

POTTSTOWN METROPOLITAN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



2024 MEMBERSHIP

DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP

Don Bergstresser
Joan DiCicco (Alternate)
Joe Richardson (Alternate)

EAST COVENTRY TOWNSHIP

Catharine Small
Larry Tietjen
N. Lance Parson (Alternate)

LOWER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP

Ray Lopez
Thomas Troutman

NEW HANOVER TOWNSHIP

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NORTH COVENTRY TOWNSHIP

Jim Marks (Chair)
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POTTSTOWN BOROUGH

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UPPER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP

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WEST POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP

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Bonnie Frisco (Non-Voting Member)

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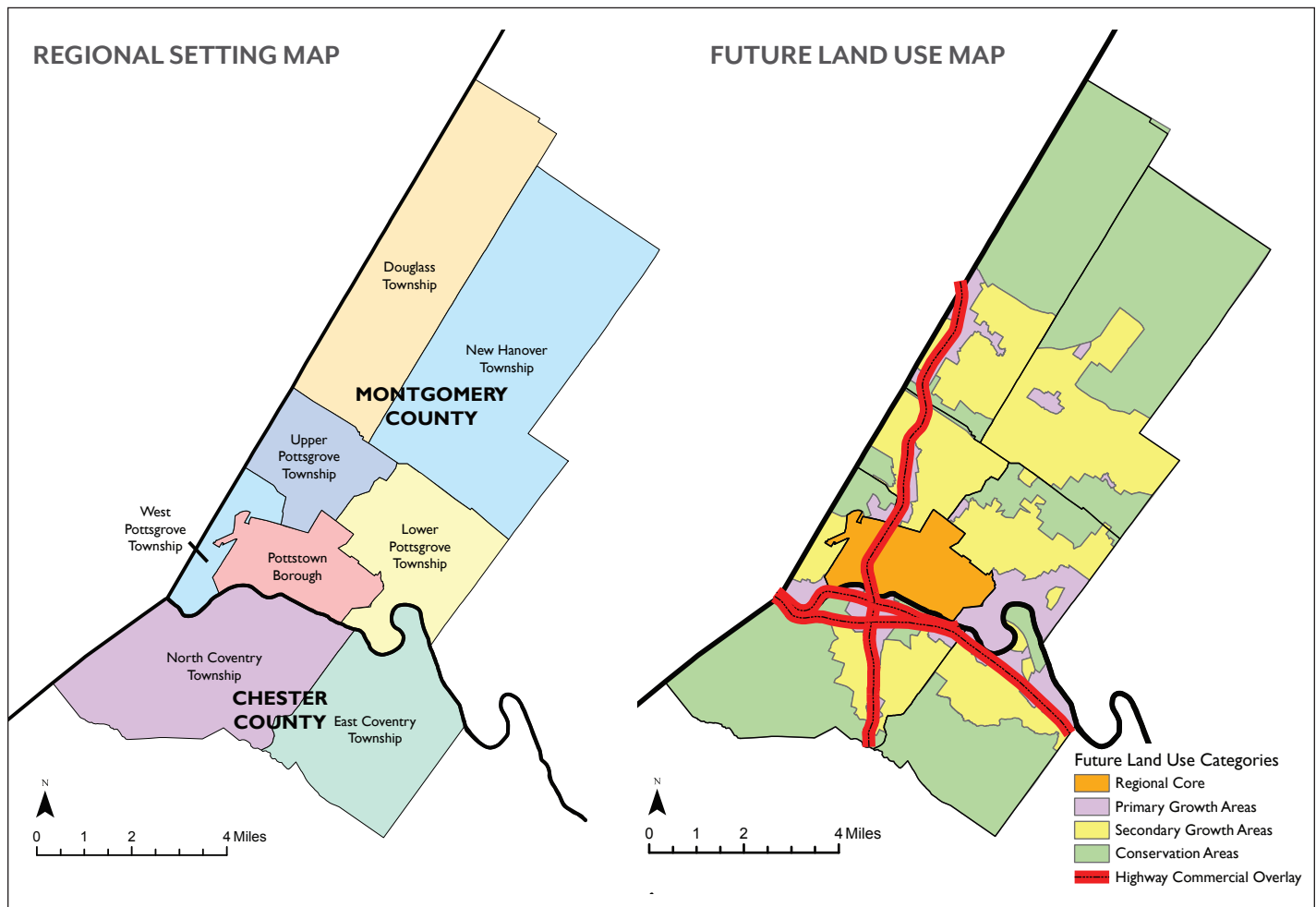
PMRPC PURPOSE

