

The Plan for Implementation

"A Plan is only as good as its implementation"

Keys to a Successful Plan

During the planning process, the Project Steering Committee discussed the following question – "What are the keys to success for the Franklin Township Comprehensive Plan?" They came up with the following factors:

- Communication
- Accountability – this effort involves more than the Township Supervisors
- Unified Effort
- Momentum – start with some low hanging fruit
- Making a Difference – being a "change agent" / "champion" for the Plan
- Getting people involved – using personal networks
- Stay Positive
- Implementation
- Determining or measuring success

All of these factors are important to validating the planning process and achieving the priority goals identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

What is an Implementation Plan?

Implement – (1) to put (a decision, plan, agreement, etc.) into effect (google.com – dictionary), (2) carry out, accomplish; to give practical effect to and ensure of actual fulfillment by concrete measures (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/implement>)

The implementation plan includes the goals, actions and strategies identified during the comprehensive planning process and the tasks required to accomplish them. It was important to develop goals, actions and strategies that are realistic and actionable as they could have implications on capital improvements programming, new or updated development policies and procedures, the identification of public funds potentially available, and the vision created for the Township.

To ensure that the plan is implemented, accountability for moving the priority goals forward should be established. This will provide the administration and oversight needed to keep the recommendations / projects on schedule and that the desired

results are accomplished effectively and efficiently. Also, progress can be communicated to Township Officials and other stakeholders as the goals, actions and strategies are completed.

The implementation strategy will provide a path to achieving the priority goals through the identification of potential resources (funding, technical, etc.) and partners.

Defining a Goal

There are many definitions for *goal* that are available in online and hardcopy dictionaries. But since this Plan is based on local input, the Project Steering Committee members were asked to provide their definition of a "goal". Their responses included:

- An achievable realistic dream
- Trying to achieve something that will improve yourself or your surroundings
- An end achievement
- Something to aim for
- A planned outcome of a desired achievement
- A point to be reached
- Finish line product that is attainable

This was followed up by the following question – "What is the biggest obstacle to achieving a goal?" The Project Steering Committee answers included:

- Factors outside of your control
- (Lack of) Time
- Time and Money
- Finding help
- Cooperation
- Lack of follow through
- Lack of initiative
- Leadership
- Accountability and Vision

Establishing what is a goal and identifying some of the obstacles to achieving a goal is important to understand so that the implementation plan is carried out successfully. Knowing that it will take perseverance, determination and patience to achieve some of the goals, actions and strategies will be vital as potential pitfalls and obstacles can derail the best of plans.

Goals / Strategies / Actions

Attendees of the public meetings and the business and industry focus group, stakeholders, and the Project Steering Committee were asked to identify possible goals – broad and specific - for the Comprehensive Plan as well overall goals for the Township. Their input is reflected in the following responses which have been consolidated:

- The Plan needs to be implemented and those responsible for ensuring that the goals are completed should be identified to provide accountability – Action is the key to success
- Identify new (commercial) development opportunities
- Expand commercial / industrial zones (properties) for future economic growth in the Township
- Make future growth easier for developers – streamline process, additional locations for future commercial and industrial growth, etc.
- Stabilize the tax base
- Make Franklin Township a better place in the future – improve on what has been done already
- Manage future growth and development in the Township for the next ten years so that it is reflective of the Brand and Vision
- Bring in additional jobs
- Add housing units that include a variety of types and price ranges
- Address transportation / traffic issues
- Ensure that future infrastructure improvements are coordinated with proposed developments
- Develop new partnerships to encourage growth (ie. Developers, the County, etc.)
- Don't throw away the work that has been done already
- Identify what the future plans are for the Airport and the Fairgrounds
- Improve communication between the Township and the County
- Coordinate the efforts of the Township's Comprehensive Plan with the County's Comprehensive Plan
- Repurpose any underutilized or vacant buildings and / or sites (brownfields)
- Determine if the future plans for the locks on the Monongahela River will have any impact on the Township
- Examine the impacts of present and future rail access in the Township
- Make this Plan a marketing piece for the Township
- Include plans to improve Route 21 by the State into the overall plans for the Township – this is a priority growth corridor for the County
- Identify the reasons why the younger residents are leaving the Township / County

- Develop a focus group for business / industry leaders in the Township
- Take advantage of the campgrounds that are being used by the Gas Industry – captive audience for input and potential revenue
- Investigate the opportunity for developing a food / culinary incubator

Priority Goals for the Township

The following goals, strategies and actions were a culmination of the efforts of everyone involved in the planning process for the Comprehensive Plan Update. The overall goal developed for each of the issues identified in the Plan is listed below along with the priority goals for each issue. Goals identified in blue were ranked as short-term high priorities.

