



## **Considerations for Development Plans Under Review by Upper Gwynedd Township Environmental Advisory Council**

In presenting a project for review by the Upper Gwynedd Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), please consider the following recommendations. The EAC will be using these considerations to guide their review and comments provided to the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners (BOC).

The EAC, an advisory council to the BOC, advises on matters dealing with protection, conservation, management, and use of natural resources, including air, tree, land, and water resources located within the limits of Upper Gwynedd Township.

1. **Green Infrastructure.** Consider incorporating green stormwater infrastructure, such as constructed wetlands, rain gardens, bioswales, rain barrels, permeable pavements, planter boxes, green roofs, etc. to buffer high-flow rates and facilitate biological removal of nutrients (phytoremediation) from water leaving the site. For high-density or other projects with a large impervious footprint such as commercial, industrial, residential townhouses or apartment complexes, consider co-designing cutouts and traffic calming measures, etc. as stormwater control measures.
2. **Tree and Vegetation Coverage.** Retention of healthy, native mature trees is desirable for many reasons, including reducing the effects of climate change, providing food and habitat for wildlife, decreasing air temperature, and providing shade and aesthetic value to residents. Native plants are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions where they naturally occur. These important plant species provide nectar, pollen, and seeds that serve as food for native butterflies, insects, birds, and other animals. Consider the use of native species in all layers of vegetative cover – trees, shrubs, herbs, and grasses.
3. **Light Pollution.** The inappropriate or excessive use of artificial light can have serious environmental consequences for humans, wildlife, and our climate. Components of light pollution include glare, skyglow, light trespass and clutter. If the project proposes exterior illumination, consider incorporating plans to mitigate excessive light pollution.
4. **Noise.** Excessive noise generated during construction and, in some cases, during operation of a new development has the potential to negatively impact the quality of the human environment. Noise impacts also have the potential to temporarily or permanently displace wildlife and, in some cases, to cause indirect wildlife mortality (i.e., nesting birds). If project construction or operation is to generate excessive noise that could potentially impact neighboring properties or sensitive wildlife, please consider implementing noise mitigation

measures to reduce or eliminate these risks.

5. **Renewable Energy Transition.** The finite nature of non-renewable fossil fuels and the inevitable shift to renewable energy in the near future to address climate change lends an obligation to communities and developers therein to consider these realities and prepare for a future that does not rely solely on fossil fuels for energy and heat. With this in mind, the EAC highly encourages incorporating utility infrastructure that allows new developments to plan for and allow the transition to renewable energy now or in the foreseeable future.
6. **Wildlife, Habitat and Natural Resource Management.** A healthy, flourishing native wildlife population contributes to our planet's biodiversity and is essential to the existence and proper functioning of all ecosystems. Habitat loss – due to destruction, fragmentation, or degradation of habitat – is the primary threat to the survival of wildlife in our region. The EAC will evaluate any potential loss of wildlife or habitat, either directly (i.e., physically killing or destroying), or indirectly (i.e., tree thinning or bird nest/fledgling abandonment) as a result of the project.

Additionally, the EAC will evaluate if the project conflicts with any management plans for open space, conservation areas, or natural resources that the Township may be a party to. The EAC's review will seek to respond to site conditions as it relates to impacts to floodplains, wetlands, streams, valleys, woodlands, and other natural and scenic features consistent with Township policy.

Based upon the review of plans, the EAC will offer recommendations to the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners for their evaluation of the proposed project. Thank you.