“The Pottstown Metropolitan Region is positioned directly in the path of growth as it continues to expand outward from Philadelphia and its suburbs. It is a well-balanced region with a richly diverse landscape of historic communities, attractive suburban neighborhoods, industry, commercial centers, rolling farmlands and abundant natural resources. The intersection of US Route 422 and PA Route 100 in the middle of the region provides a gateway for new growth. The region’s communities recognize that they are at a crossroads for directing growth and this is the catalyst for the region’s eight municipalities working together to plan their future. Especially important for the region is directing growth into the region’s older communities and designated growth areas, particularly the Borough of Pottstown, in order to revitalize these older places, maximize the costly public infrastructure of the region, and preserve the region’s rural areas.

Through regional cooperation and planning the Pottstown Metropolitan Region intends to:

- Protect the unique historical, cultural, and natural resources of the region.
- Promote the economic vitality and quality of life of the region’s existing communities.
- Implement growth management techniques to provide for orderly and well-planned new development.
- Preserve open space and agriculture in the region.
- Develop transportation choices for better mobility in and through the region.
- Encourage walkable communities with a mix of uses and a range of housing options where appropriate.
- Promote new economic opportunities and jobs.
- Maintain and improve recreation options.
- Address the specific needs and unique conditions of each municipality.”

Source: Pottstown Metropolitan Region Intergovernmental Cooperative Implementation Agreement for Regional Planning (April 12, 2010)



FEATURED PROJECT: POTTSTOWN REGION SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS) STUDY



PMRPC partnered with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to conduct a study to analyze and develop recommendations for safe routes to school (SRTS) improvements for six schools within the Pottstown Region.

The six schools that participated in the study are:

- West Pottsgrove Elementary School, *West Pottsgrove Township*, Montgomery County
- Gilbertsville Elementary School, *Douglass Township*, Montgomery County
- Boyertown Middle School East, *New Hanover Township*, Montgomery County
- East Coventry Elementary School, *East Coventry Township*, Chester County
- North Coventry Elementary School, *North Coventry Township*, Chester County
- Rupert Elementary School, *Pottstown Borough*, Montgomery County

To improve active transportation safety and access to Pottstown area schools, the DVRPC project team developed conceptual designs and traffic calming recommendations with corresponding illustrations showing existing and proposed conditions at each location (see two examples from the draft report below). These improvements include a combination of traffic calming, curb extensions, signage, and pedestrian/bicycle facilities.

The draft report also includes maps of existing conditions, a summary of public engagement at each school, rough cost estimates for recommended improvements, and next steps to guide the municipalities and schools to apply for funding to help implement the recommendations, such as through the Safe Routes to School grant program.

The final report will be posted on the PMRPC website, once available.



Conceptual illustrations of several pedestrian infrastructure improvements are included in the report for each study school, including a raised crosswalk across Chalet Drive near the Boyertown Middle School East (above, left) and an improved crosswalk and new mid-block crossing along Grosstown Road near the West Pottsgrove Elementary School (above, right).

REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2015 as an update to the first regional comprehensive plan adopted in 2005. The 2015 Regional Comprehensive Plan lays out goals and objectives for the region related to economic development, housing, parks and recreation, open space, natural resource protection, agriculture, transportation, and community facilities.

No amendments to the regional comprehensive plan were reviewed or adopted by the Committee during 2024

2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

In 2024, the Committee began the process of updating the regional comprehensive plan including an extensive online community survey and municipal outreach. At their monthly Committee meetings, updated background information, maps, and draft recommendations covering the many topics of the comprehensive plan were discussed.

