FRONT COVER PHOTOS
Bike Montco Event at Montgomery County Community College – Whitpain
Backyard Garden Depicted in New Residential Agriculture Guidebook
Public Workshop for Lansdale Comprehensive Plan

BACK COVER PHOTO
Kayaking on the Schuylkill River - Norristown
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Planning is a creative process that envisions the possibilities for the future, prioritizes, and involves others to make it happen.

— Jody L. Holton, AICP
MCPC Executive Director
INTRODUCTION

As a result of **good planning**, this year we saw **real progress** on projects throughout the county.

These projects, focused on improving pedestrian connections, greening stormwater management, and enhancing public spaces, received Montco 2040 implementation grants and were successfully completed in 2018. We have highlighted a couple of these success stories on page 9. We expect that the new County Transportation Program (CTP) will also initiate new ideas and projects, such as those adopted as part of the *Bike Montco* plan, and achieve meaningful improvements to the road network in the county. These accomplishments and others are highlighted below:

- Completed *Bike Montco: The Bicycle Plan for Montgomery County*, which was adopted by the county commissioners in August 2018.
- Created a new guidebook, *Suburban Homestead: A Primer on Best Practices and Management*, which focuses on residential agriculture practices, such as keeping beehives and chicken coops, gardening, and composting.
- Awarded 14 grants, totaling over $1.5 million, from the Montco 2040 Implementation Grant Program to 15 municipalities.
- Awarded 17 grants, totaling $968,361, to projects in 13 municipalities across the county in the first year of the new County Transportation Program, which was established to share funding from the county’s Vehicle Registration Revenue Fee with our municipalities.
- Completed the Jenkintown and North Wales comprehensive plans and the Ridge Pike West Corridor Connection Study in Lower Providence, the Keystone Employment and Economic Plan (KEEP) for Pottstown and West Pottsgrove, a zoning update for Schwenksville, and a land use assumptions report for New Hanover.
- Worked on comprehensive plans for Hatboro, Lansdale, Narberth, Plymouth, Upper Gwynedd, Upper Merion, and Upper Moreland.

Planning relies on strong partnerships. We are fortunate to have a proactive team of planners who build relationships and encourage inclusive community outreach efforts. We appreciate the collaboration with municipalities, business leaders, the nonprofit community, and our colleagues in governmental agencies across the Philadelphia region.

Steven Kline, Chair
Montgomery County
Planning Commission Board

Jody Holton, AICP
MCPC Executive Director
FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

BIKE MONTCO

In August 2018, the Montgomery County Commissioners officially adopted Bike Montco: The Bicycle Plan for Montgomery County. Prior to adoption, the plan, which was developed through extensive public input and a steering committee, was introduced at a packed Planning Smarter Montco 2018 event on June 20 at the Montgomery County Community College. After its adoption, MCPC offered three public workshops on the plan in Lower Gwynedd Township, Upper Merion Township, and Abington Township. Bike Montco envisions the creation of a future on-road bicycle transportation network throughout Montgomery County. This planned future network and new policies in Bike Montco will work toward achieving improved bicycle access and mobility all across the county—a major goal of the county’s comprehensive plan. While the primary focus is physically tangible on-street bicycle facilities, similar to those in Philadelphia and elsewhere in the United States, Bike Montco is so much more. The plan strives to:

- Create an on-road bicycle network that addresses all skill levels of riders.
- Develop new relationships with law enforcement to ensure laws related to bicycling are properly interpreted and crashes involving bicyclists are well recorded.
- Work with underserved and lower-income communities to make sure bicycles and bicycle infrastructure are readily available to those who could benefit the most from this low-cost form of transportation, and encourage them to ride.

A major part of our work program is the implementation of Montco 2040: A Shared Vision, Montgomery County’s comprehensive plan.

This important plan identifies three key county themes for the future—Connected Communities, Sustainable Places, and Vibrant Economy—and identifies goals with specific implementation steps and recommendations. Since the adoption of the plan in 2015, we have continued to work with others to achieve the vision of this award-winning plan. To ensure Montco 2040 remains relevant, we annually prepare an implementation update covering projects undertaken by the county that fulfill plan recommendations.
In 2018, MCPC produced a new guidebook to inform municipal officials and interested county residents on best practices regarding keeping chickens, honeybees, composting, and gardening. *Suburban Homestead: A Primer on Best Management and Practices* includes two full model ordinances regarding the keeping of honeybees and chickens as well as suggestions on zoning language for gardens and composting, where potentially necessary. The last chapter shows two typical county lot configurations in which these practices are demonstrated. The guidebook defines residential agriculture as any noncommercial, small-scale farming for personal consumption that takes place on private residential property. It addresses a trend toward more diverse private residential land uses such as keeping beehives and chicken coops. When properly managed, they can be beneficial to both the resident and community as a whole. More robust gardens and composting can go toward reducing local stormwater burdens and diverting waste from landfills. Keeping chickens can provide food and companionship, and keeping bees provides a vital ecological service in the form of pollination. There are many myths surrounding these uses, and this guide explains both the benefits and potential drawbacks of these practices. In 2018, MCPC presented the guidebook at an Adult Speakers Series at the Union Library of Hatboro and promoted it at the annual Montgomery County 4-H Fair. MCPC is looking for other opportunities to share information from this guidebook as well as other guidebooks on green parking lots, adaptive reuse of institutional properties, and townhouse community design guidelines. If interested, contact us at 610-278-3722.
ACHIEVING THE VISION

