

Plan Coordination

Interrelationships among the Plan Components

During the preparation of a municipal comprehensive plan, Section 301 (Subsection 4.1) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires that a statement of the interrelationships among the various plan components, which may include an estimate of the environmental, energy conservation, fiscal, economic development and social consequences on the Township be completed.

Even though the update of the Franklin Township Comprehensive Plan was based on the issues currently impacting the municipality, elements such as housing, community facilities and services, infrastructure, recreation, and cultural / natural / historical / environmental infrastructure were addressed. The interrelationships of these Plan elements were considered as the goals, strategies and actions were created for the issues identified to minimize any fiscal and environmental impacts. This effort was also completed to ensure that general consistency of the elements was achieved and that future decisions regarding growth and development support the community development objectives for Franklin Township. The major themes of the objectives include:

- Conserve and enhance important environmental, cultural, natural, and historic resources
- Protect the Township's rural character
- Provide a variety of housing options
- Direct future growth and development to the sites / corridors that have the infrastructure in place to support it
- Capitalize on the mineral resources in the Township
- Create a sense of place that will attract new residents and visitors
- Enhance the overall Quality of Life for residents

The potential development opportunities in Franklin Township not only looked at available infrastructure and environmental constraints but were identified with these interrelationships in mind. To enhance the current quality of life, the Township will consider the planning principles that support "Smart Growth", "Livability", and "Sustainability" initiatives.

According to Smart Growth America, Smart Growth is a way to build cities, towns, and neighborhoods that are economically prosperous, socially equitable, and environmentally sustainable. "Smart Growth" covers a range of development and

conservation strategies that help protect our health and natural environment and make our communities more attractive, economically stronger, and more socially diverse.

Based on the experience of communities around the nation that have used smart growth approaches to create and maintain great neighborhoods, the Smart Growth Network has developed the following ten basic principles to guide smart growth strategies:

- Mix Land Uses
- Take Advantage of Compact Building Design
- Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
- Create Walkable Neighborhoods
- Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
- Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
- Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
- Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
- Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
- Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions

Franklin Township's planning effort will follow the smart growth planning principles to guide future land use decisions that foster efficient development opportunities and create a more livable community.

The interrelationships of the various plan elements were important to developing goals that included consideration of the possible impacts on the Township's future growth and conservation policies. These policies provide the framework to implement procedures and ordinances that are prepared in the context of the Township's Comprehensive Plan as well as the PA MPC and the Commonwealth's Keystone Principles and Criteria for Growth, Investment and Resource Conservation.

Adopted by the Economic Development Cabinet in 2005, the Keystone Principles and Criteria make a strategic effort to target Pennsylvania's investments through a coordinated interagency approach to fostering sustainable economic development and conservation of resources in Pennsylvania's diverse communities. The principles lay out general goals and objectives for economic development and resource conservation while the criteria help measure the extent to which projects accomplish these goals.

The principles and criteria are designed to encourage sound planning and project development that will integrate programs and funding sources from a variety of state agencies into a comprehensive strategy that improves whole communities. Projects are evaluated with the recognition that rural, suburban, and urban areas in Pennsylvania

have different characteristics and needs, and that what might work in an urban area might not work for rural communities. The Keystone Principles and Criteria are:

- *REDEVELOP FIRST – Give funding preference to reuse and redevelopment of "brownfield" and previously developed sites in urban, suburban, and rural communities for economic activity that creates jobs, housing, mixed use development, and recreational assets. Conserve Pennsylvania's exceptional heritage resources. Support rehabilitation of historic buildings and neighborhoods for compatible contemporary uses.*
- *PROVIDE EFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE – Fix it first: use and improve existing infrastructure. Make highway and public transportation investments that use context sensitive design to improve existing developed areas and attract residents and visitors to these places. Provide transportation choice and intermodal connections for air travel, driving, public transit, bicycling and walking. Increase rail freight. Provide public water and sewer service for dense development in designated growth areas. Use on-lot and community systems in rural areas. Require private and public expansions of service to be consistent with approved comprehensive plans and consistent implementing ordinances.*
- *CONCENTRATE DEVELOPMENT – Support infill and "green field" development that is compact, conserves land, and is integrated with existing or planned transportation, water and sewer services, and schools. Foster creation of well-designed developments and walkable, bikeable neighborhoods that offer healthy lifestyle opportunities for Pennsylvania residents. Recognize the importance of projects that can document measurable impacts and are deemed "most-ready" to move to successful completion.*
- *INCREASE JOB OPPORTUNITIES – Retain and attract a diverse, educated workforce through the quality of economic opportunity and quality of life offered in Pennsylvania's varied communities. Integrate educational and job training opportunities for workers of all ages with the workforce needs of businesses. Invest in businesses that offer good paying, high quality jobs, and that are located near existing or planned water and sewer infrastructure, housing, existing workforce, and transportation access (highway or transit).*
- *FOSTER SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES – Strengthen natural resource-based businesses that use sustainable practices in energy production and use, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, recreation and tourism. Increase our supply of renewable energy. Reduce consumption of water, energy and materials to reduce foreign energy dependence and address climate change. Lead by*

example: support conservation strategies, clean power and innovative industries. Construct and promote green buildings and infrastructure that use land, energy, water and materials efficiently. Support economic development that increases or replenishes knowledge-based employment or builds on existing industry clusters.

