

Chapter 1

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives identified in this chapter provide the basic framework for this update of Worcester’s 1995 Comprehensive Plan. These goals are intended to guide Township decision-making on rural preservation, growth, development, environmental protection, parkland, and infrastructure to the year 2020. This update is the result of a review of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan to determine any revisions that may be appropriate as a result of changing conditions. The Township recognizes that these goals and other parts of the plan should be reviewed again in the future to remain relevant.

These goals and objectives summarize the desires and vision of the Township and spell out the goals contained throughout this comprehensive plan. The goals are explained briefly and followed by a set of objectives and action steps to help the township achieve these goals.

Rural Preservation Goals

Maintain the Rural Character of the majority of the Township:

For social, economic, and environmental benefits that come from remaining a rural community near a metropolitan area.

Preserve Farmland:

To provide areas for growing produce and raising farm animals close to the greater Philadelphia market while contributing to the diversity of the township’s economic base and employment. Also, to preserve soils that are suitable for farming instead of paving them over, and to help protect environmentally sensitive areas.

Preserve Scenic Views and Roads:

To help define and preserve the township’s rural character, history, and property values.

Preserve Historic Sites and Landscapes:

To help people understand the township’s heritage as part of the history of the United States.

Rural Preservation Objectives

Achieve Rural Preservation Goals through the following objectives:

- Classify rural preservation areas for low density

- development and direct growth by concentrating higher density zoning in specific areas provided with sewers.
- Consider enacting a transfer of development rights ordinance to allow development rights to be transferred from rural and farm areas to growth areas.
- Consider establishing a regional planning effort in order to reduce development pressures in inappropriate areas.
- Encourage farmers to join the Township’s agricultural security district and sell their development rights to the County, State or conservation organizations.
- Encourage cluster development to help preserve critical natural and farmland resources and to move homes away from roads or behind ridgelines and woodlands to preserve views.
- Continue to use conservation subdivision techniques to ensure new residential development contributes positively to the character of the township and preserves rural resources.
- Encourage historic cluster development to preserve historic buildings within their context, instead of demolishing them or surrounding historic homes, farm buildings, or mills with suburban subdivision.
- Use landscaping, buffering, and tree preservation to screen and protect views of historic sites, to maintain, restore, or expand scenic roads and views, and to retain Worcester’s unique rural character.
- Consider new ordinance provisions to preserve scenic views and scenic roads.
- Enact village commercial zoning in commercial areas that still have a historic character and in areas where a village character is desired.
- Consider hamlet-style zoning provisions for appropriate rural areas.
- Enact natural resource protection ordinances and require tree protection, buffers between uses, and installation of street trees with new development.
- Encourage the County to continue acquiring land around Peter Wentz farmstead, so that this grouping of historic farm buildings continues to evoke Worcester as it existed 200 years ago.
- Encourage donations of land, development rights, and scenic easements to the Township or to land conservation groups.
- Preserve open space and farmland by purchasing development rights and/or easements and by facilitating preservation through land trusts, conservancies, or similar organizations.

Growth and Development Goals

Develop the Villages:

To reduce conflicts between agricultural uses and suburban development, to facilitate provision of infrastructure to concentrated development, to create a sense of place and community where shopping, recreation, institutions, and housing are close by, to maintain the rural character of the township, and to reduce development pressures on the rural and the preservation areas of the township. Almost all new development should occur in the villages and not in the rural or preservation areas.

Provide a Range of Housing Types and Densities:

To provide a balanced housing stock that meets the needs of residents with different incomes, housing preferences, and ages, and to meet its fair share of housing types and densities.

Encourage Housing that Fits the Township's Character:

To help preserve the township's history, preserve its aesthetic beauty and character, to protect property values, and to foster a sense of community.

Allow Neighborhood and Convenience Commercial Facilities:

To meet the shopping needs of the township's residents for food, and other items. To diminish the potential for increased traffic, environmental, aesthetic, and safety problems that often arise with extensive commercial development, no community or regional shopping facilities are proposed. Instead, residents will continue to be served within the trade areas of the eight community shopping centers, five town centers, and three regional malls outside the township.

Discourage Strip Commercial Uses:

To reduce potential problems that occur where relatively small commercial buildings are strung out along a road, each with its own access, and avoid: traffic congestion caused by numerous turning points and the need to drive, not walk, between neighboring or nearby businesses; the proliferation of competing signs; increased vehicular accidents and conflicts between pedestrians and cars; additional noise, pollution, light, and unsightliness, stretched out along roads and affecting a larger number of adjacent properties.

