


Policy Opinion Memorandum

TO: Honorable Citizens of Mount Airy
Honorable Elected Officials of Mount Airy

FROM: Council Member Stephen L. Domotor 

SUBJECT: Approval or Denial of Preconcept Sketch Plan for the Proposed Mount Airy Crossing Mixed Use Development, May 6, 2024, Town Council Agenda Item

DATE: May 6, 2024

I do not believe that the Preconcept Sketch Plan for the proposed Mount Airy Crossing mixed use development sufficiently achieves the purpose, objectives, and related considerations for mixed use developments as specified by the Town of Mount Airy code. Therefore, I do not support approval of the Preconcept Sketch Plan.

Preface -

This document shall be included as part of the formal record along with my oral comments on the Preconcept Sketch Plan for the Mount Airy Crossing agenda item discussed at the May 6, 2024, Town Council meeting.

As a Town of Mount Airy Council Member, I have diligently followed the town code's process for consideration of a proposed mixed use development and participated in every public hearing, charette, workshop, and listening session associated with this proposed development.

Pleasants Development delivered a letter via e-mail to the Mayor and Town Council (March 28, 2024) regarding the Mount Airy Crossing Preconcept Sketch Plan, stating their request that the Plan be placed on the Town Council's April 8, 2024, agenda and that the Council approve their Plan. Accordingly, my evaluation is based on the most current Preconcept Sketch Plan available as of the date of the referenced letter.

The Pleasants Development team has stated it is using the Downtown Mount Airy Vision Plan (Ref. 1) to guide their design of Mount Airy Crossing. The Vision Plan was prepared by Design Collective, Inc., who is also a member of the Pleasants Development Team for Mount Airy Crossing. The stated guiding principles in the Downtown Mount Airy Vision Plan are to "announce identity, create walkable centers, integrate a mix of uses, strengthen building frontage, establish open space amenities, and promote complete streets." Pleasants Development's Mount Airy Crossing web site states that it honors the Vision Plan by using these same guiding principles.

I hope that the well-intentioned and constructive comments offered below are addressed in future efforts to put forth a Preconcept Plan, and Concept Plan should it be advanced, for Mount Airy Crossing.

Basis for Non-Approval of Mount Airy Crossing Preconcept Sketch Plan -

The purpose of mixed use development is not simply to afford the co-location of differing housing types and commercial space within a development. Rather, it is to apply and take advantage of the flexibility afforded by Mount Airy's mixed use code objectives and provisions to deliver a cohesive community

with a harmonious mix of uses “that will create synergy, efficiency of design, and an increase in walkability,” resulting in a sense of place where residents can live, work and play. While the current Preconcept Sketch Plan may check some “technical boxes” of the town code, it fails to sufficiently deliver the true flavor of a mixed use development, or a safer and “more attractive residential and nonresidential environment than would be possible through strict application of conventional zoning district requirements.”

Furthermore, in describing the “then new” proposed mixed use zoning category, the town’s 2013 Comprehensive Master Plan (Ref. 2) stated that “As the Downtown Zone District was implemented to promote the appreciation of the existing historic town center and to preserve the atmosphere of small town charm, the intent of implementing a mixed use zoning classification is to incorporate the general characteristics of existing historic centers into new development.” It is not clear that this intended vision for mixed use zoning has been fully realized in this Preconcept Sketch Plan.

Town Code Preconcept Sketch Plan Requirements and Evaluation Criteria -

Chapter 98 (98-61) of the town code (Ref. 3) states that “B. Preconcept sketch layout plan. As part of the initial phase of the development approval process, the applicant shall provide the Commission with a preconcept sketch layout plan, which shall contain the to-scale preliminary layout of the project with the proposed density, including the number and approximate location of proposed residential units and the approximate location and square footage of commercial space, the proposed dwelling types, the proposed mixed-use ration of residential to commercial uses, the general locations of proposed future roads and connections and/or improvements to existing roads, the proposed amount and general location of parking, the preliminary location of stormwater management facilities and open space, and the approximate water and sewer allocations from the Town that the development will require, if any.”

In evaluating the preconcept sketch plan, Chapter 98 (98-61) of the town code states that “ D. The preconcept sketch layout plan and pattern book shall be evaluated based on the purpose and objectives of the mixed-use development as outlined in section 112-39.1A and B or, as applicable, the Mixed Use District outlined in section 112-37.2.” The objectives cited in these referenced sections are qualitative in nature.

Evaluation -

In my evaluation of the Preconcept Plan, several of the specific objectives cited in town code section 112-37.2, in particular the objective to “create a mixture of office, retail, cultural, art, recreational, and residential uses, along with restaurants, eateries and cafes, where all related structures, parking, and open spaces are designed to establish and maintain a cohesive community while protecting the character of surrounding neighborhoods and the overall natural environment” are not sufficiently evident or met, in part due to the lack of information on these elements available within the Plan.

