

*The relevant question
is not simply what
shall we do tomorrow,
but rather what shall
we do to get ready for
tomorrow?*

- Peter Drucker (1974)

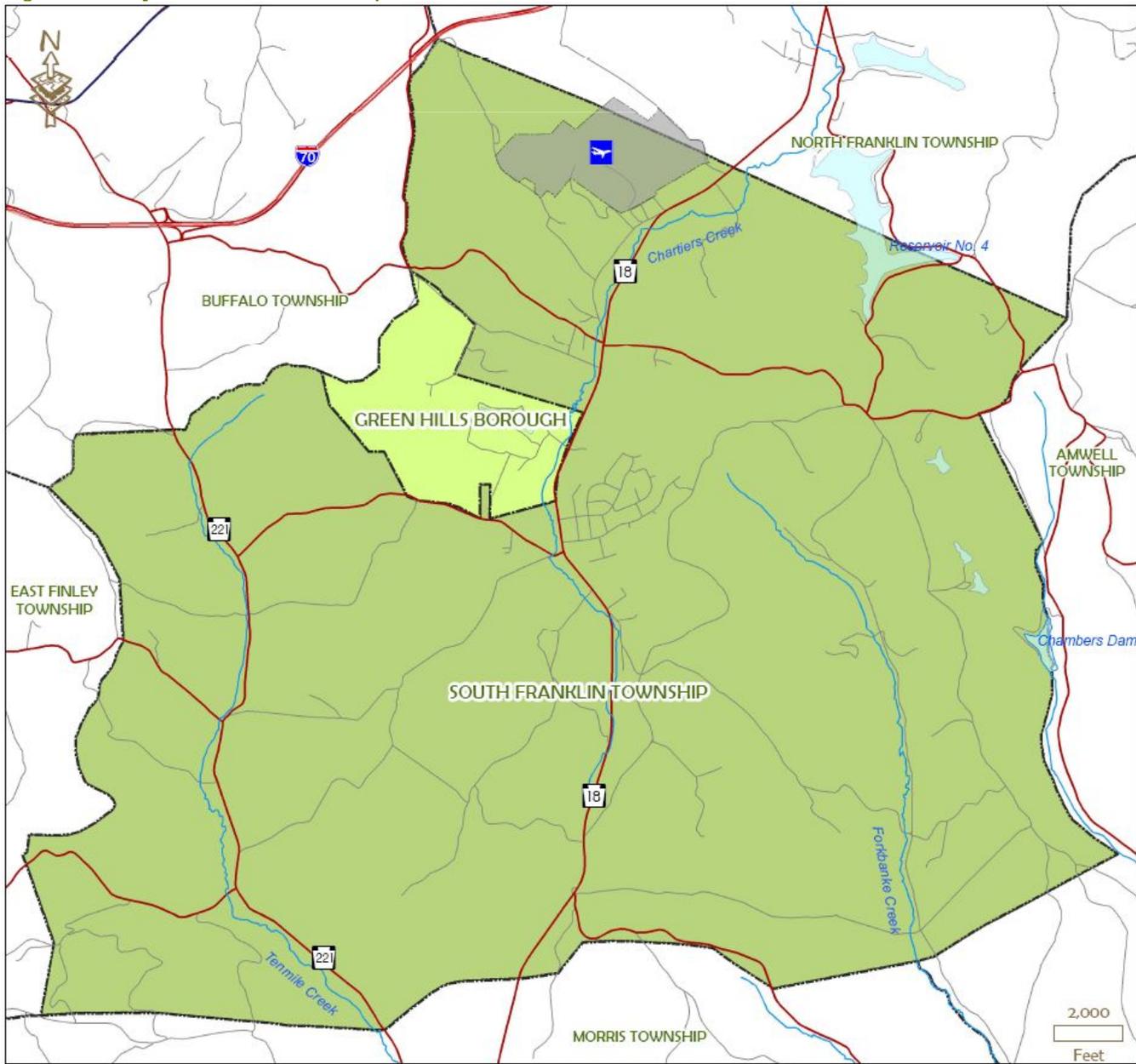
One of the best tools available to a municipality to address its future, particularly in terms of development and growth is the comprehensive plan. Municipal officials who institutionalize the use of a comprehensive plan in their decision-making are more likely to achieve the desired goals and vision of the municipality. Small and rural communities especially stand to gain the most from the use of a comprehensive plan as they often have limited resources and a restricted tax base, thereby needing to plan more carefully to avoid costly mistakes and inefficient decisions. A comprehensive plan serves as a “blueprint” to help guide growth and development to locations that have adequate infrastructure in place to support it. In addition, the plan provides the basis for future land use ordinances to implement the comprehensive plan, if the municipality so desires. Ultimately, a comprehensive plan is more than just a document disclosing past and present land use trends with a proposed course of action outlined; it is a chance for a community to organize a process for the future, and to develop a roadmap that will guide community decisions in nearly every aspect for years to come.

