

# ABINGTON TOWNSHIP

SEPTEMBER 21, 2021



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MEETING



# TOWNSHIP OF ABINGTON

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## *COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MEETING*

### **A G E N D A** **September 21, 2021** **6:00 PM**

There are three ways for the public to participate in the meeting: online, by phone, or in-person viewing room. Residents can access the meeting online, by a computer, iPad, iPhone or Android at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89714885938>. This link will enable residents to hear the meeting and see presentations. There will be no video capabilities. Residents, who are unable to join online, can listen to the meeting by calling 1-929-436-2866 and entering the meeting ID number 897-1488-5938 when prompted. Residents, who are unable to join online or by phone, can watch the meeting in a viewing room at the Abington Township Board Room located at 1176 Old York Road, Abington, PA 19001, 2nd Floor. This will allow residents to see, hear, and participate in the meeting.

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#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Future Land Use Chapter
  - A. Update: Discussions about Public Outreach for Future Land Use Chapters
  
  - B. Update: Results of Public Outreach for Transportation Chapters
  
  - C. Future Land Use Chapter: New Recommendations

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

## **BOARD POLICY ON AGENDA ITEMS**

*For Information Purposes Only*

### **Board President Announcements**

*This item on the Board of Commissioners Agenda is reserved for the Board President to make announcements that are required under law for public disclosure, such as announcing executive sessions, or for matters of public notice.*

### **Public Comment**

*Public Comment on Agenda Items is taken at the beginning of regularly scheduled Public Meetings prior to any votes being cast. When recognized by the presiding Officer, the commenter will have three minutes to comment on agenda items at this first public comment period. All other public comment(s) not specific to an agenda item, if any, are to be made near the end of the public meeting prior to adjournment. Public comment on agenda items at regularly scheduled Board of Commissioner Committee meetings will be after a matter has been moved and seconded and upon call of the Chair for public comment.*

### **Presentations**

*Should the Board of Commissioners have an issue or entity that requires time to present an issue to the Board, that is more than an oral description relating to an agenda item under consideration, The Board may have that matter listed under Presentations. If nothing is listed under presentations, then there is no business to conduct in that manner.*

### **Consent Agenda**

*Items of business and matters listed under the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine and non-controversial and will be enacted by one motion and one vote. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired by Board of Commissioner Members, that item is to be identified by the Board member and will be identified and removed from the Consent Agenda, and will be considered separately at the appropriate place on the Agenda.*

### **Unfinished Business**

*Items for consideration as unfinished business are matters that have been considered for action at a public Board Meeting and have not been tabled to a date certain or voted upon.*

### **New Business**

*Items for consideration as new business are matters that have been considered for action at the Board Committee Meeting. It is Board practice to not introduce new business at Board Committee Meetings.*

## **BOARD POLICY ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

### *For Information Purposes Only*

The Township shall conduct business in accordance with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Laws governing the conduct of public meetings and only establish guidelines that shall govern public participation at meetings consistent with the law.

Each commenter shall:

- Direct their comments to the Presiding Officer;
- Speak from the podium or into a microphone designated by the presiding officer;
- State their name for the record;
- Either orally or in writing provide their address for the record;
- Have a maximum of three minutes to make their comments. Each commenter when speaking to a specific agenda item, is to keep their comments relative to that identified agenda item;
- Speak one time per agenda item;
- When commenting on non-agenda items, the commenter is to keep their comments related to matters of the Township of Abington, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.
- State a question to the Presiding Officer after all commenters have spoken, and;
- Be seated after speaking or upon the request of the presiding officer;
- Not engage in debate, dialogue or discussion;
- Not disrupt the public meeting, and;
- Exercise restraint and sound judgement in avoiding the use of profane language, and the maligning of others.

