

# **Montgomery County Planning Commission**

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Maintaining and improving the County's quality  
of life

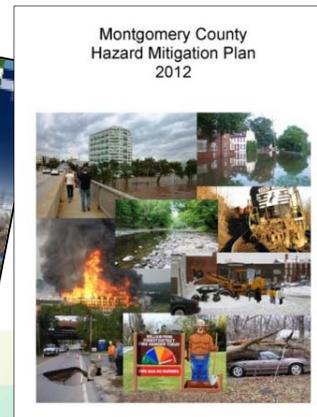
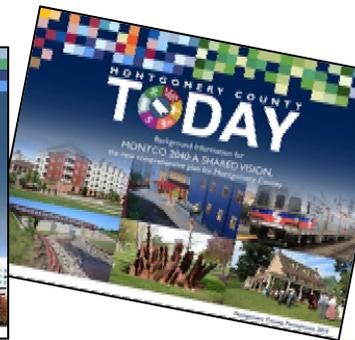
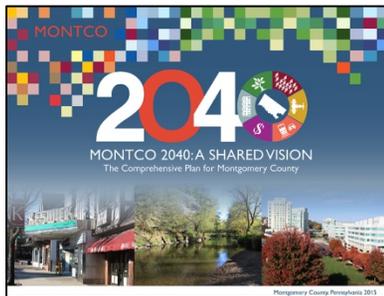
Lansdale Borough  
January 20, 2016

John Cover, AICP, Section Chief – Community Planning  
Mike Narcowich, AICP, Principal Community Planner  
Brian Olszak, Community Planner



# Create County Plans for a Better Future

- County Comprehensive Plan - Montco 2040
- Municipal Waste Plan
- Cultural Arts Plan - *Creative Montco*
- Stormwater Management Plans
- Hazard Mitigation Plan



# *Translate Plans in Action*

- Advancing transportation projects
- Environmental protection
- Model ordinances
- Design publications
- Trail development
- Staffing the Transportation Authority, Open Space Board and Agricultural Preservation Board



# Expand Planning Education

- Montco Planning Smarter 2015 – program of events
- Engage public through the website and social media
- Provide informative publications
- Montgomery Awards

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Montgomery County Planning Commission is on Facebook.

Montgomery County Planning Commission

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## PLANNING PERSPECTIVES

Focuses on Planning in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

Mar 2012 - Volume 19, Issue 1

### Median Home Prices Fall in 2011

The Montgomery County Median Price for Housing Report 2011 indicates that the median home sales price dropped 1.9 percent last year to \$200,000. The median housing price has now dropped in the same level as it was in 2005. Though housing prices had increased 1.7 percent in 2010, they have been dropping since 2007. All types of housing experienced housing price drops, with multi-unit housing declining the most. The drop in median housing prices was also widespread, occurring in 90 of the 62 municipalities.

The median price for new homes dropped 6.1 percent to \$323,540 in 2011. This is a continuation of the new housing price decline experienced since 2006. Part of this decline is a reflection of the fact that smaller and more attached multi-family housing is currently being developed.

The number of houses sold in 2011 dropped by 7.4 percent, continuing a decline in sales for the sixth straight year. Only 5,229 units were sold at a market rate level in 2011—the lowest total since at least 1999 and about half of the number of houses that were typically sold each year throughout the early part of the last decade.

### Meet Our Newest Board Members

Mark D. Beiss, Esquire is recently appointed chair of the Montgomery County Planning Commission Board. He is a shareholder of Leathers and Gray, P.C., attorneys at law, with offices in Blue Bell, Montgomery County, and Drexelton, Berks County. Mark is co-chair of the firm's real estate and land use group. Mark has served as trustee of the Albright Health Foundation for many years. He has been recognized by U.S. News as a "Best Lawyer" in land use and zoning law for the Philadelphia metropolitan area. Mark is a member of the Pennsylvania Montgomery Bar Association and chairs the Montgomery Bar Association Real Estate Committee. He is a resident of Blue Bell.

Jill Blumhardt is Senior II Project Manager at AMEC Environment & Infrastructure, Inc. (AMEC). She is Vice President of the Lower Merion Township Board of Commissioners. She is also a board member of the Pennsylvania Ecological Restoration Trust and is a board liaison to the Lower Merion Township Recreation Board and a member of the Township Valley Township Committee. Jill resides in Washington Valley/Lower Merion Township with her husband and their three children.

Reverend John H. West, III has been the Pastor of the Shalom Baptist Church of Norristown for over 10 years. During his tenure, there has been a significant increase in membership, community programs, and ministries. He has also served as a board member of Healing Homes, as a trustee of the Burdette School Committee of the Norristown Area School District, and as President of the Greater Norristown Area Ministers. Reverend West and his wife reside in East Norriton Township.

## TOWN CENTER NEWS

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

### RETAIL TRENDS... AND HOW THEY AFFECT YOUR DOWNTOWN SHOPPER

Recently the Urban Retail Institute's Robert Gibbs gave an intriguing talk at the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Breaking Ground conference. Much of what he said was very applicable to the county's traditional downtowns.

For example:

- Gibbs mentioned that the vast majority of retail spending takes place after the work day is over – yet he felt many downtown shop owners balk at staying open late. Having hours that are attractive to people who are coming and going from jobs with traditional hours may attract more spending.
- More online retailers are opening brick and mortar stores – or have pop up stores at back and corner locations. According to a survey of 1,000 online retail professionals conducted by eBay, about 72 percent said they thought online revenue would grow by 17 percent – but physical sales will also be part of that growth. Some 14 percent of the respondents said they will make their initial investments in the sector experience this year. Several online brands, such as trendy eyeglasses (everget Warby Parker, are opening their first brick-and-mortar operations after growing their brand online.
- Spending at restaurants and bars has eclipsed grocery spending for the first time, according to recently released U.S. Commerce Department data. According to Bloomberg Business, this is a hint at the dining trends that millennials effect deeply. That is to say, they are more willing to spend their food dollars away from the home (because eating and food have become very social events).

