



Improving One Community at a Time

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LIVABILITY IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY



TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY

Train Station Vision Plan, Conshohocken

The Vision Plan, supported by TCDI funds, sets the stage for the borough to pursue quality development and redevelopment of the SEPTA regional rail station area. The vision includes a new station with improved facilities that includes a new parking garage (for both train riders and shoppers in the downtown), new retail space to provide services that the borough currently lacks, and improved landscaping that includes new street trees and a small park. Conshohocken's design standards will guide the design of the station, garage, and all street and site improvements. To help move the vision forward, the plan recommends the following short term implementation strategies.

- Publicize and build support;
- Incorporate the plan into official borough plans;
- Identify easy, low-cost improvements;
- Seek funding from public and private partners; and
- Prepare preliminary design in order to move forward quickly.



The 2009 train station vision illustrates the placement of a new parking garage, updated sidewalks and bike paths, as well as a relocated platform. Source: Conshohocken Train Station Vision Plan, Kise, Straw, & Kolodner Inc.

Willow Grove Train Station Relocation Feasibility, Upper Moreland

DVRPC awarded Upper Moreland Township TCDI funds in 2010 to determine whether the relocation of the Willow Grove Station is a financially and physically feasible strategy to spur revitalization of the Willow Grove Town Center. The study identified the



Shown above is the existing Willow Grove station platform. The feasibility study examined improved safety and station access for commuters.

components and costs of needed rail station infrastructure improvements including structured parking to serve the train station, technology enhancements to reduce train/traffic delays, and improved safety and station access. The study highlighted three potential locations for the station: the current station location, south Davisville block, and north of the current station along Davisville Road adjacent to Mineral Avenue.

Findings: Of the three alternative locations that were considered for a new Willow Grove Station, the current location was deemed most feasible. The key findings and observations supporting this conclusion:

- The site already has some degree of municipal and SEPTA control. Property acquisitions would be minimized.
- Previous public investments have been focused in this area, including Memorial Park Drive, streetscape improvements, and pedestrian crossing initiatives. Enhancing the existing train station capitalizes on these previous investments.
- Traffic impacts at the current site could be mitigated with improved signal technology.



SPOTLIGHT ON LANSDALE

DOWNTOWNS

REVITALIZATION | DOWNTOWN DESTINATION PLAN

Summary

TCDI program funds assisted in the development of the *Downtown Destination Plan*, which provided a vision for Lansdale’s business district and its historic role as the commercial and cultural center of the North Penn region. Lansdale seeks to revitalize its Main Street as a destination based on expanded cultural activities, dining, unique retail, and improved access to their SEPTA regional rail station. Lansdale developed the key principles listed below to further their revitalization goals.



The above map illustrates the focused planning area for the *Downtown Destination Plan* and implementation activities.

Key Principles

Priorities for the borough are based on the following guiding principles:

- **Residential:** Maintain existing walkable neighborhoods and protect their character.
- **Transportation:** Provide improved services in and around the train station, and expand parking opportunities at the Madison Lot; provide additional parking opportunities in the downtown.
- **Industrial:** Adaptively reuse existing noteworthy buildings, revitalize sites that are vacant, and create new attractive development in scale with the character of the borough.
- **Open Space:** Maintain and enhance existing parks and recreation areas, upgrade the landscaping, and expand recreation programs.
- **Historic Resources:** Protect and preserve historic resources to maintain the character and charm of the borough.

Implementation Activities

Outlined below are recent implementation activities that resulted from the *Downtown Destination Plan*.



New streetscape enhancements have been installed along Main Street from Broad to Richardson and a small portion of Broad Street. Enhancements include new brick pavers, curbs, parking meters, light posts and parking space delineation. The streetscape improvements are part of the borough’s \$2.3 million revitalization effort to bring visitors and residents to the downtown.



The Madison Parking Lot development would turn the existing Madison surface lot into a mixed-use development with 209 apartments, 54 townhomes, and a parking garage. The multiphase project would also include 30,000 square feet of retail and a public plaza. This new development is part of the borough’s strategy to improve services around the train station. *Source: BPG Properties, Ltd.*



Signs identifying parking and gateways will be installed along Main Street and municipal parking lots. Unified messaging is reflected in the wayfinding signage and carried through the borough’s new branding efforts. The *Wayfinding Signage Plan* received 2012 TCDI funds. *Source: Merje, 2013.*



