

ACTION PROGRAM

The following table summarizes the major recommendations of this Plan. In the second column, there is a reference to the goal that relates to the action. The numbers in the second column correspond to the numbers in front of each goal on pages 5 to 7 of this Plan. The timing of each recommendation is listed in the third column. Short-range actions are intended to be carried out in less than 3 years. Mid-range recommendations are intended to be carried out in 4 to 6 years. Long-range recommendations are intended to be carried out in 7 or more years. The fourth column lists agencies that should have the primary responsibility to carry out the recommendation.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT, WATER MANAGEMENT AND FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Recommended Action	Goal that is Served by this Recommendation (See Goal Numbers on Pages 5 to 7)	Timing	Prime Responsibilities (see abbreviations at end of this table)
Encourage landowners to join Agricultural Security Areas. These designations: 1) make land eligible for easement purchase by the County and 2) protect farmers against nuisance challenges.	4	Short-range	Supervisors, PC, property-owners and Conservation District.
Encourage additional landowners to apply to the County to request purchase of the development rights on their farmland. Link individual property-owners with persons who can provide advice about ways to use tax incentives to help maintain land in an undeveloped state.	4	Continuous	Supervisors, PC and property-owners
To promote voluntary land preservation, strongly encourage the School District to approve use of State Act 4 of 2006. This law allows real estate taxes to be frozen by the School District and the Township for lands that have been permanently preserved. (Forks Township and Northampton County have already approved this program, but approval is needed by the School District before the tax freeze can become effective). If this program moves forward, Forks Township should then publicize its availability, to encourage property-owners to consider preservation options.	4	Short-term	Supervisors and School Board.

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Recommended Action	Goal that is Served by this Recommendation (See Goal Numbers on Pages 5 to 7)	Timing	Prime Responsibilities (see abbreviations at end of this table)
<p>Seek additional sources of funding to supplement the existing State-County agricultural preservation program. This should include seeking funding to: 1) preserve lands that are less likely to be preserved under the existing State-County program, or 2) provide funds to supplement monetary offers by the County. These funding options could include asking Township voters to approve an 0.25% increase in the earned income tax. If that tax would be approved, all of the proceeds would be required by State law to be used for land preservation.</p>	4	Continuous	Supervisors and PC
<p>Apply for State matching grants to preserve key areas of open space or public recreation land. Match these State funds with County open space acquisition funds or other funds.</p>	2	Continuous	Supervisors, PC and Twp. Staff
<p>Refine the FP Farmland Protection zoning district provisions to place a stronger emphasis on maintaining productive agricultural land. Consider an optional transfer of development rights, which would involve developers paying to permanently preserve large areas of land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote use of the cluster option in the FP district. Where proposed open space would not be suitable for agriculture, then use it as a buffer between new homes and farms. - Make sure that any preserved open space is designed to serve a valuable public purpose. The open space must not be fragmented or leftover land that provides little benefit to the public or the residents of the development. 	1, 2, 3, 4	Continuous	Supervisors, PC and property-owners.
<p>In agricultural areas, continue to permit a range of accessory activities that allow opportunities for supplemental income for farmers on larger tracts of land. These are known as “Farm-Based Businesses.”</p>	4	Continuous	Supervisors, PC and property-owners
<p>Maintain reasonable controls on very intense Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, particularly to require large setbacks from waterways and concentrations of existing homes. Recognize that State law limits the ability of a township to over-regulate agricultural activities.</p>	3	Continuous	Supervisors and PC

Recommended Action	Goal that is Served by this Recommendation (See Goal Numbers on Pages 5 to 7)	Timing	Prime Responsibilities (see abbreviations at end of this table)
<p>Use development regulations to protect important natural features, particularly to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limit the intensity of development of steeply sloped lands. - Require that building and paving setbacks be maintained along creeks and the river to protect water quality and fishing habitats. - Encourage landowners to maintain thick vegetation and trees along creeks and the river. - Carry out the Best Management Practices in stormwater management, including methods to protect water quality and encourage recharge into the groundwater. - Maintain a minimum setback from wetlands and require wetland studies whenever a development site includes areas that are suspected of including wetlands. - Continue to minimize sinkhole risks. 	1	Continuous	Supervisors and PC
<p>Carefully enforce State regulations on erosion control through on-site inspections, to protect water quality and fish habitats</p>	2, 3	Short-range	Supervisors and PC
<p>Minimize unnecessary removal of trees during construction. Require temporary fencing around trees during construction to avoid damage to tree trunks and compaction of root systems.</p>	1, 2, 3	Short-range	Supervisors and PC
<p>Continue to prohibit most new buildings within the 100 year floodplain along the river and creeks. Require floodplain studies by developers where there is any question concerning whether an unmapped floodplain may exist.</p>	1, 2, 3	Continuous	Supervisors, PC and property-owners
<p>Seek Federal Floodplain Mitigation funds to offer to buy and remove the most flood-prone buildings and turn the land into permanent open space. In some cases, this may open up opportunities to reduce sharp curves in roads and reduce the costs of public sewage extensions. This type of action may also help implement a set of greenways throughout the County, and provide access points to the Delaware River and the Bushkill Creek.</p>	2, 3	Mid-range	Supervisors, PC, property-owners, business owners and LVPC
<p>Continue to use mandatory dedication provisions in the subdivision and land development ordinance to require dedication of open space or payment of recreation fees as part of new residential developments.</p>	1, 2, 19	Short-range	Supervisors, PC and Recreation Commission

