

PEOPLE AND POPULATION

BACKGROUND AND TRENDS



MONTCO

A Comprehensive Plan
for a Changing World

People and Population

Existing Land Use

Transportation

Preservation and Recreation

Environmental Systems

Infrastructure and
Utilities

Economic Development

Housing

Health

Government and Community
Facilities

Montgomery County is home to 856,553 people living in 62 municipalities. While experiencing modest growth (7 percent each decade) over the first part of the twenty-first century, many changes within the population are taking place. The county continues to become more racially and ethnically diverse, residents are generally growing older, and there are more seniors living alone. As the county’s population continues to grow to a forecast of 942,944 by 2050, we need to understand how the changing characteristics of our population will impact the delivery of governmental services and continued economic development.

GROWTH THROUGH MIGRATION

Montgomery County’s population continues to grow, but the source of that growth has changed over time. From 2000 to 2010, births outpaced deaths and population was growing primarily through new births. However, births slowed after 2010, and the number of deaths and births were nearly identical in 2020. Our population growth of 56,670 people between 2010 and 2020 was driven by people moving to the county from other areas of the United States as well as international migration.

Population growth through in-migration is motivated by people wanting to move to Montgomery County for employment and appealing communities, including amenities such as successful schools and great parks and trails. In-migration was primarily domestic (from the United States) until recently. In

2021 and 2022, international migration to Montgomery County exceeded domestic in-migration. Considering the trends, in-migration is how the county is likely to maintain population growth for the foreseeable future. We rely upon in-migration to grow communities, support businesses and industries, and to remain competitive.

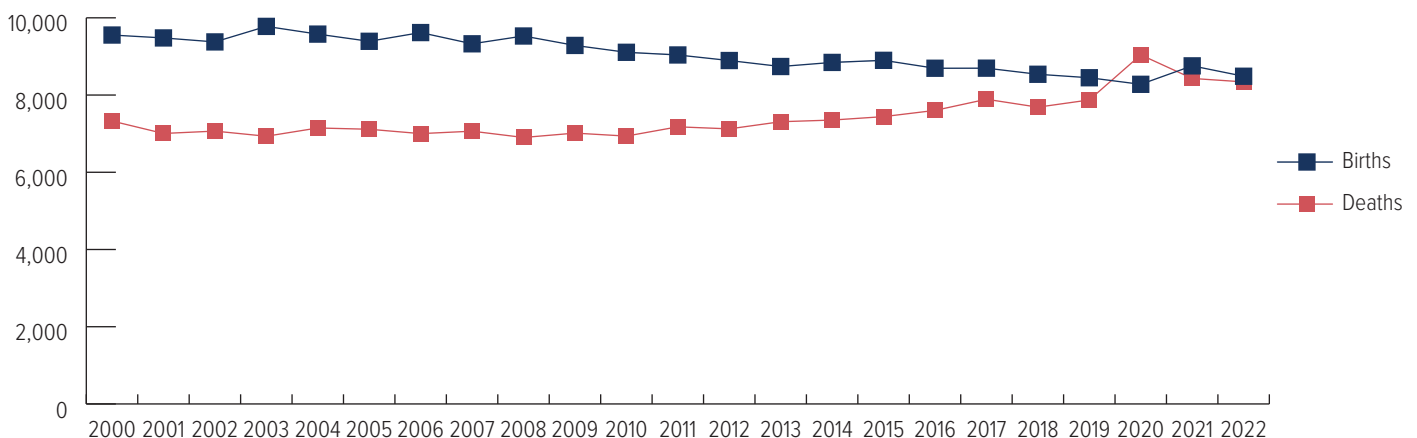
WORKER INFLOW/OUTFLOW

Worker inflow/outflow tracks the movement of workers into and out of the county. Inflow workers come from elsewhere to work in the county, while outflow workers are the people that live here and travel outside the county to their jobs. There are also workers that both live and work in the county.

Between 2000 and 2019, there was a 29 percent increase in the number of people

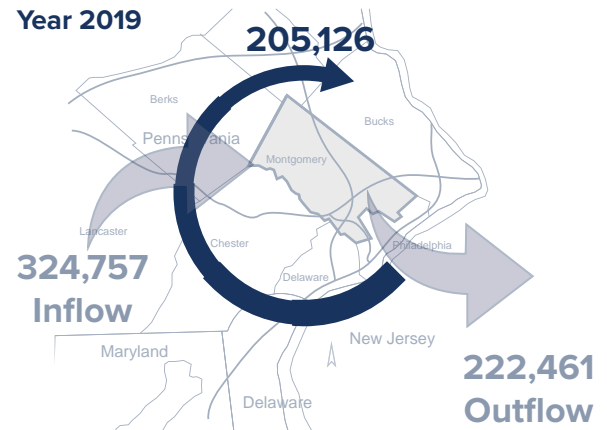
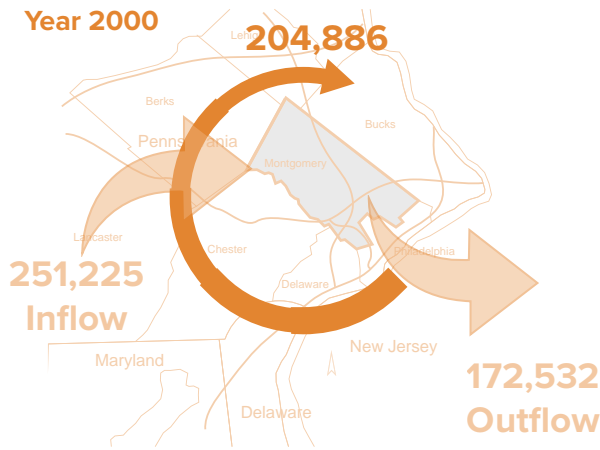
Births and Deaths in Montgomery County, 2000–2021

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health



Worker Inflow/Outflow

Source: U.S.Census Bureau, On The Map, 2000 and 2019



coming into the county to work. There has been similar growth (29 percent) in the number of people living in the county and leaving for work. There are various reasons why people choose where they live, but it is notable that so many people choose to commute into the county for work. It's possible this may be due to higher housing costs in the county and that workers live in more affordable areas and commute to jobs in Montgomery County. The county has a diverse economy with numerous job opportunities, giving us a competitive advantage for capturing high-quality employees.

MEDIAN AGE

We are getting older as a county, increasing from a median age of 40 years in 2000 to 41.3 years in 2020. However, distribution of median age is not the same across the county. Six communities (Green Lane, Lower Salford, Montgomery, Pennsburg, Schwenksville, and Skippack) had an increase in median age greater than 21 percent. Another 46 communities had an increase in median age between 1 percent and 20 percent. Interestingly, in ten communities, the median age actually decreased. Whether a municipality's population is aging or getting younger, there's a need

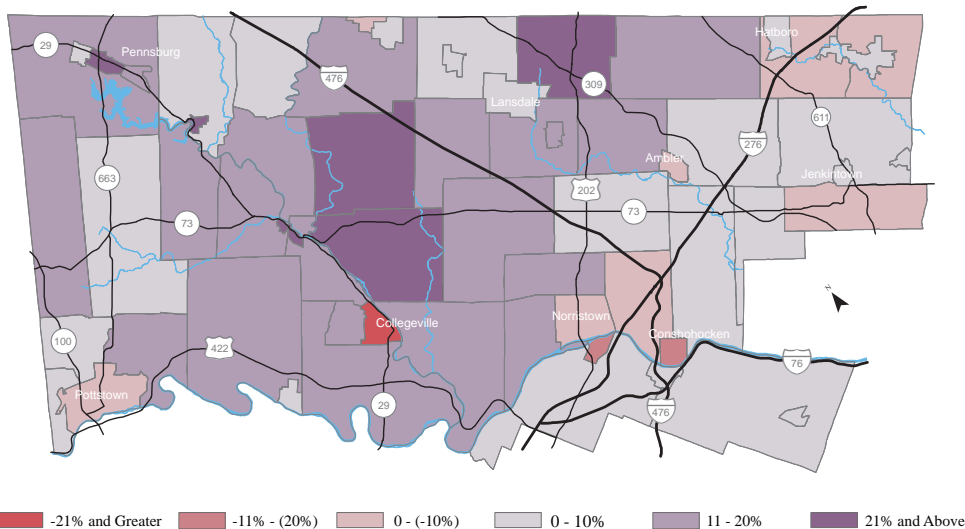
to assess the services (such as library and recreation programming) and amenities (park facilities and accessibility) being offered to be sure this changing population is being served.

INCREASED DIVERSITY

Since the turn of the century, the county has been growing more diverse in terms of race and ethnicity. While the county remains predominantly Caucasian (72 percent white, non-Hispanic), diversity across the county has been growing. Between 2010 and 2020, the Hispanic population grew 59 percent, the Asian population increased 32 percent, and the Black or African American population expanded by 18 percent. The largest percentage change was an increase of 150 percent for people identifying as multiracial (31,732 people in 2020).

Median Age Change 2000–2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2000, and 2020

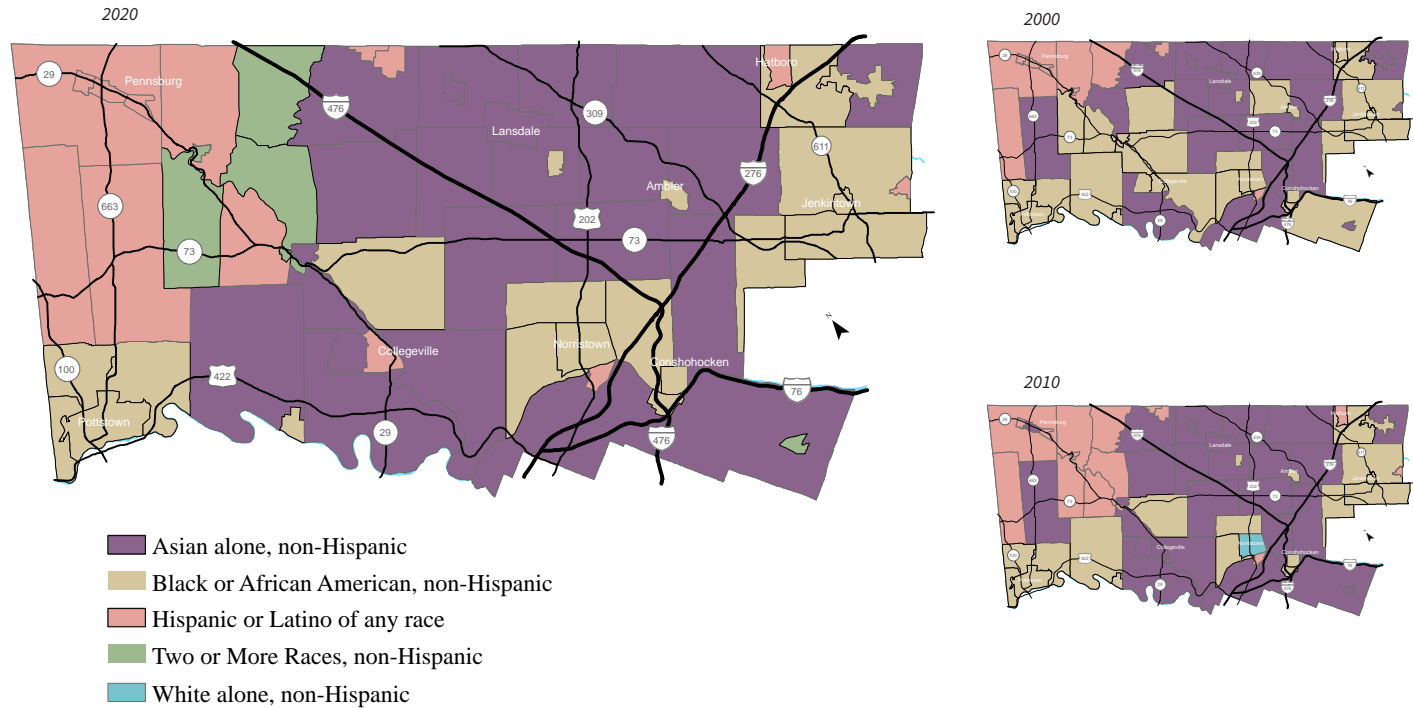


The second most represented racial or ethnic group in each municipality has shifted significantly over the past several decades. The most represented group was White or Caucasian in all municipalities in 2000, 2010, and 2020, except Norristown. The most represented racial or ethnic group in Norristown was White or Caucasian in 2000, Black or African American in 2010, and Hispanic or Latino in 2020. In 2000, residents who identified as multiracial (representing two or more races) were not even present on the map showing the second most represented race or ethnicity. However, by 2020, multiracial individuals were the second most represented race or ethnicity in six municipalities.

Second Most Represented Race/Ethnicity by Municipality

White or Caucasian (non-Hispanic) populations are the most represented group in all municipalities except Norristown.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2000, 2010, and 2020



HOUSEHOLD SIZE

One in four households (26 percent) in Montgomery County are comprised of a single person. This has been consistent over the past 20 years, but an increasing number of these households are seniors living alone. In 2020, nearly half of single-person households were a person age 65 or older (39,517 households). Single-person households are also disproportionately female (59 percent), with single-person senior households even higher (73 percent female).

INCOME AND POVERTY

Federal poverty status in the county, currently 5.9 percent, has not changed significantly over the last ten years. However, this measure of poverty does not fully take into account a household's essential expenses. Another measure of residents who are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed (or ALICE) better captures those who are struggling to meet basic expenses. United Way calculates a Household Survival Budget which is a minimum average income that a household needs to afford housing, food, transportation, health care, child care, and

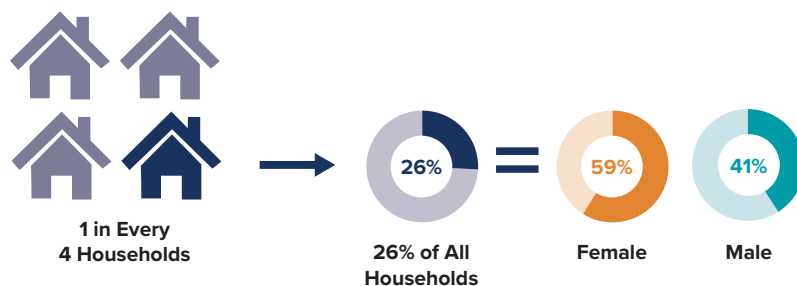
Race and Ethnicity of Montgomery County Residents

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2010 and 2020

RACE AND ETHNICITY	2010	2020
White alone	79.0%	72.2%
Black or African American alone	8.4%	9.3%
Asian alone	6.4%	7.9%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	4.3%	6.4%
Two or more races	1.6%	3.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.1%	0.1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander alone	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race	0.2%	0.5%

Single Person Households

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates 2016-2020



a basic smartphone plan, plus taxes. In Pennsylvania, the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a family of four was \$26,500 in 2021. However, the minimum household income as calculated by United Way to meet basic needs for a family of four was \$65,796 in Pennsylvania in 2021. Households below the ALICE threshold are all those who have a household income less than what is needed to meet basic needs.

In Montgomery County, 29 percent of households qualify as either ALICE households or FPL households. That means 97,222 Montgomery County households likely struggle to pay for essential household expenses. The occupations with the most ALICE households in Pennsylvania are personal care aides, who make a

median hourly wage of \$13.65, fast food and counter workers (\$10.82), and cashiers (\$11.03).

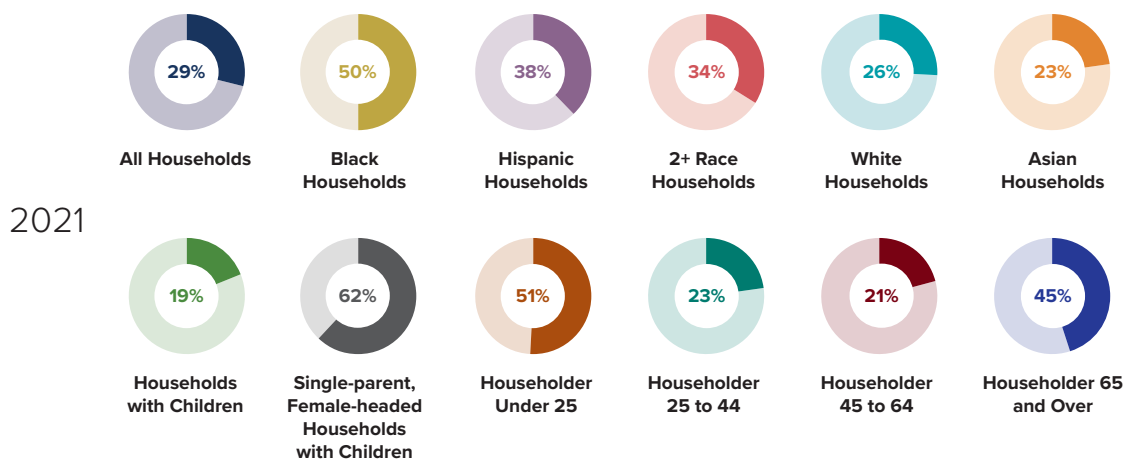
Data that expand upon different races, ethnicities, and ages show variation in terms of which households have trouble making ends meet. Although 29 percent of Montgomery County households are below the ALICE threshold, that number is 50 percent of black households, 38 percent of Hispanic households, 34 percent of households where the householder is under 25 years old, 45 percent of households where the householder is 65 or older, and 62 percent of single-parent, female-headed households. Local data on ALICE households is not available for people with disabilities, but in Pennsylvania 50 percent of people with disabilities have incomes below the ALICE threshold.

CONSIDERATIONS

Understanding how our population is changing is key to thoughtfully assessing our current county policies and developing new ones to deal with emerging trends. For example, an increasingly diverse population will require that we better understand how residents of various races and ethnicities have different needs for parks, transit, community facilities, and housing. An aging and more independent population will require a greater variety of affordable living arrangements and community services. Being prepared for these changes will not only better serve all our residents, but it will ensure we remain a county where people want to live and work, ensuring continued community vitality and economic growth for the decades to come.

Percent of Households Below the ALICE Threshold

Source: ALICE Threshold, United Way, 2021; Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates 2017-2021



Montgomery County government departments and boards play a role in furthering the county's comprehensive planning work. The Department of Health and Human Services provides a wide variety of services and support to the people of Montgomery County. That department's Community Connections Office is a first stop for residents who may need information or support from Montgomery County.



Additional maps and data are available at:
<https://montco-2050-1-montcopa.hub.arcgis.com>



Prepared by:
 Montgomery County Planning Commission, 2023

EXISTING LAND USE

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A wide variety of rural, suburban, and urban landscapes are found in Montgomery County. This diversity of land use types makes it easy for residents and visitors to find high-rise residential and office towers, suburban residential cul-de-sacs, suburban office and industrial parks, small town main streets, beautiful open spaces, nationally significant higher educational institutions, neighborhood schools, and quiet rural farmland. Montgomery County has so much that appeals to a wide variety of people for many reasons. The land area that makes up the county continues to develop and change, though the overall pace of development has slowed. Single-family detached residential is the largest single land use (by acreage) in Montgomery County.