Pleasants Development’s responses to the questions and comments I provided at the February 13, 2024, workshop were also considered in my evaluation (Ref. 4).

General locations of proposed future roads and connections and/or improvements to existing roads.

Complete Streets.

As stated in the Downtown Vision Plan, “complete streets are streets that provide safe and convenient accommodation to all potential users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike. Complete streets recognize that crossing the street, walking to shops, and cycling to work or for recreation are equally

important to driving. A network of complete streets, together with necessary physical, design and visual elements, will enable downtown to be safer, more livable and welcoming to everyone.” It also states, “require new development (near MD Route 27 and in other areas) to design new streets to meet the complete streets principles and enhance and expand the pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular networks.” Further, Pleasants Development’s web site for Mount Airy Crossing states as a guiding principle to “promote complete streets.” However, there is no indication in the Preconcept Plan as to what future roads and connections, or improvements to existing roads, will be designed as complete streets. Given the definition of complete streets and their importance to the success of a mixed use development, the need for their identification in the Preconcept Plan seems central to a walkable, pedestrian friendly Mount Airy Crossing mixed use development.

MD Route 27 and Center Street / MD Route 27 corridor between Twin Arch Road and North Main Street.

The Pleasants Development Team has chosen to develop the Beck property which has MD Route 27, a major, high-volume transportation artery (e.g., estimated at up to 24,000 vehicles per day as of 2016) running right down the middle of the property, separating east from west. Importantly, MD Route 27 in the area relative to the proposed Mount Airy Crossing is characterized by a high number of vehicle crashes (with the highest number at the intersections of Park Avenue and Twin Arch Road), and intersections with marginal level of service ratings (Ref. 5).

Regarding intersections that are signalized with traditional pedestrian safety technologies, traffic light timings are typically set according to the average walking speed of a person without physical disabilities under age 65 – creating potentially dangerous situations for older pedestrians and people with disabilities. Other factors that worsen pedestrian safety, especially for seniors, include long crossing distances (see Ref. 6 and the additional details noted for a full summary of risks posed to senior citizens at traditional crosswalks).

In 2024 Carroll County government identified and prioritized the need for dualization of MD Route 27 that would likely occur over the course of the Mount Airy Crossing build-out period (e.g., estimated to be at least 10-15 years or more) that will take this vital transportation artery from 4+ lanes to 6-8 lanes. In any developer plans for MD Route 27 and Center Street intersection improvements, as part of making it signalized, from a safety perspective traditional pedestrian signal and crosswalk technologies will not suffice.

My first responsibility as an elected official is to provide for the safety and security of my constituents. I cannot envision a parent being comfortable with their child’s safety by pushing a button to then cross six to eight lanes of traffic at a traditional pedestrian signal technology crosswalk; nor can I envision seniors with disabilities and/or ages sixty-five and up being comfortable with doing the same. It is not consistent with town code section 112-37.2, A. Purpose, that states “The MXD District is intended to provide flexibility to design residential neighborhoods in a **safe**, attractive and environmentally responsible manner.”

Pleasants Development’s Mount Airy Crossing web site states “Our plan will also offer a safe and convenient streetscape where pedestrians and bicyclists can enjoy the beauty of their small town alongside motorists.” This is an unsupportable claim for residents (e.g., especially children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities) wishing to safely make their way across MD Route 27 from the east side to the west side, and back, of Mount Airy Crossing.

I do not believe this would achieve an acceptable level of safety for our citizens; nor will it achieve a fully connected, cohesive mixed use community that allows pedestrian walkability for seniors on the east side to the west, and vice versa, and thus not sufficiently meet town code objectives 112-37.2 B (2), (3) and (4). Absent any modifications, the developer has essentially created two separate, stand-alone disconnected developments. As such, the developer should plan for and contribute to a pedestrian tunnel as a viable solution to make this mixed use development plan workable.

Pedestrian tunnels improve safety, access, and connectivity to a community. A University of North Carolina School of Government group indicated that for bridges and underpasses that are used by a large proportion of pedestrians and bicyclists, studies show that pedestrian related crashes decreased by 91 percent (Ref. 7). Pedestrian tunnels enhance mobility and promote pedestrian safety by minimizing the risk of accidents and collisions. They also evoke an emotional response from users due to enhanced security and aesthetic appeal. Well-designed underground walkways can serve as art installations or feature decorative elements that add beauty to the development landscape (Ref 8).

