

Section 4.....Implementation Plan

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

The purpose of Part 4: Implementation Plan is to identify community goals and recommendations that once implemented, will help to achieve the Community Vision. Goals have been developed for each plan element that reflects the needs and desires of residents while the recommendations provide realistic strategies that each municipality can implement. The Implementation Plan provides guidance to direct growth to appropriate areas of South Franklin and Green Hills; plan regionally for infrastructure expansion; and the sharing of resources in order to control future land development in a positive and orderly manner.

- ❖ **Historic Resources Plan**
- ❖ **Natural Resources Plan**
- ❖ **Transportation Plan**
- ❖ **Land Use Plan**
- ❖ **Residential Development Plan**
- ❖ **Economic Development Plan**
- ❖ **Community Amenities Plan**
- ❖ **Energy Conservation Plan**
- ❖ **Implementation & Priorities Matrix**

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

Historic Resources Plan

Goal: Protect and maintain historic resources in the Project Area.

Recommendation: *Work with interested local property owners to obtain National Register status for eligible properties.*

Currently only the Kelly House and the Clark House are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Obtaining National Register status for these properties is important because it offers the following benefits:

- ❖ Prohibit the damage or destruction of registered places by requiring licensed, funded, or assisted federal and state projects to examine alternatives.
- ❖ Federal income tax incentive for rehabilitating income-producing places.
- ❖ Property tax assessment freeze incentive for rehabilitating single-family, owner-occupied residences.
- ❖ Increase awareness and appreciation of designated places and local history.

However, it is important to remember that listing on the National Register *does not* require owners of designated places to obtain prior approval to change or demolish their property when using private, city, or county funds.

The process outlined by the National Register of Historic Places for obtaining National Register status is as follows:

- ❖ Nominations can be submitted to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) from property owners, historical societies, preservation organizations, governmental agencies, and other individuals or groups. Official National Register Nomination Forms are downloadable or from the PHMC website. National Register Bulletins can also provide guidance on how to document and evaluate certain types of properties.
- ❖ PHMC notifies affected property owners and local governments and solicits public comment. If the owner (or a majority of owners for a district nomination) objects, the property cannot be listed but may be forwarded to the National Park Service for a Determination of Eligibility (DOE).
- ❖ Proposed nominations are reviewed by PHMC and the Commonwealth's National Register Review Board. The length of the state process varies but will take a minimum of 90 days.
- ❖ Complete nominations, with certifying recommendations, are submitted by the state to the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. for final review and listing by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places. The National Park Service makes a listing decision within 45 days.

More information can be obtained at the National Register website at <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/index.htm> or the PHMC website at <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=3741&&level=1&css=L1&mode=2>.

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

Recommendation: *Recognize the birthplace of Joe Walker by placement of an historic marker.*

One possible method for increasing awareness of the importance of the Walker family in the history of the Project Area is the establishment of an historic marker. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) has administered the historical marker program since 1946. The program has resulted in the placement of over 2,000 cast aluminum markers across the state. These markers tell the stories of important places and people in the Commonwealth's history, including early inhabitants, political and governmental figures, athletes, entertainers, artists, important businesses and industries, and many other topics. PHMC approves and places new markers along Pennsylvania highways or city streets on a yearly basis, and any individual, organization, or government agency may submit nominations. Limited matching grants are available for the manufacture of markers, and nominators should be prepared to share in the costs of their marker's fabrication. More information can be found on PHMC's website:

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=2539&&SortOrder=200&level=2&parentCommID=1586&menuLevel=Level_2&mode=2.

Recommendation: *Organize interested residents to document and map the locations of historic cemeteries and promote these resources through publications such as the Township website.*

An inventory of the Project Area's historic burial grounds could serve as a starting point to initiate a responsible approach to what the Township should do with these unique resources. To many, cemeteries are an important link to the past, providing historical and genealogical data, information on settlement patterns, burial practices, etc. A citizen group could inventory these assets and publish their existence on the Township website, thereby providing genealogical researchers, historians, and those interested in Township history with a useful resource. The effort would naturally have to be volunteer and grassroots in nature, but if enough momentum is sustained, the project could widen and deepen to include other historic preservation efforts as time progresses.

Case Study:

Other communities have identified the need to document and publicize the importance of cemeteries. In Maryland, the Montgomery County Cemetery Inventory Project has been an ongoing effort spearheaded by three historic preservation groups, Peerless Rockville, Historic Takoma, and the Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites. Using grant funding, the coalition has worked to document the county's numerous burial grounds, with the goal of creating a baseline of information for future action and policy development. The Project created an initial database of all known cemeteries using Microsoft Access. A group of dedicated volunteers has worked since then to survey each one and expand their base of information. A Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map has been created, which shows the locations of cemeteries surveyed so far and a list of those most threatened. For more information, visit Montgomery County Planning's website (<http://montgomeryplanning.org/historic/education/cemeteries.shtm>).

Natural Resources Plan

Goal: Protect vital environmental resources, including floodplains, waterways, steep slopes, and wildlife habitats.

Recommendation: *Adopt a stormwater management ordinance.*

A stormwater management ordinance can provide an excellent level of assistance and protection for South Franklin Township as well as Green Hills Borough. As part of the countywide Stormwater Management Plan currently underway, a model stormwater ordinance will be developed. However, in the interim, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) provides an excellent resource for stormwater management through the publication of its yearly Best Management Practices (MP) Manual. Several useful tools can be placed in a stormwater management ordinance:

- ❖ Structural and non-structural management procedures for stormwater
- ❖ Design Manual for minimum control requirements such as:
 1. Stormwater management ponds
 2. Stormwater management wetlands
 3. Stormwater management infiltration
 4. Stormwater management filtering systems
 5. Stormwater management open channel systems

The Design Manual can and should include ways to minimize increases in new development runoff, including provisions for natural area conservation, grass channels, sheet flow to buffers, disconnection of rooftop and non-rooftop runoff, and environmentally sensitive development. These standards can take the form of performance criteria and can include parameters regarding general feasibility, conveyance, pre-treatment, treatment and geometry, environment and landscaping, and maintenance. The ordinance can also include requirements for applicants to select stormwater management practices that accommodate any unique hydrologic or geologic characteristics of the site (<http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/watershedmgmt/cwp/view.asp?a=1437&q=529063>).

In addition, a stormwater management ordinance can include requirements for review and approval of a stormwater management plan with any proposed development. This plan should contain supporting computations, drawings, and sufficient information describing the manner, location, and type of measures in which stormwater runoff will be managed from the entire development.

Recommendation: *Strengthen the SALDO to include stormwater Best Management Practices (DEP).*

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection publishes an excellent manual for stormwater management, updated yearly. The manual provides guidance on managing all aspects of stormwater: rate, volume, quality, and groundwater recharge. The guide emphasizes that while it is important to control the peak rate of flow during extreme rainfall events, that alone is not sufficient. Reducing the overall volume of runoff during large and

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

small rainfall events, improving water quality, and maintaining groundwater recharge for wells and stream flow are all vital elements of protecting and improving the quality of streams and waterways. The manual outlines Best Management Practices (BMP's), both structural and non-structural. Structural BMP's are basins or facilities such as wet ponds, dry ponds, infiltration basins, and bio-retention areas designed to reduce pollutant load in stormwater runoff. Non-structural BMP's are land use or development practices such as preservation of open space, vegetative buffers and filter strips that minimize the impact on receiving stream systems. The manual can be found online at: <http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/watershedmgmt/cwp/view.asp?a=1437&q=529063&watershedmgmtNav=> and clicking "BMP Manual."

Recommendation: *Participate in Washington County's Act 167 Plan and work with County Planning officials to identify and prioritize stormwater infrastructure improvements that would improve water quality.*

South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough should work with Washington County to develop a list of key infrastructure improvements that can assist the Project Area with stormwater issues. As stated in Section 3: Needs Assessment, the County is in the process of assembling their Act 167 Plan. This Plan presents the perfect opportunity for the communities and the County to work together to identify key improvements and present a timeline and plan for implementing them.

Recommendation: *Preserve riparian buffers by integrating riparian protection standards into existing land development ordinances.*

Riparian buffers can be a practical and constructive step in ensuring that area streams and waterways remain uncompromised. Riparian buffers are vegetated areas next to water resources that protect these resources from nonpoint source pollution and provide bank stabilization and aquatic and wildlife habitat. One of the most widely recognized buffer planning models is the three-zone buffer that was developed by the USDA Forest Service (Welsch, 1991).

- ❖ The first zone begins at the normal water level and extends a minimum of 15 feet along a line perpendicular to the watercourse. Dominant vegetation consists of existing or planted woody vegetation suitable for the site and intended purpose. This zone should remain undisturbed; therefore, tree removal is generally not permitted.
- ❖ The second zone begins at the edge of zone one and extends a minimum of 60 feet perpendicular to the watercourse. While vegetation in zone two should be similar to zone one, removal of tree and shrub products is permitted on a regular basis provided the trees and shrubs are replaced.
- ❖ The third zone begins at the outer edge of zone two and has a minimum width of 20 feet. Vegetation in this zone can be grazed or un-grazed grass or



A tributary of Chartiers Creek along SR 18 in South Franklin Township. (Mackin, 2009).

other plant communities as long as it facilitates sediment filtering, nutrient uptake, and the conversion of concentrated flow to uniform, shallow, sheet flow through the use of structural practices such as level spreaders (Lowrance et al., 1995).

Other techniques to consider include encouraging bio-engineering for stream restoration projects when possible and the use “hard armoring” only when necessary as well as encouraging and promoting streambank fencing. Riparian buffer requirements can be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance and the SALDO or can be adopted as a stand-alone ordinance.

Adopting a riparian buffer ordinance involves a process similar to that of any ordinance. The streams, corridors, wetlands, and other water resources that the Township and / or Borough wishes to protect are identified and analyzed by a private consultant; the consultant then drafts the regulations. These regulations can be specific to each corridor or stream identified or can be overarching and apply to the entire municipality. In addition, the ordinance can be designated to only apply to certain areas, or specialized “districts” within the municipality. As with any ordinance, the municipality must hold a public hearing and advertise the ordinance in the newspaper before official enactment can occur.

An excellent model ordinance for riparian buffer techniques can be found at: http://planning.montcopa.org/planning/cwp/fileserver,Path,PLANNING/2006Guidebook_RiparCorrCons.pdf,assetquid,24c7f069-fa80-47a9-bedddbfa0f1746c3.pdf.

Recommendation: *Organize a workshop to educate residents about stormwater and the benefits of rain barrels and other techniques that can be implemented by private property owners.*

Stormwater management workshops are becoming an increasingly popular way to teach private property owners as well as public officials the benefits of adequate stormwater management. While it is important for municipalities to engage in efficient stormwater management, individual homeowners and local businesses can also take steps to lessen their impact on community watersheds. This can include using rain gardens, cisterns, or rain barrels to collect runoff, replacing driveways and walkways with pervious materials, installing green roofs, or re-grading yards to slow runoff or increase infiltration (<http://www.epa.gov/piedpage/stormwater.htm>). The PA DEP regularly works with communities and local educational institutions (such as colleges or universities) to hold such workshops; speakers from local municipalities, environmental groups or non-profits, and County and state offices can all provide valuable lessons in ways to mitigate the impact of development on local watersheds. More information can be found by visiting their website (<http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/watershedmgmt/cwp/view.asp?a=1437&q=518682&watershedmgmtNav=1>).

Goal: Promote environmental stewardship.

Recommendation: *Support Washington County's efforts to establish and fund a PA CleanWays chapter.*

Pennsylvania CleanWays is a non-profit organization that assists communities with identifying and cleaning illegal dumpsites along with maintaining sites that have been part of past clean-up efforts. PA CleanWays is similar to the Adopt-A-Highway program, but focuses on debris sites along non-state roads and adjacent areas. Around 20 local

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

chapters (most countywide) exist within the Commonwealth; however, Washington County does not have its own chapter. The County has pursued the idea of initiating a Washington County chapter; however, funding has been an issue. Both South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough should determine if an adequate level of interest exists among residents to volunteer for and establish a CleanWays program. If it does, the community can coordinate with the County so that when funding becomes available, they can participate in the program. More information is available on their website (<http://www.pacleanways.org>).

Recommendation: Hold a “Hard to Recycle” event on an annual or semi-annual basis.

The Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC) regularly collaborates with communities and retailers (such as Best Buy and Verizon Wireless) to collect items that are hard to recycle. Normally, such an event will accept paper products, metal, glass, and plastic containers, cell phones, large appliances, tires, latex paint, and computer or electronic equipment. In some cases, the event can also accept phone books, mixed paper, and aluminum cans. The collection events also help teach the importance of recycling and waste reduction. South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough can work with the PRC to hold such an event in order to maximize their resources. More information on these events can be found at: http://www.prc.org/community_collections.html.

Recommendation: Consider and implement the Washington County Greenways Plan in future ordinances.

Both the Chartiers Creek and Ten Mile Creek watersheds/water corridors are delineated, respectfully, as Primary and Secondary Recreational Greenways. Supporting the goals and recommendations of the Greenways Plan in the Multi-Comprehensive Plan as well as in any future ordinances that the communities undertake will help the municipalities qualify for various state funding sources in the future. It will also assist in improving the designated “hubs and spokes” plan outlined in the Greenways Plan.