SPOTLIGHT ON UPPER DUBLIN TOWNSHIP

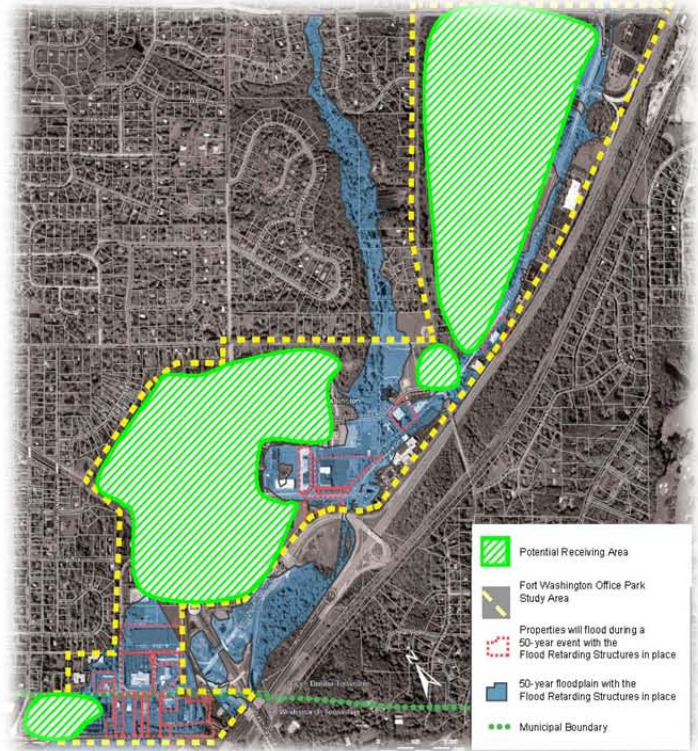
OPEN/CIVIC SPACES

CIVIC/OPEN SPACES | INNOVATIVE USE OF TDR SPURS REDEVELOPMENT

Summary

The Fort Washington Office Park opened in the 1950s, purposely located at the Pennsylvania Turnpike and PA 309 interchange to provide easy access, but was also sited in flood-prone lowlands. Over time the office park grew, along with other development in the watershed. Now, although the office park serves as Upper Dublin Township’s primary center of business and industry, it suffers from severe flooding and disinvestment, threatening people’s safety, damage to property, and the township’s tax base.

To deal with these ongoing challenges and maintain the strong economic base that the business park provides, Upper Dublin Township sought a solution that would resolve the flooding issue and also modernize the office park setting. A Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) ordinance provided the solution. TDR ordinances are traditionally applied in Growing Suburbs and Rural Areas to use the development process to preserve agricultural or natural resource areas in one part of a municipality in exchange for increasing density in other locations better supported by land conditions and infrastructure. In the Fort Washington Office Park, the TDR ordinance is crafted to provide incentives to property owners to demolish their buildings in the flood prone areas and to clear and stabilize the land, in exchange for selling their development credits. Development credits may be purchased and used by developers for increasing density and building types, including residential and retail uses, on the higher-ground areas of the business park. Design regulations are also incorporated to create a more sustainable, inviting, and pedestrian-oriented pattern with both civic spaces and greenways.



Normally, TDR is used to preserve open space and farmland. In the case of the Ft. Washington Office Park, TDR is intended to permanently remove development from the floodplain and preserve the formerly developed land as open space while increasing density and mixed uses on the higher grounds within the office park. *Source: Sustainable Revitalization of the Fort Washington Office Park, Urban Partners, URS, 2011.*

Implementation Activities

DVRPC has enjoyed a long-standing partnership with Upper Dublin, assisting with a federal grant to investigate solutions to the Fort Washington Office Park flood problems, providing an Efficient Growth for Growing Suburbs (EGGS) grant to study the feasibility of applying a TDR program in the office park and culminating in a 2012 TCDI grant to fund the crafting of the TDR ordinance and outreach strategy. The ordinance was adopted by the Board of Commissioners in November, 2013, positioning the office park toward new, sustainable, mixed-use development.

HOW DVRPC PROMOTES LIVABILITY

DVRPC strives to focus redevelopment to create compact, mixed-use, livable communities within and around our centers. Communities can facilitate livability by adopting sound land use practices. The chart to the right illustrates livability elements and tools municipalities can undertake to promote smart growth.

Smart Growth Project Database

The *Smart Growth Project Database* is an online mapping application that tracks a variety of noteworthy development projects throughout the Greater Philadelphia Region. The initial launch of this application focuses on three types of Smart Growth projects: development near transit, traditional neighborhood development (TND), and conservation subdivisions.

This mapping application is meant to serve as a quick and convenient reference tool for planners, local officials, and citizens who are interested in Smart Growth. The database includes projects that are proposed, in progress, and completed. The details of proposed developments are subject to change and projects will be updated and added as new information becomes available. The inclusion of any particular project within this application does not serve as an endorsement by DVRPC or its partner agencies. Furthermore, this application focuses on recent developments, because they are the most relevant to today's real estate and economic climate. To access the database, visit www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/SGPD.

ELEMENT		MUNICIPAL TOOLS
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Universal Design Standards ▶ Housing Maintenance and Rehabilitation Programs ▶ Inclusionary Zoning Ordinances
POPULATION DENSITY		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Incentive Zoning ▶ Traditional Neighborhood Development ▶ Mixed-Use
WALKABILITY		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sidewalk Standards ▶ Multi-Use Trails
TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Transit-Oriented Development ▶ Transit Revitalization Investment Districts ▶ Smart Location of Employment and Public Facilities
DOWNTOWNS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Business Improvement Districts ▶ Main Street Programs ▶ Tax Increment Financing
INFILL DEVELOPMENT		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Brownfield and Greyfield Redevelopment ▶ Infill Design Guidelines
OPEN/CIVIC SPACES		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Conservation Design ▶ Parkland Dedications ▶ Transfer of Development Rights
HISTORIC CHARACTER		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Historic Resource Inventory ▶ Local Historic Districts ▶ Preservation Ordinances



The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is dedicated to uniting the region's elected officials, planning professionals, and the public with a common vision of making a great region even greater. Shaping the way we live, work, and play, DVRPC builds consensus on improving transportation, promoting smart growth, protecting the environment, and enhancing the economy.

We serve a diverse region of nine counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer in New Jersey. DVRPC is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Greater Philadelphia Region — leading the way to a better future.

DVRPC fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. DVRPC's website (www.dvrpc.org) may be translated into multiple languages. Publications and other public documents can be made available in alternative languages and formats, if requested. For more information, please call (215) 238-2871.

Abstract: *Improving One Community at a Time* is a newsletter that highlights DVRPC's livability grant program, the Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI). Each newsletter provides information on how DVRPC's investment has impacted the region and reviews a specific county and projects.

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