



To:

**Abington Township Board of Commissioners  
c/o Township Manager Chris Christman**

Abington Township  
1176 Old York Rd, Abington, Pennsylvania 19001

## **Dear Township Manager and Members of the Board,**

We are writing on behalf of the Tookany Creek at SPS Working Group, a cross-municipal group of residents and advocates from Abington, Jenkintown, Cheltenham, and nearby communities who have been following the SPS redevelopment and advocating for a stronger outcome along Tookany Creek.

At the outset, we want to say clearly that we support the broader conditions advanced by the Abington Planning Commission and reflected in the work of the Environmental Advisory Council and Shade Tree Commission, including the revised landscaping plan, native planting, stormwater compliance, streambank restoration, light pollution reduction, bird-safe windows, and related sustainability measures. We are especially encouraged that the Planning Commission recognized two key points: that SPS should finalize a plan that **does not foreclose future opportunities along the Tookany Creek** boundary, and that SPS should **coordinate with the Township on any plans for a separated bike lane** along Highland Avenue.

We write now to ask the Board to put real substance behind those ideas in the final written conditions.

### **1. Preserve a usable creekside corridor**

The Board should require that the rear of the SPS site preserve the **widest feasible continuous corridor along Tookany Creek** for future restoration and possible public access. Even if a final trail or easement is not resolved at this stage, the grading, parking layout, slope treatment, planting plan, and especially the slope treatment adjacent to the new rear access road should not make those options impossible later.

That corridor should remain physically capable of supporting streambank restoration, invasive removal, native riparian planting and shade canopy, improved stormwater treatment near the creek, and, if pursued later, a future mixed-purpose walking and biking trail. **Of particular concern, the southern section of the rear access road creates a pinch point** where the road approaches the floodplain with a steep drop-off and the **easternmost section** also appears to constrain future continuity for restoration, maintenance access or a trail more than necessary. The Board should **require that these areas be designed so that future options are preserved rather than designed out of the site.**

### **2. Keep open the possibility of a future easement**

We understand that the exact form of any public access easement may need to be worked out later with the appropriate public agency, trail partner, or Township entity. We are not asking the Board to require that an easement be finalized today. We are asking the Board to ensure that SPS does not rebuild the site in a way that forecloses that possibility before those discussions can occur.

Accordingly, we ask that the Board include a condition requiring SPS to **engage in good-faith discussions during the current planning process with Abington Township and, as appropriate, Montgomery County, the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership, or other relevant public or nonprofit partners** regarding preservation of a usable corridor along Tookany Creek and the **feasibility, structure, and potential future dedication or acquisition of a restoration and/or public access easement.**



Friday, April 10, 2026

### **3. Coordinate with the Township on Highland Avenue bike access**

We strongly support the Planning Commission's condition that SPS coordinate with the Township on any plans for a separated bike lane along Highland Avenue. Even if a full creekside trail takes time, Highland Avenue can function as a practical access spine connecting neighborhoods, workers, and future greenway segments. Coordination now can help ensure that frontage, crossings, curb geometry, planting, and circulation decisions support safer multimodal access rather than making it harder later.

#### **Why this matters**

We respectfully encourage the Board to evaluate this corridor not only as a matter of immediate adjacent use, but in its broader intermunicipal and long-term public context. Preserving usable space along Tookany Creek would support multiple public purposes at once: streambank restoration, improved water quality, stronger flood resilience, safer bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, future access for workers and nearby residents, and preservation of a public asset before redevelopment makes those options impossible.

This concept has also drawn interest from civic, watershed, trail, and state-level partners. Representative Ben Sanchez, for example, has expressed support for preserving the corridor and exploring future trail and watershed funding for this stretch of Tookany Creek.

Because this project is moving forward through a waiver of the standard land development process, the written conditions matter tremendously. We respectfully ask that any final approval clearly require:

- continued good-faith coordination on landscaping, stormwater, and streambank restoration
- preservation of a usable rear corridor along Tookany Creek
- avoidance of design choices that foreclose future restoration or public access
- good-faith discussion regarding a potential future restoration and/or public access easement
- coordination with the Township on future separated bike access along Highland Avenue
- at least one focused working session on the rear creek corridor with SPS, Township staff, and relevant partners to evaluate restoration, grading, access, and bicycle / pedestrian connectivity

Thank you for your consideration and for your work on this important project. We would be glad to discuss any of these ideas further or provide supporting visuals and examples if helpful.

#### **On behalf of the Tookany Creek at SPS Working Group,**

- Ross Abel, Abington Township, Jenkintown Abington Neighbors Association (JANA), Bike Montco
- John Raisch, Cheltenham Township Active Transportation Committee Chair
- Eric Horowitz, Jenkintown Borough Planning Commission member
- Steve Spindler, Jenkintown Borough Councilmember
- Patrick Monahan, Circuit Trails Coalition & Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
- Jordan Linhart, PA Environment Council Program Manager of Trails & Outdoor Recreation

#### **cc:**

Abington Township Shade Tree Commission  
Abington Township Environmental Advisory Council  
Abington Township Planning Commission