Provide a Variety of Housing Opportunities

G – Identify the reasons why there has been a downward trend in building permit applications for new homes and residential subdivision / land development plans in the Township

S – Meet and / or discuss this issue with real estate professionals and housing developers in the region

A – Compile the results from these meetings / discussions and address the items that are within the Township’s capabilities

S – Compare the development costs in Franklin Township with other locations in the region

A – Identify what costs (land, infrastructure, taxes, etc.) can be addressed by Township officials to help spur future development

A – Review the current tax abatement program to determine if it should be updated or revised to encourage new residential development

S – Compile and analyze county, regional, and statewide residential development data and trends

A – Identify the locations / municipalities that are growing

A – Identify the reasons why they are growing and if they can be implemented in Franklin Township

G – Identify and prioritize potential sites within the Township that can support new housing growth and residential developments

S – Direct higher density housing to locations that currently have, or are planned to have, the public infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, utilities, etc.) capacity to support these types of development

S – Encourage Conservation Subdivisions, Cluster Developments, Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) that promote the preservation of open space, natural / environmental resources, wetlands and waterways, sensitive habitats, and viewsheds

A – Provide incentives for these types of developments through the provision of higher density bonuses, flexible lot sizes, expedited permitting and approval, and conservation easements, etc.

A – Implement policies and requirements for the on-site treatment of stormwater using swales, ponds, biofiltration, retention / detention and other conveyance facilities prior to discharge to either ground or surface waters

G – Provide a variety of market rate housing options throughout the Township to encourage the retention of long-term residents and to attract new residents

S – Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to provide flexibility and creativity in residential land development regulations

A – Provide for a diversity of housing types / styles, residential lot sizes and densities

A – Allow for, and encourage, live – work opportunities, co-housing, etc.

A – Provide for mixed use developments such as Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), Planned Residential Development (PRD), etc. that include residential and non-residential uses

S – Identify incentives to encourage unique and attractive residential developments that meet the emerging lifestyles of potential residents

S – Review the zoning requirements to permit multi-generational (multi-gen, next-gen, etc.) homes to be constructed in the Township

- S** – Promote more 55 and over / senior housing options – patio homes, assisted / skilled living, retirement living, independent living, continuing care communities, etc.
- A** – Ensure that housing is available for aging populations that is affordable and in locations that are accessible to services, shopping, restaurants, libraries, places of worship, etc. so that older adults can age in place and remain actively engaged in the community
- S** – Direct resources to assist with improvements in older residential areas in the Township that include neighborhoods such as West Waynesburg, East Waynesburg, and Morrisville
- A** – Assure safe, healthy, and attractive neighborhoods through preventive maintenance, code enforcement, and reinvestments
- A** – Provide flexible land use requirements that will encourage infill development opportunities in these areas
- G** – Amend and revise municipal ordinances / codes / policies / regulations that are negatively impacting development in the Township
- S** – Conduct stakeholder meetings with representatives from Greene County Government, Central Greene School District, Greene County CTC, Waynesburg University, developers, real estate professionals, Greene County Chamber of Commerce, business owners, and other stakeholders to discuss current and emerging trends in development, education, funding opportunities, land use policies, and other relevant community and regional issues
- A** – Use the results from these meetings to promote the Township to potential developers and businesses through the dissemination of municipal information and marketing materials
- S** – Maintain a database of creative, flexible and innovative strategies that encourage private housing development(s)
- A** – Provide this information to potential developers that may be interested in the Township

Expand Infrastructure to Support Future Growth and Development

- G** – Prioritize development areas where infrastructure (public water / sewer, roads, etc.) can be reasonably expanded to support future development that aligns with the “Vision” of the Township

- S** – Extend the current public water and wastewater systems within the Township to serve priority growth areas for planned residential, commercial and / or industrial developments

- S** – Ensure that the continued use of individual wells and septic systems in areas not served by public systems is done in a safe and efficient manner
 - A** – Encourage the use of new technology that is approved by the PA DEP which could be an alternative to individual septic systems in areas that are not served by the public sewer system