The inclusion of this design feature would ameliorate pedestrian and traffic safety issues associated with this Plan and provide the connectivity and walkability between the west and east sides essential for a cohesive Mount Airy Crossing community to meet the town code's objectives for mixed use development, to include objectives 112-37.2 B (2), (3), (4) and (6). The tunnel also affords the safe connection of the town's rails to trails pedestrian and bicycle recreational amenity which is strategically important for the current and future recreational and economic vitality of the town. An escrow account for funding these improvements could be established by the developer, with assistance from and following MD State Highway Administration guidance and protocols.

Number and approximate location of proposed residential units and the approximate location and square footage of commercial space, the proposed dwelling types, and the proposed mixed-use ratio of residential to commercial uses.

Overall Design.

Mount Airy Crossing is characterized by a noticeably low percentage (e.g., around 25 percent) of single family detached units and senior single family detached units; and a predominantly high percentage (e.g., around 75 percent) of single family attached units and senior villas (which are attached units). This does not fully achieve the purpose and objectives of town code 112-37.2 A and B (5).

Single family attached units are viewed by the town's citizens as high density housing. This is supported by the 2020 and earlier 2007 Town of Mount Airy Community Surveys, where citizens in both surveys consistently indicated their strong sentiment of limiting residential growth, particularly for high density housing (Ref. 9).

More single family detached units, preferably on ¼ to ½ acre lots, would reduce housing density and offer a more favorable balance and integration of mixed use residential units. This would be more in harmony with the broader surrounding communities of our town and would provide the community feel and design that has drawn so many people to our town and for which our citizens have sacrificed so much in order to live here. This approach is readily achievable. The town's mixed use code requirements provide broad design flexibility; there is nothing that prevents the developer from taking this approach (e.g., town code section 112-37.2, A, Purpose).

Applying a model mixed use ordinance from another municipality as an independent benchmark, using their residential housing density and mix requirements, the current residential housing density and mix for

Mount Airy Crossing would not meet their density and housing diversity guidelines (see Ref. 10, Table 1. and the additional summarized guidance presented).

There is no evidence in the design of Mount Airy Crossing that intentionally or purposefully “encourage[s] development of sites that promote and support a diverse artistic and if possible cultural entertainment area and that creates a community with live-work space for artists (town code 112-37.2 B(6)).

West Side.

Pleasants Development has approached the design of the west side of Mount Airy Crossing utilizing the Downtown Mount Airy Vision Plan as a key template and frame of reference. Pleasants Development’s Mount Airy Crossing web site states that “Our plan is intentionally balanced between a mix of uses – creating a natural extension of Mount Airy’s Downtown.” As discussed below, I do not see evidence of this natural extension of our downtown in the Preconcept Plan.

It is relevant that in describing the “then new” proposed mixed use zoning category, the town’s 2013 Comprehensive Master Plan (Ref. 2) stated that “As the Downtown Zone District was implemented to promote the appreciation of the existing historic town center and to preserve the atmosphere of small town charm, the intent of implementing a mixed use zoning classification is to incorporate the general characteristics of existing historic centers into new development.”

A key objective for this new mixed use zoning vision was to carry the look, feel, and functionality of our historic Main Street into the design of the extension of Center Street, to include offering commercial space on the first floor and residential units on top floors of buildings and applying historic facades as is found on our Main Street. Mixed use development often involves stacking uses, such as residential or office uses above first floor commercial uses (Ref. 11). It does not appear from the Preconcept Plan that this objective of “vertical mixed use” has been realized (even as a small percentage) in the design of the west side, particularly along Center Street of Mount Airy Crossing where it was envisioned. This approach should be incorporated into any future designs for the west side of Mount Airy Crossing.

There is little evidence of “incorporating general characteristics of existing historic centers into new development” in terms of, for example, town plazas or squares. There is a centralized green space which is a very positive design feature. However, the “commercial plaza” identified within the commercial space at the Center Street entrance to our historic downtown is small and not what is envisioned when offering plazas as public gathering spaces that typically include a significant public amenity. Consider the historic small town of Front Royal, VA which has a public plaza with a gazebo as a gathering place within a small town setting as an example to draw from.

The residential housing units of the west side could be more integrated, following guidance from a model mixed use ordinance from another municipality as an independent benchmark that states “Mixed residential neighborhoods should be designed so different housing types are well integrated, like patterns found in traditional villages (Ref. 10).

East Side.

The east side of Mount Airy Crossing is “all seniors, single use” with respect to the residential component. As noted above under *Overall Design*, the east side would benefit from the addition of more senior single family detached units (or more single family detached units if modified to include a mixed age community). If the east side is to stay “all seniors” in future designs, there are many design queues that can be referenced from our existing and well-regarded Wildwood senior community that include

Wildwood Park (featuring a Gazebo for town events and gatherings, water feature, and trails), a senior center, walking pathways, easy access to shopping, and non-senior single family detached housing on ¼ acre and larger lots along the perimeter of the senior living units.