Transportation Plan

Goal: Maintain safe road conditions and alleviate traffic and safety concerns on important thoroughfares throughout the Project Area.

Recommendation: *Realign the intersection of Jolly School Road, Lagonda Road, and SR 18.*

If this intersection were to experience gains in traffic due to future development, a realignment of Lagonda Road should be considered, directly across from existing Jolly School Road, forming a '+' intersection. Jolly School Road has a bridge on it so its relocation would require the construction of a new bridge.

Recommendation: *Limit access from Jolly School Road and Old Plank Road to the Schoolhouse Pizza parking lot and the Keith Homes parking lot by installing curbing and creating defined driveways in order to make access safer.*

As noted in Section 3: Needs Assessment, Old Plank Road goes through the Schoolhouse Pizza parking lot. Pavement markings or curbing should be considered at this location to identify where Old Plank Road is located. In addition, vehicles parking in the Schoolhouse Pizza lot currently back out onto Old Plank Road, causing a safety hazard. Parking stalls should also be clearly defined by pavement markings. Access should be limited for the Schoolhouse Pizza parking lot and the Keith Homes parking lot by installing curbing and creating defined driveways.

Recommendation: *Petition SPC to include the widening and roadway improvements to SR 18 on the TIP if proposed development occurs.*

Although it does not appear that a traffic signal or left turn lanes are warranted at this intersection at this time, the Franklin Lake View Estates, Lone Pine Estates, and additional development in the area could lead to the future installation of a traffic signal at this location. Northbound and southbound left turn lanes on SR 18 are also a potential future improvement, although a culvert just south of Lagonda Road would most likely need replacing. Since the responsibility for this improvement does not lie with the Township but with PennDOT, the Township should work with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) to get it added to the list of Transportation Improvement Projects (TIP).

Recommendation: *Improve pedestrian mobility and safety in the vicinity of the intersection of Jolly School Road, Lagonda Road, and SR 18, and between the Township municipal building, the elementary school, the Township Park, and Schoolhouse Pizza.*

Provide crosswalks and signing for improving pedestrian safety. Since the responsibility for this improvement does not lie with the Township but with PennDOT, the Township should work with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) to get it added to the list of Transportation Improvement Projects (TIP).

Recommendation: *Remove the existing stop sign on Pikes Peak Road and install a new stop sign on Old Post Road where it intersects with Pikes Peak Road.*

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

This should eliminate the sight distance problem at this location as the sight distance for Pikes Peak Road looking to the right appears limited. Since the responsibility for this improvement does not lie with the Township but with PennDOT, the Township should work with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) to get it added to the list of Transportation Improvement Projects (TIP).

Recommendation: *Install a new stop sign on Lagonda Road on the westbound approach at Cove Road and cut back excess shrubs and trees.*

The corner sight distance looking to the left from Cove Road at Lagonda Road is not up to PennDOT standards. By cutting back the bush and trees that are causing the sight distance problem, this would greatly improve the condition. However, a more permanent solution to the problem would be to consider installing a stop sign at Lagonda Road on the westbound approach at Cove Road. Since the responsibility for this improvement does not lie with the Township but with PennDOT, the Township should work with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) to get it added to the list of Transportation Improvement Projects (TIP).

Recommendation: *Limit access in front of the Township Fire Station and install center and edge line pavement markings along the length of Jolly School Road.*

The Fire Station parking lot along the northern side of Jolly School Road is wide open to Jolly School Road, i.e. access is not limited, and as discussed in Section 3: Needs Assessment, it should be. Some sort of curb, sidewalk or fence should be considered in this location so that access is limited to two ingress/egress driveways. Finally, at the time of the field view, Jolly School Road had double yellow center line and white edge lines pavement markings from SR 18 for approximately 400 feet and then they stopped. The rest of Jolly School Road had no pavement markings. Since Jolly School Road is wide enough, these longitudinal pavement markings should be installed along the remainder of Jolly School Road. Since the responsibility for this improvement does not lie with the Township but with PennDOT, the Township should work with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) to get it added to the list of Transportation Improvement Projects (TIP).

Recommendation: *Consider implementing a transportation impact fee to assist South Franklin Township in alleviating future pressure on local roadways when residential and commercial development begins to occur at a rapid rate.*

Municipalities experiencing intense residential, commercial, and/or industrial development often struggle to fund roadway improvements needed to serve that development. It is important to keep in mind that all large developments on state or local roads should be reviewed by PennDOT to determine if a state Traffic Impact Study / Highway Occupancy Permit is required. However, transportation impact fees are an additional tool to narrow the funding gap. Transportation impact fees are authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) Article V-A. They are permitted in any municipality that has adopted a comprehensive plan, an updated Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO), and an updated Zoning Ordinance. Municipalities with a Multi-Municipal comprehensive plan may enact Multi-Municipal transportation impact fee ordinances.

Fees can be assessed to new development in proportion to its impact on transportation, i.e., the traffic the development is expected to generate during peak commuter periods. Funds collected are used to improve roadways used by development-related traffic, enabling Pennsylvania municipalities to provide adequate infrastructure to support economic growth and development. Fees may be assessed to new development in proportion to its impact; the MPC limits the fee to a maximum of \$1,000 per peak hour trip. Specifically the fee may

be used for construction, acquisition of land and / or rights-of-way, engineering, legal costs, planning costs, or debt service. Fees may be used to fund 100 percent of the costs for improvements to local roads or 50 percent of the cost of improvements to state roads. Typically, the fees are used for capacity improvements to accommodate traffic generated by new development, including adjustments to traffic signals, new signals, auxiliary turn lanes, new lanes and / or roads. It is important to keep in mind that the fees may not be used to address existing deficiencies or anticipated deficiencies unrelated to development.

However, adopting an impact fee ordinance involves complying with certain regulations and completing specific studies, which represent a significant investment by the municipality. The steps include the following:

- ❖ *Establish Traffic Impact Fee Advisory Committee (TIFAC)* - This is a seven-member board, each serving two- year terms, consisting of one representative of the building industry, one certified public accountant, one certified engineer, one licensed realtor, a Planning Commission representative and two citizen representatives.
- ❖ *Complete Land Use Assumptions Report* - Should describe current conditions and reflect projected changes in land uses, densities of residential development, intensities of nonresidential development, and population growth rates. These are all things which may affect the level of traffic within the designated area or areas over a period of at least the next five years.
- ❖ *Complete Roadway Sufficiency Analysis* - An inventory of roadway improvements planned by PennDOT and land development proposals that have been given preliminary or final land development approval by the municipality within and surrounding future growth areas. If significant capacity improvements are planned or programmed in the immediate future along arterial and collector corridors that may negate the need for future improvements, impact fees may not be needed.
- ❖ *Complete Transportation Capital Improvements Plan* - An inventory of traffic volumes and capacities should be completed for the roadways and intersections within and surrounding future growth areas. An existing level of service analysis should be completed to identify deficiencies. If existing levels of service are acceptable but will likely become deficient with future growth or numerous deficiencies already exist, impact fees could be an effective tool to fund improvements to accommodate new development.
- ❖ *Adopt Transportation Impact Fee Ordinance by resolution*

Before incurring the up-front costs of implementing a transportation impact fee ordinance, municipalities should consider several issues related to existing traffic conditions and projected land development activity to help determine whether the investment would indeed be worthwhile. The Township needs to consider the future land use projections; an impact fee is only of great benefit if 50 to 100 residential units and 50,000 to 100,000 square feet of non-residential development is expected per year for the next five years. In addition, if a review of proposed road improvements reveals that PennDOT plans significant capacity improvements, an impact fee may not be beneficial. Although the Project Area is not witnessing the type of growth outlined here currently, it is very possible that this rate of growth could occur once infrastructure is in place and if economic development projects such as the Airport expansion and Skypointe, happen. As the Needs Assessment demonstrates, continued residential and commercial growth along the SR 18 corridor could necessitate improvements such as a signal at the SR 18 and Jolly School and Lagonda Road intersection and additional travel lanes along SR 18.

Developing an ordinance could take about a year and would cost between \$50,000 and \$100,000, though the cost of the study could be included in the total cost of the road improvement package. Communities can also enact a "temporary" impact fee while the appropriate studies are being completed, but all fees collected must be rolled into

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

the permanent fund within a certain period of time. More information on traffic impact fees can be found online at: <ftp://ftp.dot.state.pa.us/public/Bureaus/Cpdm/ImpactFees.pdf>.

Recommendation: Consider adopting PennDOT's "Access Management Model Ordinance for PA Municipalities Handbook" into the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO).

Access management is a means of controlling the ways in which vehicles can access major roadways, using techniques such as limiting the number, location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, intersections, and connections with local roadways. It also involves roadway design applications, such as median treatments and auxiliary lanes, and the appropriate spacing of traffic signals. The purpose of access management is to provide vehicular access to land development in a manner that preserves the safety and efficiency of the transportation system. Although it involves a sometimes complex balance of the need for local accessibility with the need for overall mobility, properly managed access is vital to the safety and efficiency of a community's road network. PennDOT's Access Management Model Ordinance is intended to promote safe and efficient traffic flow on higher order roadways within a municipality while protecting the rights of abutting landowners to reasonable street access. By reducing the potential for crashes at access points along the corridor and avoiding future degradation of roadway capacity, this access management ordinance serves to promote the public health, safety, and welfare of citizens. The ordinance can be found on the Web at <ftp://ftp.dot.state.pa.us/public/Bureaus/Cpdm/WEB/BestPracticesinAccessManagement.pdf>.

Goal: Enhance pedestrian and bicycle mobility and safety.

Recommendation: Require walking trails in new subdivisions, developments, and redevelopments through the SALDO.

Even if development does not occur at a rate high enough to warrant a fee-in-lieu-of or fee dedication, South Franklin Township can still implement requirements within the context of their Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) for recreational amenities such as walking trails. A fee in-lieu-of or fee dedication requires that a developer either set aside a certain amount of land for recreational purposes or pay a fee to the Township that will be used for recreational or park improvements. However, development rates may not warrant such an action for South Franklin Township; a simpler method may simply be to adopt a requirement within the context of the SALDO. Many ordinances establish a scale based on the type and intensity of use and require a certain percentage of land be set aside for trails, or that any new development connect to existing trails, or that the developer provide an easement for future trails. So for example, commercial uses can be categorized by size (under 10,000 square feet, 10,000 to 45,000 square feet, etc.) and residential uses can also be categorized by intensity (single-family dwellings, multi-family dwellings, condominiums, etc.).

Recommendation: Explore the option of a walking / cycling trail along new sewer right-of-way easements in both Green Hills Borough and South Franklin Township that can connect both existing and future residential developments.

As a community experiences growth and development, the demand for trail networks that access parks, public lands, and connect neighborhoods increases. The presence of linear utility and transportation corridors in these settings offers a unique recreational opportunity in the form of trail development for communities. Utility corridors by their nature often act as green or open space in a community. However, when a new line is constructed, it is often possible to work with service providers to develop a way to use these typically passive spaces as active

recreational resources for a community. These utilities can provide solutions to improve the economic vitality, aesthetic value, and general quality of life for the communities they transect.

(<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/greenways/counties/montgomery.html>).



The Sligo Creek Trail in Maryland travels through sensitive wetland areas and a floodplain forest. (<http://www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails/trailNRT/SligoCreek-MD.html>).

South Franklin and Green Hills are presented with an important opportunity in this regard; because they have not yet experienced significant growth, they can plan for the future, and ensure that trail connections are provided for now, instead of being forced to try to make connections once development has already occurred. In particular, the prospect of utilizing the planned sewerage corridor for trail development provides a solution to an important problem: as the community grows, its recreational needs will continue to increase. Already many residents feel that a walking trail is needed in the Township; as more residents settle in planned developments (such as Lone Pine Estates and Franklin Lakeview Estates) this need will only intensify. As currently planned, the future sewerage corridor will extend from Franklin Lakeview to Franklin Manor and

over to Lone Pine Estates, servicing residents in those new neighborhoods as well as existing residents along SR 18. This corridor is an excellent candidate for a walking/biking trail because it will connect all three neighborhoods and has the opportunity to intersect with the current Township park facilities and existing walking trail.

The establishment of a trail along this corridor will require intensive and active cooperation and planning. Important impacts to consider include:

- ❖ Ownership of the trail
- ❖ A policy providing that the needs of the sewer authority should take precedence over the needs of the public
- ❖ Establishment of a coalition that oversees the whole length of the trail
- ❖ Annual operations plan
- ❖ Establishing times for specific operation and maintenance tasks
- ❖ Establishing design standards to ensure separation of the trail from any maintenance access ways
- ❖ Adequate signage and intensive education programs
- ❖ Informal/neighborhood patrols

Case Study:

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) has done much to improve recreational space and greenways in the greater metro D.C. area. In many cases, they work with local governments to establish permanent greenways and trails along their sanitary sewer easements. One example is the Northwest Branch of the Sligo Creek Trail in Montgomery County and Prince George's County, Maryland. The Northwest Branch is a hard surface, eight-foot-wide trail that runs in conjunction with a sewer line replacement and stream bank stabilization. The WSSC buried most of the pipelines underneath the trail, though there are a few dips that reveal aqueducts. More information regarding this trail and other partnerships between Maryland and the WSSC can be

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

found by visiting the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' website at <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/greenways/counties/montgomery.html>.

