



**PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
Cumberland County

## Cumberland County Review Report

Cumberland County Planning Department  
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### Recommendation: Approval With Comments

<i>Name of Amendment:</i>				
Storing, Warehousing and Distribution Centers in CH – Commercial Highway				
<i>Municipality:</i>	<i>Date Received:</i>	<i>Date Reviewed:</i>	<i>Reviewed By:</i>	<i>Checked By:</i>
Middlesex Township	3/16/2023	3/31/2023	SH, EG	KS
<i>Type of Amendment:</i>				
Zoning Text Amendment				

### Explanation of Amendment:

Middlesex Township has submitted a zoning ordinance text amendment that will remove storing, warehousing, and distribution centers from the list of permitted and special exception uses in the commercial highway district. These uses are still permitted by right in the industrial general district. The Middlesex Township Zoning Ordinance was written in 1989.

<i>Consistency with County Comprehensive Plan:</i>	
AMENDMENT IS CONSISTENT	AMENDMENT IS NOT CONSISTENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The area southwest of the Pennsylvania Turnpike interchange is in the commercial character area. Economic growth in this area includes regional oriented retail, services and office uses and light industrial parks. Storing, warehousing and distribution centers are not included in this character area.</li> <li>The Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan has identified the 'miracle mile' area as an opportunity area which is targeted for development. These areas should be made 'shovel ready' to support new development in the county. Removing the use of storing, warehousing, and distribution centers from the list of permitted uses will encourage economic diversity in a region that is teeming with warehouses and distribution centers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>n/a</li> </ul>

The Middlesex Township Comprehensive Plan was adopted on February 5, 2003. The county has reviewed 2 revisions to the comprehensive plan in 2022 and another amendment was proposed in 2023.

Significant changes and growth have occurred in Middlesex Township and Cumberland County since 2003. The plan is no longer applicable to the proposed growth and development in the township. CCPD recommends the township begin the process of writing a new comprehensive plan with updated goals and a new future land use map that will guide growth and development.

**Administrative Comments and Recommendations:**

1. Middlesex Township is currently in the process of writing a new zoning ordinance.
  - a. The township should consider incorporating the proposed text amendment into the new ordinance rather than amend a zoning ordinance that is 33 years old and likely to be repealed in 2023.
  - b. If approved, the township should verify that the proposed amendment will be incorporated into the new zoning ordinance.

**Technical Comments and Recommendations:**

2. The proposed language will create several nonconforming warehouses and distribution centers that are currently permitted in the CH district. The township should consider a comprehensive study of the route 11 corridor that identifies the current land uses, zoning districts, and the future vision of the corridor. Future land uses should be identified and incorporated into the new zoning ordinance.
3. Storing, warehousing and distribution centers are not permitted in the light industrial zoning district. It would follow that the commercial highway zoning district may also prohibit these uses. As part of the zoning ordinance update, the township should consider whether the area currently zoned CH encompasses an area where commercial development in support of surrounding residential uses predominates or whether the area to the east of the I-81 interchange should reflect a higher intensity of commercial or industrial use.
4. The proposed amendment retains wholesaling, lumber yards, building contractors, and farm supply and building material yards as permitted uses in the CH district when in proximity to an interchange and abutting the IG district. Elsewhere in the ordinance, wholesaling and the other uses above are linked to storing, warehousing and distribution centers. The township should consider refining existing definitions and including a specific definition for structures permitted to store the goods that are to be wholesaled or provided for in the uses retained. If a warehouse is the structure used for the storage of goods, how can storing or warehousing be separated from the permitted use of wholesaling?

*“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.”*