- *RESTORE AND ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT – Maintain and expand our land, air and water protection and conservation programs. Conserve and restore environmentally sensitive lands and natural areas for ecological health, biodiversity and wildlife habitat. Promote development that respects and enhances the state's natural lands and resources.*
- *ENHANCE RECREATIONAL AND HERITAGE RESOURCES – Maintain and improve recreational and heritage assets and infrastructure throughout the Commonwealth, including parks and forests, greenways and trails, heritage parks, historic sites and resources, fishing and boating areas and game lands offering recreational and cultural opportunities to Pennsylvanians and visitors.*
- *EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES – Support the construction and rehabilitation of housing of all types to meet the needs of people of all incomes and abilities. Support local projects that are based on a comprehensive vision or plan, have significant potential impact (e.g., increased tax base, private investment), and demonstrate local capacity, technical ability and leadership to implement the project. Coordinate the provision of housing with the location of jobs, public transit, services, schools and other existing infrastructure. Foster the development of housing, home partnerships, and rental housing opportunities that are compatible with county and local plans and community character.*
- *PLAN REGIONALLY; IMPLEMENT LOCALLY – Support multi-municipal, county and local government planning and implementation that has broad public input and support and is consistent with these principles. Provide education, training, technical assistance, and funding for such planning and for transportation, infrastructure, economic development, housing, mixed use and conservation projects that implement such plans.*
- *BE FAIR – Support equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of development. Provide technical and strategic support for inclusive community planning to ensure social, economic, and environmental goals are met. Ensure that in applying the principles and criteria, fair consideration is given to rural projects that may have less existing infrastructure, workforce, and jobs than urban and suburban areas, but that offer sustainable development benefits to a defined rural community.*

Water Resources Statement

In Article III (Preparation of the Comprehensive Plan) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, it states that Comprehensive Plans shall include a plan for the reliable supply of water, considering current and future water resources availability, uses and limitations, including provisions adequate to protect water supply sources. Any such plan shall be generally consistent with the State Water Plan and any applicable water resources plan adopted by a river basin commission. It shall also contain a statement recognizing that:

- (1) Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities.
- (2) Commercial agriculture production impact water supply sources.

The goals, actions and strategies that were developed during the Comprehensive Plan Update considered the MPC directives to address water resources in the Township. Public water service is being expanded in the Township – by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Water Authority – to areas that presently are not served. The Authority’s efforts will ensure that the residents and businesses in the municipality have a safe, reliable supply of water in the future. The goal of the Franklin Township Supervisors is to provide public water service to all residents in the municipality.

A review of the current Pennsylvania State Water Plan was conducted to determine if the goals of the Comprehensive Plan were consistent with those established in the Commonwealth’s Water Plan. *Note: The current plan (dated 2009) is presently being updated by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Office of Water Resources Planning.*

Regional water resources management priorities were created for the major drainage basins in Pennsylvania. The following priorities were established for the Ohio River Basin which includes Franklin Township:

- Reclaim water resources impaired by abandoned mines
 - A full assessment of all water resources impaired by drainage from abandoned mines should be conducted
 - Incentives and new technologies for the mining industry and others should be developed to reclaim or reuse these waters

- Identify water resources needed to promote and facilitate economic development and provide job opportunities, while maintaining watershed integrity and recreational benefits
 - Work with water supply data, regional economic development groups, and the Southwest Pennsylvania Commission to achieve a balanced approach to support economic growth and environmental goals
 - Encourage water-based recreation and tourism
 - Sewage problems in the region have the potential to impair economic development and proper sewage disposal is a top issue to address in the Ohio River Basin

The Ohio River Basin Alliance (ORBA) advocates for the ecological health and economic well-being of the Ohio River Basin through sound laws, policies, projects, and the funds to support them. The ORBA is currently executing a US Army Corps of Engineers Planning Assistance to States (PAS) Initiative that will result in the development of an Ohio River Basin Strategic Plan in March of 2020. (Source: ORBA Website)

Many of the goals (actions and strategies) that were identified in the Implementation Plan – Section 8 of the Comprehensive Plan Update are specific to the enhancement, protection and conservation of water resources in Franklin Township. They included extending public water service to potential development areas (residential, commercial and industrial), preserving environmental resources and waterways, implementing policies and requirements for the on-site treatment of stormwater, ensuring the continued use of individual wells and septic systems are done in a safe and efficient manner, protecting and preserving ground and surface water in the township from the negative effects of intensive and incompatible development, and educating the public regarding the Township’s reliance on groundwater resources.

