



Chapter 2

Community Goals and Objectives

Background

Springfield Township is a near fully developed suburban community. Unlike exurban or less developed communities, a plan for a community like Springfield is less concerned with shaping future growth and development through comprehensive land use decisions. The goal is to maintain and improve upon existing conditions although some decisions or proposed actions may be focused on future land use. This update is intended to evaluate the existing conditions in the township, identify issues and planning related needs and establish appropriate planning goals and objectives for future decision-making. This is accomplished through analysis of demographics, housing, and transportation trends, and evaluation of community facilities and existing potential land uses.

Springfield's Vision for 2025

The Comprehensive Plan update includes a statement of community goals to be achieved through specific objectives forming the basis for land use policies and practices, evaluation of zoning, subdivision and land development ordinances, and review of new land development proposals and redevelopment of existing sites.

Goal 1: Land Use

Promote balanced land use that considers environmental, open space and recreation needs with the need for sustainable growth that complements established patterns of development in the township. Foster a well-integrated community development pattern with a mix of residential, institutional and commercial uses that supports the changing needs of the community. Continue to provide for residential, institutional, and commercial uses in ways that are complementary to maintaining the historic character of the township.

Objectives

- 1.1 Update the zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances to reflect the current and future needs of the township.
- 1.2 Provide for compatible infill development that respects the scale of existing neighborhoods and architectural history.



- 1.3 Preserve conservation areas and strengthen the protection of natural resources.
- 1.4 Coordinate long-range planning between large institutional uses and other large land owners in the township to encourage cooperation and to minimize potential conflicts with future land use.
- 1.5 Investigate opportunities for shared planning and improvement projects with adjacent municipalities.
- 1.6 Support a sustainable community that balances the rights of property owners to reasonable use of land within the community's expressed goals.
- 1.7 Continue to provide for a variety of dwelling types that meet the needs of current and future residents of the township.

Goal 2: Community Facilities and Municipal Services

Provide for the needs of the municipal government to supply the level of service required by the residents and businesses of the township. Ensure that all areas of Springfield Township are adequately served by public safety agencies.

Objectives

- 2.1 Provide for streets, utilities, stormwater management systems, solid waste management and other infrastructure at sufficient levels to meet the changing needs of township residents.
- 2.2 Establish/maintain annual Capital Improvement Plan to provide for maintenance and improvements of all community facilities.
- 2.3 Implement the recommendations of the 2008 Springfield Township Park and Recreation Connections Plan (SPARC).
- 2.4 Provide administration, code enforcement, emergency, police and other services at sufficient levels to meet the needs of the community.
- 2.5 Conduct periodic assessments of the municipal complex so that it continues to meet the needs and expectations of the residents and businesses.
- 2.6 Plant and maintain trees along public right-of-ways and in township parks.
- 2.7 Encourage the creation of new passive and active recreation facilities that support the health and welfare of the residents of all ages and abilities.
- 2.8 Encourage development of appropriate types of recreation facilities on lands that may be developed and that are not targeted for permanent protection.
- 2.9 Maintain and enhance existing parks and recreation facilities and programs.
- 2.10 Support the township's recreation programs and services.



Goal 3: Natural Resource Protection

Protect and preserve sensitive environmental features such as waterways, wetlands, watersheds, streams, woodlands, open spaces, slopes, soils, and natural habitats.

Objectives

- 3.1 Create a natural resource inventory and assessment. Identify priorities and actions.
- 3.2 Ensure that the updated subdivision and land development ordinance standards exceed the current NPDES permit requirements.
- 3.3 Plan for and implement a coordinated open space network including stream corridors, parks, and green infrastructure.
- 3.4 Develop a robust tree planting program.
- 3.5 Develop strategies to preserve and protect open space such as the Lower Schuylkill River Conservation Landscape (SRCL) in the lower panhandle.
- 3.6 Educate and promote the benefits of a Riparian Corridor Ordinance.
- 3.7 Participate in regional and watershed-based technical and steering committees.
- 3.8 Encourage voluntary water conservation and anti-pollution measures throughout the township.

Goal 4: Historic Resource Protection

Identify, preserve, protect, enhance, and encourage continued utilization and rehabilitation of such areas, districts, places, buildings, structures, works of art, and other objects having a special historical, community, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value to the township and its citizens.

