Problematic and inappropriate development can be built if there are weak regulations.

- Doesn’t match community character
- Lacks amenities and landscaping
- Doesn’t foster walking
- Creates traffic problems
Good regulations will encourage better development.

- Adds to community character
- Walkable, even if car-oriented
- Provides amenities and landscaping
- Limited traffic impact
The Planning Commission’s 16 model ordinances fall into four broad categories:

- Residential Use and Design
- Open Space Preservation
- Environmental Protection
- Mixed Use and Commercial Design
Residential Use and Design

Most residential development in the county is well designed, although certain problems often crop up, including:

• Developments that appear overcrowded
• Unaffordable housing
• Limited housing choices
• Lack of usable and accessible open space
• Dominance of cars and garages along streets

Paved front yard
Detention basin open space
Unaffordable
The small-lot single-family detached model ordinance, called the Neighborhood Residential District, includes the following:

- 10% open space with central greens
- 10,000 square foot lots
- Extra-wide lots
- 2.5 homes per acre
- Garages to rear, side, or set back from front

Garage doesn’t dominate street

Usable, central open space
Mixed Residential

The mixed residential model ordinance, called the Village Residential District, includes the following:

- Singles, twins, townhouses, and apartments are allowed
- Mix of housing required on properties five acres or larger
- Parking is generally to side or rear of homes
- 5 homes per acre
- 20% open space with 10% as central open space
Accessory Homes

The county’s *Promoting Workforce Housing* series has standards for *accessory dwellings* - “mother-in-law suites” - on single-family lots:

- Accessory dwellings must meet all setback and coverage regulations
- Accessory units can be no more than 40% of the size of main home
- Units must be buffered from abutting homes
- Accessory units may not be sold separately

Accessory home in converted garage
Workforce Housing

The *Promoting Workforce Housing* series also includes a model ordinance for requiring more affordable housing:

- 15% of the units in developments with 15 or more homes must be affordable to the region’s median income
- Density bonus for providing this housing
- Units must be affordable in perpetuity
- Dwelling must look like normal homes

Ardmore development that includes affordable units
Open Space Preservation

Zoning can be used as a tool to preserve open space. Without good zoning regulations, municipalities will often have:

- Sprawling development with no open space
- Low priority open space areas
- Open space that is only buffers, ditches, and detention basins
- Fewer scenic views

Sprawling development - Less important open space - Blocked scenic views
Land Preservation District

This cluster ordinance for rural areas preserves significant open space and includes:

• 75% open space
• 15,000 square foot single-family detached lots
• One home per 2 developable acres
• Central or public sewers and water

Normal Development

Land Preservation Development
Rural Residential District

This zoning preserves key scenic, historic, and environmental areas and includes:

- Home placement that preserves most important site features
- 30,000 square foot lots
- One home per 2 developable acres
- Possibility of on-site sewer and water

Normal Development  
Rural Residential Development
Transfer of Development Rights

This unique **zoning** transfers development from a preservation part of a community to a growth area.

- This is a market driven process
- New development in growth area must meet zoning standards
- Normally, residential development is transferred
Environmental protection is a critical aspect of zoning and subdivision ordinances. Without it, many problems can occur, such as:

- Erosion and flooding
- Indiscriminate destruction of woodlands and natural areas
- Inappropriate and ineffective landscaping
- Poorly designed streets and other public facilities
Floodplain Protection

The county’s model regulations meet federal FEMA standards as well as unique local conditions:

- Floodplains include the 100-year floodplain plus local soils subject to flooding
- Buildings and most development are prohibited in the floodplain
- Buildings given a variance to be in the floodplain must be floodproofed
Riparian Corridor Conservation

This overlay *zoning* protects wooded buffers along streambanks:

- Applies to all streams with drainage area of 75 acres or more
- No disturbance within 25 feet of streambank
- Limited disturbance, such as sewer lines and accessory buildings, is allowed from 25 feet to 75 feet of streambank
Landscaping

These regulations, which are normally part of a subdivision and land development ordinance, encourage appropriate landscaping and greening:

• Extensive buffering and screening standards
• Tree replacement requirements
• Parking lot landscaping regulations

Buffer for a Store in Narberth
Subdivision and Land Development

These extensive and up-to-date standards regulate all aspects of subdivisions and land developments:

• Street, sidewalk, and parking lot design
• Land disturbance and natural features protection
• Best management stormwater control
Mixed use development in the county is relatively rare, although it is common in other parts of the country. The quality of the county’s commercial development often seems lower than that found in nearby counties and other parts of the country. Common problems include:

- Poor driveway design and access control
- Inadequate landscaping and buffering
- Incompatible building design with neighboring properties
- Hazardous walking environment

Uncontrolled access

Clashing building style

Poor landscaping
These standards are designed for small scale offices in residential areas near busy roads and retail centers.

- Single-family homes allowed by right
- Offices allowed as conditional use
- On smaller lots, offices must be in existing homes
- On larger lots, new offices allowed if residentially compatible
- Driveways for offices must be shared and interconnected
This commercial ordinance provides regulations for standard car-oriented development.

- Wide range of commercial uses
- Controlled driveway access and interconnected parking lots
- Good landscaping and extensive buffers
- Public plazas and other amenities for large shopping centers

Design Requirements for Pedestrians
This **zoning** is designed for traditional, historic downtowns and town centers.

- Range of permitted uses, but not auto oriented ones or ground-floor apartments
- New buildings must be built to sidewalk and two or more stories high
- Front facades must match historic character
- Unique streetscaping and greening point system is included
Village Mixed Use

These regulations apply to both older historic villages and large open tracts where a walkable, mixed-use character is desired.

- Variety of permitted residential and commercial uses
- Full mix of uses required on larger tracts
- Small-scale, village-style buildings close to street
- Central greens must be at least 10% of site
- Historic buildings must be preserved

Village Home

Village Stores
New Town Mixed Use

This mixed use ordinance is designed for places where compact, walkable, mixed use development is appropriate, such as near train stations, historic downtowns, old shopping centers, and underutilized industrial land.

- Mix of uses required on larger tracts
- Walkable building design
- Compact development with FAR of 1.5 and height of 6 stories
- Parking garages and parking lots are hidden from view
- Central plazas and open space

Rockville Town Square
Princeton, New Jersey
The county’s 16 model ordinances provide guidance for improving the quality of new development. These models can be accessed online at:

www.planning.montcopa.org/ModelOrdinances
In addition to our model ordinances, the county also has many other helpful resources. Two of these are:

**Alternative Energy Sources Series**
- Small-Scale Solar Energy Systems
- Small Wind Turbines
- Geothermal
- Outdoor Hydronic Heaters
- Energy Conservation Site and Building Design

**Planning by Design Series**
- Green Streets
- Green Parking Lots
- Sustainable Paving
- Stormwater Bioswales, Drainage Swales, and Basins
- Traffic Calming Devices
- Pedestrian Amenities
- Cul-De-Sac Islands
- Woodland Edge Treatments
- Street Trees
For more information on the county Planning Commission’s many resources, go to:

www.planning.montcopa.org

My contact information is:

Brian O’Leary
Montgomery County Planning Commission
boleary@montcopa.org
610-278-3728