Montco 2040: A Shared Vision

MCPC, along with other county agencies, works consistently to attain the goals established within the three themes—Connected Communities, Sustainable Places, and Vibrant Economy—of Montco 2040: A Shared Vision, the county’s comprehensive plan. Local, regional, and statewide governments and the private sector also have a significant role in successfully addressing all of the challenges identified in the plan.

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

To build better connected communities, MCPC accomplished various activities including:

- Continuing to award grants in the Montco 2040 Implementation Grant Program that promote connected communities by enhancing pedestrian safety and improving active transportation connections.
- Approaching completion for the third and final phase of the Lafayette Street Corridor project.
- Completing Phase I of the site development work at the Trail Junction Center in Norristown.
- Repaving approximately 3 miles of the Schuylkill River Trail and making safety upgrades to 5 trail road crossings in Conshohocken.
- Securing $775,000 in grant funding toward county trail development and planning studies.
- Working with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services to complete 3 new walkability studies for schools in the county.
Completing a successful first year of the new County Transportation Program (CTP), which uses some of the proceeds of the $5 vehicle registration fee enacted by the Montgomery County Commissioners to work with our 62 municipalities to complete local transportation projects.

- Adopting Bike Montco: The Bicycle plan for Montgomery County.

- Advancing the Chester Valley Trail Extension into final design.

- Assisting municipalities in the completion of comprehensive plans, municipal ordinances, and other products to enable them to better shape their future development.

SUSTAINABLE PLACES

Different actions are required to ensure that the wonderful neighborhoods in the county continue to provide the quality of life which makes them so attractive. Some of the sustainable activities achieved by MCPC include:

- Moving 11 new bridge improvement projects into the design phase, funded by the county’s $5 vehicle registration fee.

- Continuing the work of the Wissahickon Clean Water Partnership project, which includes 13 municipalities and 4 municipal wastewater treatment plants, the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, consultants, and providers of legal and technical services, all of which have signed an intergovernmental commitment to the project.
Preserving an additional 257 acres of farmland on 5 farms through the Montgomery County Agricultural Land Preservation Program.

Guiding 4 municipalities through the national SolSmart designation program.

Performing enrollment projection services for 2 school districts to assist school board members in making informed decisions about future facilities and educational resource needs.

Assisting the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and the Montgomery County Division of Parks, Trails, and Historic Sites in promoting healthy lifestyles through the use of county trails.

Successfully conducting the 2018 Montgomery Awards Program, which recognized 5 projects and 1 planning advocate.

Completing 434 reviews for land development and subdivision projects throughout the county.

Providing 7 household hazardous waste collections, 2 tire collections, a campaign sign recycling program, and a rain barrel and compost bin sale in 2018.

Beginning a collaborative effort with the Montgomery County Office of Housing and Community Development to develop an affordable housing strategy for the county.

Some examples of our efforts to enhance the county’s economic competitiveness include:

- Assisting the Montgomery County Commerce Department and various state and regional economic development agencies in attracting new businesses and retaining existing businesses by providing data for a new microsite and partnering to present a Future of Manufacturing event in 2018.

- Promoting farming as a vital part of our economy with 2 AgBrewCulture events.

- Participating fully in the lead-up to the 2020 Census.
Producing our revitalization newsletter, *Town Center News*, to share useful information about revitalization with local decision makers.

Managing the design and construction of major county road projects and collaborating on transit improvements, which will provide access to employment areas.

Helping to promote regional sports facilities and arts attractions in the county in partnership with the Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board.

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**SUCCESSFUL MONTCO 2040 GRANT PROJECTS**

**Douglass Township**

One of the most exciting flagship projects from the Montco 2040 Implementation Grant Program’s inaugural year was finished in 2018. Douglass Township completed a retrofit of its municipal parking lot to be a model of sustainable green parking practices. After final plantings in the spring, the lot will feature a large rain garden, naturalized bioswales replacing asphalt, new inlets along a realigned driveway, rain barrels, and porous pavement. It also provides new pedestrian connections from Philadelphia Avenue to the park. The township was fortunate to leverage this project and receive state funding that will also improve the Douglass Park parking lot, which connects directly into the municipal building lot.