Objectives

- 4.1 Establish an updated inventory of historic resources.
- 4.2 Create a historic resource committee to oversee inventory and make policy recommendations to the township Board of Commissioners.
- 4.3 Safeguard the township's historic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in certain districts, places, buildings, structures, works of art, and other objects.
- 4.4 Preserve the character and vitality of neighborhoods and promote economic development through rehabilitation of existing structures.
- 4.5 Protect significant historic structures from decline and demolition through encouragement of adaptive reuse.
- 4.6 Encourage the continuation of surveys and studies of the township's historical



and architectural resources and the maintenance and updating of areas, districts, places, buildings, structures, works of art, and other objects which may be worthy of landmark designation.

- 4.7 Educate and promote the use of preservation easements.

Goal 5: Housing

Encourage a range of housing types that will meet the needs of the township's residents of various ages, incomes, lifestyles and special needs. Promote residential development that is consistent with established development patterns. Encourage active lifestyles through environmentally sustainable residential neighborhood and commercial district design.

Objectives

- 5.1 Preserve the character and integrity of neighborhoods that give the township its distinctive character.
- 5.2 Permit a variety of housing options to allow existing residents to remain in the community as they age and encourage development of housing that targets first-time homebuyers.
- 5.3 Encourage environmentally responsible upgrades to properties that promote stormwater best management practices, water conservation devices, low-flow and tank-less water heaters, and use of renewable energy sources such as geothermal heating and cooling and solar powered electric service and hot water heating.
- 5.4 Encourage infill development and modifications to existing properties in commercial districts to accommodate affordable housing in the community.
- 5.5 Encourage adaptive reuse of selected vacant commercial properties or buildings for residential uses.
- 5.6 Enhance and beautify neighborhoods with improved streetscapes including sidewalks, lighting, and landscaping.
- 5.7 Create a systematic enforcement of property maintenance to help preserve neighborhood conformity and elevate property values.

Goal 6: Transportation

The township benefits from its location near major transportation routes and transit facilities, allowing easy access to surrounding areas and employment centers. The township is pedestrian-oriented, with an extensive sidewalk network for access needs within the community. The goal is to maintain these advantages and to expand and improve upon them wherever possible.



Objectives

- 6.1 Increase resident access to all modes of transportation including walking, bicycling, and public transit by creating safe pedestrian and bicycle connections between existing/proposed parks, trail systems, institutional open space, commercial areas, neighborhoods and public transit stops.
- 6.2 In commercial districts, provide and enhance parking opportunities, locate parking to the side and rear of buildings, encourage shared parking, and update zoning code to facilitate this goal. Maintain on-street parking in and around the commercial districts. Improve access to parking through coordinated way finding signage.
- 6.3 Maintain and improve the existing pedestrian network and create new sidewalks or trail networks to enhance community walkability. Fill in gaps in the existing sidewalk network. Explore ways to convert informal pedestrian paths to a public pedestrian network.
- 6.4 Encourage new development to be designed with pedestrians in mind, providing ADA accessibility, safe and inviting pedestrian connections internally to the development and to adjacent neighborhoods, schools, public transit and commercial areas. Add crosswalks to intersections near schools, parks, houses of worship, public buildings, and public transit stops. Use textured crosswalks and other traffic-calming measures on streets with high traffic volumes.
- 6.5 Install bicycle racks and other bike facilities at community destinations including train station, shopping centers, and municipal park and recreation facilities. Encourage bicycle parking facilities in all public and private parking lots and bicycle storage facilities in multi-family developments.
- 6.6 Continue to coordinate with PennDOT, DVRPC, Montgomery County and surrounding communities to improve the regional transportation network. Participate on PennDOT, DVRPC and County technical and steering committees during local project planning and development process.
- 6.7 Work with SEPTA, Upper Dublin Township, Whitmarsh Township, Philadelphia, and others to beautify transit stops and train station areas, improve commuter rail service, enhance parking opportunities, and promote transit oriented development. Enhance the appearance and functionality of the train stations with landscaping, pedestrian lighting, coordinated signage, and improved parking and circulation.
- 6.8 Maintain and enhance public and private parking lots with appropriate landscaping, lighting and signage.
- 6.9 Continue the program of road maintenance and reconstruction.