The current design does not offer a large, centralized open space green for recreation and public gathering, and there are no specifically identified amenities tailored to seniors, which seems important in an “all-seniors” community.

The current design does not fully address multigenerational livability. Multigenerational living can be in the same house or in close proximity in the same neighborhood. National AARP policy states that when multigenerational living is intentional, it is associated with better health outcomes, decreased loneliness among older adults, and better educational outcomes for children (Ref. 12). In speaking with our senior citizens, many expressed the desire for housing where they could live in the same house with their adult children (and grandchildren) so that each could assist with taking care of each other. Alternatively, some seniors expressed the desire to live independently but in the same immediate neighborhood with their adult children (and grandchildren). The “all seniors” age-restricted approach on the east side does not allow for this and is at odds with town code objective 112-37.2 B (5).

Open space.

The Pleasants Development Team has chosen to develop this property at a time when the town has an eighty acre deficit of open space. Now more than ever, it is not simply the amounts and locations of open space, but the quality and amenities associated with the open space that come together in an optimized way to promote a high quality of life for this development’s residents and more broadly the town.

There is no finalized set of amenities identified in the Preconcept Plan. Pleasants Development’s Mount Airy Crossing web site states that it honors the Downtown Mount Airy Vision Plan’s guiding principles that includes “establish open space amenities.”

At the February 13, 2024, workshop, a Pleasants Development representative stated that amenities do not need to be formally identified until the Concept Phase. Without a full understanding of the specific finalized set of amenities to be included (e.g., critically needed ballfields or passive recreation, town plazas, water features or art installations, event stages, amphitheaters, or gazebos), it is not feasible to evaluate this Plan for sufficiency regarding many of the town code’s mixed use district objectives (e.g., specifically town code section 112-37.2 B. (1), (2), (4), and (6)). For comparison, the town’s Greentree Development did formally identify the specific final amenities (e.g., a gazebo within a park) in its Preconcept Plan, which was approved by the Town Council, so there is precedent for doing so.

Additionally, town code section 25-5G states that in the event of an open space deficit, a developer may be granted a waiver considering, among other things: “(3) (c): whether the proposed development optimizes the proposed open space in consideration of the amount, nature (i.e., whether the proposed open space is green space and /or offers passive or active recreation), dimensions, quality, location, suitability to the proposed development, whether the proposed open space satisfies a critical town need or proposes a shortage, amenities, and accessibility of the open space within the proposed development, and any adverse impacts on neighboring property.” In evaluating the Mount Airy Crossing Preconcept Plan against the Open Space Guidelines listed above, I do not see a robust case for the granting of such a waiver. There is no identified formal set of amenities and qualities of open space from which to make a waiver determination.

Approximate water and sewer allocations from the town that the development will require, if any.

The developer has stated that no water allocations will be required of the town. In their letter of March 28, 2024 (RE: Mount Airy Crossing Water Demand and Well KZ-5 Capacity) to the Mayor and Town Council, the developer states that “the 3-day and 30-day long term projections of all 3 steps appear to be above the shallowest water-bearing zone and well above the test pump intake level and capable of meeting the 75,000 gpd minimum yield required by the town code.” The letter further states that “a testing plan for Maryland Department of Environment approval for the KZ-5, 3 day and 30 day pump tests was prepared and submitted. Approval was received last week.” And that these tests will be run soon, to include collection of sampling for PFAS/PFOA, with a final report available “with submittal of a new Concept Plan after receipt of Preconcept Sketch Plan approval.”

In my view, until these actual field tests confirm that well KZ-5 is certified to meet the projected water demand of 85,000 gpd (estimated by Pleasants Development) corresponding to the Preconcept Plan, it is not a certainty that no water allocations will be needed from the town. As such, any approval of the Preconcept Plan should be conditional on this certification. There are additional considerations such as water quality, delivery and treatment systems, to include treatment for PFAS. Costs for water treatment systems for PFAS (i.e., if PFAS is present at concentrations above Federal and State regulatory standards) and their associated maintenance must be addressed by the developer.

Adequacy of Public Facilities.

The town’s objectives for harmonious and coordinated mixed use development are not only influenced by the density, placement, and mix of housing types in a development plan, but also by the potential impacts (positive or negative) of these design elements on its residents’ quality of life ... which are also brought about by impacts on the adequacy of public facilities. Accordingly, in January 2023 I advocated for a screening assessment of the adequacy of public facilities at the Preconcept Phase of the Mount Airy Crossing development. As cited in the town’s communication recap of the January 9, 2023, town council meeting (Ref. 13), “Mayor Hushour noted that council members have the responsibility to anticipate the impacts of development prior to voting on a preconcept plan, but also understands the need and desire for a clear method to anticipate and calculate those impacts. He stated a willingness to produce a document to enable council members to make more informed decisions on development plans.” Accordingly, such a document was prepared by town staff and provided to all stakeholders at the February 13, 2024, workshop (Ref. 14; also provided as attachment one to this policy opinion memorandum). My evaluation findings (e.g., for water, roads, parks and open space) for the Mount Airy Crossing Preconcept Plan presented herein are largely corroborated by the town’s review observations and findings contained in that document.

