Walking the Walk in Montgomery County, PA

Walk to School Day at Myers Elementary School, Cheltenham, PA

America Walks Webinar – November 29, 2018
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Montgomery County Planning Commission
Put it in the Plan: Montco 2040 – A Shared Vision

- Montco 2040 is our comprehensive plan adopted in 2015
- A guidance document for us and the county’s 62 municipalities, focused around policies & strategies that the county can implement
- Funding from the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation to include health topics in plan
Each plan theme has goals which support walkability

- Improve transportation quality and expand options for county residents and workers
- Expand and connect trails, natural areas, and parks
- Support strong downtowns and community destinations

- Provide more opportunities for residents to exercise and have healthy lifestyles
- Enhance community character and protect neighborhoods

- Improve transportation access to businesses
- Encourage development and transformative investment where infrastructure already exists.
- Flexibly adapt to changing market conditions and demographics
The comprehensive plan looked closely at current walkability.

Walkability = Destinations + Built Environment

Supermarkets, Drug Stores, Restaurants, Public Schools, Libraries, Post Offices, Train Stations, and Bus Stops

People, Street Grid, Commercial Intensity and Lot Size, Residential Density and Lot Size, Mix of Uses, Presence of Parking Lots, and Types of Streets
And lays out an ambitious trail network
Our land use policies support walkability…

… which leads to updated ordinances in municipalities.
Walk Montco
Montgomery County Walkability Study
MCPC
Walk Montco took a closer look at where people can walk.
...and sets up policies for future development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>VERGE WIDTH</th>
<th>SIDEWALK WIDTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT SIDEWALKS</td>
<td>5'</td>
<td>8'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMERCIAL, OFFICE, AND INDUSTRIAL SIDEWALKS</td>
<td>5' - 8'</td>
<td>5'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTSIDE OF CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESIDENTIAL SIDEWALKS ALONG MAJOR STREETS</td>
<td>5' - 8'</td>
<td>5'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESIDENTIAL SIDEWALKS ON LOCAL STREETS WITH MORE THAN 4 HOMES PER ACRE</td>
<td>2'</td>
<td>5'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESIDENTIAL SIDEWALKS ON LOCAL STREETS WITH 4 HOMES PER ACRE OR LESS</td>
<td>2'</td>
<td>4' - 5'</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
It makes recommendations that are applicable county-wide

- Four **Walk Audits** that are case studies
  - Downtown
  - Commercial corridor
  - School
  - Train station
- Involve engineer, PENNDOT, SEPTA, community leaders, residents, township staff
- Sought input with online comment maps and open invitations to join the walk audits
- Municipalities that participated in this effort can use the case studies as a planning document for future funding requests

*Walk audits help us do better planning of the built environment.*
Walk Montco

Taken from our walk audit at a local elementary school

1. **SOLUTION:** Update school zone sign to meet current FHWA and MUTCD standards. Sign type should be consistent with newly installed signs on Front Street.
   **POTENTIAL COST:** $$$

2. **SOLUTION:** A. Paint "no parking zone" stripes on either side of driveway.
   **POTENTIAL COST:** $
   
   Solution B. Install tubular delineators on either side of driveway.
   **POTENTIAL COST:** $
   
   Solution C. Extend curb line on either side of the driveway to create a bump-out.
   **POTENTIAL COST:** $$$

3. **SOLUTION:** Widens Ashbourne Road from Front Street intersection to the school driveway. Create a dedicated westbound left-turn lane into the school driveway and provide space on westbound side. These improvements could be concurrent with the proposed development.
   **POTENTIAL COST:** $$$$

4. **SOLUTION:** Launch an educational campaign highlighting the effects of idling vehicles. Example: Myers Elementary School sign campaign.
   **POTENTIAL COST:** $

5. **SOLUTION:** Delimitate the bus stop zone with painted pavement and signs. Replace or extend the sidewalk on school property to 5’ or greater width, and install a bus shelter.
   **POTENTIAL COST:** $$
Bike Montco

• **Adopted as the county’s bike plan** – to work toward a safe, efficient bicycle network for everyone

• **Not a trails plan**, despite the heavy use of the region’s Circuit Trails network

• This plan highlights on-street and next-to-street bike facilities (e.g. bike lanes and shoulders)
Bike Montco

- The planning process had a diverse and large (40+ member) steering committee
- Plan revolves around 6 themes
  - Connected communities
  - Equity
  - Safety
  - Education & Enforcement
  - Health & Environmental Sustainability
  - Vibrant Economy
- Case studies that focus on safe bike routes to parks & trails, bike mobility in towns, biking to transit, biking near schools
Planned Bike Montco Network
Planned Bike Montco Network
The plan’s recommendations include feasible solutions

A traffic engineer is a critical piece of the walk and bike audit process – to provide concept plans for feasible design solutions with cost estimates.
Other ways we influence change in the built environment

• Model zoning & subdivision ordinances
• Regional transportation planning with MPO (DVRPC) for sidewalk, trail, and bicycling improvements
• Grant programs for:
  • Municipal-level projects that implement the ideas in Montco 2040
  • Municipalities seeking matching funds for PennDOT’s Green Light Go grant program

Ordinances that illustrate outcomes

A sidewalk connection to a county trail, funded by a Montco 2040 grant.
Next Steps

We hope to continue encouraging county residents to stay active and keep walking!

- Complete streets policy
- Ongoing grant making
- Continue providing walk audits for interested school districts and communities