



PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Cumberland County

Cumberland County Review Report

Cumberland County Planning Department
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Carlisle, PA 17013
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Recommendation: *Disapproval-see comments below*

Name of Amendment:				
Heckman-Sunday Data Center Overlay				
Municipality:	Date Received:	Date Reviewed:	Reviewed By:	Checked By:
Middlesex Township	12/10/2025	1/15/2026	SH, EG, KS	Planning Commission
Type of Amendment:				
Zoning Map Amendment				

Explanation of Amendment:

A property owner in Middlesex Township has submitted a zoning ordinance map amendment. The map amendment would extend the data center overlay district to include the parcels listed below. The total acreage of this map amendment is over 214 acres. The parcels are currently in the commercial highway (C1) district.

The current data center overlay district was established on May 30, 2025. The overlay was then added to the new zoning ordinance that was adopted on September 3, 2025. The current data center overlay occupies approximately 694 acres.

Parcel Number	Property Owner	Underlying Zoning	Address	Acreage
21-07-0467-012	Walter, John D & Heidi A	Commercial Highway (C1)	Harrisburg Pike	118.85
21-07-0467-013	Heckman Irrev Trust, Joan C Etal & C/O Sally Mentzer	Commercial Highway (C1)	1166 Harrisburg Pike	60.33
21-17-2696-023	Heckman Irrev Trust, Joan C Etal & C/O Sally Mentzer	Commercial Highway (C1)	1170 Harrisburg Pike	13.31
21-07-0467-015	Hempt Real Estate Holdings LLC	Commercial Highway (C1)	Harrisburg Pike	21.92
TOTAL:				214.41



Consistency:

Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan

The 2024 Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan¹ is organized around the Cumberland Principles. These principles guide effective planning practices which benefit the environment, economic development, and the community. The following table determines consistency between the proposed amendment and the Cumberland Principles.

The Cumberland Principles (Comprehensive plan page number)	Consistency Determination
Protect the Best First (page 20)	• The parcels are in proximity to the Conodoguinet Creek. The township should consider additional requirements to protect these sensitive features. • Most of the area proposed for rezoning is agricultural in nature. • Water requirements should be closely evaluated to ensure viability of existing and future water supplies.
Grow In Not Out (page 29)	• The area proposed for rezoning is adjacent to public sewer and public water service. • The area is near the Pennsylvania Turnpike. • Energy needs should be evaluated to determine appropriate system upgrades or new generation needs for the community as a whole.
Expand Transportation Choices (page 51)	• The subject parcels located north of the Pennsylvania Turnpike could access the Harrisburg Pike via Sunday Boulevard. The limited amount of truck traffic and lower overall traffic volumes generated by a data center would be compatible with the existing access.

¹ <https://www.cumberlandcountypa.gov/4888/Comprehensive-Plan>

The Cumberland Principles (Comprehensive plan page number)	Consistency Determination
	• The subject parcels located south of the Pennsylvania Turnpike connect to the Carlisle Pike via an access drive. • Consultation with PennDOT would be required to determine connections with the Carlisle Pike needed to support increased traffic from a data center at both locations.
Plan for People and Places (page 44)	• The character of the area is agricultural. • While not densely developed now, data centers should be attractively and thoughtfully designed to facilitate compatibility with new development.
Open for Business (page 71)	• If constructed, a data center will provide economic development for the area. Temporary construction jobs and permanent data center operation jobs may increase the income to the area. • Tax revenue from data center development(s) will help to improve municipal and county services and provide improvements for the school district. • There is a demand for data centers as evidenced by recent developments in Cumberland County. Residents and businesses rely on modern technology to properly function.
Engage to Improve (page 78)	• The township should provide the public with an opportunity to speak regarding the proposed amendment to the data center overlay district. Announcements and advertisements should be placed at the township building, online and on social media. • All parties property owners identified in the amendment request should provide their support in writing if they are not represented by the Sunday's attorney.

Middlesex Township Comprehensive Plan

The Middlesex Township Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2003. The plan is now considered obsolete as land uses, traffic patterns and development patterns have changed.

Comments and Recommendations:

1. The township should consider updating its comprehensive plan prior to acting on any amendments to its September 2025 zoning ordinance. The comprehensive plan was last updated in 2003 which has led to uncertainty about long-term development goals and frustration from residents who feel disconnected from the planning process. A comprehensive plan update would enable the township to work in conjunction with staff, residents, businesses, and neighbors to make informed, proactive land use planning decisions on the following issues that are relevant to the current rezoning request.
 - a. The location and extent of data centers. There is a significant area that is already designated as data center overlay in Middlesex Township that is under development. The township should consider how much land is appropriate for data centers while leaving room for other necessary uses in the township. The location of the overlay should be closely linked to data center infrastructure needs while considering land use compatibility with existing uses.

- b. Infrastructure capacity and availability. The electric, fiber optic, and water needs of data centers should be balanced with existing uses to safeguard existing users while reserving appropriate levels of infrastructure for future, diverse economic development opportunities.
- c. Public engagement. Data centers are a rapidly emerging use in the county that have garnered significant public interest and attention. A thorough, inclusive process to develop the data center overlay district will enable the township to transparently develop land use policy that accommodates business interest while protecting residents' quality of life.

"Section 505 (b) and 609 (g) of the Municipalities Planning Code requires that amendments to municipal ordinances be filed with the county planning agency. If this amendment is approved, please forward a final copy to the county planning office so we may update our records."