking lot trees and vegetated buffer along the property frontage.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The proposed use is compatible with Norristown Centre's existing development and Montgomery County comprehensive plan's Future Land Use map, which designates this area as Community Mixed Use.

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 key issues that the applicant and the Municipality should resolve prior to final plan approval. Our comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

USE DESIGNATION

A. Shopping Center Use in CR District. This proposal meets the definition of Shopping Center as defined in Section 320-11 of the Zoning Code. Shopping Center is a Class III use in the CR District. Class III uses incorporate Class I retail uses and the Class II restaurant with drive-through use.

   We ask the Municipality to confirm that the proposal is subject to Class III and Shopping Center use regulations, rather than retail and restaurant regulations. A classification of Shopping Center requires that the proposal is subject to review by a Design Review Board in accordance with Section 320-88.D.(1).

B. Condominium Designation. The cover sheet names this proposal as Norristown Centre Retail (Condo #3). We believe that the reference to Condo 3 refers to the larger tract comprising the Norristown Centre prior to its subdivision and sale of individual parcels to various owners. The reference to the redevelopment proposal being a condominium is confusing, assuming that the current property owner will continue to own the individual units and lease them to tenants. We ask the applicant to confirm whether each unit will be leased or owned by its tenant.

SITE DESIGN

A. Design Review Board. As stated above, Section 320-89.A. requires all buildings that meet the requirements for Class III use to be reviewed by a Design Review Board in accordance with Section 320-243 of the zoning code. We ask the Municipality to confirm that the Design Review Board has reviewed the current proposal, with consideration of the Design Review Board Standards identified in Section 320-243.B. and the General Regulations for Class III permitted uses required in the Zoning Code's Section 320-88.D.

   Section 320-88.D.(2)(b) states, "Shopping centers shall contain a common use area that will serve as a focal point for the center and provide walkways, seating, and landscaping" and provides specific guidance on the location and design of the common use area . We recommend that this common use area be incorporated into the design, as it would create an opportunity to plant more vegetation and

reduce the amount of impervious pavement on the site. The List of Granted Variances on the Site Plan Sheet CS-101 does not include a variance from this requirement.

B. Zoning Data Table. The Zoning Data Table included on the Site Plan, Sheet CS-101, includes a note that the information shown is based on a previous proposal for the larger Norristown Center complex that was approved and recorded in 2019. The zoning table for that plan aggregated six parcels into one proposal to accommodate various offsite improvements that extended beyond the subject property identified as Phase A on the recorded plan.

The current proposal is contained within a single parcel that is under separate ownership from the other parcels that comprise the Norristown Center complex. We ask Norristown's Solicitor to confirm whether the calculations for this proposal should be specific to the subject parcel and not the entire complex.

Should the Solicitor confirm that this parcel is to be reviewed in the context of being a standalone parcel, and not part of a phased development of the larger complex, we strongly recommend that the zoning table be updated to reflect calculations as they pertain to this site.

C. Parking Area. The preliminary plan shows a reduction of the number of proposed parking spaces from the sketch plan, from 86 spaces to 72, and a reconfiguration of the spaces on the west side of the property. The Parking Spaces Tabulation Table on the Site Plan, Sheet CS-101, indicates that 62 parking spaces are required and 76 are proposed.

1. Parking Standards for Drive-Through Restaurants - Parking standards for drive-through restaurants are not included in Section 320-304. The source of the criteria cited in the Parking Spaces Tabulation table is unclear.

2. Parking Standards for Shopping Centers - Section 320-304, Parking standards, requires shopping centers to provide one parking space for every 250 square feet of gross leasable space, exclusive of use. This standard applies when the gross leasable floor area of all buildings comprising the shopping center is greater than 10,000 square feet. We ask the Municipal Solicitor to confirm whether the above interpretation is accurate. If accurate, we strongly recommend recalculating the required parking spaces based on the entire building, 13,259 square feet and remove the separate calculation for the drive-through restaurant from the requirement.