Project Area

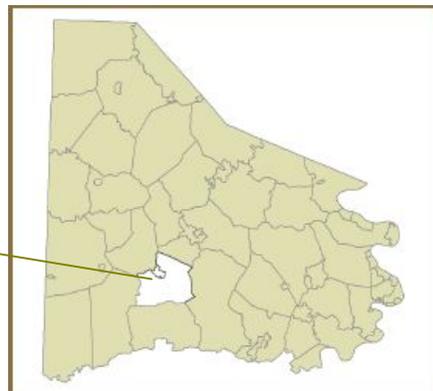
The Township of South Franklin and the Borough of Green Hills are located in the south-central portion of Washington County, Pennsylvania, along State Route 18 a few miles south of the City of Washington, the county seat (See *Figure 1: Project Location*). In terms of land area, the Project Area is similar to many other boroughs and townships in Pennsylvania, in that the township is somewhat large in land mass while the borough is relatively small – with South Franklin covering 20.7 square miles while Green Hills Borough is 0.9 square miles. Additionally, South Franklin Township surrounds most of Green Hills, which is a common borough / township spatial relationship in the Commonwealth. However, the Project Area stands apart from other borough / township relationships in a number of unique ways. For example, Green Hills Borough has a population of just 19 while South Franklin has roughly 3,795 residents and both municipalities are classified as “rural” (defined as having population densities lower than the average Pennsylvania density of 274 persons per square mile).

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Figure 1: Project Area Location Map



Project Area
Washington County, PA



Planning 101

Why Plan?

The South Franklin and Green Hills Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan was prepared in accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247 of 1968) and is the only public document that describes the community as a whole in terms of its complex and mutually supporting networks. As a policy statement of long-term goals, it provides both a broad perspective and a guide to short-term community decisions. Though not a legally binding document, the comprehensive plan does provide the following:

- ❖ Helps to make decisions about the use of resources (the comprehensive plan's primary purpose).
- ❖ Helps a community / communities decide on their future course of action in regards to their physical development and recognize, preserve and enhance their unique characteristics and service requirements, as well as their contribution to the regional quality of life.
- ❖ Identifies the responsibilities and services that each municipality might be better suited to provide for the region and helps to develop strategies to make such efforts cost effective for all involved.
- ❖ Strengthens the municipalities' ability to guide future development in an effective and orderly manner.
- ❖ Promotes cooperation and coordination across municipal borders.
- ❖ Considers the environmental and economic impacts of land use change, assesses critical issues (problems, needs, and opportunities for improvement), and identifies the best alternatives (programs, projects, and policies).

Goals of a Comprehensive Plan

The overall goal of a comprehensive plan is to provide a description of how, and at what pace, a community desires to develop its land in order to direct growth and preserve natural resources and historic or cultural character, while strengthening its commercial and economic base. In addition, the comprehensive plan identifies what social aspects the community believes are important and provides strategies to improve the quality of life for its citizens by providing appropriate public services and improving the quality of the housing stock.