Goal: Enhance multi-modal transportation opportunities in the Project Area.

Recommendation: Support the expansion of the Washington County Airport and the implementation of the Washington County Airport Master Plan.

South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough both need to take active steps in supporting Washington County in its efforts to improve and expand the Airport facilities. As outlined in the Needs Assessment, the immediate concern is to alleviate issues with the Runway Safety Area (RSA). The Township and Borough should work with the Washington County Planning Commission (WCPC) and the Redevelopment Authority of Washington County (RACW) to identify properties located within the current RSA and should cooperate with the County to acquire these properties so that the RSA may be extended to meet federal regulations and standards. Properties along Moore Road and SR 18 are of high importance in this regard.

South Franklin and Green Hills should also take proactive steps in assisting WCPC and RACW in constructing new facilities for airport-related businesses. As documented in the Master Plan, there is a waiting list of tenants for hangars. The two communities should cooperate with WCPC and RACW to obtain, prepare, and build on the parcels to the north of the Airport. In addition, both communities should assist WCPC and RACW in identifying parcels for additional acquisition so that land may be accumulated gradually with the hope of extending the runway in the future.



The Washington County Airport is an important economic generator for the Project Area as well as the surrounding region (Mackin, 2009).

Recommendation: Implement and enforce zoning regulations regarding the Runway Safety Area (RSA) in order to improve air traffic control.

The Runway Safety Area (RSA) zone is an important facet for communities affected by airports. The purpose of specialized airport zoning is to protect the lives and property of users of the Airport as well as the property or occupants of land near the Airport. South Franklin Township's Zoning Ordinance specifically establishes four types of zones in an effort to prevent obstructions that could affect Airport operations or reduce the size of areas available for landings, takeoffs, or other air maneuvers. It is important that the Township enforce these regulations in order to maintain a high level of safety at the Airport and surrounding area. In addition, Green Hills Borough should implement and enforce

these regulations, as well, as some of the Borough falls within the limits of the safety zones.

Recommendation: *Coordinate with public transit agencies (GG & C, Washington County Transportation Authority) to determine if there is a need to expand public transit service to the Airport.*

Once the Airport begins to expand its businesses, and when Skypointe begins to develop, a greater demand for public transit within the Project Area may arise. Current demand for bus or shuttle service to the City of Washington and other points of interest is low, but this could very well change as the Airport develops into a hub for employment for the immediate vicinity. Demand may never warrant full-time bus service, but a daily shuttle for employees could be a convenience that would make working at the Airport and vicinity very attractive. The Township and Airport should work together with local public transit service providers such as the Washington County Transportation Authority and GG & C Bus Service to ensure that the needs of workers at the Airport as well as residents of the Project Area are being satisfied.

Land Use Plan

Goal: Ensure that future development is compatible with the existing character of the Project Area.

Recommendation: Update the South Franklin Township Zoning Ordinance to reflect the Future Land Use Plan and community development objectives.

Zoning is perhaps the most important tool for implementing a Comprehensive Plan. It is the best and most efficient way of achieving the Future Land Use vision. It also offers the greatest flexibility and variety of tools for municipal implementation. As such, the following supporting recommendations are aimed at providing the Project Area with a comprehensive go-to guide for future amendments or new ordinances.

A good comprehensive plan uses Future Land Use as its foundation. Future Land Use aims to utilize all of the data gathered in the comprehensive planning process, including demographic and economic statistics, infrastructure assessment, and analysis of current land use regulations, and harmonize it with goals identified by elected officials and citizens to project the most likely and most appropriate locations for future growth. When land uses and developments are built in logical locations and are designed well, everyone benefits. Residents benefit from quiet streets, pleasant neighborhoods, and convenient services; businesses enjoy good transportation access and positive community relations; the local government and service providers benefit from a strong tax base and efficient systems. On the other hand, without the guide of an appropriate Future Land Use plan, poor land use decisions result in the spread of sprawl, increases in taxes, traffic congestion, and a decline in the quality of the natural environment.

Yet it is important to remember that Future Land Use is just a first step. It is a good first step, but planning alone will not ensure the achievement of a community's vision. Innovative zoning and flexible site design standards must follow the Future Land Use Map. The following section presents Future Land Use classifications with this end goal in mind. Each classification presents a brief description of the Future Land Use category and possible uses that zoning could permit in those areas. This list is by no means exhaustive, nor is it a definitive list of zoning districts. Rather, this should act as a general outline and a starting point for drafting new zoning or subdivision regulations.

The Future Land Use Plan is in compliance with the regulations set forth by the PA Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and recognizes the following:

- ❖ 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.

On the following pages are the descriptions of each category. For the locations of each category, please refer to *Map 4.1: Future Land Use*.

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough



Flex – industrial space in California Technology Park, PA (RACW 2008).

Flex Commercial/Industrial (Targeted Investment Area)

The Flex Commercial/Industrial classification supports the types of uses that will compliment the community's vision and community development objectives. This is meant to reflect the desire for this area to become the major future growth area for economic development. Because of their proximity to the Airport, major transportation corridors (SR 18), and easy access to the amenities offered in the City of Washington, these parcels represent an ideal area for flexible commercial, office, and light industrial uses. Business parks, retail, light manufacturing (or similar industrial uses with little to no impact), office space, and warehousing are all appropriate uses for this area. This would establish a cohesive district to act as a hub for local

employment. However, due to the Project Area's inherently rural nature and charm, it is vital that regulations are put in place to ensure that appropriate design concepts are followed. Landscaping, signage, connected or shared service roads, building height and vehicular and pedestrian access points should be addressed in the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and/or Zoning Ordinance to ensure that new development visually enhances the area.

Sample Uses:

- ❖ Airport
- ❖ Small assembly plants
- ❖ Printing establishments
- ❖ Contractor storage yards
- ❖ Warehouse, distribution, or wholesale
- ❖ Transit or truck terminal
- ❖ Small-scale commercial manufacturing, i.e. cabinet shop, upholstery shop, or similar
- ❖ Business or industrial parks
- ❖ Research and development space/ "flex space" (which could include office, support, light industrial, and warehouse/research areas)

Mixed Use – Residential / Commercial (Targeted Investment Area)

The Mixed Use classification is intended to allow some small-scale commercial uses to be intermixed amongst the existing commercial and residential uses located along the northern section of SR 18 into North Franklin Township. The Mixed Use designation will allow for a buffer between the Flex Commercial / Industrial, Local Commercial, and Low Density Single Family Residential classifications.

Sample Uses:



Multi-family housing (Mackin, 2004).

- ❖ Retail/ local commercial (under 5,000 square feet), i.e. offices, medical or dental offices/clinics,
- ❖ Park/recreational facilities
- ❖ Detached single-family, attached single-family, multi-family (duplexes, apartments, etc.)

Local Commercial (Targeted Investment Area)

The Commercial classification is meant to reflect residents' vision for a town-center-style retail development mixed with pre-existing development. As with the flex commercial designation, this area is where the community would like to see the majority of its future commercial growth directed. The Township municipal building, the elementary school, and Township Park are all located in this area. Commercial development should incorporate design concepts that will encourage appropriate facades, limited building heights, adequate pedestrian-scale lighting, landscaping, etc. This type of development would serve to support the commercial and/or light industrial uses near the Airport, and would satisfy residents' needs for more convenience retail, as well as attract motorists traveling through the area.



Town-center style development in Massachusetts (Cyburbia, 2009).

Sample Uses:

- ❖ Retail/ local commercial (under 65,000 square feet), i.e. grocery stores, food establishment, bank, service stations, etc.
- ❖ Theaters, offices, medical or dental offices/clinics, veterinary facilities
- ❖ Business services, such as laundry, dry-cleaning, automotive repair
- ❖ Service establishments, i.e. electronic repair, clock/watch repair, small equipment repair, small welding shop, etc.
- ❖ Daycare/preschool/child care facilities
- ❖ Church, school, etc.
- ❖ Park/recreational facilities
- ❖ Commercial recreation/fitness (indoor or outdoor)
- ❖ Detached single-family, attached single-family, multi-family (duplexes, apartments, etc.)

Medium Density Residential (Targeted Growth Area)

The Medium Density Residential classification supports residential development that is more intense in nature, about 6 dwelling units per acre on average, sewerage connections (or possible future connections), and a mix of detached and attached single-family dwellings. It reflects land use that is already occurring or is likely to occur, and will complement the commercial town-center mixed-use style of development along nearby SR 18 as well as easy access to the elementary school and Township park. This land use classification, along with



Medium-Density Residential – Smaller lot sizes, mixture of housing types, conserved open space (University of Nebraska- Lincoln, 2005).

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

the local commercial and flex commercial classifications, encapsulate the future growth area of the Project Area. The Washington County Comprehensive Plan supports the designation of this northern portion of the Project Area as the future growth area for the community. Clustering or conservation subdivision techniques should be encouraged in order to preserve the agrarian character and peaceful quality of life that attracts residents to the Project Area.

Sample Uses:

- ❖ Detached single-family
- ❖ Attached single-family, i.e. townhomes, patio homes
- ❖ Multi-family (duplexes, apartments, etc.)
- ❖ Parks, schools, churches, institutional, etc.



Low Density Residential – Conservation by Design on Larger Lots

Low Density Residential (Future Growth Area)

The Low-Density Residential designation reflects the type of residential development that is most likely to occur in the future, and consists of a good portion of the northern and central parts of the Project Area. Already in areas of South Franklin Township where public water service is provided, low-density single-family residential development is occurring. Typically, this is along the major roadway corridors in the Township, with particular emphasis on Jolly School Road, Alamae Lakes Road, Vista Valley Road, and Lagonda Road. As such, this designation continues that trend, projecting that similar low density residential will occur along other major roadways and that some limited subdivision development in the north-central portions of the Township is supported. This type of development should be limited in density (no more than 1 dwelling unit on 3

acres) and should be detached. Single-family attached or multi-family dwellings should not be permitted in these areas if the rural atmosphere of the Project Area is to be maintained. If sewerage is established in these areas, lot sizes may be smaller. Conservation subdivision; clustering; buffering; landscaping; and limited driveways/access points should be utilized.



Open Space in South Franklin Township (Mackin, 2009)

Sample Uses:

- ❖ Detached single-family
- ❖ Parks, schools, churches, institutional uses, etc.

Agriculture/Open Space/Woodlands (Rural Resource Area)

Besides Low Density Residential, the Agriculture/Open Space/Woodlands designation comprises the largest amount of the Project Area, particularly in the parts to the south. In this classification, agriculture and single-family homes at a very low density (no more than 1 dwelling unit on 5 acres) are the primary uses. The goal of this classification is to limit new development and encourage land uses that are

complimentary to or associated with agriculture uses, open space, or wooded areas. Residential housing should be in very low densities and consistent with the rural character of the area. Any new residential uses should provide for buffers to minimize land use conflicts, particularly agriculture.

Sample Uses:

- ❖ Agricultural uses
- ❖ Kennels / stables / riding academies / etc.
- ❖ Commercial recreation/fitness (indoor or outdoor)
- ❖ Detached large-lot single-family residential

Special Recreation

This area is comprised of Lone Pine Country Club located in Green Hills Borough and the State Game Lands located in the southernmost portion of South Franklin Township as well as floodplains and is meant to protect the recreational and natural aspects of those uses.

Sample Uses:

- ❖ Golf course
- ❖ Game lands
- ❖ One-hundred year floodplains



Special Recreation – Lone Pine Golf Course (Mackin, 2009)

Recommendation: *Green Hills Borough should adopt a joint zoning ordinance with South Franklin Township.*

Because of the amount of development projected to occur in Green Hills Borough as part of the Lone Pine Estates development, it is essential that the Borough address the issue of zoning in the future. While it may seem unnecessary now since one private developer is handling the development, it does have the possibility of becoming an issue in the future. Once the development reaches build-out, over 400 new units of housing will exist in the Borough. As such, there exists the opportunity for homeowners to sell their land or property, at which point, without zoning, the new landowner is free to do as they wish the property. Zoning is the best and most adequate way to ensure that inappropriate land uses do not disturb the integrity of the neighborhood.

Moreover, joint zoning is particularly important because it offers a number of benefits to both municipalities. Perhaps the most significant is that it gives the municipalities a certain amount of insulation from exclusionary zoning challenges. For example, the fair share exclusionary zoning doctrine states that a zoning ordinance must provide for every conceivable type of residential use. Under this doctrine, every legitimate use of land must be provided for somewhere within the municipality. If a use is not permitted or is excluded the burden of proof shifts to the municipality to show that the proposed development would pose a substantial threat to the public, health, safety or welfare. When a municipality fails to meet its burden of proof, a court can invalidate the ordinance by declaring the ordinance exclusionary because the prohibition is unreasonable, arbitrary, or confiscatory and allow the excluded residential use or development (Governor's Center for Local Government Services, Series #2: The Planning Commission in Pennsylvania).

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

The advantage is that challenges to joint zoning regulations are considered and reviewed within the context of the entire area and not by each individual constituent municipality. In fact, on several occasions the MPC was amended to facilitate land use planning and zoning on a regional basis. Section 811-A of Article VIII-A, Joint Municipal Zoning authorizes courts to review regional zoning not only within individual member municipalities but also within the geographic area jointly planned and zoned by participating municipalities.