• In-store internet access is a game changer. Launching free custom Wi-Fi had the most significant positive impact on retail sales and loyalty of any technology initiative, according to a survey by IBM Group. People linger longer and may be more loyal shoppers – although in-store wireless access allows people to easily comparison shop for a lower price.

• Gibbs also spoke passionately about parking – and about keeping employee parking away from one's storefront. Creating metered (or at least restricted) parking in a business district is a way of promoting a revolving (parking) door for potential customers.

• Gibbs also mentioned that "time" (or perhaps, the absence of it) is the new luxury for young people. Technology that delivers a service – a car ride that shows up promptly or outside delivery of groceries, speaks to this. Giving shoppers convenience to save their time is an important consideration.

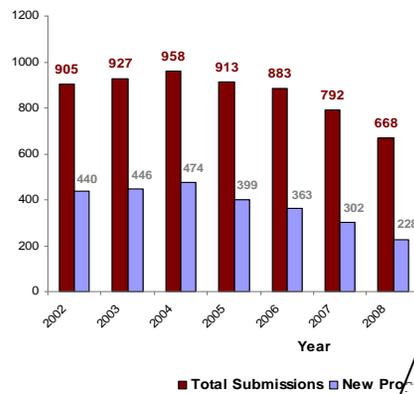
Free Wi-Fi for everyone. Now at Starbucks.

FREE PARKING

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

# Tracking County Trends

- Web-based data portal
- Various inventories and demographic reports published
- Economic and demographic forecasts
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)



# *Provide Community Planning Services*

- Contracts with 32 municipalities and 4 regions
- Prepare comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, special studies and design work
  - Walkability audits, Sustainability planning, Design guidelines, Form-based codes
- Provide planning guidance at municipal meetings
- Perform enrollment projections for school districts

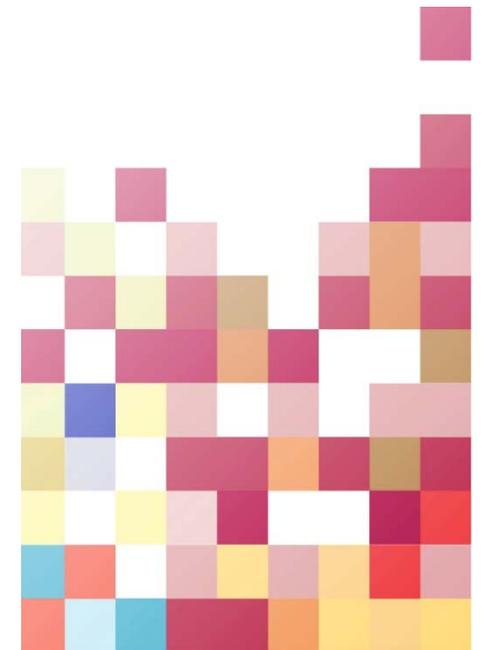
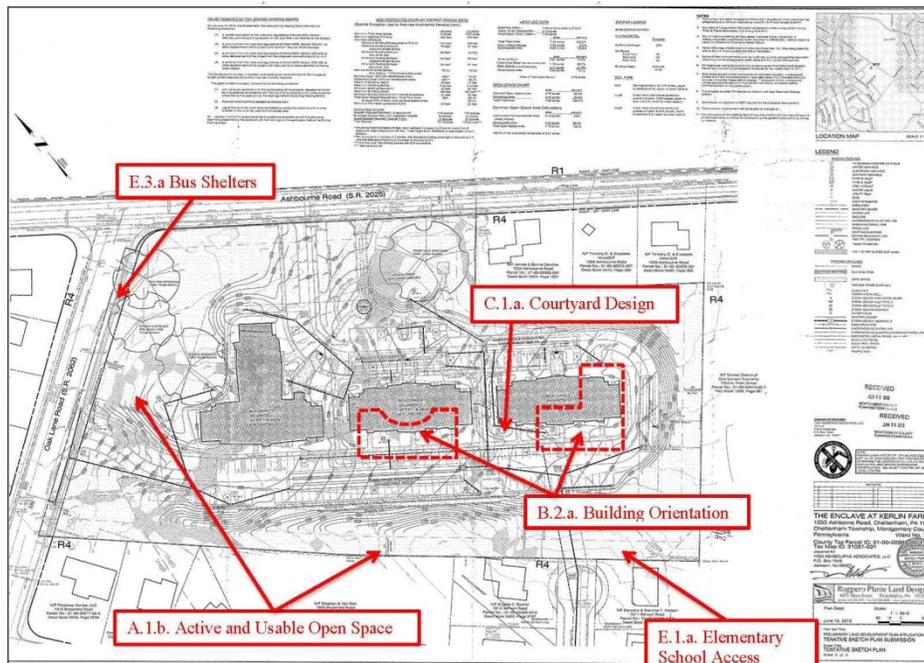