The South Franklin and Green Hills Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 170 of 1988) and subsequent amendments. Although the plan is not a legally binding document, once adopted it will be the official statement for future development in the county. The communities, to support local government decisions and prepare for future conditions should use the plan's policy statements, developed and adopted by municipal officials.

The South Franklin and Green Hills Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan is:

- ❖ A set of general guidelines for future development of all land in a manner which will promote the public health, safety, morals and general welfare of all residents and business persons;
- ❖ A tool to promote the public interests of all residents and business persons and nonresidents rather than the interests of individuals or special interests groups;
- ❖ A public policy guide to decision making regarding the physical development of the county;

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- ❖ A strategy to guide leaders when making decisions about future land use, housing, economic development, natural, cultural and historic features, transportation, community facilities and services, parks, recreation and open space;
- ❖ A statement of the past and present conditions of the communities;
- ❖ A description of how and at what pace the communities desire to develop physically, economically and socially;
- ❖ An expression of the communities' "vision" of the optimally desirable pattern of development for the future.

The Benefits of Multi-Municipal Planning

Act 67 (House Bill 14) and Act 68 (Senate Bill 300) that amended the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) enabled counties and municipalities to plan together for the development and conservation of resources, and most importantly, implementing plans through cooperative agreements and consistent ordinances and actions. Specific benefits authorized by Act 67 and Act 68 can:

- ❖ Promote the protection of rural resources: Within a multi-municipal plan, it is easier to protect larger areas of lands from intense development by designating growth areas in or around existing developed places and rural resource areas for more limited development.
- ❖ Promote development in older boroughs and suburbs: The laws give cities and boroughs the opportunity to plan with neighboring municipalities for more dense development in their municipalities, making use of and improving existing infrastructure, and providing for infill traditional neighborhood development.
- ❖ Provide funding incentives: The laws authorize state agencies to provide funding priority under state funding programs for multi-municipal planning and implementation.
- ❖ Require state agencies to incorporate local plans in decision-making: The laws require state agencies to consider the Multi-Municipal plan in making funding and permitting decisions.
- ❖ Address regional issues: The laws enable municipalities to identify and address issues that are regional in nature, such as sewer and water provisions, emergency services, agricultural preservation, transportation issues and developments of regional scope.
- ❖ Allow cost sharing: The laws allow the sharing of the significant costs of a sound land use plan, and the ability to use the technical assistance and expertise of county planning departments, state, regional, and local agencies, and/or to share planning tasks among the participating municipalities.
- ❖ Protect against curative amendment lawsuits: Municipalities within a Multi-Municipal planning area no longer have to provide for every use.
- ❖ Authorize Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) across municipal boundaries: The use of transfer of development rights in an area that combines rural lands and urban municipalities could enable farmers to sell development rights to developers for use in a city, borough or more suburban township within the project area, thereby relieving pressure on rural lands, and helping to sustain developed areas.

- ❖ Allow tax-revenue sharing across municipal boundaries: The laws authorize agreements for the sharing of tax revenues and fees within the region of the plan. For example, some percentage of the real estate tax from a large shopping mall or industrial park could be shared among municipalities in the plan on a formula basis.
- ❖ Retain local control: The laws allow municipalities to retain local control over implementation and local issues so long as implementation is consistent with the Multi-Municipal framework plan.

Keystone Principles

On May 31, 2005, the Keystone Principles & Criteria for Growth, Investment & Resource Conservation (Keystone Principles) were adopted by the Pennsylvania Economic Development Cabinet and developed by the Interagency Land Use Team, a working group of the Cabinet. The Keystone Principles are designed to be a coordinated interagency approach to fostering sustainable economic development and conservation of resources through Pennsylvania's investments in diverse communities. The Keystone Principles lay out general goals and objectives for economic development and resource conservation agreed upon among the agencies and programs that participated in their development.