Permit a Limited Amount of Office and Industrial Development:

To provide local job opportunities for township residents while reducing the distance they have to drive to work and meet the Township's fair share obligations for these uses. To limit potential negative impacts on traffic congestion,

farmland, rural character, and the environment, the Township should not become a major industrial and office employment center, but will continue to rely on nearby major industrial and office employment centers.

Consider Regional Planning Options:

To better control land uses, to better coordinate development and preservation with one or more neighboring municipalities, and to provide new planning opportunities.

Growth and Development Objectives

Achieve Residential Growth and Development Goals through the following objectives:

- Direct more intense development into, and provide public sewers for, the township's four growth areas, as follows: high-density residential, medium-density residential, and commercial uses in Fairview Village and Center Point; high- and medium-density residential uses in Cold Spring; and only medium-density residential uses in Locust Corner.
- Allow a variety of housing types in the high-density areas to help create a village character and encourage uses and development that will maintain and enhance the historic character of existing village centers.
- Do not provide public sewers to rural preservation areas within the time frame of this plan, unless necessary for specific cluster projects.
- Locate high- and medium-density housing in the township's growth areas, with access to public sewers and water, major roads, and community facilities.
- Allow a range of housing types in the high-density areas and a range of single-family detached lot sizes in the medium-density areas.
- In the township's rural preservation areas: limit housing to the lowest permitted density; encourage location of new homes in less visible wooded areas at the edges of farm fields or below ridgelines and prominent hilltops, especially when using a cluster plan; preserve scenic and roadside views, especially for scenic roads; consider rural character for new roads; preserve as much viable agricultural and natural resource land as possible; provide for trail connections to the township's destinations such as parks, other trails, and villages.

Achieve Nonresidential Growth and Development Goals through the following objectives:

- Limit commercial zoning to be sufficient for neighborhood and convenience shopping needs.
- Minimize the amount of commercial zoning strung out

along roads, but encourage common driveways and interconnected parking lots for abutting commercial uses where permitted.

- Limit the amount of industrial and office zoning in the township and encourage small-scale offices and small “satellite” office locations.

Environmental Goals

Preserve Steep Slope Areas:

To prevent or diminish potential problems on sloped areas that are more susceptible to erosion and mass movement, including increased runoff and sedimentation from disturbed slopes. Also, to reduce potential for unnecessary public expenditures for flood control, water quality, and stormwater management, and to protect habitats for important species of plants and wildlife.

Preserve Stream Corridors and Floodplains:

To carry floodwaters, minimize erosion, protect water quality, provide plant and animal habitats, and provide recreation opportunities, including trail linkages.

Preserve Wetlands:

To purify water, retain stormwater runoff, limit erosion, reduce flood flows, provide food and shelter for a wide array of animals and plants, facilitate groundwater recharge, and to help maintain the base flows of area streams.

Preserve Woodlands:

To provide habitat for many animal and plant species, control erosion, clean the air, protect privacy, provide windbreaks, cool the air in the summer, reduce the impact of rainfall, muffle noise, absorb odors, and to improve the appearance of an area.

Preserve High-Priority Open Space Lands:

To protect natural resources, to preserve important agricultural lands and working farms, to conserve historic and heritage resources, to buffer important historic and natural resource areas, to protect scenic views and roads, and to provide high-quality passive recreation opportunities.

Environmental Objectives

Achieve Environmental Goals through the following objectives:

- Continue to enforce the Township’s steep slope ordinance to prohibit development on slopes that are 25% or more, minimize development or regrading on slopes of 15% to 25%, and continue to subtract steep slopes from the calculation of lot area.
- Establish a setback from stream corridors to protect the riparian corridor and woodlands along the stream.

- Continue to enforce the Township’s floodplain ordinance to prohibit development in the floodplain and consider a twenty-five foot building setback from the floodplain edge.
- Use cluster standards, conservation subdivision procedures, and/or the transfer of development rights to keep steep slopes, stream corridors, wetlands, and floodplains undeveloped, and to reduce the amount of woodlands removed from development sites.
- Require wetlands to be shown on subdivision and land development plans, prohibit development of wetlands, require a 25-foot setback from wetlands, and subtract wetlands from the township’s definition of lot area.
- Revise the Township’s landscaping ordinance, to more strongly encourage tree preservation and require a larger number of new trees to replace mature trees that are destroyed.
- Encourage the State to expand Evansburg State Park into wooded areas and valuable natural resource areas that adjoin the park.
- Acquire land or easements to provide additional park and recreation facilities.

