

REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN: OLD YORK ROAD & SUSQUEHANNA ROAD REDEVELOPMENT AREA
ABINGTON TOWNSHIP

AUGUST 19, 2020

Prepared for: Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority and Abington Township Planning
Commission

Prepared by: Montgomery County Planning Commission

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A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Redevelopment Area Plan is to provide a guide for the development of a portion of Abington Township in accordance with the Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law (1945, May 24, P.L. 991-35 P.S. 1701-1719). A project area boundary map is included to delineate the boundary of the Redevelopment Area (see Map 1: Old York Road & Susquehanna Road Redevelopment Area Map).

The redevelopment process consists of three steps:

1. Certification of an area as “blighted”, and in need of redevelopment.
2. Preparation of a Redevelopment Area Plan.
3. Preparation of a Redevelopment Proposal by the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority (MCRDA).

The Abington Township Planning Commission must examine existing conditions and certify the area as “blighted” before the MCRDA can prepare a redevelopment proposal or exercise eminent domain as part of the area’s redevelopment. The planning commission's certification of a redevelopment area shall be made in conformance with its comprehensive plan. The Urban Redevelopment Law requires that the Planning Commission find one or more of the following conditions to be present in order to certify an area as “blighted”:

- Defective design and arrangement of buildings
- Faulty street and lot layout
- Economically or socially undesirable land uses
- Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions of dwellings
- Inadequate planning
- Excessive land coverage by buildings
- Lack of proper light, air and open space

The Urban Redevelopment Law requires a Redevelopment Plan to include the following elements:

1. The boundaries of the area, with a map showing the existing uses of the real property therein;
2. A land use plan of the area showing proposed uses following redevelopment;
3. Standards of population densities, land coverage and building intensities in the proposed redevelopment;
4. A preliminary site plan of the area;
5. A statement of the proposed changes, if any, in zoning ordinances or maps;
6. A statement of any proposed changes in street layouts, street levels, and proposed traffic regulation, including the separation or excluding of vehicular traffic partially or totally from pedestrian traffic;

7. A statement of the extent and effect of the rehousing of families which may be made necessary from the redevelopment area plan, and the manner in which such rehousing may be accomplished;
8. A statement of the estimated cost of acquisition of the redevelopment area, and of all other costs necessary to prepare the area for redevelopment;
9. A statement of such continuing controls as may be deemed necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.

B. BOUNDARIES OF THE AREA

The Old York Road and Susquehanna Road Redevelopment Area is comprised of 1.36 acres, consisting of the following properties fronting on Old York Road and/or Susquehanna Road:

- 1100 Old York Road
- 1102 Old York Road
- 1104 Old York Road
- 1106 Old York Road
- 1114 Old York Road
- 1116 Old York Road
- 1124 Old York Road
- 1907 Susquehanna Road
- 1911 Susquehanna Road
- 1915 Susquehanna Road

The properties have frontage on the northeast side of Susquehanna Road and/or on the northwest side of Old York Road. The specific properties included in the redevelopment area are shown on the map in the appendix.

C. STANDARDS OF POPULATION DENSITIES, LAND COVERAGE, AND BUILDING INTENSITIES

Zoning Standards in Redevelopment Area

Zoning District	Height	Maximum Density	Minimum Green Area	Maximum Building Area	Minimum Building Separation
MS-L Main Street- Low Intensity/ Density	35 feet (Maximum); 20 feet (Minimum Façade Height)	10 Dwelling Units per Acre	35%; 25% for multifamily; 55% for other residential use	10,000 square feet	20 feet

The existing zoning district (MS-L Main Street – Low Intensity/Density) in the Old York Road & Susquehanna Road Redevelopment Area affects population density, land coverage, and building intensities. As mentioned in Section F. PROPOSED CHANGES IN ZONING, below, the township will consider rezoning this to MS-H Main Street High Intensity/Density in order to better accommodate more intense development than is currently allowed.

D. PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN

The preliminary site plan (illustrative rendering) depicts new, mixed-use development on the properties included in the Redevelopment Area. Originally prepared in 2016, this conceptual site plan (illustrative rendering) reflects just one possible redevelopment scheme. It shows pedestrian-oriented, transit-supportive development that includes buildings built to the street a building to the rear which could be constructed if zoning is amended to increase the maximum building height. This is for discussion purposes only.