1. Redevelop First – funding preference to reuse and redevelopment of “brownfield” and previously developed sites in urban, suburban, and rural communities for economic activity that creates jobs, housing, mixed use development, and recreational assets
2. Provide Efficient Infrastructure – “fix it first” – use and improve existing infrastructure; require private and public expansions of service to be consistent with approved comprehensive plans and consistent implementing ordinances
3. Concentrate Development – support infill and “greenfield” development that is compact, conserves land, and is integrated with existing or planned transportation, water and sewer services, and schools
4. Increase Job Opportunities – invest in businesses that offer good paying, high quality jobs, and that are located near existing or planned water & sewer infrastructure, housing, existing workforce, and transportation access (highway or transit)
5. Foster Sustainable Businesses – strengthen natural resource based businesses that use sustainable practices in energy production and use, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, recreation and tourism
6. Restore and Enhance the Environment – conserve and restore environmentally sensitive lands and natural areas for ecological health, biodiversity and wildlife habitat
7. Enhance Recreational and Heritage Resources – maintain and improve recreational and heritage assets and infrastructure
8. Expand Housing Opportunities – support the construction and rehabilitation of housing of all types to meet the needs of people of all incomes and abilities
9. Plan Regionally; Implement Locally – support multi-municipal, county and local government planning and implementation that has broad public input and support and is consistent with these principles
10. Be Fair – support equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of development

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The Criteria are designed to help measure the extent to which particular projects accomplish these goals. The Criteria do not replace state agency program guidelines or criteria, but rather, at each agency's discretion, they will either be integrated into existing program criteria (preferable) or used as additional, favorable considerations in the scoring or decision making process. The Principles and Criteria are designed to encourage multifaceted project development that will integrate programs and funding sources from a variety of state agencies into a comprehensive strategy to address issues affecting whole communities. There are two categories of criteria: Core Criteria and Preferential Criteria. Core Criteria, where relevant, should be given primary consideration in all investment decisions made by Commonwealth agencies when making grants or loans to public or private projects using agency funds. Preferential Criteria should be used by Commonwealth agencies in all programs to which they are applicable to evaluate projects and make decisions on grants or loans using agency funds. Projects are to be evaluated with the recognition that rural, suburban, and urban areas have different characteristics and needs, and that what might work in an urban area might not work in a rural area (the "Be Fair" standard), (<http://www.newpa.com/default.aspx?id=435>).

Smart Growth

Smart growth recognizes connections between development and quality of life and attempts to leverage new growth to improve the community. The features that distinguish smart growth in a community vary, but new smart growth is more town-centered, is transit and pedestrian oriented, and has a greater mix of housing, commercial and retail uses. It also preserves open space and many other environmental amenities. While there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution, successful communities tend to have one thing in common--a vision of where they want to go and of what things they value in their community--and their plans for development reflect these values. The following are principles of smart growth (<http://www.smartgrowth.org/default.asp>):

- ❖ Create Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
- ❖ Create Walkable Neighborhoods
- ❖ Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration
- ❖ Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
- ❖ Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
- ❖ Mix Land Uses
- ❖ Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
- ❖ Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
- ❖ Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
- ❖ Take Advantage of Compact Building Design

State Water Plan

In recognition of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Article III, Section 307 (iv) (b), the South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan includes recommendations to provide a reliable supply of water and recommends provisions aimed at adequately protecting water supply sources. These recommendations were developed in consideration of current and future water resources availability and its uses and limitations. The South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan is in conformance with the Pennsylvania State Water and recognizes that:

- ❖ Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities.
- ❖ Commercial agriculture production impact water supply sources.

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The Plan for South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough is divided into four parts.