3. Parking Reduction - The amount of parking proposed for the Shopping Center use may be higher than what will be utilized post-development, assuming that the drive-through restaurant will not generate significant demand for parking spaces. We ask the Municipality to request the applicant to reduce the number of parking spaces proposed for this site.

   With consideration to a reduction in the amount of parking, we suggest removing the five parking spaces proposed along the southern property line near the vegetated stormwater basin. This would be an appropriate location for the common use area required for Class III uses per Section 320-88.D.(2)(b).

4. Reserve Parking - As an alternative to reducing the number of parking spaces proposed, we encourage the applicant to explore requesting parking spaces held in reserve in accordance with Section 320-307. Reserve parking could be added if needed based on post-development demand.

D. Landscaping:

1. Waivers Requested - The applicant is requesting three waivers related to landscaping requirements. The Landscape Compliance Chart on the Landscape Plan, Sheet LP-101, includes footnotes stating that the site layout does not permit the placement of all the required street trees, planting island trees, trees and shrubs along the building and around the stormwater basin due to the site layout. The applicant has indicated that the trees and shrubs will be relocated elsewhere on the site.

   Reducing the amount of proposed parking spaces would facilitate space for a common use area and plantings of more trees and shrubs to better align with the tree and shrub planting requirements. Additional plantings would also offset the urban heat island effect and promote stormwater runoff infiltration.

2. Parking Lot Landscaping - Section 282-433.5.B.1) requires a parking island for every 10 parking stalls with the condition of no more than 10 continuous parking stalls in a row without a planting island. We encourage the applicant to relocate the planting island proposed for the parking row adjacent to West Johnson Highway further to the west. Relocating this island after 10 spaces from the western boundary would visually continue the line of street trees along the property's frontage.

   A waiver has been requested for Section 282-433.5.B, which states that each planting island shall contain at least one shade tree plus shrubs and/or ground cover to cover the entire area. We note that the planting islands include a tree, but do not include smaller shrubs or herbaceous plants. We encourage the Municipality to require the applicant to provide shrubs or other ground cover in addition to the trees to improve the site's environmental functionality and aesthetics.

3. Tree Replacement - The Demolition Plan identifies one street tree to be removed. We recommend that this tree is acknowledged in the Landscape Compliance Chart and is subject to the Tree Replacement Requirements in accordance with the Subdivision and Land Use Ordinance (SALDO) Section 282-433.C.3, Tree replacement planting requirements.

4. Tree Protection - The tree protection planking detail shown on Sheet LP-501, Landscaping Notes and Detail, does not account for protection of tree roots, which are subject to being disturbed during construction activity. Disturbing the root system can significantly impact existing trees' ability to survive. We strongly recommend that a tree protection fence detail be incorporated into the plan. The detail should place fencing along the drip line of the tree.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

This site represents an opportunity to increase the amount of pervious surface area and add vegetation amongst a vast impervious area of impervious building and parking lot coverage within the larger Norristown Center complex.

A site design that maximizes the area available for vegetative plantings provides numerous environmental benefits, including stormwater runoff infiltration and filtration and reduction of the urban heat island effect.

A. Impervious Surface. Section 320-87.A.11 identifies that the maximum impervious surface for Class III uses, including the Shopping Center use, is 65% of the net lot area. A note on the Site Plan's Zoning Table indicates that based on the approved plan from 2019, the amount of impervious surface proposed, 78.7%, is permitted as an existing nonconformity. We believe that the existing nonconformity can be remedied by the proposed removal of existing impervious surface and ask the Municipality to confirm.

B. NPDES Permit. The Limit of Disturbance identified on multiple plan sheets indicates that the redevelopment of this parcel will result in more than one acre of earth disturbance, which will require the applicant to obtain a NPDES permit. We strongly recommend that the applicant coordinate with the Montgomery County Conservation District to confirm whether such a permit is required prior to final approval.

