



A G E N D A

PHOENIXVILLE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE – COMMITTEE WORKSHOP PRPC-16 October 24, 2018

1. PPW-2 Recap
2. Municipal Planning Commission Meeting Recap
3. Municipal Review Comments
4. Next Steps – Implementation Plan and Consistency Statement
5. Adjournment

Phoenixville Regional Planning Committee

August 29, 2018 Public Policy Comment Workshop Summary

Public Participation Workshop #2 took place at the Kimberton Fire Company in East Pikeland Township. Community members were invited to review and comment on PRPC Policy Elements and Implementation Strategies drafts. A total of 45 members of the public and PRPC member representatives attended.

The event started at 7:00 pm with an open house that featured large scale maps of Future Land Use, Natural Resources, Forests and Prime Agricultural Soils, Open Space/Recreation, Bicycle Routes, Transportation, and Cultural Resources.

PRPC Planning consultants Ed Theurkauf of Theurkauf Design & Planning, and Tracy Lee Tackett of Tackett Planning gave a PowerPoint presentation on the comprehensive plan elements. The presentation paused for three 15-minute “roundtable discussions” for workshop participants to comment on plan elements and implementation strategies as follows:

Land Use Plan

- Map 2 - A Schuylkill Township resident expressed concern that the “Low Density Residential” designation of an area in the Township including the Technical College High School’s Pickering campus was inaccurate and would attract additional development. Recommended re-designating it as “Rural”.
- LU-8 – request to strengthen the affordable housing component by *mandating* that new high-density residential developments include affordable housing
- LU-8 – several participants identified a need to connect affordable housing and jobs in Phoenixville and regional villages by promoting walkability and transit access
- LU-9/10 – encourage cluster-type developments for improved land conservation

Environmental Resources Plan

- ER-3 – questions about what riparian buffers are, whether the region’s streams have them and are they wide enough, and the scientific basis for protections.

Consultants explained that the PA Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) determined 150 feet as the minimum recommended buffer width for Special Protection streams (Exceptional Value and High Quality) and 100 feet for streams not subject to special protections. Implementation Strategy ER-3 advocates uniform buffer protections throughout the region, while allowing reasonable exemptions (with stormwater mitigation) for certain uses and urban/brownfield redevelopment.

Energy Conservation and Sustainability Plan

- Participants asked whether it was feasible to mandate alternative energy components for new development.
- Several suggestions to increase the educational component of this plan. Consultants responded that strategies like EC-4 aimed to create municipal “information clearinghouses” for residents and businesses.
- EC-2 – consider adding cluster development/ “Eco Village” as an example of conservation and sustainability, either under EC or LU Plan (also see LU-9/10 under Land Use Plan notes)
- EC-2/EC-6 – suggestion to strengthen language regarding LEED/SITES: either adopt LEED and/or SITES standards for municipal sustainability standards or recommend stronger standards
- EC-4 – include information on recycling
- EC-5 – debate over whether composting should be a priority for the region. Suggestions included partnering with businesses/NGO’s like Lanchester Landfill to educate homeowners about composting; promoting HOA composting facilities; and implementing central composting facilities in urban areas while encouraging more rural homeowners to compost at home.
- In the section about food composting, expand to include a recommendation for composting education for at home composting and maybe neighborhood programs where on-site is not an option.
- Address impacts of landfills on land
- EC-6 – suggestion to make the 100% renewable energy resolution adoption a separate strategy, and to develop uniform resolutions across each of the member municipalities. Consider a strategy to hire a regional energy planner.
- EC-11 – participants supported more ‘assertive’ language for statewide solar legislation advocacy
- EC-11 – A West Vincent Township resident cited economics as a barrier to including more solar components to building projects

Housing Plan

- Affordable/Low-income Housing was a major concern among participants – a survey of the room indicated that over a quarter of participants were supportive of including more affordable housing initiatives, and also wanted to see more implementation strategies concerning low-income housing. Participants also requested more information about the differences between affordable and low-income housing. The Phoenixville Affordable Housing Initiative was mentioned by participants; consultants acknowledged that several of the report’s recommendations were included in the regional comprehensive plan and in the implementation strategies, but that this issue would be reviewed to see whether the plan could further align with the report.
- Participants asked whether it was possible to mandate affordable housing.

