



# BOROUGH OF NORTH WALES

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## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING Wednesday, April 1, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.

Gregory J. D'Angelo, Chair  
Lillian Higgins  
Mark Tarlecki  
Jocelyn Tenney

**Call to Order, Date, and Time**  
**Roll Call**  
**Pledge of Allegiance**

**1. Public Comment**

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**2. Consideration: Approval of Minutes: March 4, 2026**

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**3. Old Business: Continued discussion of the Streetscape Plan & Design Guidelines**

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### Adjournment

All interested parties may participate on the date and time noted above and when called upon by the Chair. The public may also submit questions or comments prior to the meeting by e-mail to [info@northwalesborough.org](mailto:info@northwalesborough.org); these must be received no later than 12 Noon on the day of the meeting. Persons with disabilities who wish to attend the meeting and require auxiliary aid, service, or other accommodation to participate in the meeting should contact North Wales Borough at 215-699-4424 or by e-mail to [info@northwalesborough.org](mailto:info@northwalesborough.org).

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Jamila H. Winder, Chair  
Neil K. Makhija, Vice Chair  
Thomas DiBello, Commissioner  
  
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**Montgomery County  
Planning Commission**

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Scott France, AICP  
Executive Director

March 24, 2026

**SUBJECT:** North Wales Borough Streetscape Plan – Visioning Summary and Draft Introduction

**TO:** Christine Hart, Borough Manager;  
Danielle Ervin, Assistant Manager;  
North Wales Borough Planning Commission

**FROM:** Tim Konetchy, AICP, Senior Community Planner

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### **Introduction**

Last month, the Planning Commission and assistant borough manager participated in a strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats or ‘SWOT’ exercise facilitated by the Borough’s community planner. This exercise entailed evaluating the potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats relevant to the ongoing streetscape study. A summary of the feedback gathered during this exercise is provided below.

In addition to reviewing the results of the SWOT analysis, the Planning Commission will also be asked to review a proposed public outreach strategy, an updated draft table of contents, and a newly drafted introduction for the plan. The plan is proposed to contain three chapters: an introduction, a streetscape plan, and design guidelines. A brief description of the proposed public outreach plan and the plan contents/scope is provided below.

### **SWOT Exercise Summary**

The Planning Commission contributed valuable insights into the perception of the Borough and the study area during the SWOT exercise. The findings are summarized below.

#### Strengths

- The presence of historic homes on Main Street
- The architecture of residential, commercial, and institutional buildings
- “Small town” feel and aesthetics thereof (i.e., 2-3 story buildings)
- NPVFD has a prominent presence on Main Street, which adds to a sense of safety
- North Wales Station provides excellent transit options for commuters and visitors alike
- The sense of community and shared identity
- North Wales Water Authority presence in the Borough provides a benefit to business
- North Wales Elementary School being located within the Borough, with students walking to school, adds to the “small town” aesthetic
- Alley loading is common along Main Street, which keeps Main Street clear of delivery vehicles

## Weaknesses

- Sidewalk width on Walnut is constrained
- The lack of public parking or perception thereof
- Uncoordinated business signage
- Lack of wayfinding
- Ongoing degradation as the brick pavers along the sidewalk on Main Street age
- Limited participation in local government (e.g., public meeting attendance, volunteering, etc.)

## Opportunities

- Potential to improve crosswalks along Main Street to promote crossing where it is most safe (i.e., at intersections)
- Potential to create parklets or seating at “Shearer Square” and “North Wales Crossing,” which would require cooperation and coordination with the property owners.
- Potential to add seating to Lumber Street, where residents currently sit outside from time-to-time
- Potential to install new street signs on Main Street that are more visible and create a unique identity
- Planters along the streetscape could add a “green” element and aesthetic appeal
- Opportunity to work with the TMA on bicycle infrastructure
- Opportunity to improve the “threat” of littering by requiring businesses that generate trash to provide receptacles along the sidewalk

## Threats

- Vacant buildings and storefronts; business turnover
- Noncompliance with regards to property maintenance code, zoning, etc.
- Trash/littering

## **Proposed Public Outreach Strategy**

The Borough has consistently emphasized public engagement as a critical component of the planning process. Most recently, a community survey was administered in connection with the five-year review of *North Wales Borough 2040*. For the streetscape initiative, a focused community survey will be conducted early in the process to gather information similar to the input that the Planning Commission provided as part of the SWOT analysis. MCPC will prepare draft survey questions and discuss them with the Planning Commission at an upcoming meeting. The goal will be to begin to formulate the high-level vision for the study area.