C. Stormwater Basin Plantings. We ask the applicant to consider incorporating native shrubs and grasses within the base of the stormwater basin in lieu of the proposed detention basin seed mix. These plantings would create a more efficient rain garden basin that uses plantings with established root systems to facilitate infiltration, rather than seeds that may get washed away or that may not regenerate in following years.

A waiver has been requested to SALDO Section 282-433.1.A, which requires the landscaping plan to be developed by a certified planting professional, specifically, a landscape architect, nurseryman, arborist, horticulturist, or urban forester, as opposed to an engineer. This section also designates that Municipal Council may seek the advice of a certified planting professional regarding compliance with the ordinance standards. Having an experienced planting professional evaluate the proposed plan could result in improvements to the site's design and functionality. We encourage Municipal Council to consult with a certified planting professional prior to final plan approval.

SITE ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

A. Pedestrian Access and Circulation:

1. Loading Ramp - Plan sheet CS-101, the Site Plan, identifies a loading ramp at the corner of the southeast side of the building. The loading area is on the west side of the building. We ask the applicant to clarify whether the Type II ramp added on the west side near the loading zone is to serve as the loading ramp for rear access to all units. Using the loading ramp on the east side would require the delivery person to walk in the driving lanes, creating the potential for pedestrian and vehicle conflict. The menu board sign for the drive-through appears to create a conflict for deliveries that would access the rear sidewalk via the loading ramp on the east side of the building.

2. Trash Truck Circulation - The Trash Truck Turning Movement on sheet CP-101, the Truck Turning Movement and Pavement Plan, indicates that the trash truck will use the drive lanes behind the building to access the two trash enclosure areas. We ask the applicant to confirm that trash pick-up will be scheduled after operating hours to avoid conflict with vehicles using the drive-through lane.

3. Sidewalks - The site's redevelopment presents an opportunity to complete the existing sidewalk network within the larger complex, facilitating safe pedestrian access to the services available within Norristown Center. We recommend that the applicant extends the sidewalk within the curbed area along the east and south property boundaries. This extension would connect to the tract's existing sidewalk network and accommodate safe pedestrian access through the Norristown Center complex. We acknowledge that canopy trees are proposed for this area.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve Norristown's planning objectives for redevelopment within the Norristown Center complex.

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 26-0009-002 on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

Donna Fabry, Principal Trails and Open Space Planner
donna.fabry@montgomerycountypa.gov – 610-278-3445

c: Dipen Patel, Mahuva Realty LLC, Applicant
Alvinia Hamme, Chair, Municipal Planning Commission
Vince Poppa, Assistant Director of Planning and Municipal Development
Stivens Shehu, Municipal Planner
Mike Bogan, Montgomery County Conservation District