# Montgomery Awards



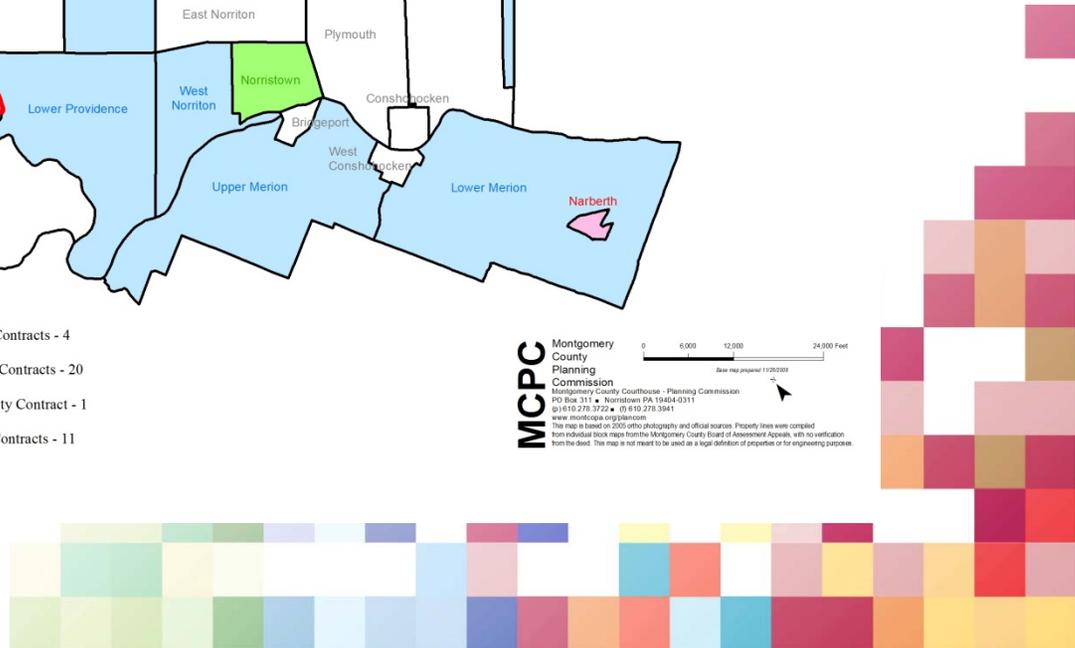
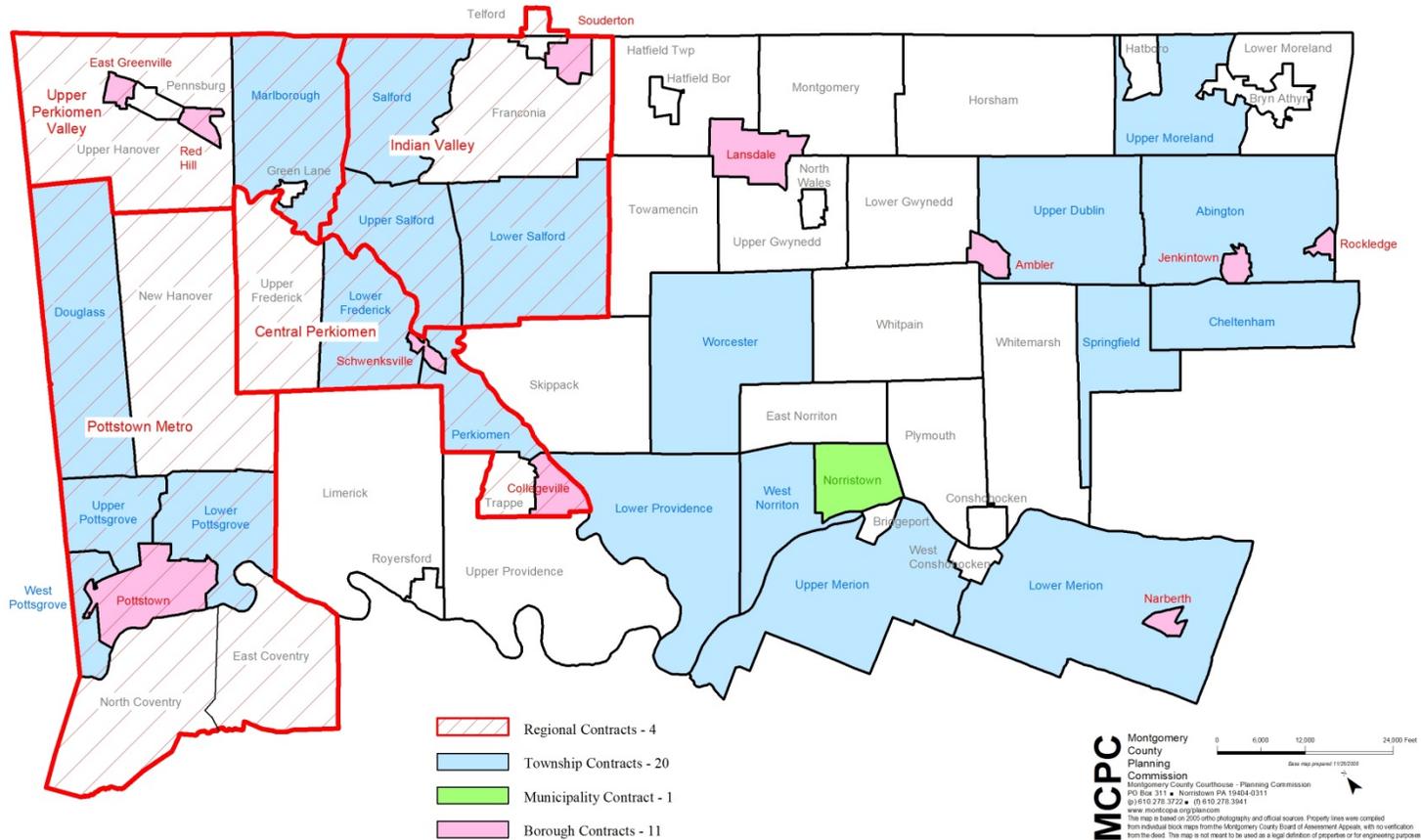
# Achieving Better Site Planning

- Review development submittals
  - subdivision or land developments
  - ordinance amendments
  - special reviews