1. *Area Profile: consists of a community snapshot detailing current conditions related to demographics, land use, etc.*
2. *The Vision: contains the vision statement for the municipalities, which reflects what the residents and leaders want to see happen in the communities over the next 10-15 years.*
3. *Needs Assessment: identifies the needs of the communities, based on stakeholder interviews, public involvement, etc.*
4. *Implementation Plan: a culmination of the first three parts of the plan into a series of priority recommendations and the identification of responsible parties, potential partners, cost estimates, and time-frame for implementation.*

To assist in using the plan, please refer to the following table for specific pages in each section that address each comprehensive plan component.

	Section 1: Area Profile	Section 3: Needs Assessment	Section 4: Implementation Plan
Comprehensive Plan Component	Page #		
Historic Resources	1-3 to 1-6	3-4	4-3 to 4-4
Natural Resources	1-7 to 1-14	3-5 to 3-8	4-5 to 4-8
Transportation	1-21 to 1-26	3-9 to 3-16	4-9 to 4-16
Land Use	1-27 to 1-36	3-18 to 3-24	4-17 to 4-28
Agriculture	1-37 to 1-40	3-18 to 3-19	4-21 to 4-28
Residential Development	1-41 to 46	3-25	4-29 to 4-34
Economic Development	1-47 to 1-54	3-26 to 3-27	4-35 to 4-38
Community Amenities / Utilities	1-47 to 1-70	3-29 to 3-36	4-39 to 4-48
Energy Conservation	-----	3-37 to 3-39	4-49 to 4-52

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It is vital to understand that planning is based on the community's wants, needs, and desires. The Plan for South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough is just that – a plan for these two communities. It is a reflection of the community's vision for future development and should be used as a tool to help achieve the vision.

Contiguous Municipalities Statement

As per Article III, Section 301 (5) of the MPC, the relationship of existing and proposed development in the Township of South Franklin and the Borough of Green Hills to existing and proposed plans of adjacent municipalities and the objectives of the region was analyzed. The following plans and studies were reviewed to determine consistency of proposed development:

The Washington County Comprehensive Plan

The Washington County Comprehensive Plan was reviewed to ensure that the South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the goals and objectives of Washington County. The vision statement for the County is as follows:

The people of Washington County will lead the region and the Commonwealth in working together to encourage a vibrant and prosperous quality of life for people of all ages. We will serve as an example of responsible and sustainable use of land and natural resources. With this as our foundation, we will create a climate that promotes economic diversity and emphasizes education while celebrating our agricultural character, historical significance and scenic beauty.

The Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan seeks to advance the County's vision by dovetailing with the wants and needs of the residents of South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough. The Washington County Comprehensive Plan specifically calls out the SR 18 corridor as a possible Targeted Areas for Investment (TAI), particularly near the South Franklin Township and North Franklin Township line, the Washington County Airport, and along the nearby I-70 corridor. As such, this Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan targets that area as an important future growth area, particularly for employment and economic development, and further recommends that future residential growth occur in the areas immediately adjacent to it. Please refer to *Map 4.2: Targeted Areas for Investment* and Section 4: Implementation Plan, for more details.

Amwell Township Comprehensive Plan

The most recent Amwell Township Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1975, and the Township followed it with a Zoning Ordinance in 1976. The goals of the Plan were to retain and support the agricultural lifestyle of Amwell Township while providing high levels of municipal service to residents. The Plan was thoroughly reviewed to ensure that any recommendations, policies, or land uses suggested by the South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan are consistent with the recommendations for Amwell. As the Plan suggests low-density residential and agricultural uses for the land immediately adjacent to the Project Area, there are no consistency conflicts at this time.

Buffalo Township Comprehensive Plan

The most recent Buffalo Township Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1973 along with a Zoning Ordinance enacted that same year. The goals of the Plan were to sustain the high quality of life for residents and encourage the protection of environmental and natural resources within the Township. The Plan was thoroughly reviewed to ensure that any recommendations, policies, or land uses suggested by the South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan are consistent with the recommendations for Buffalo Township. As the Plan suggests conservation and rural residential uses for the land immediately adjacent to the Project Area, there are no consistency conflicts at this time.

