



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Appalachian National Scenic Trail
P.O. Box 50
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1.A.2.(APPA)

December 18, 2025

Middlesex Township Planning Commission
Attn: Mark D. Carpenter, Zoning Officer
350 N. Middlesex Road
Suite 1
Carlisle, PA 17013

Dear Mr. Carpenter:

The National Park Service (NPS) has been made aware of a proposed data center campus on approximately 700-acres off Country Club Road in Middlesex Township. The proposed data center is located just 0.3-miles from the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (the Trail), and this project has potential to impact the Trail and the experiences of its users.

As the administrator of the Trail, the NPS is charged under the National Trails System Act (the Act) with protecting this nationally significant recreational and historic resource. With this letter, we wish to express our interest in participating in the planning process for this project and to share our preliminary concerns regarding its potential impacts on the Trail and the surrounding community for your consideration.

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is a 2,190+ mile-long public footpath traversing the scenic, wooded, pastoral, wild, and culturally resonant lands of the Appalachian Mountains, from Maine to Georgia. Conceived in 1921 and completed as a continuous trail in 1937, the Trail was designated as one of the first National Scenic Trails under the National Trails System Act (the Act) in 1968.

The NPS administers the Trail in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, numerous state agencies, and thousands of dedicated volunteers. Recognized as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its national significance in recreation and conservation, the NPS is actively working to list individual

Trail segments in the NRHP by state.

The NPS acquired land between I-81 and north of Deans Gap Road in Cumberland County following the 1978 amendment to the Act to ensure the Trail's protection. These lands located in the vicinity of the proposed project include a ridgeline vantagepoint, views along wooded sections and pastoral areas historically farmed and maintained to preserve open views.

Noteworthy features of this section of the Trail include:

- **Two designated viewpoints on the Trail (please see attached map and photos):**
 - **Cumberland Valley Overlook:** offering elevated, ridgetop views of the natural and cultural landscape that could be impacted by data center campus.
 - **Cumberland Valley Vista:** providing wide, open views of the cultural landscape of active and historical agriculture fields that would be impacted by the data center campus.

The Trail contributes substantially to local economic activity by attracting an estimated 3.5 million visitors annually, enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities, and preserving the pastoral and rural character of Cumberland County.

Preliminary Concerns

Based on reviewing the initial project information, the NPS has several concerns regarding potential impacts:

- **Viewshed:** The proposed development will interrupt the current pastoral views from the Trail with an industrial landscape. The proposed scale of the three data center campuses with a total of 18 buildings and a power substation has the potential to significantly alter the landscape and influence future development in the area.
- **Noise Pollution:** Construction and the constant daily operations of the data center will increase noise disturbance in the Trail's protected corridor. The NPS strives to preserve to the maximum extent possible, the existing natural soundscape of the Trail.
- **Light Pollution:** The lighting needed on the data center campus will likely impact the appreciation of dark night skies/stargazing in the Trail's protected corridor. NPS recommends incorporating night sky friendly measures into the site design.
- **Cumulative Impacts:** The project may spur additional development, the need for upgraded and larger powerlines, and amplifying its long-term environmental and community impacts. Given the significant energy needs associated with data center projects, the potential need to expand electrical service via transmission lines is a concern.

We also recognize these concerns may evolve as more information about the data center campus becomes available.

Conclusion

The proposed data center campus will have a large footprint on the landscape. Identifying and addressing potential impacts early in the process will benefit the project and the community alike.

The NPS welcomes the opportunity to participate in the planning process and contribute to a thorough and comprehensive review of the project. While we are not opposed to development, we are committed to preserving the natural and cultural resources of the Trail for current and future generations. The Trail also plays a vital role in supporting Pennsylvania's recreation economy, and we encourage solutions that enhance both the community's quality of life and the integrity of this national treasure.

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact me at 540-784-0301 or via email at Kurt_Speers@nps.gov. We look forward to working with you to ensure thoughtful planning and development in this area.