Additionally, hosting an open house or similar visioning event will be essential prior to the development of specific recommendations. This event will feature visual representations of current conditions and potential improvement options (such as a visual preference survey), and—in combination with the survey findings—will form the basis for the plan’s recommendations and concept plans. The open house is anticipated to occur this fall.

Finally, a public presentation and comment period will be provided. During the recent zoning initiative, the Planning Commission first received the public presentation, which was immediately followed by significant public input and discussion. After necessary revisions were incorporated to address specific concerns provided by the public, a summary presentation detailing the recommendations and integration of public feedback was delivered to the Borough Council for their consideration. MCPC envisions a similar approach for this effort.

## **Draft Table of Contents & Introduction**

A draft table of contents was first provided to the Planning Commission at the January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting as part of a discussion of the proposed scope of work. Since then, the table of contents has been refined to reflect the proposed

contents of the plan, which places increased emphasis on the “streetscape plan” portion of the plan. The plan is proposed to contain three chapters: an introduction, a streetscape plan, and design guidelines.

Although we are many months away from a full draft, it seemed important to provide the Planning Commission with a draft introduction to establish a shared understanding of the scope of the study. The introduction includes background information on North Wales, describes the scope and process of the study, and includes an annotated timeline of the last decade of planning efforts. A few draft maps are included, though these will be revised for the final draft. The Planning Commission should consider if additional information would be relevant to the introduction, or if anything is in need of revision. It is worth noting that each of the following chapters – the streetscape plan and design guidelines – will include introductory and background information that provides more detail than is included in the draft introduction.

## **Conclusion**

Because of the time and effort involved in this process, MCPC proposes that formal updates and discussions of the streetscape plan occur on an every-other-month basis. This will allow MCPC to make substantial progress between updates, which will make for more productive conversations with the Planning Commission. MCPC will provide a timeline/roadmap at the next outlines the major steps required to move the plan forward.

The Planning Commission's next steps will involve finalizing a public outreach strategy, and beginning to draft a survey. As mentioned earlier, MCPC will begin drafting a survey for the Commission to review. Additionally, plans for the upcoming open house event will begin to take shape. Public outreach will be the focus of the next Planning Commission meeting which, as noted above, may be in June.

MCPC will also be scheduling a site visit to walk around the study area within the next month or so. Staff will take photographs and take stock of existing constraints and opportunities. At the same time, MCPC will map land uses and other relevant information using GIS to provide more detail on the study area. The result will be a technical description of the study area and the beginning of a concept plan for future improvements.

### **Attachments:**

- Draft Table of Contents (1 pg.)
- Draft Introduction Chapter (3 pgs.)

## Table of Contents

Chapter	Heading	Content or Sub-Heading	
<b>Introduction</b>	Background	<i>Introduction to the Borough and plan contents</i>	
	Scope	<i>Expanded explanation of the scope of the plan</i>	
	Process	<i>Internal and external processes, including outreach</i>	
	Past and Ongoing Community Development & Planning Efforts	<i>Summary of recent efforts by the Borough and County</i>	
<b>Streetscape Plan</b>	The Benefits of a Well-Designed Streetscape	<i>Summary of benefits</i>	
	The Main Street Study Area	<i>Technical description of existing conditions; challenges and opportunities will be integrated via callout boxes</i>	
	Vision/Goals	<i>Vision statement and specific goals</i>	
	Focus Area Concept Plans	<i>Concept plans for various portions of study area (i.e., Main Street and Walnut Street cross-sections and concept plan of improvements at key intersections; parking and wayfinding concept plan</i>	
<b>Design Guidelines</b>	Introduction	How To Use the Guidelines	<i>Applicability and interpretation</i>
	Infrastructure	Sidewalks and Pavers	<i>Any relevant regulations and ideal design</i>
		Curbing and Curb Extension	<i>Any relevant regulations and ideal design</i>
		Crosswalks	<i>Any relevant regulations and ideal design</i>
	Street Furnishings	Benches	<i>Any relevant regulations and several product options</i>
		Bike Racks and Bollards	<i>Any relevant regulations and several product options</i>
		Receptacles	<i>Any relevant regulations and several product options</i>
		Planters	<i>Any relevant regulations and several product options</i>
		Streetlamps	<i>Period lighting specifications per manufacturer</i>
		Public Art	<i>Discussion of potential public art options</i>
	Street Trees	Street Trees	<i>Best practices and list of several preferred trees (from SALDO)</i>
	Site Screening	Low Walls and Fences	<i>Any relevant regulations and ideal design</i>
		Landscaping Treatments	<i>Any relevant regulations and ideal design</i>
	Architecture & Signage	Considerations for Existing Buildings	<i>Explanation of context and HARB design review</i>
		Considerations for Proposed Buildings	<i>Explanation of context and HARB design review</i>
		Signage	<i>Design goals; zoning regulation; HARB design review</i>