- G** – Coordinate planned infrastructure improvements for proposed developments within the Township with upgrades / improvements being planned by local utility providers
 - S** – Establish regular updates / meetings with contacts from the local gas, electric, cable, water, sewer, etc. to discuss planned improvements in the Township

- G** – Work with the County, State Legislators, and service providers (in the Township) to expand Broadband / Internet Access to areas that presently do not have adequate service
 - S** – Build capacity in telecommunications and fiber networks for commercial and industrial properties, business parks, employment centers, and residential developments
 - A** – Identify gaps in the network and prioritize areas to be addressed

 - A** – Identify alternative / creative options to fund broadband / internet service improvements

Grow the Local Economy

- G** – Identify and prioritize areas within the Township where new commercial and industrial opportunities should be located

S – Direct future commercial and industrial developments to sites within the SR 0021 corridor and other corridors that have infrastructure and utilities in place or where infrastructure and utilities can be reasonably extended

A – Prioritize the sites that provide the Township with the best return on investment for any public improvements that need to be made

A – Create a mixed-use zoning district / overlay district option in the zoning ordinance that allows for site design flexibility, encourages pedestrian-friendly development and includes a combination of residential, commercial / retail and office uses

S – Work with Greene County officials to make improvements in the Future Investment Areas for the parts of Franklin Township that are identified in the Greene County Comprehensive Plan

A – Focus efforts and resources in locations that have been designated as Infill and Reinvestment Areas, Commercial Corridor Investment Areas, and Interchange Investment Areas

S – Guide new commercial and industrial development in a manner that minimizes their impact on adjacent land uses, maintains a high level of aesthetic character, conserves natural features and protects environmentally sensitive areas

A – Work with the natural gas industry to ensure that lands disturbed by drilling and midstream activities are restored to their previous state

A – Develop zoning and subdivision / land development requirements that provide adequate buffers, landscaping improvements, etc.

S – Coordinate with Greene County officials regarding future plans for the County Airport property and the Greene County Fairgrounds property

A – Meet with the Greene County Commissioners and Staff to discuss the best way to address interest or inquiries from developers regarding the properties

G – Enhance local assets that will increase future tourism initiatives in the Township

S – Improve the assets that will encourage Heritage Tourism – “Traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present.” (Definition – The National Trust for Historic Preservation).

- A** – Work with the Greene County Tourist Promotion Agency and the Greene County Historical Society to identify and promote “real heritage attractions”, and not manufactured attractions.
- A** – Create a list / map of the Township assets and destinations and include it in future marketing efforts by the Greene County Tourist Promotion Agency and on the Township’s website
- S** – Assist with the continued improvement of cultural, environmental, and historical sites in the Township that provide passive recreation, education, and tourism opportunities
 - A** – Support the efforts of the Greene County Historical Society to protect, restore, and maintain historically significant buildings and sites
 - A** – Support efforts to develop and promote eco-tourism opportunities in the Township – “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education” (Definition – The International Ecotourism Society).
- G** – Support investments that create a diversified local economy
 - S** – Capitalize on existing industry clusters (natural gas, healthcare, tourism, etc.)
 - A** – Work with County officials to assist new businesses, entrepreneurs, and existing businesses looking to expand in the Township that are related to an industry cluster
 - S** – Protect the economic viability of farming / agricultural operations
 - A** – Review current zoning regulations to provide for adequate buffers to protect agricultural / farming operations
 - A** – Work with the local agricultural community to promote the development of agri-tourism in the Township
 - A** – Review zoning requirements to ensure that farmers can sell directly to the consumer (ie. seasonal stands)

S – Work with property owners and developers to repurpose underutilized and vacant buildings and sites

S – Investigate the opportunity of developing a food / culinary incubator in the Township

G – Work with representatives of the Mineral Extraction Industry who are active in the municipality to determine how the Township can best leverage proposed improvements being planned by their companies

S – Review the current requirements for mineral extraction activities to ensure that adequate protective measures are in place for adjacent properties

A – Protect prime mineral extraction areas from encroachment by incompatible uses

A – Protect adjacent land uses from negative impacts of mineral extraction activities through appropriate siting and adequate screening / buffering requirements, noise abatement, etc.