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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Draft Chapter 13: Future Land Use

TO: Comp Plan Development Team

FROM: Mike Narcowich, AICP, Community Planning Assistant Manager

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## Outline

### Introduction

Land Use Policies Implemented by Zoning

Land Use Recommendations from Adopted Plans

### Future Land Use Categories

Residential

Recreation/Conservation

Commercial/Mixed-Use Corridors

Village Centers

Town Centers

Industrial/Employment

Employment/Residential

Transit-Oriented Overlay

Residential Transition Overlay

### Recommendations

## Introduction

This chapter will make recommendations for Abington’s future land use and serves as the heart of “Vision2035.” Chapter 4: Existing Land Use and, Chapter 11: Transportation, Chapter 12: Economic Development, and to varying degrees, all other chapters of this plan, serve as the foundation for the recommendations made in this chapter. The future land use recommendations will be implemented through implementation mechanisms such as zoning, the subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO), and other chapters of the

## Link to Plan’s Vision

This chapter has important linkages with the following plan themes:

- *“Desirable Residential Areas”*
- *“A Thriving, Equitable Community”*
- *“Vibrant Destinations”*
- *“Healthy People and Environment (think clean, green, and healthy)”*

municipal code. Additional topic-specific studies such as fiscal-impact or neighborhood revitalization studies may be appropriate to help determine the specific course to take to best implement this chapter’s recommendations.

As noted in Chapter 4: Existing Land Use, Abington is ninety-eight percent built-out and little undeveloped land remains to accommodate new development. Therefore, most future development in the township will consist of infill development and redevelopment of existing developed sites. The township has numerous train stations—some of which are suitable for, and would meet demand for, walkable, transit-oriented development with greater intensity of development than currently exists. And it has numerous shopping centers. As trends in the retail sector have changed, it is likely that some of these centers will be reinvented as highly-walkable, mixed-use developments with a greater intensity of development than currently exists.

This chapter provides a short summary of land use policies implemented by the comprehensive zoning rewrite of 2017. That process involved extensive visioning and work to establish zoning districts’ intent. It then summarizes still-relevant recommendations from adopted township plans, including the comprehensive plan of 2007. It then presents future land use categories, which correspond to the future land use map *Note: this will be addressed at the next CPDT meeting.* Each future land use category’s character is described, as it is envisioned into the future. The chapter concludes with goals and recommendations.

## Land Use Policies Implemented by Zoning <sup>1 2</sup>

Abington's zoning ordinance (2017, with amendments) built on past and contemporaneous planning to greatly enhance design standards for commercial, mixed-use, village center, and shopping center areas. In these locations, it introduced elements such as the "build-to-line," and "street wall" to encourage pedestrian activity and walkable, transit-supportive uses having a building and site design intended to reinforce and enhance community character.

Following are some of the important land use changes made by the ordinance:

- Strengthened emphasis on building, landscape, and streetscape design
- Strong support for pedestrian transportation and safety, and de-emphasis of the personal automobile's impact on the built environment
- Greater attention to the streetscape in nonresidential and mixed-use areas
- Enhanced transit-oriented development near train stations
- "Main Street" commercial and mixed-use districts subdivided into three, based upon hierarchy of scale and design treatment
- First requirements regulating infill and expansions of single-family residential uses
- Creation of riparian corridor conservation district
- Provision for and regulation of renewable energy sources
- Allowance for significantly greater range of uses, where compatible with surrounding area
- Use of the "bonus" mechanism to incentivize provision of amenities which help attain township's planning goals

## Land Use Recommendations from Adopted Plans <sup>3 4</sup>

### *Walk-Park-Train Abington Plan (2017)*

The Walk-Park-Train Abington Plan included land use recommendations in addition to its significant recommendations for improving access to train stations. In 2017, it noted that, around the **North Hills** station, there is "good potential for TOD development over the next 10 to 20 years." It highlighted (p.91) seven parcels that it considered potentially ripe for redevelopment.

