

June 2023

ARDMORE MASTER PLAN FINAL DRAFT CHANGES

On May 12, 2023, Planning Staff presented the draft Ardmore Master Plan to the Building & Planning Committee. During the presentation, staff outlined the recommended edits. These edits represent the culmination of an extensive review process, which included feedback from multiple entities, including staff review, public comments gathered over a month-long comment period, recommendations from the Planning Commission, and prior review by the Building & Planning Committee. By outlining these edits, we aim to provide transparency and demonstrate the collaborative effort involved in shaping the Ardmore Master Plan. The recommended changes reflect the collective vision for the future of Ardmore and the commitment to an inclusive and participatory planning process. For ease of review the edits have been grouped by category and, where applicable, plan pages have been identified.

ZONING:

1. Any future zoning overlay(s) as contemplated by the Master Plan should be carefully crafted to give due regard to the impact of higher density development on specific existing conditions, neighborhood characteristics, historic resources, traffic patterns, and overall quality of life. For example, developments consisting of 4-6 stories may be appropriate in many areas within the overlay (e.g., between Lancaster Avenue and the railroad), but not in other areas (e.g., abutting single family homes). The zoning overlay should be a precision instrument. This could entail the creation of sub-zones with the overlay, creation of a 3-D model, or other methods to ensure that the impacts of a new zoning overlay are examined on a more micro-scale. **(PAGE 18 & 19)**
2. Zoning strategies should include a recommendation to include gathering space or privately owned public space for all new developments exceeding specified square footage. **(PAGE 19)**
3. Remove reference to a 45-degree setback related to building height, as the existing setback requirement is sufficient. **(REMOVED)**

PARKING:

4. A Private/Public Partnership for construction of a secondary garage structure should be considered. A future zoning taskforce should consider options for contributions strategies to encourage centralized town center parking. **(PAGE 20)**
5. A future zoning task force shall contemplate how fee-in-lieu parking could be achieved to leverage funding for the garage construction and public-private partnerships. **(PAGE 19, 20 & 50)**
6. Improvements on Rittenhouse Place for additional streetscape amenities, traffic calming, or bike lanes should give due regard to the need for parking, both short term and longer term, necessary to support businesses. **(PAGE 42)**
7. Include parking strategies aimed at protecting small businesses, including the establishment of a parking committee to consider on-going needed adjustments and incentives to encourage employee parking in underutilized locations and making on-street parking available to business customers. **(PAGE 20)**
8. Improvements to Schuffele Plaza should give due regard to the need to provide vehicular access, short term, and handicapped parking to proximate businesses. While most parking could potentially be eliminated, some may be required to support businesses. Consideration should also be given to whether maintaining a vehicular thoroughway is beneficial to provide access to the One Ardmore parking garage. **(PAGE 44)**

STREETScape/GREENING:

9. Ardmore has one of the lowest tree equity scores in Lower Merion. The Master Plan should address the need for creation and maintenance of green space-i.e., green infrastructure-including to support shade trees. **(PAGE 47)** Any future zoning overlay should require greening. New developments over a certain size should require green space, such as courtyards or other areas, preferably where shade trees can be grown. Green spaces should be planned—not an afterthought. **(PAGE 19)**

10. Develop a streetscape maintenance and improvement plan for Ardmore, including providing green infrastructure for street trees. **(PAGE 47, 48 & 50)**

AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

11. Removal of the recommendation that code regulations could be reduced to enhance the financial feasibility of affordable unit. De-regulating development does not seem advisable. Preserving existing affordable housing should be a key consideration. **REMOVED**
12. Inclusion of language that acknowledges that affordable housing strategies should be Township-wide and considered in all planning documents, not specific to Ardmore. **(PAGE 21)**
13. Additional clarification shall be added to the identified affordable housing strategies. The Township currently administers a housing rehab program, and staff would like clarification on whether the consultant means to expand on the current program or if this was an oversight. Additional information on establishing a housing trust and its advantages should be provided so that it can be further considered with future housing studies within the Township. **(PAGE 21)**

TRAFFIC CALMING:

14. The plan shall identify the intersection of Montgomery and Woodside for improvement. Additionally, staff recommends providing a matrix to better understand which toolkit treatments would be appropriate for the identified intersections. This would enable staff to refer to the plan as changes are proposed incrementally. **(PAGE 32-33)**

PLAN ELEMENTS:

15. Recommendations in the Master Plan should incorporate reliable data supporting identified strategies, particularly data presented related to building height and parking utilization. Such data should be made readily available to the public. **(PAGE 12 & 13, APPENDIX)**
16. The Master Plan should include images, particularly of traffic calming improvements, that reflect aspirational conditions. Because the Master Plan is a guiding document, it should not include images that we would not want to recreate in Lower Merion. **(THROUGHOUT)**
17. Additional Background shall be added to the plan to provide context for past planning efforts undertaken within the last 20 years. This should include acknowledging the change in zoning from C1/C2/ASDD to the MUST Overlay to the current VC/TC1, as well as a demographic analysis. This information will be critical for future users and implementers of the plan. **(APPENDIX: EXISTING CONDITIONS MEMORANDUM)**
18. The Implementation Plan shall be revised to prioritize the design and engineering of Schaufele Green, establishing a parking committee, working with Ardmore Initiative to develop a streetscape maintenance and enhancement program, and developing a signage plan to bring more visibility to the parking garage. **(PAGE 50-51)**
19. The vision statement shall be further refined to reflect Ardmore's position as a town center for the Lower Merion community while also providing for local needs and services. The current vision references a village, which historically has been used to identify smaller neighborhood-focused commercial uses such as Gladwyne and Penn Valley. However, the 2016 Comprehensive Plan identified Ardmore as a Traditional Main Street, recognizing its central position, concentration of community services and amenities, transit access, and ability to serve the commercial needs of a larger portion of the township's population. Staff recommends that the scope be expanded to recognize Ardmore as a town center, while also recognizing its unique accessibility to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. **(PAGE 14)**
20. The plan shall provide definitions and criteria for the different levels of susceptibility and justification for selecting specific properties based on those criteria. The map should help the public determine the desirability of change and help the future zoning task force better understand the reasoning and need. **(PAGE 15)**