

# What's the hottest zip code in Pennsylvania?

**PennLive**

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The kitchen isn't updated, and the basement isn't finished.

And the bathroom has been covered in the same pink tile since the two-bedroom Cape Cod was built more than 60 years ago.

This squat, 744-square-foot home is selling for \$205,000, even though it really hasn't changed since the 1950s.

In many other areas of Pennsylvania, this house might not be listed for more than \$100,000.

But this one is in the right zip code: 19406.

When it was built in King of Prussia six decades ago, the population in Upper Merion Township hovered around 6,000.

After the King of Prussia Mall was built in 1963, population nearly tripled to more than 17,000.

As the mall continued to grow, so did the township.

Population is now about 30,000 as King of Prussia continues to attract residents and jobs from Philadelphia.

"It's what we refer to as 'city without the city,'" said Eric Goldstein, executive director of King of Prussia District, an economic development organization.

King of Prussia is the largest area in the suburban Philadelphia region for office, retail and industrial space.

The housing inventory, however, is not so vast.

Prospective residents are clamoring to get into the Upper Merion School District and township that hasn't raised taxes in more than six years.

That low supply and high demand is driving up prices, some of which are standard fare in the Philadelphia suburbs. It's common to see million-dollar homes on the market here.

About 60 homes are currently listed in King of Prussia, and the 1950s Cape Cod selling for \$276 per square foot is on the low end.

The high end in Upper Merion Township is \$8.5 million for a large estate listed this week.

A four-bedroom home was listed days ago for about \$775,000.

The average listing price for single-family homes in this area is \$771,000, according to Coldwell Banker. The average price for a condo or townhouse is more than \$504,000.

Despite those high price tags, Upper Merion Township is solidly middle class with average household income at less than \$80,000, according to Census data.

The strong tax base has helped supervisors breathe new life into the township pool, and a new \$10 million community center is set to open Sept. 6.

#### [New stores and restaurants at King of Prussia](#)

The King of Prussia Mall expansion opens Thursday with new stores and restaurants.

#### **\$1 billion investment**

It's not just people trying to get into the greater King of Prussia area; it's also businesses.

The demand on commercial real estate has also driven up prices.

For example, earlier this month, a Verizon Wireless store sold for \$1,850 per square foot.

This crush of people trying to get in has attracted a \$1 billion investment in Upper Merion Township.

Most of that money is being spent on mixed-use developments cashing in on the still-popular "live-work-play" model of real estate, creating communities where people can easily walk from modern homes to shopping, dining, recreation and jobs.

In addition to the **\$250 million spent on the King of Prussia Mall addition**, hundreds of millions are being used for projects in the community:

- **\$500 million to \$700 million on the Village at Valley Forge**, a mix of apartments and townhouses that will bring more than 2,000 homes to the area
- **\$100 million on King of Prussia Town Center**, which includes Wegmans, Nordstrom Rack, REI, Ulta, LA Fitness, a Children's Hospital of Philadelphia specialty center and more
- **\$52 million on Federal Express**, a 300,000-square-foot distribution center
- **\$29 million on 933 First Avenue**, a 110,000-square-foot office building

"This is the first time King of Prussia has had real growth in the last 10 to 20 years, and it's booming," Goldstein said.

That boom attracted Maryland-based JBG Companies to build in Pennsylvania for the first time, investing \$100 million in the King of Prussia Town Center.

The company saw "tremendous value" in King of Prussia as a flourishing suburb of Philadelphia in one of the largest markets nationwide, said Tom Sebastian, senior vice president of development.

He pointed to King of Prussia's desirable demographic, growing population and "world-class reputation for retail." The young families and workers in the area are typically attracted to the shop-dine-explore model, he said.

"When we learned of the opportunity to open a Town Center in the area, we jumped at the chance," Sebastian said. "As the region continues to expand, King of Prussia is poised to become the 'Center City' of the suburbs."

That hasn't been lost on SEPTA, which is Philadelphia's regional rail system. The transportation provider is proposing a \$1.1 billion extension to its Norristown rail line. It would open in 2023 and add two stops by the mall and two stops by the King of Prussia Business Park.

Amid the surge of development, expanded public transportation is something King of Prussia really needs, Goldstein said.

In addition to passenger rail service and better on-and-off access to the Pennsylvania Turnpike, residents want more bicycle lanes, public parks and trails, he said.

But what comes next in this boom town remains to be seen.

"Better yet, what isn't next?" Goldstein said.