In addition, in a Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision issued May 31, 2007, the Court held that the language of the Airport Zoning Act (AZA) made its requirements mandatory for affected municipalities. While South Franklin Township has already incorporated airport zoning into their zoning ordinance, Green Hills Borough is required to implement and enforce the AZA, as some of the Borough falls within the limits of the safety zones (as shown on *Map 1.4: Airport Aerial Surface Boundary*). The Borough should work with Washington County to craft an ordinance that is both compliant with the AZA and useful in protecting the Airport's airspace (Gromlowicz and Letherby, 2007).

The Land Use Compatibility guidelines can be adopted as an overlay zone and incorporated in a municipal zoning ordinance. The advantage of the overlay zone is that it maintains the existing zoning designation and places additional conditions on the activities and uses that can occur in the area beneath the overlay zone (<ftp://ftp.dot.state.pa.us/public/bureaus/aviation/palanduse.pdf>).

It is very important that zoning officers become familiar with the FAA's notification of proposed construction requirements found in FAR Part 77.13 and 77.15. These provisions outline the standards for review of development that may be an obstruction according to Part 77. The lack of enforcement of these standards can cause obstructions to navigation. If the zoning officer has questions about these provisions, they should contact the Airport District Office of the FAA for clarification.

Recommendation: Protect agricultural areas within the Project Area by establishing Rural Resource Areas in the Township.

The Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) currently permits Rural Resource Areas if an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement (ICA) is signed between the two municipalities. Rural Resource Areas are defined as an "area...within which rural resources uses including but not limited to, agriculture, timbering, mining, quarrying, and other extractive industries, forest and game lands and recreation and tourism are encouraged and enhanced, development that is compatible with or supportive of such uses is permitted, and public infrastructure services are not provided except in villages." The intention of such an area is to limit development by restricting the availability of infrastructure in those areas. It is important to keep in mind that while such a designation would include an understanding that public funds would not be used to extend water or sewerage to these locations, there is nothing to preclude a developer from providing such services. Suggested areas that should be considered Rural Resource Areas are indicated on *Map 4.2: Targeted Areas for Investment*.

Recommendation: Provide residents with materials on programs that assist farmers with agricultural operations.

There are many programs available in Pennsylvania that aim to assist farmers with maintaining their agricultural operations. South Franklin Township should include materials on these programs in any municipal publications, such as the Township Website and the recommended "welcome packet." Examples of programs available include the following:

- ❖ Ag Map (<http://agmap.psu.edu/>): AgMap is Pennsylvania's online agricultural directory designed to help Pennsylvania ag businesses connect to the general public by providing free listings that are easily searchable. Consumers can find the products and services and easily contact those businesses that would best serve their needs.
- ❖ Pennsylvania Preferred (<http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us/papREFERRED/site/default.asp>): 93% of Pennsylvanians desire to purchase and consume locally-sourced products. The PA Preferred® logo helps consumers identify products of Pennsylvania agriculture, providing a valuable service to both the producer and consumer. The program exists, as well, to increase awareness, accessibility and consumption of products grown and processed (if applicable) in Pennsylvania. The logo has become recognized not only by consumers but also by retailers, wholesalers, chefs and restaurateurs as a symbol of superior taste, quality and freshness. By choosing PA Preferred Products, consumers can support local producers and thereby the local economy; enjoy optimal freshness, quality and taste; and benefit the environment as a result of minimal product transportation.
- ❖ Pennsylvania Center for Farm Transitions (<http://www.iplantofarm.com/Default.aspx>): Pennsylvania Center for Farm Transitions provides a one-stop source of information and services to Pennsylvania farmers who are in transition. Their target audience includes a beginning farmer with no existing operation; the next generation on a family farm who will be ascending to a management role; the retiring farmer who may or may not plan on transferring the farm operation to the next generation; a farmer relocating from either within or outside of Pennsylvania; and the farmer who by either choice or necessity is leaving the farm for another career. The Center's mission is to "provide information, referrals and consultations to farmers, for plans that will secure and maintain farming's important role in Pennsylvania's economy." The goal is to help farmers with developing innovative responses to challenges, remaining competitive in today's economy, and enhancing natural resources for future generations. The Center provides each farmer with information, referrals and consultations regarding his or her distinct situation.
- ❖ PAgrows (<http://www.pagrows.com/>): PAgrows specializes in helping farmers, food processors, farmer's market operators, and other agricultural businesses gain access to a number of state and federal programs that have grants and low interest loans which help to compliment private and local lender funding. Grant programs are available on private, local, state and federal levels. Grants are typically available for only short periods of time and often for very specific activities.
 - The First Industries Fund created a \$10 million grant program for the specific purpose of funding pre-development studies and planning activities. The money was shared between both the agriculture and tourism industry and is quickly being depleted. The Commonwealth Financing Authority administers this grant.
 - The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture provides grants for capital improvement projects for Fairs. Only Fairs are eligible to apply for these grants. The grants are administered from PDA's Fair division.
 - Product promotion grants, both matching and direct are also available through the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and are administered by the Bureau of Market Development. These grants are available for a variety of purposes related to the promotion of Pennsylvania grown and processed products.

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

- The Keystone Development Center provides grants and technical assistance to cooperatives. These grants are available to assist with the creation and growth of cooperatives. Grants are also available for educational purposes related to cooperatives within the state.
- Low interest loans are available through a variety of state and federal programs. Each program consists of a different partnership of local service providers, lenders and borrower eligibility requirements. On the left of this page, you will see links pertaining to various categories for which loans can be used. Below are brief descriptions of the loans that are available as well as links to specifics about those loans.
- The Next Generation Farmer Loan Program encourages lenders to finance beginning farmers by exempting the lender from owing Federal, State, or county income taxes on the interest it would earn from the loan. This allows the lender to offer a lower interest rate that it would usually offer.
- The Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority has a long-standing reputation for providing effective low interest loans on land and buildings. Recently, it has changed certain requirements, which have in the past hindered access by agribusiness. With the changes, PIDA becomes an effective tool for larger land and real estate deals.
- The Pennsylvania Working Capital Growth Fund is a partnership between the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and PNC Bank, which has two lines of credit that have been made available to agriculture.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture continues to offer its Farm Service Agency loans using federal money to provide direct loans to borrowers as well as guaranteeing loans from private banks.
- The Federal Small Business Administration, through its 504 loan program has been providing agribusiness with opportunities to purchase land at lower interest rates with a higher cap than most of the other state and federal programs.

Recommendation: *Determine the local support and interest in partaking in the Agricultural Security Area (ASA) Program in both municipalities.*

Currently there are no ASA's established in either the Township or Green Hills Borough, however municipal and elected officials should educate residents about their availability. In order to establish an ASA, the municipalities must first establish a joint advisory committee (or separate committees if only one municipality chooses to pursue an ASA and / or they do not want to do joint ASAs). Commonwealth law permits the governing bodies to cooperate in the review of a proposed security area and also allows them to provide joint public notices and joint public hearings (if they so choose).

In either case (joint or separate ASAs), the advisory committee should be appointed by the chairperson of the governing body and should be composed of five members:

- ❖ A member of the governing body of the local government unit, who shall be chairperson of the advisory committee
- ❖ One citizen residing within the local government unit

- ❖ Three active farmers, each representing a different private or corporate farm situated, at least in part, within the local government unit

The advisory committee will cooperate with the Planning Commission to oversee the formation, establishment, modification, review, or termination of any ASA. The purpose of the committee is to provide advice to the Planning Commission regarding the nature and desirability of any of those actions, including advice as to the nature of farming and farm resources within the proposed or existing ASA and the relationship of farming in the ASA to the local government unit as a whole.

Landowners who meet the following criteria are eligible to participate in an ASA:

- ❖ Noncontiguous farm parcels must be at least 10 acres in size. The farm tracts needed to create a new 250-acre or larger agricultural security area do not have to be under the same ownership or even be located in the same municipality. The Agricultural Area Security Law (Act 43 of 1981) allows for the creation of joint municipality agricultural security areas.
- ❖ The property should be viable agricultural land. Cropland, pasture, and woodland can all be included in an agricultural security area.
- ❖ At least 50% of the land should be in Soil Capability Classes I-IV, as defined by the county soil survey.
- ❖ The property must be zoned to permit agricultural uses.

The ASA program is an excellent first step in the process of preserving farmland. Participating farmers are entitled to numerous benefits beyond just the preservation of their land; they also receive special consideration from state and local agencies for funding and enjoy legal protection from nuisance challenges (<http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us/agriculture/cwp/view.asp?q=129076>).

Recommendation: South Franklin should consider incorporating agricultural preservation zoning techniques.

There are several innovative techniques used throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (as well as the nation) that the South Franklin should consider incorporating into its Zoning Ordinance. Three options are explored below; the Township should consider each one in depth when undertaking any Zoning Ordinance updates and decide what technique ultimately fits their needs best, as each option can provide them with tangible results.

Downzoning. This technique is aimed at restricting the amount of density or intensity of uses allowed in order to preserve land. For example, commercial land may be rezoned for residential use, or residential land may be rezoned to a less dense residential category. It is important to note that simply increasing the minimum lot size is not downzoning. For example, sometimes in an effort to lessen the impacts of growth and development, communities will simply increase the residential lot size required to



Farming along Old Post Road. (Mackin, 2009).

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

one, two, or three acres. However, the effects of this method usually backfire. Although increasing the minimum lot size to two or three acres may lessen the number of houses that can be built on a subject parcel, bigger lots, in general, increase suburban sprawl. A better method is to downzone the number of lots allowed with a conventional cookie cutter subdivision, thereby creating an incentive to develop the property with innovative approaches that save open space and create more livable communities.

Sliding scale zoning. Using a sliding scale, the number of development rights varies with the size of the farm parcel. For example, a parcel less than five acres in size might receive one development right; a five to fifteen acre parcel might receive two development rights, fifteen to thirty three development rights, and so on up the scale.

Fixed-Area Ratio. In a fixed area ratio scenario, the number of development rights is based on a set ratio of rights to the total acreage. Examples include one development right for every 10 acres or one development right for every twenty-five acres. Often the municipality will use the county- accepted definition of a productive farm as the base for the size of the ratio.

The most notable use of these techniques has been in York and Lancaster Counties. The York County experience reflects widespread use of sliding scale zoning, where the technique has been very successful in preserving agriculture land (Steiner, Frederick, *The Living Landscape: An Ecological Approach to Landscape Planning*, Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2008, pps. 373-375).

Recommendation: *Update definitions in the South Franklin Zoning Ordinance to address outdated, unnecessary, or missing terms.*

These terms are listed in *Section 3: Needs Assessment*.

Recommendation: *Use density, not lot size, as predetermining factor for some districts in any update to the South Franklin Zoning Ordinance.*

Density is a much more adaptable tool than lot size in establishing development patterns in the context of a zoning ordinance. All too often lot size minimums or maximums create a rigid template that is hard to follow in established neighborhoods (where lots may be smaller), and encourages sprawl in rural areas (where many are hesitant to require large lot sizes for fear of infringing on private property rights).

Using density-based zoning in the rural portions of the Township can assist with preserving rural features while still allowing for residential development, a key priority for the community. Density based zoning assigns a total permissible number of residential units that may be built on any given parcel of land using a base density plus environmental criteria to establish the numbers of residential units the land can reasonably accommodate. This allows for flexibility on the part of the landowner in determining the distribution of residential units on the parcel while protecting significant environmental features like open space. It also encourages conservation subdivisions. For example, a possible suggestion would be to set maximum density in rural portions of the Township at 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres. Alternatively, the Township could also distinguish between farm and non-farm residential dwellings, so that a higher minimum lot size / lower density could be utilized (such as 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres) for non-farm residential dwellings while establishing less stringent standards for residential farm dwellings. This would curb subdivision development but still permit family farms to subdivide for family members.

In conjunction with this technique, South Franklin Township can establish minimum density standards for targeted growth areas. Minimum density zoning contrasts with the traditional approach to regulating maximum densities. By setting a minimum number of allowable units per acre or maximum lot sizes, zoning can promote compact development patterns in areas targeted for higher density growth. For instance, a minimum density standard could be 2 dwelling units per acre, with a maximum of 6 units per acre, as a way to encourage compact development that preserves natural resources. Density bonuses, as described above, could be awarded to developers who utilize conservation by design techniques, i.e. an increase from 6 to 8 dwelling units per acre.

However, it is vital to note here that higher densities, such as 6 to 8 units per acre, should only be available in those areas within the two municipalities where there is sufficient infrastructure and services. Current conditions in both municipalities would warrant much lower densities, such as 1 to 3 units per acre, due to the lack of extensive public infrastructure. Parameters restricting higher density development to those areas where infrastructure is projected or is in place should be incorporated into land use ordinances.

Recommendation: *Include Consol and other large property owners as stakeholders in determining zoning and land use regulations for their land that will be the most beneficial to both parties.*

South Franklin Township should work toward establishing a productive and positive relationship with Consol. While Consol's plans for their land in South Franklin most likely include oil and gas well activity as well as future coal mining activity, the company has an excellent history of working with communities to create positive partnerships. The Township and Borough should reach out to Consol and work with them to develop ordinances and regulations that will protect the rights of property owners, permit economical use of the land, and move the communities closer to their vision. The surface land owned by Consol could be developed into a variety of positive uses that will keep the land on the tax rolls; however, it is vital that proper zoning regulation is put in place early in the process to alleviate legal or administrative issues in the future.

