

ERECTED INTO A TOWNSHIP IN 1733
TOWNSHIP OF WORCESTER
AT THE CENTER POINT OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA

1721 Valley Forge Road, Post Office Box 767 Worcester, PA 19490

**WORCESTER TOWNSHIP
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE TASK FORCE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021 7:00 PM
ZOOM PARTICIPATION INFORMATION**

The Worcester Township Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force meeting on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 7:00 PM will be conducted via Zoom. All members of the Task Force, staff and public will participate remotely. The public may join this meeting by either telephone using the dial in number or entering the URL on an internet browser. Below you will find instructions on how to access and participate in the meeting:

- **Meeting Date:** Wednesday, February 24
- **Meeting Time:** 7:00 PM
- **Meeting URL:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86171738643>
- **Meeting via Zoom app:** If you have the Zoom App on your smartphone, tablet, or computer, open the program, click join a meeting, and enter the ***Meeting ID: 861 7173 8643***
- **One tap mobile: Meeting ID: 861 7173 8643**
 - +13017158592,,86171738643# US (Washington DC)
 - +13126266799,,86171738643# US (Chicago)
- **Meeting dial in number (no video):** Dial by your location
 - +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
 - +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
 - **+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)**
 - +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
 - +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
 - +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)
- **Meeting ID number (to be entered when prompted): 861 7173 8643**

THE PUBLIC MAY ALSO SUBMIT QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS PRIOR TO THE MEETING BY MAIL TO WORCESTER TOWNSHIP, P.O. BOX 767, WORCESTER, PA 19490 OR BY E-MAIL TO SCRANDELL@WORCESTERTWP.COM PRIOR OR DURING THE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 24, 2021.

Persons with a disability requiring accommodation should contact Worcester Township at 610-584-1410.



**Worcester Township
Comprehensive Plan Task Force Meeting
February 24, 2021
Via Zoom
7:00PM**

- 1. Meeting Called to Order**
- 2. Public Comment-** *Any member of the public who would like to speak, please raise your hand virtually or chat that you would like to make a public comment. The host will unmute the member of the public and allow them to have up to 5 minutes to speak.*
- 3. Approval of Minutes- January 27, 2021 –** *If there are any objections to the approval of minutes, please state that in the chat window during this time.*
- 4. Tonight's Focus Area of the Comp Plan- Goal Setting, Follow up and Open House Prep** *Staff will go down the list of Committee Members during any time when feedback is requested. Otherwise, if any member of the Committee would like to provide a question or comment in between that time can state they would like to make a comment/ask question in the chat and when appropriate, the member will be unmuted.*
- 5. Next Steps and Next Meeting-** March 24, 2021 **6-8PM-** Open House Presentation Webinar
- 6. Public Comment-** *Any member of the public who would like to speak, please raise your hand virtually or chat that you would like to make a public comment. The host will unmute the member of the public and allow them to have up to 5 minutes to speak.*
- 7. Adjournment**

**WORCESTER TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE TASK FORCE
REMOTE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27 2021 7:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER by Stacy Crandell at 7:00 PM

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT:	STEPHANIE BAILEY	[X]
	WINNIE HAYES	[X]
	BURT HYNES	[X]
	LEE KOCH	[X]
	MARK LANDIS	[X]
	BRIAN NEWHALL	[X]
	ROBERT PACE	[X]
	PAT QUIGLEY	[X]
	TONY SHERR	[X]
	CHRISTENE STEERE	[X]
	JOHN WESTRUM	[X]
	DAVID ZERBE	[X]

1. December 2 Meeting Minutes – Stacy Crandell called for any comments or objections to the minutes. Ms. Quigley commented on spelling errors in the minutes. The minutes were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- There were no public comments.
2. Public Outreach – Brian Olszak, MCPC, provided an overview of public outreach methods and open houses.
 3. Existing Land Use – Brian Olszak provided an overview of existing land use in Worcester Township

Ms. Hayes commented on public open space and private open space.

Ms. Quigley commented on mobile home parks.

Brian Olszak provided an overview of remaining developable area.

Mr. Westrum commented on developable area and preserved land.

Ms. Quigley commented on developable area.

Brian Olszak provided an overview of housing unit trends and rental properties.

Ms. Hayes commented on unit types and rental properties.

Brian Olszak commented on the township's current multi-family zoning districts and units-per-acre allowed.

Mr. Westrum noted higher density housing requires access to adequate road work, public sewer and public water.

Ms. Quigley commented on existing clusters and development near available and adequate resources.

Ms. Hayes commented on sewer availability in Fairview Village and the Berwick Place Sewer Treatment Facility.

Mr. Westrum commented on mobile home parks and available homes.

Brian Olszak provided an overview of housing sales and historic resources.

Ms. Quigley commented on historical properties, previous historical studies, and historical protections.