East Finley Township Comprehensive Plan

The most recent East Finley Township Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1972, and the most recent Zoning Ordinance was enacted in 1986. The goals of the Plan were to retain and support the agricultural lifestyle of East Finley Township while providing high levels of municipal service to residents. The Plan was thoroughly reviewed to ensure that any recommendations, policies, or land uses suggested by the South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan are consistent with the recommendations for East Finley. As the Plan suggests rural residential development for the land immediately adjacent to the Project Area, there are no consistency conflicts at this time.

Morris Township Comprehensive Plan

The most recent Morris Township Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1973 along with a Zoning Ordinance enacted that same year. The goals of the Plan were encourage the preservation of sensitive natural areas, support the local agricultural community, and provide local services to residents. The Plan was reviewed to ensure that any recommendations, policies, or land uses suggested by the South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan are consistent with the recommendations for Morris. As the Plan suggests low-density residential and preserved green space areas for the land immediately adjacent to the Project Area, there are no consistency conflicts at this time.

North Franklin Township Comprehensive Plan

The most recent North Franklin Township Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1960, and the Township followed it with a Zoning Ordinance that has been continually updated. The goals of the Plan were to offer residents a high quality of life through the provision of adequate municipal services and infrastructure, support local businesses, manage traffic concerns along SR 18, and offer a variety of housing options to residents. The Plan was reviewed to ensure that any recommendations, policies, or land uses suggested by the South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan are consistent with the recommendations for North Franklin. As the Plan suggests a mixture of low-to medium density residential for the land immediately adjacent to the Project Area and local commercial along SR 18, there are no consistency conflicts at this time.

Review by Contiguous Municipalities

The South Franklin and Green Hills Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan was developed with respect to surrounding land uses of the adjoining communities. It is the belief of South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough and the Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee that the goals and objectives of this plan are consistent with those of adjacent municipalities within Washington County and are consistent with the Washington County Future Land Use Map and Vision. The plan was submitted to the MuGuffey School District, Washington County Planning Commission, the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington, the South Franklin Township Planning Commission, the Green Hills Borough Planning Committee, and the following contiguous municipalities:

- ❖ Amwell Township
- ❖ Buffalo Township
- ❖ East Finley Township
- ❖ Morris Township
- ❖ North Franklin Township

Interrelationship Statement

The synthesis of interrelated activities to resolve issues and problems is an important foundation to good community planning. In this regard, there are linkages among the elements, goals and recommendations of the Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan. All are related and should further the overall vision which is to maintain the rural character of the two municipalities while still allowing for complementary and orderly development.

Land Use

The overarching vision of creating a harmonious community that maintains the rural way of life while permitting the natural progression of growth and development clearly underlies all Future Land Use recommendations. The Future Land Use Plan attempts to protect environmental features, encourage low intensity economic development, and discourage sprawl. An example of this is the recommendation to designate Rural Resource Areas, which prohibit public funding of infrastructure to selected locations. Without public infrastructure, sprawling residential development that wastes precious resources is unlikely to occur. The Future Land Use Plan also calls for updated land use regulations that embrace smart growth-style techniques such as conservation by design and agricultural zoning. In addition, the Future Land Use Plan promotes mixed uses in multiple categories, including the Flex Commercial / Industrial area adjacent to the Washington County Airport and the Mixed Use corridor and Local Commercial category along SR 18.

Historic and Natural Resources

Historic resources recommendations seek to preserve the longevity of the area's agricultural heritage by recommending that historic family cemeteries be preserved. Natural resources recommendations complement the desire to provide efficient municipal services and protect sensitive wetlands, floodplains, and agricultural resources by recommending the adoption of riparian buffer protection and advanced stormwater management techniques. Sustainable land practices that include techniques for efficiently utilizing the land and preserving natural resources are encouraged in the residential land use categories, and particularly emphasized in the Medium Density Residential category located in the northern portion of the Project Area.