**Schwenksville Borough**

Schwenksville Borough may be one of the smallest municipalities in Montgomery County by population but definitely not by determination! The borough started out of the gates quickly in 2016 with a grant to paint an eye-catching mural on a blank wall façade in the center of town. Then in 2017, the borough received a Montco 2040 grant to build a new public plaza in front of the former fire company, which is now slated to become the new borough hall. The plaza, opened at the end of 2018, connects directly to the county’s Perkiomen Trail and coincides with a complete overhaul of the borough’s Meadow Park. If you haven’t seen Schwenksville in a while, you might be surprised by all of the new activity and public spaces available!
Communities are largely built and shaped through the development of various properties by individual private land development or subdivision proposals regulated through local land use codes. Under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247), municipalities must submit all proposed subdivisions or land developments, as well as any revisions or amendments to land development codes or local plans, to the Montgomery County Planning Commission for review and comment.

Total Annual Submissions, 2009–2018

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>199</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>177</td>
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One Ardmore Place - Lower Merion
In 2018, the planning commission reviewed 434 submittals (proposed land developments, subdivisions, rezoning actions, municipal plans, etc.). This represented a slight decrease from 2017.

This review and comment process has always been an important opportunity for us to work with municipalities to address countywide planning issues associated with a specific proposal. Our review letters are intended to offer planning advice to municipal officials to assist them in making sound land use and design decisions that will benefit their community. All of our reviews are conducted by professional planners or landscape architects, who often times collaborate with other staff professionals with specific expertise.

In 2018, we transitioned our 247 review process to an all-digital format. In partnership with the Montgomery County Information & Technology Solutions Department, we have digitized Act 247 files and documents from the last ten years, developed an online submission portal to facilitate municipal and developer applications, and migrated the existing static database into a cloud-based dynamic database. The new system, which went live in May 2018, provides a streamlined review process for planning staff, greater sharing of planning documents between staff and other county departments, and more powerful analytic capabilities. Even more significant will be the next phase of the project coming in 2019. A website with interactive mapping and database searches will allow the public to search and access land development files from any computer. Plan sets, review letters, accompanying studies, and any other document associated with a 247 submission will be available digitally.

While most of our development review work is performed under Act 247, our staff also reviewed proposals for sewage facilities service area changes under Act 537. These reviews provide comments and a recommendation to the applicant, municipality, and PADEP regarding environmental and land use planning issues. We completed 37 sewage facilities plan reviews in 2018.
2018 ANNUAL SUMMARY OF SUBDIVISION, LAND DEVELOPMENT, AND ZONING ACTIVITY

The county experienced a drop in development proposals in 2018, however private development activity continued to remain solid. In 2018, we received 434 submittals (proposed land developments, subdivisions, rezoning actions, municipal plans, etc.). These submittals represent a slight decrease from 2017. Detailed information is available in the 2018 Annual Summary of Subdivision, Land Development, and Zoning Activity.

RESIDENTIAL PROPOSALS

Apartment proposals continued to boost the total number of proposed residential units even though the total amount proposed was less than last year. A total of 821 of the 1,501 housing units proposed in 2018 were multifamily structures—most of which were located in medium to large apartment projects. Single-family attached units (primarily townhouses) registered 463 units proposed while single-family detached units numbered 217.
**ZONING ACTIVITY**

In 2018, 142 zoning revisions were submitted for review. These consisted of changes to zoning maps, comprehensive changes to local zoning ordinances, and minor amendments to existing ordinances.

**NONRESIDENTIAL PROPOSALS**

The total nonresidential development square footage (2,795,810) proposed in 2018 was below the amount proposed in 2017 but still around the average amount proposed over the last ten years. Institutional development comprised the largest share of nonresidential development proposed, though commercial and industrial square footage did not lag too far behind.

![Proposed Nonresidential Square Feet by Development Type, 2009–2018](image)

_in 2018, MCPC worked with Schwenksville Borough to draft a comprehensive rewrite of the borough's zoning code. The new ordinance strengthens design and streetscape standards for the borough’s Village Commercial districts, which were informed by Schwenksville’s Main Street design guidebook, also completed by MCPC._
MCPC does a lot of **research and data analysis** to keep track of the trends occurring in our dynamic county. During 2018, we monitored various conditions, trends, and issues to **provide timely information to local leaders and business professionals** who all make important decisions that have an impact on the future of the county.

We also offer information designed to help county residents make important decisions for themselves and their families.

Careful research and thought goes into providing accurate information within convenient platforms so it can be used in many ways. Our [Montco Planning Data Portal](http://www.montcopa.org/planning) continues to be a popular resource with thousands of visits throughout the year. Other online databases, reports, and geographic information system (GIS) mapping products also were well used by our staff and the public.
DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS
AND INVENTORIES

In 2018, we published several inventory and demographic reports that characterize key development trends, some of which are highlighted below. All of these reports are contained within the Montco Planning Data Portal.