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

Residential Development Plan

Goal: Provide for a variety of residential development patterns that are compatible with the existing character of the Project Area.

Recommendation: *Include an Agricultural Transition zone in any update to the South Franklin Zoning Ordinance.*

An Agricultural Transition zone can provide for a number of things. The main purpose of this zone, however, is to provide for the continued agricultural use of lands that will see eventual residential and / or nonresidential development. These areas may not be suited to development currently, but will become desirable for development pending the extension and provision of adequate infrastructure and utilities, such as major streets, sewage and water, and other facilities. The Agricultural Transition zone allows continued farming activities but also permits other uses, and includes standards that will allow for compact and orderly development once the land becomes ready to "transition." As such, agricultural activities should be a permitted use; however, residential dwellings (detached single-family and / or attached single-family) should also be permitted. Certain industrial uses such as coal mining activities should be permitted as conditional or special exception uses. Density should be low (no more than 1 unit on 3 acres) unless public utilities are available, in which case lot sizes may be permitted to be smaller and densities increased.

Standards regarding the look and feel of residential development (i.e. street and lot layout and open space requirements) should be included to ensure development does not disrupt surrounding parcels / neighborhoods. Provisions for "family lots," i.e. small parcels carved from a larger parcel and meant to stay within one family, can also be a part of this district. An Agricultural Transition District allows traditional farming and open space practices to be preserved while still providing for the future possibility of development. This will allow for a flexible district that can accommodate the changing needs of the Township. The most appropriate locations for such a zone would be along roadway corridors where development pressures are currently low but may increase over time, such as along Jolly School Road, Old Scales Road, Bethel Church Road, Vista Valley Road, and Alamae Lakes Road.

Recommendation: *Include stricter provisions to limit number of horses per acre in residential areas in any update to the South Franklin Zoning Ordinance.*

The current South Franklin Township Zoning Ordinance does not directly address equestrian uses. In agricultural zones, this may not present a problem, but in residential areas, the keeping of horses on very small parcels of land can pose a significant threat both to the health of the animals and to the neighborhood. The Ordinance should be amended to include provisions for equestrian uses, and require that in residential areas at least 2 acres of pastureland should be required for each horse.

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

Recommendation: *Include Conservation by Design techniques in land use ordinances.*

The purpose of Conservation by Design (CBD), or conservation subdivision, is to provide an opportunity for future residential growth to occur in a more controlled manner that will accurately reflect the rural lifestyle and character of the Project Area. It is meant to provide parameters for new residential neighborhoods that will likely develop within the next ten to fifteen years. The most important determining factors shall be a concerted effort to preserve the rural landscape and protect environmentally sensitive lands; lot configuration and street layout should be determined by an understanding and accommodation of the natural features already existent on the site. Conservation subdivisions can reduce land consumption by as much as 63 percent without losing new development or limiting the number of new homes/units constructed (Arendt, Randall, *Rural By Design*, Chicago: APA Planners Press, 1994, pps 226-245).

A typical CBD will be provided for in a Zoning Ordinance, with additional regulations in the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO), and can occur as an option within a residential district, as a requirement within a residential district, or as an overlay zone. Conservation subdivisions are characterized by common open space and "clustered," compact lots. The purpose of a conservation subdivision is to protect farmland and/or natural resources while allowing for the maximum number of residences under current zoning and subdivision and land development (SALDO) regulations.

Designing and regulating a CBD is a relatively simple, four-step process to identify the most significant natural and cultural resources on a given tract of land, and thereby determine the most suitable "building envelopes" from a preservation viewpoint. Typically, within the context of land use ordinances, a process is laid out for applicants to follow (McMahon, Edward T., and Shelley S. Mastran, *Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania*, Harrisburg: The Conservation Fund, 2005, pps 15-33). It involves:

❖ Identifying and setting aside as permanent open space the following:

1. Floodplains
2. Steep Slopes
3. Prime Agricultural Soils / Hydric Soils
4. Waterways
5. Wetlands
6. Wooded Areas
7. Farmlands

❖ Identifying and preserving these elements at least in part:



Conservation Subdivision Example (Arendt, Randall, *Conservation by Design for Subdivisions*).

Residential Development Plan

1. Buffers
2. Heritage and/or Historic Component
3. Landmarks
4. Scenic Viewsheds
5. Public Vistas

In a typical CBD, half or more of the developable land is designated as permanent open space. This results in a more compact residential neighborhood with smaller lots for single-family homes. It is a useful tool for the Project Area because it can allow for a variety of housing types (including high-density options such as townhomes, apartment homes, or condos) while still retaining the attractive rural charm of the community. Every lot in a CBD adjoins open space. This open space is usually publicly owned, maintained, and preserved. Some other general parameters for conservation subdivisions (McMahon, *ibid*):

- ❖ Permitted uses should include single-family detached residential dwellings units, single-family attached residential dwelling units, and multi-family residential dwelling units.
- ❖ While there does not need to be a minimum lot size requirement (lot sizes should and can range from 5,000 square feet to 20,000 square feet), in no case should the subdivision or lot exceed the maximum dwelling density.
- ❖ There should be a minimum lot width of 150 feet at building setback line. Side yard setbacks should be 15 percent of the lot width at the minimum building line; front and rear yard setbacks should be 50 feet minimum.
- ❖ Net lot coverage should be no more than 10 percent.
- ❖ Open space shall be required and open space lots may vary in size but shall never be smaller than .25 of an acre.



Conservation by design preserves woodlands and open space (<http://www.dcrpc.org>).

There are three typical options utilized by communities:

Option 1

In this option, a developer is full density only if at least 50 percent of buildable land is maintained as undivided open space. Otherwise, the density would be less, and set at a point that would maintain the current rural residential land use pattern.

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

Option 2

In this option, a developer receives a density “bonus,” that is, for preserving a certain percentage of open space (i.e. 60 percent) the developer is permitted to increase the density maximum for his land, usually by about 25 percent.

Option 3

A third option would be for “estate lots.” In this option, developers wishing to serve the estate lot market would follow a 50 percent density reduction, making the typical lot size much larger than the underlying zoning permits. Estate market properties are usually accessed by gravel drives built to township standards for low-volume rural lands; an added incentive would be to allow developers to build up to two dwellings on these properties.

Case Studies:

Garnet Oaks is a CBD located in Bethel Township in Delaware County. It consists of 58 acres, 24 acres of which is permanently preserved open space. This open space consists of a woodland wildlife preserve, walking trails, tot lot, and informal picnic grove. The single-family detached residential dwellings are located on quarter-acre lots; two-thirds of these lots directly abut open space (<http://www.natlands.org/categories/article.asp?fldArticleId=71>).

Farmview is a CBD located in Lower Makefield Township in Bucks County. It is a 418-acre site comprised of 322 detached single-family dwellings located on half-acre lots. Over two hundred acres are reserved as open space, with 145 acres preserved as active cropland and 68 acres of woodlands. The cropland is leased to farmers in the community through multi-year agreements (<http://www.natlands.org/categories/article.asp?fldArticleId=72>). The woodlands are open to residents. All preserved land is managed and maintained through a homeowners' association.

Recommendation: Update South Franklin's SALDO to address the future needs and desires of the Project Area.

The following improvements to the SALDO should be considered:

❖ The following information should be required on all sketch, preliminary, and final plans:

1. Environmental data
2. Natural features
3. Existing structures
4. Land use, zoning, and other code data

This information is vital in order for the Planning Commission to review adequately the proposed development, and most other municipal SALDOs require it.

❖ Address lot arrangement and access, including prohibiting:

1. “Landlocked” or interior lots
2. “Flag” lots

Both “flag” and “landlocked” lots, that is, lots that either have only a narrow strip of access to a road or no access to a road at all, should be prohibited in the Township. A “flag lot” is a parcel of land that is accessible only by a very long narrow strip leading from a main road. “Landlocked” lots are those that are completely surrounded by other lots and have no road frontage. These are undesirable because they present a visually unappealing landscape (development completely surrounded by more development, in

most cases) and also because developers often try to use “flag” lots as a means to avoid compliance with SALDO requirements (i.e., if a lot has road frontage, some ordinances allow exemptions from certain setback and yard requirements). Not only do they create unsightly streetscapes, but they also make it difficult for emergency service providers to reach the home or structure built within their bounds.

- ❖ Include “cluster” or conservation subdivision standards

As discussed in previous sections, the SALDO should incorporate conservation by design or conservation subdivision standards in order to protect natural resources and preserve the rural character of the community.

- ❖ Include more detailed landscaping requirements, such as “land compatibility classes” with associated buffers

1. List of approved plantings
2. Spacing and number of plantings
3. Tree, vegetation, and wildlife preservation and protection

Buffers are an important mechanism for screening between different types of uses (i.e. between industrial and other uses, or between commercial and residential uses), in impervious areas such as parking lots or along driveways, and as a tool for managing stormwater (i.e. through the use of drainage basins). Buffers add to the natural landscape. The current buffer requirements within the SALDO are weak and should be strengthened to include “land compatibility classes.” These would classify different types of uses, i.e. high-density residential, low-density residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and so on and require specific types and amounts of buffering for each. This is a much smoother process than regulating it through zoning districts as it focuses less on the district and more on the use.

- ❖ Address issues with driveways or access points, including:

1. Length
2. Placement
3. Number of dwellings or structures utilizing driveway
4. Grade / slope

The current SALDO does have regulations in place regarding driveways, but these should be rewritten so that stricter attention is paid to the placement and length of access points. This is particularly true for areas along roadways that are likely to see increased development in the future, such as along Alamae Lakes Road, Vista Valley Road, SR 18, Cove Road, and others.

- ❖ Address lighting

Lighting standards should be introduced into the SALDO that utilize techniques from the Model Lighting Ordinance assembled by the Pennsylvania Outdoor Lighting Council, and available online at: <http://www.polcouncil.org/polc2/MLOZoning2008MAR.htm>.

- ❖ Add requirements regarding mandatory sidewalks in high-density residential developments

Although sidewalks are encouraged, they are not required under current statute. This is not a necessary requirement for rural portions of the Township, but in higher-density developments (those that include townhomes or patio homes, for instance) they should be mandatory.

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

- ❖ Revise stormwater management standards and include BMPs such as:

1. Naturalized drainage basins
2. Rain gardens
3. Riparian buffers
4. Erosion and sediment controls

As discussed in previous sections, the SALDO should incorporate more comprehensive stormwater management practices.

- ❖ Consider adding requirements to protect viewsheds along identified roadways

There are some important viewshed corridors in the Project Area. Viewsheds are areas with scenic views; parts of Bedillion Road, Pikes Pike Road, and Deerfield Road all have scenic views of the surrounding foothills. Viewshed protection language can ensure that when proposed new development minimizes impacts on the cherished scenic nature of the Project Area.

- ❖ Require infrastructure for development, including adequate water and sanitary systems

As mentioned in previous sections, it is vital that growth is handled in a capable and responsible manner in order for the rural character of the Project Area to remain intact. In this regard, development should be encouraged to locate in areas where infrastructure for it is already in place, and where, if it is not, it makes logical sense to extend it.

- ❖ Require dedicated open space, parks, recreation, or fee-in-lieu of

As discussed, if development happens at a rapid rate, the Township should consider instituting a fee-in-lieu-of ordinance (after a Comprehensive Recreation Plan is undertaken and adopted) to assist with future recreation and open space needs.

- ❖ Adequately address transportation issues, including requiring:

1. Traffic impact fees
2. More specific requirements for streets, including intersections (radius required, sight distance, sight triangles, etc.)

As discussed in the Transportation portion of this Section, if development happens at a rapid rate, the Township should consider instituting a transportation impact fee ordinance as a way to deal with increased traffic and road concerns.

Economic Development Plan

Goal: Improve the overall image of the Project Area by enhancing the appearance of S.R. 18.

Recommendation: Create a flexible zoning district, in any update to the South Franklin Zoning Ordinance, that will allow for concentrated growth and development on the northern portion of the SR 18 corridor.

It is essential that communities plan for growth in a responsible manner. If not adequately addressed, residential, industrial, and commercial development can happen in a haphazard fashion, costing a community unnecessary amounts of money in order to address issues regarding infrastructure, traffic congestion and conflicting land uses. The vision for the northern portion of SR 18 has been stated as a “hub” for the community with industrial uses complimenting the airport, limited commercial development to serve local needs, and medium- to high-density residential development consisting of townhomes, patio homes, multi-family dwellings, and detached single-family homes on smaller lots.

In order to ensure that this occurs, the South Franklin Township should amend its Zoning Ordinance to create a more flexible district that encompasses these types of uses. However, as mentioned in the Future Land Use Plan and the Residential Development Plan, the community also wants to ensure that future development blends with the existing character of the Township. Residents and visitors praise the peaceful, rural nature of the Township and it is important that new development remain sensitive to that fact. In order to achieve that, the Township will need flexibility in its land use regulations, but will need to be able to assert some measure of control in order to assure that future development does not create harmful effects. Form-based codes can be extremely helpful in assisting municipalities in this way, as they focus more on the appearance of developed land and less on the use of that developed land. As such, the Township should consider implementing a form-based code or integrating form-based code principles into the Ordinance in the areas along SR 18 where high-density growth is desirable. Please refer to *Map 4.2: Targeted Areas for Investment*.