DEVELOPED LAND OVER TIME

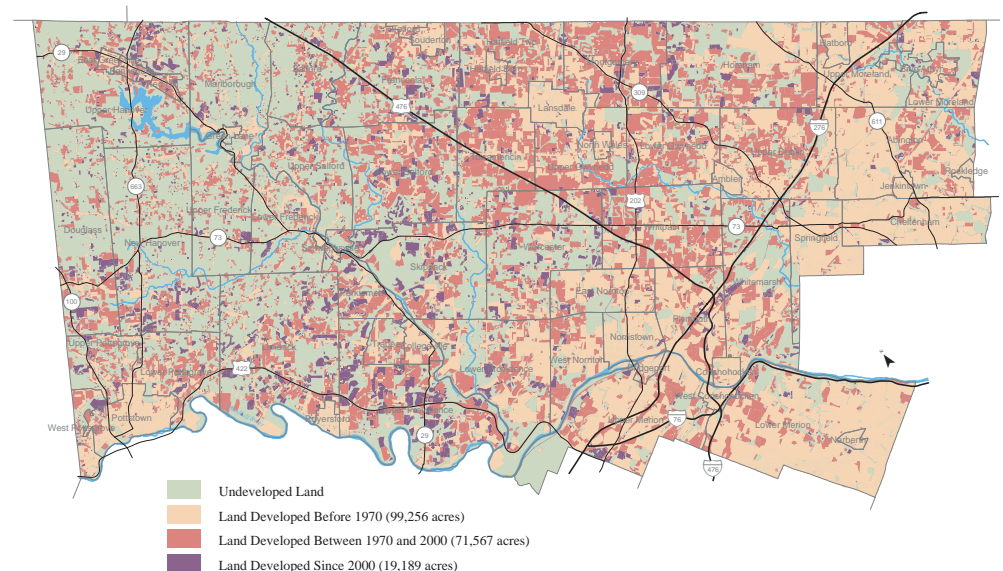
The county's land has developed gradually over many decades, with development consuming less open space in recent years. Each year from 2000 to 2010, approximately 1,280 acres of land was newly developed. From 2010 to 2020, that number dropped by half to 552 acres of newly developed land per year. Infill development has become a popular way of revitalizing neighborhoods and capitalizing on new opportunities for growth.

Change in land use has slowed over time, with smaller changes to all categories happening in recent years.

There are three main types of land use in the county: residential, nonresidential, and undeveloped. Since 2015, residential land uses make up the largest land use category (41 percent). Nonresidential developed land only increased by 1 percent between 2000 and 2020.

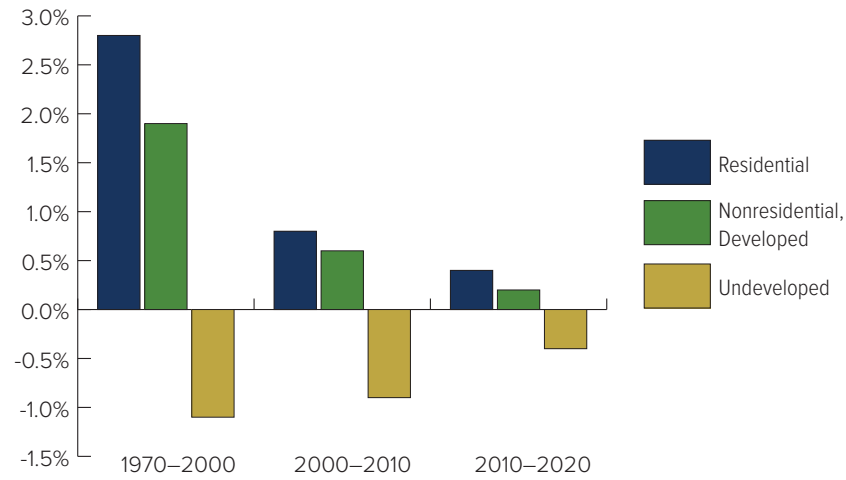
Land Developed Over Time

Source: MCPC, 2023



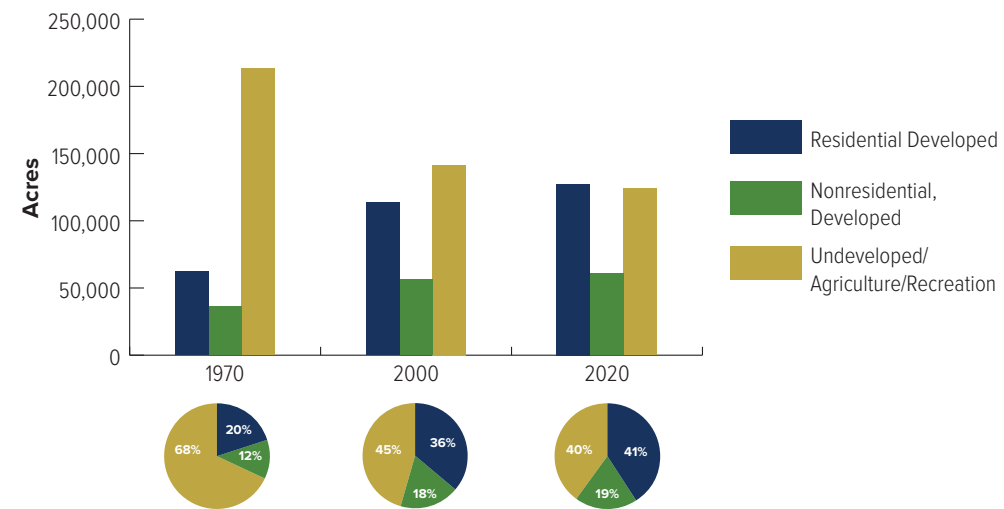
Annual Percent Change in Land Use Area

Source: MCPC



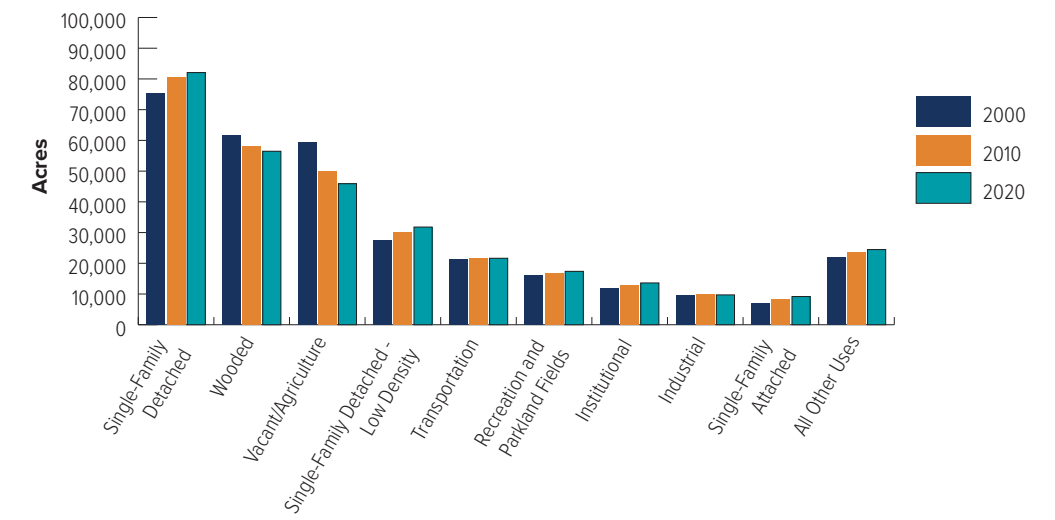
General Land Use Changes, 1970-2020

Source: MCPC



Changes in Largest Land Use Categories, 2000-2020

Source: MCPC



LAND USE BY CATEGORY

In examining specific land uses in the county, single-family detached housing covers the greatest acreage in the county and continues to grow. Institutional uses are prominent throughout the county and continue to increase in land area.

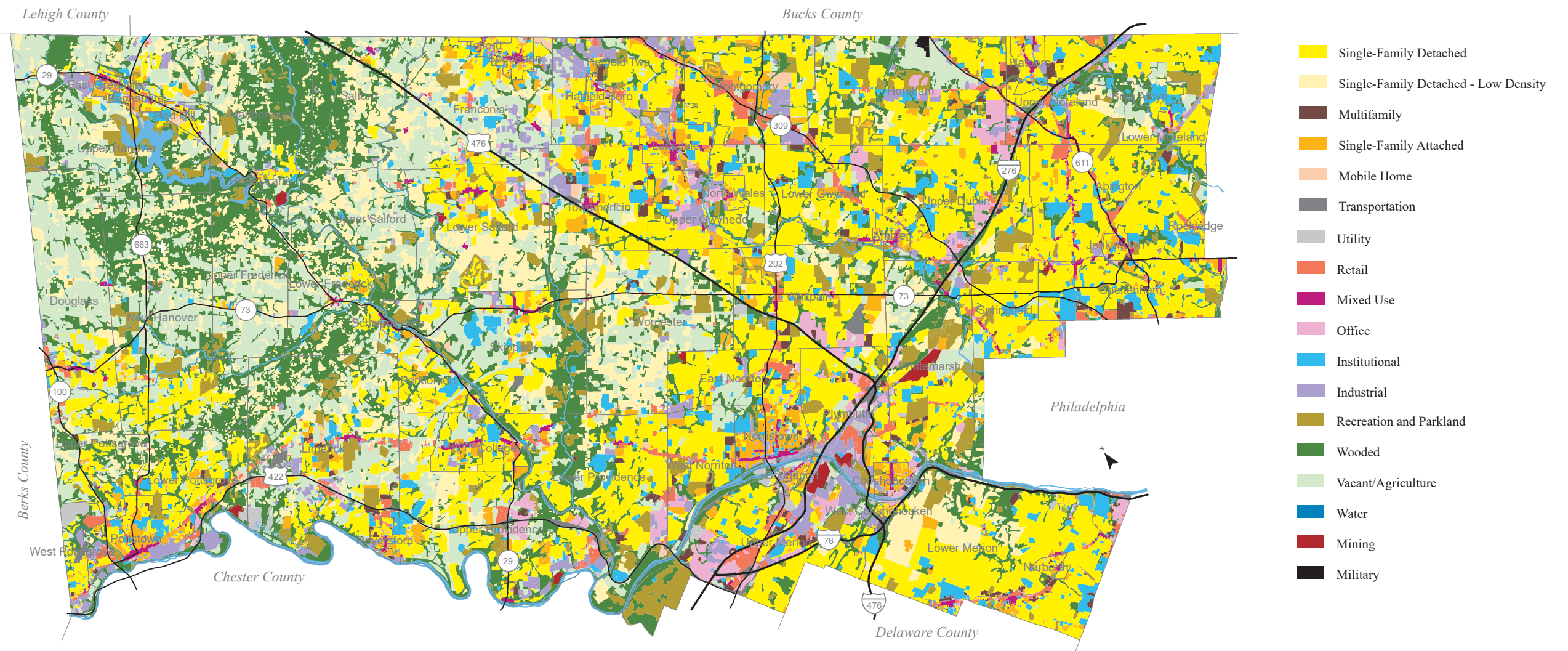
The acreage of undeveloped land continues to decline with the exception of recreation and parkland fields, which show a slight increase in recent decades. It is likely that some of the privately held wooded and vacant areas have become public park spaces.

Other land uses not shown individually in the above graph of largest land use category changes have 2 percent or less of land area. This includes multifamily housing, with only 1.2 percent of the county's land area. It should be noted that multifamily housing is a very efficient land use. With only a small portion of the county's land area, it supplies 22 percent of total dwellings. Denser development types, like multifamily, allow for more preservation of open space area while still supplying housing for the county's residents.

The largest percentage increases in acreage from 2010 to 2020 have been in single-family attached (9 percent) and multifamily (9 percent) housing. Vacant or agricultural land had the largest percentage decrease, a drop of 8 percent.

Montgomery County Land Uses in 2020

Source: MCPC, 2020



TRENDS IN LAND USE CHANGE

We have generally seen an increase in development containing a mix of uses throughout the county. Areas that already contained some mixed use, such as our Main Street communities, are seeing infill development that adds additional housing units in mixed-use buildings. Other commercial areas, including office and industrial parks, are seeing infill and redevelopment that change the mix of uses there. We also continue to see a gradual decline in the number of golf courses in the county as they change to a variety of other uses, primarily housing. We have also seen the expansion of our institutional uses as a trend over the past ten years.

Office and Industrial Park Trends

Changes are being proposed to the mix of uses in Montgomery County's office and industrial parks, with retail and housing becoming more common in these areas. The graphs below show land development

proposals in eight of our largest office and industrial parks since 2010. These proposals involve adding residential units, increasing commercial and institutional uses, and reducing the acreage devoted to office use. We anticipate office and industrial areas to continue to evolve to include a wider variety of uses. In particular, the decline in acreage for office use may be a trend we see continue and potentially accelerate over time.

Golf Course Trends

Nationally, the number of golf courses peaked around 2005. Since then, the number of golf courses has gradually declined due to a decline in golf players. Montgomery County lost 9 percent of its golf course acreage (775 acres) in the past ten years. These courses have become housing (634 acres) and public parkland (141 acres). We anticipate continued conversion of golf courses to other uses in the coming years.

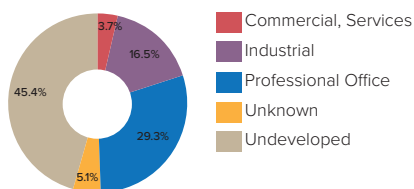
CONSIDERATIONS

While the ways in which land is used in Montgomery County continue to evolve, new development of undeveloped land has slowed significantly over the past decade. Changes are still occurring but at a slower pace than in the past. Acreage in the county devoted to housing of all kinds is now the largest category of land uses, and housing is the most significantly increasing land use.

Office or Industrial Park Pre-proposal Land Use

By Percentage of Total Acreage Proposed for Redevelopment

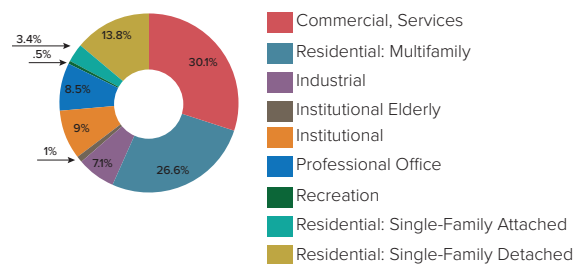
Source: MCPC



Office or Industrial Park Proposed Land Use

By Percentage of Total Acreage Proposed for Redevelopment

Source: MCPC



Montgomery County government departments and boards play a role in furthering the county's comprehensive planning work. The Recorder of Deeds and Board of Assessment Appeals offices in the County Administration track property boundaries, land use, land value, ownership, and other information related to land throughout Montgomery County.



Additional maps and data are available at:
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 Montgomery County Planning Commission, 2023

TRANSPORTATION BACKGROUND AND TRENDS



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Accelerating technological changes and disruptions to traditional commutes caused by the Covid-19 pandemic have resulted in unpredictable and still evolving transportation network usage in Montgomery County. Uncertainty about future changes affects how we plan our communities and provide for their transportation needs.

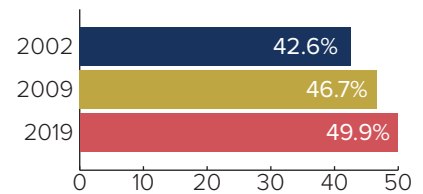
COMMUTING PATTERNS

Commutes for Montgomery County residents were growing in distance during the early twenty-first century, reflecting the trends of the time when employment was still largely focused on in-person work in major job centers, and housing was generally more affordable further away from Philadelphia.

Beginning as a result of the Covid-19 global pandemic in 2020, the availability of remote work has resulted in dramatic changes to transportation network usage in Montgomery County and around the world, with peak travel volumes distributed over more hours and increases in midday and evening vehicle trips. Most offices in the Philadelphia area now have between 25 percent and 50 percent worker occupancy on an average weekday.

Commuters Traveling More Than 10 Miles

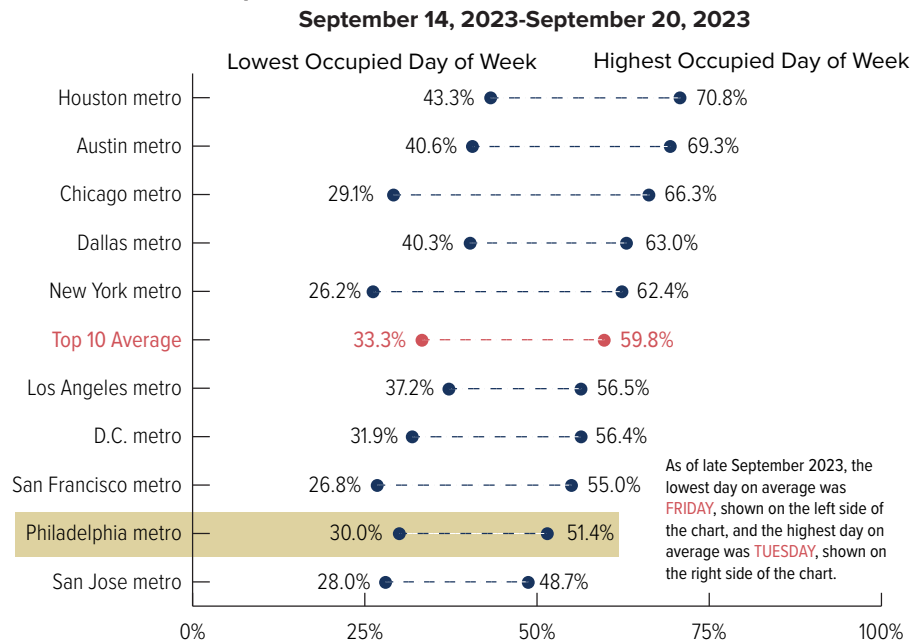
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, On the Map



Even with the increased levels of telecommuting, Philadelphia's roadway traffic has remained problematic, with the city experiencing the fourth highest level of congestion in the United States in 2022.

Ten-City Daily Analysis of Office Occupancy

Source: www.kastle.com/kastlesafespaces/



TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Most major county roadway traffic counts peaked prior to the Great Recession of 2007–2009 and have not handled the same daily volumes since. Traffic volumes have been generally flat since 2015.

TRAVEL TIME DISPARITIES

Most Montgomery County residents and workers use their own cars to get around each day. For those without access to a car, the alternatives include transit, biking, and walking. Approximately 77 percent of Montgomery County municipalities have transit service from SEPTA or PART within their borders, allowing residents and visitors travel choices. However, while a car can make a trip from Norristown to Colledgeville in 20 minutes, the travel time on transit is close to double with service only once per hour. According to a recent DVRPC study, the challenges for low-income residents to access transit range from cracked sidewalks, inadequate street lighting, and even elevation changes between their home and a transit route. Additionally, transit service reliability is an ongoing issue and can mean the difference between predictable commutes and missed engagements. The county continues to promote investment in infrastructure allowing for more transportation choices, especially in lower-income communities, with the goal of providing smoother travel in whatever mode of transportation a person selects.

BICYCLES AND FREIGHT

The county's complete streets policy promotes safe access for all users of a roadway, including motor vehicles (especially emergency vehicles), bicycles, transit, and pedestrians. The county encourages safe bicycle infrastructure to be installed wherever possible, as per the *Bike Montco: The Bicycle Plan for Montgomery County* planned network or by municipalities looking to create bicycle-friendly conditions on streets they own. Bicycle travel volumes on roadways and trails were increasing even before the pandemic, and continue to grow, as county residents and visitors continue to seek a more active and environmentally sustainable lifestyle.