Improve the Transportation Network

G – Prioritize improvements to the road network in the Township that support the future vision for growth and development and improve the overall safety and efficiency of the network

S – Continue coordination with Greene County, PennDOT and Southwestern Pennsylvania Corporation officials to ensure that projects in Franklin Township on the current Transportation Improvement Program are completed

S – Work with Greene County and PennDOT officials to identify improvements needed on SR 0021

A – Explore access management techniques within the SR 0021 corridor to manage congestion and access points, increase capacity, and reduce traffic incidents

S – Work with PennDOT to determine the feasibility of gateway signing on the off ramps from I-79 into the Township

S – Integrate gateways into key development areas and points of access into Franklin Township

A – Utilize a common design theme that is used throughout the community to create a sense of identity for both residents and visitors

S – Identify roads that could be designated as Scenic Byways

G – Support a safe and well-maintained transportation network that will effectively serve existing land uses and meet anticipated transportation demands generated by future development

S – Promote residential developments that limit excessive curb cuts / driveway access to existing roadways

S – Encourage and support the development of multi-use trails / pathways throughout the Township between residential areas, activity centers, employment centers, public facilities, and recreation areas

A – Include bicycle and pedestrian connections in future proposed developments

G – Ensure that proposed developments do not create capacity issues or unsafe conditions for the current road network

S – Guide future development(s) to roadways capable of accommodating the anticipated traffic that the development will create

S – Maintain rural and scenic (low volume) roads in their present capacity

G – Work with the County to ensure that underserved populations (elderly, disabled, low income, etc.) in the Township have access to goods and services, recreation opportunities, and other essential needs

S – Explore the possibilities of expanding current service by an existing transportation provider into the Township to serve these individuals

Enhance the current Quality of Life

G – Create a healthy, resilient, and sustainable Franklin Township

S – Adopt goals, policies, and development regulations designed to foster sustainability, healthy community initiatives, and community resilience

- A** – Utilize resources and tools such as: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Keystone Principles for Growth, Investment, and Resource Conservation; Smart Growth Principles; Green Infrastructure Practices; Urban Land Institute’s Principles for Building Resilience, etc.
- A** – Ensure that the Township’s Emergency Preparedness Plan is consistent with the updated Comprehensive Plan
- S** – Develop a walking and biking network that provides a safe, local recreational opportunity that promotes a healthy community
- S** – Update the Zoning Ordinance to include regulations for alternative energy sources for vehicles (CNG fueling stations, electric charging stations, etc.) and for homes and businesses (solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, etc.)
 - A** – Support voluntary programs for allowing electric vehicle charging stations in locations where they are needed such as homes, businesses, and public parking infrastructure
 - A** – Update the zoning requirements to permit the installation of roof-top and back yard solar panels, residential windmills, and other alternative energy options
- S** – Protect and preserve ground and surface water in the township from the negative effects of intensive and incompatible development
 - A** – Include requirements in the land use ordinances that promote low impact developments, reduce runoff from stormwater, protect riparian buffers; and utilize impervious surfaces where possible
 - A** – Educate the public regarding the Township’s reliance on groundwater resources
 - A** – Promote stewardship of the Township’s water resources
- G** – Make information easier to access and market the assets within the Township more effectively to attract new visitors to the region
- S** – Redesign the Township website to make it more user friendly and provide additional content

- S** – Include information on the Township’s website to assist new and potential residents and business owners in understanding Township requirements, available resources and regulations
- S** – Include assets, attractions, and quality of life items on the Township website for potential residents and visitors to the area
- G** – Establish an identity for Franklin Township that is built on, and promotes, its sense of place characteristics
 - S** – Create a brand for the township that can be used in future marketing efforts
- G** – Foster a positive and interactive relationship with the residents and business community
 - S** – Promote meaningful citizen participation in all aspects of local government
- G** – Continue to enhance the current recreation facilities in the Township
 - S** – Identify the needed improvements to Crawford Park, Route 188 Park, and West Waynesburg Park and pursue funding opportunities to complete them
 - S** – Support the County in their efforts to develop the Wisecarver Recreation Area as a regional attraction
 - S** – Complete a Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan for the Township
 - S** – Improve existing, or create new, playing fields that would better serve the needs of local and regional recreational organizations and the changing demographics of the Township
 - S** – Protect sensitive recreational assets such as Ten Mile Creek
- G** – Enhance the aesthetics of the Township that will help to protect its scenic and rural character
 - S** – Continue to address blighted properties and establish a priority list to address them as funding becomes available

- S** – Determine if any blighted properties would be candidates for the Greene County Land Bank – being administered by the Greene County Redevelopment Authority – if it is created