The Plan was completed with the understanding that lawful activities such as the extraction of minerals may impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities. This also applies to commercial agriculture production and its impact on water supply sources. The goals in the Implementation Plan – Section 8, related to these activities include working with the natural gas industry to ensure that lands disturbed by drilling and midstream activities are restored to their previous state, protecting the economic viability of farming / agricultural operations, and ensuring that adequate protective measures are in place for properties adjacent to mineral extraction activities.

Compatibility and Consistency

It states in the PA MPC that municipal comprehensive plans shall include a statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities, or a statement indicating measures which have been taken to provide buffers or other transitional devices between disparate uses, and a statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the Greene County Comprehensive Plan and the Central Greene School District.

Franklin Township is a predominately rural in character which is similar to the other Townships in Greene County. The majority of the development in the Township is concentrated in the north central part of the municipality. Residential development is located adjacent to Waynesburg Borough in the neighborhoods of West Waynesburg, East Waynesburg and Morrisville as well as in developments along Rolling Meadows Road. Commercial and industrial development is focused along the SR 0021 (Roy Furman Highway) corridor between Rolling Meadows Road and Jefferson Road (SR 0188). The majority of the commercial and industrial development is closely situated near the Interstate 79 Interchange (Exit 14).

There are some scattered residential, commercial and industrial areas within the municipality that are along the SR 0019 and SR 0218 corridors. The remainder of the Township is made up of woodlands and open spaces with along with some agricultural and institutional uses.

Franklin Township is the medical, commercial and industrial center of Greene County with strip commercial development, the Walmart site, Washington Health System – Greene, WVU Medicine facility and Evergreene Technology Park occupying a majority of these sites. The Township is also the location of many County and State facilities including the Greene County Airport, Greene County Water Park, Greene County Fairgrounds, Greene County Jail, and SCI – Greene.

Regional Relationships

Franklin Township completely surrounds Waynesburg Borough – the county seat and shares its outer boundary with the following Townships in Greene County: Morgan, Jefferson, Whiteley, Wayne, Center, Morris, and Washington. The geographic relationships are shown on the location map in the Plan.

As required by the PA MPC, the existing and proposed development, as well as current land use patterns of Franklin Township and the adjacent municipalities were considered during the planning process. The potential development opportunities identified in the Comprehensive Plan Update appear to be consistent and compatible with Waynesburg Borough and the adjacent areas of the surrounding contiguous Townships. Any future large-scale development plans should be communicated to the Borough and adjacent Townships to discuss potential impacts and how they can be mitigated.

There are potential impacts due to future developments that may impact the region such as flooding, water quality, air quality, transportation issues, trails and open space networks, and regional facilities and services that should be addressed cooperatively. Franklin Township has made an effort to work with the surrounding municipalities, Greene County, and affected organizations / agencies on regional issues.

At present, Waynesburg Borough along with Jefferson, Morgan and Washington Townships have updated their comprehensive plans and / or land use ordinances withing the past five years.

Greene County Comprehensive Plan

Greene County is presently updating their comprehensive plan with an expected adoption in the Spring of 2020. The Plan, which will establish the county's land use policies, was built around the following six pillars:

- Mobility, Transportation and Infrastructure
- Workforce and Education
- Business and Industry
- Quality of Life
- Grow and Protect Assets
- Local Government

Through an inclusive public involvement process – which included focus groups for each of the pillars – goals and strategies were identified for the County's Plan. These goals and strategies will provide the County's local municipalities with the guidance and direction to complete their plans and ordinances in a manner that is consistent with the overall vision of the region. The priority goals of the Greene County Comprehensive Plan include:

- Expand Broadband Access to Underserved Areas
- Assist Educational Providers to Enhance Opportunities and Reduce Costs
- Capitalize on Greene County's Assets to Expand Economic Opportunities

- Continue to Improve Overall County Health, Safety and Wellness
- Increase Housing Opportunities That Meet the Demonstrated Needs

The County Plan included a map showing Future Investment Areas that identified the high priorities for traditional infrastructure investments to support economic development throughout the county. The Future Investment Areas included the following categories: Infill and Reinvestment Areas; Commercial Corridor Investment Areas; Housing Investment Areas; Brownfield Redevelopment Areas; Interchange Investment Areas; and Natural Resource Investment Areas.

Three of the Future Investment Areas were included in Franklin Township; Infill and Reinvestment; Commercial Corridor Investment; and Interchange Investment. This will provide support for future projects in the Township that are compatible with the intent of each Future Investment Area.

The existing and proposed development and plans of Franklin Township are generally consistent with the goals and strategies of the Greene County Comprehensive Plan. The vision for both the Township and the County do not conflict and identify similar ideas and thoughts for the region.

Central Greene School District

As part of the Comprehensive Plan Update, it was important to involve the Central Greene School District in the planning process. The superintendent was included as a stakeholder to identify the current and future plans of the School District. A follow up meeting was held with school district officials to discuss some of the issues that were identified and that will need to be addressed moving forward.

Overall, the future plans of the Township and the School District are generally consistent. Communication between the two entities will be key with regards to future development, changes in demographics and socioeconomics, budgets, and taxation issues.