

Community, Culture, and History

A Lower Providence Comprehensive Plan Report for the February 17, 2021 Meeting

Introduction

One of the requirements of a comprehensive plan in Pennsylvania is planning for community facilities. This report focuses on the facilities and services that support the Lower Providence community.

Government Facilities

The township has facilities within its boundaries that are owned and operated by every level of government ranging from the township up to the United States government. These properties and the facilities located on them provide services to township residents, are places of employment, and constitute a significant fraction of the township's land. Many of these facilities serve primarily serve recreational functions. The numerous recreation facilities in Lower Providence are the subject of the township's Parks and Open Space plan update and will be studied and planned for in that document.

Township Facilities

Lower Providence is incorporated as a second-class township. The township's governing body is a Board of Supervisors. The board consists of five supervisors who are elected to serve in six-year terms. The board appoints all advisory and regulatory boards, including the Business Development Committee, Environmental Advisory Council, Finance Committee, Parks and Recreation Board, Planning Commission, Sewer Authority, Vacancy Board, and Zoning Hearing Board. The township's administrative staff and other departments operate out of the Lower Providence Municipal Building.

Among the township's departments, few have a more significant public-facing role than the Parks and Recreation Department. The programs, parks, and open spaces maintained by this department will be studied in the ongoing Parks and Open Space Plan. Public works is another major department. The township's public works department is based out of the Municipal Campus and is responsible for maintaining approximately 92 miles of Township Roadways. The department is also responsible for repairing storm sewer inlets, maintenance of all traffic lights within the township, replacing old or damaged road signs, and trimming tree branches and bushes along township roads.

The municipal building also serves as the township's police station and makes up the township's Eagleville Municipal Campus with the nearby Lower Providence Community Library and Lower Providence EMS station. The municipal campus is centrally located on Ridge Pike, but the facilities are set away from the road, embedded in Eagleville Park on Parklane Drive.

Schools

Lower Providence and Worcester townships make up the Methacton School District. The school district has seven facilities, five of which are located in Lower Providence. Of these five sites, four are currently in operation. Audubon Elementary was closed in 2018. A new school building is now being constructed on the grounds of Arrowhead Elementary to replace the site's current building. Total kindergarten through 12th grade enrollment in the Methacton School District is approximately 4,800 students. An additional 147 students have chosen to enroll in North MontCo Tech Career Center and 66 students attend charter schools. The district employs about 700 people.

Per Pennsylvania's Future Ready School Index, 18 percent of students are eligible for special education services, and 3.2 percent are English Language Learners. 15 percent of students are considered economically disadvantaged. <https://futurereadypa.org/>

Arcola Intermediate and **Skyview Upper Elementary** share one campus. The two schools are attached buildings located in the middle of the township on Eagleville Road. This site hosts all of the district's grades 5 through 8 students.

Arrowhead Elementary is located in the west end of the township on Level Road. This school provides Kindergarten and grades 1 through 4 for students from the northwest portion of the township.

Eagleville Elementary is located in the east end of the township, adjacent to Eagleville Park and the municipal campus. This facility hosts kindergarten and grades 1 through 4 for students living in eastern Lower Providence and the southern edge of Worcester Township.

Woodland Elementary is located on Woodland Avenue, in southeastern Lower Providence. This school provides kindergarten and grades 1 through 4 for students living in the southern end of the township, including the Audubon area.

School	Enrollment	Grades	Location
Arcola Intermediate/Skyview Upper Elementary	1,540	5-8	4001 Eagleville Road, Eagleville, PA 19403
Arrowhead Elementary	406	K-4	232 Level Road, Collegeville, PA 19426
Audubon Elementary	0	Inactive	2765 Egypt Road, Eagleville, PA 19403
Eagleville Elementary	388	K-4	125 Summit Avenue, Eagleville, PA 19403
Woodland Elementary	442	K-4	2700 Woodland Avenue, Eagleville, PA 19403

The Montgomery County Intermediate Unit operates The Anderson School in the Park Pointe at Lower Providence business park. This facility serves students in grades 7 through 12 from across Montgomery County, providing needed academic, emotional, social, and therapeutic support.

County Facilities

Montgomery County has a significant presence in Lower Providence. The county's facilities are concentrated in two areas within the township. The Montgomery County Correctional Facility and the county's Emergency Operations Center are located on a site located between South Grange Avenue and Eagleville Road. This campus is a major employment center in the township and provides Lower Providence and other communities in the county with emergency preparedness, management, and recovery services. Montgomery County's John James Audubon Center is located on Pawlings Road in the southern end of the township. This facility is a major site for public recreation and natural conservation. The center is home to several historic structures and a recently opened museum.

Lower Providence is home to one of Montgomery County's 30 magisterial district courts. An elected Magisterial District Judge presides over each of the individual district courts. The district courts have

jurisdiction over criminal preliminary arraignments and preliminary hearings; summary criminal offenses; traffic offenses; municipal code violations; suits between landlords and tenants; and civil claims where damages do not exceed \$12,000. The local district court office is located in the northwest end of the township at 133 Level Road. This court serves a district that includes all of Lower Providence and a portion of Upper Providence Township and the boroughs of Trappe and Collegeville.

Community Services

This section provides an overview of public and private institutions that operate in the township and provide services to Lower Providence residents. Other organizations, located outside of the township, may provide Lower Providence residents with vital services that are not available in the township or are easier to access in neighboring communities. An example of this would be residents making use of senior centers or community centers in Norristown or other nearby municipalities.