Economic Development Plan

There were no comments on implementation strategies for the Economic Development Plan.

Community Facilities Plan

- Suggestion for a “CF-12” strategy that addressed public safety/awareness/emergency response measures concerning trains carrying fossil fuels on regional freight routes
- CF-5 – A participant expressed concern that the hourly requirement for volunteer firefighters may be impractical for most regional residents; suggested encouraging a high school program to allow teens to begin some of the required training early

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan

There were no comments on PROS Plan implementation strategies.

Transportation Plan

- T-7 – Participant expressed concern that the PA Bike Route ‘S’ had become too dangerous for cyclists due to increased vehicular traffic; suggested increasing signage along it and other regional routes to increase driver awareness
- T-7 – Participant suggested widening SRT connection over the Route 29 Bridge from Phoenixville into Mont Clare to improve multimodal access.
- T-10/T-11 – Participant supported bringing passenger rail service back to Phoenixville. Recommended increasing emphasis on bus transit to benefit low-income and working class residents.
- T-10 – Recommend public transit between the region and West Chester

Cultural Resources Plan

- A participant commented that all of the CR Plan’s implementation strategies were lacking detail and should be expanded similar to other plan components’ strategies.
- A participant suggested partnering with the Chamber of Commerce to promote regional heritage tourism / establish a regional cultural center.

Other Comments:

- A Phoenixville resident commented that it was difficult to find location information for the draft Comprehensive Plan on the PRPC website.

The workshop concluded at 9:00 pm. Consultants encouraged participants to attend the monthly PRPC meetings, as well as the future Public Participation Workshop scheduled for March 2019.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOPS – SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2018 DRAFT POLICY ELEMENTS

The policy elements were presented to the Planning Commissions of each Member Municipality. Comment and questions were received as follows:

East Pikeland Township – September 11, 2018

- Discussed benefits of adding East Vincent, Spring City, and West Pikeland to PRPC
- Questions about status of efforts to reestablish passenger rail service to Phoenixville
- The Municipal PowerPoint presentation could be used to promote the work of PRPC to non-member municipalities

Phoenixville Borough – September 13, 2018

- Benefits of small warehouse uses in industrial areas
- How to establish Phoenixville as the regional employment center – Accessibility seen as the critical issue
- Do Economic Development Areas outside of the Borough constitute sprawl?

Schuylkill Township – September 19, 2018

- Implementation Strategies in certain chapters require additional subtext for clarification and consistency
- Where do Regional efforts to coordinate trails stand?
- Will Schuylkill adopt the Regional Comprehensive Plan as its Municipal Comprehensive Plan?

West Vincent Township – September 20, 2018

- The Planning Commission was receptive to all concepts as presented
- Questions regarding the goals and timing of public workshops and the timeline for adoption were discussed

Charlestown Township – October 9, 2018

- Work with PennDOT to implement bicycle and pedestrian accessibility objectives
- Is there a way to compel PennDOT to pay more attention to County and Regional transportation policy, especially with regard to bicycle and pedestrian accessibility?
- Open Space protection requires municipal allocation of financial resources. Do all PRPC members have an open space earned income tax?
- The PRPC Plan should provide more context with regard to destinations, economic centers, etc. beyond the five member municipalities

President

TJ QOAU EQQKTA AUQEATGU KE0

Town Planners & Landscape Architects

18 W. Chestnut Street

West Chester, PA 19380

p. 610-696-3896 ext. 4 / f. 610-430-3804

cell: 484-678-9245

www.comitta.com

tom@comitta.com

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