

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

VALERIE A. ARKOOSH, MD, MPH, CHAIR
KENNETH E. LAWRENCE, JR., VICE CHAIR
JOSEPH C. GALE, COMMISSIONER



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE • PO Box 311
NORRISTOWN, PA 19404-0311
610-278-3722
FAX: 610-278-3941 • TDD: 610-631-1211
WWW.MONTCOPA.ORG

JOHN COVER, AICP
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Monday, May 18, 2020

SUBJECT: Abington Township Review of *Upper Moreland 2040*

TO: Abington Township Planning Commission

FROM: Mike Narcowich, AICP, Assistant Section Chief: Community Planning

The MPC requires municipalities to consider the comments of contiguous municipalities prior to adoption of a municipal comprehensive plan:

The Municipalities Planning Code (MPC, PA Act 247)

Section 302. Adoption of Municipal, Multimunicipal and County Comprehensive Plans and Plan Amendments.

(a) The governing body may adopt and amend the comprehensive plan as a whole or in part. Before adopting or amending a comprehensive plan, or any part thereof, the planning agency shall hold at least one public meeting before forwarding the proposed comprehensive plan or amendment thereof to the governing body. **In reviewing the proposed comprehensive plan, the governing body shall consider the comments of the county, contiguous municipalities and the school district**, as well as the public meeting comments and the recommendations of the municipal planning agency. The comments of the county, contiguous municipalities and the local school district shall be made to the governing body within 45 days of receipt by the governing body, and the proposed plan or amendment thereto shall not be acted upon until such comment is received. If, however, the contiguous municipalities and the local school district fail to respond within 45 days, the governing body may proceed without their comments.

As you review *Upper Moreland 2040*, I suggest you focus on the following sections (these are all the recommendations that specifically refer to Abington Township):

p.167, Transportation Chapter, Recommendations Section: “Determine feasibility of connections to the bicycle route on Davisville Road proposed in Abington’s recently completed Master Bicycle Plan.”

p.175, Economic Development Chapter, Recommendations Section:

“A business organization might take the form of an organization known as a “Business Improvement District (BID)”, “Main Street Program” or “Special Services District”. Many such organizations raise revenue through special assessments. Some are multimunicipal, and thus have an advantage when applying for public financing. The township will pursue partnerships in such efforts with Abington (for Willow Grove) and with Horsham and Upper Dublin (for the business park and interchange areas).”

p.177, Economic Development Chapter, Recommendations Section:

“Pursue a “placemaking” strategy in downtown Willow Grove. This would include:

- a. Providing and strengthening incentives for provision of pedestrian accommodations and amenities, with the foundation for such improvements being created by preparing a “walk audit”, examining and documenting the pedestrian system in downtown Willow Grove on foot, in coordination with MCPC.
- b. Acquiring or incentivizing the provision of public plazas and parks,
- c. Multimunicipal Cooperation. Work with Abington Township (and its Economic Development Director) and the Eastern Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce to foster economic development in the neighboring portions of Willow Grove. Coordinate planning for the shared Moreland Road corridor. Areas of cooperation to explore include land use and form, streetscape, marketing and transportation (including vehicular, pedestrian and transit connections to Willow Grove station, Willow Grove Shopping Center and Willow Grove Park Mall). Pursue joint or coordinated grant applications for the combined Upper Moreland-Abington sections of Willow Grove.

Objective: Strengthen “Sense of Place”, Support Local Businesses. Note: various recommendations above contribute to this goal. Much of the vision for the economic development strategy for downtown Willow Grove has been defined by Upper Moreland’s Revitalization, Redevelopment and Signage & Wayfinding plans and its implementation techniques like the Town Center Zoning Districts. The township will move aggressively to pursue additional opportunities to reinvigorate Willow Grove as a business and town center for Upper Moreland and eastern Montgomery County. This, in turn, will improve the township’s image.”

p.208, Future Land Use Chapter, Recommendations Section:

“The township will consider various areas of potential multimunicipal planning and cooperation. These might include land use planning for shared downtown areas, trail interconnections and investments in shared roadways, such as

- a. Planning for downtown Willow Grove with Abington Township. This might involve creation of a broad conceptual vision for downtown, discussions about forming a Business Improvement District (BID); streetscape, pedestrian safety and other improvements to PA 63 (similar in some ways to how Philadelphia and Lower Merion created a Special Services District for City Avenue).”

p.210, Future Land Use Chapter, Recommendations Section:

- e. “Upper Moreland will consider the advantages of planning in cooperation with Horsham, Abington and other neighbors [see Economic Development chapter] in the interest of establishing a planning vision and potential business improvement districts for downtown

Willow Grove and the Horsham-Upper Moreland business park area; planning for trails and consequent benefits to public health (in consultation with Abington-Jefferson Willow Grove campus) and bike routes that cross municipal lines; and improvements to shared roadways. Sixty-four percent of UpperMoreland2040 survey respondents felt that the township should work with neighboring municipalities to advocate for the development of the Welsh Road interchange.”

p.216, Consistency with Plans of County and Neighboring Municipalities

Abington Township

“Abington’s Comprehensive Plan (2007) uses the zoning map as its future land use map. The zoning map reveals that generally, the land use policy of Upper Moreland and Abington is compatible. There are a few limited areas along Moreland/Welsh Roads (PA 63) where commercial-mixed use zoning lies across the street from single-family residential zoning (it should be noted that the width of Moreland Road helps partially mitigate the impact of more intense uses of one side upon the other). And although land use policy for downtown Willow Grove is similar from Abington to Upper Moreland in some ways, Upper Moreland’s TC-1 Town Center District allows much taller buildings than Abington does on its side of the boundary. Therefore, the two communities should communicate when a development proposed along the municipal boundary is more intense or dense than that on the other side of the municipal boundary.”