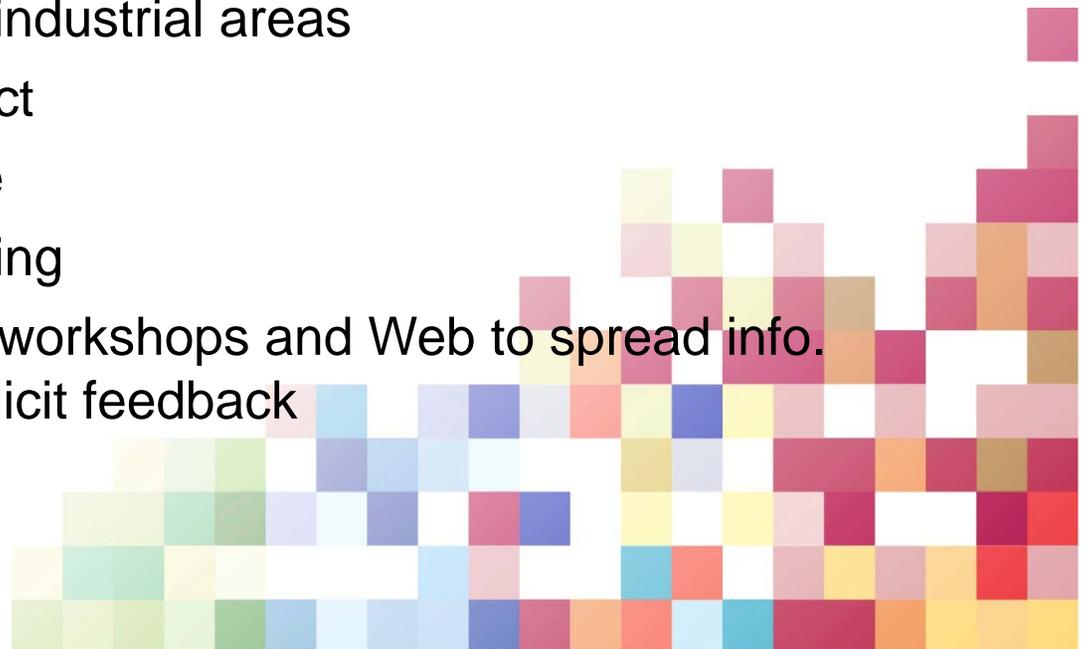
# Community Planning Assistance

Municipal and Regional Contracts January 2016



# *New Lansdale Comprehensive Plan*

- Comprehensive Plan
  - Task Force to be formed
  - Plan to incorporate recommendations of recent Borough plans and ensure consistency
  - Focus areas may include:
    - Revitalization of older industrial areas
    - Central business district
    - Shopping center reuse
    - Public health/active living
  - To maximize use of public workshops and Web to spread info. Plan(ning process) and solicit feedback



# (Lansdale Comprehensive Plan Timeline (draft))

Phases	Tasks	2016												2017				
		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	
Phase 1: Kickoff	Review Relevant Plans																	
	Establish Content, Format, Process																	
	Audit Existing Plan with Task Force																	
Phase 2: Analysis	Demographics and Population Projections																	
	Land Use Update																	
	Mapping																	
Phase 3: Goals	Community Vision & Preliminary Goals																	
	Issues & Goals Finalization																	
	Future Land Use																	
Chapter 4: Policies & Plan	Strategies & Policies																	
	Draft Narrative for Each Chapter																	
	Visualizations/Sketches																	
	Analyze Compatibility with Adjacent Plans																	
	Finalization of Draft Plan																	
	Public Comment Period																	
	Adoption																	



Public Workshop or Meeting



# Other MCPC Support– Lansdale

- County Community Revitalization Funding: Approx. **\$2 Million** for completed projects
  - Wood Street Realignment
  - Pedestrian Connections to Main Street
  - 9<sup>th</sup> Street RR Crossing & Drainage
  - Traffic Signal at Broad & Vine



# Other MCPC Support– Lansdale



- Open Space Funding: \$721,000.
  - Railroad Plaza
  - Schweiker Park
  - Stony Creek Park
  - Wissahickon Project
  - York Street Park



MONTCO

# 2040



MONTCO 2040: A SHARED VISION  
The Comprehensive Plan for Montgomery County





## THE NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY

This plan provides an overall growth management framework for local municipal plans, a list of actions for county government, and guidance on issues that transcend local boundaries, such as:

- Roadways
- Public Transportation
- Flooding
- Trails
- Growth Trends
- Economic Growth
- Impact of Large Developments
- Natural Systems
- Housing Needs
- Shopping Needs
- Redevelopment Trends



# THE NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY

**The Plan has two major components:**

- *Montgomery County Today* – this element includes an overview of existing conditions, trends, forecasts, and issues.
- *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision* – this element includes a vision for the county, goals, themes, recommendations, and an implementation strategy.