The increased development of major warehouses has drawn attention to truck and tractor-trailer travel throughout the county. While

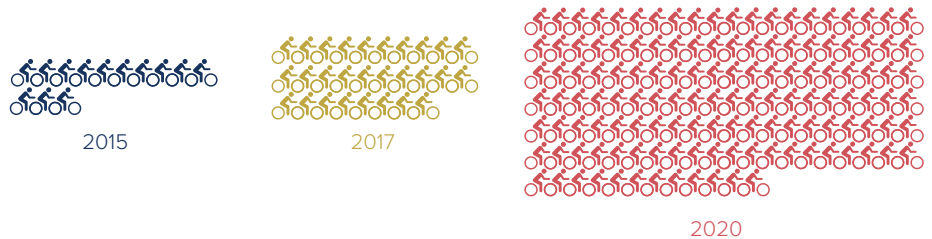
Traffic Volume Over Time

Source: DVRPC

	2005-2007	2010	2014-2016
I-76 (Schuylkill Expressway) between Hollow Rd & Belmont Ave	129,425	112,212	118,654
I-476 (NE Extension) between Balligomingo Rd & Front St	128,198	113,173	112,965
US 422 between PA 363 & Schuylkill River Bridge	89,152	74,444	78,189
PA 100 between Rick Rd & Grosser Rd	24,216	19,074	21,415
I-476 (NE Extension) between I-276 (PA Turnpike) & Hickory Rd	66,645	62,422	59,073
PA 309 near PA 152 (Easton Road)	38,459	33,201	44,251
I-276 (PA Turnpike) between Stenton Ave & Joshua Rd	130,080	114,675	127,535

The number of daily on-road bicyclists along Susquehanna Road in Abington Township from Cumberland Rd to Arbuta Rd increased tenfold over 5 years

Source: DVRPC Bicycle Counts



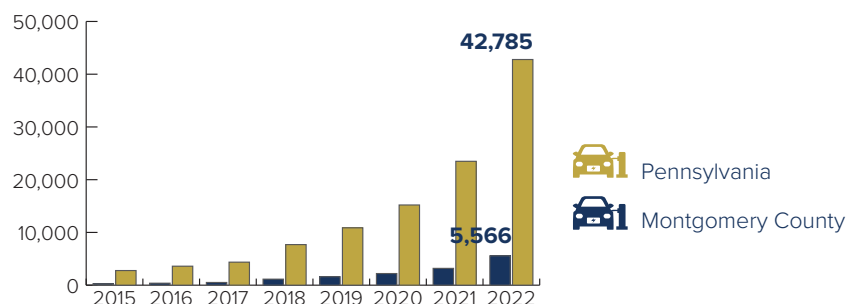
the county is not under as much pressure to cede development areas to warehouses as in the Lehigh Valley or the New Jersey Turnpike corridor, some larger-scale warehouses have been constructed or proposed along the Northeast Extension and US 422 corridors. E-commerce usage and growth accelerated during the pandemic but it remains unclear how delivery logistics will evolve as in-person shopping becomes viable again. It is likely that the convenience of home deliveries will continue to encourage the growth of warehousing across the region.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE USAGE

Montgomery County is at the forefront of a trend toward increased electrification of motor vehicles. The county has one of the highest adoption rates of electric car ownership in Pennsylvania, and hundreds of public vehicle charging stations already have been installed around the county. Federal and state grant programs to install additional charging infrastructure will continue to support the transition of the county's vehicle fleet to an electric-powered fleet.

Electric Vehicle Ownership in Pennsylvania and Montgomery County

Source: PennDOT





SEPTA 132 Bus, Souderton Borough

TRANSIT

Public transportation in Montgomery County, as provided by SEPTA and Pottstown Area Rapid Transit (PART), faces difficult challenges. While traffic volumes on certain roadways in the county are close to their pre-pandemic levels, transit ridership remains substantially lower than pre-pandemic levels, especially for regional rail services connecting the county with Center City Philadelphia.

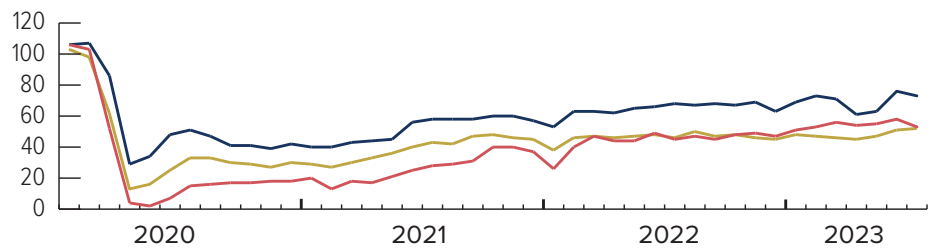
By December 2022, ridership on SEPTA's 38 county bus routes recovered to 61 percent of 2019 levels (similar to the 63 percent figure for the entire system at that time), while individual routes ranged anywhere from 33 percent to 78 percent. Regional Rail routes and the Norristown High-Speed Line (part of Metro) have even lower passenger counts, reaching only about half of pre-pandemic levels.

Remote work, competition from ridesharing services, passenger safety fears, and the unpredictability of service due to a shortage of operators continues to negatively impact public transit usage.

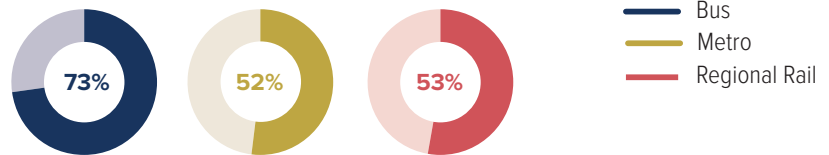
SEPTA's *Bus Revolution* and *Reimagining Regional Rail* projects are ongoing efforts to remake the system to provide more frequent service in areas with high transit demand. Both initiatives will take years and millions of dollars to fully realize, but they have the potential to go beyond traditional weekday work commuters to serve more county citizens.

SEPTA Systemwide Post-Pandemic Ridership Recovery

Source: <https://data.septa.org/>



Data current as of July 2023



CAPITAL PROJECTS

Multiple challenging factors impact infrastructure improvements for Montgomery County's transportation network, resulting in less overall investment per capita over time.

- Reductions in gas consumption, both from fewer miles traveled and rising use of electric vehicles, means fewer gasoline taxes collected that are available to municipalities for maintenance or the state for funding capital projects.
- Inflation increases costs for raw materials and labor for transportation projects already under construction or in the regional funding pipeline above what was originally expected.

- A shift in emphasis toward safety and repair projects at the regional level means more dollars are spent on the rehabilitation of roads, bridges, and transit structures than on the construction of new or improved facilities.

While major expansions to roadway capacity are being achieved during the mid-2020s (such as the widening of US Route 202 in the central part of the county and the construction of the PA Route 309 Connector in the Indian Valley region), these projects have long been planned and engineered. The expectation is that future construction projects will focus on operational improvements to arterials as well as preservation of the existing road network.

SAFETY

Despite improvements in vehicle safety features, road design, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and traffic signs, the number of fatal crashes remains fairly consistent, peaking in 2018 with 50 deaths across Montgomery County.

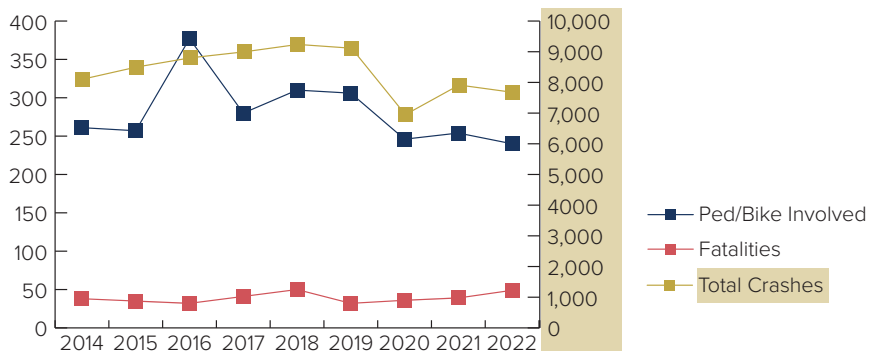
The traffic pattern changes during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a significant decrease in the number of vehicle crashes around the county, but the number of crashes involving fatalities or serious injuries actually increased over 2019 levels. Most of the county's vehicle crashes are concentrated along principal arterials, such as Ridge Pike, PA-63, PA-463 and PA-611, and on major highways such as the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-276), the Schuylkill Expressway (I-76), and US-422.

CONSIDERATIONS

As the world recalibrates after the Covid-19 pandemic, some of the most impactful changes to our daily lives center around the use of transportation. A variety of transportation choices will continue to be important for residents and visitors. We will continue to monitor data to understand the evolving transportation world.

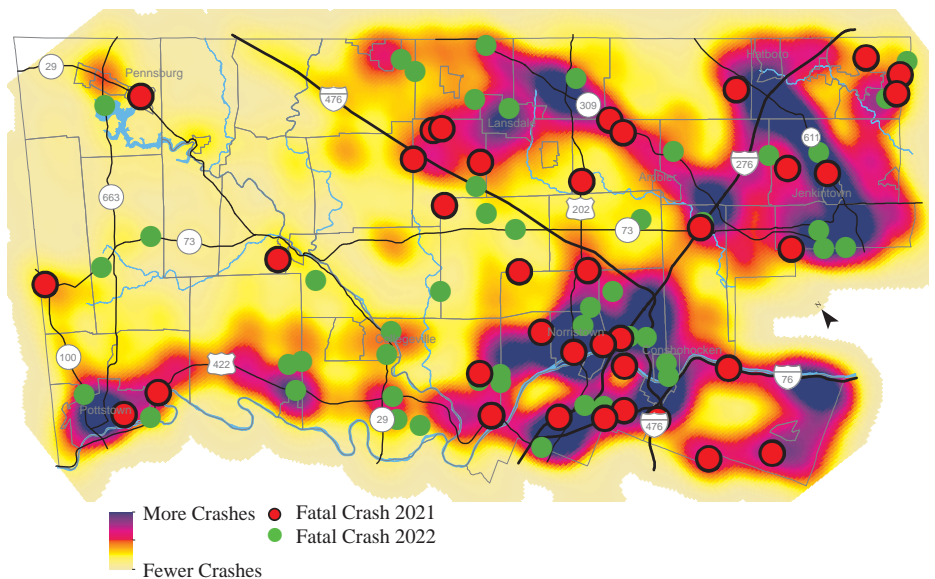
Total Vehicular Crashes Versus Pedestrian- and Bicycle-Involved Crashes

Source: PennDOT



Vehicular Crashes, 2021–2022

Source: PennDOT, 2022



Montgomery County government departments and boards play a role in furthering the county's comprehensive planning work. The Roads & Bridges Division, part of the Department of Assets and Infrastructure, maintains 131 county-owned bridges and more than 75 miles of county-owned roads. Updates on ongoing and completed projects can be found at <https://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/4177/Ongoing-Completed-Projects>.



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PRESERVATION AND RECREATION

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Montgomery County hosts a diversity of recreation and preservation assets which collectively benefit the economy, the environment, and quality of life for residents, workers, and visitors. The expansion of these assets has increased the priority people place on their availability and accessibility. While the term “infrastructure” is commonly thought of as power grids and highways, other assets, such as trails, county parks, open spaces, preserved farms, and historic resources, are increasingly perceived as essential to the core infrastructure that makes Montgomery County a great place to live, work, and visit.

TRAILS

The Primary Trail Network (PTN) represents the existing and proposed arteries of the countywide trail system. Some of the PTN is built and maintained by the county; other portions are locally constructed and managed. Overall, the PTN provides the geographic framework for trail access across the county.

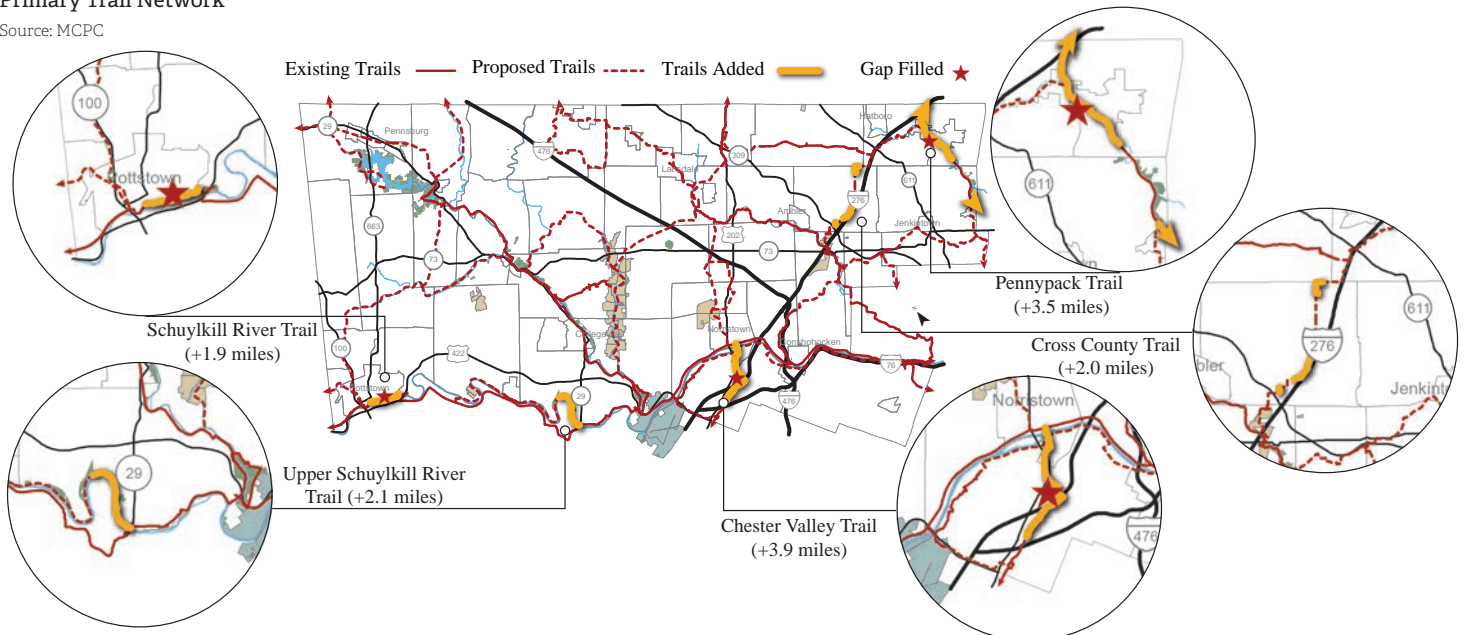
As of 2023, approximately 99 miles of the PTN have been constructed by the county and local partners. Since 2015, five trail segments, totaling 13.4 miles, were added to the PTN. Of these, three closed a missing “gap” in the system. As more trail miles are added and gaps

are closed, accessibility will improve and the PTN will become a more robust transportation and recreation resource.

Connections to local trails via the PTN provide access to our distinctive municipalities. Approximately 100 connections to 94 miles of local trails are available from the PTN. Connecting our communities with trails boosts the diversity of our trail users, improves access to the trail system, increases opportunities for exercise, provides transportation options, and raises awareness of trails throughout the region.

Primary Trail Network

Source: MCPC



COUNTY PARKS

County parks are publicly accessible properties the county owns and actively manages. Currently, the county manages 15 parks and historic sites comprising 5,900 acres. While county parks have always been popular destinations for outdoor recreation, the Covid-19 pandemic quickly escalated public demand for these outdoor facilities. Historic sites, which typically offer more indoor facilities and programming, saw somewhat diminished use during the pandemic.

Between 2018 and 2022, county parks, including the Schuylkill River, Pennypack, and Perkiomen Trails, saw an increase in attendance of 64 percent, representing 1.3 million visitors. While the pandemic contributed to increased attendance, the popularity of these resources was already growing due to the expansion of the trail system and heightened public awareness of parks and trails. The county park system, in its entirety, provides enormous recreational and economic value to the county.

OPEN SPACE

Montgomery County has a strong record of open space preservation over the last 30 years, driven by a broad understanding that open space provides innumerable benefits—economic, recreational, and environmental—as demonstrated in the recent *Return on Environment: The Economic Impact*



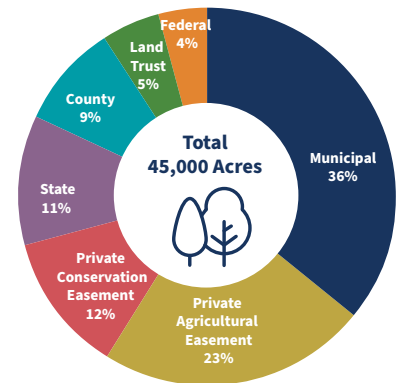
The Highlands, Whitmarsh Township

of Protected Open Space in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania study. Federal, state, county, and local governments, and nonprofit organizations, primarily land trusts, are responsible for the success of these preservation efforts. Protection mechanisms include fee acquisitions, conservation easements, and agricultural easements.

As of 2015, approximately 42,200 acres of open space, including preserved farmland, were permanently preserved throughout the county. By June 2023, an additional 1,362 acres of farmland were preserved under the county's farmland preservation program and another 1,420 acres of other open space were preserved, bringing the total to just under 45,000 preserved acres. Development pressure will continue to be the greatest challenge to open space preservation. Given the diversity of development patterns across

Protected Open Space in Montgomery County by Ownership Type

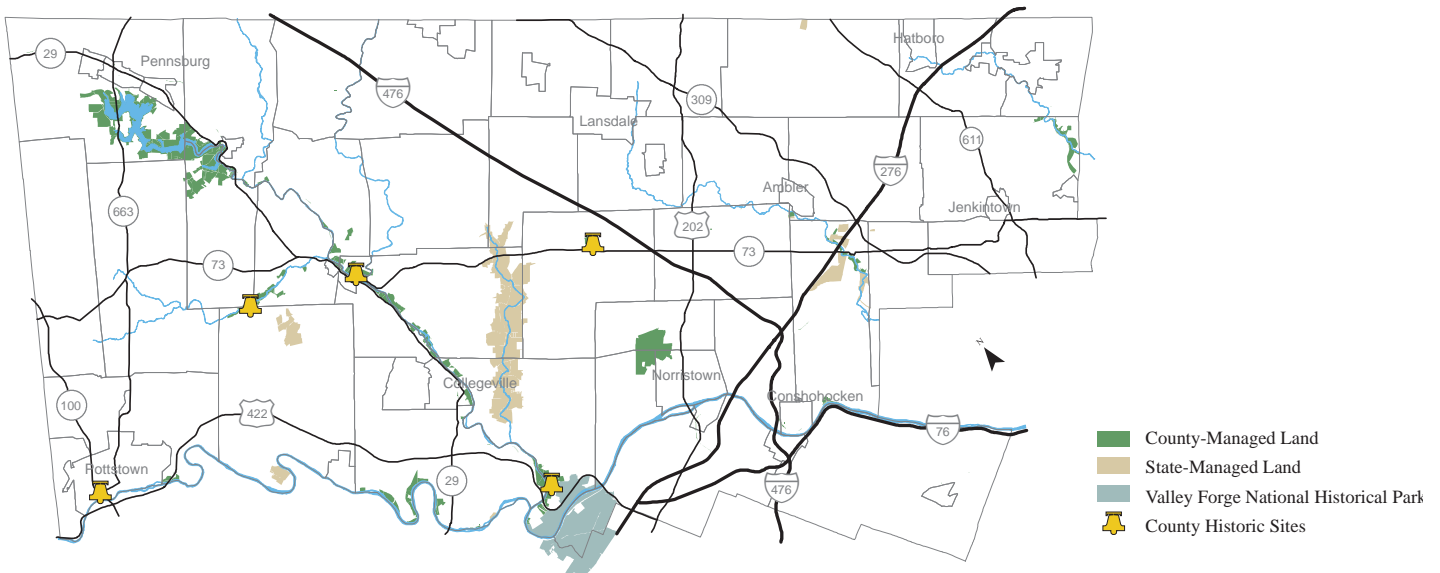
Source: Montgomery County (2021), Econsult Solutions, Inc. (2021)



Park to Perkiomen Trail Connector, Upper Salford Township

Federal, State, and County Land and Historic Sites

Source: MCPC



the county, the question of how we collectively define, utilize, and preserve open space will continue to be a key consideration.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic resources contribute to Montgomery County's rich culture and heritage. Preserving and adaptively reusing these resources demonstrates a respect for the unique history and character of our communities and balances new development. The identification, preservation, and enhancement of historic resources largely happens at the municipal level. This might be achieved by integrating historic preservation programs and policies into comprehensive and economic development planning, reviewing proposed changes to historic structures, and using regulatory tools for the protection of historic resources.