References and Additional Information

1. Downtown Mount Airy Vision Plan. February 2019. Prepared for Town of Mount Airy. Prepared by Design Collective, Inc.
2. Comprehensive Master Plan for 2013. Town of Mount Airy, MD. Adopted November 3, 2014.
3. Town of Mount Airy Code. Specifically cited: Chapter 12, Zoning, 112-37.2; Chapter 98, Subdivision of Land and Site Plan Review, 98-61; Chapter 25, Planning Commission, 25-5G.
4. Mount Airy Crossing Workshop Questions/Comments and Responses. Pleasants Development. Communicated through a letter from Pleasants Development to the Mayor and Town Council on March 8, 2024.
5. MD Route 27 Corridor Study. May 2016. Sabra, Wang and Associates, Inc.

Summary Overview:

- MD Route 27 in the areas closest to the Mount Airy Crossing property got a minimal passing grade in 2016.
 - MD Route 27 at Watersville Road had a level of service (LOS) C rating for both AM and PM timeframes.
 - MD Route 27 at Park Avenue and Twin Arch Road had a LOS C rating for the AM and a D rating for the PM timeframes.
 - There were ninety-three crashes at intersections along MD Route 27 from January 2012 to December 2014, with the highest number of crashes at MD Route 27 and Park Avenue/Twin Arch Road.
 - Traffic volume on MD Route 27 varies between 18,000 and 24,000 vehicles per day, per the 2016 study, not considering traffic volume increases since that timeframe.
 - In my view the Developer's Traffic Impact Study (TIS) must thoroughly examine the impacts and changes to the Twin Arch/Md 27 intersection.
6. Crosswalks and Pedestrian Safety: What You Need to Know from Recent Research. IN: The Journalist's Resource. Harvard Kennedy School, Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy. July 10, 2023.

Summary Overview:

- States that hotspots for pedestrian deaths are characterized by road corridors roughly one half mile long with relatively high rates of deadly pedestrian vehicle crashes; are more likely to be near commercial zones; have speed limits over 30 mph and have traffic volumes greater than 25,000 vehicles per day according to January 2021 research published in the Journal of Transport and Land Use. Note that several of these characteristics align with the conditions on MD Route 27.
- Cites that current traffic light timings are typically set according to the average walking speed of a person without physical disabilities under the age 65 – creating potentially dangerous situations for older pedestrians and people with disabilities. Cites those other factors that worsened pedestrian safety included long crossing distance, intersections where right-on-red turns were allowed, commercial or vacant land nearby and communities where higher percentages of pedestrians have a physical disability or are racial or ethnic minorities, among other factors.

- Federal Highway Administration recommends transportation agencies use a walking speed of less than 3.5 feet per second for pedestrians such as the aged that walk slower or use wheelchairs routinely crossing an intersection. Standard traffic lights apply an average walking speed of 3.5 feet per second.
 - Observational research through studies cited found that for people over the age of sixty, nearly 96% walked slower than 3.5 feet per second.
7. Pedestrian Tunnels: Connecting People with Communities Part II. Community and Economic Development in NC and Beyond. UNC School of Government. February 25, 2016.
 8. Pedestrian Tunnels: Enhancing Public Transportation Infrastructure and Safety. Chad D. Robinson. August 17, 2023. IN: Support Transit.
 9. Town of Mount Airy 2020 Community Survey. Survey Report. November 2, 2020.
 10. Village Mixed Use District. Creating a Small Town Character. Prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Commission, Montgomery County, PA. 2010. Contains Design Elements and Model Ordinance.

Summary Overview and Analysis:

- Village Mixed-Use District (VMU) requires new development to have a mix of uses with a small town character.
- To provide active recreation areas, create a focal point for the community, and save environmental features, the VMU District requires at least 20% open space, with half of this required open space located centrally, in village greens and other types of central open space. Specifies specific open space requirements to include that each central village green shall be at least 10,000 square feet in size, with additional specifications.
- Protection from housing fair share challenges. Mixed use zoning that allows apartments, townhouses and twins can be used to help meet a municipality's housing fair share needs.
- Using open and recreational spaces as a community focal point.
- Density and Mix Requirements: Mixing requirements for mixed residential developments. All mixed residential developments shall meet the following mixing requirements: The development shall include at least three of the following housing types: single family detached, village house, single family semi-detached, single family attached, or multifamily. To qualify as one of the three required housing types, a housing type must comprise at least fifteen percent of the total housing units in the development. No housing type may exceed fifty percent of the total housing units in the development.
- Townhouses and multifamily apartments should be located near the non-residential uses and primary park. Mixed residential neighborhoods should be designed so different housing types are well integrated, like patterns found in traditional villages.
- Provides maximum numbers of dwelling units in a row along one side of a street as follows: single family detached, village house: ten units; single family semi-detached: twelve units; single family attached: sixteen units; and multifamily: twenty-four units.