E. LAND USE PLAN

The land use plan for the Old York Road & Susquehanna Road Redevelopment Area is for the full 1.36 acre area to be used for mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, transit-supportive development. The plan is for retail (which includes restaurant and a range of other subtypes) to be located on the ground floor of the development along the street, with office and/or apartments or residential condominiums development located on upper floors. Parking would be located to the rear. Along a portion of the street frontage, a landscaped public space in the form of a plaza, and amenities for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit-users would be a primary component of this development.

Specific uses in the mixed-use development are those allowed by the MS-L Main Street-Low Intensity/Density Zoning District. The township is considering increasing the allowed density

and/or intensity for this redevelopment area. The township will consider increasing the allowed building height for this area, from the 35 feet currently allowed under MS-L zoning to 45-50 feet. This would have the effect of increasing the allowed density and intensity.

F. PROPOSED CHANGES IN ZONING

Population Densities

The maximum residential density in the MS-L Main Street—Low Intensity/Density District is 10 dwelling units per acre. The township will consider increasing this density to accommodate redevelopment. The township will also consider increasing the maximum building height from 35 feet, the maximum currently allowed under MS-L Main Street: Low Intensity/Density District zoning to 45-50 feet to make an increase in density/intensity possible.

Land Coverage

Existing zoning provides for a generous minimum green area. This will be the standard applicable to the redevelopment area. The intersection of Old York Road and Susquehanna Road was historically, and is still, an important intersection in the heart of the township. This location was historically the heart of Abington village and today serves as a gateway to important medical, educational, commercial, civic and mixed use areas. The required minimum green area is consistent with the township's goal to create a landscaped, common area-transit plaza to aesthetically enhance the gateway, provide accommodations for transit-users, pedestrians and bicyclists, positively affect the township's image, and contribute to the area's vitality.

Building Intensities

Building intensity in the Redevelopment Area is currently regulated by standards in the MS-L District for height, building footprint, green area, and setbacks. The township will consider increasing the effective allowed building intensities and densities by amending the zoning map from MS-L to MS-H in the Redevelopment Area, allowing for modestly more intense/dense development, by increasing or eliminating the maximum building footprint, and increasing the maximum building height from 35 to 45-50 feet.

If maximum allowed density and intensity were increased, its impact would be mitigated by preservation and possible expansion of zoning and subdivision and land development ordinance requirements affecting architectural components and variation, green space requirements, and buffering and screening. If maximum height is increased within the regulating base zoning district, increased height would only be allowed in appropriate portions of the district. These might be confined based on areas at or near major intersections, commercial and mixed-use areas, near transit, or with a minimum site acreage.

The township would add additional architectural and site design requirements to the MS-H District for sites. These changes would ensure that future redevelopment would harmoniously fit

in with existing development, consist of attractively designed building architecture and landscaped common areas, and support an aesthetically appealing, pedestrian-oriented, transit-supportive streetscape.

G. PROPOSED CHANGES IN STREET LAYOUTS AND TRAFFIC CIRCULATION.

See Appendix: Changes in Street Layouts, Traffic Circulation, and Development of Transit Plaza.

H. EXTENT, EFFECT, AND MANNER OF ACCOMPLISHING THE REHOUSING OF FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS.

[To be provided by township]

I. ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION AND OTHER COSTS NECESSARY TO PREPARE THE AREA FOR REDEVELOPMENT.

[To be provided by township]

J. CONTINUING CONTROLS.

The Old York Road & Susquehanna Road Redevelopment Area Plan shall remain in effect for a period of 20 years from the date of approval of the redevelopment area plan by the Abington Township Planning Commission.

K. PROCEDURES FOR CHANGES IN THE APPROVED PLAN.

The Old York Road & Susquehanna Road Redevelopment Area Plan may be amended from time-to-time in compliance with the provisions of the Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law. The Redevelopment Authority of Montgomery County may obtain the written consent of all redevelopers who have purchased project land and who may be materially affected by an amendment to the Old York & Susquehanna Road Redevelopment Area Plan.