THE NEW  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY

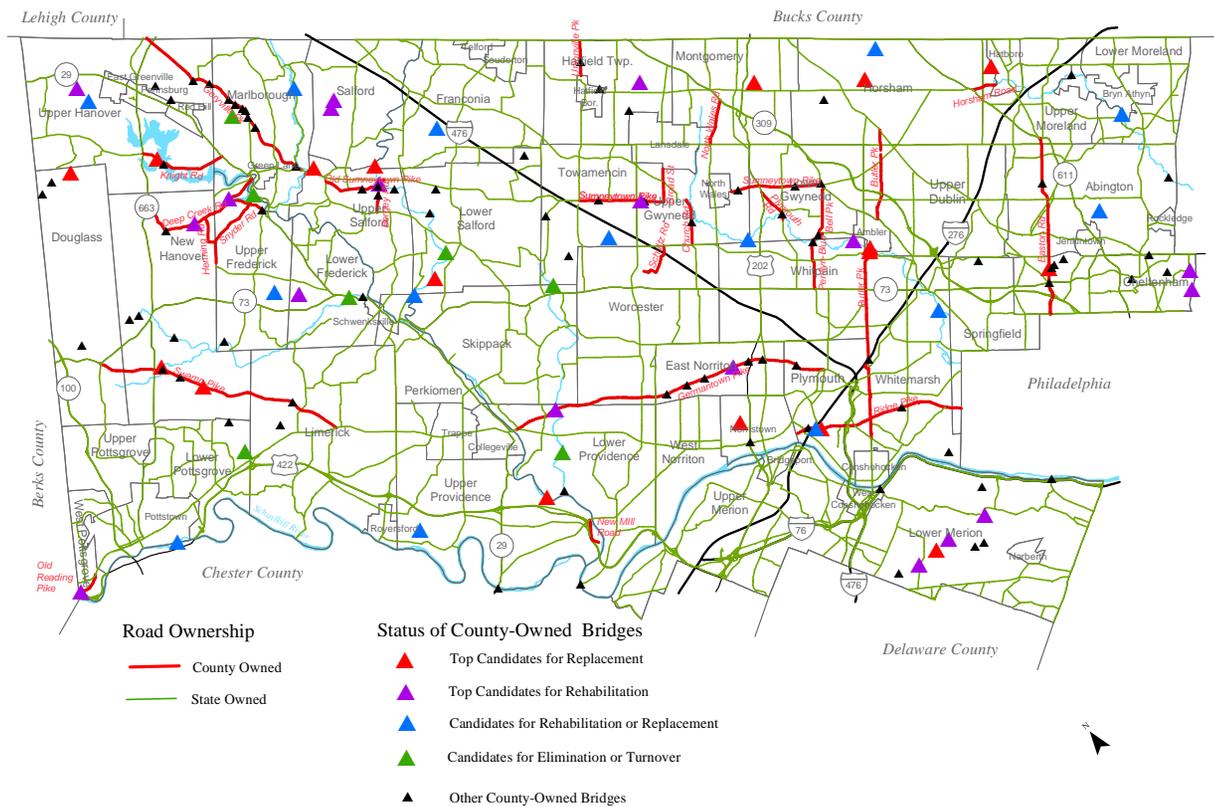




# CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

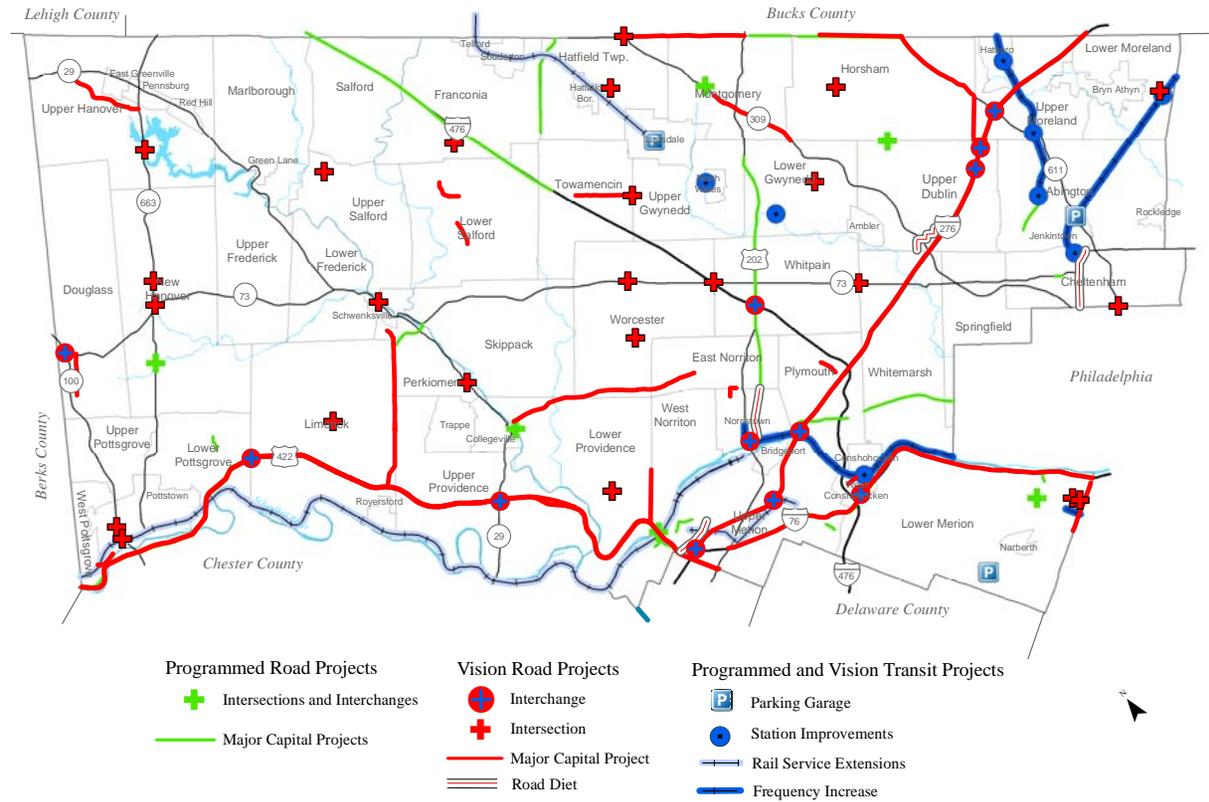
## Support a modern infrastructure network

