

# TOWN CENTER NEWS

Winter 2013

A quarterly newsletter on revitalization  
and economic development in  
Montgomery County's traditional towns



## 2012 REVITALIZATION AWARDS

**In November, two very worthwhile projects won Revitalization Awards from Montgomery County – Lansdale's Cannon Square development and the Glenside Commercial District Streetscape Enhancements. This is the sixth year that the county has granted awards for revitalization projects; all winners are well-designed projects with a significant revitalization impact on the community.**

**Cannon Square**, a new townhouse community in Lansdale Borough at the intersection of Second and Cannon Streets, received a 2012 Montgomery Award for the successful transformation of a former industrial property into 28 townhomes on 1.34 acres that fit seamlessly into their residential surroundings. This project has had a significant impact on the borough, providing new market-rate housing in what could otherwise be a built-out community and new jobs and residents to support the downtown business corridor.



*Cannon Square townhouses in Lansdale with parking in back*

Located near the Lansdale train station and the heart of the borough's downtown, this has become a popular place for young families and empty nesters to purchase homes. Most of the townhomes have sold at prices in the range of \$240,000-\$300,000, well above the median attached home sale price in the borough. The developer of this project, W.B. Homes, Inc., propelled by the success of this project, has already proposed another infill development

of townhomes and twins in Lansdale.



*Central courtyard in Cannon Square*

### **The Glenside Commercial District in Cheltenham Township**

received a 2012 Montgomery Award for streetscape enhancements that have revitalized the Easton Road corridor, which runs through the heart of Glenside. This successful project has helped reinvigorate a popular, walkable, aesthetically pleasing neighborhood where residents and visitors are excited to visit, shop, and support local businesses.

The streetscape improvements have increased the livability and sustainability of the Glenside Commercial District as well as the quality of life in the surrounding residential neighborhood. Physical improvements include paver blocks, widened sidewalks, benches, street trees, illuminated bollards, ornamental pedestrian-scaled street lamps, wayfinding signage, and street furniture. This corridor is now home to several special events, and



*Crosswalk in Glenside*



*New business in Glenside*

the streetscape enhancements have helped attract jobs, visitors, and at least ten new businesses to Glenside. These changes have also helped leverage a seasonal farmers' market, located at

the train station parking lot off of Easton Road.

Although some funding for this phased project came from the county's revitalization program; the township's matching funds, local fund-raising efforts and a PennDOT PCTI grant for \$1.4 million helped with funding as well. The streetscape was designed with input from local residents and participation from local business owners and Arcadia University. Cheltenham and its residents recognize how these improvements have added vitality to Glenside, increased quality of life for everyone, and created a focal point for events and commerce.

**For additional information, contact the Montgomery County Planning Commission at 610-278-3723 or visit [www.planning.montcopa.org](http://www.planning.montcopa.org)**

## PennDOT embraces context sensitive designs

A continuing challenge in planning and designing transportation improvements in the county is creating a balance between utility and design. For some stakeholders, the priority of the project is on travel time and speed; others may focus solely on community character and revitalization. How can planners and communities balance these competing interests? Smart transportation, which incorporates the ideas of context sensitive design, is a way to marry these different viewpoints into a solution that satisfies (hopefully) all stakeholders.

Smart transportation is a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach which PennDOT has embraced with its recent Smart Transportation Guidebook (available at <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/mobility/pdf/smarttransportationguidebook2008.pdf>).

According to the guidebook, smart transportation can be summarized with the following principles:

### 1. TAILOR SOLUTIONS TO THE CONTEXT

Roadways should respect the community character, and their design should change as they transition from rural to suburban to urban areas. Factors like changes in roadway widths or the presence or absence of parking lanes provide clues to motorists on how fast to drive when passing from one land use type to another. Creating an environment that supports a roadway's desired operating speed is important to context sensitive roadways.

### 2. TAILOR THE APPROACH

Improvement projects vary in need, type, complexity and range of solutions - so the approach should be tailored to that specific project - with stakeholder input - early in the process.

### 3. PLAN ALL PROJECTS IN COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

State officials, local officials, and citizens all have appropriate roles and responsibilities as part of these design collaborations. PennDOT will review proposed roadway projects to ensure they fit regional or statewide mobility goals, but may also recommend revised designs or alternative strategies. The municipality is responsible for sound land use planning and should help create a well-connected street network to better accommodate local trips. The municipality should also encourage a healthy mix of uses that cut down on the number of local vehicular trips.

### 4. PLAN FOR ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MODES

The needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users must be considered in designing all roadway projects. Sidewalk networks should be well connected with regular, safe street crossings. Bike lanes or wide curb lanes can encourage people to bike rather than drive for short and moderate distance trips. And if a roadway is designed to discourage vehicular speeding, it can be comfortably used by pedestrians and bicyclists alike. A balance should be sought in attaining these goals on all projects.

### 5. USE SOUND PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to good decision-making. The smart solution on some projects may be to seek design exceptions or waivers to allow for true context-based design.

### 6. SCALE THE SOLUTION TO THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM

Find the best transportation solution that fits within the context, is affordable, is supported by the communities, and can be implemented in a reasonable time frame. Safety must be considered on all roadway projects.



Downtown Hatboro supports a lively dining scene. From a new café on the ground floor of Jacksonville Road's Hatboro Lofts to new Middle Eastern and (soon-to-open) Indian restaurants joining the businesses already established along South York Road, there's much to choose from if you're looking for a meal or a place to hang out.

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