- G** – Coordinate with the County, Borough of Waynesburg, and surrounding municipalities to evaluate opportunities to provide services in a more economical and efficient manner
 - S** – Identify the cost savings and improvement in delivery through shared services / equipment for specific tasks

 - S** – Approach Waynesburg Borough regarding their interest in discussing a potential merger / consolidation of the two municipalities

- G** – Ensure that the priority goals, strategies and actions in the Comprehensive Plan are implemented as funding and resources become available
 - S** – Build on the momentum of the planning process that focused on a unified effort, open communication, the delivery of a positive message, and how residents can make a difference by getting involved
 - A** – Establish an implementation team that is accountable for meeting on a regular basis to discuss the goals and ensure that they are accomplished

 - S** – Work with the Greene County Chamber of Commerce, local Business Community, and Greene County Economic Development Agencies to identify how they can assist the Township with implementing the Comprehensive Plan Update or other projects that the Township has planned

 - S** – Update the demographic and socioeconomic data after the release of the 2020 US Census

Potential funding sources for the goals, strategies and actions have been listed in the Appendices for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Advancing the Goals

After the adoption of a comprehensive plan, many municipalities have a propensity to put the document aside and consider their efforts complete. Because change is inevitable and can happen quickly, the Plan can provide guidance on how best to address these changes.

To assist Franklin Township officials in implementing the goals, actions and strategies identified in the Comprehensive Plan Update, a recommendation was made to create an implementation committee made up of individuals from the Township and the County. This will expand the “human capital” needed to address the priority issues in Franklin Township.

This committee will be a collaborative of the intangible resources – knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, training, and wisdom – that each member brings to the table to help the Township accomplish their goals.

Human capital can be locally grown and developed, or it can be imported

The comprehensive plan implementation committee will be responsible for objectively evaluating and monitoring the progress of the plan’s implementation and providing an additional level of accountability. This group can include individuals from the following organizations, associations, etc.:

- Township Supervisors / Appointed Officials / Staff
- Greene County Government
- Comprehensive Plan Project Steering Committee Members
- State Legislators – Representative / Senator
- US Legislators – Representative / Senator
- Central Greene School District
- Business / Industry
- Township Residents

The make-up of this committee should also include younger residents who are attending college and / or high school. Engaging these future generations will be critical to the success of the municipality.

The implementation committee will assist Township officials in measuring the success of the Plan at regular intervals (ie. six months, one year) and ensuring that the Plan is updated every ten years.

Measuring Success

What is success... an accomplishment, attainment, or achievement? Success can be defined in many ways.

"You can't manage what you can't measure." – Peter Drucker, "the inventor of modern management"

One of the tasks that the implementation committee will have to address is how to best measure the success or effectiveness of the implementation plan. Determining success can be subjective so a consensus of potentially differing thoughts and ideas will need to be reached through a rational and logical process; one that establishes guidelines and parameters to decide whether a goal, action or strategy has been accomplished.

Relying on tools such as a return on investment (ROI) of the Township's capital improvements (infrastructure, community facilities, etc.) may not be a clear-cut method to measure success. The ROI of these enhancements may be longer term and their success may be assessed by an increase in population or socio-economic attributes, business / industry growth and development, a comparison to other similar communities, and an improvement in the overall quality of life in the Township.

Keeping the measurement objectives (key performance indicators) clear and using benchmarks will provide the implementation committee with a basic strategy to help in determining the overall success of the Plan.