Recommended Action	Goal that is Served by this Recommendation (See Goal Numbers on Pages 5 to 7)	Timing	Prime Responsibilities (see abbreviations at end of this table)
Establish a volunteer Environmental Advisory Council (EAC). The EAC should recommend ways to preserve the environment, such as ways to increase recycling.	1, 2, 3	Short-range	Supervisors

LAND USE

Recommended Action	Goal that is Served by this Recommendation (See Goal Numbers on Pages 5 to 7)	Timing	Prime Responsibilities (see abbreviations at end of this table)
Emphasize business development in the Employment Center zoning district. Seek major road improvements to make these business areas more accessible to major employers, including a new interchange to Route 33.	11, 16	Short-term	Supervisors, PennDOT.
Seek the permanent preservation of most of the environmentally sensitive lands along the Bushkill Creek and Delaware River. This effort should include the eventual conversion of existing commercial parking along the Bushkill Creek into public recreation parking and landscaped access points.	1, 2, 3	Continuous	Supervisors and PC
Continue to use zoning regulations to provide disincentives and incentives that direct most housing away from areas planned for agricultural preservation and important natural areas.	4, 6, 10	Continuous	Supervisors and PC.
Avoid the creation of new strip commercial areas along major roads. Concentrate most commercial uses within existing commercial areas or within business parks with interior access.	12	Continuous	Supervisors and PC

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Periodically review the zoning ordinance to make sure that all desirable types of businesses are allowed in appropriate business zoning districts. Require the smallest reasonable lot sizes for businesses and the smallest reasonable setbacks between adjacent businesses. These steps are important to promote economic development, increase tax revenues to the school district and widen choices for close-to-home employment.	16	Short-range	Supervisors and PC.
Continue to carefully control the types and locations of intense business uses near neighborhoods. This should particularly include limits upon gas stations, stores that are open 24 hours, adult uses and similar uses that may cause nuisances for neighboring homes.	5, 9	Short-range	Supervisors and PC
Carefully control heavier industrial uses through zoning ordinance requirements. Require "special exception" approval by the zoning hearing board for industrial uses that may generate significant hazards or nuisances.	5	Continuous	Supervisors, PC and ZHB
Work with adjacent municipalities to ensure that compatible land uses and road patterns are in place across municipal borders. Provide adjacent municipalities with an opportunity to comment upon proposed zoning amendments and major development plans that may have impacts across municipal borders.	5, 26	Short-range	Supervisors, PCs and Adj. Mun.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Recommended Action	Goal that is Served by this Recommendation (See Goal Numbers on Pages 5 to 7)	Timing	Prime Responsibilities (see abbreviations)
<p>Work with developers, realtors and economic development groups to publicize opportunities for new business development in designated areas of the Township, particularly to attract employers that will provide wages and benefits that can support a family. Appoint a Township representative to serve as a liaison to businesses considering a location in Forks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take advantage of the Wall Street West initiative to encourage back office space and backup facilities for businesses located in the New York metropolitan area. 	16	Continuous	LVEDC, developers, property-owners, Supervisors and Chamber of Commerce
<p>Encourage residents and businesses to “buy local.” This involves buying products and services from local companies to keep those dollars within the local economy. Make local businesses aware of opportunities to bid on Township purchases.</p>	16	Continuous	Merchants, Chamber of Commerce and Twp. Staff.
<p>Prepare an information package and web pages that stress the advantages of locating a business within Forks.</p>	16	Continuous	Twp. Staff and LVEDC.
<p>Make sure that the development approval process for allowed businesses in business areas is as streamlined as is reasonable, while avoiding unnecessary delays.</p>	16	Continuous	Supervisors, PC and Twp. Staff.
<p>Review development regulations to: 1) ensure they do not overburden businesses with any unnecessary costs, and 2) minimize the need for special approvals that may create excessive opportunities for legal challenges.</p>	16	Continuous	PC and Property-owners

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Recommended Action	Goal that is Served by this Recommendation (See Goal Numbers on Pages 5 to 7)	Timing	Prime Responsibilities (see abbreviations)
Identify the most important historic buildings that are worthy of preservation. Enact zoning provisions to require special zoning approval by the Supervisors or zoning hearing board before anydemolition is allowed. This alternative would not regulate architecture or routine changes to buildings.	15	Continuous	Supervisors, PC and Historical society
Provide information to owners to older buildings to promote sensitive rehabilitation and to increase their awareness of the significance of their buildings. Promote greater interest in the region's history and historic buildings through the Historical Society and newsletters.	15	Continuous	Twp. Staff and Historical society
Add zoning ordinance incentives to promote the preservation of historic buildings. These incentives could include allowing certain additional uses within restored historic buildings that otherwise would not be allowed in the zoning district. For example, a restored historic building in a residential district might be allowed to be used as an office or bed and breakfast inn.	15	Short-range	Supervisors and PC

