

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives are intended to be used as guides for the future development of Forks Township.

Goals are general statements that reflect the overall vision of the Township residents, property owners and board members as to what direction Forks Township should take in the future.

Objectives are more specific policies which will aid the Township in fulfilling the major goals as they were compiled through the cooperation of residents, business owners, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

The goals from the Township's 2009 Comprehensive Plan were used as a starting point and updated to reflect current planning philosophy and issues in the Township.

Land Use

Goal 1: Plan for and manage the use of land in a manner that provides for a balanced range of uses, meets the needs of current and future residents, and establishes a balance among resource protection, preservation of community character, and growth.

Objectives

- Manage growth to create livable and sustainable development, and maintain and enhance the quality of life for all Township residents.
- Provide for growth in appropriate areas, through new development and redevelopment, as supported by the necessary infrastructure.
- Accommodate a range of agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional land uses and, through appropriate land use regulations, ensure their compatibility with the existing Township character.
- Protect agriculture, natural resources, and open space through the use of regulatory provisions.
- Promote economically viable and environmentally sustainable agriculture as an important land use and industry within the community.
- Maintain the existing pattern of commercial and industrial development, which complements the Township's character and is based on the availability of supporting infrastructure.
- Ensure regulatory controls support the land use policies of this Plan.
- Ensure that regulatory design standards for commercial, industrial, and institutional development are current with accepted best practices.
- Promote sustainable land use and building practices.

Housing

Goal 1: Provide diverse housing options to meet the needs of all households now and into the future.

Objectives

- Support the viability of existing housing stock and neighborhoods.

- Ensure that regulatory controls permit a range of housing types and densities to meet the diverse needs of current and future residents in a manner compatible with the overall character of the community.
- Develop design guidelines and regulations to allow developers the opportunity to explore more innovative and greener designs.

Economic Development

Goal 1: Seek a balanced, diversified economy in order to maintain and enhance the quality of life of local residents.

Objectives

- Expand the Township's tax base through appropriate commercial and industrial development and redevelopment, thus contributing to the Township's economic and budgetary sustainability.
- Encourage commercial and industrial development and redevelopment along the existing commercial and industrial corridors.
- Promote adaptive reuse and redevelopment initiatives for abandoned/vacant industrial and commercial sites.
- Promote clean and green industry development in the designated commercial and industrial corridors.
- Develop design guidelines and regulations to allow developers the opportunity to explore more innovative and greener designs.

Community Facilities

Goal 1: Provide for appropriate and adequate community services and facilities within the practical fiscal limits of the Township.

Objectives

- Recognize future facilities and services needs of Township residents as a function of population, age, and household trends.
- Continue to provide open and clear communication between Township government and the community to ensure that residents are informed and have the opportunity to participate in important local issues.
- Continue to provide residents with access to information on Pennsylvania municipal land use laws to promote better understanding of the limiting conditions under which a township operates.
- Continually assess Township ordinance and other standards in light of increasing technology innovations, needs, and accessibility as well as growing and changing alternative energy sources.
- Continue to support fire and ambulance services that provide emergency service coverage for Township residents and businesses.
- Maintain communication with the Easton Area School District concerning proposed developments to assist them in anticipating trends in future enrollments.

- Encourage the School District to maintain better communication with the Township and residents of the school district, particularly on issues relating to taxes.

Goal 2: Continue to maintain, enhance, and expand natural, historical, and cultural open space areas, trails, and parks and recreation opportunities for Township residents.

Objectives

- Provide sufficient publicly-owned and managed parks, recreation facilities, trails, and open space to provide a variety of active or passive recreation opportunities.
- Provide for continued maintenance and improvements to existing parks, recreation facilities, trails, and open space to ensure adequate recreational areas for residents.
- Require developers to help meet the increased demand for public recreation created by new development.
- Encourage recreation programming that serves all segments of the population.
- Pursue public and private grants and funding sources for recreation while continuing to dedicate municipal funding for recreation capital improvements, maintenance, programming, and other necessary costs.
- Encourage the preservation of critical natural, historic, and scenic resources in permanently preserved open space.
- Encourage the preservation of, and funding for, protected open space in appropriate areas by landowners, public agencies, and non-profit organizations.
- Balance the protection of resources on open space with the desire for public access and recreation.
- Ensure that open space protection efforts include planning and funding for the long-term maintenance of the property.
- Pursue joint public-private recreation initiatives, and support private and institutional entities that provide community recreation opportunities such as organized team sports, community events, active recreation areas, and school related play and athletics.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Goal 1: Provide a safe transportation system, which optimizes mobility and access, sustains quality of life, strengthens the economy, and protects the environment.

Objectives

- Enhance the safety of the transportation system for all users—motorized and non-motorized.
- Encourage the use of alternative non-motorized modes of transportation such as: walking, hiking and biking.
- Promote development design that encourages bicycling and walking, including sidewalks or other pedestrian facilities.
- Efficiently maintain the existing roadway network and supporting infrastructure.
- Encourage the expansion and utilization of public transportation.
- Recognize and promote the importance of the Braden Airpark in relation to economic development.

Goal 2: Improve the Township's infrastructure to support future demands.

Objectives

- Support continued maintenance and improvement of all stormwater and sewer facilities.
- Support continued maintenance and improvement of the Township's road network.
- Encourage utility companies to utilize existing rights-of-way and utility easements for the expansion and/or upgrade of service lines.
- Coordinate water and sewage facilities planning with land use planning and natural resource protection objectives, and assess the impacts of proposed sewer, water, and stormwater facilities on groundwater quality, quantity, and recharge.

Natural Resources

Goal 1: Protect the natural environment and conserve the natural resources of the Township while accommodating planned growth.

Objectives

- Protect the Township's natural resources by limiting adverse impacts into the area.
- Encourage and advocate the use and protection of native species of plants.
- Educate Township residents on the impacts associated with using non-native/invasive plant species and the effects they have on the environment.
- Ensure regulatory controls preserve and protect natural resources throughout the development process.
- Promote innovative stormwater management and wastewater disposal that emphasize the recharge of groundwater and water balance.