

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**
JOSH SHAPIRO, CHAIR
VALERIE A. ARKOOSH, MD, MPH, VICE CHAIR
JOSEPH C. GALE



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION**
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE • PO Box 311
NORRISTOWN, PA 19404-0311
610-278-3722
FAX: 610-278-3941 • TDD: 610-631-1211
WWW.MONTCOPA.ORG

JODY L. HOLTON, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 2, 2016

Mr. Richard D. Barton, AICP
Community Planner and Zoning Officer
Upper Dublin Township
801 Loch Alsh Avenue
Fort Washington, PA 19034

Re: MCPC 08-0244-005
Plan Name: BT Dreshertown, LP – Zoning Amendment
Situate: Dreshertown Road (E)/Welsh Road (S)
Upper Dublin Township

Dear Mr. Barton:

We have reviewed the above-referenced zoning text amendment in accordance with Section 609 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on April 7, 2016. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, BT Dreshertown, LP, proposes a zoning text amendment to Upper Dublin's OC (Office Center) District. This amendment would add a Mixed Use Development option to the district as a permitted use. This amendment is being proposed to apply to a 25 acre tract located on the southeast corner of Dreshertown and Welsh Roads. The option requires a mix of at least two use types, with no one use taking up greater than 80% of total building floor area. A minimum of 5% of the gross area of the lot is required to be reserved or developed as green space, parks, and plazas. The Mixed Use Development may have a maximum permitted density of 25 dwelling units per gross acre of the lot. Overall, this amendment would increase permitted density, decrease required open space, and decrease front, side, rear, and parking setbacks. In addition to the zoning amendment, the applicant provided a potential site plan for the Promenade at Upper Dublin, a development rendering from the perspective of the corner of Dreshertown Road and Welsh Road, a transportation impact study, a fiscal impact study, and letter of opinion from a professional planning consultant.



RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) generally supports the applicant's proposal, however, in the course of our review we have identified a number of key issues that we believe should be resolved prior to zoning amendment adoption. Our comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

CONDITIONAL USE

- A. Because of the increase in permitted maximum impervious cover and density, we recommend that this Mixed Use Development option be permitted via conditional use in the OC District with the following condition:
 - 1. Cross County Trail Connection – Linkages to the county trail system be provided on the property and be 12 feet wide, with 2-4 feet of buffers on each side of the trail. These should be accessible to the public and maintained by the county.

COMMON AREA SPACE (§255-61A.C.(5))

- A. Public Access – Public access to the site could provide an amenity to the Township and its residents. We recommend that common area space be made accessible to the public. This change could be included in §255-61a.C.(5): Common Area Space.
- B. Minimum Area – We recommend that common area space be a minimum of 15% of the gross area of the lot. This is an increase from the proposed 5% gross lot area. This change could also be included in §255-61a.C.(5): Common Area Space.

PARKING

- A. Parking Setbacks – In §255-61a.D, we recommend that parking setbacks be increased from the proposed 20 feet to 50 feet. This will ensure that the character and layout of the Mixed Use Development is consistent with adjacent parcels and the surrounding area.
- B. Buffers – We recommend that where parking is located along a street frontage, a buffer be required. This may be done through the use of a low wall, fencing, and/or landscaping. This requirement may be added to §255-61a.C.(7).

ACCESSORY USES (§255-61A.B.(3)(C))

- A. Drive-thru Service – We recommend the removal of drive-thru service as an accessory use. Drive-thrus are not consistent with the character of the development, which seeks to provide for a variety of uses while maintaining a pedestrian-friendly environment.

DESIGN STANDARDS

A. Building Design (§255-61a.E.(1))

1. **Walls and Windows:** The requirements for the proposed Mixed Use Development option should include additional regulations for walls and windows under (b) and (c) (Primary and Secondary Façade). In order to develop under this option, the site must be located on two public road frontages with access on both. Because of this, all sides of a building must be treated and no walls may be blank. Requirements regarding appropriate ratios for windows and walls should also be included. This addition may read as follows: Blank walls shall not be permitted along any exterior wall facing a street. Walls in these locations shall comprise a minimum 35% window area and 75% maximum window area, with windows interspersed across the façade. Walls or portions of walls where windows are not provided shall have architectural treatments designed to break up the bulk of the wall.
2. **Horizontal Articulation:** We recommend that an additional subsection in §255-61a.E.(1) be added that specifies that for all buildings greater than 4 stories tall, the façade of the building must step back a minimum of 3 feet after the first floor.
3. **Balconies:** To prepare for various forms of development that may be proposed, we recommend that minimum requirements for balconies be included as an additional subsection in §255-61a.E.(1).

LANDSCAPE AND STREETScape STANDARDS (§255-61A.E.(2))

- A. Sidewalks We recommend that the construction of sidewalks along all street frontages be a requirement under the Mixed Development option to a minimum width of 5 feet. This could be added into the Landscape and Streetscape Standards section within the proposed amendment.

TRANSIT FACILITIES

- A. We recommend that the potential for SEPTA bus service to the site be explored. Transit facilities and shelters should be constructed based on design standards established by SEPTA.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal, but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve Upper Dublin's planning objectives for 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 adopt this proposed zoning ordinance amendment, Section 602 of the Municipalities Planning Code requires that we be sent an official copy within 30 days.

Sincerely,



Jamie Magaziner, Community Planner
JMagazin@montcopa.org
610-278-3738

c: BET Investments, Inc., Applicant
Gilmore & Associates, Inc., Applicant's Representative
Paul A. Leonard, Township Manager
Jeffrey Albert, Co-Chairman, Township Planning Commission
Michael Cover, Co-Chairman, Township Planning Commission
Jeffrey A. Wert, PE, PLS, Township Engineer

Attachments: 1. Aerial View of Potential Development Site
 2. Reduced Copy of Potential Development Site Plan



