

# TOWN CENTER NEWS

*A quarterly newsletter on revitalization and economic development in Montgomery County's traditional towns*

*Summer  
2016*

## **PROMOTING LOCAL FOOD... LOCALLY!**

The height of summer—when corn, peaches, and tomatoes overflow the bins at local farm stands—is a great time to be thinking about supporting local food. Our downtown areas may feel far removed from local farms and agribusinesses, but there are lots of ways to support Montgomery County's growing local food movement no matter where your municipality is located. Check out the list below:

- **Allow residents to grow (or raise) food at home.** Whether it's an effort to save some money or to have less lawn to mow, many county residents are turning to gardening (or backyard chickens, beehives, or all of the above) to get some food onto their plates. Communities can be proactive by allowing these sorts of activities in the right locations (even on municipally owned property). Montgomery County is setting a great example with the newly installed [Sweet Fields Community Supported Agriculture](#) (CSA). Having the right ordinances in place can allow this to happen with little disruption to neighbors.
- **Allow residents to grow food nearby.** If backyard gardens are not a possibility in your municipality, how about a community garden? Or a creative agreement with nearby institutions such as a church or a college? An excellent example is [Ursinus College](#). The college grows food on its campus (which is ultimately sold to students, faculty, and staff) and owns a nearby preserved farm that is used for educational purposes and food production. Several churches have farms or gardens on which they grow produce and donate the crop to local food pantries.
- **Support farmers' markets, farm stands, and other ways to get food and related products into consumers' hands.** This is the time of year when roadside stands proliferate and farmers' markets are teeming with customers. While operating a profitable farmers' market is not without its own challenges, municipalities can do their part by supporting the existing markets in our communities. Help with publicity, a highly visible location, and parking are all ways to support local markets and vendors. Supporting other special events, such as craft fairs or flea markets,



*A successful market brings foot traffic and shoppers to downtowns across the county, such as Ambler.*

may be another way to attract local food vendors if a full-scale market isn't the right fit for your town.

- **Bring food trucks for a visit.** Food trucks are a great way to support local start-up businesses and local food while giving residents a chance to try something new. The food trucks could be part of a special event or offered in a section of town that has a regular, daily lunch crowd. The key here, again, is regulating this use from the get-go. MCPC has some great resources on how to regulate food trucks and can help with key issues such as hours of operation, food truck parking location, and sanitation standards.
- **Buy local!** There are lots of opportunities to use municipal dollars on local products. Special events, such as municipally sponsored barbecues or picnics, would be a great place to serve locally produced items like potato chips or hot dogs. Your municipal building may not be large enough to have a cafeteria, but for those places which offer snacks on a regular basis, having locally grown fruits and vegetables on hand is a great place to start. Even better, offer up your municipal building as a pickup spot for a local CSA! Give employees an incentive to join the CSA by making it hard to resist (and host some potluck lunches so everyone has a chance to use up their produce). Check out [Montgomery County's guide to buying local!](#)



**For additional information, contact the Montgomery County Planning Commission at 610-278-3722 or visit [www.montcopa.org/planning](http://www.montcopa.org/planning)**

## ELEVEN PROJECTS RECEIVE MONTCO 2040 IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

The Montgomery County Commissioners have approved 11 projects to receive grant funding as a part of the county's efforts to implement *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*, the new county comprehensive plan. So, what are our communities up to? Here's a summary of the awarded projects so far—and we're looking forward to seeing the results!

- Collegeville Borough will install a new traffic signal at the corner of Main and Sixth Streets after several serious pedestrian accidents.
- Douglass Township will retrofit an existing municipal parking lot adjacent to the township building and Douglass Park with a large rain garden, two new inlets along the realigned driveway, rain barrels, and porous pavement.
- Hatfield Township will build additional segments onto its existing trail system to connect township recreational facilities, a business park, residential areas, and the county's Liberty Bell Trail in Hatfield Borough.
- Lower Moreland Township will construct a sidewalk along the south side of Welsh Road between Lieberman Drive and Valley Road to connect residents to the Pennypack Trail, Septa Bethayres Station, and the Bethayres commercial district.
- Upper Moreland Township will construct a new pedestrian crossing at York and Davisville Roads in the Willow Grove Redevelopment Area.
- Upper Salford Township will acquire a conservation and trail easement over the Schirk-Hutt woods area of the Hutt Farm.
- Conshohocken Borough will retrofit the parking area at Sutcliffe Park between Wood and Freedley Streets through the installation of green parking elements.
- Lower Pottsgrove Township will construct a green parking lot in an existing overflow parking area with stabilized turf parking spaces and stormwater BMPs.
- Narberth Borough will install a series of bio-infiltration facilities along the southern edge of Windsor Avenue adjacent to Narberth Park. The project will include shade tree pits, a spillway for excess water during rain events, and a vegetated rain garden.
- Schwenksville Borough will work with artist Teresa Haag to design and create a mural on the north side of the Sabo Apartment building located along Main Street.
- Towamencin Township will construct a multiuse trail from Trumbauer Road to Valley View Way along the Towamencin Creek through lands owned by the township and the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

Funds for the program in 2016 are almost completely committed, but we plan to have another round available in early 2017. Municipalities may continue to submit applications in 2016 and receive feedback in advance for the next round of funding. Visit [www.montcopa.org/Montco2040GrantProgram](http://www.montcopa.org/Montco2040GrantProgram) for more details.



## Check Out WHAT'S HAPPENING

### BEER GARDENS ARE THE SUMMER HIT OF 2016!

Two beer gardens opened up shop this summer in Montgomery County and quickly became popular spots to hang out with family and friends. Just outside of Ambler, the [Ambler Yards Beer Garden](#) had a great season (it closed for the year at the end of June). The season is still going strong at the [Conshohocken Beer Garden](#), which is located at 2 Ash Street in part of the parking lot at the 3 Tower property near Residence Inn. If you're interested in having a beer garden in your community, visit the Conshohocken Beer Garden (just [register](#) in advance). The Conshohocken Beer Garden is scheduled to run through October.



Keeping cool at the Ambler Yards Beer Garden.



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