Currently, 33 of our municipalities have ordinances related to historic preservation. Of those, 11 were either enhanced or newly adopted since 2014. Across the county, there are 19 municipally-appointed historic boards or commissions that provide advice to their respective elected officials to inform local decision-making processes.



Peter Wentz Farmstead, Worcester Township



**33
Municipalities**

Thirty-three of Montgomery County's 62 municipalities have ordinances related to historic preservation.



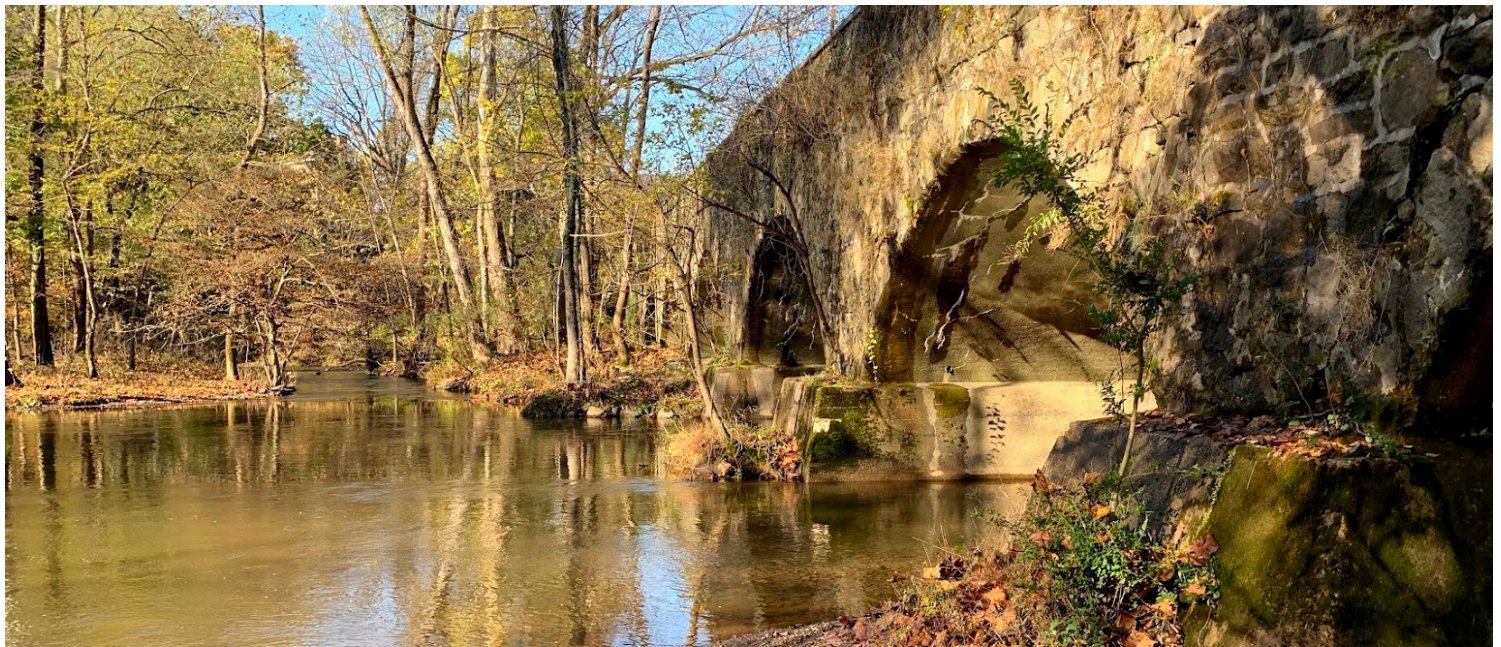
**11 New
Ordinances**

Of these, eleven ordinances were newly adopted or improved between 2014 and 2023.



**19 Historic
Boards or
Commissions**

Nineteen municipalities have municipally-appointed historic boards or commissions that serve elected officials in an advisory capacity.



Perkiomen Trail Bridge, Upper Frederick Township

PRESERVED FARMLAND

Montgomery County's efforts to preserve farmland have produced significant results that strengthen the county's cultural and operational landscape. In addition to the crops and livestock they produce, farms also support substantial economic activity, provide environmental services, and generate direct-use benefits.

As of the 2017 Census of Agriculture, which catalogs all farms, there were 565 farms in Montgomery County, covering approximately 31,000 acres, with an average farm size of 55 acres. Over the past ten years, the total acreage of preserved farmland jumped 15 percent, or approximately 1,500 acres, to a total of 10,457 acres in 2022. The number of preserved farms increased about 20 percent, increasing from 154 in 2015 to 185 in 2022.

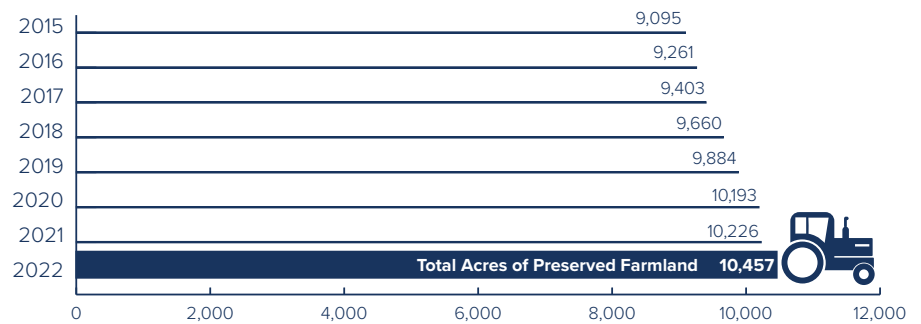
Paralleling this success story, challenges within the culture and operations of the farming community persist. Family farms, representing 90 percent of the county's farms, are confronting a generational dynamic where 30 percent of farmers are over 65 years old while the succeeding generation may be seeking different education and career paths. The financial viability of farming is also under siege by inflation and higher costs. As a result, some farms are exploring alternative revenue streams, such as agritourism (e.g., hay rides, pick-your-own crops, corn mazes) to supplement the more conventional farm revenues.

CONSIDERATIONS

Montgomery County has already taken important steps to preserve and protect many environmental, recreational, historical, and agricultural resources that serve residents and visitors. The preservation of this type of infrastructure and collaboration with municipal and regional partners will help Montgomery County continue to thrive in the future.

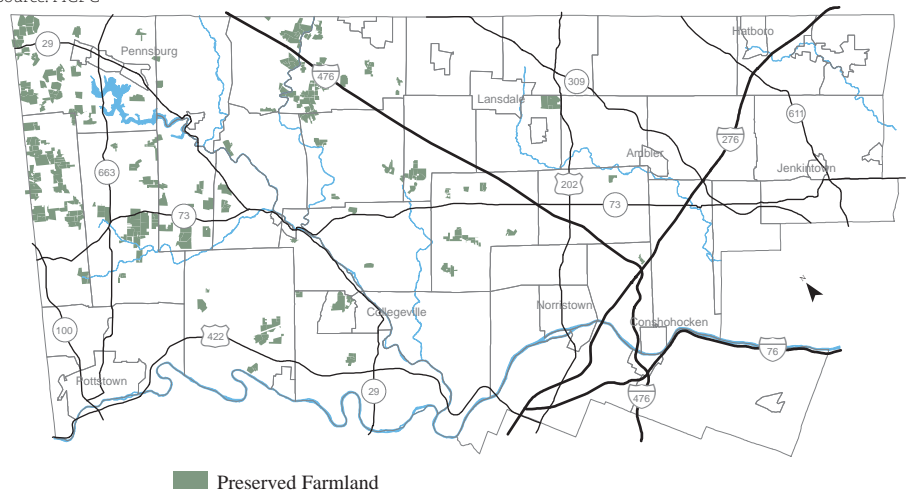
Total Acres of Preserved Farmland

Source: MCPC



Preserved Farmland

Source: MCPC



Peter Wentz Farmstead, Worcester Township

Other departments play a role in furthering the county's comprehensive planning work.

The Department of Assets and Infrastructure manages all physical county assets. The Division of Parks, Trails, and Historic Sites provides maintenance and programming for county-owned parks, trails, and historic sites.



Additional maps and data are available at:
<https://montco-2050-1-montcopa.hub.arcgis.com>



Prepared by:
 Montgomery County Planning Commission, 2023

ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS

BACKGROUND AND TRENDS



MONTCO

A Comprehensive Plan for a Changing World

- People and Population
- Existing Land Use
- Transportation
- Preservation and Recreation
- Environmental Systems**
- Infrastructure and Utilities
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Health
- Government and Community Facilities

Montgomery County is comprised of many environmental systems that serve a critical role in protecting the natural environment and human health. Environmental systems include all the ways our ecosystems, the natural world, the built environment, and people interact with each other. Scientific studies demonstrate/project that Montgomery County will continue to experience extreme heat, and more intense and frequent storm events will occur. Understanding the environmental systems and populations that will be affected by climate change and development pressures is critical for our communities as they adapt and become more resilient.

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE

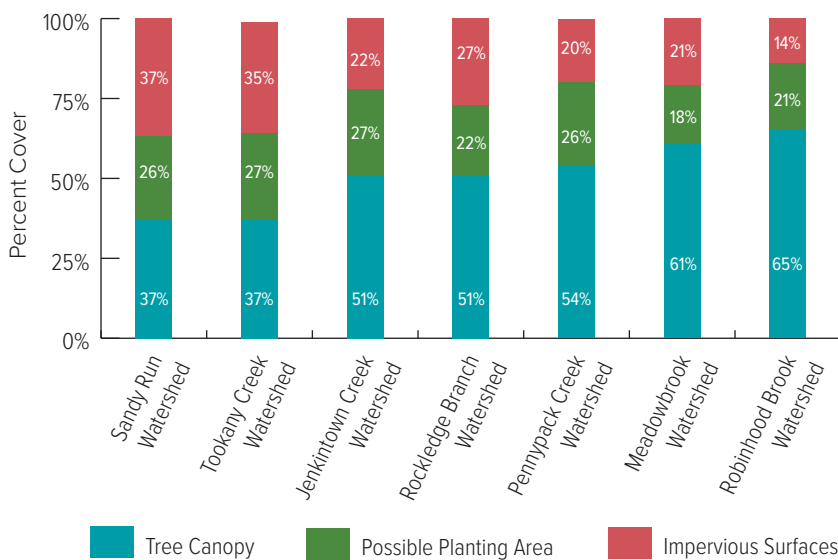
Environmental infrastructure is a community's natural systems and the services they provide. Ecosystems, such as wetlands, steep slopes, riparian areas, floodplains, tree canopies, bodies of water, and all other natural systems, are present in the county. Environmental infrastructure is crucial for its ability to detain and manage stormwater, improve water quality, improve air quality, control erosion, provide species habitat, and serve as a sink for greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change will

impact the county's environmental infrastructure in specific ways, but its infrastructure will definitely experience the loss of certain species and the introduction of new species due to the changing environment.

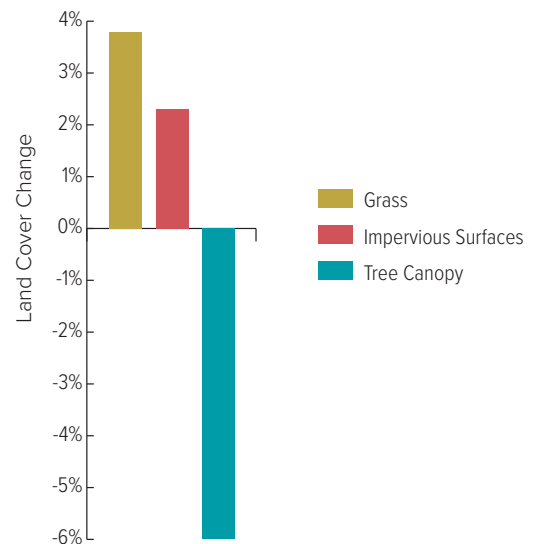
The development of buildings, roads, and other public works in sensitive areas also threatens our environmental systems. Over the past ten years, 23,320 housing units and 17,624,025 square feet of nonresidential construction have been built in Montgomery County. While most buildings are developed responsibly, some of this development has occurred in

Abington Township's Existing and Potential Planting Areas

Source: Abington Township, 2017



Plantable space represents the upper limit of possible plant space



Loss of Abington Township average canopy between 2004 and 2017, based on Google Earth imagery

environmentally sensitive areas or has not been constructed in a way that protects our environmental systems. Development can diminish/erode the benefits provided by the environmental infrastructure without replacing or replicating it and can also degrade nearby areas. Our communities are confronting this challenge by taking measures to protect environmental infrastructure through the development process by restoring and preserving the infrastructure where possible. Abington Township's *Interactive Urban Forest Story Map* is an excellent example of a municipality studying a segment of their environmental infrastructure and creating actions based on scientific data.



Naturalized stormwater basin at Germantown Academy, Whitemarsh Township

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Managing stormwater remains a challenge for Montgomery County. Climate change has increased precipitation totals and the severity of storm events. Our communities are working to manage stormwater using the best methods available with the goal of replicating pre-development hydrology. Best management practices incorporate green stormwater infrastructure (GSI), such as naturalized basins, constructed wetlands, rain gardens, and riparian corridor enhancements to help manage stormwater. State and

federal regulations continually require stricter stormwater standards, which are challenging for municipalities to meet without updated ordinances, enforcement of stormwater policies, and the construction of stormwater management projects. As a result, many municipalities in the county are considering imposing stormwater fees to help fund the implementation of stormwater management projects.

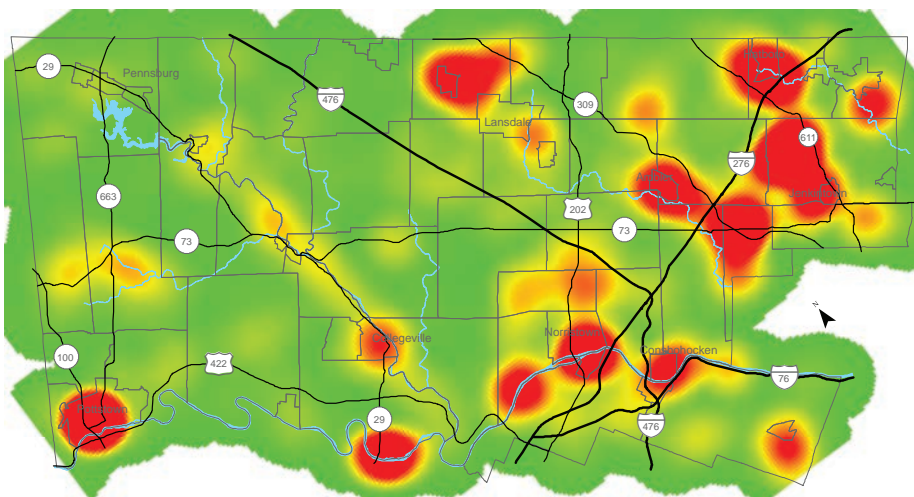
FLOODING

Development disruptions within the floodplain, climate change, and outdated stormwater management facilities contribute to flooding events across Montgomery County. Floodplains are seeing more intense flooding, and floods are occurring in areas where they have not previously. Flooding is caused by large amounts of rain in short periods of time, which overwhelm stormwater management controls. The county and region have also experienced sustained development

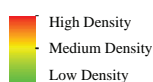
Structures Built in the 100 Year Floodplain

These structures may be most vulnerable to flooding due to their proximity to floodways.

Source: MCPC, 2022



Structures Built in the 100 Year Floodplain 2000-2023



From FEMA data, through 2020
Montgomery County contains



677 structures with repeated flood damage that have received almost

\$100 million
(\$ 99,692,852.71)

in flood insurance payments.

in attractive floodplain areas, which has changed the hydrology of the floodplains and worsened the impact of flooding events. Increased flooding has a myriad of effects such as loss of life, damage to homes and possessions, increased flood insurance costs,

decreased home values, and increased costs to make buildings and communities more resilient. Our communities strive to ensure that equity is addressed during flood events and that everyone has opportunities to protect themselves from these dangers.

IDENTIFICATION OF VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

To ensure that all populations of Montgomery County are represented in the efforts to become more sustainable and resilient to climate change, it is necessary to identify the various populations that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Vulnerabilities come from economic factors, racial identity, geographic location, gender, language barriers, access to services, and various other contributing factors. Stakeholders in the county work to identify the vulnerable populations in their communities, understand why they are vulnerable, and create avenues for outreach to those who are most vulnerable. The *Montgomery County Climate Change Potential Vulnerability Assessment* is a tool that helps identify vulnerable populations using demographic data and heat island mapping, along with current and historical flood event information. The map shows the areas of the county that are ranked above average for both climate change impacts and vulnerable populations with examples of the types of populations residing in those areas.