Police

The Lower Providence Police Department operates from the township's municipal building in Eagleville. The department is a professional law enforcement organization consisting of 32 police officers, one accreditation manager, and one civilian dispatcher. The department operates in two units: the Patrol Division and the Detective Division.

The Patrol Division is the larger of the two units and is responsible for primary police services provided to the township. Specialized units within the Patrol Division include the Traffic Unit which conducts activities related to traffic enforcement and traffic safety, and the Bicycle Patrol Unit. The Detective Division investigates criminal offenses that occur within the township.

The police department operates several outreach and crime prevention programs to educate the public, improve communications, and promote public safety.

Fire

Lower Providence Fire Department (LPFD) is a volunteer fire company that has served Lower Providence Township since 1945. The fire department also provides mutual aid to neighboring Montgomery County municipalities and Norristown, Trappe, and Limerick Township. The LPFD has two firehouses in the township. One is located in the township's northern end on Ridge Pike at the intersection of East Mount Kirk Avenue. The other, in Audubon, is shared with Lower Providence EMS and located on Lark Lane.

EMS

The township is served by Lower Providence Emergency Medical Service, Medic 322. Lower Providence EMS is a non-profit organization and operates four ambulances from two stations. This organization also provides services in Worcester and Upper Providence townships. The main station of Lower Providence EMS is located at the township's municipal campus. The service's substation is located at 24 Lark Lane and is shared with Lower Providence Fire Department.

Lacking a hospital, residents of Lower Providence Township needing emergency care or other hospital services may have to visit nearby facilities in Phoenixville or East Norriton Township. Access to such facilities can be considered both as an issue of transportation planning and land use planning.

Post Office

Lower Providence is divided between three zip codes: 19403 in the east, 19426 in the northwest, and 19460 in the southwest. The United States Postal Service operates two offices in the township. One is located in the north of the township in Eagleville Plaza, the other is located in Audubon Village Shopping Center on Egypt Road.

Library

The township is served by Lower Providence Community Library, located in Eagleville on the municipal campus. The library offers residents multiple programs serving adults, teens, and children. The services provided by the Lower Providence Community Library go beyond the collection of digital and physical media resources to include yoga and wellness instruction, community activities, and others.

Lower Providence Community Library is a member of the Montgomery County Library & Information Network Consortium (MCLINC), a non-profit organization that facilitates cooperation and resource sharing between 16 member communities in the county.

Food Access

Access to food and nutrition is a fundamental need of all community members and a vital component of a community's quality of life. Residents of Lower Providence have many local supermarkets and grocery stores to choose from. The township is home to three supermarkets and Apka Bazar Indian grocery store, with many other supermarkets and food stores located nearby in surrounding communities. Food stores in Lower Providence and surrounding areas are concentrated along major arterials, chiefly Egypt Road and Ridge Pike.

Lower Providence is served by two food pantries: Daily Bread Community Food Pantry and Outreach House of St. James' Episcopal Church. Both of these food pantries are located in the Evansburg area, in the northwest corner of the township. Residents who need these services may find this location inconvenient to access compared to food pantries located in more developed areas or on transit lines in neighboring communities.

Religious and Cultural Institutions

Lower Providence Township is home to many institutions with significant social, cultural, and religious roles for their communities. The following list notes where institutions host programs that serve the public. Many such programs that are located outside of the township receive support from, or operate in partnership with institutions on this list and may serve Lower Providence residents.

Name	Address	Notes
Calvary Chapel of Norristown	601 N Park Ave	Operates a food pantry
Cornerstone Fellowship	1170 Rittenhouse Rd	
Eastern PA Conference of the United Methodist Church	980 Madison Ave	
Evansburg United Methodist Church	3871 Germantown Pike	
Gan Israel County Day Camp	4102 Township Line Rd	
Iqra Institute	2550 Eisenhower Ave	
Lower Providence Baptist Church	3430 Ridge Pike	

Lower Providence Presbyterian Church	3050 Ridge Pike	
Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church	2725 Egypt Rd	
Saint James' Episcopal Church	3768 Germantown Pike	Operates Outreach House food pantry and charity
Thomas Paine Unitarian Universalist Fellowship	3424 Ridge Pike	
Valley View Community Church	778 Sunnyside Ave	
Vedagita Center Inc, Sri Shiva Vishnu Temple	3801 Ridge Pike	
Victory Church	2650 Audubon Road	

Historical Resources

Lower Providence retains many significant historic properties from its centuries-long history. In recognition of their value to the community, many historic properties or districts with concentrations of historic properties have been listed, or deemed eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places. Receiving a National Historic Listing does not preserve a property or prohibit its demolition unless the project involving demolition includes funding from state or federal sources. Several properties in Lower Providence that were previously evaluated and either listed or noted as being eligible for listing have since been demolished or destroyed. There may be other properties with historic value that have not been evaluated for listing or preservation. A survey of historic resources would be needed to fully assess the number and condition of historic resources within the township.

Evansburg Historic District

This historic district was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 and includes over 50 listed properties. This district is centered on the historic Skippack Bridge and encloses the village of Evansburg. Just beyond this district, the NRHP-listed Perkiomen Bridge connects Lower Providence to Collegeville.

Mill Grove

Located on the grounds of Montgomery County's John James Audubon Center, this property was the first home of the famous naturalist after he arrived in the United States in 1803. This estate was built in the 1760s and is recognized as a National Historic Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Valley Forge NHP

Valley Forge National Historic Park occupies a large area in the south end of the township. The land and buildings preserved here by the National Parks Service played a significant role during the Continental Army's winter encampment from 1777 to 1778. The main feature in this portion of the park is Pawling Farm.