2018 IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

MONTCO 2040: A SHARED VISION

From Vision to Reality
Montco 2040, the comprehensive plan for Montgomery County, was adopted in January 2015 as a working document. This report is an update on implementation actions. It highlights major achievements in implementing the plan that took place in 2017, and provides a number of implementation actions that will take place in 2018. Many goals have been, and will be implemented directly by the county, but many are implemented by the county’s partners, such as local municipalities, PennDOT, the Turnpike Commission, SEPTA, and other government agencies, nonprofit partners, and private developers.
Montco 2040: A Shared Vision is designed around three interrelated themes.

**Connected Communities**
People want to be connected and part of a broader community. A key role for the county is to help these connections occur beyond local municipal boundaries.

**Sustainable Places**
The county is full of wonderful neighborhoods and communities. These places need to be sustained and enhanced in a long-lasting and effective way.

**Vibrant Economy**
A strong economy is critical for all places. With a vibrant economy, residents can earn and spend more, governments can make needed infrastructure improvements, and businesses can grow.
Connected Communities

**GOAL** Encourage collaboration and partnerships among governments, businesses, institutions, schools, higher education, and other stakeholders

**2017 ACHIEVEMENTS**
- Completed 6 school district enrollment projection studies.
- Maintained 34 municipal planning and 4 regional planning contracts.
- Supported the MAHN, the county’s anti-hunger network, which provides coordinated food storage and delivery to food pantries and safety net providers.
- Completed year two of the Montco 2040 Implementation Grant program, with funding to 13 local projects. Five projects from the initial round of grants are complete including a mural in Schwenksville and a green parking lot in Conshohocken’s Sutcliffe Park.

**2018 IMPLEMENTATION**
- Complete the Multi-regional Greenway and Stewardship Study in cooperation with Natural Lands and 26 municipalities.
- Support the coordinated efforts of the county’s three human services collaboratives: Tri-County, Bucks-Mont, and the Interagency Council of Norristown.
- Work with the agencies of the MAHN to promote the resources of the county’s Community Connections office.
- Provide school district enrollment studies.
- Complete and start to implement the county’s GIS strategic plan.
- Assist municipalities with their planning, trail building, and transportation work.

**GOAL** Improve transportation quality and expand options for county residents and workers

**2017 ACHIEVEMENTS**
- SEPTA announced a $12 million capital improvement project at the Frontier Bus District depot in Plymouth Township, housing 99 buses serving 15,000 customers.
- PennDOT’s multimodal long range plan to enhance travel along I-76 is in the middle of engineering.
- Groundbreaking for the third and final phase of the Lafayette Street project took place.
- Outreach on pedestrian and bike safety by the county’s Health and Human Services Department continues with three new Safe Routes to School committees.

**2018 IMPLEMENTATION**
- Begin construction of Phase 3 of the Lafayette Street project in downtown Norristown.
- Adopt the TIP update to advance projects of regional importance that will reduce congestion and improve safety.
- Complete the update of the county’s bicycle plan, Bike Montco.
- Advocate for a complete streets policy on county roads and begin to explore a countywide vision zero policy as part of the bicycle plan implementation.
- Zagster, the county’s bike sharing program, will continue to expand at places like the Norristown Farm Park.
- The redesign of the Ridge Pike Improvement Project in Whitemarsh, Springfield, and Plymouth is ongoing.
**2017 IMPLEMENTATION**

**GOAL** Expand and connect county trails, local trails, greenways, natural areas, and parks

**2017 ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Advanced the Chester Valley Trail Extension through preliminary engineering.
- Repaved approximately 2 miles of the Schuylkill River Trail from Port Indian to Norristown with almost 1 mile being widened to the 12-foot desirable federal standard.
- Design of the Wissahickon and Cross County Trails through Erdenheim Farm is 90% complete.
- Completed the first phase of construction for the Schuylkill River Trail - Pottstown.
- Began design for Pennypack Trail Extension - Byberry Road to County Line Road.
- Secured grant funding from DVRPC for design of the Trail Junction Center in Norristown and for additional feasibility work on the Wissahickon Trail to Philadelphia’s Forbidden Drive.
- Upper Dublin Township began construction of a portion of the Cross County Trail through the Fort Washington office park.
- Expanded parking for Pennypack Trail at Byberry Road.