Transportation

Transportation recommendations not only address safety issues and strengthen and improve the existing transportation system but also seek to enhance the Future Land Use recommendations and economic development potential of the Airport and surrounding amenities, as well, by suggesting improvements to important thoroughfares such as SR 18, Lagonda Road, and Jolly School Road. The Transportation Plan also calls out the increased need for multi-modal transportation options, including expanding public transit services to the Airport, exploring the feasibility of new walking and /or biking trails and pathways throughout the Project Area, and requiring pedestrian connections in all new residential, commercial, and industrial developments.

Residential Development

Residential development recommendations not only come to terms with demographic trends, housing needs, and existing housing conditions, but also further the goals of low-density and complementary residential development and the conservation of the existing way of life in South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough. This is exemplified by the recommendation that the municipalities concentrate medium-density residential development of mixed types in the northern-central portion of the Project Area. Residential development recommendations also encourage building a mixture of more compact dwelling types and styles, including multi-story dwellings such as townhomes, patio homes, and multi-family housing units.

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Economic Development

Economic development recommendations seek to take advantage of the potential offered by the Washington County Airport by directing growth to the northern portion of the Project Area and thus protecting environmentally sensitive areas and reducing traffic congestion. The recommendation to develop SR 18 as an important central corridor for the area is an example of this. SR 18 is a primary artery that traverses the heart of South Franklin Township, and its northern section should be a target for development; this includes adjacent areas, as well.

Community Amenities

The community amenities recommendations reflect the Land Use recommendations related to the small town center concept, the avoidance of sprawl, and the preservation of agricultural areas. Examples of this include recommendations that the Township extend public water and public sewage to limited priority areas, particularly in and around Franklin Manor, the proposed Lone Pine Estates, and the land adjacent to SR 18. The Community Amenities Plans also recommends that the Township develop a sustainable and comprehensive technique for managing on-lot sewerage systems.

How to Use the Comprehensive Plan

The Future Land Use Plan, comprised of the Future Land Use Map and the corresponding categories found in Section 4: Implementation Plan, is a guide for land use development, decision-making, and regulation. It should be used by the South Franklin Township Board of Supervisors, the Green Hills Borough Council, as well as by Washington County and state agencies, when making decisions, providing grants or offering review comments regarding growth, redevelopment, and conservation. The South Franklin and Green Hills Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan identifies land use and policy tools appropriate to each category that will assist the community in achieving the vision and goals it sets forth. The Future Land Use Plan should serve as a guide for zoning and subdivision and land development ordinance revisions to be implemented following adoption of the South Franklin and Green Hills Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan.

Until such changes are made to South Franklin Township's ordinances, and until such ordinances are established in Green Hills Borough, municipal officials, and Planning Commission members should use the Future Land Use Plan to evaluate proposed development. Questions that municipal officials and Planning Commission members should ask include:

- ❖ Is the proposed development consistent with the Future Land Use Plan?
- ❖ Does the proposed development fit the scale and intended character of a district / area?
- ❖ How will adjacent sidewalks and streets fit together?
- ❖ Are the setbacks of buildings similar and appropriate to traditional pattern?
- ❖ Where and what type of landscaping is provided?
- ❖ How much traffic will be generated?
- ❖ How will the proposed development impact an adjacent site?
- ❖ How will stormwater runoff be handled?
- ❖ How will this development affect the community or adjacent communities?

Through open communication, dialogue, and use of the South Franklin and Green Hills Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Plan and Map as a guide, the community can easily reach its vision.