# **INTRODUCTION**

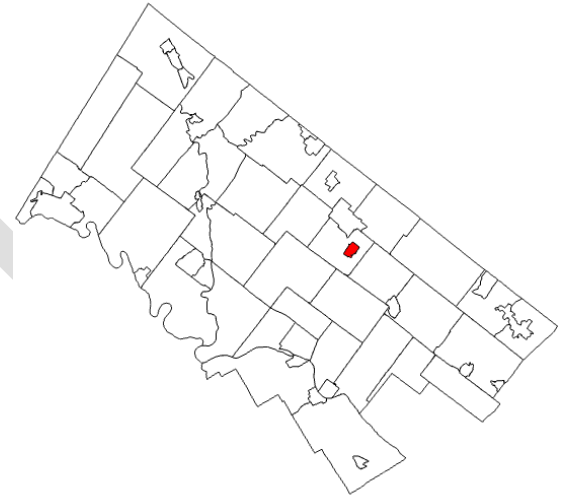
## **Background**

North Wales Borough is a dense, historic community located in the heart of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The Borough was originally settled in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century by Welsh immigrants, and it remained rural for much of its early history. Significant changes began in the 1850s with the arrival of the North Penn Railroad, which brought rapid development and which led to the Borough being officially incorporated in 1869. The railroad fueled steady population growth for several decades, leading to the distinctive gridded street pattern surrounding the commercial district that remains to this day. Today, North Wales Borough is predominantly a residential community, offering well-maintained parks accessible to all residents, a walkable network of sidewalks, a growing business district, and efficient rail connections linking residents to Philadelphia to the south and Doylestown to the north.

Recent community planning efforts, particularly public outreach related to *North Wales Borough 2040* and the recent 5-year review undertaken by the Planning Commission, have shown that residents want to see the Main Street and Walnut Street corridors improved. The focus is on enhancing—not transforming—these important areas of the community. This initiative aims to set a clear vision and actionable implementation plan for making targeted improvements and investments to the streetscape throughout the Borough’s commercial and mixed-use areas.

## **Scope**

This document seeks to provide a vision for future improvements to North Wales key commercial corridors, which include the Commercial Business District (CBD) along and around Main Street and Walnut Street as well as the Transit-Oriented Development District (TOD) surrounding the North Wales Train Station. The principal areas of concern are Main Street – from Beaver Street to the west to E Montgomery Avenue/the railroad tracks to the east– and Walnut Street – between Main Street to the south and Beaver Street to the north. These key corridors see the most vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the Borough and, due to this, will receive the most scrutiny. That said, the many side streets of the study area are also integral to the success of this endeavor. For these reasons, an three idealized streetscape templates will be prepared: Main Street, Walnut Street, and side streets. Each of these will include details on the specific treatments that are preferred, though site-specific context remains important.



*North Wales is located in the heart of Montgomery County*

The **North Wales Borough Streetscape Plan and Design Guidelines** cover two main components: (1) a streetscape plan that identifies specific improvements to Main Street, Walnut Street, and other locations within the study area (“Streetscape Plan”) and (2) design guidelines to support redevelopment efforts throughout the study area (“Design Guidelines”). The conceptual plans for Main Street and Walnut Street will serve as a launching point to seek funding to implement the vision. The design guidelines are intended to support property owners and guide oversight bodies—such as Borough Council, Planning

Commission, Zoning Hearing Board, and Historical Architectural Review Board—in applying relevant sections of the Borough Zoning Ordinance and the Borough Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to individual projects. Both of these documents, housed within this unified plan, will ensure that the vision for this portion of the community is implemented effectively and efficiently.