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

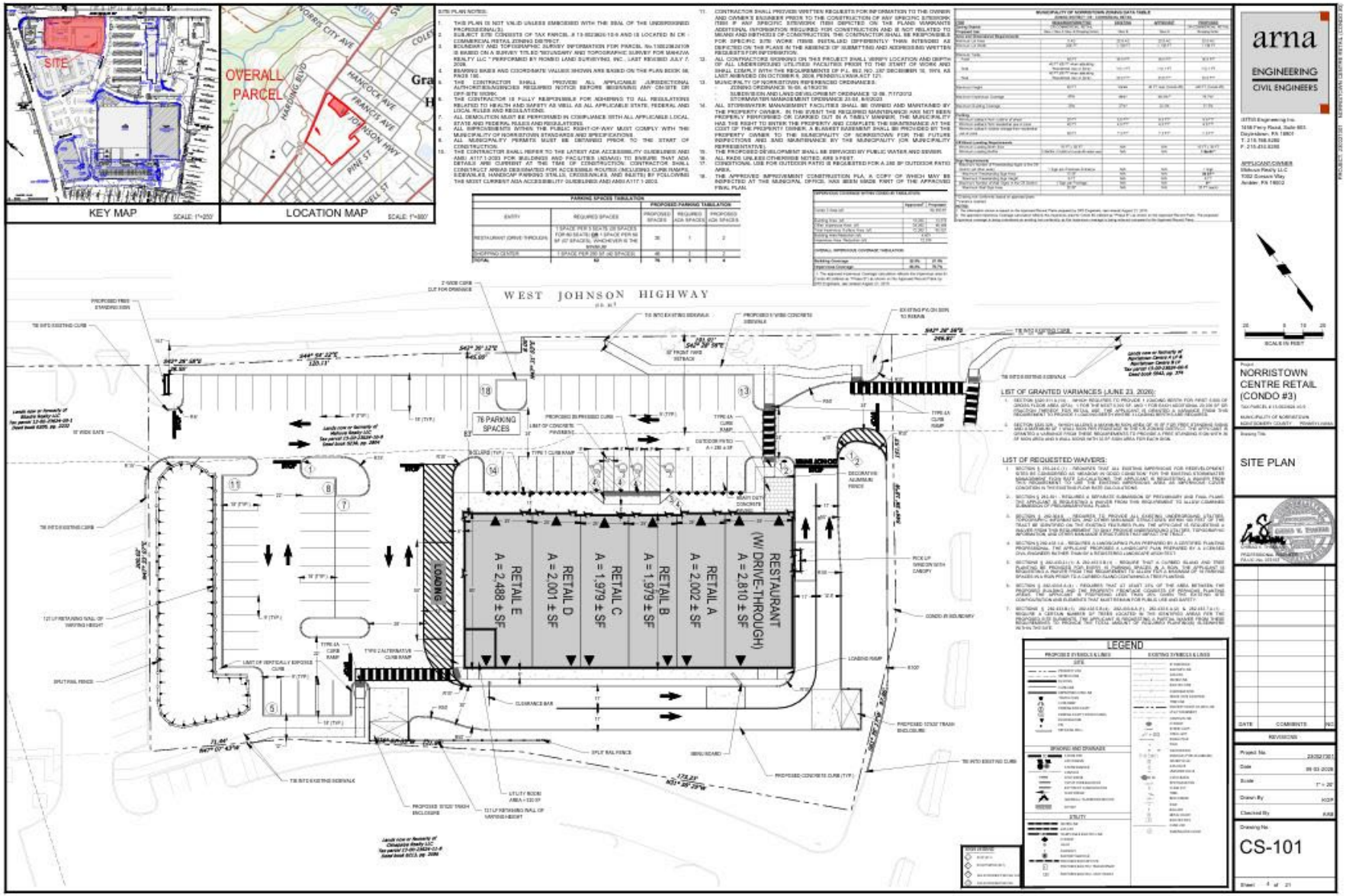


Norristown Centre Retail (Condo #3)
MCPC#260009002

Montgomery County Planning Commission
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www.montcopa.org/planning
Aerial photography provided by Nearmap

0 50 100 200 Feet

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KEY MAP
SCALE: 1"=200'
LOCATION MAP
SCALE: 1"=800'
OVERALL PARCEL
SITE
WEST JOHNSON HIGHWAY
76 PARKING SPACES
LOADING
RETAIL E A = 2,488 ± SF
RETAIL D A = 2,001 ± SF
RETAIL C A = 1,979 ± SF
RETAIL B A = 1,979 ± SF
RETAIL A A = 2,002 ± SF
RESTAURANT (W/ DRIVE-THROUGH) A = 2,810 ± SF
LIST OF GRANTED VARIANCES (JUNE 23, 2026):
LIST OF REQUESTED WAIVERS:
LEGEND
arna
ENGINEERING
CIVIL ENGINEERS
NORRISTOWN CENTRE RETAIL (CONDO #3)
SITE PLAN
CS-101