



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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February 10, 2009

Mr. Bruce G. Horrocks, Asst. Manager
Whitemarsh Township
616 Germantown Pike
Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

Re: MCPC #09-0005-001
Township Wide Pedestrian and Bicycle
Network Feasibility Study
Whitemarsh Township

Dear Mr. Horrocks:

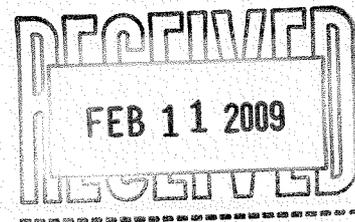
We have reviewed the above-referenced Pedestrian and Bicycle Network Plan in accordance with Section 302 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," per your request received on January 12, 2009. We forward this letter as a report of our review and recommendations.

Background

This submission is the final report of a Feasibility Study detailing the phases involved in implementing a township-wide pedestrian and bicycle network plan in Whitemarsh Township. The Plan is a five-phase blueprint that pinpoints priority areas and makes recommendations for how to complete the gaps between portions of the network thereby making it whole.

Comments

1. Bus Routes – The Montgomery County comprehensive plan recommends that "sidewalks should be provided wherever people might be expected to walk." Access to bus transit requires that transit riders must often walk along bus routes to get to their stops. While this study identifies the SEPTA bus routes that operate within Whitemarsh Township, it does not provide an inventory of the sidewalks along those routes to illustrate where gaps in the network could be bridged. Such an inventory would aid in moving forward in completing the network.
2. Using the Study – There is some ambiguity as to how this report, once completed and adopted by the township, will be used to make decisions governing the bicycle and pedestrian network throughout the township. We recommend that a small note explaining the township's intentions be included.



3. Phase 1 "Sierra Club Trail" - The Township should reconsider the study's recommendation to make the Sierra Club Trail a Phase 1 priority. While we recognize the recreational potential that such a trail would provide, Whitemarsh Township residents are already afforded a safe walking path along the south side of the township via the County-owned Schuylkill River Trail. We believe that the resources required to complete such a trail could be better spent on sidewalks that enhance safe pedestrian mobility in other, more centrally located portions of the township.

Recommendation

We recommend approval of the submitted study given the above-mentioned review comments are addressed to the satisfaction of the township.

Please note that the review comments and recommendations contained in this report are advisory to the municipality and final disposition for the approval of any proposal will be made by the municipality.

We ask that you forward a copy of the study to the Planning Commission upon formal adoption.

Sincerely,



Wesley Ratko, - Transportation Planner
610.278.3734 – wratko@montcopa.org

c: Christopher VandeVelde, Twp. Manager
Sean P. Kilkenny, Esq., Twp. Solicitor
James C. Sullivan, P.E., Twp. Engineer
Elizabeth DeCordova, Twp. Zoning Officer

Doug, on behalf of the Whitemarsh Valley Farms Community Association and the Whitemarsh Valley Country Club, the modifications that have been made thus far to the originally proposed Bicycle and Pedestrian Path Study, which consist of relocating the proposed sidewalk from the east side of Thomas Road to the west side, and the replacement of the proposed sidewalk along Kottler Drive with an 'on road trail', are appreciated. However, the association and the club still have the following constructive recommendations with regard to the plan, some of which were previously outlined in correspondence to the Township in October 2008:

1. Please consider the implementation of traffic calming measures within the Whitemarsh Valley Farms Community;
2. Please consider the removal of the proposed sidewalk along Thomas Road from the plan. The southern end of this sidewalk appears to dead-end at Germantown Pike, where a safe pedestrian crossing isn't provided. At the northern end, a safety concern also exists as an unsignalized mid-block pedestrian crossing would be required to access the Flourtown Road trail. As previously noted, the intersection of Flourtown Road and Thomas Road is a free-flow condition for Flourtown Road traffic along a curved section of roadway. If the Thomas Road portion of the network were removed, there would be no need or desire for pedestrians or bicyclists on the Flourtown Road trail to attempt to cross Flourtown Road at this location, instead continuing along the trail on the north side of the roadway, until reaching Stenton Road, where the crossing of Flourtown Road could be accomplished in a safer manner at a signalized intersection.

In addition, we would request that a meeting be scheduled between representatives of the Whitemarsh Valley Farms Community Association, the Whitemarsh Valley Country Club and the Township's Staff and/or representatives of Campbell Thomas & Co. to further discuss these items. As previously stated, the memberships of the Whitemarsh Valley Farms Community Association and the Whitemarsh Valley Country Club believe the study has many worthwhile recommendations, but they will not support a plan that includes a sidewalk along Thomas Road. Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Brian R. Keaveney, P.E., PTOE
Transportation Division Manager
Pennoni Associates Inc.

**WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
RESOLUTION # 2009-21**

WHEREAS, Whitemarsh Township adopted [1] an updated Comprehensive Plan on November 20, 2003, [2] an updated Open Space Plan on December 21, 2006, [3] a Parks & Recreation Plan on March 22, 2007, and [4] a Greenway Plan on August 16, 2007; which Plans establish specific goals regarding appropriate pedestrian travel for the Whitemarsh Township community; and

WHEREAS, on May 9, 2006, the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors ("Board") executed a contract with Campbell Thomas & Co. Architects of Philadelphia, PA ("CTC") to prepare a Pedestrian and Bicycle Network Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Board appointed an ad hoc committee known as the "Pedestrian and Bicycle Network Plan Steering Committee" ("Committee"), with its membership comprised of representatives from the Supervisors, Planning Commission, Open Space Committee, Shade Tree Commission, Park & Recreation Board and the Environmental Advisory Board. The Committee assisted CTC in the preparation of the Plan; and

WHEREAS, a draft of the Plan, dated December 14, 2007, was the subject of public meetings conducted by the Committee and the Board, for the purpose of soliciting public comment; and

WHEREAS, to conform to applicable provisions of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, copies of the Plan were made available to the public, contiguous municipalities, the Montgomery County Planning Commission and the Colonial School District for comment, and all such comments have been considered prior to any action by the Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, and it is hereby resolved by the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors that the Plan, as prepared by the Committee and initially dated December 14, 2007 and as amended, is hereby adopted as the Whitemarsh Township Pedestrian and Bicycle Network Plan and shall be dated May 14, 2009.

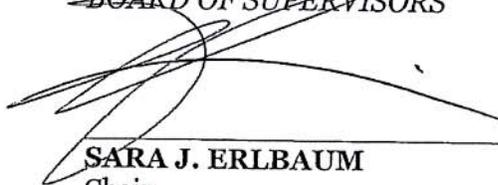
RESOLVED, this 14th day of May 2009.

ATTEST:



CHRISTOPHER R. van de VELDE
Secretary

**WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**


SARA J. ERLBAUM
Chair