



Borough of Lansdowne

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Anthony Campuzano
Mayor

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Borough Manager

August 20, 2020

Delaware County Council
Government Center
201 W. Front St.
Media, PA 19063

Re: Commentary: Delaware County Housing Plan

Dear Delaware County Council,

We, the members of the Lansdowne Borough Council, want to express our appreciation to Delaware County Council and the Delaware Planning Commission for providing the Delaware County Housing Plan to the Borough officials and all of the residents of Delaware County in a timely manner to allow for a thorough examination and with time to provide comments to the plan. At its August 19th, 2020 meeting, Lansdowne Borough Council took action and voted unanimously to send this letter as commentary on the contents of the proposed plan.

As the guiding document for Delaware County in noting housing development trends and as a guide for policy-making for the County, several areas of the plan are areas of interest and/or concern for Lansdowne Borough. Within this context, Lansdowne Borough Council appreciates the Delaware County Council's consideration of the following requests.

In review of the Housing Plan, Lansdowne Borough Council requests the county provide investment in the following areas for Mature Neighborhoods and municipalities identified as Urban Centers:

1. Invest in Greenway and Recreation Projects in Eastern Delaware County across municipalities: Ex. Darby Creek Greenway completion; Protected Bike and Walking Trails.
2. Invest in Recreational Programming in Eastern Delaware County: Ex. Financial supports for established youth clubs; a Regional Parks and Recreation Director to create Public Swimming Pools; financial subsidies for basketball and tennis courts, parks, and fields.
3. Provide financial support through low-interest loans or grants for aging housing stock.
4. Create preferences for housing programs and new development that reduce racial and economic segregation in the County.
5. Create Preference for dispersal of CDBG funds by way of bonus points for projects that will serve mixed income and racially diverse communities.

Incorporated in 1893, the Borough of Lansdowne developed as a commuter suburb with neighborhoods built around two train stations within walking distance of the residential neighborhoods. Still today, Lansdowne Borough maintains this character as a culturally and racially community comprised of residents of diverse professions, many of whom commute into Philadelphia. Likewise, Lansdowne is an older community with aging housing stock of various lot sizes. The

Housing Plan notes that “[t]he largest percentage of survey respondents, 46% . . . would prefer to live in Mature Neighborhoods that are highly walkable and close to transportation and other amenities” (3-4). Similarly, the Housing Plan also notes that “41% of respondents also preferred detached single-family houses and wanted to live on lots with yards, which are less common in Mature Neighborhoods” (3-5). Similarly, the Housing Plan notes, “Some respondents expressed a preference for characteristics that are more likely to be found in Mature Neighborhoods: 55% of respondents said the ability to walk to shops and restaurants was a top priority, 40% desired the ability to walk to public transportation, and 39% wanted common park or playground areas in walking distance” (3-5).

Through all indications, the square mile of Lansdowne Borough, like other inner-ring suburbs and established communities should be thriving as a gateway community into the city and out to the rest of the county with attractive housing, safe neighborhoods, walkable streets, accessible parks, and dedicated community leaders. However, our community struggles under an inequitable tax burden (see the charts in the Housing Plan), a struggling school district, and a need for more investment from the county.

By encouraging both the retention of green space in the rest of the county through smart growth and investment in multi municipal planning, the County can provide the direct assistance to help Lansdowne Borough thrive in the coming decades.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Hover
Borough Council President

Cc:
Lansdowne Borough Council
Ms. Linda Hill, Director, Planning Department
Mr. Craig Totaro, Borough Manager