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<sup>1</sup> For plans, see <https://www.abingtonpa.gov/departments/engineering-and-code-department/planning-documents>

<sup>2</sup> For zoning and map, see <https://www.abingtonpa.gov/departments/engineering-and-code-services/zoning-ordinance-and-maps>

<sup>3</sup> For plans, see <https://www.abingtonpa.gov/departments/engineering-and-code-department/planning-documents>

<sup>4</sup> For zoning and map, see <https://www.abingtonpa.gov/departments/engineering-and-code-services/zoning-ordinance-and-maps>

In **Crestmont**, it commented that “there is an opportunity for higher density residential and mixed uses in the area between the station and Old York Road and bordered to the north and south by Tremont Road and Roy Avenue.” It also commented that keeping the land zoned “Suburban Industrial” located on the west side of Rockwell Avenue, between Rubicam Avenue and Hamilton Avenue, “is not the highest and best use for this area directly adjacent to the station” since this light industrial property is isolated from any other such uses.

Recommendations for **Ardsey** include potential redevelopment of ten properties around the train station which front on Tyson Avenue, and consideration of a possible satellite parking lot for the train station.

The plan remarked that, concerning the **Roslyn** station area, “...if private sector interest for more intense development surfaces, it should be considered by the township.” It noted that the greatest constraint for such development appears to be steep slopes and many small sized parcels that would require land assembly.

*Old York Road Corridor Improvement Plan (2010)*

The Old York Road Corridor Improvement Plan made corridor-wide recommendations. These included visual continuity, improved mobility, access management, addition of street trees, median landscaping, and other greenery, and improving conditions for pedestrians and transit users.

The plan identified “priority areas” where the plans’ authors felt that the greatest potential for development and investment existed.

Following are still-relevant site-specific recommendations for Old York Road at the following locations:



1. The Fairway. Recommendation: creation of a new, walkable, mixed-use town center focused on Noble station. The center would include new streets and buildings located near the street. *Update: The township's comprehensive zoning ordinance adopted in 2017 was designed to facilitate this and allowed the greatest intensity of development on the "Triangle" area defined by the zoning ordinance-- the area where the train station is located, up to Old York Road and the Fairway. The township should consider whether increasing the allowable density-intensity in this vicinity (in the Business Center zoning district) would be appropriate.*
2. Susquehanna Road. Recommendation: reconfiguration of the intersection to improve its function for vehicles (including transit), pedestrians, and those with disabilities, while supporting infill development to enhance the utility of retail and service businesses to the neighborhood. *Update: the township obtained funding of \$2.3 million for this project and is working with the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority on project implementation.*
3. Old Welsh, Chester, Roy, and Rubicam Roads/Avenues. Recommendation: Improve pedestrian and vehicular safety, create a village environment with neighborhood-serving retail, and create a new, green, open space along the east side of the road. *Update: The township's comprehensive zoning ordinance adopted in 2017 promotes access management, and has design standards for buildings, sites, and the streetscape while emphasizing pedestrian safety.*

The plan identified these areas as appropriate ones for application of shared themes, including sustainability, healthy living, creation of an Abington Town Center, and broadening of types of commerce along the corridor. It made the creation of a Priority Area Task Force to guide implementation the highest priority.

### *Roslyn Revitalization Plan (2010)*

#### Train Station

The plan recommended moving the entrance to the train station fifty feet to the south to reduce vehicular-pedestrian conflicts, and recommended extending Roslyn's streetscape improvements south to the train station.

#### Anchor

The plan advocated for the attraction of an anchor attraction to be the centerpiece of the Roslyn business district. At the time, the township was attempting to acquire new land for the Roslyn branch of the township library. The plan recognized that a new anchor might take the form of the relocated library or a full-service restaurant. It also recommended enhanced pedestrian connections and the orientation of buildings in this area be designed to create a plaza with seating for nearby dining establishments, a new bus shelter, wider sidewalks on Easton Road, and a streamlined pedestrian connection that better links the residential area west of Bradfield Road with Easton Road, south of the intersection of Easton and Bradfield.

## Design

The plan recommended many land use, site design, streetscape, and architectural design features that were included in the comprehensive township zoning rewrite adopted in 2017.