**2018 IMPLEMENTATION**

- Finalize Chester Valley Trail Extension design.
- Begin construction of Phase 1 of the Wissahickon and Cross County Trails through Erdenheim Farm.
- Begin design for the Cross County Trail from Germantown Pike to Erdenheim Farm in Plymouth and Whitemarsh Townships.
- Complete design for Phase 2 of the Schuylkill River Trail in Pottstown to the new Route 422 bridge over the Schuylkill River.

**GOAL** Support strong downtowns and community destinations, including mixed use areas, arts and culture focal points, libraries, and other gathering places

**2017 ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Upper Dublin Township purchased a new library and community facility in the Fort Washington office park, strengthening this area as a core part of the community.
- Many of our downtowns pursued improvement projects: a new pocket park with DCNR grant backing in Ambler, a new roof for the Speakers House in Trappe, wayfinding signs in Elkins Park, a mural in Schwenksville, and grant funding to restore Souderton’s train station.
- Funded senior center upgrades, including a new senior center in Pottstown and parking lot improvements for Souderton’s Generations center.
- The county’s planning commission presented three webinars on walkability, aimed at providing education to municipal officials on how walkability can be incorporated into planning decisions.
- Pop-ups, including beer gardens, craft markets, food trucks, movie screenings, and concerts, are enlivening many of our local downtowns. The planning commission toured the Village at Valley Forge, giving staff and others the chance to see this new mixed use development.

**2018 IMPLEMENTATION**

- Emphasize and award projects that support downtowns and community destinations through the Montco 2040 Implementation Grant Program.
- Lower Merion Township is continuing its library upgrades and will complete renovations to its Belmont Hills branch.
**GOAL** Support a modern, resilient, green, and energy-efficient infrastructure network

**2017 ACHIEVEMENTS**
- Thirteen new bridge improvement projects were approved to move forward in September 2017. Ten of these projects are funded through the $5 vehicle registration fee, approved in 2016. Information on all active county bridge projects is publicly available online.
- The regional Green Light Go funding program provided more than $5 million to 13 municipalities to upgrade outdated and energy inefficient traffic signals.
- Promoted alternative energy uses, such as this past year’s electric car event on the courthouse plaza.
- The county sponsored 6 hazardous waste events in addition to 2 tire collection and 3 paper shredding events, all actions outlined in the county’s municipal waste management plan.
- Pottstown’s sustainability plan was completed.

**2018 IMPLEMENTATION**
- Design, rehabilitate or replace more county-owned bridges.
- A new (for 2018) Montco 2040 Implementation Grant focus area was created for climate change adaptation and resiliency projects.
- Assist municipalities with sustainability and/or renewable energy planning and zoning.
- Maintain contract to shred and compost county documents and sponsor hazardous waste collection events.
- Pursue a location for a permanent county household hazardous waste dropoff site.
- Update the sewage facilities database.

**GOAL** Improve stormwater management and reduce the impact of flooding

**2017 ACHIEVEMENTS**
- 13 municipalities and 4 sewage treatment plants, along with the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, consultants, and providers of legal and technical services, continue to work together to implement the alternative TMDL plan in the Wissahickon watershed.
- The county continues to implement its MS4 permit.
- Stormwater management was addressed with green parking lot improvements and best management practices at the county’s Youth Center, the Peter Wentz Farmstead, and Conshohocken’s Sutcliffe Park.