Table 1. Density and Mix of Residential Unit Types (Numbers and Percentages) Contained in the Mount Airy Crossing Preconcept Plan.

East or West Side?	Dwelling Type	Number of Units	Percentage of Development (e.g., of 350 total units)	Comments ^{1,2}
West	Single Family Detached	43	12.3	Less than 15%. Would not qualify as adequate housing mix.
West	Single Family Attached	141	40.3	Relatively high using threshold of not exceeding 50%.
East	Senior Housing Villas RL	77	22.0	Grouping RL and FL Senior Housing Villas as one "type" seems appropriate and yields a total of 36%.
East	Senior Housing Villas FL	50	14.3	
East	Senior Housing Single Family Detached RL	24	6.8	Senior Housing Single Family Detached kept as a distinct category from Single Family Detached (above) since it is dedicated to a specific age/use-type: seniors. Grouping RL and FL Senior Housing Single Family Detached as one "type" seems appropriate and yields a total of 11%. This would not qualify as adequate housing mix.
East	Senior Housing Single Family Detached FL	15	4.3	
Total Unit Count		350	100	Dwelling type column content and total unit count taken from Preconcept Plan.

¹ Using Village Mixed-Use District (VMU) Montgomery County PA density and mix requirements for mixed use development (see Ref. 10 above).

² Results: The developer's mix of dwelling types reflects a very low amount of single family detached housing for the general public (at 12%) and for seniors (at 11%). The development is comprised of a high percentage of attached residential housing, considered by the public as "high density" housing.

11. Mixed Use Development E-Tools. Web Site. Chester County Planning Commission. Chester County PA.

Summary Overview:

- Mixed use development often involves stacking uses, such as residential or office uses above first floor commercial uses. With appropriate building placement, building scale, street and pedestrian network, and public spaces a mixed use development can function as an integrated community, providing services, jobs, and living space within the municipality and region. New mixed use centers can provide a focal point within a community and opportunities to live, work and play.

- Infill mixed used can complement existing architectural character and development patterns to retain an area's traditional sense of place.
12. Multigenerational Livability. AARP Policy Book. 2023-2024.
 13. Mount Airy Town Council Meeting Recap. January 9, 2023. "Screening Assessment Requested." Under "Town of Mount Airy – News and Information." IN: 4 County Catch. February 2023.
 14. Town Engineering/Planning Review of Mount Airy Crossing (Beck Property) Pre-Concept sketch plan dated December 20, 2023. Prepared by the Town of Mount Airy.

LARRY HUSHOUR
Mayor

TIM J. WASHABAUGH
Council President



Council Members
LYNNE P. GALLETTI
Secretary

KARL L. MUNDER
JASON P. EVANS
STEPHEN L. DOMOTOR

Town Engineering/Planning Review of Mount Airy Crossing (Beck Property) Pre-Concept sketch plan dated December 20, 2023.

This review took information from the APFO Screening Assessment dated January 26, 2023, and the Pre-Concept Sketch Plan dated December 20, 2023, from Pleasants Construction, VanMar Associates, Inc., and Design Collective. Additional information was received from Carroll County Public Schools, Mount Airy Police Department, and Mount Airy Fire Department.

Of the seven areas of Town Code Chapter 25, Article II Adequacy of Facilities, the Town Engineering Department is involved in assessing (A) Water, (B) Sewer, (D) Roads, and (G) Parks and Open Space. For the remaining areas, (C) Schools require input from Carroll County Public Schools, (E) Fire and Rescue Services require input from the Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Company, and (F) Police Services require input from the Mount Airy Police Department.

In January 2023, a "Beck Property APFO Screening Assessment" was prepared and provided by VanMar Associates. This screening does not consider any change to Senior Housing as reflected in the latest pre-concept layouts, nor is it a complete APFO submission. In May 2023, Pleasants indicated they would work to update the Assessment, but none have been received to date.

A 10-year buildout of the development, at a rate of 47 residential units per year, would exceed the 24 permits limit from Section 47-2.1 of the Town Code. The Town Council reserves the right to determine the rate of development per sections 98-6 and 47-2.1.C of the Town Code.