- **Improve county-owned roads and bridges**



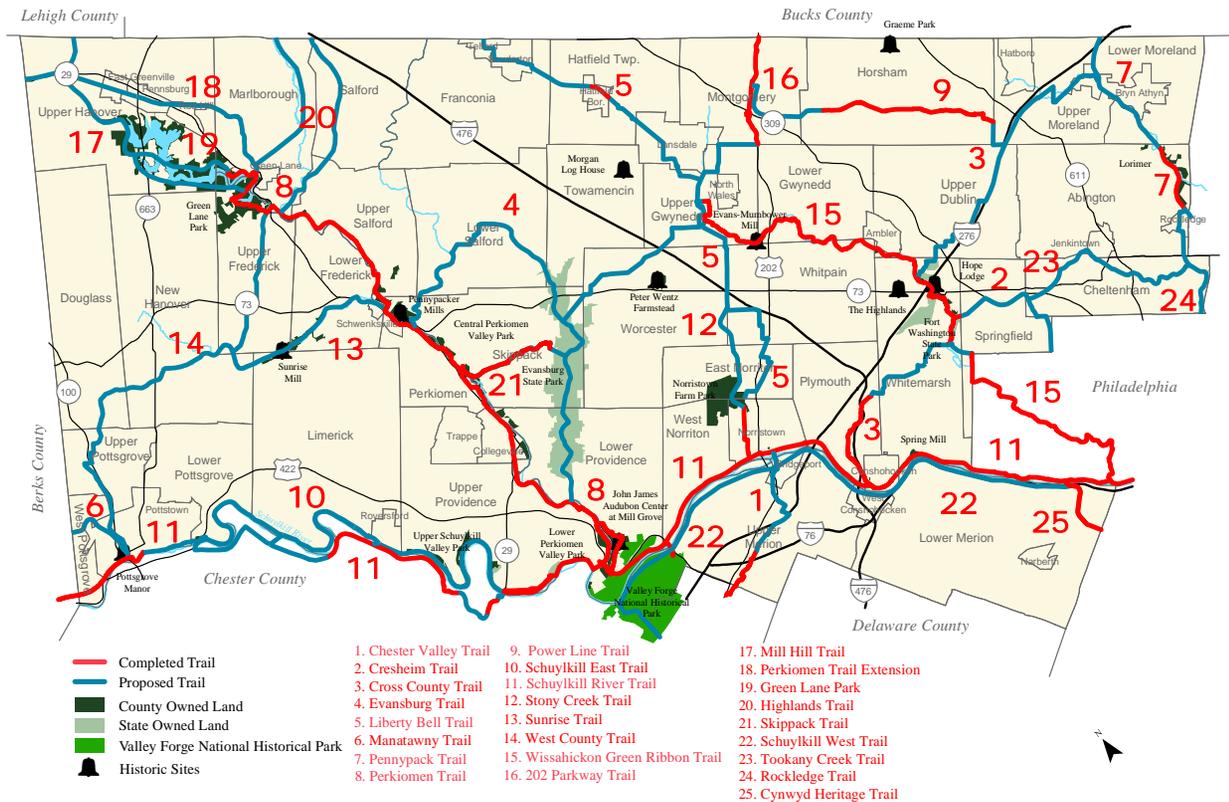
## Transportation Vision

- **Proposed Transportation Projects**



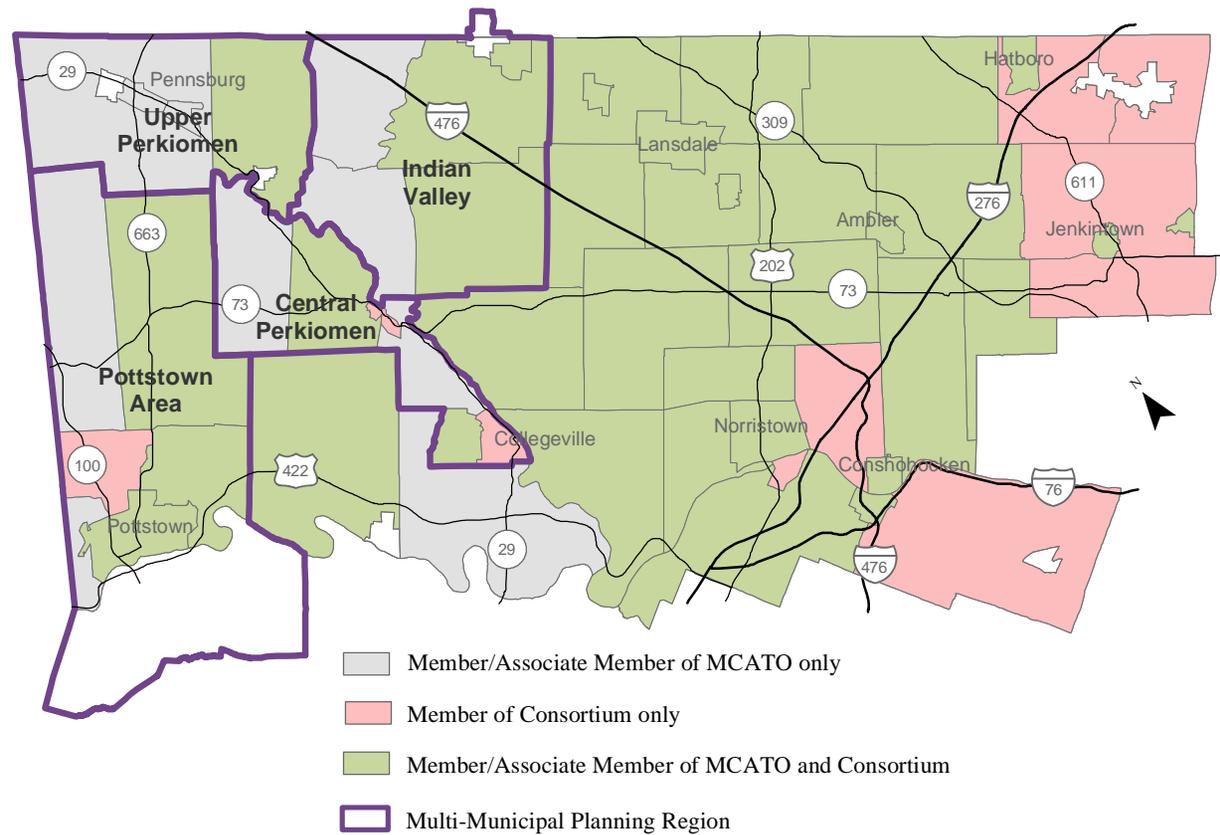
## Connected Communities

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



## Connected Communities

Encourage collaboration and partnerships among governments, businesses, institutions, and other stakeholders