**2018 IMPLEMENTATION**
- Continue to investigate the feasibility of a county-wide stormwater management plan.
- Promote stormwater best management practices in county facilities.
- Hold event to promote best practices in stormwater management.
- Assist local municipalities in obtaining hazard mitigation grant funding to reduce flood vulnerability.
GOAL  Conserve natural resources, environmentally-sensitive areas, and farmland

2017 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Sunrise Mill barn restoration and new roof completed by Public Property staff.
- Norristown Farm Park received new eco-friendly restrooms.
- Constructed a new rentable pavilion at the Hill Road Day Use Area in Green Lane Park.
- Broke ground on a new visitors center at the John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove.
- Preserved 3 farms under the county’s Farmland Preservation Program. The county has preserved more than 9,300 acres of farmland, leveraging additional county funds to make offers to 7 new farms.

2018 IMPLEMENTATION

- Create a long-term maintenance plan for Lock 60 and this unique canal stretch.
- Complete a park master plan for the Peter Wentz farmstead.
- Improve access to Sunrise Mill and start feasibility plan to open the park in a phased approach with a trail.
- Add eco-friendly restrooms to Green Lane Park.
- Enhance visitor experiences along the Perkiomen and Schuylkill River Trails with major repaving improvements.
- Preserve additional farms with the cooperation of local municipalities, along with strong county and state support.
- Grow outreach and education on the ongoing threat of spotted lanternfly.

GOAL  Provide more opportunities for residents to exercise and have healthy lifestyles

2017 ACHIEVEMENTS

- The county renewed and gave residents more time to take its trail challenge, a friendly competition to discover the county’s trails. More than 1,500 people have already participated.
- New recreation facilities are being built and renovated: Norristown purchased the GNPAL building to create a municipal recreation center and the Hatboro-Horsham YMCA announced plans to build a new facility in Upper Moreland.
- New prescription drug take-back programs were started at several senior housing facilities in partnership with the Housing Authority.
- After going smoke-free in 2016, the county’s Housing Authority has implemented aggressive smoking cessation programs and supports the ongoing health improvements of its residents.
- New web resources were launched to assist the county’s fight against opioid addiction: smart911.com and Geostory.

2018 IMPLEMENTATION

- Connect county farmers with local restaurants, breweries, and consumers.
- Expand overdose tracking, predictive analysis, and mapping capability.
- Expand efforts to supply Naloxone to local first responders. As of 2017, all local police departments were carrying Naloxone.
- Construct a welcome center at the Human Services Center to coordinate the delivery of services in an easy-to-find location on the first floor of the building.
- Distribute food from local farms to older or disabled adults living in Housing Authority homes while providing nutritional, cooking, and food preservation training.
GOAL  Support housing choices and opportunities to meet the needs of all people

2017 ACHIEVEMENTS
- Adopted the Housing Action Plan for the county.
- Renovations at Crest Manor are nearly complete. Six additional units were added during the renovations; all units have been removed from the floodplain.
- A housing eviction prevention initiative was started with the Montgomery County Bar Association. Pro-bono legal services are available for tenants at risk of losing their homes, with additional funding available for related expenses.
- Supported good residential design with new townhouse design guidelines and a robust event to launch the publication.
- The county’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund awarded $1.2 million to various affordable housing programs and projects, including the county’s First Time Homebuyers Program.

2018 IMPLEMENTATION
- Implement Your Way Home, which has led to a drop in the county’s homeless population by focusing on rapid rehousing.
- Finish renovations at North Hills Manor, with a shift from a rowhouse format to one primarily of twins. Several units will be fully ADA-accessible.
- Support community development and affordable housing initiatives.

GOAL  Enhance community character and protect neighborhoods

2017 ACHIEVEMENTS
- The county’s draft hazard mitigation plan was published after a collaborative process with our various emergency services providers and two public meetings held in late 2017.
- More than $4 million in CDBG funds were awarded.
- Worked to update local zoning codes, such as in Cheltenham and Abington Townships, to better support context-sensitive and appropriate development and land use needs.
- Supported Park(ing) Day with pop-up open spaces in Norristown and Narberth, which highlighted the importance of green space in our downtowns.
- Added the iconic Washington Memorial Chapel, in Valley Forge National Historical Park, to the National Register of Historic Places.