4. February 24, 2021 meeting – Brian Olszak provided an overview of next month's meeting.

Ms. Quigley commented on public meetings and open houses.

Ms. Hayes commented on the Comprehensive plan update survey and open houses.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force, Stacy Crandell adjourned the meeting at 8:36 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Andrew R. Raquet
Codes Director; Zoning Officer

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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KENNETH E. LAWRENCE, JR., VICE CHAIR
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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION**

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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: The Comprehensive Plan Goal-Setting and Recommendation Process

TO: Worcester Comprehensive Plan Task Force

CC: Tommy Ryan, Township Manager
Stacy Crandell, Asst. Township Manager

FROM: Brian J. Olszak, Senior Planner, MCPC

DATE: February 24, 2021

INTRODUCTION

Up until now we have spent a fair amount of time analyzing the current social, economic and environmental conditions of the Township. Only after an impartial review of the existing data would we be able to then direct our attention to how to address the issues and challenges the Township faces through recommendations. But before this, we must develop guiding principles, goals and visions, which ultimately decide what form the recommendations take and how they might be applied in the future.

Creating goals and a vision is an iterative process, meaning that it involves several adjustments over time and integrating results from:

- our outreach survey,
- input to date from the Task Force, Township officials and staff,
- the findings from our existing conditions research and past plans,
- input from public meetings, and
- professional analysis from Township consultants and planners

We should keep in mind that, since the Board of Supervisors' outlined that our planning process be strictly an *update* of the 2008 Plan, we should resist offering sweeping changes or reorientation to the general direction of the plan, and instead work within the general perspective of the 2008 Plan.

The existing 2008 Comp Plan organizes as Goals, each with several Objectives, are provided initially in Chapter 1, a Vision is provided in several pages of Chapter 7 (pp. 78-88), and Recommendations in the last pages of the Plan (pp. 90-93). Upon my own review of the 2008 Comp Plan, I believe that the various goals, objectives and vision in the plan, while admirable and relevant, could be reorganized and clarified so as to provide stronger clarity on how the different plan elements logically fit together and relate to each other, as well as clearer direction on how they can implemented by the Township. Additionally, the 2008 Comp Plan seemingly uses the "Objectives" as recommendations or strategies, but then within the "Recommendations" proposes several similar but overlapping additional strategies, albeit with slightly different language. Otherwise, the Recommendations make no reference to how they will address the Goals or

Objectives of the Plan. Our job in creating this Plan Update is to create a usable document with goals, priorities and successes are clear, measurable, and easy to understand and implement.

To that effect, I am proposing a different framework for the Goals, Objectives and Recommendations for this plan update, with the ultimate intent integrating existing and new plan elements into this framework. A typical planning process illustrates the decision-making and guiding principles of a Plan through a series of Goals, Objectives and Strategies or Recommendations. Each Objective should flow from and correspond to a goal, and strategies flow from and correspond to each objective, which are all interrelated with the Future Land Use Map. The Future Land Use Map is a visual, geographic representation of where the Township would like to see ideal types of development and community character. Areas of the Township would be identified with different designations (e.g. village growth area, conservation priority area, etc.) in the Future Land Use Map, which is ultimately a product of the Goals, Objectives and Strategies laid out in the plan. We will be discussing the Future Land Use Map at a later meeting.

My proposal is that the goals and recommendations would be structured in the following hierarchical manner, flowing from the general to the specific:

- **Goals.** Overarching principles or statements indicating community aspirations and long-term vision. Goals themselves don't suggest what needs to be done to achieve them, but instead simply envision an ideal outcome or state of being. For instance, desiring to "preserve farmland" does not itself suggest how the preservation will be accomplished: an objective or recommendation later will suggest the best or relevant way(s) to accomplish preservation.
 - **Objectives.** Measurable targets which are met through a policy, project or community action. Objectives measure *progress* to a particular goal or envisioned outcome, allowing comparison over time. Some examples of objectives include "increased acres in preservation," "percentage of new housing within designated growth areas," and "miles of trails built."
 - **Strategies or Recommendations.** *Specific* policy proposals, actions, and projects that should be undertaken to "move the needle" on an objective, and by extension make progress on achieving a larger goal of the plan. An implementation plan indicates who is responsible for carrying out proposals or actions, the available funding sources, and how the Township should prioritize different action steps.

The goals of this February 2021 Task Force meeting are as follows:

- **Review the Goals of the 2008 Plan and seek preliminary feedback from the Task Force on existing goals and suggest new or modified goals as appropriate.**
- **Review case studies within "Case Examples from *Rural by Design*" and seek preliminary feedback envisioning the type of development that we want the Plan to encourage.**

REVIEW OF 2008 PLAN GOALS

Below are each of the 2008 Plan goals organized by their respective plan theme/topic areas (*note: we might consider reorganizing goals into our current 2021 plan theme categories*). I provide a short analysis based upon all the successive reviews of the topic areas through our planning process to help contextualize whether goals remain relevant today. As indicated above, further work needs to be done to integrate input and analysis from other sources, but our next step will be to gather the Task Force's input. Draft Goals will integrate this and other data, which will be presented at a later meeting.