A true form-based code focuses more on the look and style of buildings rather than their use, which is traditionally what zoning focuses upon. A typical form-based code will include two main parts. The first part is a “regulating plan” that designates areas where different building form standards apply (i.e. residential building types such as high-density townhomes or single-family detached dwellings, or commercial building types such as small-scale commercial buildings or “big-box” style commercial developments). The second part is the accompanying standards for building form, including the configuration of buildings and their facades and other features. Form-based codes can also include specifications regarding public spaces, landscaping, architectural materials, signage, or environmental protection. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code specifically permits form-based code as part of



Good example of development along SR 18. Lagonda Machine, Inc., South Franklin Twp. (Mackin, 2009).

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

what it terms Traditional Neighborhood Development (<http://www.twp.cranberry.pa.us/index.aspx?NID=118>).

Instituting a form-based code, or at least implementing some important elements of a form-based code, along this portion of the corridor will allow the community maximum flexibility without having to re-zone parcels in the future if a proposed commercial or light industrial use decides to locate in a different spot than originally anticipated during the drafting of the Zoning Map. It also streamlines the development process for builders by making the community's vision and goals very clear-cut and eliminating a lot of the back and forth negotiations that can bog down the Planning Commission and Zoning Hearing Board.

Case Study: Media Borough

Media Borough in Delaware County has embraced many facets of form-based codes into their Zoning Ordinance. Perhaps the best example is their Traditional Neighborhood Overlay District for the Baltimore Pike corridor. The corridor has a long history of serving as the main thoroughfare through Delaware County and combines a mixture of residential and commercial uses that resulted from years of organic growth. The overlay is a "floating district." This means that it does not replace existing zoning but can be utilized by any applicant in place of the base zoning. The overlay sets forth specific building standards, including building types, materials, bulk, and density, and reinforces these with additional landscaping and street design standards contained in the Borough's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO). More information on Media's Zoning Ordinance can be obtained by visiting their website (<http://www.mediaborough.com>).

Recommendation: *Develop a gateway to welcome residents and visitors to the Project Area in key locations.*

Gateways are architectural and physical elements that are designed to create a sense of place and a perception of arrival. These elements could take the form of a simple stone structure or could be designed to be more artistic and reflect the community's image and history. Gateway designs typically compliment a community's physical features and building materials and can include signage as well as landscaping, lighting, and other creative elements. South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough should work together to establish such an area for the joint community. Possible locations that might be suitable would be at the entrance to the Township Park or near Joe Walker Elementary along SR 18. Because gateways take up land, it is important that its location is appropriate and that the land or right-of-way in question be owned by one of the municipalities. Funding for projects like these is available through DCNR's Small Community Development Project grants. More information is available by visiting <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/Keystone/factsheet.pdf>.

Recommendation: *Target under utilized properties along SR 18 for future commercial, light industrial, and residential development.*

South Franklin Township should work to create a plan that will address under utilized parcels along the SR 18 corridor, particularly in prime opportunity areas such as adjacent to / near the Airport. The Township can work with Washington County Planning Commission, the Redevelopment Authority of Washington County (RACW), or other public planning entities to develop a set of goals and objectives regarding key properties along the corridor. Developing a set of goals and strategies for these properties will help ensure that as land becomes available, the Township can seize the opportunity to develop a commercial / light industrial hub that will create new housing, new businesses, and jobs. The Township should focus on the Targeted Investment Areas indicated on *Map 4.2: Targeted Areas for Investment*.

Recommendation: *Work with the Washington County Airport to enhance trees, plantings, and buffers surrounding the Airport, particularly along SR 18.*

The County Airport is an important economic generator not just for the Project Area, but also for the entire region. As such, it should be showcased and presented to the public in an appealing and attractive manner. South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough should work with the Airport to beautify the approach, including SR 18 and the drive leading up to the Airport, with plantings, landscaping, and signage. This will provide a welcoming entrance into the Airport and will also signify to potential investors the commitment of the County and municipalities to developing the Airport into an important employment center.

Recommendation: *Strengthen property maintenance codes as well as enforcement.*

Property maintenance is not a widespread problem in the Project Area; however, there are some isolated instances of it throughout the community. While the property maintenance code currently in place for South Franklin Township is adequate, it would be worthwhile to re-examine the language and close any possible loopholes that may exist. In particular, areas where the Township is having repeated trouble should be strengthened to eliminate future problems. In addition, enforcement of codes is imperative. The Township has had issues with property owners not following enforcement efforts in the past. It should be noted that the Municipal Housing Code Avoidance Amendment to Title 18 of the Crime Code, Act 70 of 1998, imposes increased fines and criminal penalties for repeat offenders in all municipalities. They can now receive imprisonment of up to two years for a misdemeanor of the second degree, and five years for a misdemeanor of the first degree.

Goal: Encourage limited commercial and business services in the community that will serve the needs of local residents and complement nearby economic development activities related to the Washington County Airport.

Recommendation: *Support the RACW in its efforts to develop “Skypointe” as a regional center for economic activity related to support airport industries.*

While plans for Skypointe are not final, RACW is committed to developing a niche for the area for aviation-related industries. As noted in previous chapters, RACW is in the process of assembling land for the project and does have potential investors and businesses willing to locate in the park. This plan recommends that both South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough support the RACW’s efforts. They can accomplish this by working with local property owners whose land may be affected or who may be interested in selling property adjacent to the Airport for use as part of Skypointe, and targeting that portion of the Township for infrastructure investment (such as improved roads and sewers). If their efforts are successful, it will create an important boost to the community’s economy by providing a wealth of new job opportunities, as well as opportunities for supporting businesses and local commercial retail along SR 18.

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

Recommendation: *Work with local developers to find a suitable location for and the construction of a “Town Center” concept that would include a gas station, grocery store, and bank.*

Both South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough expressed a wish to see limited commercial development along SR 18. In particular, the hope is to draw convenience retail, such as a bank, gas station, grocery store, or some similar combination of uses in the Targeted Investment Area (Map 4.2). In most cases, communities must react when development occurs to try and put controls in place. However, the Project Area is fortunate that no major commercial development has happened. This gives the community the advantage to not only put proper regulations in place now but also to identify key sites that would be suitable for commercial development. The municipalities can then enter into discussion with current landowners to gauge their level of interest, and work with county agencies such as the Redevelopment Authority and Planning Commission to approach retailers who may take an interest in building the type of commercial uses they seek to attract.



The “town-center”- style development in Adams County has a bank as well as a small grocery (Mackin 2009).

A town center is a concentrated development that is typically a mix of retail, light office, and some residential uses. It acts as a gateway to the community and provides a central location for shopping and activity. Typically these centers embrace traditional design concepts, including lighting, landscaping, and façade treatments that blend in with existing architecture of community. They are also pedestrian and bicycle friendly and are easily accessible by all residents, and can vary in size, from only one or two stores to hundreds of shops and residences.

Case Study

The southwest portion of Adams County, Pennsylvania is a rural area with little commercial development. To meet the needs of the local residents, a “Town Center” was developed along SR 116 that offers a bank, gas station, pharmacy, and some additional retail stores and healthcare facilities. The development is compact and nicely landscaped so that it compliments, rather than detracts from the surrounding rural setting.



Attractive signage makes the Adams County retail complex welcoming and appropriate to the area (Mackin 2009).

Community Amenities Plan

Goal: Enhance local municipal service capabilities.

Recommendation: Explore new ways to expand upon existing regional partnerships by increasing collaboration with the existing Cooperative and establishing a Council of Governments.

In 1972, the Pennsylvania state legislature passed Act 180, allowing municipal governments to cooperate jointly with each other in the performance of their powers and responsibilities. In 2001, the lawmakers approve Act 13, authorizing the state to recognize the groups as legal entities. Together, the laws allow formation of groups of municipalities and schools to pursue contracts, grants and other needs, and to enter, as a group, into state programs. As stated in *Section 1: Area Profile*, South Franklin Township currently maintains a cooperative agreement with Amwell, Buffalo, and Donegal Townships. South Franklin should build upon this foundation of multi-municipal partnership, and, if the other communities are interested, facilitate the formation of a full Council of Governments. Green Hills Borough should also be included in this effort. It is important to remember that a COG is not a merger of governmental procedure in that it cannot make laws, nor does it have taxing powers. However, a COG does give its members a more efficient way of utilizing existing services and equipment. It also provides a way for municipalities to plan regionally, particularly when looking at larger commercial, industrial, or residential development possibilities. In order to form a COG, each municipality would have to pass an ordinance adopting the Intergovernmental agreement, which is also accompanied by a set of by-laws. Together, both documents detail the requirements for appointment of representatives from each municipality, term of appointment, designation of officers, rotation of the chair position if desired, quorum, frequency of meetings, procedures for action, removal of representatives and other functional and procedural requirements of the intergovernmental body. The Intergovernmental agreement already in place between the communities establishing the cooperative could easily be amended to include the expanded duties and powers of a COG (<http://pacog.com/index.shtml>).

Insurance and liability can sometimes be a concern for these groups; however, most COGs find that any jointly purchased equipment can be insured through group pool insurance. Section 2307 (7) of Act 180 (The Intergovernmental Cooperation Law) allows any entity created under the Act to enter into contracts for group insurance policies (http://www.lgc.state.pa.us/deskbook06/Basics06_Intergovernmental_Cooperation.pdf). Currently, in the Project Area, equipment insurance is now carried by Amwell Township and reimbursed by the other Townships in the COG.

Case Study: Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments (TCVCOG)

The Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments was founded in 1971 when eleven municipalities recognized a benefit to working cooperatively and sharing services. Currently, there are twenty municipalities in the TCVCOG with total population of approximately 190,000. Member municipalities join the COG through Council resolution. Each member pays annual dues of \$3,500 and is entitled to appoint two representatives to the Board of Directors – one voting and one alternate delegate. Board officers are elected for two-year terms on the even years. The four officers and the previous Chairman make up the Executive Committee.

The COG derives its operating funds from various sources including annual membership dues, fees for contracted services and an administrative grant from Allegheny County Department of Economic Development. Additional funding support comes from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development for various

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

programs, and through the Regional Asset District (RAD). The COG does not have a dedicated source of funding (<http://www.tcvcoq.com>).

Some of the programs currently provided are as follows:

- ❖ Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Administration
- ❖ Multi-municipal contracts, grants, and administration
- ❖ Utility billing
- ❖ Equipment sharing
- ❖ Joint Public Works
- ❖ Joint purchasing

Recommendation: *Develop a “welcome packet” for all new or potential new residents, businesses, realtors, and developers that includes pertinent information on municipal ordinances, services, and publicizes the Township website.*

A Welcome Packet is a feature that many other communities and even schools and churches utilize in order to receive new residents into the community and make them feel at home. The packet can provide them with helpful information such as community resources, useful phone numbers and links, local business listings, a map, a calendar, and so on. The packet should be distributed to new residents but can also be given to realtors and existing residents. It can be a relatively simple document, making it inexpensive to produce and copy.

Recommendation: *Expand the South Franklin Township website to include more information regarding ordinances, municipal services, etc.*

The Township website is an important and underutilized resource for residents of both municipalities within the Project Area. The website can and should act as a community bulletin board, providing pertinent information to residents such as:

- ❖ Access to ordinances (or important sections of ordinances)
- ❖ Information on trash collection, recycling facilities, or similar municipal services
- ❖ Information on the Fire Department and how to donate time or funding
- ❖ Announcements from local churches, Citizens’ Library, and McGuffey School District
- ❖ Regular updates on Township activities, including meetings

Examples of local websites that provide excellent information for residents and visitors include:

- ❖ Cranberry Township: <http://www.cranberrytownship.org/>
- ❖ South Park Township: <http://www.southparktwp.com/>
- ❖ Murrysville: <http://www.murrysville.com/>

Expanding and maintaining an updated Township website is largely an effort undertaken by one or two interested individuals who wish to donate their services; however, there is some limited funding available through the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's Municipal Technology Assistance Program (MTAP). While MTAP's grant program for website development is targeted at communities they do not currently have a website, there are other funding options, including grants for technology training that may be helpful. More information is available on the web site: http://www.spcregion.org/plan_mtap.shtml.

Recommendation: *South Franklin Township should enact a burning ordinance.*

Adopting a burning ordinance can be a helpful tool in managing the burning of refuse in municipalities. This step will improve the safety of the community and prevent unnecessary brush fires. In Pennsylvania, open burning of "domestic refuse" (such as leaves) is not permitted except on the premises of a building occupied by two families or less (Section 129.14 (c) (5) of DEP Rules & Regulations). A burning ordinance is necessary to enforce open burning regulations. At a minimum, a burning ordinance should contain the following:

- ❖ The Fire Chief in coordination with the governing body of the municipality shall have authority to prohibit all burning during drought conditions
- ❖ Leaf burning shall be permitted only on properties meeting established minimum size limits
- ❖ Fires shall be allowed only when set a specified distance from a property line
- ❖ Fires shall be attended by an adult
- ❖ Fires shall be extinguished by sunset
- ❖ Leaf burning shall be allowed by permit only, which gives the township control over it, and also offers an opportunity to educate permit seekers about dangers of leaf burning
- ❖ Persons who violate the ordinance shall be subject to penalties

South Franklin Township can easily tailor the burning ordinance to meet its needs, choosing to permit the burning of some items while prohibiting others.