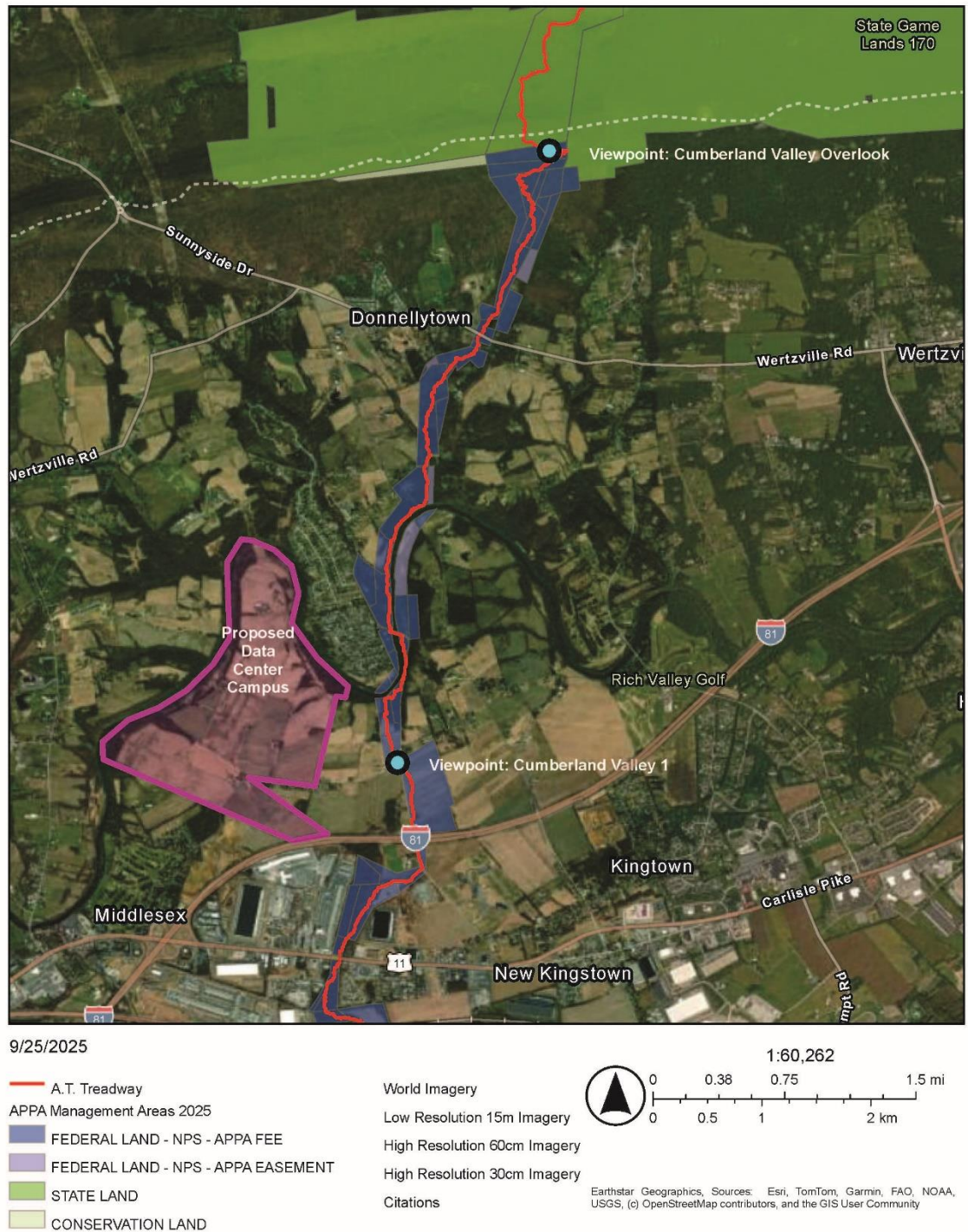
Sincerely,

Kurt Speers
Acting Superintendent
Appalachian National Scenic Trail

cc:

Donald S. Geistwhite Jr., Middlesex Township, Chairman
Eileen M. Gault, Middlesex Township, Manager
Rachel Lettre, Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Katie Hess, Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Lauren Cosgrove, National Parks Conservation Association

Proposed Data Center Campus - Middlesex, PA



Map: Data center in relation to National Park Service lands.



Photo 1: Cumberland Valley Overlook Vista.

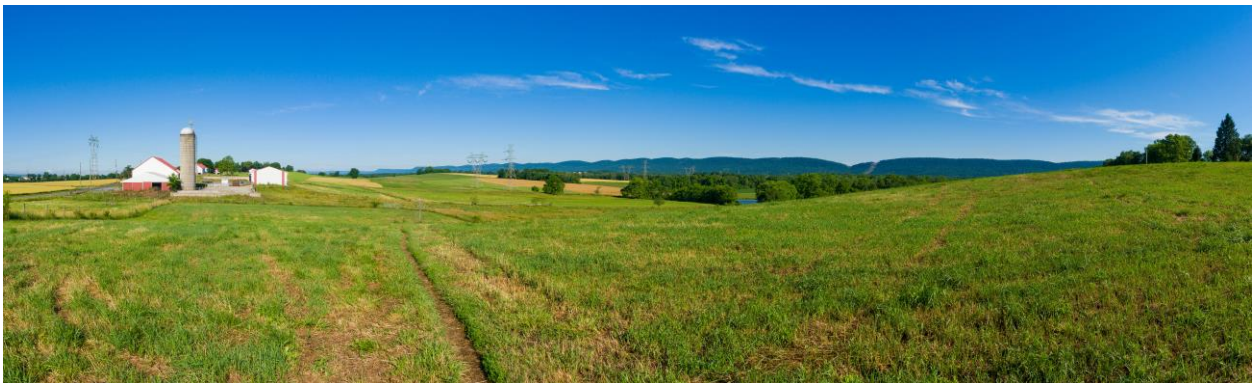


Photo 2: Cumberland Valley Vista.