

I. Introduction

A. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Healthy, attractive and economically-sound communities do not “just happen.” They are created through vision and foresight and grow and change successfully with the same. Today, local governments are responsible for guiding growth and development within communities, for setting aside open spaces, and for delivering public services. Like any business, local governments need to chart future plans so that they can assure the efficient use of resources. The preparation of a comprehensive plan provides a deliberate framework of information that can be used to make future decisions regarding local government functions. The Comprehensive Plan further provides a sound legal basis for specific implementing measures, such as zoning and subdivision regulations designed to carry out the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Planning:
“the allocation of municipal resources
towards local goals and objectives.”

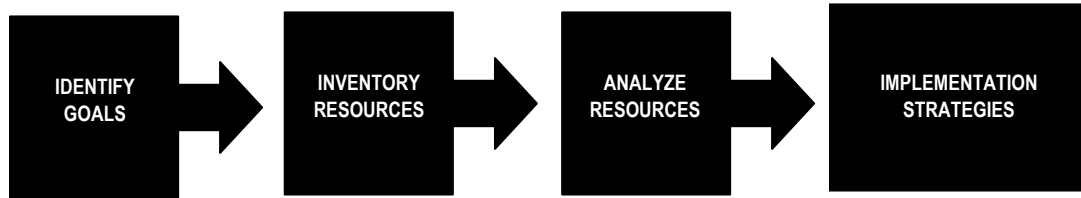
The Conewago Township Comprehensive Plan represents the work of many people. Local elected officials, planning commission members and other appointed citizens oversaw the preparation of the Plan by reviewing the plan content and conducting monthly public meetings. The Plan also sought specific input from various local, County and State officials and staff regarding the Township’s resources and possible programs available to implement the Plan’s findings. Finally, the Plan incorporates the many public comments received during the planning process.

This Comprehensive Plan first sets forth a set of Community Planning Goals. These goals include broad objectives, such as the provision of adequate housing and employment opportunities, the protection of the environment, and the provision of a balance of public services. They also seek to correct existing or foreseeable deficiencies or problems, such as improving the design of a particular road intersection or reducing localized flooding through improved storm water management.

Next, this Plan inventories, maps and describes the Township’s resources over several chapters. These resources include many features, such as land, streams, roads, utilities, parks, housing, schools, police and fire service, businesses, and so on. Analyses are performed within each of the Plan’s chapters to determine their capabilities in meeting the desired future. Each chapter makes specific recommendations to improve the capabilities of these in attaining locally-expressed planning goals.

Then, the analyses of resources and recommendations are used together with the Community Planning Goals to develop a future land use scenario and a plan for the future delivery of public and other services. The time-frame for this Comprehensive Plan is to the year 2020; all recommendations made within this Plan are structured around this time period.

Finally, implementation strategies are discussed and recommended that will enable the Township to set in motion the goals, objectives and recommendations identified in the Plan. In the end, any planning process is meaningless unless its recommendations find application as part of the Township's business—the protection of public welfare and the delivery of public services.



B. MPC REQUIREMENTS

Pennsylvania's Constitution gives the General Assembly the power to enact laws that protect the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens. The General Assembly has, in turn, given local municipalities primary responsibility for community comprehensive planning. Municipalities in Pennsylvania are empowered by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 of 1968, to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans according to specified requirements and procedures. Revisions to the MPC made by Act 170 of 1988 expanded the subject matter and goals of comprehensive planning to enable municipalities to manage growth more effectively, and to provide greater protection for environmentally sensitive lands and important historic and cultural sites. Furthermore, Act 170 also requires that all counties in Pennsylvania prepare and adopt comprehensive plans and that municipal plans be generally consistent with the adopted county plans. Municipalities are also empowered by this Act to carry out joint planning with one another. Finally, the most recent amendments to the MPC specifically enable municipalities to work together and develop regional plans for the allocation of growth and development, along with the delivery of public facilities and services.