The plan also recommended the following, still-relevant recommendations:

- Preparation of a detailed wayfinding signage plan
- Location of buildings close to the sidewalk, with parking to the rear on some properties. The zoning ordinance encourages this in Roslyn, but allows for land developments to locate property along the street, provided that it is screened by a low, decorative wall, fence, and landscaping (and street trees)
- Requirement that conversions of residential structures to commercial uses maintain the appearance of residential structures

## Grove Park

The plan recommended numerous improvements to Grove Park, including stormwater management, parking, pedestrian paths, and other amenities. It also recommended the park be used for activities such as farmer's markets and performances. These recommendations should be revisited when the township prepares its Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

## *Abington Township Comprehensive Plan (2007)*

The last Abington comprehensive plan made the following recommendations that are still-relevant:

- Master Plans: Use these for large properties to develop potential regulatory changes and use classifications that will enhance the surrounding neighborhoods and the Township.
- Nodes of Development: Evaluate zoning districts and the zoning map to develop nodes of similar and complementary uses so that these nodes can thrive and the businesses within them can support each other. *Update: the township's zoning strengthened nodes using (1) a variety of zoning text changes that further placemaking and the image of town and village centers, and (2) realignment of commercial zoning districts to establish more of a hierarchy of intensity, density, and design, with nodes such as shopping centers and village centers getting the strongest treatment.*
- Regional Planning: The plan recommended that the township, "Consider regional planning and creation of a specific plan to "allow for site-specific development plans to be pre-approved by the municipality and developed strictly in accord with that plan. Such an effort would also enhance grant application status for shared

development projects, and would increase the likelihood for unified development, at least along major access corridors such as Old York Road.”

- Transition Zones: The plan recommended creation of transition zones between our residential neighborhoods and commercial districts. *Update: The zoning rewrite process completed in 2017 considered this issue. Commercial corridor zoning was modified with a linear hierarchy of intensities, but opportunities still exist to create transition zones between (a) predominantly commercial areas and (b) residential neighborhoods by allowing mixed-dwelling type, residential-office, and live-work units in those transition areas.*
- Commercial Corridors: Develop centralized parking to reduce the amount of impervious parking area for individual properties (specifically smaller properties).
- Commercial Corridors: Develop guidelines that will create continuity between properties (internal lot connections, pedestrian walkways, architecture and street treatment). *Update: the township did this for Old York Road with the Old York Road Corridor Improvement Plan (2010)*
- Housing: Target development of housing that will encourage aging residents to stay in the Township. *Update: the Senior Neighborhood Residential (SNR) District did this for the area along Old York Road behind Rydal Park.*
- Housing: Develop tools that will enable current large building property owners to seek adaptive reuse options that will diversify the Township's housing stock.
- Housing: Develop design guidelines for small subdivisions so that the new homes constructed are not a complete departure from the vernacular of the neighborhood. *Update: zoning now requires single-site infill development meet certain design and dimensional requirements based on the characteristics of adjacent homes.*
- Opportunity Sites: Identify specific properties that will pose a challenge in the future due to vacating of the current owner/tenant and sale of the property and the attempt to create tools that will guide a suitable/viable replacement for that property. *The comprehensive zoning update addressed numerous large opportunity sites as part of the new Business Center District, and additional changes have been proposed for the Willow Grove Park Mall.*

## Future Land Use Categories

Following are the future land use recommendations for Abington. All land in the township is divided into future land use categories, which are depicted on the *Future Land Use Map, Fig. \_\_\_\_\_*. The categories are described below. These recommendations are intentionally broad and the boundaries of each future land use area shown on the map are intended to be interpreted flexibly; they are not intended to be exact. These policies represent a vision that

will serve as a guide for future, more specific implementation measures (e.g., zoning map and text amendments, other land use plans) and for the township as it reviews future land developments.

To contrast the future land use map with existing land use, see *Chapter 4: Existing Land Use Map, Figure.---*

### *Residential*

This future land use category includes neighborhoods of a predominantly residential character, and represents the areas which are most cherished by Abingtonians. Abington's existing, tree-lined, residential neighborhoods add much to the township's character. Many existing neighborhoods consist of low- or relatively-low-density single-family homes (detached, and in some cases, attached units (twins)). Some of these neighborhoods' homes were built in the 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Other neighborhoods were built during the postwar suburban housing boom. Large residential neighborhoods are found in many places in Abington, and comprise much of the communities of North Hills, Crestmont, Huntingdon Valley, Glenside, McKinley, Roslyn, and many other neighborhoods.