### Process

The **North Wales Borough Streetscape Plan and Design Guidelines** project was initiated by the Borough Planning Commission after a five-year review of the Borough’s comprehensive plan, *North Wales Borough 2040*, identified this project as a high priority for the community. The Planning Commission, consisting of five residents appointed by the Borough Council, included Greg D’Angelo (Chair), Mark Tarlecki (Vice Chair and Borough Council President), Jocelyn Tenney (Secretary), and Lillian Higgins. The Planning Commission engaged Borough staff, elected officials, and community members at various stages of this endeavor. The Borough maintains a long-standing planning assistance contract with the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC). MCPC provided guidance to the Planning Commission and Borough staff during the development of these guidelines and prepared this report on behalf of the Borough.

*Note: an explanation of public outreach efforts will be provided here.*

### Recent Community Development & Planning Efforts

Over the past decade, the Borough has undertaken several important community development and planning projects. This period began with the drafting and adoption of a new comprehensive plan in 2018, which was followed by multiple projects aligned with the objectives outlined in the plan. The brief timeline provided below summarizes key planning efforts, recently enacted ordinances, and capital improvement projects undertaken over the last 10 years:

- **2018: Borough Council adopts North Wales Borough 2040**  
Borough Council adopted the comprehensive plan in September of 2018. Planning took almost three years, involving monthly meetings with a steering committee of Borough residents, extensive public outreach, and thorough data collection and analysis. The plan outlined numerous policies, ordinance revisions, research and planning initiatives, and capital projects that will inform Borough decision-making for years to come.
- **2021: Borough Council approves the Walkability Audit Report**



*The study area includes the Commercial Business (CBD) and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Zoning Districts, which are highlighted in crimson*

Borough Council approved the *Walkability Audit Report* in September of 2021. This project was identified as a high priority in *North Wales Borough 2040* and constituted a substantial step in implementing the goals of the plan. The project assessed all sidewalks and intersections in North Wales using standard criteria, with priority given to infrastructure near key locations such as North Wales Elementary School and other institutions. The report included a ranking of existing conditions throughout the sidewalk network and provided recommendations for future improvements.

- **2023: Borough Council adopts amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map**

Throughout 2022 and 2023, the Planning Commission drafted substantial amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map that address many of the recommendations contained in *North Wales Borough 2040*. The new zoning map corresponds to the Future Land Use map contained in the plan, which involved expanding the Commercial Business District and Transit-Oriented Development District.

- **2025: The North Wales Arts & Cultural Center Grand Opening**

After nearly a decade of planning and construction, the North Wales Arts & Cultural Center officially opened its doors. This successful adaptive reuse of the former St. Luke's Church will ensure that the building that became integral to the identity of North Wales remains an integral part of the community for generations to come. More than \$2 million from multiple sources—including Montgomery County ARPA and Montco 2040 funds, the Commonwealth's RACP program, and North Wales Borough reserve funds—was invested in the renovation and acquisition of the former St. Luke's Church.

- **2026: Borough Council Approves the *North Wales Borough 2040 Comprehensive Plan Implementation Report***

After five years of successfully implementing the priority goals and policies set forth in *North Wales Borough 2040*, Borough Council wished to formally document progress made. The Planning Commission was tasked with auditing the plan and document progress made, undertake a community survey to reassess priority projects, and ultimately compile a written report.

- **2026: Borough Council Adopts a New Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance**

The Planning Commission spent much of 2024 and 2025 drafting a Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) that addresses many recommendations contained in *North Wales Borough 2040*. Some notable provisions related to the streetscape include enhanced streetscaping standards, landscaping requirements, and updated specifications for many physical improvements like sidewalks and crosswalks.

- **2026: The Center Street Gateway Project is Completed**

The Center Street Gateway Project, which was completed in 2026, resulted in continuous sidewalk and associated infrastructure (e.g., crosswalks and accessible curb ramps) along Center Street from the trail connection to Parkside Place Park in Upper Gwynedd Township to Washington Avenue. This \$1M project was funded by a grant from Montgomery County's Montco 2040 Implementation Grant Program and County Transportation Program, a PECO Green Region Grant, and a PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Grant.