



# NEWS

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**  
**COURT HOUSE, NORRISTOWN, PA., BOX 311, 19404-0311**

**Frank X. Custer, Communications Director**

**Jessica Willingham, Communications Assistant**

**PHONE (610) 278-3061 FAX (610) 278-5943**

**COMMISSIONERS: JOSH SHAPIRO, *Chair***

**VALERIE A. ARKOOSH, MD, MPH, *Vice Chair***

**JOSEPH C. GALE, *Commissioner***



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 11, 2016**

## **Montco Land Development Plans Highest Since '09; Indicates an Improving Economy**

**Norristown, PA (March 11, 2016)** – The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) in 2015 received the highest number of land development and subdivision proposals it has received since 2009, according to the MCPC’s annual Summary of Subdivision, Land Development, and Zoning Activity report.

“This increase in activity shows that the economy in Montgomery County has significantly improved after a post-recession dip in activity,” said Josh Shapiro, chair of the Montgomery County Commissioners.

Residential land development proposals exploded in 2015 and set a ten-year record for units proposed. The 4,089 units proposed resemble the active markets in the 1990s, but the big difference is how multifamily housing is the dominant form. Multifamily units are benefitting from the robust market for apartment rentals in the Philadelphia region.

A newer trend in both younger and older generations seeking to live near employment, major road access, retail centers, and public transit, has also opened up many redevelopment and mixed-use opportunities. Upper Merion Township was the leader for multifamily development proposals due to the momentum with the Village at Valley Forge, but also with rezoning in the King of Prussia Business Park and transit-oriented development in the township’s more eastern business area. Upper Moreland and Lower Merion also saw major multifamily projects proposed near employment centers in 2015.

Proposed nonresidential square footage also increased in 2015, and every one of the major sectors – commercial, office, industrial, and institution – realized a record level of square footage proposed going back at least five years. The office sector in particular showed signs of a rebound after several years of depressed activity.

The office market still faces challenges, but if the economy continues to improve and municipalities address the changing needs and desires of companies, this sector could see new opportunities over time. The commercial sector still saw the highest square footage proposed, which is typical. A few new neighborhood shopping centers were proposed along with some large-scale single-occupancy buildings. The industrial sector had two of the three largest nonresidential projects proposed, both in Hatfield Township.

MCPC received 157 proposed amendments to either the zoning code or zoning map of local municipalities. This was a small decrease from the prior year, but it still represents a similar figure to the average number of zoning submissions over the last ten years. More substantial zoning ordinance amendments were much higher in 2015 though, while zoning map amendments and minor zoning text amendments both decreased.

MCPC is required by law to review all proposed subdivisions, land developments, and zoning amendments in the county. Each year the commission compiles statistics regarding these submissions to analyze trends in plan proposals. The information and statistics in the annual summary reflect proposal plans only—not actual construction activity. The report focuses on residential and nonresidential proposals, the amount of acreage proposed for development, and zoning text and map amendments.

For more information on the annual summary, visit the Subdivision & Land Development Reviews page at [www.montcopa.org/Planning](http://www.montcopa.org/Planning). Contact: Scott France at 610-278-3747 or via email at [sfrance@montcopa.org](mailto:sfrance@montcopa.org).