- **2018 Annual Summary of Subdivision, Land Development, and Zoning Activity**
- **2017 Housing Units Built**
- **2017 Nonresidential Construction**
- **2017 Median Prices for Housing**
- **Updated Inventories:**
  - Shopping Centers
  - Business Parks
  - Apartments and Condominiums

GIS MAPPING

This year marked the beginning of a major transformation in how we use and provide geographic spatial data in Montgomery County. The Montgomery County Commissioners adopted the Strategic Management Plan for County GIS and began its implementation by hiring a GIS manager. Since that time, the planning commission’s GIS staff has been working with the new manager to refine its entire library of GIS data in order to prepare for a more centralized and authoritative data deployment. Essential county GIS data will be stored in the cloud and, for the first time, be publicly available online under an open data policy. Many other improvements are also planned and being implemented by the county’s GIS staff including:

- A GIS Data Hub that will feature a broad collection of interactive maps, story maps, and web apps which highlight new and existing data available for the public to explore.
- The ability for the public to download and use county GIS datasets including feature inventories, infrastructure, and parcels.
- Data support for an economic development online mapping toolkit being contracted through the Montgomery County Commerce Department.
- An interactive map to access the planning commission’s Act 247 land development submission database and all associated plan sets.
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2018 MONTGOMERY AWARD WINNERS

In 2018, five outstanding projects and a long-standing committee that has preserved an impressive amount of open space in Montgomery County received 2018 Montgomery Awards. The winners were honored at a celebration sponsored by the Montgomery County Planning Commission and the Montgomery County Conservation District. Over 80 people attended the celebration, which included a reception and welcoming comments from the county commissioners.

The Montgomery Awards recognize the best in planning, design, and advocacy in Montgomery County. This annual program promotes awareness of outstanding design and innovative planning in our communities and acknowledges the high quality of work and commitment of communities, organizations, planning professionals, and local volunteers in their efforts to enhance Montgomery County. It also recognizes citizens and organizations that have made significant and sustained contributions to planning in the county through a Planning Advocate Award. In 2017, MCPC collaborated with the Montgomery County Conservation District to offer an Environmental Stewardship Award as part of the awards program. The program, which celebrated 50 years in 2017, has presented 209 awards throughout Montgomery County. Information on all of our award winners is available in an online database and a new online story map at www.montcopa.org/MontgomeryAwards.
CENTRE SQUARE COMMONS
Whitpain Township

Centre Square Commons, an outstanding redevelopment project, received a 2018 Montgomery Award for collaborative planning, creative design, and community investment. This exceptional redevelopment project transformed a collection of unconnected properties into a community town center that not only reflects the vision of the township’s comprehensive plan but also reestablished the heart of Centre Square Village.

CHELTENHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Cheltenham Township

Cheltenham Elementary School, a successful redevelopment project, received a 2018 Montgomery Award for community vision, creative building design, and the creation of a sustainable landscape. This exceptional project, which transformed this property into a new public education campus and sustainable asset, continues to promote the district’s commitment to education and neighborhood connections, retaining the school’s legacy in the community.
HALLOWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Horsham Township

Hallowell Elementary School, an innovative redevelopment project, received a 2018 Montgomery Award for successful community collaboration, innovative design, and sustainable practices. This outstanding project, which transformed a brownfield into a new state-of-the-art elementary school and sustainable asset, demonstrates how successful collaboration can benefit the entire community.

LIONS GATE AT PENN STATE ABINGTON
Abington Township

Lions Gate at Penn State Abington, a transformative redevelopment project, received a 2018 Montgomery Award for innovative design, community investment, and sustainable practices. This exemplary project, which transformed a neglected site into a unique student living facility, is a community amenity that helps to complete the fabric of Penn State and Abington Township.
UPPER POTTSGROVE TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE & RECREATION BOARD

Upper Pottsgrove Township

The Upper Pottsgrove Township Open Space & Recreation Board, a dedicated volunteer group recognized for community vision, sustained commitment to conservation of natural resources, and successful open space preservation and trail development achievements, received a 2018 Planning Advocate Award. Over nearly three decades, the board has created an enviable record of accomplishments, furthering the vision and goals of the township.