Revising Land Use and Development Regulations

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning code (MPC) provides the legal framework for local governments to enact, revise, administer, and enforce zoning, subdivision, and land development regulations. Zoning regulations dictate where certain land uses are permitted within the municipalities to protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents. Subdivision and land development ordinances determine the layout and design of development on the land, e.g. landscaping standards, and right-of-way widths for roadways and utilities, etc. These regulations are the municipalities' primary tool for managing the amount, character and intensity of future development. Infrastructure maintenance and planned expansion, collaborative relationships with developers and design guides are valuable supplementary tools for achieving the desired physical development of a community. Land use regulations, water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure plans should be updated on a consistent basis to proactively steer new development to the appropriate locations outlined in the Future Land Use Plan. Through effective regulation, both

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Green Hills Borough and South Franklin Township can achieve greater opportunities to thrive economically, encourage sustainable development, and enhance the overall quality of life for local citizens.

Annual Plan Review and Plan Updates

Amendments to the MPC (Section 302(d)) require municipal comprehensive plans to be reviewed every 10 years (Section 301(c)). In rapidly changing communities, more frequent updates may be needed to maintain timely policies and priorities. Indeed, the South Franklin and Green Hills Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan will only be useful if it is implemented, evaluated, and updated. For this to occur, it is recommended that the South Franklin Township Planning Commission and the Green Hills Borough Planning Committee perform the following actions:

- ❖ Annually evaluate the Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan and, if necessary, make modifications to the Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan to ensure it remains useful in terms of guiding the decisions made regarding the continuing development of the two municipalities.
- ❖ Prepare and submit an annual written report to the South Franklin Township Board of Supervisors, the Green Hills Borough Council, the citizens of the two municipalities, summarizing this evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan, the past year's implementation activities, the upcoming planned implementation activities, and crucial issues that will, or may, impact the communities.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement (ICA)

South Franklin and Green Hills should draft and sign an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement (ICA) to use as an implementation tool. The ICA is a device given to municipalities undertaking multi-municipal comprehensive plans as per Article XI, Section 1104 of the MPC. Although the agreement may take many forms, it typically incorporates the "Plan," as adopted by all the participants, and may include growth and infrastructure areas, future growth areas and rural resource areas, and plan for the distribution of uses. The implementation agreement must also cover the required provisions for yearly reporting, consistency review, developments of regional impact (DRI), and any other desired optional provisions. Yearly reporting helps participating municipalities keep track of what implementation projects are underway, what projects are completed, and what ones are in need of funding. Consistency review provisions also assist in implementation by providing that the participating municipalities must bring their codes and ordinances in line with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. Lastly, the ICA gives municipalities the power to "establish a process for review and approve developments of regional significance and impact that are proposed within any participating municipality." As the MPC states, a development of regional significance and impact (DRI) is any land development that, because of its character, magnitude, or location will have substantial impact upon the health, safety, or welfare of citizens in more than one municipality. Examples of DRIs include the following: airports, industrial parks, retail centers or office space in excess of 50,000 square feet, housing developments (whether single or multi-family) in excess of 50 dwelling units such as the Lone Pine Estates proposal, or any development in excess of 10 acres or a development that generates new vehicle trips in excess of 5,000 trips per day, or that will overburden the existing road network. The term shall also include any development that will require the construction of new municipal sewage facilities. However, this is by no means a comprehensive list, and communities can agree upon more specific definitions for DRIs in the ICA.

Implementing Priority Projects

The ease of implementing projects was taken into account during the compilation of the Implementation Matrix. Hence, many short-term projects are those which can be implemented with relative ease due to low cost or small time commitments and not necessarily because they are vital to the future of the two municipalities. Some of the projects may be high-priority and short-term, however, because they are imperative issues that the communities

must address in order to move the Project Area forward, such as infrastructure improvements. South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough should begin to deal with these issues immediately, but depending upon economic and political circumstances, these projects may take longer to complete than five years. These considerations and the fluctuating nature of the implementation process – which is highly dependent upon local, regional, and state political, social, and economic situations – should be kept in mind when assessing and implementing the Matrix.