2018 IMPLEMENTATION
- Receive approval for the hazard mitigation plan, followed by adoption by each of the county’s 62 municipalities.
- Complete the new public safety radio system in the first half of 2018, providing enhanced coverage and capacity to law enforcement, fire and emergency management agencies.
- Complete four studies, funded by the Department of Public Safety, that will assist municipalities with their public safety responsibilities related to fire services staffing & deployment, hazardous materials response, a disaster mass care plan, and a disaster debris management study & plan.
- Activate the county’s first Law Enforcement Records Management System to enhance criminal justice information sharing, intelligence, crime mapping, and prosecution capacity.
**GOAL** Improve transportation access to businesses

**2017 ACHIEVEMENTS**

- PennDOT continues construction to replace and widen the US 422 bridge over the Schuylkill River.
- The US 422 interchange at Stowe is under construction.
- The PA Turnpike was widened from the Mid-County Interchange to Lansdale along the Northeast Extension.
- Various transportation projects were awarded multimodal and RACP funds this year, including a project along Abington’s Susquehanna Avenue and at Ardmore’s SEPTA regional rail station.
- Norristown received funding from the county’s Local Share Account to proceed with riverfront gateway planning.
- Lansdale’s new SEPTA station garage opened in April, paving the way to transit-oriented development that broke ground in November.

**2018 IMPLEMENTATION**

- Advocate for improved turnpike interchanges per the recommendations of the Turnpike Corridor Reinvestment Study and its 2017 update.
- Work with SEPTA to approve the locally preferred alternative for the Norristown High Speed Line extension to King of Prussia.
- Support enhancements to public transportation projects that improve quality of life and the attractiveness of communities to business and the workforce looking to locate here, such as the current projects at Willow Grove, Noble, Philmont and Conshohocken stations.
- A Pennsylvania Turnpike zip ramp is being constructed in Upper Dublin to secure direct access into the Fort Washington Business Park.

**GOAL** Encourage development and transformative investment where infrastructure already exists

**2017 ACHIEVEMENTS**

- SEI, a major county employer, announced an expansion at its current campus that will double its size.
- Glaxo Smith Kline is investing $245 million at its Upper Providence hub.
- The former Rohm & Haas site in Lower Gwynedd was repurposed as the Spring House Innovation Park.
- The county created a new online inventory of business parks to assist with business location searches.
- The county continued targeted site visits and marketing of once-industrial properties to new-age manufacturers with similar infrastructure requirements.
- The county’s Redevelopment Authority facilitated various EPA Brownfields grants and loans for assessment and cleanup activities.
- Horsham adopted new mixed use zoning standards for its business park.

**2018 IMPLEMENTATION**

- The county’s Planning Commission and Commerce Department are teaming up to hold a “Future of Manufacturing” event in October 2018.
- Develop opportunities to further leverage investments in infrastructure with economic and workforce development programming.
GOAL Attract and retain businesses and vital community assets

2017 ACHIEVEMENTS

✔ Facilitated over thirty site selection visits to prospective businesses, both domestically and internationally.
✔ Organized multiple regional stakeholder meetings, bringing together representatives from municipal, county, state, legislative, chambers of commerce, non-profit, and private sector industries.
✔ Coordinated County Commissioner tours of businesses, showing support and appreciation to our large and small employers.
✔ Three LERTA (Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance) applications were approved: for Norristown’s 50-unit Montgomery Park senior housing complex and the second for Stoveworks, a 85-unit apartment building in Hatboro. Lower Moreland LERTA District along Philmont Avenue was approved.

2018 IMPLEMENTATION

■ Maintain and cultivate strategic partnerships between business stakeholders.
■ Integrate and promote economic and workforce development assistance into a seamless project-based model.