2018 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT

ANDORRA CREEK FLOODPLAIN RESTORATION

Whitemarsh Township

The Andorra Creek Floodplain Restoration, a successful floodplain restoration and wetland creation project along the Andorra Creek, received a 2018 Environmental Stewardship Award for controlling streambank erosion and sediment, reconnecting the channel to the surrounding land, and mitigating flooding. This project has restored much of the creek’s habitat and ecological function and has created an aesthetically pleasing environment.
In addition to serving individual municipalities, our planners assist the four regional planning commissions that comprise 24 Montgomery County municipalities. These active regional boards continue to work effectively in addressing issues which extend beyond municipal boundaries. In 2018, the four regional planning commissions continued to finalize the preparation of the multiregional greenway study being undertaken by our staff and Natural Lands through a $120,000 DCNR Grant. The focus in 2018 was on the completion of the stewardship elements of the study. Natural Lands provided individual assessment reports for the 38 municipal parks and open spaces that were examined as part of the study. Natural Lands also drafted a stewardship guide to assist municipalities in the implementation of the park and open space assessments. The guide also is formatted to direct municipal decisions for parks which were not assessed but face similar land management issues. In order to maximize the study’s stewardship efforts, the guide can also be a tool for the region’s private landowners, directing them on how to manage their lands in ways that protect and enhance their site’s natural resources. Lastly, Natural Lands completed a stewardship management plan for 475 acres of Montgomery County’s Green Lane Park. The plan’s strategies will be transferable to other portions of the park as well.
A strong county must be built one municipality at a time, and planning is the primary tool our municipal leaders use to guide development in ways that best achieve the vision established for their community. In 2018, we maintained contracts with 35 municipalities, serving nearly 60 percent of the county’s residents. While we are contracted for a variety of services under the Montgomery County Community Planning Assistance Contract Program, the single most common service provided in 2018 involved updating the comprehensive plan for eight of the communities. Other professional planning services provided to the communities involve preparation of various planning studies, the drafting of new zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances, grant writing, park and streetscape design studies, and economic development support. Examples of the many municipal projects we successfully accomplished in 2018 include:

- **Ambler Borough**
  Completed an Open Space Plan Update

- **Douglass Township**
  Completed Revisions to Landscape Ordinance

- **Jenkintown Borough**
  Adopted Jenkintown 2035 Comprehensive Plan

- **Lansdale Borough**
  Completed Draft of Lansdale 2040 Comprehensive Plan
MCPC offers School District Enrollment Projections Services through a community planning assistance contract. In 2018, we performed two studies for previously contracted districts, the Upper Merion Area School District and Lower Merion School District. We are now in the process of working with 13 of the county’s 22 districts and have produced 20 separate reports. Our enrollment projection reports contain detailed information on local development trends within the school district along with other demographic data. This collaborative work benefits the school districts and MCPC. We are able to apply our expertise in the demographics and development trends in the county and use valuable county data to bolster our projections and insight for each district. At the same time, we learn about the issues facing each district and how land use and demographic changes have real effects on families, governing bodies, and taxpayers.
KEYSTONE EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMIC PLAN (KEEP)

Pottstown Borough and West Pottsgrove Township will have the distinction of being the first municipalities in Pennsylvania to adopt a “Specific Plan,” a redevelopment tool only available to municipalities that participate in regional planning. The plan’s adoption will be followed by the release of a Request for Information (RFI), which will promote the plan and project site and gauge the interest level of the development community.

The plan envisions employment-generating uses, including industrial, office, and research & development, which may be supplemented by apartments. The site offers available land with premium access to major roadways, rail, and the Schuylkill River Trail, which offers proximity to walkable, downtown Pottstown and the Montgomery County Community College. The plan’s “Principles for Development” call for development with ample greenery and open space, attractive site and building design, and strong interconnections among onsite and adjacent land uses.

The project was undertaken by a contract with Pottstown Area Industrial Development (PAID) on behalf of Pottstown and West Pottsgrove. Funding was provided by a $200,000 Local Share Account grant from the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) with matching funds of $67,000 provided by the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority.
MCPC is always looking for opportunities to share planning information and our available resources and services with our communities.

In 2018, we offered courses, seminars, and workshops through our Planning Smarter Montco 2018 program. We capped off the year by celebrating our 2018 Montgomery Award winners— all examples of excellence in planning. Throughout the year, we provided planning information in newsletters, email blasts, social media posts, and participation at conferences and events. Some of the highlights of our 2018 outreach and education efforts include:

- Providing Planning Smarter Events and Promoting MCPC at Conferences and Events:
  - Three nine-hour courses in community planning, subdivision and land development, and zoning attended by approximately 80 people.
  - An MCPC open house, attended by over 40 municipal leaders and staff, county residents, and others, that offered an opportunity to hear about how planning can help when working with constituents to set and achieve goals and how good information can assist leaders in making the best decisions for their community.
  - Promotion of MCPC at the spring and fall annual conventions of the Montgomery County Association of Township Officials (MCATO) where we shared our latest planning resources, the professional services we offer to assist communities, and information on upcoming planning events with municipal officials and others.

- Over 800 public participants
- Over 1,312 Facebook friends
- Over 1,300 followers on Twitter
- 1.89 million visits to our Flickr site
- Approximately 30 e-blasts to over 2,000 community leaders
Two AgBrewCulture events, offered as part of the county’s local food initiative, which provided networking opportunities for farmers, brewers, and distillers and joined together those seeking more local products to incorporate into their manufacturing process or restaurant or pub and farmers who have been thinking about growing malting barley, hops, or other ingredients for this growing local industry.

