

Chapter One: Background and Planning Issues

SECTION 1.1: INTRODUCTION

Chapter One describes why Tredyffrin Township has decided to develop a new Comprehensive Plan and Historic Preservation Plan and documents recent planning initiatives within the Township. It also outlines the planning process and work program, and highlights several major planning issues that the Plans address.

SECTION 1.2: PURPOSE OF THE NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The purpose in preparing a new Comprehensive Plan & Historic Preservation Plan is fourfold. First, the planning database for the Township is brought up to date. Chapter Two includes surveys of natural and cultural features, the current land-use pattern, the road system, and the systems of public services and utilities; analyses and projections of population and housing; and an examination of the rate and types of change in the Township over the last twenty years. Second, the Plan identifies the basic direction and structure recommended for the future development of the Township, derived from explorations of alternative scenarios for development. Third, the Plan specifies the goals, policies, and individual elements that will form the basis for the development, revitalization and redevelopment in the municipality. Finally, the Plan lays forth a specific implementation strategy and program to help achieve the goals of the Plan.

A Comprehensive Plan for Tredyffrin Township can provide local officials with a highly-effective planning tool that will support day-to-day decisions about future development so that they may be thoroughly rational and consistent and at the same time move the Township in a desirable direction in terms of open space conservation, roadway corridor planning, traffic management, historic preservation, stormwater and sanitary sewers and recreation facilities development, and fiscal balance.

A Plan that is fully responsive to the needs of the residents of the Township needs to contain both long-range and short-range programs, must balance local needs and perceptions with regional requirements and perspectives, and contain its own logic and strategy for implementation. A good Plan can also serve as a “road map” for Tredyffrin Township, both in terms of informing and improving the process of reviewing and approving development plans, and in projecting a coherent and mutually agreed-upon development framework and visual image of the community.

A new Comprehensive Plan should serve as an everyday working document to be referred to regularly in the review of development proposals and in the planning of

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long-range capital improvements. A Comprehensive Plan for Tredyffrin Township needs to relate to and be coordinated with the Chester County Comprehensive Plan, but at the same time must reflect the unique characteristics and setting of the municipality and the point of view of its residents. The Comprehensive Plan must meet the requirements of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) as to content and the procedure for the preparation and adoption of municipal comprehensive plans.

SECTION 1.3: RECENT PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Tredyffrin Township's previous Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1987. In 2001 the Township developed the Paoli Community Master Plan as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan that identified opportunities to support the Paoli area, which is shared between Tredyffrin Township and Willistown Township, as a vital mixed-use center with a new intermodal transportation center and links to the surrounding community. A zoning ordinance intended to implement the Paoli Community Master Plan was adopted in September 2007.

In 2003, Tredyffrin Township used a community involvement process to develop a Strategic Plan that contains broad vision statements and goals for the future. Also in 2003, the Township completed a Historic Sites Survey of over 300 potentially historic sites, including 14 that are on the National Register of Historic Places, 20 that are eligible for the National Register and two (2) that are National Historic Landmarks.

The Township prepared a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS Plan), which was adopted in 2005 as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan to address the improvement, expansion and maintenance of the Township's existing 343-acre open space and recreation system (268 acres of parks and 75 acres of open space), and to develop a Township-wide pedestrian network. Following the adoption of the PROS Plan, the Sidewalks Trails and Paths (STAP) Committee was formed and is actively working to guide plan implementation related to the pedestrian portions of the PROS Plan. The STAP Committee is currently working to support the Safe Routes to School project as well as the planning for the Patriot's Path and the Cedar Hollow Trail.

Tredyffrin Township is also actively working on stormwater management projects, including an update of the Township ordinance that affects stormwater management practices. In addition, funding for stormwater abatement is included in the 5-year capital plan. Focused work continues for the Trout Creek Watershed. These initiatives include

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the 2004 *Trout Creek Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan* and the stormwater best management practice analysis that commenced in Spring 2007 with construction expected to follow in 2008. It is anticipated that the best management practices will translate into strategies that may apply to other watersheds throughout the Township.

Tredyffrin Township is a participant in Chester County's Vision Partnership Program. Tredyffrin Township's 2006-2008 update of its comprehensive plan has been undertaken under the terms of Chester County's Vision Partnership Program, including financial support from the county.

SECTION 1.4: COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

In recognition of the need to update the 1987 Comprehensive Plan and local interest in the location, pace, and character of recent and future development in the municipality, the Board of Supervisors of Tredyffrin Township directed the creation of a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and Citizens Committee for Historic Preservation to guide the preparation of the two Plans and oversee the work of the consultant selected to prepare the plan.

Through the Comprehensive Plan preparation process, the Steering Committee met on a regular basis with the consultant. The Committee had several critical roles to play, including:

- Monitoring progress on the work program, including scheduling and coordinating all workshops and public information meetings according to the Plan's work program schedule;
- Providing information and ideas to the consultant and providing data/contacts/leads and direction to the consultant for tasks in the work program schedule as the process was underway;
- Reviewing study products of the consultant, providing feedback to the consultant, and participating in the consensus-building process;
- Publicizing the Plan, encouraging community participation and promoting the comprehensive planning process generally and the growth management ideas that emerged during the planning process.

The Citizen's Committee for Historic Preservation provided guidance to the consultant at key points in the planning process in order to comment on existing conditions analysis and to provide insight into the plan's recommendations.