These MPC standards are the foundation upon which the Comprehensive Plan for Conewago Township is built. This Plan, therefore, is born not only out of a belief that sound planning is the key to a healthy, attractive and economically sound community, but also out of a respect and regard for the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

C. HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan is designed to serve several important purposes. Principally, the Plan is intended to share with Township residents a vision for the future. Secondly, it is designed to assist the Township in the administration of land use planning programs. A detailed table of contents appears at the beginning of the text that provides quick reference to the appropriate sections of the Plan. **Action-oriented recommendations within each of the Plan's chapters are printed in bold, italicized letters so that the decision-maker's attention is immediately drawn to them.** Many of these recommendations tie in to specific implementation strategies discussed in the Plan's final chapter.

The numerous maps within the Plan have been carefully prepared so that the information can be easily visualized and is meaningful. Related features are composited together so that the reader gains a better understanding of their connection. The many analyses utilized

throughout the study are intended to maximize the utility of the findings. Step-by-step descriptions of these methodologies are furnished to enable the reader to gain a better understanding of the issues and their planning implications. All of these features will aid local decision-makers in their evaluation of future planning proposals. Data used to compile the maps in this Plan was largely furnished by the Adams County Geographic Information System (GIS). Therefore the data is readily consistent with the County's database and new layers of data created by this Plan are similarly compatible with the County's system.

An additional function of this Plan is its collection of important information. The term *Comprehensive Plan* accurately describes the composition of this report; its contents are quite comprehensive. Accordingly, the Plan provides convenient access to a wealth of up-to-date factual information concerning the Township's resources. This information will not only serve local officials, but also service agencies, property owners, residents, business leaders, and prospective developers. The inventories of existing conditions will also provide the groundwork upon which future Plan updates can be more easily accomplished.

Finally, the Plan provides a future land use scenario that can be useful to many landowners. For example, residents can get an idea of the land uses that are projected around their homes. Prospective developers can use the Plan to package development proposals that conform to the municipal goals, thereby ensuring a smooth development review process. Business leaders can glean a sense of secure investment climate from the Township's future land use scenario. In all, the Plan considers many competing interests and devises a strategy to assure their relative harmonious coexistence. It is hoped that the Plan will become a powerful and practical tool in local decision-making. ***It is important for all persons involved and/or interested in the future of the Conewago Township to read and understand this Plan. Local decision-makers should keep the Plan handy when evaluating future development proposals, service adjustments or public investments.***

D. REGIONAL SETTING

Conewago Township is situated in the southeastern portion of Adams County in south central Pennsylvania. The Township also directly adjoins York County and Hanover Borough to the east which has strongly influenced development activities in recent decades. The Township has an irregular shape that has an east-to-west width of almost 3.1 miles and a north-to-south length of nearly 4.9 miles. Conewago Township contains a total of approximately 10.5 square miles with some 6,720± acres.

At its closest point, the Township is about 8.6 miles east of the Borough of Gettysburg, the Adams County seat. Serving as a "hub," Gettysburg's position led to development in outlying areas in a spoke-like pattern. An extensive road system formed, linking the outlying municipalities like Conewago to Gettysburg via Rt. 116. But Hanover too has strongly influenced eastern Adams County and especially Conewago Township. Hanover's numerous industries and businesses provide ready access to jobs and goods and services for Township residents. Finally, the Township is a few miles from the Maryland border. Many residents within the Township commute to work in Maryland and recent planning policies within Maryland have caused a migration of resident into Adams County and Conewago Township.

The eastern boundary of the Township is formed by the man-made line separating Adams and York Counties. The northern boundary of the Township is formed by the

Little Conewago Creek while the western and southern boundaries follow the South Branch of the Conewago Creek. To the north of the Township lies Oxford Township in Adams County. To the east is Penn Township, York County which is bisected by Hanover Borough (York County). Directly to the south and southwest lie Union Township and to the northwest is Mount Pleasant Township, both in Adams County.