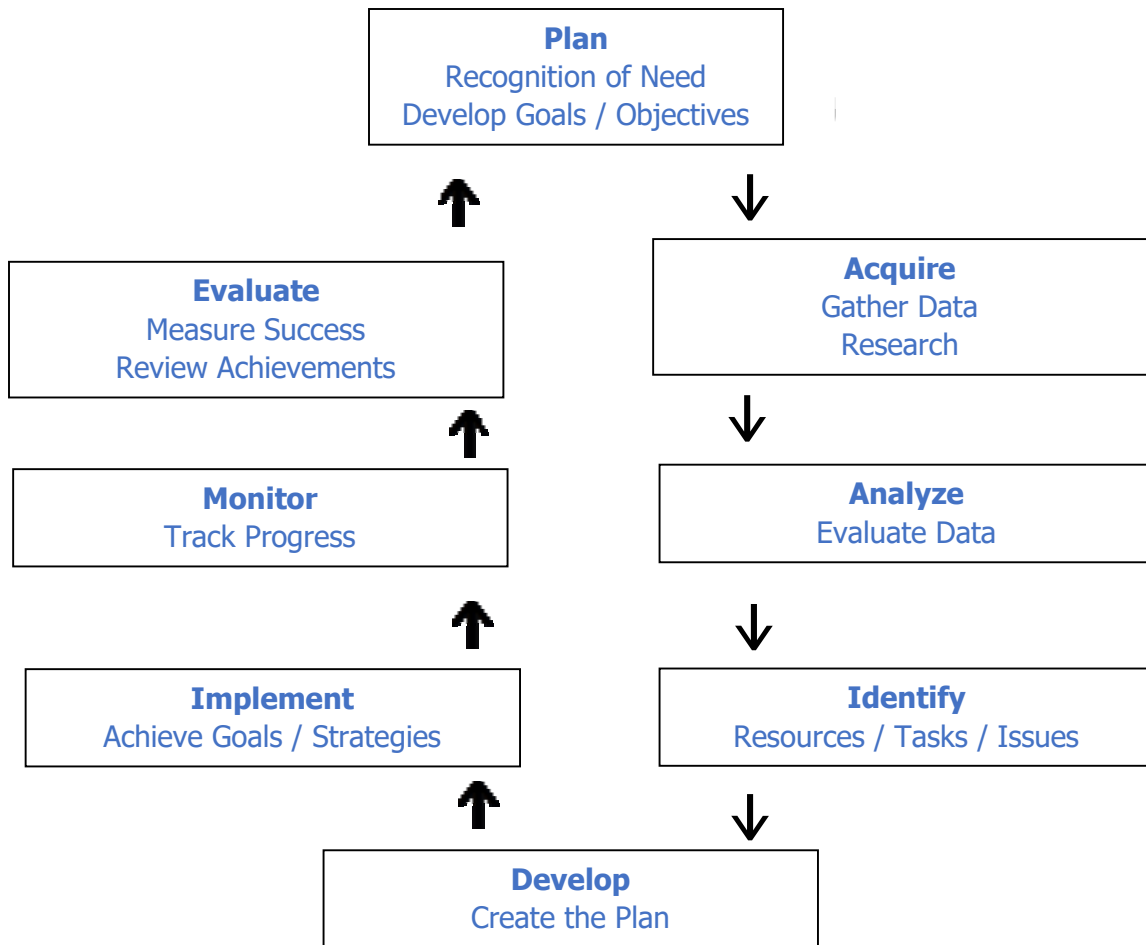
The Planning Continuum

Franklin Township will continue to experience changes – positive and negative – even after the Comprehensive Plan Update is adopted. Therefore, it will be important for Township officials and the implementation committee to utilize a continuing planning process (cycle) to address a shift in trends and patterns due to economic, residential, social, and demographic factors.

The Franklin Township Comprehensive Plan was updated to provide a framework – one that was agreed upon by those participating in the planning process – to address the most pressing issues affecting the municipality. The plan principles and policies will provide the basis to guide future growth and development so it will be important to understand the local, regional, and national matters that may influence Franklin Township.

This process, which is detailed below, will provide the foundation to deal with change in the municipality in a continual manner.

Figure 8-1: Franklin Township Continuing Planning Process



This procedure should be done on a periodic basis to replace goals as they are completed or to reprioritize other goals as resources become available. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code also addresses the need to continually plan as stated in Section 303 - Legal Status of Comprehensive Plan Within the Jurisdiction that Adopted the Plan. "(a) Whenever the governing body, pursuant to the procedures provided in section 302, has adopted a comprehensive plan or any part thereof, any subsequent proposed action of the governing body, its departments, agencies and appointed authorities shall be submitted to the planning agency for its recommendations when the proposed action relates to:

- (1) the location, opening, vacation, extension, widening, narrowing or enlargement of any street, public ground, pierhead or watercourse
- (2) the location, erection, demolition, removal or sale of any public structure located within the municipality

- (3) the adoption, amendment or repeal of an official map, subdivision and land development ordinance, zoning ordinance or provisions for planned residential development, or capital improvements program
- (4) the construction, extension or abandonment of any water line, sewer line or sewage treatment facility

A similar provision, Section 209.1 of the PA MPC mandates that the planning agency “review the zoning ordinance, subdivision and land development ordinance, official map, provisions for planned residential development, and such other ordinances and regulations governing the development of land no less frequently than it reviews the comprehensive plan.”