The residential future land use category also encompasses medium-density, high-density, and institutional residential types (such as continuing care communities). These higher-density housing types include townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, quadruplexes, garden apartments, midrise apartments, and continuing care communities.



Future development in the residential future land use category should occur in the following manner:

- New homes and other buildings should be designed to fit well with the surrounding neighborhood.
- Neighborhoods should be well-served with sidewalks and other pedestrian connections internally, and should be interconnected with surrounding development and land uses.
- Residential development and neighborhoods should include abundant tree canopy and substantial landscaping.
- To accommodate the diversity of housing types and needs, differing household sizes, and changing market preferences, land use policy will accommodate a range of housing types and sizes at varying price points. A greater range of housing types is appropriate near commercial and employment centers, and near transit.
- Gradual transitions will occur between areas of (1) low density residential and (2) higher-density residential and commercial or mixed-use areas.

- In the future, should the township adopt a historic district, as recommended by Chapter 6: Historic Preservation, infill development in historic areas should employ architecture consistent with the established historic local development style.

This land use category includes most of the community service (institutional) uses in the township, including schools, a college and university, health care institutions, religious uses, and cemeteries. These uses contribute to the township's quality of life by providing a variety of important municipal, health care, education, and other services. Cemeteries even contribute to quality of life of surrounding areas by providing a unique form of open space with ample trails, trees, vegetation and wildlife that those living or working nearby have come to appreciate. Convenient access to institutional and open space land uses can enhance the appeal of residential areas.

Community service development within the Residential future land use area should occur in the following manner:

- Adequate setbacks and landscaping should be used to prevent negative impacts on nearby residential neighborhoods and areas.
- For large institutional uses located in or abutting residential neighborhoods stepped-down building heights near residential uses and architectural design standards will be used to ensure institutional buildings' compatibility with residential uses.

Where former institutional uses with historic, architectural, or community significance are redeveloped for other uses, redevelopment should preserve and reuse the building(s).

*Note: Residential uses are also an important part of the Mixed-Use Commercial Land Use Category.*

### *Recreation/Conservation*

This land use category includes land designed to serve active recreation, passive recreation, and environmental conservation purposes. These areas should be preserved, maintained, and enhanced in the following ways:

- Conservation areas should undergo stewardship to maintain or restore optimal ecological quality.
- Park and open space areas primarily used for active recreation should have unused portions of the property returned to a natural state.
- Appropriate areas should be identified and used for stormwater best management practices (BMPs), and educational signage used to explain their function.
- Environmental education opportunities should be identified and educational signage added.

- Parks and open space areas should be well-connected with trails and pathways to adjacent residential and other areas, so that nearby residents, employees, and visitors can easily access them. This is important for quality of life and public health.

### *Mixed-Use Corridors*

Much of Abington’s arterial and collector roads serve as its main streets. These roads do and will continue to host retail and service uses, office, institutional, and high-density residential uses. Development in these areas is usually linear, lying along Old York Road, Easton Road, and other major streets.

Generally, land uses here are located on small or modest-sized lots, and will continue to be local-serving, convenience oriented uses. These include restaurants and take-out businesses, pharmacies, gas stations, repair shops, small stores and shops, fitness studios, and consumer services, among other uses. Institutional uses are an acceptable use; these take the form of uses such as libraries; hospitals and medical offices; emergency and government services and religious uses. Residential uses in this category will preferably be located in a mixed-use building with, and located above, nonresidential uses, but they may also be located in small-to-medium freestanding apartment buildings.

Development in the Mixed-Use Corridors will:

- Be transit-supportive and walkable.
- As sites redevelop, conform with the township’s zoning ordinance requiring better building, site, signage, and streetscape design.
- Add more green areas, including public open space.
- Include artisanal manufacturing or “maker” space (for more on these uses, see the Industrial/Employment future land use category, below).