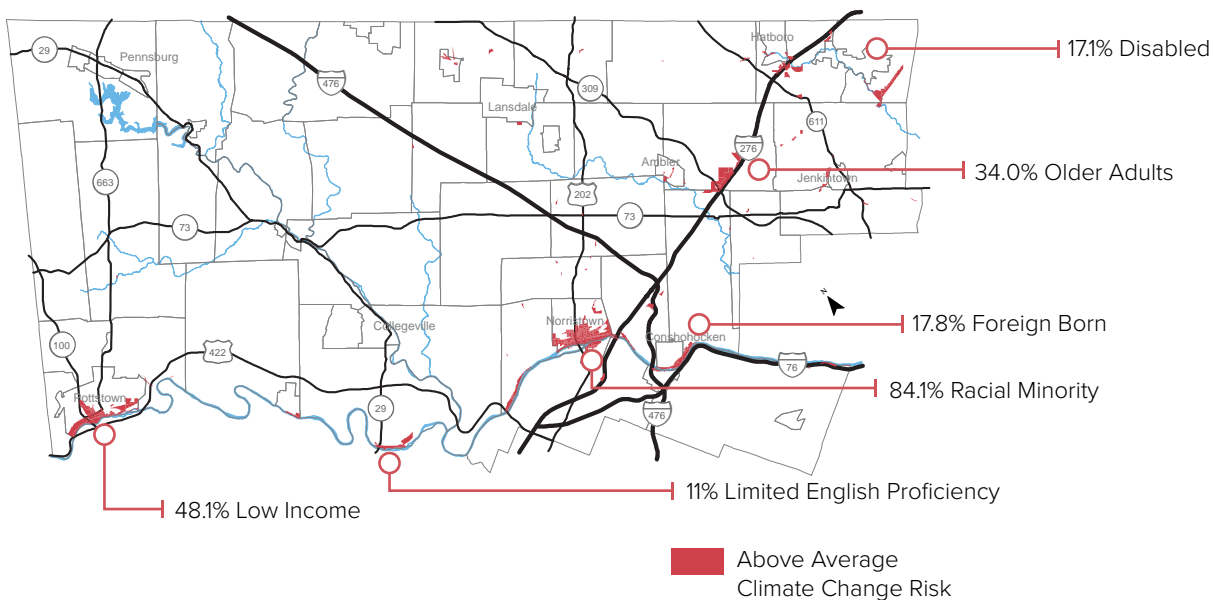


Flooding Tower Bridge II, West Conshohocken Borough

Spotlight on Vulnerable Populations in Montgomery County

Areas most vulnerable to climate change and examples of vulnerable population types

Source: MCPC, 2022



SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY IN PLANNING AND PROJECTS

The Montgomery County Hazard Mitigation Plan is the cornerstone of the county's efforts to identify the natural disaster risks and vulnerabilities that are common in the county and develop long-term strategies for protecting people and property from hazardous events. Montgomery County augments these efforts through related planning efforts and policies. The county continues to implement Greenprint for Montgomery County: Climate Action Plan and work on internal sustainability efforts. Many of our communities are also taking a leadership role in promoting sustainability. Cheltenham Township, Collegetown Borough, Pottstown Borough, Lower Merion Township, Abington Township, and Narberth Borough have all drafted plans that will guide sustainability and climate change mitigation efforts.

Stakeholders throughout the county are working collaboratively on sustainability, energy, and greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts. This includes state and federal agencies, organizations such as DVRPC and SEPTA, municipalities, and private organizations working to increase their ability to affect change. Not only are the organizations in the county planning around sustainability and climate change; they are working to implement projects that will have a positive impact on the county. These projects include stormwater management, renewable energy, building energy conservation, and outreach projects. Through sustainability planning and project implementation, Montgomery County is preparing for a changing future.

CONSIDERATIONS

Our environmental systems are critical to the success and well-being of the county. These systems are threatened by climate change and development in environmentally sensitive areas. The county is tackling the challenge of protecting our environmental systems through sustainability planning and projects that strive to create equitable solutions.



A residence being elevated as a resiliency measure after incurring flood damage during Hurricane Ida, Upper Providence Township

Montgomery County government departments and boards play a role in furthering the county's comprehensive planning work.

The Conservation District Board directs the district staff to work toward controlling flooding, reducing soil erosion, implementing stormwater management, and preserving the quality of dams, reservoirs, harbors, air, wildlife, and public land. The Department of Public Safety works to keep residents safe when environmental hazards are unanticipated and overwhelming.



Additional maps and data are available at:
<https://montco-2050-1-montcopa.hub.arcgis.com>



Prepared by:
Montgomery County Planning Commission, 2023

INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

BACKGROUND AND TRENDS



MONTCO

A Comprehensive Plan for a Changing World

People and Population

Existing Land Use

Transportation

Preservation and Recreation

Environmental Systems

**Infrastructure and
Utilities**

Economic Development

Housing

Health

Government and Community
Facilities

Montgomery County relies on various systems and infrastructure that allow our communities to function. Our households and businesses depend upon the swift, safe daily delivery of power, water, and internet service. Sewer and trash services provide necessary disposal of waste products. While most infrastructure and utility systems in Montgomery County function adequately, new and more efficient systems will always be on the horizon. Changes in how we get our energy, what we do with our waste, and who manages our infrastructure will affect future reliability and effectiveness of these services.

ENERGY

The county is currently undergoing electrification — the process that replaces fossil fuel power sources, such as coal, oil, and natural gas, with electricity generated from renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, hydropower, and geothermal. Solar is the most common renewable energy source and the most practical installation; there are no hydroelectric facilities in the county yet.

Solar Power – Photovoltaic Systems

Pennsylvania ranks 30th among the fifty states for megawatts of solar power installed (1,002 megawatts powering 121,001 homes, according to Forbes). While Pennsylvania ranks low, Montgomery County is among the top five Pennsylvania counties for photovoltaic (PV) generation – 48.73 MW_{DC}. This is enough to

power 6,335 households. The county is also in the top five statewide for the number of systems: 3,310. The graphic below depicts the increase in the number of solar energy systems in the county, and the cumulative electric power generated by solar over time.

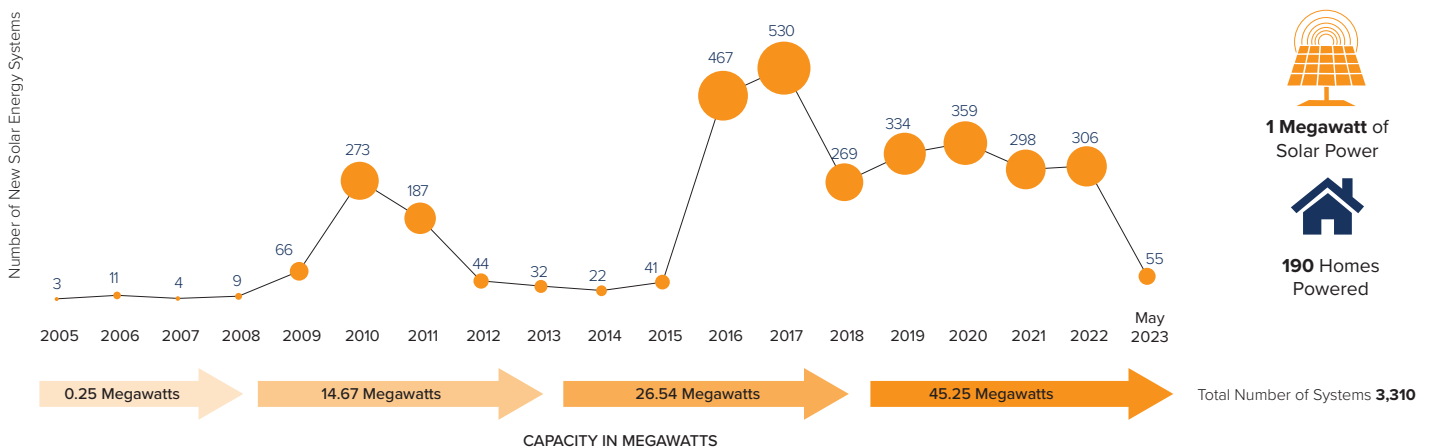
Montgomery County participates in the Delaware Valley Regional Planning



Solar Panels on Captain Carwash, Worcester Township

New Solar Energy Systems Added Annually and Total Capacity

Source: PJM



1 Megawatt of
Solar Power



190 Homes
Powered

Commission's (DVRPC) efforts to reduce the soft costs associated with installing solar photovoltaic (PV) systems. Soft costs include permitting fees, inspection fees, customer acquisition, installation, and utility interconnection. Soft costs can account for up to 64 percent of the total installed cost of a rooftop PV system.

Pennsylvania offers two programs that support the development of residential solar power systems: net metering, a billing mechanism that credits solar energy system owners for the electricity they add to the grid, and solar renewable energy certificates (SRECs), where for every 1,000 kWh of energy generated by solar panels, the owner can sell the certificates to local energy companies for current market value. In 2021, the going rate for these credits was between \$24 and \$41.

The county's Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) Program enables property owners to obtain low cost, long-term financing for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Up to 100 percent funding of total project costs can be obtained through a voluntary assessment (annual payment) on the property that repays the costs of the upgrades.

DVRPC's Alternative Energy Ordinance Working Group brings together leadership

from counties and municipalities to support the safe development of small-scale renewable energy systems. The county's involvement has been to assist with the development of model renewable energy ordinances for solar, geothermal, and wind technologies.

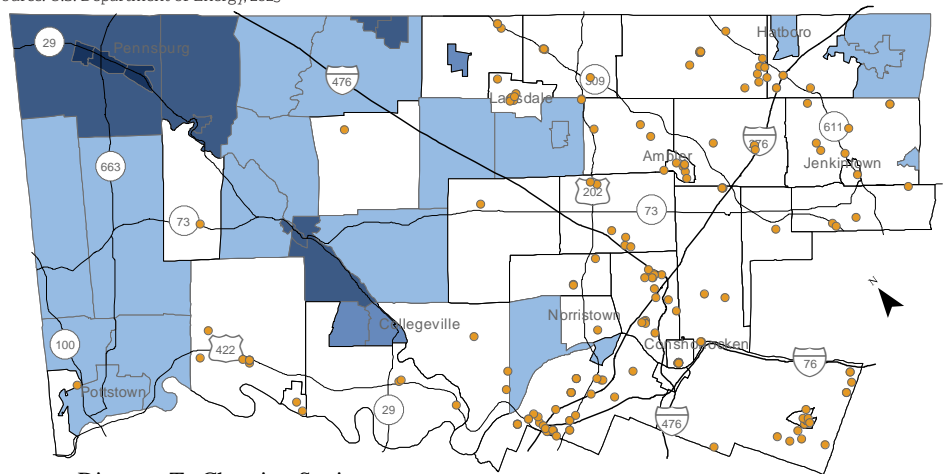
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

With the advent of electric vehicles (EV) and their increasing popularity, the demand for electric vehicle charging stations continues to grow. Many, though not all, EV charging stations are solar powered. Charging stations can be installed to encourage people to purchase

electric vehicles, or their installation can be delayed until the density of electric vehicles in an area is enough to support the cost of installation by the public sector. While the county and other public entities have provided some charging stations at public locations, it is predominantly a private sector endeavor, with retail, grocery stores, malls, and car dealerships installing stations to attract customers. From a public safety perspective, consideration should be given to their placement in public places because the station locations need to be accessible to emergency vehicles in case of a fire or safety issue.

EV Charging Stations

Source: U.S. Department of Energy, 2023



Distance To Charging Station By Municipality

- Contains Charging Station
 - Less Than 1 Mile
 - 1 to 2 Miles
 - 2 to 5 Miles
 - Over 5 Miles
- Electric Vehicle Charging Locations



SORA West, the county's first C-PACE approved project, Conshohocken Borough



EV charging station installed in a grocery store parking lot, Upper Merion Township

MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT

Montgomery County annually generates approximately 1.1 tons per person of municipal solid waste. Population and waste generation rates are steadily increasing, but because recycling remains flat, a smaller percentage of total waste is being recycled. Recycling reduces the waste that needs to be landfilled or incinerated and reduces greenhouse gases by 2.6 Million Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (MMTCO2E) statewide.

Montgomery County adopted its [municipal waste management plan](#) in 2015. The waste management plan demonstrates that adequate disposal capacity has been contracted with various disposal sites to accommodate the county's municipal solid waste for the next ten years. The plan also describes efforts to maximize recycling rates.

WATER AND SEWAGE FACILITIES

Privatization of public water and sewer systems is a recent trend. There are 43 municipal sewage treatment plants and 17 municipal and private water suppliers operating in the county. Over the past seven years, five municipal sewage systems have been purchased by private water companies. The sale of two others, Norristown and Towamencin, were challenged by public protest and their fate is still unclear. System purchase price ranged from \$13 million to \$75 million.

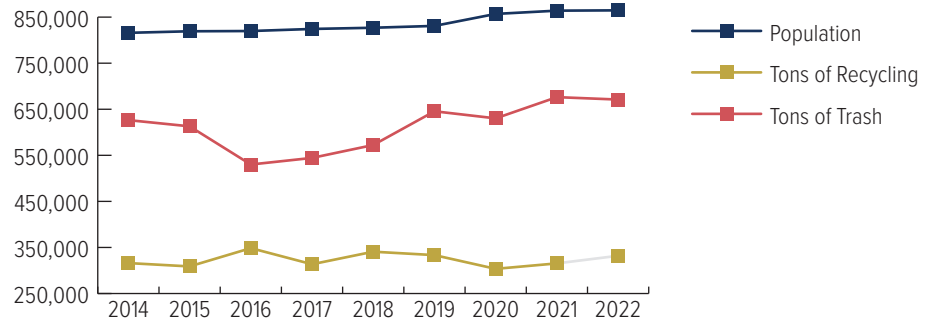
There are benefits to privatization. The resources of private companies enable them to more easily upgrade systems and address water quality issues such as PFAS contamination. There are also drawbacks, such as the potential for rate increases, which is of concern to the public. After the initial period of rate stabilization, rates increased between \$20 and \$40 per quarter for the five purchased systems. Privatized systems may be run as a business without consideration of comprehensive land use or sewage facilities planning, which is a concern for the municipalities and the county.

Sewage Facilities Planning

Outdated municipal sewage facilities plans do not reflect the current county or municipal comprehensive plan recommendations. Provision of sewer and water service can

Trash and Recycling Disposal (With Population) in Montgomery County

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection



direct growth where the comprehensive plan recommends higher-density development. An updated sewage facilities plan can support these recommendations. Out-of-date plans can lead to challenges and legal decisions that force municipalities to extend sewer and water to areas where higher density is not desired.

While Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is responsible for enforcing sewage facilities planning requirements, the county can assist municipalities by providing population growth and development data.

Municipal Sewage Facilities Plan Status

Source: MCPC

PLAN AGE (YEARS)	NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES
Between 5 and 10	6
Between 10 and 20	31
Between 20 and 40	17
Older than 40	8



Aeration Tank, Oaks Wastewater Treatment Plant, Upper Providence Township

BROADBAND AND INTERNET

Most maps showing accessibility to high-speed internet depict the entire county as having access. However, these maps are based on broadband being available to at least one address in a neighborhood and not necessarily to all addresses in that area, resulting in pockets of residents without access. This could be voluntary, as the resident might not be interested in having access, though in many cases, the lack of access is due to socioeconomic factors.

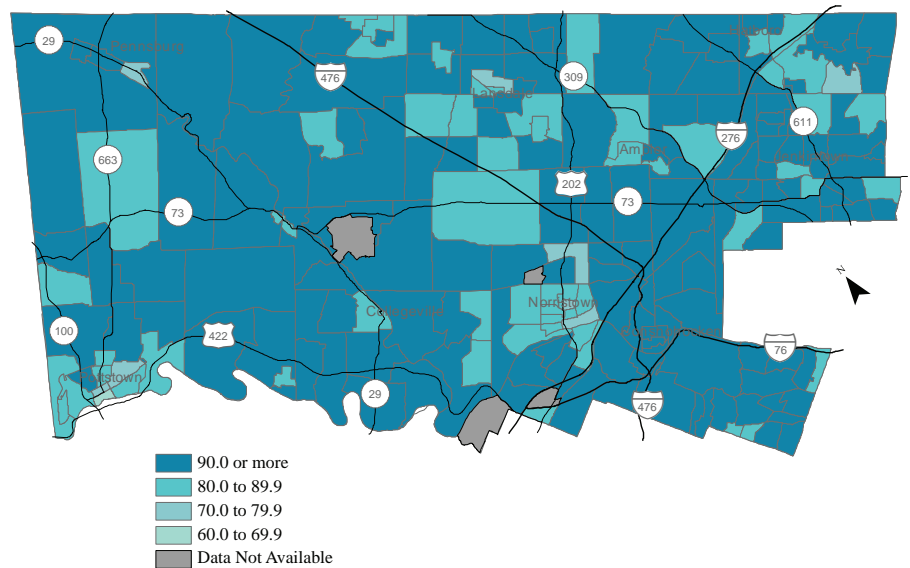
As of 2021, 5.9 percent of the county's population lives below the federal poverty level (49,563 persons). Further, 4.7 percent (16,463 households) lack a computer, and 7.9 percent (27,671 households) are without a broadband internet subscription. This small percent of the population is at a disadvantage due to lack of access in a variety of situations, such as when schools shift to remote learning, when emergency notifications are issued, or when residents are engaged in a job search or seeking medical information.

CONSIDERATIONS

The county's population continues to grow, and prominent businesses, industries, and institutions continue to locate here. These all rely on a variety of services for support — access to energy, waste disposal and recycling services, provision of sewage disposal and water service, and access to the internet. These services are experiencing change. Energy sources are converting from nonrenewable energy to renewables. With the use of electric vehicles, there is greater demand for charging stations. Privatization of water and sewer systems moves these utilities out of the public sector and into the private market. All of these changes need to be navigated in a way that provides uninterrupted service at a sustainable level so that the county continues to be viewed as a desirable location for business and residents.

Percentage of Households With a Broadband Subscription

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates 2017-2021



Multifamily housing and commercial areas provide locations for EV charging stations, Upper Merion Township

Montgomery County government departments and boards play a role in furthering the county's comprehensive planning work. The Office of Recycling holds hazardous waste collection events across the county each year.



Additional maps and data are available at:
<https://montco-2050-1-montcopa.hub.arcgis.com>



Prepared by:
 Montgomery County Planning Commission, 2023

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND AND TRENDS



MONTCO

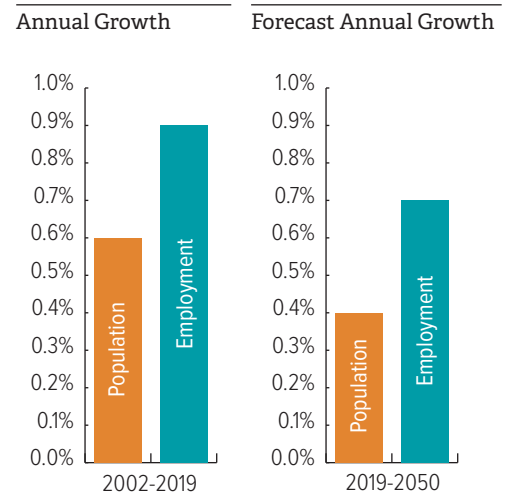
A Comprehensive Plan
for a Changing World

- People and Population
- Existing Land Use
- Transportation
- Preservation and Recreation
- Environmental Systems
- Infrastructure and Utilities
- Economic Development**
- Housing
- Health
- Government and Community Facilities

Montgomery County has many employment opportunities and low unemployment among its workforce. Job growth outpaces population growth, and the number of people commuting into the county for work continues to increase. Most industry sectors are expanding.