RURAL PRESERVATION GOALS

- *Maintain the Rural Character of the Majority of the Township*
- *Preserve Farmland*

- *Preserve Scenic Views and Roads*
- *Preserve Historic Sites and Landscapes*

Analysis: The “Maintaining the Rural Character” goal appears to be the overarching goal to which all other goals listed here are subordinate. Overall we should consider whether the other listed goals here such as “preserve farmland” is actually goal in itself or if it might be more of a strategy or objective, and whether there may be other goals we can add that give the Township better guidance. Additionally, we should ensure that there is greater coordination between this section and the Growth and Development Goals section below. As we have discussed in several of our meetings, preservation and development are two sides of the same coin, and oftentimes overly restricting one of these might have an unintended, adverse impact on the other.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- *Develop the Villages*
- *Provide a Range of Housing Types and Densities*
- *Encourage Housing that Fits the Township’s Character*
- *Allow Neighborhood and Convenience Commercial Facilities*
- *Discourage Strip Commercial Uses*
- *Permit a Limited Amount of Office and Industrial Development*
- *Consider Regional Planning Options*

Analysis: We have discussed in detail several of these items, including the state of housing and development within the Township. We heard last meeting that the growth of nonresidential land uses, particularly commercial and industrial land uses, was flat, or in some cases experienced a slight decline. Additionally, we noted that the Township has attempted to develop plans for the further development of the villages, such as through the “Center Point Vision Plan,” however the effort remains unfinished. Overall, we want to be sure that we are capturing actual *aspirations* within these goals, and not policy recommendations. For instance, “Consider regional planning options” might be considered less of a goal, and more of a strategy on how to get to certain goals in the future, so we may want to consider relocating this. I have gathered from our many meetings and additional research that the current financial and tax environment of the Township remains desirable for many people—we should be sure to incorporate goals which speak ensuring the financial sustainability of development in the Township.

ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

- *Preserve Steep Slope Areas*
- *Preserve Stream Corridors and Floodplains*
- *Preserve Wetlands*
- *Preserve Woodlands*
- *Preserve High-Priority Open Space Lands*

Analysis: The Township now has several ordinance provisions with their Zoning and Subdivision ordinances which protect many of these and other environmental resources, including steep slopes, riparian, floodplain and wetland protections. The Township’s Planning Commission is currently working on an ordinance update for these types of ordinances. Some of these goals might be worth combining into a larger “sensitive environmental areas” category. “Open Space Lands” tend to be a separate category of investigation and may overlap or duplicate goals within the **Rural Preservation** section.

PARKLAND AND RECREATION GOALS

- *Provide Community Level Parks*
- *Meet the Township's Neighborhood Park Needs*
- *Provide a Trail Along Zacharias Creek*
- *Develop a Network of Parks and Trails Throughout the Township*
- *Create Passive Park Sites*

Analysis: This section may have some overlap with the preservation-focused goals above, so we may want to consider coordinating between the two themes and ensuring that their goals are complementary, and not redundant or repetitive. As we have seen, the Township has continued to make headway on some of these goals, especially in acquiring accessible open space and developing the Zacharias Creek Trail. However, some of these goals may seem redundant (e.g. "Provide a Trail..." and "Develop a Network of Parks and Trails..."). "Meet the Township's Neighborhood Park Needs" appears based on the earlier Open Space Plan, which referenced the NRPA's older standards for recreation—we should look at modernizing this goal, perhaps. There also seems to be a lack of attention to sustaining the park and trail system in these goals, so we may want to address that as well.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL AND WATER SUPPLY GOALS

- *Provide Public Sewers for Intense Land Uses*
- *Provide Public Water Wherever Public Sewers Are Proposed*

Analysis: We discussed earlier in our planning process that it may be less possible in the present to deliberately prevent public sewer expansion into non-sewered areas, especially if developers seek to fund the capacity upgrades themselves or if the on-lot septic systems in these areas are failing.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

- *Reduce Traffic Congestion and Improve Traffic Safety*
- *Provide Transportation Alternatives*
- *Preserve Scenic Roads*
- *Develop Rural Road Standards*

Analysis: I believe many of these goals are still widely relevant to the Township's transportation planning. "Develop Rural Road Standards," however, does appear to be more of a strategy than a goal; perhaps this may be relocated. I would also recommend, as members of the Task Force had earlier stated, that we make more explicit the goal of prioritizing pedestrian and cyclist transportation, both in "traffic safety" as well as in the infrastructure network.