GOAL Flexibly adapt to changing market conditions and demographics

2017 ACHIEVEMENTS

✔ Montgomery County Development Corporation (MCDC) launched a new “Seminar Series” to educate business owners on topics such as healthcare reform, business succession planning, cybersecurity, and tax policies.
✔ DVRPC adopted its Connections 2045 Long Range Plan for Greater Philadelphia, with outreach sessions and a future forces study to determine a vision for the region.
✔ Transformative job center-based projects continue to attract millennial workers to the county, such as the new linear park along King of Prussia’s First Avenue.
✔ Retail continues to adapt to changing needs, with transformative projects in Jenkintown, the proposed Kimberton Whole Foods in Collegeville, and two Suburban Square projects (the rehabilitation of the former Macy’s and the new adjacent parking garage).

2018 IMPLEMENTATION

■ Continue attracting new residents, workers, and businesses to our suburban centers.
■ Promote new transit-oriented development, like the projects proposed in Bala and Fort Washington.
■ Develop data tools and analysis capacity to keep stakeholders informed about how local and global events impact the county’s economy.
■ Educate the public and private sector on economic and workforce development initiatives available through the Commerce Department and its branches: MCDC, Montcoworks, Industrial Development Authority (IDA), and the Redevelopment Authority.

GOAL Facilitate the marketing of the county and its assets

2017 ACHIEVEMENTS

✔ Major events and destinations continue to draw visitors to Montgomery County. This year brought LEGOLAND Discovery Center to the Plymouth Meeting Mall, the only indoor LEGO-themed playspace in the region.
✔ The Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board continued to broaden its appeal with its new initiative, Arts Montco, and outreach to bring in more events like Cirque de Soleil to the county.
✔ The Upper Perkiomen region’s wayfinding signs tied to its Perk Up campaign began installation this year.

2018 IMPLEMENTATION

■ A new station in Pottstown’s Memorial Park is proposed for the popular Colebrookdale Railroad.
■ Work with the VFTCB to promote the county’s regional sports facilities.
2040 VISION

Land Use Vision

The land use vision will be implemented by:

- Updating the comprehensive plan land use maps based on updated 2015 aerial photography.
- Continuing to assist 15 to 20 municipalities in zoning and/or comprehensive plans through the community planning assistance program.
- Partnering with municipalities along the Turnpike Corridor to promote redevelopment around existing and future interchanges.
- Administering Year 3 of the Montco 2040 grant program.

Transportation Vision

The transportation vision will be implemented by:

- Undertaking US 202 reconstruction from Elm Street to Main Street in Norristown.
- Undertaking US 202 reconstruction in Whitpain Township from Township Line Road to Morris Road.
- Continuing reconstruction and widening of the I-476 Northeast Extension.
- Continuing construction of the Route 422 improvements around Pottstown and Valley Forge.
- Adding high level platforms at the Noble, Jenkintown, and Ardmore SEPTA stations.
- Beginning the final phase of the Lafayette Street Extension Project in downtown Norristown.
- Continuing the design of traffic management technology along I-76 and its parallel roads.
- Finishing the Schwenksville bypass at Plank, Ott, Meyers, and Seitz Roads in the Central Perkiomen.
- Starting a new transportation grant program for the county to partner with municipalities on needed improvements.

94 percent of residential development and 99 percent of nonresidential development was built in our growth areas in 2016.
More details about upcoming initiatives can be found at county department websites and the websites of the county’s partners.

Aging and Adult Services

Assets and Infrastructure – Office of Parks, Trails and Historic Sites

Assets and Infrastructure – Office of Roads and Bridges

Commerce

Conservation District
http://montgomeryconservation.org/

Health Department

Housing Authority
http://www.montcoha.org/

Housing and Community Development

Montgomery County Planning Commission

PennDOT
http://www.dot.state.pa.us/

Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission
http://www.paturnpike.com/

Public Safety

SEPTA
http://www.septa.org/

Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board
http://www.valleyforge.org/

To learn more about the county comprehensive plan and its implementation, go to –

www.montcopa.org/Montco2040.