(1) Water

Additional documents from the Developer have been received regarding water, including a 2010 watershed analysis, 2017 drilling reports, and a 2017 Hydro Terra Well Report. Based on preliminary calculations the Town estimates water/sewer usage to be 97,000 gpd. This is very similar to the estimated 100,000 gpd as shown on the December Plan. The Adequacy of Facilities for Water is generally broken down into 4 parts: Supply Source, Treatment, Distribution, and Storage.

- (1) **Supply Source: Inadequate.** The existing and prior developers both have indicated that 100% of the water needs will be provided as part of the development. This development will not impact the Town's current supply source. Currently, there is no allocation for water available in the Mixed-Use Development category. It is anticipated the developer will provide all necessary groundwater supply well(s) in accordance with the Town Code. The well driller reports show 5 test wells were drilled and tested in 2017. Of these wells, only one qualifies as a potential source, and that will need to be tested a minimum of 30 days in coordination with the Town Engineer. Any/all wells shall receive appropriation(s) from MDE and acceptance by the Town. Additional details are required at Concept.
- (2) **Treatment: Inadequate.** Any new groundwater supply source will require a new Water Treatment and Booster Pumping Station to treat the water onsite, including PFAS and other treatment technology approved by the MDE and the Town. Additional details are required at Concept.

P.O. Box 50, Mount Airy, MD 21771

Telephone: (301) 829-1424 • Fax: (301) 829-1259

Email: town@mountairymd.gov • Web Page: www.mountairymd.gov

- (3) **Distribution: TBD at Concept.** The developer will be required to provide an adequate distribution system consistent with the Town's requirements and tie into the Town's existing distribution system in multiple places as approved by the Town. Additional details are required at Concept.
- (4) **Storage:** Quantity of elevated storage is **Adequate**. Improved access to Elevated Tank #3 will be required at Concept.

(2) Sewer

Based on preliminary calculations the Town estimates water/sewer usage to be 97,000 gpd. This is very similar to the estimated 100,000 gpd as shown on the December Plan.. The Adequacy of Facilities for Sewer is generally broken down into 4 parts: Discharge, Treatment, Collection, and Pumping.

- (1) **Discharge: Adequate.** The existing NPDES Discharge Permit for the WWTP allows a capacity of 1.2 MGD. From the latest 2022 capacity yield, the Town had 198,929 gpd available.
- (2) **Treatment: Adequate.** The treatment for the WWTP is currently sufficient for all known contaminants and existing design capacity. PFAS could be an added element; however, the treatment of groundwater sources may adequately offset future requirements for the wastewater.
- (3) **Collection: TBD at Concept.** The developer will be required to provide an adequate collection system consistent with the Town's requirements and tie into the Town's existing collection system as approved by the Town. The 15-inch sewer main just prior to the WWTP has a history of surcharging in the upstream manholes, which may need to be addressed. More details are required at Concept.
- (4) **Pumping: TBD at Concept.** Similar to Collection.

(3) Schools

Carroll County Public Schools, Board of Education is the agency responsible for providing the Available Threshold Capacity (ATC) Certification for the town related to school capacity and have completed a preliminary evaluation of the four schools that the Mount Airy Crossing development would impact. This evaluation was based only on 143 residential units. Residential units identified as Senior Housing were not considered for this Preliminary Available Threshold Capacity Certification. Only those homes restricted to residents who are all 55 years or older and covenants to require the same per Code Section 112-62.F.(21) will be excluded from evaluation. It should be noted that the preliminary capacity numbers do not consider the projected student yield from the Greentree Subdivision. The School Board looks 6 years in the future at capacity.

The four feeder schools for this development are Mt. Airy Elementary and Parr's Ridge Elementary, Mt. Airy Middle School, and South Carroll High School. The preliminary Available Threshold Capacity numbers for both Mt. Airy Elementary and Parr's Ridge Elementary are Adequate for years FY24 – FY29. Mt. Airy Middle School is Adequate for years FY24 – FY25 and Approaching Inadequate for years FY26 – FY29. Finally, South Carroll High School is Adequate for years FY24 – FY29.

The Town's adequacy standards for schools reflect the same Carroll County School Board's adequacy standards for schools.

Carroll County School Boards definitions:

Adequacy: Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, and High Schools will exceed 100% capacity according to local functional capacity standards utilized by the applicable school system.

Approaching Inadequacy: Elementary Schools proposed to serve the projected school population will exceed 100% capacity but not greater than 105% capacity, and each Middle School and High School will exceed 100% capacity but not greater than 110% capacity once the proposed development project fully built, according to local functional capacity standards utilized by the applicable school system.

Inadequacy: Elementary Schools proposed to serve the projected school population will exceed 105% capacity, and each Middle School and High School will exceed 110% capacity once the proposed development project is fully built, according to local functional capacity standards utilized by the applicable school system.