Recommendation: *South Franklin Township should offer curbside recycling services to residents.*

Curbside recycling is typically offered as part of a package or contract with a municipality. As such, in order for the Township to be able to offer curbside recycling to its residents, it should consider the feasibility of contracting directly with a municipal waste hauler. A ballpark estimate from a service provider to handle waste collection and curbside recycling for a community the size of South Franklin Township would be in the area of \$20 to \$40 per household per billing cycle (billing cycles typically run every 3 months). The costs to the municipality itself would be minimal as the hauler would handle paper billing and mailings, distribute recycle bins / trash receptacles, and use their own vehicle fleet. The Township would have to adopt a municipal waste ordinance and solicit competitive bids. The municipality could then choose the service provider that best suited its needs for the best price.

Alternatively, the Township could also build upon its existing partnerships as part of the cooperative agreement established with Amwell, Buffalo, and Donegal Townships. If these entities chose to form a Council of Governments, or COG, they would be granted the power to pursue contracts with a waste hauler, or jointly purchase equipment that would allow for the establishment of curbside recycling.

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

Case Study: Twin Rivers Council of Governments

The Twin Rivers COG was established in 1977 as a small partnership between neighboring municipalities in southern Allegheny County and has since grown to 14 municipalities, including Boroughs of Elizabeth, Glassport, Liberty, Lincoln, Port Vue, Madison, Versailles, West Mifflin, West Newton, White Oak, the Townships of Elizabeth, Forward, South Versailles, and the City of McKeesport. Insurance and liability is handled through a group pool that each participating municipality pays into. Twin Rivers COG's recycling program saved municipalities more than \$40,000 in landfill costs through its recycling efforts in 2003. It includes curbside recycling collection in several municipalities and drop-off sites for leaf composting, newspaper, aluminum, and clear glass. The COG shares equipment, including trucks, to collect the recycling materials, and then deposits them at a shared site. Individual residents pay a small yearly fee (\$12) to the COG for these services (Jon Paylo, Twin Rivers COG Executive Director).

Goal: Continue to support the efforts of the South Franklin VFD.

Recommendation: *Collaborate with McGuffey School District to establish a junior firefighter program to interest young people in joining the fire service.*

According to a recent report compiled by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, an overwhelming number of volunteer firefighters in rural Pennsylvania communities joined in their early teens and have since remained dedicated to service. Often they cited presentations and open houses as having a lasting impact on their decision to serve. As such, it is vital that SFVFD make the effort to reach out to young teens and college students and encourage them to participate. Increasing marketing through newspaper ads, open houses, appearances at job or community service fairs, or presentations at local schools can all serve as vehicles to reach out and recruit new, young membership. In order to retain new membership, South Franklin can offer incentives such as reducing the cost of training, improving understanding of what volunteer fire companies do for the community, providing officers with additional management training, and providing financial benefits, such as pension plans, income tax credits, and higher education tuition.

Recommendation: *Reach out to retiring baby boomers who may be interested in volunteer firefighting training through one-on-one communication and through local senior citizen groups such as AARP.*

Although targeting younger students will be helpful in building a future base for SFVFD, it should not be the only focus. An often untapped potential resource is retiring baby boomers. Often these individuals enjoy being able to serve their community, and can devote the amount of time necessary for proper training and service. Several options could be used to recruit this population such as advertising in the local newspaper or municipal website, announcement at municipal functions, partnering with the local American Association of Retired People group (AARP). In many instances, however, a direct one-on-one approach can work best.

Recommendation: *Expand upon existing mutual aid agreements with North Franklin Township, Morris Township, Claysville, and Taylorstown.*

Mutual aid agreements can be a beneficial and cost-saving method for maintaining adequate fire and emergency services in rural areas. A mutual aid agreement provides that the closest available fire/rescue/EMS resources will respond to a particular incident without regard to political boundaries. SFVFD already maintains mutual aid

agreements with North Franklin Township Volunteer Fire Department, Morris Township Volunteer Fire Department, Claysville Volunteer Fire Department, Taylorstown Volunteer Fire Department, and Washington County Emergency Management (HAZMAT). It is recommended that the Township continue to coordinate with these and other surrounding communities, such as Buffalo Township, Amwell Township, West Finley Township, or Canton Township in order to provide adequate fire protection and EMS services.

Recommendation: *Develop comprehensive marketing materials that include information on the VFD and how to join, support, etc., and distribute to all residents.*

Information on the South Franklin Township Volunteer Fire Department should not only be distributed to targeted groups but should be made available to everyone through the Township website and similar market materials, including the new resident “welcome packet.”

Goal: Direct infrastructure investments to suitable locations.

Recommendation: *Provide public sewerage in the Project Area by implementing Phase I of the priority recommendations contained in the Township’s Act 537 Sewage Management Plan.*

As described in both the Background Studies and Needs Assessment sections, the Act 537 Plan developed several scenarios for addressing Act 537 needs within South Franklin Township. Whether the partnership with Washington-East Washington Joint Authority (WEWJA) comes to fruition or the Township decides to construct and maintain its own plant and lines is undecided, but in either case, the Township must address the issues with Franklin Manor and surrounding residential neighborhoods. The Township should look to the Act 537 Plan as a guide and utilize at least one, if not several, of the Plan’s suggested strategies for managing wastewater.

Recommendation: *Ensure that the Act 537 Sewage Management Plan includes a fee structure for mobile home parks.*

The current Act 537 Plan does not adequately address the issue of mobile home parks. There are several mobile home parks in the near vicinity of the proposed sewage lines, and in all likelihood, these mobile home parks will become part of the future system of public sewage since they are part of the targeted areas for expansion identified by residents (*Map 4.3*). In most instances when a mobile home park is incorporated into a public sewage system, an agreement is drawn up between the owner of the park and the municipality. Outlining a general fee structure and providing some parameters (such as the handling of empty lots, the frequency of inspections, and so on) for mobile home parks now, in the context of the Act 537 Plan, can save a lot of hassle for both the municipality and the mobile home park owners later.

Recommendation: *Support the effective management of municipal on-lot wastewater management systems in South Franklin Township.*

The Township should require site-specific analysis of soil capability for new development to ensure that conventional or alternative systems can be properly installed. If the capability is not there, then the development can justifiably be denied. In addition, the Township should provide for the development of on-lot management districts. These districts are characterized by the following:

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

- ❖ Created by ordinance and specify a geographic area
- ❖ Administered by a public or private entity
- ❖ Require regular septic pumping and system inspection

The Township can in turn establish specifications for the installation of new or replacement systems in order to adequately manage these districts. The Township should also take steps to make sure that residents are educated about the maintenance of on-lot systems.

Recommendation: *After Phase I of the public sewerage extension is complete, continue to expand public sewerage to areas as identified on Map 4.3*

Residents and elected officials within the Project Area are in favor of expanding their residential, commercial, and industrial base, but still want to preserve their rural character. However, there is a trade-off between economic growth and a rural environment. The creation of a new sewer system is a complicated topic, as it involves a host of environmental, economic, and political issues that in turn affect the development of land use patterns within a community. Establishing sound planning practices that limit expansion of sewerage services only to areas appropriate for future development is one way of ensuring that rural character is preserved. South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough both need to carefully consider the type and density of growth they want to encourage. Due to the complicated infrastructure problems that exist in Franklin Manor, the Township must extend sewerage to that point as part of Phase I (as recommended in the Act 537 Plan). However, that still leaves a significant portion of the Project Area without access to public sewerage. As such, the next logical step would be to continue to extend sewerage into other areas of the Township. Residents and stakeholders identified the northern portion of the Project Area (branching off SR 18 north of Franklin Manor) as priority areas for future phases of sewerage expansion. For specific details, please see *Map 4.3: Future Priority Infrastructure*.

Recommendation: *Expand public water to areas as identified on Map 4.2: Future Priority Infrastructure.*

Access to public water is seen as a similarly complex issue. South Franklin Township is fortunate in that a good portion of residents already have access to public water. However, if development is to continue into the future, particularly in the targeted areas north of Green Hills Borough, it should be extended. Areas identified as high priorities for public water extension are depicted on *Map 4.3: Future Priority Infrastructure*.

Recommendation: *Collaborate with service providers to encourage the use of the new cell phone service tower near the Airport.*

The recent installation of a cell phone tower near the Airport in South Franklin Township aims to improve wireless service in the surrounding area. However, no cell phone service providers have currently purchased or leased any rights to the tower. South Franklin Township should work with the tower's owners as well as Washington County entities such as the Redevelopment Authority, the Planning Commission, and Chamber of Commerce to promote and market its availability to allow for improvements to wireless service in the Project Area.

Community Amenities Plan

Recommendation: *Petition Internet service providers to extend high-speed broadband and cable modem services to a larger portion of the Project Area.*

Internet service providers recently took steps to expand service in the Project Area; however, there are still large portions in need of high-speed Internet. Key areas for expansion should include the new Lone Pine Estates development, Franklin Lakeview Estates, Franklin Manor, Jolly School Road, Alamae Lakes Road, Cove Road, and Vista Valley Road. Both South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough should work together to request that Internet service providers expand their services. Most Internet service providers will not enlarge service areas until there is a significant aggregate of demand. The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) assists communities in this effort through the Broadband Outreach and Aggregation Program. This program provides an organizational structure that can assist communities in promoting widespread Internet access, educating community members about the benefits of high-speed access, initiating a grassroots movement to aggregate demand, and signing up community members to purchase future high-speed services. More information about this program is available by visiting SPC's website at: http://www.spcregion.org/plan_broadband.shtml. Additionally, recent federal stimulus money is set aside for expanding broadband Internet service into rural areas; if / when this money becomes available, the Project Area municipalities should apply to the County and state for funding.

Goal: Ensure that the recreational opportunities available in the Project Area adequately serve the needs of all types of residents.

Recommendation: *Develop a Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan for South Franklin Township. Consider partnering with Green Hills Borough.*

As the name suggests, a Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan inventories and evaluates all current recreational assets in the community. This includes passive recreational space, open space, wooded areas, game lands, and active recreational space, such as parks, athletic fields, trails, and so on. The Plan identifies areas where these assets may be improved, highlights opportunities for connecting open spaces or parks to one another. The plan will analyze land use patterns, zoning, historic and cultural resources, natural features and resources, parks and recreational facilities, greenways and open space, and perform a spatial analysis. A typical recreation plan utilizes the standards developed by the NRPA for recreation, parks, and open space. These standards are widely used, although they should be viewed only as a guide and not as absolutes. The most commonly used standard is the population ratio method, or the number of acres of parkland per 1,000 people (Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines; 1983). Recommendations are developed from this base, and can serve as an important road map for the Parks and Recreation Board to follow in determining priority improvements and projects. More importantly, such a plan is required if the Township wishes to enact a fee dedication ordinance or fee-in-lieu- of ordinance that would require developers to set aside land for recreation or pay a fee to the municipality. Funding for Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plans can be obtained through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us>).

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

Recommendation: Amend the South Franklin Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) to require recreational spaces in new developments or a “fee-in-lieu of” that can assist the Township in providing adequate recreational amenities to residents.

Pennsylvania municipalities have the power under Section 503(11) of the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) to require developers to dedicate land to the municipality for public parks and recreation purposes to support new developments. The amount of land can be specified either as a percentage of the tract or can be based upon the square footage of residential or nonresidential space to be added. Alternatively, developers may voluntarily agree to do one or a combination of the following:

- ❖ Pay a fee that the Township can use for providing parks and recreation facilities accessible to the new development. This is known as the “fee-in-lieu of” land dedication;
- ❖ Construct recreational facilities; and/or
- ❖ Privately reserve land within the subdivision for park and recreation purposes

The “fee-in-lieu-of” can range anywhere from \$250 per dwelling unit to nearly \$2,000 per dwelling unit. Municipalities can also choose to create formulas for calculating fees based on the square footage of residential or nonresidential space created. As with most land use tools, there is a process involved; however, it is relatively simple. In order to utilize a fee-in-lieu of, South Franklin and / or Green Hills must ensure that the appropriate language is included in their Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO). They must also prepare and adopt a recreation plan. The Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan (suggested on page 4-41) must demonstrate through analyses that the fee is necessary to meet the recreational needs of the community. A manual for Pennsylvania communities interested in adopting a fee in lieu of ordinance has been published by the Pennsylvania Land Trust, and can be found at <http://conserveland.org/lpr/download/23142/PubDedication08dec15.pdf>.

Recommendation: Develop a Master Site Plan for South Franklin Township Park to ensure that the entire site utilizes its fullest potential.

A park master plan provides the public with a way to help determine the best uses for a specific site and to optimize management of the site's resources. Input from the public, as well as elected officials, is combined with analyses of current trends and future needs. The master site plan is developed to act as a general guide for appropriate park uses and their approximate location within a specific park site. The plan will also act as a long-range vision for future development and programming within the park.

