

PLANNING PERSPECTIVES



Focusing on Planning in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

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on the Madison Avenue Parking Lot property in the heart of Lansdale's downtown and adjoining the Lansdale Station. It will be exciting to see how this multi-phased project will further enhance downtown Lansdale and add to ridership on the Lansdale regional rail line.

In the past six months, we have seen other residential proposals near regional train stations in Ambler, Conshohocken, and Hatboro. We are also aware of rezoning work done in communities, such as Lower Moreland and Hatfield townships, to further encourage transit-oriented development. Improving regional rail ridership by better planning the areas around existing stations will be a team effort. We are ready to assist in any way to make our communities more transit-oriented.

Jody L. Holton, AICP
Executive Director
Montgomery County Planning Commission

A Note From the Executive Director's Office

I believe in the future of transit service. Not only is it more energy efficient than automobile transportation, but it fits better into current digital lifestyle in which commuters can be connected into the world while traveling.

Apparently many people value transit. SEPTA's regional rail ridership has reached record highs this year. A recent study by the Pennsylvania Economy League found that regional rail adds \$6 billion in property value in the Philadelphia Region. Despite aggressive efforts to expand the parking at many of the 41 train stations in the county, only five typically have available spaces throughout the day for more commuters.

Enhancing pedestrian access to our suburban transit stations is essential in expanding ridership. Already more than half of the commuters at 28 stations in Montgomery County reach the station with a ride, by bike, or on foot. We need to continue our work to create safe, connected sidewalks to train stations. Our office is currently developing up-to-date geographic information data of all sidewalks in the county so our planners can better identify the sidewalk gaps. We also need to integrate our trail system and bike lanes to make biking to train stations safer and convenient.

Additionally, we need to better plan for development within a short walk of our stations so that commuting fits effortlessly into daily lifestyle. As I bike along the Schuylkill River Trail, I have enjoyed watching the progress of a new 381-unit apartment building now under construction next to the Spring Mill Station in Whitmarsh Township. A few months ago a bold collaboration was announced between the developer Equus, SEPTA, and Lansdale Borough to develop a mixed-use project

Montco 2040 A Shared Vision



This week the Montgomery County Planning Commission Board and the County Commissioners kicked off a broad public outreach effort to develop the county's new comprehensive plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*. Join in the conversation and encourage others to do so by taking

our [survey](#) and giving us your perspective on critical issues to be addressed in the plan. Save the date for one of four public workshops listed below to discuss current trends described in *Montgomery County Today*, a draft section of the plan, and to provide input into future planning goals. Check out other ways to get involved at <http://www.montcopa.org/2040CompPlan>.

Public Workshops

- November 18, 7-9 PM
Steel River Playhouse, Pottstown
- November 19, 4-6 PM
North Penn Community Health Foundation, Lansdale
- November 20, 7-9 PM
Upper Dublin Township Building, Fort Washington
- November 25, 4-6 PM
Upper Merion Township Building, King of Prussia

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



Stormwater Management Tools: Real-Life Solutions for a Resilient Community

*SAVE THE
DATE*

Housing Units Built Report

New single family housing construction in Montgomery County increased in 2012, but multifamily housing declined due to poor national housing economic conditions that began in 2007. The 978 total housing units constructed in 2012 represented a decrease of 25 percent from 2011.

Even though the number of single-family detached homes grew by 9 percent and attached housing grew by 3 percent since 2011, the 83 percent decline in multifamily units brought the overall housing numbers down. In the past, multifamily units, which include a large number of age-restricted homes and apartments, represented about one-third of all housing. In 2012, multifamily units represented less than 8 percent.

Though housing market conditions have improved dramatically over the past year, availability of money for home mortgages and building loans still have had an impact on housing sales.

There is a brighter future. In the past few months, more new residential development plans have been filed for review. Also, construction activity at existing projects has increased dramatically throughout 2013. With the completion of some larger multifamily housing projects in Kulpville, Plymouth Meeting, Conshohocken, and the Spring Mill area and overly brisk sales at several single-family development projects, an increase in housing units completed is expected over the next two years.

The characteristics of housing continue to change. In 2012, the trend toward smaller houses on smaller lots, especially with single-family detached homes, continued

[Check out the full report on housing units built.](#)

On **October 24**, the Montgomery County Planning Commission will sponsor Stormwater Management Tools: Real-Life Solutions for a Resilient Community. This informative seminar will take place from **5-7 p.m. at Germantown Academy in Fort Washington**. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about what your community can do to minimize the impacts of stormwater damage and flooding. Presentations will focus on tools that are effective in both developed and suburban communities. In addition to our staff, experts from local universities, the PA Department of Environmental Protection, and the Montgomery County Conservation District will be on hand to share the latest information about stormwater management. A light meal will be provided, and plenty of time will be set aside for discussing how we should be moving forward collectively to solve the stormwater and flooding challenges in our county.



Municipal Waste Management Plan Update Begins This Fall

MCPC will be working with a municipal waste advisory committee appointed by the county commissioners to update the municipal waste management plan for the county. In accordance with Act 101—the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Act of 1988—all counties in

the Commonwealth are required to update their municipal waste management plans at least every ten years. The previous plan was adopted in 2006.



This plan will include a description of the current waste stream and management facilities, estimated future waste capacity needs through 2025, an overview of waste reduction and recycling efforts and future recycling rate goals, selection of future waste management facilities, and implementation responsibilities. The update will provide an opportunity to review issues regarding the current service agreement with Covanta Energy for disposal services at the resource recovery facility in Plymouth Township (expiration December 31, 2014) and the inter-municipal agreements with the twenty-two participating municipalities (expiration November 1, 2015) that comprise the waste system authority.



We'll Keep Flicking if You Keep Clicking

If a photograph is worth a thousand words, our [Flickr site](#) has been doing a lot of communicating for us! So far this year we have had over 100,000 people visit our site containing over 2,050 photos. Our collection includes a variety of county settings taken by planners over the weekends and in the evening. Each photo is tagged with keywords, and most are part of a photo group and located on a map. Using the site is easy. Anyone can locate the image that they are interested in through a number of ways. Full-size photographs can be downloaded from the site to be used in a variety of ways, though we do ask that you attribute them to the Montgomery County Planning Commission. Visit our site often. We like showing off our great county to everyone!



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