A Bike Montco event, which was attended by over 70 people and focused on the new bike plan and topics including building safer on-road bicycle infrastructure, linking to the county’s trail network, and the role the county can play in providing bicyclist safety education and encouragement strategies for new riders.

Participation in PARK(ing) Day 2018 in Norristown where MCPC created a mini farmland scene, complete with hay bales and corn stalks, to share information on the county’s local food initiative, our newest guidebook on residential agriculture, the newly adopted Bike Montco plan, and other information.

Three public workshops on Bike Montco in Lower Gwynedd Township, Upper Merion Township, and Abington Township, which focused on how municipalities can embark on practical and strategic projects to improve bicycle mobility and safety in their own communities.

An event attended by over 50 people, which focused on stormwater BMP projects, water quality improvement efforts, and green stormwater infrastructure installations that have been successfully achieved in the county.

An event attended by over 80 people which examined manufacturing in the county and how municipalities can learn how to accommodate smaller-scale manufacturing that provides excellent jobs and creates economic benefits for their community.

Participation at the Montgomery County 4-H Fair in Creamery where we shared information on the county’s farmland preservation program, the county’s local food initiative, local farmers’ markets, and the AgBrewCulture events.

Participation in the Norristown Riverfront Festival where we shared information on Bike Montco and our guidebooks with our Norristown neighbors and other visitors.

Producing 4 Planning Perspectives newsletter issues and issues of our revitalization newsletter, Town Center News, and our farmland preservation newsletter, Stalk Talk.

Sharing important planning news and information through approximately 30 e-blasts to over 2,000 community leaders, organizations, businesses, and citizens throughout the year.

Awarding 5 outstanding projects and 1 exceptional planning advocate as part of the Montgomery Awards Program.
LEADERSHIP

The nine-member Montgomery County Planning Commission Board, appointed by the Montgomery County Commissioners, plays an important leadership role in addressing future challenges confronting the county.

MCPC Board Touring Suburban Square - Lower Merion

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD

2018 BOARD MEMBERS

Steven Kline, Chair
Dulcie F. Flaharty, Vice Chair
Robert E. Blue, Jr., P.E., P.L.S.
Jill Blumhardt
David L. Cohen, AICP
John J. Ernst, AIA
Scott Exley
Charles J. Tornetta
Pastor John West

(Seated L-R) Jill Blumhardt; Steven Kline, Chair; Dulcie F. Flaharty, Vice Chair; Judy L. Helton, AICP, MCPC, Executive Director; (Standing L-R) Robert E. Blue, Jr., P.E., P.L.S.; Charles J. Tornetta; Rev. John H. West, III; John J. Ernst, AIA; David L. Cohen, AICP; Scott Exley

www.montcopa.org/planning
Each member, volunteering to serve a four-year term, offers a unique perspective and varied expertise, representing the geographic and cultural diversity of the county. The board advises our staff on critical issues at monthly meetings and works to promote excellence in planning throughout the county. The board, which held 11 meetings in 2018, took action on various contracts, provided important planning guidance, and received staff briefings and guest presentations from the following organizations:

- Natural Lands
  *Multi-Regional Greenway Project Update*

- Elmwood Park Zoo
  *Parking Lot Expansion*

- McMahon Associates
  *Traffic Impact Studies for TOD and Infill Development*

- Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority
  *Norristown Existing Conditions Report for Redevelopment Area*
  *Norristown Redevelopment Area Plan*

- Mullin & Lonergan Associates, Inc.
  *Norristown Existing Conditions Report for Redevelopment Area*
  *Norristown Redevelopment Area Plan*

- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
  *Walk Audits at Schools*

**LOWER MERION**

The Montgomery County Planning Commission Board, along with the three Montgomery County Commissioners, officials and staff from Lower Merion Township, other guests, and MCPC staff members, toured various locations in Lower Merion Township prior to the board’s regular monthly meeting in September. Visited sites included West Laurel Cemetery, One Ardmore Place, the Ardmore train station, Bala Avenue, the GSB Building, and Pencoyd Landing. They also viewed and discussed Danley Bryn Mawr and Bryn Mawr Hospital. The board’s annual tour is a great way for the members to see and hear about what is happening in our communities and to share information.
The Montgomery County Agricultural Land Preservation Board, generally referred to as the farm board, is a five-member board consisting of two active farmers, an elected municipal official, a builder, and a member-at-large. The board guides the county’s farmland preservation efforts by prioritizing farmland applications and working with staff and farmers to arrive at fair agriculture easement acquisition values. The farm board met nine times in 2018 and also held a day-long tour of prospective farms for preservation.