(4) Roads

Roads: Undetermined. The Developer's original Assessment only looks at a few intersections, and a Traffic Impact Study has not been provided to the Town by the developer. The SHA, the town consultant, and the town staff have provided a number of intersections to be evaluated. No update to the Assessment has been provided. The reduction of homes in the updated plan and the potential for Senior Housing will have some impact on the trips to be considered for the Traffic Impact Study. A few additional items will need to be reviewed:

- (1) Widening and signalization of MD27 to a 4-lane road from Twin Arch Road to Center Street.
- (2) Safe connectivity for Ped-Bike without impacting traffic along MD27. A safe, wide, illuminated tunnel to the South of the Center Street intersection is contemplated that would serve both existing facilities and new development.
- (3) Connection of the Rail Trail on the East and West sides of MD27 utilizing a safe crossing with minimal grade change and minimal impact to traffic. Again, a tunnel to the South of the Center Street intersection is contemplated.
- (4) Provide street connections and improvements as required by the Town. At a minimum, Engineering will recommend 2 Center Street connections and Beck Drive on the West side and Century Drive and WWTP Road on the East side.

(5) Fire and Rescue Services

Fire and Rescue Services: Adequate. The standard time to get APFO certification for Fire and Rescue Service is at the Concept plan submission following the review and approval from the Planning Commission. The revised plan shows a total of 476 housing units, multiplied by 2.75 people per unit, which will increase the total population by 1,309 people.

The Planning Staff reached out to the Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Company to review the Beck Property APFO Screening Assessment that the Developer submitted. They reviewed the Developer's original Assessment and below is the Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Company's rewrite of that paragraph.

Carroll County is in the process of establishing county-wide management of the fire and rescue services in Carroll County. This includes some professional staffing for the volunteer fire companies. Medic transport units and chase medics have been instituted by Carroll County, which will assist in covering ambulance/medic demands. Regarding fire apparatus and equipment, the fire company currently has enough apparatus and equipment for a population of approximately 25,000 in their first-due area. The fire company estimates that there is a population of approximately 18,000 in their first-due area. Since the estimated population added to the area from the Beck development would be (1,451 or less), the existing fire company apparatus and equipment will continue to be sufficient, notwithstanding replacement and maintenance needs. (\$670,000 or less) in fees will be paid to support the Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Company related to the Beck property development.

P.O. Box 50, Mount Airy, MD 21771
Telephone: (301) 829-1424 • Fax: (301) 829-1259
Email: town@mountairymd.gov • Web Page: www.mountairymd.gov

(6) Police Services

The current population per Carroll County Department of Planning report from November 2023 states that the Town of Mount Airy has a population of 9873 residents for the entire Town. The current population-to-officer ratio is 10.78 officers per 1000 residents, and the town is currently budgeted for 11 offices. The addition of 46 residential permits from this development would make the town inadequate.

Inadequate. The standard time to get APFO certifications for the Police Service is at the Concept plan submission following the review and approval from the Planning Commission. The revised plan shows a total of 476 units of housing, multiplied by 2.75 people per unit, which will increase the total population by 1,309 people.

Note: APFO requirements for an adequate police force is 1.1 sworn officers for every 1000 population.

(7) Parks and Open Space

The Assessment does not address the latest requirements for parks and open space and will be subject to the requirement of 3 acres per 100 persons. The 476 residential units at 2.75 persons per unit yield a total added population of 1,309 persons. A few additional items will need to be reviewed:

- (1) **Inadequate.** Unless the Town's overall inventory changes significantly (unlikely), the Developer will need to request a waiver to allow the Development to move forward, providing its pro rata share of the 3 acres per 100 persons, or 39.27 acres, requirement. In reviewing the waiver request, the Town Planning Commission shall consider section 25-5.G.(3) of the Town Code for the proposed Parks and Open Space to:
 - a. Meet or exceed the minimum requirements of the pro rata share since the Town is in an 80+ acre deficit.
 - b. Provide a developed, full-size multi-purpose field since that is a critical need of the Town. A simple "green space" should not suffice for this need.
 - c. Provide other new active recreation to serve at least the new residents of the development. The existing fields, playgrounds, pavilions, and courts in the adjacent Watkins Park are already widely utilized.
 - d. The Tree-save/buffer and Wooded areas do match the intent of the Code for preserving natural habitats.
- (2) **Appears Inadequate.** The Developer shall calculate the Net Developable Acreage and verify section 98-23 requirements of the Town Code are met.

Please note this is strictly a preliminary look at the APFO requirements, and further in-depth reviews will be done as more information becomes available. The revised pre-concept plan shows a reduction in requirements from the APFO Screening Assessment dated January 26, 2023, though a complete APFO report, as required at the Concept Plan phase, will be needed to complete these reviews.