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Four public information meetings were held during the course of the Plan preparation. The first public information meeting, held in October 2006 at the completion of Phase A in the project, was an introduction to the process being undertaken and an opportunity for the Steering Committee and consultant to present the range of issues and choices to be examined in the overall Comprehensive Plan and Historic Preservation Plan preparation process. The second public information meeting occurred in March 2007 at the conclusion of Phase B. The focus of this meeting was to review the alternative concepts for the future that the Steering Committee had explored and consider an emerging framework for the future of Tredyffrin Township. The meeting also included a discussion of this emerging framework from the Historic Resources standpoint. The third public information meeting took place in November 2007 in order to review the recommendations included in the draft Comprehensive Plan. A fourth public information meeting was held on April 2008 to discuss the revised draft Comprehensive Plan and the draft Historic Preservation Plan.

These public information meetings served to update local residents, business operators, landowners, and other interested parties on the progress on the new Township Comprehensive Plan, and Historic Preservation Plan, and elicited feedback on the ideas being put forward as part of the planning process. The Township's boards and commissions including the Planning Commission, Historical Architectural Review Board, Environmental Advisory Council, Parks and Recreation Board, Sidewalks, Trails, and Paths Committee, and the Traffic Committee also discussed the Comprehensive Plan at their public meetings and provided input.

Public hearings were held on the draft plan on October 20 and December 1, 2008, and January 26, February 25, and March 2, 2009, and a resolution for adoption was approved by the Board of Supervisors on March 16, 2009. The formal review process of public hearings rounded out the extensive community participation program, including the three aforementioned public information meetings. Community participation was an important part the planning process, in order to fully inform residents and to create a strong consensus as to the most desirable and achievable common future for Tredyffrin Township.

SECTION 1.5: COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

The Comprehensive Plan process consisted of four distinct phases that took place between 2006 and 2008.

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Phase A was primarily devoted to background data collection and the documentation of change in the Township during the last twenty years. Tasks within this phase included a review of earlier planning documents and data, creating the base maps of the Township for the study, an inventory of natural and cultural features and development limitations, documentation and projections of demographics and development activity, a land-use field survey, and documentation of physical change.

As a foundation for the work in Phase B, Phase A concluded with the setting of preliminary goals and objectives for the Plan. Phase B itself incorporated a systematic exploration of a variety of planning and development issues and alternative development patterns. It culminated with the development of a framework for future development and preservation that synthesized the best planning ideas that had emerged through the work of the Steering Committee process.

The third phase, Phase C, focused on the actual preparation of the Comprehensive Plan and Historic Preservation Plan for Tredyffrin Township. The Plans were prepared as initial rough drafts, reviewed by the Steering Committee and Citizens Committee for Historic Preservation, and revised to a preliminary draft form that was ready for public review.

Phase D concluded the planning process and included a public review and hearings on the preliminary and final drafts of the Plans. Revisions were made based on those reviews and hearings and final Plans were prepared for printing and public distribution.

SECTION 1.6: MAJOR PLANNING ISSUES

The Steering Committee examined the following important planning issues, among others, throughout the development of the Plans:

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Land Use

Tredyffrin Township is a mature suburban community that has been the subject of considerable development over the past thirty years. As a result, the Township is substantially built-out. The challenge ahead is to maintain a high quality of life for Township residents and to maintain and expand the tax base by providing conditions that will retain existing businesses and encourage new businesses to locate within the Township.

New residential and non-residential development opportunities are anticipated to take the form of the redevelopment or revitalization of existing developed areas. This opportunity raises issues of identity and quality of life; the challenge of new development activity is to ensure that it is designed and built in a way that fits with the existing built environment, including several historic contexts.

Transportation

Because of Tredyffrin's status as an employment center, morning and evening peak hour traffic congestion is and will remain for the foreseeable future one of the paramount concerns in the Township. Several high-profile highway projects are either planned or underway, including the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's widening of US Route 202, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission's project to install an interchange with slip ramps at PA Route 29 in East Whiteland Township and the Turnpike widening from four lanes to six lanes throughout Tredyffrin.

The projects described above are targeted for the major expressways that pass through Tredyffrin Township. However, the Township has other transportation needs. These include: improving north-south routes, particularly where they pass over or under the major east-west expressways and the railroad lines; developing a pedestrian and bicycle network throughout the Township that makes non-motorized travel a safe and convenient alternative to the private automobile; and, increasing the opportunities for those who live and work within the Township to use transit.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater management is a critical issue for Tredyffrin Township. Past development increased the amount of impervious surfaces within the Township, making it more difficult for stormwater to infiltrate into the ground. In addition, a number of past developments were built in steeply sloping areas along the North and South Valley Hills

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before the adoption of stormwater management regulations and therefore do not include stormwater management facilities. The result is flooding that requires long-term solutions, not just quick fixes that create more problems downstream.

Historic Preservation

Tredyffrin Township is fortunate to have many important historic resources within its boundaries. These resources have been the focus of special preservation efforts including the establishment of a Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) that has authority over 29 historic properties. Work performed on these properties that requires a building permit must be reviewed by the HARB and receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Board of Supervisors. In addition to their review work, the HARB oversaw development of a historic resource survey that identifies over 300 historic resources in Tredyffrin Township.

The Township is fortunate to have made this progress towards preserving its history, but challenges remain. These include the education of Township residents regarding the importance of historic resources and implementing effective historic preservation strategies.

SECTION 1.7: PLAN CONTENT

The following Comprehensive Plan chapters were developed In order to address the issues outlined above and to provide a framework for the future of Tredyffrin Township:

Chapter 2: Existing Conditions - Provides a snapshot of the Township as it is today, examines recent trends and considers forecasts for growth and development.

Chapter 3: Growth Management Plan - Identifies goals and objectives for the future and establishes a policy framework for meeting those goals.

Chapter 4: Implementation Plan - Establishes an implementation framework of actions that the Township will take over time to translate the Plan into reality.