### *Village Centers*

This land use category includes small-to-medium-sized, mixed-use, walkable centers in the form of nodes, the development of which was often based around a train station or important intersection. These centers feature neighborhood-serving or specialty (niche) retail uses, restaurants, services, entertainment, professional office uses, community services, and apartments (the last preferably located above nonresidential uses).

Development in the Village Centers will:

- Have a strong mixed-use component.
- Have densities greater than surrounding residential neighborhoods.

- Be undertaken consistent with refined zoning which further strengthens design standards, pedestrian-friendly, and transit-oriented development.
- Be guided by conceptual master plans (in selected locations), which address ideal density and intensity, land use mix, and in some cases, updated design standards to reflect the unique character of individual villages.
- Include artisan manufacturing or “maker” space (for more on these uses, see “Industrial Employment” future land use category, below).

### *Town Centers*

These areas apply to the shopping centers in Abington. These are nodal areas located on principal arterial roads. All are served by public transit, including two areas that are located at or near regional rail stations. Although they typically consisted of shopping areas, they are in a state of transition.

Over time, it is likely and desirable that some or all of these transition into mixed-use town centers, with increasing amounts of nontraditional uses for malls and shopping centers. In fact, some of these centers have already incorporated such uses in the last decade, such as medical centers, offices and brewpubs. The Pavilion-Foxcroft-Acme area already includes a substantial number of residential units and is adding more, while apartments are planned immediately to the rear of Baederwood Shopping Center.

Uses in the Town Center future land use category might take the form of an increasing number of some or all of the following:

- Mixed use buildings which include residential uses
- Services, such as fitness centers, academic institutions, and medical services
- Entertainment, performance venues, and indoor recreation
- Hotels
- Community center

In some of these areas, greater intensity of development may be appropriate, provided there is an adequate transportation network (multimodal in nature, and preferably served by transit) and where not incompatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods. As noted in the Chapter 7: Housing, since Abington is 98 percent built-out, there are few areas remaining that can accommodate anything but limited numbers of new residents. These town centers areas comprise, through redevelopment, a large portion of the land remaining that might accommodate such growth.

Such areas play an important role in changing a postwar tendency for new suburban commercial growth to take the form of sprawl, strung out along long highways, with never-

ending blacktop, little character, and areas which are unpleasant and/or unsafe to walk along and not interconnected with shared access and pedestrian facilities. Instead, focusing development and redevelopment in a more nodal form in town centers allows for the development of more walkable, mutually-reinforcing, mixed land uses, with plentiful landscaping, walking paths, and common plazas and courtyards for public gathering space. High design standards, placemaking, and programming will be important considerations in these areas.

Development in Town Centers will:

- Be highly pedestrian-oriented and transit-oriented (rail and/or bus).
- Consist of a mix of uses, such as retail (including dining and entertainment), residential, office, community services, public open space.
- Be medium-to-high intensity/density in scale.
- Major residential projects will be required to submit fiscal impact studies and transportation impact studies ensuring that such development will not unduly burden the township and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Provide a generous amount of open space and gathering areas, some of which will be open to the public. Be subject to master plans that portray a coherent, interconnected development for the center over time.
- Demonstrate exceptional standards of building and site design.
- Be highly interconnected, and connected to surrounding areas with pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks.
- Allow artisan manufacturing or “maker” space (for more on these uses, see “Industrial Employment” future land use category, below).

### *Industrial/Employment*

This land use category provides for industrial, research & development (R&D), biotech, and office uses. This land use category is located on Highland Avenue in Glenside. Although limited in extent, it is important for Abington to protect this land use category, as it allows the township to maintain a presence in the industrial sector, along with related jobs and economic development. That helps its economy be more diverse, and provides options for employment and economic development outside of the commercial and other sectors, making the local economy more resilient to downturns affecting the retail or office sectors. Industrial jobs include many that are high-paying; for example, at the time of the last Economic Census the average manufacturing job paid 25% higher than the average job paid in Montgomery County<sup>5</sup>. Additionally, opportunities for manufacturing and other industrial uses. These

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<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017).

include reshoring, the innovation economy (e.g., 3D printing),

Pennsylvania's energy infrastructure and trade policy. Accordingly, residential uses in the largest portion of this land use area, in Glenside, will be limited so as to protect the limited land in Abington available for industrial/employment uses.