GUEST SPEAKERS

June – Transportation Discussion

- Matthew Edmond, AICP, *MCPC Assistant Director of Transportation & Long-Range Planning*
- Brian Styche, RLA, *AICP CCPC Multimodal Transportation Planning Director*
- Kourtney High, *Pottstown Borough Grants Administrator*
- Thomas Frawley, *SRPRA Executive Director*
- Paul Lutz, *PennDOT District 6-0 Senior Manager of Transportation Services*
- Thomas Cornell, *Jacobs Engineering Group, Highway Group Leader*

September – Parks & Open Space

- Bill Hartman, PLA, *MCPC Trails & Open Space Planning Manager*
- David T. Stauffer, RLA, ASLA, *Chester County Parks & Preservation Director*
- Tricia McCloskey, AICP, *PARRC Regional Recreation Planner*

December – Housing

- Anne Leavitt-Gruberger, AICP, *MCPC County Planning Manager*
- Joel A. Johnson, AICP, P.H.M., *Executive Director, Montgomery County Housing Authority*
- Chris Patriarca, AICP, *CCPC Senior Community Planner*

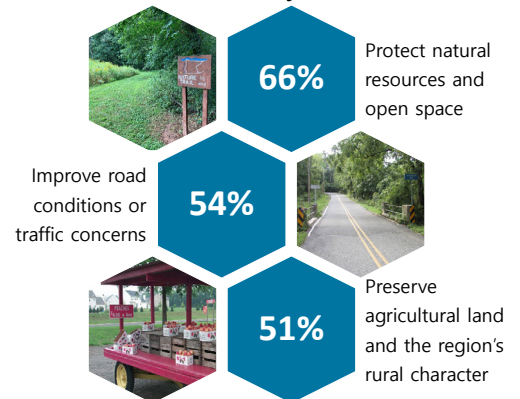
COMMUNITY SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

The community survey was open from April 24 through October 21, 2024 and received a total of 733 responses from residents of all eight PMRPC municipalities, as well as neighboring municipalities. The survey gathered each stakeholder's ideas and vision for the Region's future development, as well as specific feedback on topics ranging from community services and housing to economic development and parks and open space.

What factors most influenced your decision to live in or relocate to the Pottstown Region?



What kind of initiatives do you see as a priority for the Pottstown Region over the next 20 years?



ZONING ORDINANCE AND MAP CONSISTENCY REVIEWS

Route 100 Commercial Overlay Text & Map Amendment—West Pottsgrove Township – At the January meeting, PMRPC reviewed proposed zoning text amendments related to the Route 100 Commercial Overlay District in West Pottsgrove Township. PMRPC expressed concerns related to the proposed maximum building height and relationship to the nearby Pottstown Municipal Airport and fire response. At the January meeting, the Committee also reviewed a zoning map amendment to expand the Route 100 Corridor Overlay District further west along Upland Square Drive into an area identified as a Conservation Area in the 2015 regional comprehensive plan. PMRPC recognized that the proposed map amendment is a logical expansion of the existing primary growth area and stated that they will incorporate this change into the regional comprehensive plan update that is underway.

Various Zoning Map Amendments —Upper Pottsgrove Township – At the February meeting, PMRPC reviewed various proposed zoning map amendments in Upper Pottsgrove Township. PMRPC determined the zoning map amendments to be generally consistent with the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Route 100 Commercial Overlay District Text Amendment —Upper Pottsgrove Township – At the April meeting, PMRPC reviewed proposed zoning text amendments related to the Route 100 Commercial Overlay District in Upper Pottsgrove Township. PMRPC determined the zoning text amendments to be generally consistent with the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

R-1 District Text Amendment —Upper Pottsgrove Township – At the April meeting, PMRPC reviewed proposed zoning text amendments related to the R-1 District in Upper Pottsgrove Township. PMRPC determined the zoning text amendments to be generally consistent with the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Sober Living Zoning Text Amendment —Pottstown Borough – At the May meeting, PMRPC reviewed proposed zoning text amendments related to sober living uses in Pottstown Borough. PMRPC determined the zoning text amendments to be generally consistent with the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Gateway Mixed Use District Zoning Text Amendment —Lower Pottsgrove Township – At the May meeting, PMRPC reviewed proposed zoning text amendments related to the Gateway Mixed Use District in Lower Pottsgrove Township. PMRPC determined the zoning text amendments to be generally consistent with the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan for the Pottstown Metropolitan Region as outlined in the 2015 Regional Comprehensive Plan includes policies and maps intended to guide future growth in the Region for the next 20 years (see the Future Land Use Map on page 1).