JOB GROWTH

Montgomery County's population has been growing steadily at an annual rate of 0.6 percent per year. However, employment has been growing much faster, above 0.9 percent per year. This trend is forecast to continue, with job growth outpacing population growth.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, On the Map, 2002 and 2019; Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2021; MCPC, 2023

EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

Key Industries

Jobs overall in Montgomery County are distributed across a variety of industries. The largest number of jobs in Montgomery County are found in the health care and social assistance industry, and this sector continues to grow over time. Health care establishments are often stand-alone facilities but have started

Employment Sectors

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021. U.S. Census Bureau, On the Map, 2020 and 2010

NAICS Code	Industry	Wages	Location Quotient	Employees	Percent Change in Employment 2010-2020
	<i>Total, All Industries</i>	\$82,168	1.00	489,727	5.20%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	\$34,552	0.29	660	34.3%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Gas Extraction	\$72,554	0.14	260	17.7%
22	Utilities	\$146,874	0.96	2,799	15.5%
23	Construction	\$90,196	1.08	24,640	33.9%
31-33	Manufacturing	\$102,515	0.93	43,992	-5.3%
42	Wholesale Trade	\$119,316	1.22	21,736	-4.4%
44-45	Retail Trade	\$38,869	0.98	50,464	-2.1%
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	\$52,181	0.48	13,580	5.0%
51	Information	\$106,018	1.29	9,947	-9.4%
52	Finance and Insurance	\$145,672	1.48	34,259	3.7%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$88,159	1.37	7,636	8.3%
54	Professional and Technical Services	\$135,017	1.75	56,819	9.4%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	\$154,580	1.30	15,509	38.2%
56	Administrative and Waste Services	\$55,441	1.34	34,751	15.6%
61	Educational Services	\$64,639	0.76	30,564	4.0%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	\$58,660	0.92	83,106	19.5%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	\$28,977	0.92	6,585	-12.3%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	\$25,010	0.80	27,638	-16.3%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	\$42,871	0.92	14,779	-13.2%
92	Public Administration	\$71,912	0.50	10,004	-4.3%

Key Employment Sectors and Rank Compared to all Sectors in Montgomery County
 See also "Employment Sectors" table on previous page



Health Care & Social Assistance
17% of jobs - #1
 Wages lower than median - #13
 Concentration - #12
19% growth - #4



Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services
11% of jobs - #2
 High wages - #4
High concentration - #1
9% growth - #8



Retail Trade
10% of jobs - #3
Low wages - #17 (\$38,869)
 Concentration - #9
 2% contraction - #13



Manufacturing
9% of jobs - #4
Good wages - #7 (\$103K)
 Concentration - #11
5% contraction - #16



Finance & Insurance
 7% of jobs - #6
High Wages - #3
High concentration - #2
 4% growth - #12



Construction
 5% of jobs - #9
 Wages - #8
 Concentration - #8
34% growth - #3



Management of Companies & Enterprises
 3% of jobs - #11
Highest wages - #1
 High concentration - #5
38% growth - #1



Transportation & Warehousing
 3% of jobs - #13
 Low wages - #15
Low concentration - #19
5% growth - #10

appearing more frequently in former retail spaces on Main Streets, in malls, on pad sites, and in shopping centers. Locating health care offices amidst commercial uses increases health care accessibility and encourages commerce.

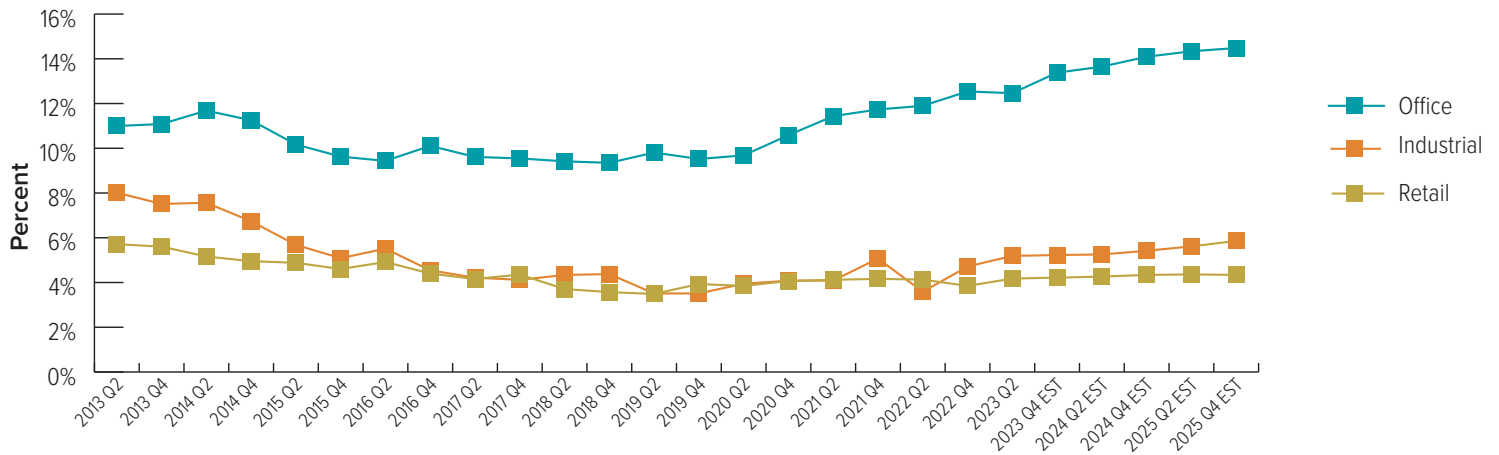
NONRESIDENTIAL VACANCIES

Vacancy rates are currently around 12 percent for office, 5 percent for industrial, and 4 percent for retail uses in Montgomery County. Office vacancy rates are typically higher than other uses but are predicted to increase in the next two years (by *CoStar*).

Since commercial leases are often for several years at a time, there is additional office space that is currently leased but functionally vacant or underutilized due to an increase in remote work. Some companies renewing office leases have requested a reduction in square footage in response to employees working remotely.

Vacancy Rates for NonResidential Space in Montgomery County (Actual and Estimated)

Source: CoStar, 2023



MAIN STREET COMMUNITIES

Montgomery County is home to unique villages and downtowns. Many traditional, walkable Main Street areas have seen a decline in retail over time, starting with the advent of indoor shopping malls and exacerbated more recently by online shopping. Some Main Street areas have filled this void by adding residential units, especially in areas served by transit, creating a new customer base.

Main Street areas often add or improve elements that capitalize on a consumer interest in walkable, family-friendly, and distinctive places, such as:

- Outdoor dining
- Pedestrian-oriented streetscaping (sidewalks, street trees, benches, etc.)
- Public art and events
- Film and theater
- Historic preservation
- Main Street management programs or Business Improvement Districts
- New uses such as: entertainment, artisan manufacturing, co-working, pop-ups, and health care

TOURISM

Being the home of the Valley Forge National Historical Park and several regional events and attractions, tourism has a large economic impact in Montgomery County. Visitors spent over \$1.1 billion in 2021. Excluding tourists who are from the greater Philadelphia area, most of the county's tourists are from New York City (23 percent), followed by Harrisburg (15 percent).

WORKFORCE

Education

Montgomery County residents make up 6.1 percent of the state's population yet make 9.2 percent of the income earned. This may be due to the high education levels of residents. Nationally, 13 percent of the population has a graduate or professional degree. In Montgomery County, 22 percent of the population has an advanced degree. Despite the increase in education level of the general population, Montgomery County also has seen the percentage of jobs held by people without a high school diploma grow over time.

Educational Attainment

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2000; American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates 2006-2010 and 2016-2020

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF RESIDENTS AGE 25 OR OLDER	2000	2010	2020	% CHANGE 2000-2010	% CHANGE 2010-2020	% CHANGE 2000-2020
Not a high school graduate	59,307	38,898	32,898	-34%	-15%	-45%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	140,839	142,257	135,488	1%	-5%	-4%
Some college, no degree	85,342	88,355	82,408	4%	-7%	-3%
Associate degree	30,596	36,120	42,615	18%	18%	39%
Bachelor's degree	118,910	147,258	164,225	24%	12%	38%
Graduate or professional degree	80,877	102,247	125,003	26%	22%	55%

The education level of the county workforce is an important consideration for certain industries, such as professional, scientific, and technical services, seeking to locate in Montgomery County.

Unemployment

Unemployment levels in Montgomery County are very low compared to the state and the nation. Despite a rise in unemployment to 13 percent of the workforce in April 2020, the economy quickly recovered from this initial pandemic-related spike, with unemployment hovering at around 3 percent for the past 18 months.

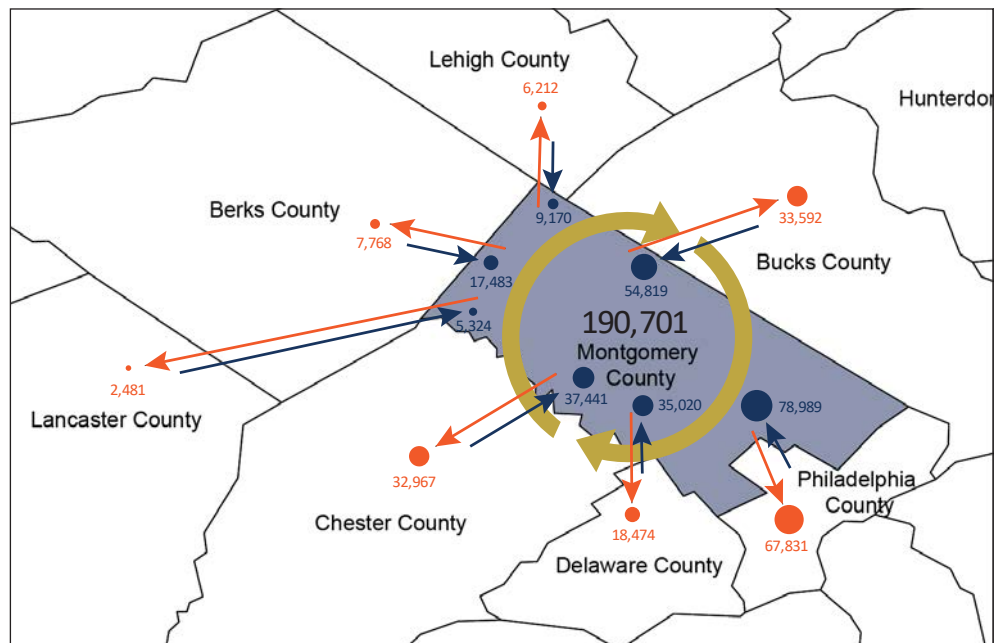
Commuting

Many workers from nearby counties commute to Montgomery County, while fewer employees commute from the county to elsewhere. Approximately 190,700 people both live and work in Montgomery County. Those commuting into the county account for about 299,900 people, while nearly 206,700 residents leave the county for work. The counties sending or receiving the most workers are shown on the map below.

Due to the increase in jobs significantly outpacing population growth, a smaller percentage of jobs are held by residents of

Commute to Work Locations by County

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, On the Map, 2019



the county, which increases the need for hiring workers from other locations. As of 2020, 38 percent of jobs in Montgomery County were held by residents. There are now more employees from Philadelphia working in Montgomery County than vice-versa – a shift that occurred in 2011.

JOB LOCATIONS

The distribution of jobs throughout the county is uneven. Concentrations of over 2,000 jobs in one census block appear in Hatfield, Horsham, Upper Merion, Upper Dublin, Upper Gwynedd, Upper Moreland, Upper Providence, West Norriton, and Whitpain Townships. Many of these job concentrations are in areas where the median home price exceeds \$400,000, making it challenging for some employees to live close to where jobs are available.

Job Growth by Location

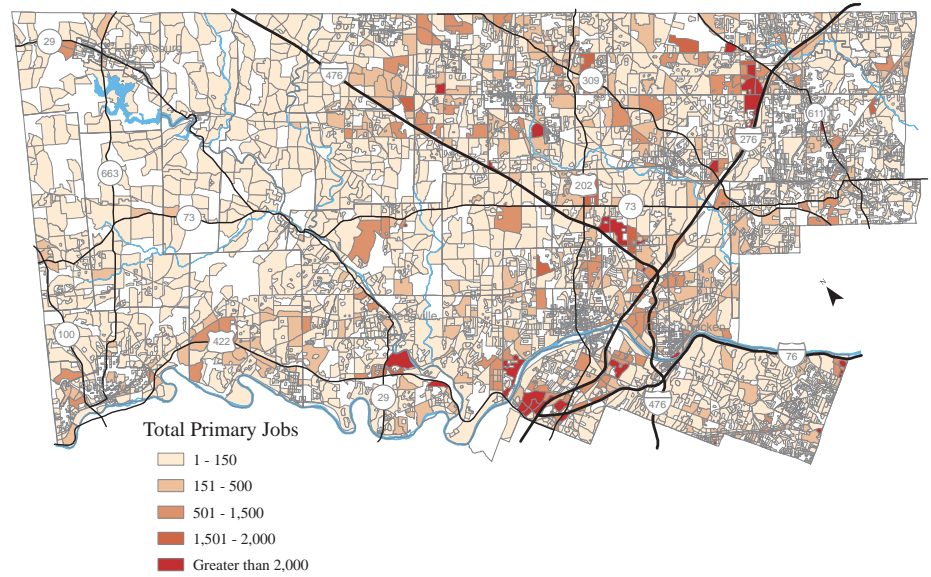
Jobs are predicted to continue to grow significantly in number in some municipalities with large job centers, including Conshohocken, Plymouth, Upper Merion, and Horsham. In addition, many municipalities without a defined job center are forecasted to have job growth. Notably, DVRPC anticipates that the entire western third of the county will have job growth of over 20 percent. This is partly due to the smaller number of jobs there now, so the percentage increase may not translate to large numbers of new jobs.

CONSIDERATIONS

Montgomery County is a community and a home for its residents and a great place for preserved open space and recreation, but more than anything it is a “jobs county” with high employment that continues to grow.

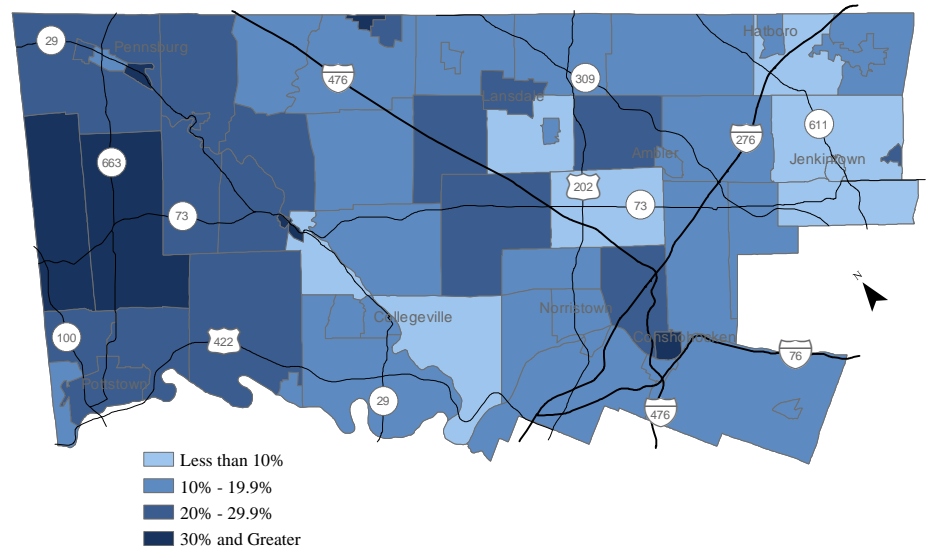
Major Employment Centers

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, On The Map 2020



Forecast Employment Increases by Percentage 2020-2050

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2021



Montgomery County government departments and boards play a role in furthering the county's comprehensive planning work. The Commerce Department works to promote economic and workforce development. The department includes MontcoWorks (which provides workforce training), the Redevelopment Authority, the Industrial Development Authority, and the Higher Education and Health Authority.



Additional maps and data are available at:
<https://montco-2050-1-montcopa.hub.arcgis.com>



Prepared by:
 Montgomery County Planning Commission, 2023

HOUSING BACKGROUND AND TRENDS



MONTCO

A Comprehensive Plan for a Changing World

- People and Population
- Existing Land Use
- Transportation
- Preservation and Recreation
- Environmental Systems
- Infrastructure and Utilities
- Economic Development

Housing

Health

Government and Community
Facilities

Housing affordability is among the biggest challenges that Montgomery County residents face, and finding ways to provide for more affordability continues to be a struggle for the county's 62 municipalities. The county's current housing landscape and the new development and home sales data the county analyzes further reinforce this assertion. Strict zoning regulations, a shortage of buildable land (and interest in preserving open space), as well as community pushback around increased density make for a competitive suburban housing market throughout the region. For those with an interest in buying or renting in Montgomery County, finding a place to live has become increasingly out of reach.

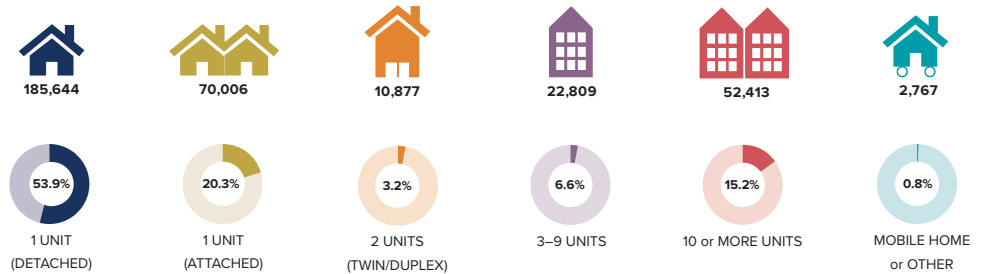
EXISTING HOUSING UNITS

As of the 2020 Census, Montgomery County had 344,516 housing units. This is an increase of 9.5 percent from 2010, when the county had 325,735 housing units. The majority of housing

units in the county — just under 54 percent — are single-family detached homes. Single-family attached homes — commonly called townhomes — make up about 20 percent of the county's housing stock.

Existing Housing Units

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2020



Crescent Fields at Huntingdon Valley, Lower Moreland Township

PROPOSED HOUSING UNITS

The housing units that are proposed each year provide insight into construction trends. Not all proposed homes get built. In the last ten years, multifamily and single-family attached homes (townhomes) have made up a majority of proposed housing units. Not that long ago, single-family detached homes made up the majority of proposed units. Today's trend is partly due to practical reasons — future growth has to be accommodated within county limits, and much of the county's new construction has been infill development. The composition of households also has changed over time. The county has growing numbers of single-person senior citizen households, for example, and smaller households may prefer smaller homes. Many people want to live in walkable communities in close proximity to amenities, such as public transit, shops, and restaurants, and would choose an apartment or a townhouse over a detached home to get those desirable community traits.

HOUSING UNITS BUILT

Not surprisingly, the housing that gets built is a reflection of the housing units which are proposed for construction. In the last decade, the county has seen a big shift toward multifamily construction — even though the existing units in the county are still predominantly single-family detached homes. The majority of the apartments built in the last decade are rental units — though there are older condominiums in many municipalities.