TRANSPORTATION

Recommended Action	Goal that is Served by this Recommendation (See Goal Numbers on Pages 5 to 7)	Timing	Prime Responsibilities (see abbreviations)
Work with PennDOT to resolve traffic congestion bottlenecks and traffic safety problems, as described in the main body of this Plan.. Conduct traffic studies to result in the design of proposed improvements and then seek funding through the State 12 Year Plan to construct those projects.	22	Continuous	PennDOT, LVPC, PC and Supervisors.
Design residential streets to discourage use by through-traffic. Limit truck traffic on residential streets where feasible. Improve major roads to relieve congestion so that traffic will not seek alternate routes on residential streets.	20, 21	Continuous	PennDOT, Supervisors, PC and Adj. Mun.
Adopt an "Official Map" to design locations where additional land will be needed to improve existing roads or to build new road connections. This type of Official Map allows a municipality to reserve land for improvements for a limited period of time.	20, 22, 23	On-going	Supervisors and PC
Require developers to improve immediately adjacent segments of roads, including widening of roads, addition of turn lanes and providing shoulders. Emphasize shoulders along heavily traveled roads that are separated by a white line from the travel lanes. These shoulders provide a safety factor (particularly in snowy and icy conditions), provide room for mail delivery vehicles, allow room for bicyclists and pedestrians and provide space for wide or slow moving farm equipment.	22	Continuous	PennDOT, Supervisors and PC
Improve pedestrian and bicycle access. Encourage greater use of public transit. Seek additional park and ride lots to promote carpooling.	23	Continuous	PennDOT, LVPC, Supervisors and Adj. Mun.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Recommended Action	Goal that is Served by this Recommendation (See Goal Numbers on Pages 5 to 7)	Timing	Prime Responsibilities (see abbreviations)
<p>Improve existing parks and playgrounds, particularly to develop the new Township Park on Newlins Road East. Seek to make the best use of school district facilities. Investigate opportunities for a township park next to a school, to allow use by the public and school students during various times of the week. Concentrate most active recreation at a few sites to reduce maintenance burdens and to allow the most efficient use.</p>	19	Continuous	Supervisors and Recreation Commission
<p>Provide trail links that will connect to regional trails along the Bushkill Creek and other major recreation pathways. (The Bushkill Creek trail is planned to connect to the Appalachian Trail and the Lehigh River trails in Easton.)</p>	19, 23	Continuous	Supervisors, PC and Recreation Commission
<p>Emphasize high-quality police, emergency medical and fire protection services. Promote joint training and cooperation between emergency service providers, including those in adjacent municipalities.</p>	17	Continuous	Emergency service providers, Supervisors and Adj. Mun.
<p>Continually explore ways to minimize local government expenses, particularly through sharing of services or staff among municipalities. Aggressively seek Federal and State grants to address local needs.</p>	17	Continuous	Supervisors and Twp. Staff
<p>Implement the Trails Plan, particularly to require developers to construct segments when they develop adjacent land.</p>	19, 23	Continuous	Supervisors, PC, Twp. Staff and Recreation Commission
<p>Regularly communicate with the School District staff to inform them about new residential developments and their timing in phases.</p>	17, 29	Continuous	Twp. Staff

Recommended Action	Goal that is Served by this Recommendation (See Goal Numbers on Pages 5 to 7)	Timing	Prime Responsibilities (see abbreviations)
Seek to extend public sewage service along the southern and central portions of the Delaware Drive/Route 611 corridor. This service is necessary to replace failing and outdated septic systems. Work with Lower Mt. Bethel Twp. to develop a long-term solution to sewage needs along the northern segment of Delaware Dr.	18	Continuous	Supervisors, Twp. Staff and L. Mt. Bethel Twp.
Avoid extending public sewage service into the FP zoning district. The FP district includes most of the remaining prime farmland in the Township.	4, 18	Continuous	Supervisors and PC.
Protect public water supplies along the Delaware River from contamination. Seek that alternative supplies are available in case the Delaware River intake is temporarily not suitable.	2, 3, 18	Continuous	Easton Suburban Water, Supervisors and PC.

Abbreviations of Responsible Agencies/Groups:

- Supervisors = Forks Township Boards of Supervisors
- PC = Forks Planning Commissions
- ZHB = Zoning Hearing Board
- Adj. Mun. = Adjacent Municipalities
- LVPC = Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and Staff
- LVEDC = Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation Staff
- PennDOT = Pennsylvania Department of Transportation