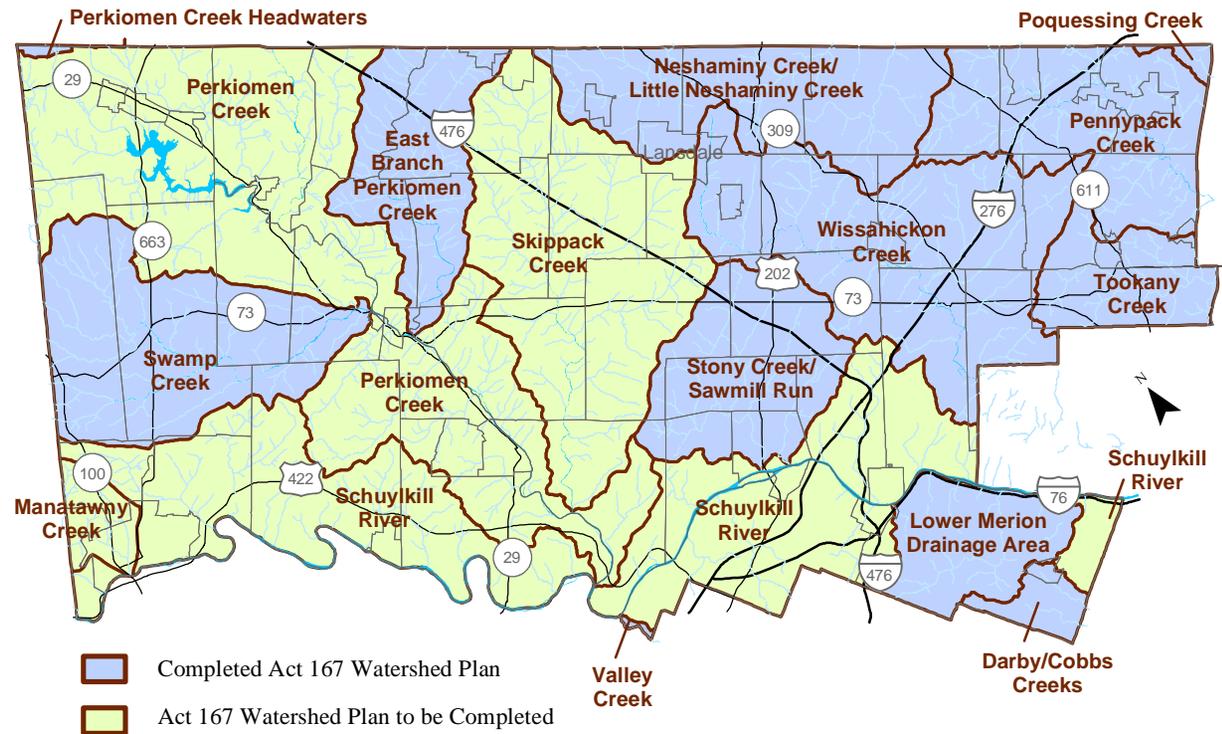




# **SUSTAINABLE PLACES**

## Improve stormwater management and reduce the impact of flooding

- *Complete watershed stormwater management plans*



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

- *Revitalize downtowns*
- *Raise the profile of arts and culture activities in the county*
- *Strengthen the county library and collaborate with other libraries*



## Enhance community character and protect neighborhoods

- *Support investment in existing neighborhoods*
- *Advocate for appropriate land uses and infill development*
- *Organize and support emergency services*
- *Preserve important historic properties*
- *Reinvigorate the tree canopy in communities*

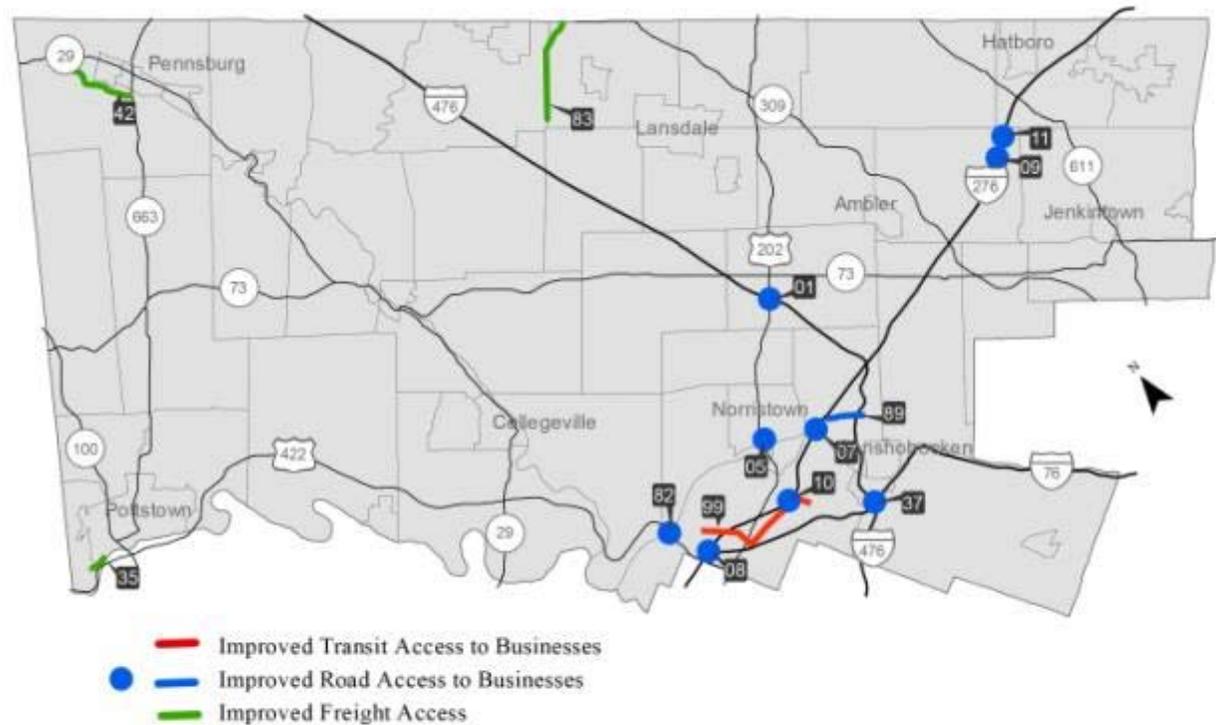




# VIBRANT ECONOMY

## Improve transportation access to businesses

- *Provide better road access to employment centers*
- *Expand transit options in employment centers*



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

- *Encourage redevelopment of underutilized and vacant industrial land*
- *Modernize older offices and businesses*
- *Locate new development in proposed growth areas*

