Cars, cars, and more cars

Earlier this month, the Pottstown Metropolitan Area Regional Planning Committee asked Montgomery County to conduct a regional traffic study next year.

The immediate impetus for the request is a proposal to build hundreds of houses, retail, and offices on the site of the former New Hanover Airport on Swamp Pike between Route 663 and Township Line Road.

This development could add 7,500 additional trips daily to the region’s roads. And there are plenty of other developments on-going and planned in New Hanover, Douglass, and the Pottsgroves that will add hundreds more homes — and a lot more car traffic — to the area.

2005 comprehensive plan

In 2005, the eight municipalities comprising the Pottstown Metropolitan Region adopted a 258-page comprehensive plan that calls for directing growth into Pottstown and other older areas to preserve open space and agriculture.

Since then, Pottstown has continued to lose retail businesses while huge new malls like Upland Square and the Philadelphia Premium Outlets have been built on virgin land.

Countywide zoning

Montgomery County is divided into 62 municipalities, each with its own zoning ordinance, which must allow for every kind of development. Montgomery County, Maryland, on the other hand, does all its planning and zoning on a countywide basis. There are no townships in Maryland — just cities and counties.

But even in Maryland — theoretically a planner’s paradise — sprawl is the law of the land.

Car-oriented development

As long as people want to live on scattered housing lots and drive for all their daily activities, open land will be consumed and ever more traffic will be generated on our roads. No traffic study will change that.

Sustainable development

Pottstown is the one local municipality that embodies sustainable development — protecting the environment and open space.

We have hundreds of homes within walking and biking distance of our major employers — the school district, the hospital, Dana, Wal-Mart, and the YMCA. Many Hill School employees live right on campus.

If you don’t like sitting in traffic, perhaps you should consider living in Pottstown.

KISS THIS OPEN SPACE GOODBYE — The former New Hanover Airport and adjacent open space, above, more than 200 acres, has been targeted for a proposed New Hanover Town Center with 761 new homes, a supermarket, restaurants, office buildings and retail space.