FUTURE HOUSING DEMAND

While it is easy to take a look at what has been built already, knowing which housing units the county's residents may need in the future is more challenging. Using DVRPC's population forecasts as a starting point, MCPC forecasts an estimated population of 942,944 people in 2050. Taking the 355,232 housing units that are already built and assuming an

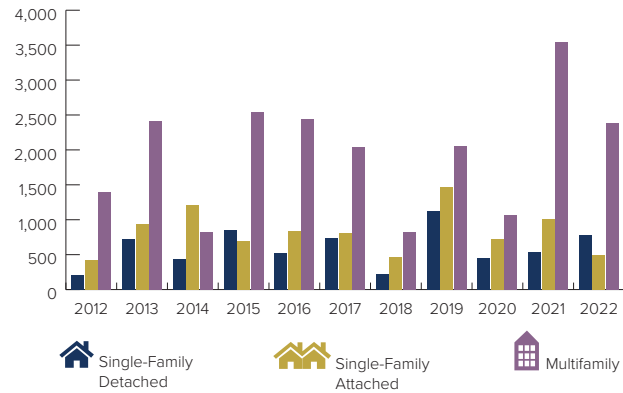
Future Housing Demand

Source: MCPC and US Census Bureau

Adjusted 2050 Population	942,944
Minus Group Quarters Population	-24,517
Equals Total Population in Households	918,427
Divide by Future Average Household Size (2.49 people) for Unadjusted Total Future Housing Units	368,846
Multiply by (1+future vacancy rate)	388,617
Minus Existing Housing Units	-355,232
Equals Future Units Needed by 2050	33,385

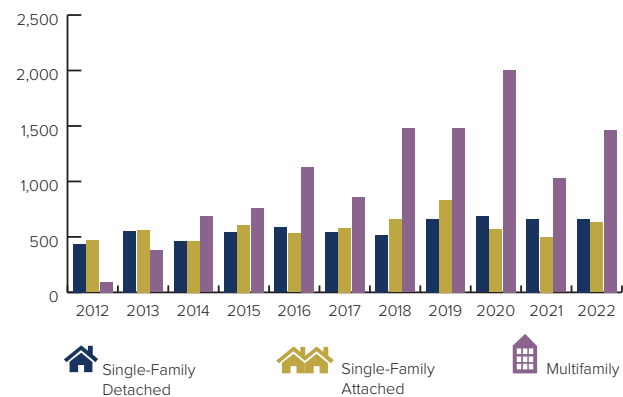
Proposed Housing Units

Source: MCPC



Housing Units Built

Source: MCPC



Northgate, Upper Hanover Township

average household size of 2.49 persons, this equates to a need for an additional 33,385 housing units by 2050. While this may seem like a big number, this is the equivalent of 1,237 new housing units built each year (a figure regularly exceeded on an annual basis).

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing costs in the county continue a steady shift upward, with serious implications for who can and cannot afford to live in the county. Generally speaking, a housing unit is considered affordable to someone if they can pay 30 percent or less of their income toward housing costs. While the number of homeowners with a mortgage paying more than 30 percent of their income toward these costs has actually gone down over time, the high numbers of renters paying more than 30 percent of their income for rent is indicative that housing costs are high — too high — and will make it a challenge to save for and afford a home purchase.

HOMEOWNERSHIP RATES

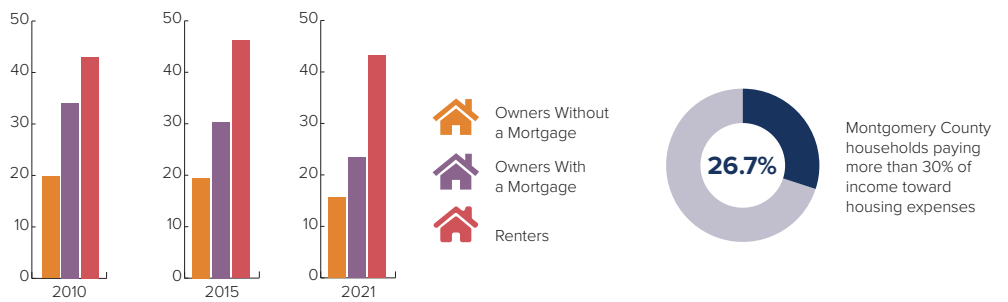
Census data indicate there are increasing numbers of residents in rental units (rising from 27.4 percent of occupied units in 2010 to 29.2 percent of occupied units in 2020) and fewer owner-occupied units with a mortgage (68 percent of units in 2020 versus 72 percent of units in 2010).

When taking a closer look at who owns homes in Montgomery County, the disparities of homeownership became clearer. Homeownership is an important way of building generational wealth as it is among the biggest financial investments that people make. Yet, a history of redlining limited investment in some neighborhoods and prevented generations of families from attaining the equity associated with homeownership. In addition, unequal lending practices persist today. Together, these practices have contributed to disparities in homeownership rates and wealth accumulation among racial groups. More than 83 percent of the homeowners in owner-occupied units are Caucasian and just over 5 percent are African-American, despite the county's population being about 77 percent Caucasian and about 9 percent African-American.

Cost-Burdened Households

Percent of Montgomery County Households Paying More than 30% of Income Toward Housing Expenses.

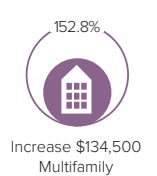
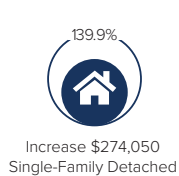
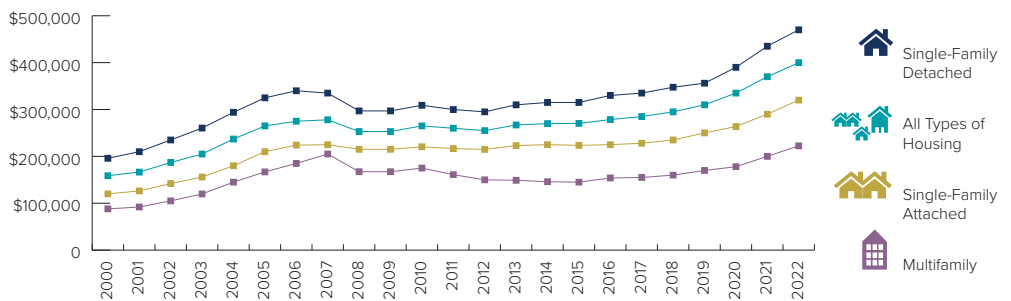
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates 2006-2010, 2011-2013, and 2017-2021



Median Housing Costs

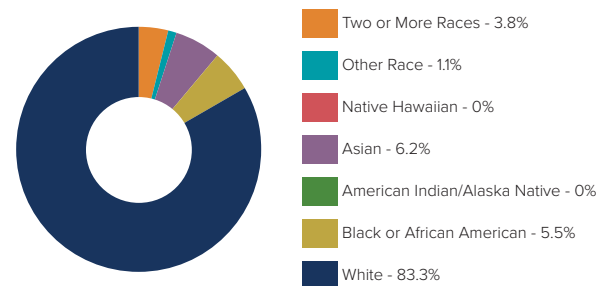
In the last 22 years, housing prices dipped during the (2008) Great Recession but continued to climb since then.

Source: MCPC



Percent Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Race

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates 2017-2021

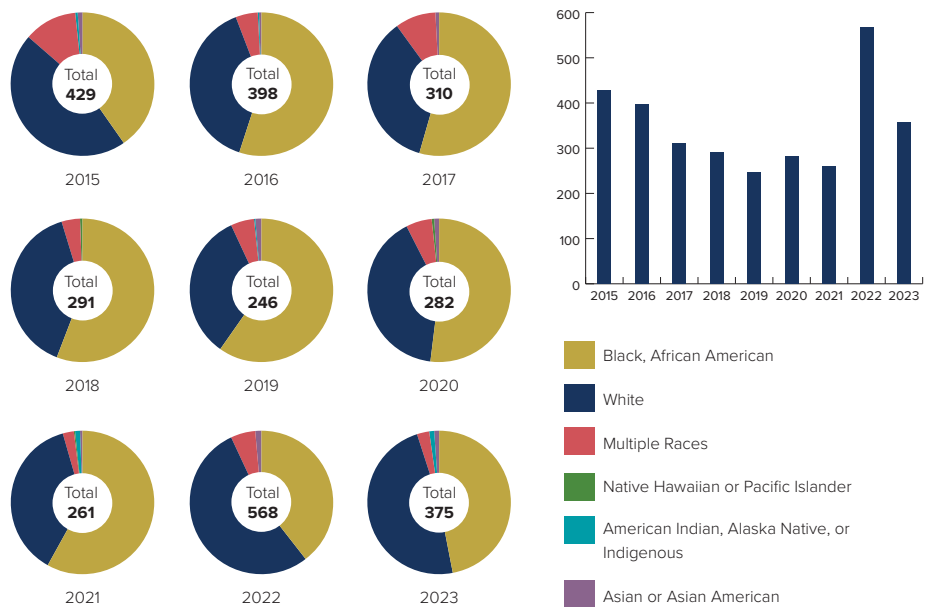


HOMELESSNESS

The systemic drivers of homelessness in the county have trended upward in the last several years, exacerbated by a number of factors, the cost of housing among them. Hurricane Ida rolled through Montgomery County in 2021 and while the cleanup has concluded, the county lost many affordable housing units to demolition or buyouts because of flood damage. The county's primary homeless shelter, the Coordinated Homeless Outreach Center (or CHOC), was the only year-round 24-7 emergency shelter service for single adults. Its facility on the Norristown State Hospital grounds closed in June 2022 due to the state's termination of the building's lease. Montgomery County has financially supported hotel stays for single adults to address this gap while a new location is secured. While the total number decreased from its high point in 2022, the numbers still remain high.

Number of Homeless Individuals

Source: Montgomery County Office of Housing and Community Development

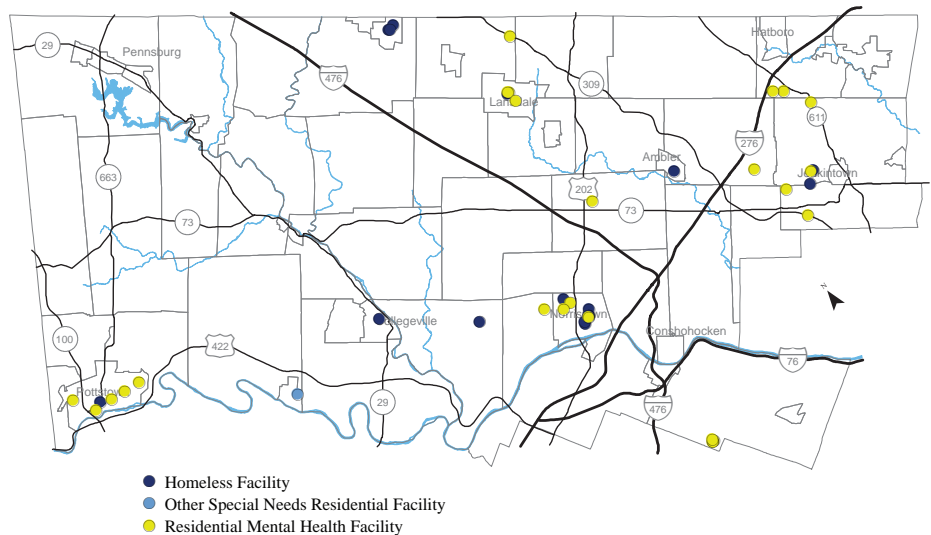


CONSIDERATIONS

What is clear is that people recognize we have reached a crisis point when it comes to housing. Many levels of government and other agencies and institutions are looking for ways to promote fixes to this issue. Some municipalities have adopted or are exploring ways to provide density bonuses; others are exploring additional flexibility through accessory dwelling unit provisions. The county, inspired by the success it has had with its *Your Way Home* initiative, developed a plan called *Homes For All*. The plan outlines ways communities and employers can promote housing affordability as well as provide funding to programs to keep existing housing units affordable. Grassroots efforts are popping up to provide homegrown support, and the Commonwealth has released its own report to promote inclusionary zoning efforts as one piece of the solution.

Facilities for the Homeless and Special Needs Populations

Source: Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services



Montgomery County government departments and boards play a role in furthering the county's comprehensive planning work. The *Office of Housing and Community Development*, housed in the *Department of Health and Human Services*, provides a comprehensive, coordinated program that addresses housing, community, and economic development within Montgomery County.



Additional maps and data are available at:
<https://montco-2050-1-montcopa.hub.arcgis.com>



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 Montgomery County Planning Commission, 2023

HEALTH BACKGROUND AND TRENDS



MONTCO

A Comprehensive Plan for a Changing World

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Housing

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Facilities

There are real connections between land use and health. Areas with more tree cover tend to be cooler because dark pavement and roofs absorb the hot summer sun. People want to age in place and grow old among family and friends, but if that “place” isn’t built for aging gracefully, where will the county’s seniors go? Contaminated properties are complicated to reclaim for new uses. The older housing stock in some of the county’s most affordable areas has the highest risk for lead contamination — higher than the risk countywide. How we plan for the county’s housing, jobs, transportation, recreation, and natural systems has direct connections to and implications for the health of the county’s residents.



Farmers markets create opportunities for economic development as well as increase access to locally grown and produced foods.



The county's trail system provides recreational opportunities for people of all abilities.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

According to the *County Health Rankings and Roadmaps*, Montgomery County is the fourth healthiest county in the state. This ranking considers a number of factors, including:

- A relatively low level of physical inactivity and high access to exercise opportunities
- A relatively low teen birth rate
- Good access to healthcare
- Participation in healthy behaviors, such as flu shots and health screenings
- The quality of our physical environment

We’re not in perfect health, though, as increases in certain chronic and communicable diseases show. Like many counties, our residents are gaining weight (despite proximity to exercise opportunities). Our obesity prevalence is 29.1 percent.

Also worth noting is a continued rise in

sexually transmitted disease (STD) infections, particularly in young people. In 2021, syphilis cases increased 28 percent in Pennsylvania (higher than the nationwide increase). While Montgomery County’s rate of syphilis cases is lower than most surrounding counties, cases have been increasing over time and are a public health concern. Other STD infection rates continue to increase, though whether this is due to a change in testing frequency is unclear. Public health priorities shifted tremendously during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, and it remains to be seen if an uptick in STDs is something that can be easily reversed.

MENTAL HEALTH

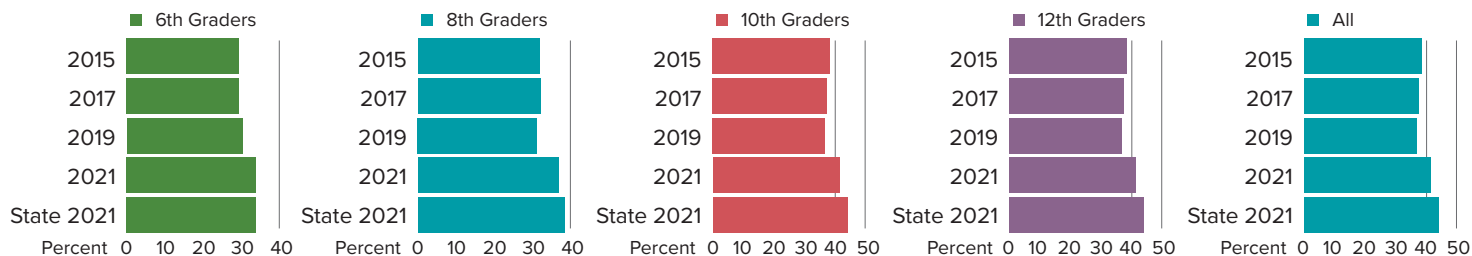
Mental health struggles are receiving more public attention than ever before. The isolation that the Covid-19 pandemic caused shows how critical mental health is to overall well-being and has shifted the conversation about

Changes in Teen and Pre-Teen Mental Health

Montgomery County pre-teens and teens rated their own mental health states worse in 2021 than in the three previous surveys (2015–2019). All grade levels experienced higher rates of feeling sad or depressed.

Source: *Pennsylvania Youth Survey*

In the past 12 months have you felt depressed or sad MOST days, even if you feel OK sometimes?



Sometimes I think that life is not worth it.



6,409 responses | 27% of students agreed with this statement.

At times I think I am no good at all.



8,924 responses | 37.6% of students agreed with this statement.

All in all, I am inclined to think I am a failure.



6,076 responses | 25.6% of students agreed with this statement.

mental health needs. The nation's surgeon general went as far as declaring that the "epidemic of loneliness and isolation" is an underappreciated public health crisis.

The pandemic was particularly hard on the mental health of our most vulnerable populations. For children, this was highlighted in the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (or PAYS) report, a long-running survey given to 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th graders with consistent data from prior to, during, and, as of this year, after the Covid-19 pandemic. As of 2021, the report stated that more than a third of school-aged respondents in Montgomery County felt sad or depressed most days over the year prior, and 17.7 percent of respondents had seriously considered suicide (compared to 18.6 percent at the state level). These numbers worsened between 2019 and 2021 when many students were still learning from home. While it could be easy to write this off as the turbulence of being a teenager or a pre-teen, these statistics have very real implications for creating safe places to provide recreational and social opportunities for the county's youth.

CAUSES OF DEATH

Chronic disease is the leading cause of death in Montgomery County. There are several genetic and non-biological risk factors associated with chronic disease. Many

chronic conditions disproportionately impact racial minorities and lower income residents. Heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death in the county. Covid-19 was the third leading cause of death in 2020, and

while the pandemic public health emergency may have ended, the severity of this virus and its continued and long-lasting effects on county residents will affect public health planning for years to come.

Causes of Death

Age-adjusted Rates of Selected Causes of Death, 2016-2020

Source: Community Health Needs Assessment, 2022

MEASURE	MONTGOMERY	PENNSYLVANIA
All causes of death	680.6	788.4
Heart disease	148.0	176.2
Cancer	142.6	157.8
Accidents	46.8	64.4
Cerebrovascular disease	43.9	36.3
Chronic lower respiratory disease	26.8	35.3
Alzheimer's disease	19.1	21.9
Diabetes mellitus	13.5	21.1
Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, and nephrosis	12.9	15.9
Influenza and pneumonia	12.9	14.1
Septicemia	12.0	13.1

ND = Not displayed when count is less than 10 data is not available.

Age-adjusted rates are per 100,000 and are calculated using the U.S. 2000 standard million population distribution.

FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER

Food insecurity is a persistent challenge in the county. It's not the same as hunger, which is the feeling one has when they don't have food. The USDA defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food to live an active, healthy life. According to *Feeding America*, 7 percent of county residents are food insecure (though this data is from 2020). That's nearly 25,000 people, and when you take a closer look at the numbers, food insecurity disproportionately affects residents of color. Census data also shows an increase in the numbers of people receiving SNAP benefits, going from 3.6 percent of county residents to 5.6 percent in a ten-year time frame. It's worth noting that the Covid-19 pandemic (and the end of pandemic-era financial assistance), the increasing cost of food, and rising inflation rates worsened food insecurity. Area food pantries continue to report ongoing increases in need and rising numbers of clients. Data from the Montgomery County Anti-Hunger Network show an increase in pantry visits among its partner providers, rising from 19,880 unduplicated individuals served in 2021 to 28,504 unduplicated individuals in 2023. Unduplicated households served rose within the same timeframe from 6,492 to 9,927.

OPIOID AND DRUG OVERDOSES

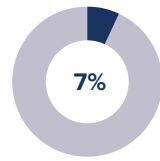
As more states consider the decriminalization of some drugs, concerns about opioid use and overdoses in Montgomery County persist. Since 2015, drug overdose deaths have tripled and are the leading cause of death among young adults in the region. Montgomery County has had more than 890 drug overdose deaths in the last 5 years — opioids and fentanyl (or some combination of the two) are the most frequent contributors to drug overdose deaths.

HEALTHCARE ACCESSIBILITY

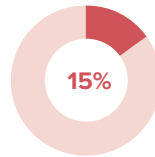
Healthcare facilities exist in the county in several categories: hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, urgent care facilities, and outpatient care centers. Hospitals are licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and are either general acute care hospitals or specialty hospitals (which include psychiatric facilities and drug and alcohol treatment centers).