SUBDIVISIONS AND LAND DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT

Any subdivision or land development proposal within the Region which meets the definition of a “subdivision or land development of regional impact” is reviewed by the Committee. The Committee reviews and provides advisory comments to the individual municipality where the proposal is located as it relates to the stated goals, objectives, and policies of the adopted Regional Comprehensive Plan.

Wawa – West Pottsgrove Township – At the February meeting, PMRPC reviewed a proposed development of a 6,049 square foot convenience store and gas station with 16 fueling pumps near the intersection of Grosstown Road and Old Reading Pike. PMRPC provided comments on stormwater management, impact on wetlands, vehicular circulation, and electric vehicle parking.

749 Congo Road – Douglass Township – At the February meeting, PMRPC reviewed a proposed development of 26 single-family detached homes. PMRPC provided comments on the proposed single-access loop street.

Sanatoga Land Holdings, LP – Lower Pottsgrove Township – At the May meeting, PMRPC reviewed a proposed mixed-use development at 147 Evergreen Road consisting of two fast food restaurants with drive-thru facilities, a 125-room hotel, and four apartment buildings totaling 200 dwelling units. PMRPC provided comments related to traffic impacts.

State Street Commercial Development – West Pottsgrove Township & Upper Pottsgrove Township – At the October meeting, PMRPC reviewed a proposed development consisting of eight commercial and institutional buildings on individual lots totaling 129,380 square feet of building area and 820 surface parking spaces. PMRPC provided comments related to transportation impacts and pedestrian circulation.

276-284 N. Hanover Street – Pottstown Borough – At the December meeting, PMRPC reviewed a proposal to renovate several buildings to create a total of 85 dwelling units and a cafe/retail space on North Hanover Street in Pottstown Borough. PMRPC provided comments in support of the project.

REGIONAL GRANT PROGRAMS

PREVIOUS MINI-GRANTS ROUNDS #1-5: 2013-2024



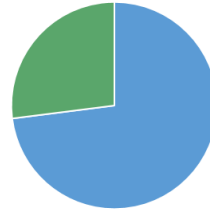
48

Projects



8

Municipalities



73% park development projects
27% park planning projects



\$900,000+
Total grant
funds awarded

MINI-GRANTS PROGRAM

The Pottstown Parks and Recreation Improvement Mini-Grant Program is a local grant program jointly-administered by PMRPC and the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation (PAHWF) with grant funding from DCNR which is matched 50:50 locally by PAHWF. Mini-grants are available to all eight of the municipalities within the Region. The program is designed to fund park improvements to increase park usage and improve the health of area residents.

MINI-GRANTS ROUND #4: 2021-2024

During 2024, all remaining mini-grant projects awarded under Round #4 were successfully completed and the grant was closed out with DCNR. The images below highlight two of the projects that were completed in 2024.



During Round #4, Lower Pottsgrove Township constructed an accessible, 400 square-foot pavilion on the south side of Sanatoga Park. The township also constructed two ADA parking stalls and an accessible pathway, planted four native shade trees, and installed other amenities including refuse bins and grills.

MINI-GRANTS ROUND #5: 2023-2026

In early 2024, seven mini-grants were approved for funding, including five development projects and two planning projects. Projects range from master plan preparation for a new park (East Coventry Township) to the renovation of a municipal mini-golf course (Pottstown Borough).

INTERACTIVE WEB MAP OF PROJECTS

PMRPC continues to update an online map of ongoing and completed mini-grant projects. The GIS-based website allows users to select the grant round and individual projects within each round. When a project is selected, the map zooms in on the project location and provides a brief description of the project. View the map here: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/e017a6cb1f5e45e4881413e3cf8a380e/>



During Round #4, Upper Pottsgrove Township constructed a new trailhead and parking area on the 22-acre "Schwenk parcel" at the southeast corner of Snyder Road and Schwenk Road. The project provides a trail connection to Sussell Park on the north side of Snyder Road.