- 6.10 Improve lighting along streets where needed using energy efficient technologies.
- 6.11 Support an interconnected and “complete streets” network.

Goal 7: Commercial District Revitalization and Economic Development

Provide for a strong, diverse commercial base within the established development pattern of the commercial districts in the township. Conserve, maintain and strengthen the streetscape character of the Bethlehem Pike corridor in Flourtown-Erdenheim, the Willow Grove Avenue business corridor in Wyndmoor and the Oreland Commercial Village to promote and enhance a vibrant small town/village identity.

- 7.1 Create a position for a main street manager/business development coordinator to expand upon the current township staff’s efforts to work with the business community, governmental agencies, and the public to retain existing businesses and attract new businesses and services to add vitality to the existing commercial districts. In this role the coordinator will also promote Springfield Township as a great place to work, live and play and come up with strategies to implement the proposed Village Center Overlay District.
- 7.2 Create an attractive hub including public gathering spaces within each commercial district that is pedestrian and bicycle friendly.
- 7.3 Improve signage to make the districts more attractive and easier to navigate.
- 7.4 Add street trees and landscaping throughout the business districts.
- 7.5 Encourage and support storefront facades upgrades and seek funding opportunities to assist small businesses with façade and landscaping improvements.
- 7.6 Encourage the development of new restaurants along Bethlehem Pike to create vitality, enhance Springfield’s image as a destination, and provide expanded services to the residents and visitors alike.
- 7.7 Encourage development of small shops and cafes close to the core area around the train station.
- 7.8 Promote the use of appropriate period lighting in locations that supports the historical character of the township.
- 7.9 Foster positive communications between local government and the business community.
- 7.10 Promote new business development and expansion in areas with existing transportation infrastructure. Promote and advance the success of the Flourtown Business Association.



Goal 8: Energy and Resource Conservation

Adopt policies and practices that make Springfield more environmentally sustainable. Encourage conservation of energy and natural resources, and allow the use of renewable energy sources by the municipality, residences, and the business community.

Objectives

- 8.1 Encourage land development design and practices that utilize energy conservation techniques.
- 8.2 Complete the pedestrian network throughout the township that links neighborhoods with commercial districts, schools, parks, and trails.
- 8.3 Encourage public transit use and create pedestrian and bicycle linkages to regional transportation nodes.
- 8.4 Continue to encourage, utilize and support the educational efforts of the Environmental Advisory Committee.
- 8.5 Increase the tree canopy of the township to reduce the effects of emissions and to promote cooling. Encourage land owners to replace mature trees lost to age, disease and damage with shade/canopy trees, rather than smaller ornamental species.
- 8.6 Target higher standards for energy efficiency (heating, cooling and lighting) in all township facilities and operations (fuel efficiency) to reduce energy consumption and determine if there are cost effective ways to lower that consumption.
- 8.7 Enhance township website to reduce resident's vehicle trips to township facilities for information, applications, forms, etc.
- 8.8 Promote energy conservation methods for heating, cooling and lighting, and encourage the utilization of energy audits for township residents and businesses.
- 8.9 Advocate for greater recycling and waste reducing practices in construction and demolition.
- 8.10 Continue to promote the responsible composting of all yard, food and other biodegradable waste.
- 8.11 Advocate for resident participation in the Montgomery County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program.

Goal 9: Sustainability

Encourage policies and practices that use, develop, and protect all of the township resources in ways that allow the residents of Springfield Township to meet their current needs and maintain a fulfilling quality of life without compromising or foregoing the ability of and opportunity for future residents to do the same.



Objectives

- 9.1 Reduce stormwater runoff and flooding through regulation, property-owner incentives, public demonstration projects, education and outreach.
- 9.2 Preserve the viability and benefits of open and rural lands.
- 9.3 Expand biodiversity through public education, restoration and protection of natural waterways, habitats, and preserved open spaces.
- 9.4 Reduce solid waste and airborne products of combustion.
- 9.5 Support increased use of alternative modes of transportation and pedestrian circulation.
- 9.6 Reduce the consumption of non-renewable resources.