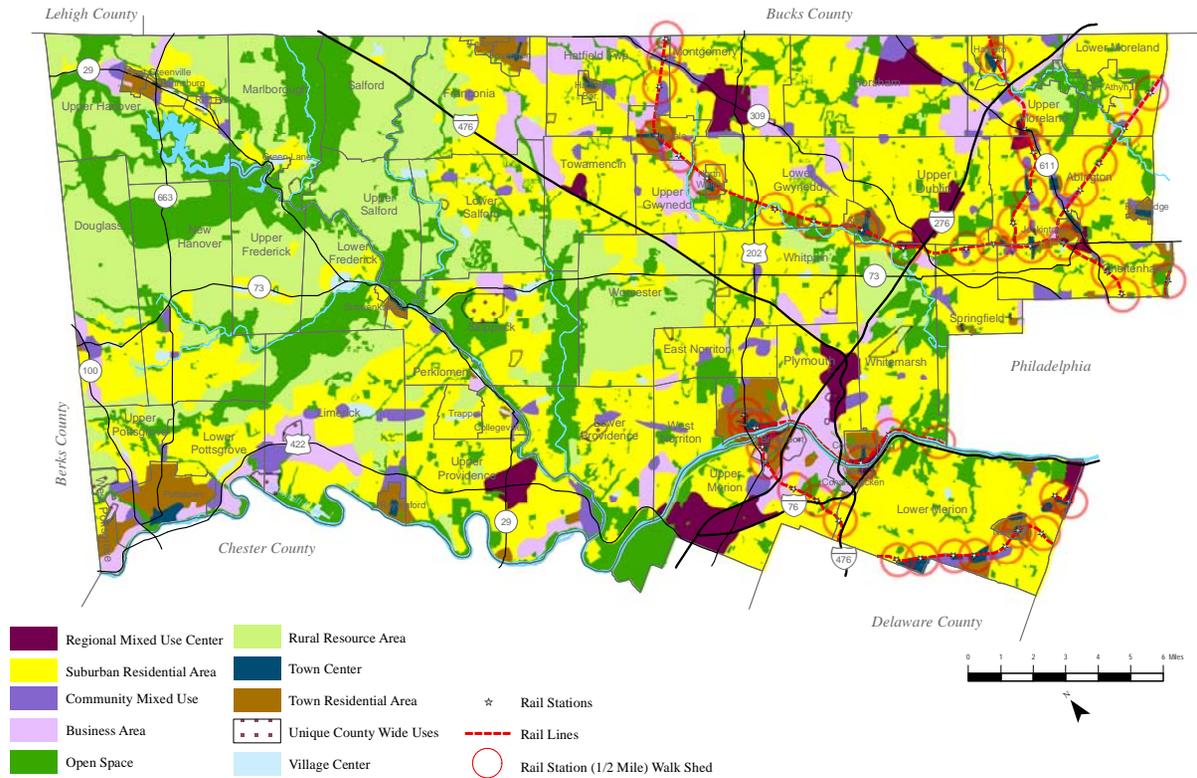




# 2040 VISION

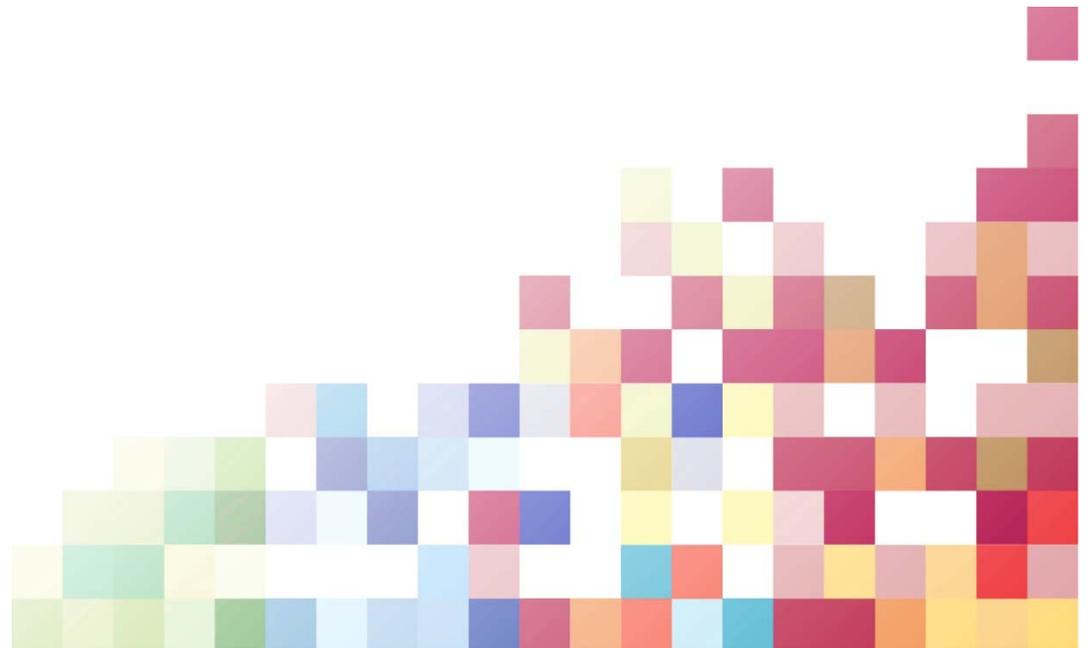
## Land Use Vision

- **Future Land Use**



# *Partnering with MCPC*

- Let us know about issues or concerns
- Use our online and printed resources
- Continue to utilize our planning services and view us as an extension of township staff



# Stay Connected

- Website: [www.planning.montcopa.org](http://www.planning.montcopa.org)
- Follow us on twitter @MontcoPlanning
- Like us on Facebook and Flickr
- Visit our offices at: One Montgomery Plaza,  
Swede and Airy Streets, Norristown
- Pick up the phone: John Cover at 610.278.3741  
Mike Narcowich at 610.278.5238  
Brian Olszak at 610.278.3737

