

Public Meetings

All Comprehensive Plan meetings were open to the public as they were regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings. However, the first targeted public meeting was the Public Visioning session. The intent of the meeting was to solicit input from residents and property owners of the Township. The meeting was held on June 22, 2021 at the Forks Township municipal building. Approximately 44 people (in addition to Township Supervisors, Planning Commission members, and Township Staff), representing a diverse cross-section of the community, attended the two hour meeting. Draft maps showing the existing land use and aerial view of the Township were presented to the group.

For this visioning session the project consulting team utilized the Nominative Group Technique. The Nominative Group Technique is a process in which the group develops answers to a series of basic questions and then vote on the top priorities within each group to determine key needs and desires regarding the Township. The key component to this technique is that each person present has a chance to offer input and each opinion is recorded. Many of the answer lists generated in response to the questions will be lengthy. Therefore, each member of the group is given a set number of votes per question. A participant can put all their votes in any combination on any of the responses (i.e., all votes on one response, or one vote each on a number of responses.) What emerges are clumps of interest and a general idea of consensus, even when outwardly, people appear to be in great disagreement. A simple vote count helps to rank the list of answers for each question. The questions asked were as follows:

- Currently, what do you like most about Forks Township?
- Currently, what do you like least about Forks Township?
- What would you want to preserve/maintain about/in Forks Township for the future?
- What would you want to change about/in Forks Township for the future?

Using this technique and the four focus questions above, the meeting attendees were encouraged to voice their opinions which were written on a large sheet of paper. Care was taken to ensure that the written response reflected the individual's exact concern. Once every member of the group had their opportunity to answer and reflect on the other responses, everyone was asked to vote on the responses which were most important to them. Once voting was completed and tabulated, the session facilitator presented the top three responses to each question. All of the responses, as they were written during this session, can be found in Appendix XX.

The overall reaction and responses to the questions indicated that the residents liked the current quality of life within Forks. People liked the mix of suburban and rural areas within the Township, they appreciated the availability of green/open space and parks, and generally are fond of the sense of community they feel living in Forks Township. In correlation with this appreciation for the current quality of life many residents expressed a concern with uncontrolled development, specifically industrial development and the impact of this on the community, i.e. loss of farmland,

increased (truck) traffic, and stormwater issues. There was a general feeling of “rapid growth” occurring in the Township negatively affecting the things residents love about living in the Township. Residents want to preserve open space and farmland, and limit high density residential and industrial development.