Food Insecurity Disparities in Montgomery County

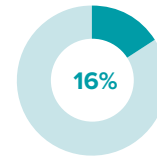
Source: Feeding America, 2020



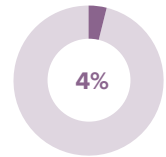
7 percent of County residents are food insecure



15 percent of Black population are food insecure



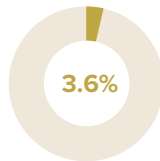
16 percent of Hispanic population are food insecure



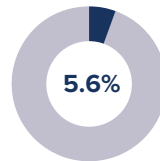
4 percent of White population are food insecure

Percent of Households Receiving Food Stamps/ SNAP Benefits

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates 2007-2011 and 2017-2021



2011



2021

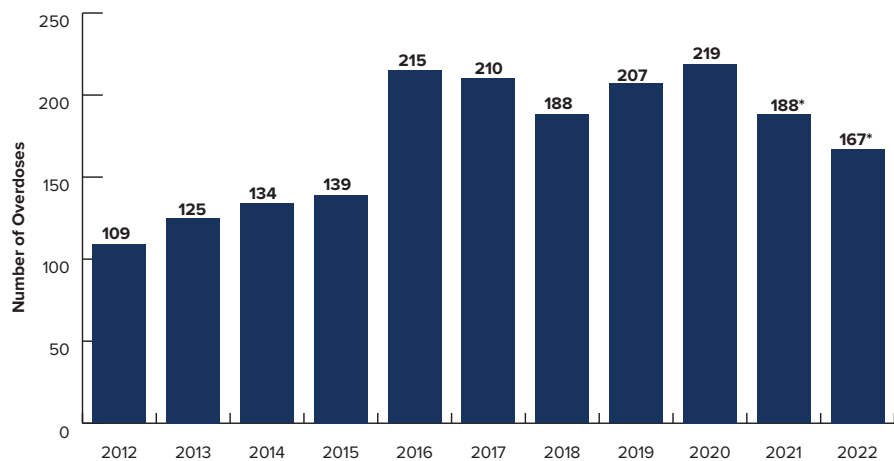


Food pantries in the county continue to have increased demand for assistance. Manna on Main Street, Lansdale

Opioid and Drug Overdoses

*2021 and 2022 data as of April 2023

Source: Pennsylvania Opioid Dashboard



There are new hospitals and affiliated facilities in the county, including a Children's Hospital of Philadelphia pediatric hospital in King of Prussia and a Main Line Health outpatient center. St. Luke's University Health Network opened an outpatient facility in Upper Hanover Township. Several existing hospitals, including Bryn Mawr Hospital (part of the Main Line Health System), have expanded over the last decade. Pottstown Hospital, once a

nonprofit hospital, was purchased by Tower Health and converted to a for-profit facility in 2018.

What is new is the rise in urgent care and outpatient care centers throughout the county. Census data from 2021 indicates there are 141 outpatient care centers in the county, an increase from 77 establishments in 2017. According to the Urgent Care Association, visits to urgent care centers nationwide are up

60 percent from 2019, and today nearly 90 percent of the U.S. population lives within 20 minutes of an urgent care center. Some, but not all, urgent care locations are affiliated with the major health care networks serving the region.

Telehealth services are an increasingly common way of interacting with healthcare professionals. Virtual visits provide flexibility (and limit the spread of germs).

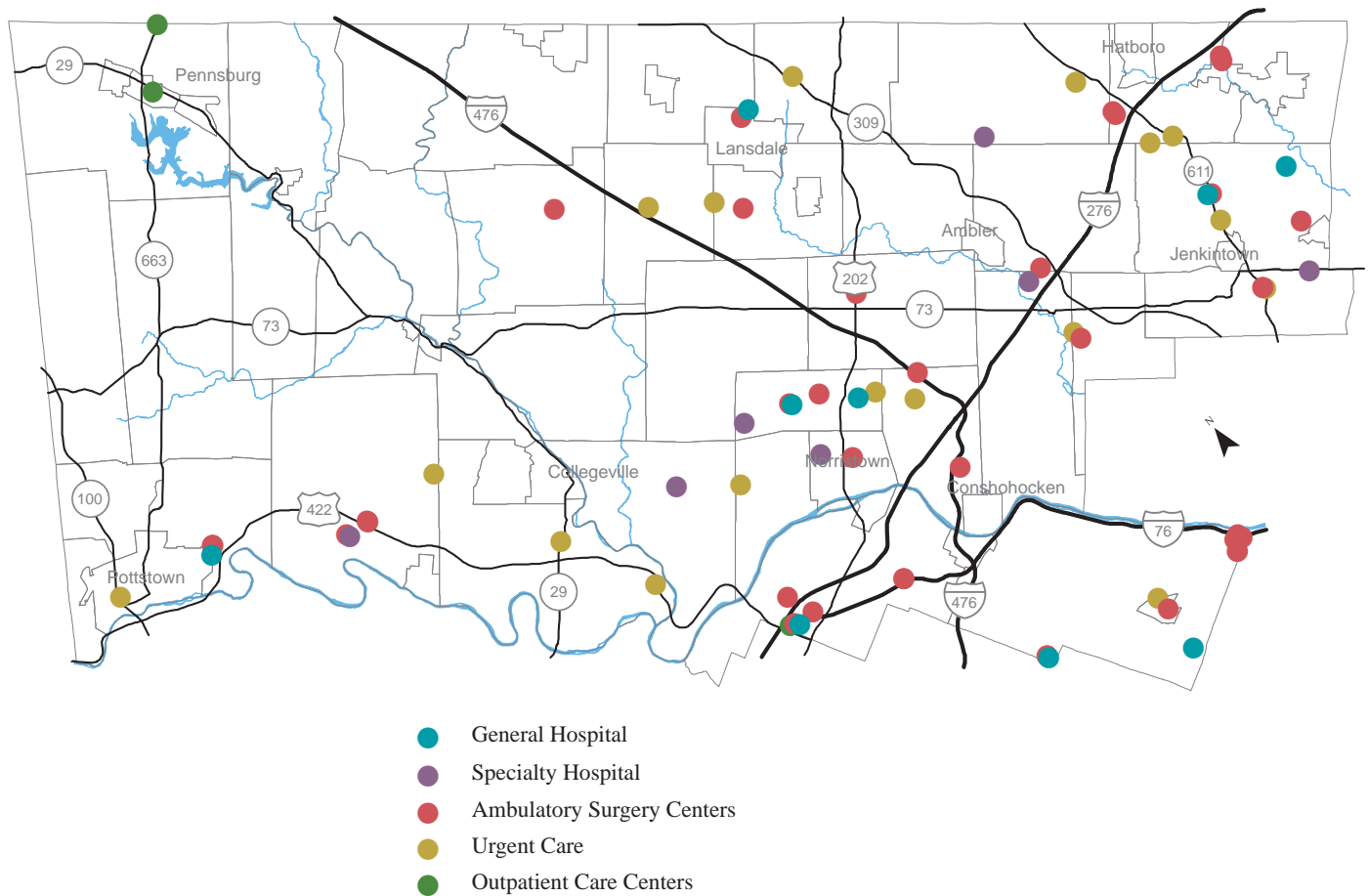
CONSIDERATIONS

Planning for people and places means also planning for overall health and well-being. Working to build communities that have a positive impact on mental health, provide access to healthcare facilities, support an aging population, and allow for healthy lifestyles will benefit county residents.

Accessibility of Healthcare

Source: Hospitals and Ambulatory Surgery Centers, Montgomery County, 2023

Source: Urgent Care Facilities, Pennsylvania Department of Health, 2023



Disclaimer: Not all urgent care facilities in the county are shown on this map.

Montgomery County government departments and boards play a role in furthering the county's comprehensive planning work. The Department of Health and Human Services is expansive, covering functions from immunizations to restaurant inspections. Program offices include the Early Learning Resource Center, Children & Youth, Community Connections, Drug & Alcohol, Public Health, Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Early Intervention, Senior Services, and Veteran's Affairs.



Additional maps and data are available at:
<https://montco-2050-1-montcopa.hub.arcgis.com>



Prepared by:
 Montgomery County Planning Commission, 2023

GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

BACKGROUND AND TRENDS



MONTCO

A Comprehensive Plan for a Changing World

People and Population

Existing Land Use

Transportation

Preservation and
Recreation

Environmental Systems

Infrastructure and Utilities

Economic Development

Housing

Health

**Government and
Community
Facilities**

Government and community facilities have an important presence in our county. They provide employment and focal points in our 62 municipalities and offer many services to residents. They also supply grant funding, research capacity, a structure for managing planning and development, and many other services that keep our communities running smoothly.

GOVERNMENT

Federal and State Government

The federal government's role in planning and land development is indirect. The federal government provides funds for transportation improvements, but how and where to spend this money is decided by the state and region. Federal environmental regulations primarily get enforced through the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides block grant and housing funds; the Department of Agriculture has a variety of programs used by county farmers as well as a large research facility in the county; and the National Park Service (NPS) manages Valley Forge National Historical Park.

Through its legislation and regulations, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania plays a significant role in planning and development. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning

Code (MPC) enables municipalities to create zoning and land development regulations, and requires the county to review these regulations.

State-level departments and agencies also have a significant role, including:

- The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) issues permits and enforces federal and state environmental regulations..
- The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) owns and maintains many roads and highways and issues street and driveway permits to connect to these roads. It also creates and maintains bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on the roadways it owns. District 6-0 headquarters are located in King of Prussia with satellite driver services facilities elsewhere in the county.



Schwenksville moved its borough hall into the space vacated by the fire company when it merged with the Lower Frederick Fire Company

- The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission operates the turnpike system.
- In addition to parks and forestry, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) enforces the protection of endangered and threatened species. State parks in the county include Fort Washington and Evansburg. The state owns the Norristown Farm Park, which is managed and maintained by the county via a long-term lease.
- The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) has grants and educational programs for local municipalities, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) identifies and works to preserve historic properties, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture provides funds to the county's farmland preservation program; and the Department of Corrections runs the State Correctional Institution Phoenix in Montgomery County which houses approximately 3,800 inmates.

Among the oldest state facilities in the county is the Norristown State Hospital, built in 1879. In 2018, the state announced it would permanently close the civil unit, which offered psychiatric care facilities for patients with a hospital referral. Some of the underlying land on this site (about 68 acres) has been cleared and transferred to the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority (RDA), on behalf of the municipality of Norristown, for future redevelopment. The forensic facilities located on the remainder of the site — treatment for individuals referred through the criminal justice system — will remain in use for the foreseeable future.

County Government

Montgomery County provides services to individuals across its 62 municipalities. County roles include economic and workforce development, health, and law enforcement and safety. The county provides specialized services to seniors, veterans, and youth. In addition, the county is advised by a variety of boards and commissions.

The county owns (or rents space in) several buildings. The Montgomery County

Correctional Facility is in Lower Providence with about 1,000 inmates. Also in Lower Providence is a new coroner's facility, the county's 9-1-1 call center, and other public safety offices. The former Sacred Heart Hospital in Norristown continues to house the Montgomery County Human Services Center but is no longer owned by the county. Since 2006, the county has owned One Montgomery Plaza, an office building located across the street from the county courthouse.

The courthouse was built in 1849 and provides offices, courtrooms, and meeting rooms for the county's court system. The county is currently undertaking the Justice Center project adjacent to the courthouse. This will create a new 325,000-square-foot, 6-story building connected to the existing courthouse. The project will also reconstruct Hancock Square, as well as completely renovate the existing courthouse. At this time, all phases of construction are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2026. The county has thirty district court offices in places such as Bridgeport, Ardmore, and Limerick. The Eastern Montgomery County Courthouse Annex, in Willow Grove, houses branch offices of various county services. Similar satellite offices are located in Lansdale and Pottstown. The county owns the campus that houses the Montgomery County Fire Academy in Plymouth Township, which has training facilities for fire, rescue, and emergency medical personnel throughout the county.

Regional Planning Governance

Three regional organizations have a significant impact on the county's landscape - DVRPC, DRBC, and SEPTA.

- The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is the regional planning agency for Pennsylvania and New Jersey. DVRPC manages federal transportation funding for the nine-county region, and provides supportive planning work, demographic analysis, and regional employment and population projections.
- The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) is a four-state agency encompassing Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and New York. It regulates (through permitting) water quality and supply within the Delaware River drainage area.



SEPTA 201 Bus, Upper Dublin Township

- The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) is a regional transit company that provides regional rail, subway, trolley, and bus service to Philadelphia and its Pennsylvania suburbs.

Municipal Government

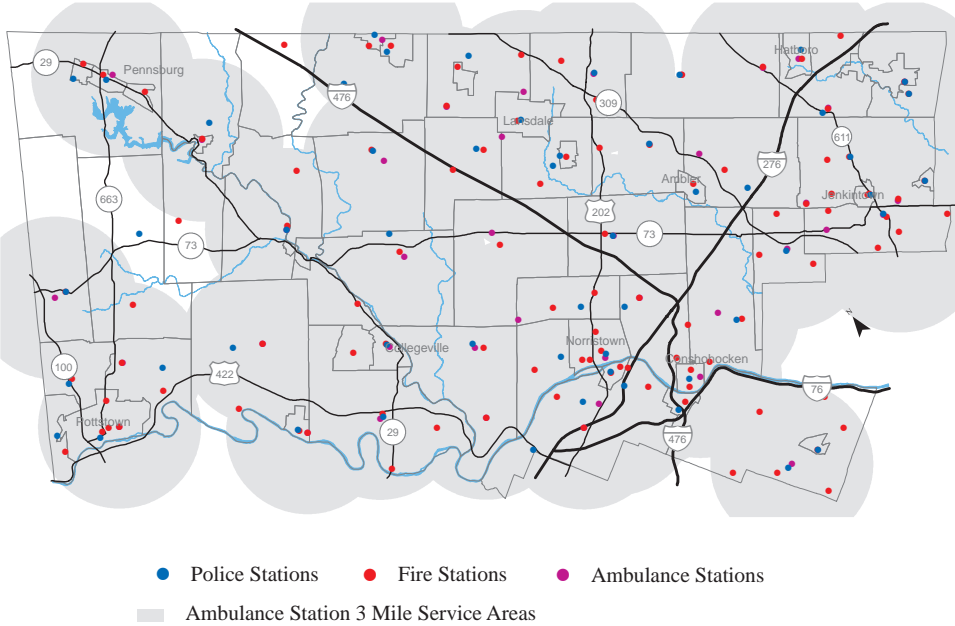
The county's 62 municipalities control much of the planning and land development that occurs here. All have zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances; the vast majority also have adopted comprehensive plans.

Local municipalities have the following powers:

- Adopt zoning, approve zoning changes, and grant variances through zoning hearing boards.
- Approve subdivisions and land developments.
- Control and maintain local roads.
- Impose traffic and park impact fees but not other types of impact fees. User fees for sewer, water, and other utilities can be imposed.
- Regulate stormwater runoff in accordance with state law and a regional watershed plan, if one exists.
- Provide parks, police protection, fire protection, ambulance service, libraries, and other cultural facilities.

Emergency Services

Source: Montgomery County Department of Public Safety, 2023



Each municipality in the county has a building for conducting business. Municipal buildings may include ancillary uses such as police stations, libraries, firehouses, public works facilities, and ambulance stations — although some of these uses are housed in satellite locations.

Local municipalities can create independent authorities for specific governmental purposes. The most common type of authority in the county is for sewers; however, authorities also exist for water, electricity, parking, transportation, economic development, solid waste, and recreation.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Emergency Services

In Montgomery County, police, fire, and ambulance companies provide emergency services.

Police services occur primarily at the municipal level. Twelve municipalities without their own police force are covered by the [Pennsylvania State Police](#) barracks located in Skippack Township. Additional law enforcement presence includes a branch field office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation as well as the Montgomery County's [Office of the District Attorney](#), [Detective Bureau](#), and [Sheriff's Office](#).

Volunteers partially or completely staff all fire departments in the county. Some departments have full-time or part-time paid professional firefighters as well, and municipalities may provide some funding through committed taxes or from operating budgets. The Montgomery County Department of Public Safety operates the Fire Academy, which trains and certifies firefighters from this and other counties. There are just over 100 fire stations across the county.

Ambulance services are primarily provided by state-licensed private nonprofit organizations. Ambulance services are a part of emergency medical services (EMS), which include paramedics, emergency medical technicians, and quick responders. The EMS system is coordinated by the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety within the EMS Division by State Act 45 of 1985. Many municipalities provide limited funds for ambulance companies. Ambulance stations generally have a combination of paid and volunteer staff.



Fire trucks on display, Upper Salford Township

Schools and School Districts

Montgomery County has an excellent educational system that includes universities, colleges, public schools, and private schools. In the 2022–2023 school year, the system consisted of:

- Twenty-two active school districts serving 119,385 students. (Five of the school districts include areas outside of Montgomery County. Bryn Athyn is the twenty-third school district, and has no public facilities.)
- A large variety of private schools that enroll approximately 17.5 percent of all K-12 students. This ratio has been slowly declining. It was approximately 26 percent in 1990 and 21 percent in 2000 and 2010.
- Twenty-one colleges or universities with tens of thousands of students. These include national liberal arts colleges such as Bryn Mawr College, Haverford College, and Ursinus College, private for-profit schools, small theological schools, and Montgomery County Community College with approximately 13,000 students on two campuses.

Libraries

Libraries give access to books and information; provide resources and activities for youth, families, and seniors; supply reference materials for entrepreneurs and job seekers; make computers and broadband access available; and advance democracy by creating educated constituencies. As of 2021, about 46 percent of the county's population had a library card, and cardholders checked out an average of ten items each in 2021. There are a total of 35 libraries in the county. The Montgomery County Library and

Information Network Consortium (MCLINC) provides an information sharing network and interlibrary loans for many of the libraries in the county.

Arts and Culture

The county's ease of access to Philadelphia provides numerous opportunities for top-notch museums, concerts, theater, and film. Outlets for creativity abound in the county. There are dozens of performing arts schools at which to learn dance, music, and theater. Art centers have classes ranging from painting to pottery for students of all ages. There are also world-class contributions to arts and culture here. Collegeville's Ursinus College is home to the Berman Art Museum, which houses more than 4,000 pieces of art as well as many large outdoor sculptures placed throughout the campus. A love of wildlife might bring you to Norristown's Elmwood

Park Zoo. Local history is highlighted at the Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center. Various other museums include the Stoogeum (Three Stooges memorabilia), the Hatfield Auto Museum, the John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove (artist and naturalist John James Audubon's first American home), and Wings of Freedom Aviation Museum.

Considerations

Governments and community organizations provide crucial structure and services to the county's residents. As needs change as we plan for the future, these entities are nimble enough to grow and change too.



Public Library, Lower Providence Township

Montgomery County government departments and boards play a role in furthering the county's comprehensive planning work. The Department of Public Safety houses emergency management resources, and oversees public safety training facilities for local fire, police, and EMS staff. The Department of Assets and Infrastructure manages all of the county's physical facilities. The County Administration manages all county policy direction, including the potential acquisition or sale of county-owned property.



Additional maps and data are available at:
<https://montco-2050-1-montcopa.hub.arcgis.com>



Prepared by:
Montgomery County Planning Commission, 2023