An increasingly important role for industrial areas is to host artisanal manufacturing, "maker," or business incubator space. Incubators and "maker" space allow for entrepreneurs in industrial, culinary arts, or other fields to practice and hone their expertise in an industry in a way that requires less investment, in a manner in which multiple users of the space may share equipment and a workspace. It also provides for training and education in industrial, technical, and related fields. Such space can help entrepreneurs launch new businesses and provide an area for training new workers in these fields.

Another major issue affecting industrial areas is the rapid growth of distribution centers for online retailers. Regulations for distribution centers should be updated accordingly, and located where they will have the no or low impact on residential areas and the transportation system.

Development in the Industrial/Employment area should be developed in the following manner:

- With adequate setbacks, landscaping, and safeguards to protect nearby residential areas from truck traffic, noise, odors, and any other impacts associated with industrial uses.
- The small portion of the Suburban Industrial zoning district abutting suburban homes will be rezoned as residential.
- The portions of this area in Crestmont and Willow Grove will have their permitted uses reviewed to ensure that lumber yards and similar potential nuisances are not allowed due to its location in a residential neighborhood. These areas will be separately demarcated on the future land use map as "Industrial/Employment(Neighborhood)."
- Artisanal manufacturing and maker space should be added to the list of uses in the zoning ordinance, and use regulations added. This should be allowed throughout the SI-Suburban Industrial District.
- Regulations for distribution centers should be updated to reflect the rapid growth in such centers for online retailers and their related land use and transportation impacts.

### *Transit-Oriented Overlay*

Abington has seven SEPTA Regional Rail stations—more than virtually all other metropolitan area municipalities outside of Philadelphia. Five of these are suitable for transit-oriented development, and are assigned to the transit-oriented overlay future land use category.

These include: Noble, Crestmont, North Hills, Roslyn, and Ardsley. Although the stations for Willow Grove and Glenside are located outside the township's boundaries, overlay areas in Abington have been applied for them as well.

In these areas the township will examine further refinements to the zoning ordinance to encourage transit-oriented development, provided adequate transportation infrastructure exists and that zoning changes are compatible with surrounding areas. Zoning will ensure that development in these areas is designed best to contribute to transit, with extensive pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

### *Residential Transition Overlay*

The residential transition overlay future land use category applies to areas where a more gradual hierarchy of uses and development intensities or densities (a "transect") will be introduced over time. Multiple Abington planning initiatives have recognized that many parts of the township undergo an abrupt transition from commercial-mixed use areas and transit facilities to low-density residential areas, with little transition. The township will evaluate and introduce a more gradual hierarchy of land uses and intensities/densities over time, so that abrupt changes in land use are lessened and land use patterns in such areas become more cohesive and compatible with one another.

Development in the Residential Transition Overlay area will:

- Provide for a greater range of dwelling types in areas close to town and village centers, which also leverages the locational benefits of those areas' proximity to transit and major roads.
- Provide greater housing choice, accommodating varied household sizes, consumer preferences, and often-changing market trends.
- Provide more customers for businesses and services offered in town and village centers.

Uses which will be considered for these transition areas include low-impact offices, home occupations, live-work units, , and allowing for a greater variety of dwelling types.

Landscaping and other forms of buffering are important to minimize impacts of higher intensity areas on adjacent areas of lower-density development in areas of existing sharp differentials in land use intensities. Strong pedestrian linkages between such areas can and should help tie these areas together more closely, as recommended by multiple township plans. Traffic calming measures are appropriate in these areas to mitigate the impact of traffic from high intensity development on nearby residential neighborhoods.