

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This Franklin Township Comprehensive Plan provides the basis for informed decision-making and a different path forward. The Township could continue to receive subdivision and land development applications with no particular order or geographic emphasis. In the alternative, the Township could attempt to direct growth and development as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. Given the public outreach process that has guided this Plan, the likely outcome is to implement a “growing smarter” initiative that is outlined herein.

The Goals & Objectives in Chapter 2 clearly indicate a vision for a development pattern that is focused, not random. The overall character that has attracted people to Franklin Township can be retained if places like Kemblesville are enhanced, and if places adjoining Fairhill are conserved. In fact, there are still numerous properties in the outlying areas that are appropriate for continued agricultural use and warrant consideration for effective agricultural zoning. Therefore, a meaningful balance should be struck to enable higher intensity development to locate in the Kemblesville area in an attractive and functional way, while the outlying areas are maintained as a low intensity rural landscape.

The Natural Resources Protection Plan and the Cultural Resources Protection Plan that are presented in Chapters 3 and 4 present a thorough display of the environmental assets in Franklin Township that are worthy of protection. The resources can be protected if growth is properly managed and directed to the most appropriate places.

The Land Use Plan presented in Chapter 5 identifies a concept for future development over the next 10 years and beyond. The logical progression of development from the “Kemblesville Village Area”, to a “Moderate Intensity Use Area”, to a “Low Intensity Use Area”, to a “Rural Resource Area” provides an opportunity to transition the intensity of development based on the character zones of Franklin Township, from the village, to the more suburban, to the more rural. The overall pattern proposed for future land use is consistent with the Chester County “Landscapes” Plan in that their 2020 Plan depicts Kemblesville as a “Rural Center” and the fringe areas of the Township are designed as “Rural” and “Natural” Landscapes that mesh with those shown in this Plan. In addition, the “Natural Resource Protection” (overlay) area provides the green underpinnings for a conditional use/land development process based on “mother nature”.

The Housing, Transportation, Community Facilities, Recreation Open Space & Recreation, and Utilities and Water Supply Plans all flow from the Land Use Plan. The Land Use Plan provides the policy framework for the transitional character of future development, that is recommended to be in sync with the infrastructure constraints and opportunities of the Township. Housing, roads, parks, and pipes need to be organized to gracefully function in support of the recommended future land use pattern.

As development proceeds from 2006 to 2016 (when this Plan should be updated), it can meet projected growth needs without resulting in a hodge-podge pattern. While at the crossroads, the

Franklin Township Comprehensive Plan

Township should take a new path forward. The Future Land Use Plan should be made available to every property owner, household and applicant. It should be the direction that the Township travels, while maintaining the balance of where to build, and where to conserve and protect. Franklin Township is fully aware of land use and zoning requirements in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), and applicable case law, and has produced a Comprehensive Plan that is fair, balanced and diversified. Franklin Township aspires to meet several critical aspects of the MPC as outlined below.

Unlike Kennett Square, Avondale, West Grove and Oxford, the “Borough corridor” along Baltimore Pike, Franklin Township is located “off-the-beaten-path”, away from the primary path of growth corridor along Route 1/Baltimore Pike that is approximately 5 miles to the north. Jennersville is emerging as a path of growth community due to its proximity to the Route 796 Exit of Route 1 (the limited access road two Townships north of Franklin). Jennersville is a perfect place to form a new growth center due to its superior infrastructure and accessibility. In contrast, a place like Kemblesville is more like a hamlet even though it is called a village. Kemblesville has a very limited infrastructure.

Although Route 896 passes through Franklin, this road is merely a two-lane directional route that traverses a primarily agricultural landscape from the Pennsylvania-Delaware-Maryland state lines to Strasburg Borough in Lancaster County. Further, although Kemblesville is located 8 miles north of the Route 95 corridor, its location along Route 896 provides access for the Village of Kemblesville. Outside of Kemblesville, Route 896 quickly reverts to a back country road.

During several of the Comprehensive Plan Task Force meetings, the project team “re-visited” the MPC to refocus on key words and elements to which this Plan is intended to respond. These key words and elements that serve as the underpinning of this Plan include:

- + A plan for the protection of natural and historic resources including wetlands, aquifer recharge zones, woodlands, steep slopes, prime agricultural land, flood plains, unique natural areas and historic sites. (301.(a)(6))
- + Zoning ordinances should reflect the policy goals of the statement of community development objectives and give consideration to the character of the municipality, and the suitabilities and special nature of particular parts of the municipality. (603.(a))
- + Zoning ordinances may permit, prohibit, regulate, restrict and determine protection and preservation of natural and historic resources and prime agricultural land and activities. (603.(b))
- + Zoning ordinances may contain provisions to promote and preserve prime agricultural land, environmentally sensitive areas and areas of historic significance. (603.(c))
- + Zoning ordinances shall protect prime agricultural land and may promote the establishment of agricultural security areas. (603.(g)(1))

Franklin Township Comprehensive Plan

- + Zoning ordinances shall provide for protection of natural and historic features and resources. (603.(g)(2))
- + Zoning ordinances shall encourage the continuity, development and viability of agricultural operations. (603.(h))
- + The provisions of zoning ordinances shall be designed to promote, protect and facilitate preservation of the natural, scenic and historic values in the environment and preservation of forests, wetlands, aquifers and floodplains. (604.(1))
- + Zoning ordinances shall be designed to preserve prime agriculture and farmland considering topography, soil type and classification, and present use. (604.(3))
- + Additional classifications may be made within any district for the regulation, restriction or prohibition of uses and structures at, along or near natural or artificial bodies of water, places of relatively steep slope or grade, places having unique historical, architectural or patriotic interest or value or flood plain areas, agricultural areas, and other places having a special character or use affecting and affected by their surroundings. ((605.(2)(ii), (iii), (vi) and (vii))

While many of the citations above pertain to zoning, this Comprehensive Plan is also intended to provide the underpinnings for the Zoning Ordinance Amendments that will flow from it.

If a reader were limited in time and wishes to skim through this Comprehensive Plan, the following parts should definitely not be missed:

- Chapter 2, Goals & Objectives, that provides the “mission statements”;
- all 12 maps and plans; and
- Chapter 13, Implementation Strategies, that includes an Implementation Matrix.

This 2006 Comprehensive Plan will be updated in 2016. Please help us to implement the recommendations of this plan over the next 10 years.