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January 20, 2016

Manheim Township Board of Commissioners
1840 Municipal Drive
Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17601

RE: The Crossings at Conestoga Creek Land Development Plan, Harrisburg Pike &
Farmingdale Road, East Hempfield Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

Dear Commissioners:

The Coalition for Smart Growth Board of Directors (CSG) is writing to support the referenced land development. The project includes elements of the national 10 Principles of Smart Growth (please see attached), a sustainable planning approach that improves our cities and towns from an economic, environmental, and wellness standpoint.

It is our understanding that the project offers the following benefits to Manheim Township (MT), the municipalities surrounding MT, and to a lesser extent Lancaster County as a whole. Therefore, we believe the project generally supports the following objectives of smart growth:

- **Strengthens and directs development toward existing communities**
The site is ideally situated for this development in a designated growth area, with its proximity to the hub of Lancaster City, Route 30, and Park City Center. In addition, the project includes needed off-site infrastructure improvements to Harrisburg Pike and the Route 30 ramps.
- **Mixes land uses / Takes advantage of compact building design**
The multi-use plan provides efficient use of land space with a mix of residential and commercial uses.
- **Creates a range of housing opportunities and choices**
The project provides for 258 apartment units, a market underserved in Lancaster County.
- **Provides a variety of transportation choices / Creates walkable neighborhoods**
The plan provides public amenities including over 3,700 LF of bike/pedestrian trail connecting LCSWMA trails located west of the site, along Harrisburg Pike to the main entrance of Long's Park. The proposed 1,400 LF public walking path on-site will provide access to the bike path. In addition, the plan extends sidewalks along Harrisburg Pike from south of the Norfolk Southern bridge to the Toys R Us property.
- **Preserves critical environmental areas**
The project features constructed wetlands, riparian buffer enhancement along Little Conestoga Creek, and stabilization of eroded areas along the Little Conestoga Creek. Educational signage along bike/pedestrian trails will increase public enjoyment and awareness.
- **Fosters distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place**
The preservation of the Deisley farmhouse sets the stage for the potential adaptive re-use of the building, which helps preserve the community's local history and identity.

We believe this project is a positive step forward to a better community, but the CSG recommends a few additional improvements for future projects to achieve even better land use results. The Coalition for Smart Growth recognizes the township made progress recently

with the adoption of their new municipal ordinances. The Coalition advocates for the advancement of policies encouraging higher densities and further compact design in the future.

Even though this project consists of a mix of uses, each use tends to stand alone, losing the original intent of multiple land uses working together. For example, apartments could be located on the upper floors of the retail portion of the project. In addition, to meet the need of the affordable housing crisis in Lancaster County, the apartments units would be better served at affordable rates in order to house the workforce employed at the site. We understand the process of obtaining municipal, county, state and federal approvals is a long and costly process, and we applaud the developer for taking a step toward creating a true mixed use project in their original design to incorporate some of these elements.

The Conditional Use approval granted to the developer includes a laundry list of conditions for the developer to address. The CFSG assumes the developer will address these conditions to the satisfaction of Manheim Township.

Connectivity via alternate forms of travel (i.e. bicycles and walking) are important components related to a healthier population, as well as for residents and visitors to reach the locations where they work and play. As a community benefit, we encourage the developer to increase the non-motorized circulation, both on site and beyond, where possible.

The Board also encourages the developer to seriously consider and implement the recommendations of the Transportation Coordinating Committee, described in their letter to Manheim Township dated September 28, 2015.

Lastly, the CSG strongly encourages the Board of Commissioners to consider modifying their ordinances where appropriate to encourage and permit higher maximum densities, taller buildings, require attention to connectivity issues (pedestrian & non-motorized as well as vehicular) and true mixed use development projects in the future.

The future economic health of Manheim Township and Lancaster County and the future physical health of its current and future residents depends on it.

Sincerely,

Coalition for Smart Growth



Robert M. Shenk, RLA, President

Encl: Principles of Smart Growth

cc: Kenneth A. Hornbeck, VP Development, High Real Estate Group LLC
Board of Supervisors, East Hempfield Township
James Cowhey, Executive Director, LCPC