Issues that are typically addressed can include but are not limited to planned park improvements, natural and cultural resource management, and general design concerns. Typically, a master plan is conceptual in nature; however, it



The Gazebo in South Franklin Township Park (Mackin, 2008).

should contain a preferred alternative which shows what should be on site and where improvements should be located. It should also contain community goals for the site, and management options to carry out plan recommendations. Park master site plans can vary widely in cost depending upon the size of the park as well as the breadth and length of the study although the average cost is between \$10,000 and \$40,000; an average estimate for a park of South Franklin's size would be around \$15,000 to \$20,000 depending on the scope. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) awards grants through its Planning, Implementation, and Technical Assistance program (PITA) to municipalities for the purpose of creating a master site plan.

Recommendation: *South Franklin Township should conduct an annual survey of residents and / or program participants to assist in identifying recreation needs.*

The purpose of an annual survey of residents regarding recreational needs is to gather public opinion and input that is relative to the park and recreation system in the Township. This survey can be part of the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan or the Township Parks and Recreation Board can develop it separately. As mentioned briefly in the Needs Assessment, the Parks and Recreation Board has taken great strides in identifying opportunities for improvement to the Township Park and associated recreational facilities; however, in order to utilize time and resources efficiently, it is vital that their efforts aim at addressing perceived deficiencies or needs as identified by the public. Parks and recreational facilities are a public resource and as such should address public desires. A typical recreational needs survey for a Township such as South Franklin could span two to three pages and include a dozen or so questions that generally would encompass the following categories:

- ❖ Household Characteristics
- ❖ Needs
- ❖ Programs
- ❖ Facilities
- ❖ Financial Concerns

Recommendation: *The South Franklin Township Parks and Recreation Board should obtain grant funding to install security cameras at strategic locations in the Park and around the Township building to discourage vandalism.*

The South Franklin Township Parks and Recreation Board has already taken important steps in improving safety conditions at the park, including the installation of new security gates that can be locked after hours to limit access to certain areas of the park. An additional measure of safety would be to install security cameras at strategic locations within the Park, such as at the security gates, or in portions of the Park where vandals tend to congregate. Grant funding for these cameras can be obtained by contacting the community's local state representative or applying through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (<http://www.newpa.com>).

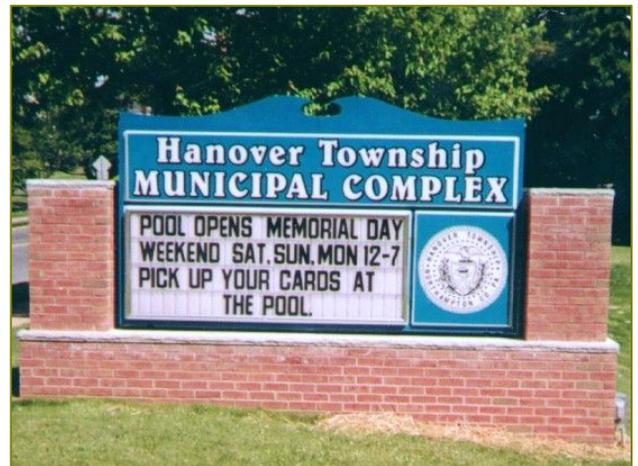
A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

Recommendation: *Install a new, larger sign at the park / municipal complex entrance that can serve to inform residents about upcoming meetings, events, etc.*

A more attractive and larger sign at the entrance to South Franklin Township Park and the adjoining municipal building can act as an important visual reminder investment in the community. It signals to residents and to visitors that South Franklin Township is a welcoming community and a great place to work, live, and play. The sign can include attractive landscaping elements such as perennial flowerbeds, creative lighting, and can include a section for changeable copy. Allowing a marquee on the sign would present the opportunity for the Township to make announcements and advertise events going on in the Park or elsewhere; it can act as a de facto community bulletin board.

Recommendation: *Install directional signage on SR 18 for the municipal complex.*

SR 18 currently lacks adequate signage that directs residents and visitors to the municipal complex and park. As this is a valuable asset for South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough, not to mention the virtual heart of the community. Having directional signage that is attractive and adequate will alert many passersby on SR 18 of the amenities that both the park and municipal complex offer. There are many grants available for signage. The Township should coordinate with PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (<http://www.newpa.com>) to determine if such signage is eligible for funding through their grant programs.



Example of attractive community message board sign. (Copyright Stewart Signs, Inc. (2009).

Energy Conservation Plan

Goal: Encourage sustainability in the Project Area.

Recommendation: *Institute methods to conserve energy at Township facilities, such as utilizing compact fluorescent bulbs, low-flow faucets, weatherization techniques, and recycling cans.*

An important way for the Project Area to encourage sustainable living within its borders is to adopt sustainability measures as official policy. This can be done through a series of small steps, such as instituting more energy efficient techniques at Township and Borough owned buildings. Compact fluorescent bulbs, low-flow faucets, increased weatherization, and recycling containers can all contribute to lessening the two municipalities' impact on the environment. Some small steps that the Township should take into consideration include:

- ❖ Conduct an "energy audit" that examines the costs of its buildings, output, and vehicle fleet
- ❖ Utilizing greywater recycling systems
- ❖ Replacing current water fixtures with low-flow fixtures
- ❖ Installing programmable thermostats
- ❖ Installing timers on lights
- ❖ Using reflective roofing
- ❖ Increasing the R-value of insulation
- ❖ Using window glazing to increase heat retention
- ❖ Installing solar panels on Township-owned buildings such as the municipal complex or maintenance buildings
- ❖ Using integrated pest management techniques on Township-owned open space
- ❖ Use local regional materials whenever possible

To take things a step further, South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough can offer incentives to residential property owners who wish to use alternative energy sources such as wind turbines or solar panels, such as property tax reductions. Funding for these types of projects is widely available. Because of the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, more than \$23 million will be made available to local governments and non-profit entities in Pennsylvania through the new Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program. Funding is available specifically for comprehensive energy audits (up to \$30,000) in addition to a litany of other simple cost-savings measure and projects (<http://www.recovery.pa.gov>).

Case Study #1: Cranberry Township

An interesting example of a community embracing this model is Cranberry Township. Cranberry Township articulated and adopted five broad principles of conservation in 2008, and has been using these principles as a way to guide its operation and policies ever since. These five principles are:

- ❖ **Smart Electric Use** – Cranberry has made energy efficiency a top priority in new construction as well as retrofitting old buildings, such as the wastewater treatment plant, which now uses variable frequency drives

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

and capacitors to help reduce high electric costs. Motion detectors on room lights, timers on appliances, retrofitting furnaces and other HVAC components have all contributed to Cranberry's increased cost savings and efficiency.

- ❖ *Incentives* – Cranberry has crafted its land development codes and ordinances to reward developers who make greater use of sustainable building practices by allowing greater development density (such as with conservation by design techniques).
- ❖ *LED Traffic Lights* – The Township has converted nearly eighty percent of the bulbs in its traffic signals to light-emitting diodes (LED), which result in reduced energy consumption and brighter signal colors.
- ❖ *Traffic Signal Coordination* – The Township operates a comprehensive traffic management system that includes a signal timing system that maximizes traffic flow by coordinating timing along major corridors such as SR 228 and SR 19. This reduces traffic congestion and results in fewer air emissions from vehicle exhaust.
- ❖ *Roundabouts* – A Cranberry Township traffic circle completed in 2008 has reduced idle time and fuel use by thirty percent.

Case Study #2: Hopewell Township, New Jersey

Hopewell Township in New Jersey is also a leader in environmental sustainability. Both the Township's Comprehensive Plan and its Zoning Ordinance have been based upon sustainable principles, aimed at achieving an "eco-municipality." The Township emphasizes a "water balance," that is, maintaining a proper balance between the volume of water removed from the groundwater supply and the volume of water returned to groundwater supply from rainfall, ponds, and innovative stormwater management techniques. The Township has also funded the construction of solar panels for its public works building, has begun retrofitting the lighting in all of its municipal buildings, and has mandated that all new budgets include a sustainability consideration. In addition, Hopewell Township is developing new land use ordinances that will mandate sustainable design efforts for all new land development. More information can be found on Hopewell Township's webpage by visiting <http://www.hopewelltp-nj.com>.

Recommendation: *South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough should consider the benefits of membership in an environmental program or group such as the Clean Cities Program, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, or the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign.*

Examples of such programs include some of those listed below. However, this is by no means a comprehensive list and there are many other programs available. South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough should partner with local agencies such as the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Sustainable Pittsburgh, and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission to determine what other programs are available or appropriate for their goals.

Clean Cities Program

The Clean Cities Program aims to advance the nation's economic, environmental, and energy security by supporting local decisions to adopt practices that contribute to the reduction of petroleum consumption. Clean Cities Coalitions represent public/private partnerships that promote alternative fuels and vehicles, fuel blends, fuel economy, hybrid vehicles, and idle reduction.

International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives

The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) is an association of local governments for sustainability. ICLEI provides technical consulting, training, and information services to build capacity, share knowledge, and support local government in the implementation of sustainable development practices at the local level. Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) Campaign is a program in which ICLEI communities can participate to take measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Benefits include financial savings, improved air quality, and economic development through investments in locally produced energy products and services.

Green Schools Program

An additional opportunity exists for McGuffey School District through the Green Schools Program. The Green Schools Program begins with an introductory workshop that helps teams of teachers, custodial staff, administrators and students promote school-wide energy awareness, and develop a plan to save energy in the school and the community. Green Schools tracks energy usage within the school, encourages student learning and leadership development, and provides resources for integration into the curriculum.

Recommendation: *Explore the applicability of incorporating model ordinance language for energy production and conservation into South Franklin Township's Code of Ordinances.*

Adopting a Small Wind Ordinance, which would allow for residents or property owners to have smaller-sized wind-generated electricity equipment on their land, can make the process easier for those interested in implementing such techniques. Some sample ordinances include:

Wind Energy Facilities Ordinance (PA DEP)

As a result of increased interest in wind energy production and local government's lack of experience in addressing the development and operation of such facilities in Pennsylvania, the PA DEP prepared this model ordinance to provide for the construction and operation of Wind Energy Facilities subject to reasonable conditions that will protect the public health, safety and welfare.

Small Wind Energy System Ordinance (Wisconsin Division of Energy and Wisconsin Towns Association)

The Small Wind Energy System Ordinance was developed as a permitted use ordinance. The ordinance can be adapted to conditional use for a small wind turbine by inserting additional sections for standards, permit requirements and abandonment into the ordinance.

Green Fleet Policy Ordinance (Clean Air County Initiative, Chicago, IL)

This ordinance recognizes current costs for fleet operation and establishes policy and goals for improving fleet fuel efficiency.

Recommendation: *South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough should partner together to produce and distribute a factsheet or brochure to educate residents, businesses, industry leaders, developers, and builders of energy conservation techniques that can be applied to design, materials, and processes.*

Innovative site design and building construction is an important component of reducing energy consumption and moving toward a more sustainable future. The U.S. Green Building Council has a wealth of information for those interested in green building techniques. Foremost among their programs is the LEED certification, or Leadership in

A Plan for South Franklin Township & Green Hills Borough

Energy and Environmental Design. The LEED green building certification system is the foremost program for the design, construction, and operation of green buildings. The U.S. Green Building Council's LEED rating system is the preeminent program for the design, construction, and operation of green buildings. An estimated 35,000 projects are currently participating in the LEED system, comprising over 4.5 billion square feet of construction space in all 50 states and 91 countries. By using less energy, LEED-certified buildings save money for families, businesses and taxpayers; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and contribute to a healthier environment for residents, workers and the larger community. The factsheet or brochure should include some of the useful and valuable principles that LEED espouses, including:

- ❖ Utilizing sustainable sites
- ❖ Maximizing water efficiency
- ❖ Conserving energy and atmosphere
- ❖ Using local and sustainable materials and resources
- ❖ Providing for high indoor environmental quality
- ❖ Seeking innovations in design

Recommendation: *South Franklin Township and Green Hills Borough should partner together to produce and distribute a factsheet or brochure to educate residents about energy conservation programs such as Energy Star.*

Energy Star- qualified appliances save energy, money, and help protect the environment. Only products delivering the highest level of energy efficiency are awarded the Energy Star from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U. S. Department of Energy. Saving energy also saves money. By using energy-efficient products, the average household can save up to \$400 per year on utility bills. The U. S. EPA estimates that if just 10% of the national population used Energy Star appliances, it would be the carbon dioxide pollution reduction equivalent of planting 1.7 million acres of new trees. For more information on Energy Star- qualified products and energy efficiency, visit <http://www.energystar.gov>. The Central Louisiana Electric Company has published and distributed an excellent example of an energy conservation guide that targets residential households. It can be found by visiting <http://www.cleco.com/uploads/EnergyConservationGuide.pdf>.

Recommendation: *Adopt or implement portions of the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC).*

The IECC is a building code created by the International Code Council in 2000 and amended most recently in 2009. It is a model code adopted by many state and municipal governments for the establishment of minimum design and construction requirements for energy efficiency. The Code focuses on establishing standards in four main areas of construction and renovation: the building envelope, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, electrical systems, and water production and distribution (Heerwagen, Dean, Passive and Active Environmental Controls, McGraw-Hill Professional, 2004, pp. 728). More information on the Code can be found by visiting the United States Department of Energy's energy code website at <http://www.energycodes.gov/>.