Parkland and Recreation Goals

Provide Community Level Parks:

To provide all Township residents with a place to play a variety of sports.

Meet the Township’s Neighborhood Park Needs:

To provide parks close to people’s homes, where they are more accessible, especially for young children.

Provide a Trail Along Zacharias Creek:

To extend from the County’s Peter Wentz Farmstead to Evansburg State Park, with additional connections to the Township Building, through Heebner Park, and through passive parkland along Zacharias Creek, and to give township residents easy access to various trails in Evansburg State Park.

Develop a Network of Parks and Trails Throughout the Township:

To provide bicycle, hiking, jogging, equestrian and walking recreation opportunities for township residents by ensuring that trails of various types are constructed that: connect multiple destinations in the township; provide a variety of recreation experiences; connect to trail networks outside the township, and extend the county-wide, multi-municipal trail network.

Create Passive Parkland Sites:

To provide places for township residents to hike, picnic, fish, and enjoy nature in general.

Parkland and Recreation Objectives**Achieve Parkland and Recreation Goals through the following objectives:**

- Develop Nike Park for public park uses,
- Develop the former Army Reserve property for public park uses.
- Require developments to provide open space or pay a fee in lieu of such open space.
- Require developments to provide trails and public access easements when the trail network is proposed to traverse the development or a link to the network is desired, or to provide a public access easement and pay a fee in lieu of such trail construction to allow future construction of the trail.
- Provide neighborhood parks in the Cold Spring and Fairview Village growth areas.
- Acquire land or easements to provide additional park and recreation facilities.

Sewage Disposal and Water Supply Goals**Provide public sewers for intense land uses:**

To serve more intensive residential, and non-residential uses, for health reasons and serve less intense land uses by on-lot sewage facilities. Also, to provide public sewers to the suburban growth areas, for high-density residential, medium density residential, and commercial land uses; to reduce pressure for development of rural preservation areas by not extending sewers beyond the growth areas, unless necessary for a cluster development.

Provide Public Water Wherever Public Sewers Are Proposed:

To prevent depletion of groundwater where homes use wells for water and public sewers for wastewater. In order to help preserve areas outside growth areas, public water should not be extended beyond the growth boundaries or sewer areas. Where on-lot wells and on-lot sewage disposal are used, filtered wastewater can percolate back into the groundwater table and replenish water that was removed by the well.

Sewage Disposal and Water Supply Objectives**Achieve Sewage Disposal and Water Supply Goals through the following objectives:**

- Provide public sewers for the Fairview Village, Center Point, Locust Corner, and Cold Spring growth areas and encourage the North Penn Water Authority to provide public water to the Center Point, Locust Corner, and Cold Spring growth areas and the Pennsylvania American Water Company to the Fairview Village growth area.
- Prohibit extension of public sewers into rural preservation areas during the time frame of this plan.

Transportation Goals**Reduce traffic congestion and improve traffic safety:**

To reduce costs to residents in money and time and reduce additional air pollution, thereby enhancing the health and welfare of township residents.

Provide Transportation Alternatives:

To encourage alternatives to the automobile, such as walking, bicycling, or public transportation, and provide a means of traveling for those who cannot drive, such as children and some elderly.

Preserve Scenic Roads:

To help define and preserve the township's rural character, history, and property values.

Develop Rural Road Standards:

To help preserve the township's unique rural character, history, and property values.

Transportation Objectives**Achieve Transportation Goals through the following objectives:**

- Encourage context-sensitive solutions for transportation planning in cooperation with the State and County governments to improve the roads in Worcester to the Township's standards.
- Reserve rights-of-way needed for realigning roads and intersections where appropriate.
- Reserve road ultimate right-of-way widths that will be adequate for future road widening and/or other transportation improvements.

- Consider using various traffic-calming techniques on roads with inappropriate vehicle speeds.
- Discourage individual driveways to strip commercial uses and encourage abutting commercial uses to use common drive-ways and interconnected parking areas.
- Limit new development in the township to reduce new traffic generation.
- Require sidewalks and/or trails throughout the Center Point, Fairview Village, Locust Corner, and Cold Spring growth areas, so that people can walk to commercial, civic, and residential uses.
- Develop special road and streetscape standards unique to Worcester for its villages, hamlets, and rural roads.
- Require sidewalks and/or trails within developments built in other portions of the township.
- Support future plans to provide bus service to Worcester Township.
- Create a trail network to connect Township, County and State Park lands and trails.