The Montgomery County Open Space Board consists of five members who have interest and experience in land preservation and natural resources protection. The board works with MCPC staff to identify suitable properties and greenways to be protected in the county and to guide trail development projects. It also assists in the promotion of conservation and trail use throughout the county. The board met three times in 2018.

2018 BOARD MEMBERS
Jonathan E. Rinde, Esq., Chair
John Corkum, Vice Chair
Brett Altman
Theodore F. Poatsy, Jr.
Stephen C. Quigley

2018 BOARD MEMBERS
Paul Meyer, Chair
Bruce D. Reed
Kimberly G. Sheppard
Robert A. Thomas
Mark J. Vasoli
The Montgomery County Transportation Authority was formed by the Montgomery County Commissioners to aid in the development of transportation improvement projects throughout the county. The nine-member authority addresses transportation improvement needs in the county by guiding projects such as the Lafayette Street Extension Program and the Ridge Pike Improvement Project. The authority, which met 12 times in 2018, will also assist in the acquisition of rights-of-way for future county trails.

“We appreciate all of our boards for their expertise and guidance throughout the year in achieving our shared vision for Montgomery County.”

— Jody L. Holton, AICP
MCPC Executive Director

2018 AUTHORITY MEMBERS

Scott Brown, Chair
Jeannette J. Quirus, P.E., Vice Chair
John R. Wichner, P.E., Secretary/Treasurer
Jeffrey D. Guzy, P.E.
John Kennedy
Tom Kohler
Steven R. Malagari
Allison Slizofski, P.E.
Charles Tabourn
PROMOTIONS

MCPC is fortunate to have some of the best and brightest staff members who work hard and are dedicated to their profession and the planning commission. In 2018, nine staff members were promoted: Marley Bice, Principal Planner I; Maggie Dobbs, Senior Planner; Eric Jarrell, Section Chief: Community Planning; Rita McKelvey, Principal Communications Manager; Chloe Mohr, Community Planner II; Brian Olszak, Senior Planner; Matthew Popek, Senior Transportation Planner; Henry Stroud, Principal Planner II; and Troy Woodyard, Principal Graphic Designer. Congratulations everyone, and thank you for all of your excellent work!

“Our staff is constantly looking to the future to develop resources for the benefit of the 62 municipalities in our county. Their hard work is only eclipsed by their dedication, and the board is honored to be a part of the process.”

— Steven Kline, MCPC Board Chair
NEW STAFF MEMBERS

In 2018, we welcomed the following talented professionals to our staff: Andrew Besold, Transportation Planner II; Jason Emmel, GIS Coordinator; Ellis Foley, Environmental Planner II; and Tamar Nativ, Urban Design Planner. Andrew, an avid cyclist, is working on issues related to walking, biking, and transit in Montgomery County. Jason, who had already been employed by Montgomery County, joined our staff to assist in the revamping of our countywide GIS system and work on GIS planning projects. Ellis is working on issues related to water-wastewater, stormwater/green infrastructure, and environmental protection in the county. Tamar brings her experience in designing within the built environment and her enthusiasm of walkable streets and thriving public spaces to our commission. They are all superb additions to our staff!

STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MAGGIE DOBBS EARN AICP CERTIFICATION

Congratulations to Maggie Dobbs, Senior Planner, who earned AICP certification! The American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) is the American Planning Association’s professional institute. Planners with this certification are recognized for their education, experience, knowledge, ethical practice, and commitment to the planning profession. As part of this certification, planners keep current in their profession by continuously pursuing advanced professional education.

MATTHEW POPEK RECEIVES AWARD

Congratulations to Matt Popek, Senior Transportation Planner, who received a Top TDM Professionals under 40 Award from GVF in May 2018. According to the GVF website, the award is “presented to ambitious leaders in our industry who are working to find creative solutions to improve our quality of life through engineering, planning, marketing campaigns, and the development of commuting alternative programs that are shifting behavioral change.”

DANIELLE DOBISCH RECEIVES LEGISLATIVE CITATION

Danielle Dobisch, Farmland Preservation Administrator, received a legislative citation for taking part in the Pennsylvania Rural-Urban Leadership Program (RULE). This transformative two-year leadership development course, based at The Pennsylvania State University, Penn State Extension, encourages and fosters the development of community leaders in Pennsylvania. It explores public issue engagement, interorganizational networking, effective public decision making, strategic design, and sustainable relationships. Kudos Danielle!

RON FEICK RETIRES AFTER 33 YEARS AT COUNTY

Our staff wishes Ron Feick, GIS Coordinator, a very happy and healthy retirement. Ron dedicated 33 years of service to Montgomery County. He was part of the Geographic Information Systems section of MCPC. In this role, Ron expertly used his skills and experience to work on a variety of GIS projects, including the county’s interactive web gallery. We wish Ron the very best in his retirement and sincerely thank him for all of his good work at MCPC.
APA PA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Eric Jarrell, Section Chief: Community Planning; Pattie Guttenplan, Section Chief: Design Planning & Graphic Design; and Crystal Gilchrist, Principal Multimodal Transportation Planner attended the APA PA Annual Conference in Erie this fall. The conference offered planners many opportunities to learn and share information on planning concepts and tools that are enhancing communities. Pattie participated in the conference program by presenting a session on innovations in land use controls. Our staff members met up with Michael Stokes, who received a 2018 Award for Leaders for Distinguished Service.

MICHAEL STOKES RETIRES AFTER THREE DECADES AT MCPC

Early in 2018 we wished our colleague and friend, Michael Stokes, a fond farewell and sincere congratulations on his retirement from MCPC. Mike, who was MCPC Assistant Director, dedicated nearly 34 years of exceptional service to Montgomery County and established a remarkable history of outstanding achievements and contributions to the county and its citizens. At MCPC, he set a standard of professionalism few could match but all could admire. His limitless capacity for hard work, combined with his intellectual curiosity, made him the go-to in-house expert on all types of projects, plans, and studies and on topics including recycling, stormwater management, open space preservation, hazard mitigation, trail planning, household hazardous waste collection, and many others.

We enjoyed celebrating Mike’s retirement in several ways. The MCPC Board presented him with a resolution of appreciation, our staff presented a cake to him at his very last staff meeting, and we had a fun retirement happy hour celebration, which was attended by over 75 friends, family members, and colleagues. We presented Mike with gifts including a $200 donation to the George Washington Carver Community Center in Norristown and a bronze dedication plaque, which has been placed on the Schuylkill River Tow Path over the spillway in Port Providence. We wish Mike great happiness, good health, and much success in his new ventures!
2018 MCPC STAFF

Our staff is divided into functional areas including county and GIS, community, environmental, open space, transportation, design and graphics, communications, and administrative services. Though organized into sections, we work collaboratively to achieve results that benefit the county.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jody L. Holton, AICP

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS
John S. Cover, AICP
Michael M. Stokes, AICP**

ADMINISTRATION
Robin L. McLean – Administrator
Karina Caddick – Assistant Administrator
Denise VanBuskirk – Administrative/Executive Assistant

COMMUNICATIONS
Rita M. McKelvey – Principal Communications Manager*
Troy Woodyard – Principal Graphic Designer*

COMMUNITY PLANNING
R. Eric Jarrell – Section Chief*
Michael Narcowich, AICP – Principal Planner II
Marley Bice, AICP – Principal Planner*
Margaret Dobbs – Senior Planner*
Brian Olszak – Senior Planner*
Jamie Magaziner – Planner II
Lauren Van Dyk – Planner**
Chloe Mohr – Planner II*
Julia Detwiler – Planner
Jackson Byerly – Planner

COUNTY PLANNING & GIS
Scott France, AICP – Section Chief
Anne Leavitt-Gruberger, AICP – Assistant Section Chief
Robert S. Cartier – GIS Coordinator
Danielle Dobisch – Farmland Preservation Administrator
Jason Emmel – GIS Coordinator***
Ron Feick – GIS Coordinator**
Daniel Farina, Jr. – Planner II
William J. McLay – Senior GIS/Computer System Coordinator
Steve Zbyszinski – Planning Technician

DESIGN PLANNING & GRAPHIC DESIGN
Pattie E.B. Guttenplan, RLA, AICP – Section Chief
Kevin J. Chavous – Planner
Juliana M. Guarna – Principal Graphic Designer
Barry W. Jeffries – Senior Planner
Tamar Nativ – Urban Design Planner***
Anastasia Somers – Principal Graphic Designer II

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING
Drew Shaw, AICP – Section Chief
Donna Caramenico – Recycling Associate
Ellis Foley – Planner II***
Veronica Harris – Recycling Coordinator
Jon A. Lesher – Principal Planner

TRAILS & OPEN SPACE PLANNING
Donna Fabry – Senior Open Space Planner
Shane Greenburg – Open Space Planner
Henry Stroud – Principal Planner II*

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
Matthew J. Edmond, AICP – Section Chief
Andrew Besold – Planner II***
Crystal Gilchrist, AICP – Principal Multimodal Transportation Planner
Matthew Popek – Senior Planner*

* Promoted in 2018
** Resigned/retired in 2018
*** Hired 2018
2018 Montgomery County Planning Commission Board

Steven Kline, Chair
Dulcie F. Flaharty, Vice Chair
Robert E. Blue, Jr., P.E., P.L.S.
Jill Blumhardt
David L. Cohen, AICP
John J. Ernst, AIA
Scott Exley
Charles J. Tornetta
Rev. John H. West, III
Jody L. Holton, AICP, Executive Director

2018 Montgomery County Board of Commissioners

Valerie A. Arkoosh, MD, MPH, Chair
Kenneth E. Lawrence, Jr., Vice Chair
Joseph C. Gale, Commissioner

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