

Action Plan

Introduction

The list of nearly seventy objectives presented and reviewed in Chapters 11 and 12 may seem daunting, but it is important to remember that this document is expected to provide guidance for the next ten years. We have developed this list with the realization that the implementation process will take years, not mere months, and that implementation will be determined by the availability of the necessary resources.

As described in Chapter 12, there are a number of cases where a single action will result in progress on a number of objectives. We have in fact determined that the objectives set forth by this Comprehensive Plan may be achieved by execution of twenty-five actions. Some of these actions are simple and straightforward; others are complex, multi-phase projects. These actions may be grouped into various categories, suggesting what person or agency may be the most logical to be in charge of implementation.

- New **PLANNING EFFORTS** include the preparation of a revised or amended Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, the development of a multi-municipal traffic management plan, the finalization of an Open Space Plan, and the implementation of the Township's Act 537 Plan for sewage facilities. Implementation of Planning efforts will require the specific approval of the Township Council and must include consideration of funding sources as well as appointment of a lead agency. This agency may be an individual, a standing committee of the Township (such as the Planning Commission), or an appointed ad hoc committee.
- **DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION EFFORTS** include the various structural improvements to the road system along, the re-designed Providence Road and State Road corridors, the establishment of a pedestrian network, and improvements to the Township Building. Again, the responsibility for initiation of these projects will belong to the Township Council.
- Some tasks are essentially **ADMINISTRATIVE** and are most properly implemented by Township staff, or may require the hiring of additional staff on at least a temporary basis. These tasks include emergency management and searching and applying for the funding that is available for the other actions called for here. Although the Township Council must agree to allow the staff to pursue these activities - and certainly to approve the hiring of any new staff - the actual work could be executed by the staff with minimal supervision. In some cases, volunteer assistance may be appropriate, either by individuals or by an ad hoc committee. An example of where this would be suitable is the benchmarking effort proposed as a means to measure progress on several areas of concern.
- Finally, we note that there are a number of tasks that are principally **OUTREACH AND COORDINATION** among the Township and other agencies as well as with the Township residents. Such cooperative effort is obviously an element of nearly all of the other actions. We particularly note it here as such action is in some cases so critical to the achievement of a particular goal that it has been named as a specific objective. As with

the “administrative” actions described above, the role of Township Council here is minimal. While any official contact must be in the name of Council (or in some cases the Township Manager) and with their approval, the actual work could be executed by staff, an existing Township committee, an ad hoc committee, or volunteer individuals.

Planning Efforts

Action 1: Review/amend Zoning Ordinance - This action will implement or support objectives 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 4A, 5A, 14A, and 15D. The inclusion of conservation zoning techniques will also address objectives 12A, 17A, 18A, 18B, 18C, and Goal 13. Council may assign responsibility for this task to the Planning Commission or may appoint an ad hoc committee to execute this task. If they select the latter, the committee should include representatives of the Planning Commission and the Zoning Hearing Board. The Township Zoning Officer and the Township Manager are also logical members of this committee. If they are not committee members, then they should, as a minimum, be consulted at regular intervals and their comments carefully considered. Due to the level of effort required for this work, the Township should retain a professional consultant to produce the document. Work on the Zoning Ordinance revision should commence upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

Action 2: Review/amend Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance - This action will implement or support objectives 1A, 1D, 14A, and 19A. Similar to the Zoning Ordinance, the S&LD Ordinance revision/amendment should be executed at the direction of Township Council, with direct responsibility assigned to either the Planning Commission or an ad hoc committee. The Township Manager should have input to the process, either as a committee member or by working in close consultation with the committee. Work on the S&LD Ordinance should begin upon completion of the Zoning Ordinance.

Action 3: Review/amend Act 537 (Sewage Facilities Plan) - This action will implement or support objectives 15A, 15B, 15C, and 15E. Once again, the Township Council must initiate action on this project. Most successful planning of this type is a cooperative effort of the Planning Commission and the Township Authority. For this project, Aqua America should have a role, as they provide sanitary sewerage along the Crum Creek corridor. The assistance of a consulting engineer with knowledge of sewerage design and facility operation (including budgeting and financing of construction and operation costs) is critical. Sewage facilities planning must be consistent with both the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, as sewerage planning is necessary in order to accommodate higher density development.

Action 4: Development of Historic Preservation Plan, including update of historic features inventory - This action will implement or support objectives 16B, 16C, 16D, and 16E. Given the variety of approaches to historic preservation, Township Council should delegate this task to an individual (or group of individuals) who has already shown interest in the history of the Township. In-kind assistance in this effort is available from Delaware County and a variety of non-profit organizations; direct financial assistance is less common at this time. The specifics of the Historic Preservation Plan will be as recommended by this person or group.

Action 5: Promote the Emergency Management Plan - The Emergency Management Plan provides local providers of emergency services with a set of standard operating procedures (“SOP’s”) for use in emergencies, including weather emergencies and traffic incidents that involve spillage of hazardous materials. The general public need not be aware of the details of

this plan (and, due to Homeland Security policies, this may not even be advisable); however, it is good for the public to at least be aware that such a plan exists and where they can get more information in the event of an emergency or how to report an emergency. The Township Manager is also the Emergency Services Coordinator and should be responsible for providing appropriate information on the Township website and/or printed material pursuant to objective 11A.

Action 6: Develop multi-municipal traffic management plan - This action will implement or support objectives 2A and 2D; it is also one of an array of actions designed to enhance inter-municipal cooperation among Upper Providence and its neighbors. Due to its inter-governmental nature, the initiative must come from Township Council (perhaps through the Township Manager) reaching out to the governing bodies of other municipalities regarding this issue. Delaware County should also provide assistance in this effort. Once the municipalities have agreed to such a project, identified a scope for the plan, and set a budget, then the work of selecting and advising a consultant could be assigned to a volunteer group. This group should include representatives from each municipality, preferably individuals who are familiar with their communities. These people may, but need not, be members of other municipal agencies (such as the Planning Commission) or have their own professional expertise in traffic planning or engineering.

Action 7: Develop plan for pedestrian access and circulation - This action will implement or support objectives 7A, 7B, and 7E. This project would be appropriate for the Township Planning Commission or an ad hoc group that would include Planning Commission members. As we have noted that pedestrian access to schools is a particular area of concern, it would be sensible to include representatives from the School District, parents of students, or even some of the students themselves.

Action 8: Analysis of SEPTA's Media Station - This action will implement or support objective 6A. Strictly speaking, this should be a SEPTA project, and the first step of this action may be for the Township Manager to contact them to determine how the Township could facilitate such an analysis. If SEPTA has no interest in pursuing such a study, the Township - perhaps in cooperation with Media Borough - could undertake such a project on its own. In such case, the limits of the analysis and any recommendations would need to reflect SEPTA's level of involvement, if any. This project would be appropriate for the Township Planning Commission, or a committee that includes Planning Commission members, as advised by a professional consultant.

Action 9: Analysis of parking for mass transit - This action will implement or support objective 6B. The implementation process of this action is similar to that for the previous action: once again, SEPTA must be involved at some level as they are currently the only provider of mass transit in Upper Providence. However, they need not be the sponsor or the funding source for this work. Again, this would be a suitable project for the Township Planning Commission, or a committee that includes Planning Commission members (and SEPTA representation), and a professional consultant.

Action 10: Contact surrounding municipalities and School District regarding creation of an Open Space and Recreation Plan - This action implements objective 12F. We have noted that land available for open space and recreational purposes is in short supply in the Township, even as demand for these facilities is continuing to increase. A multi-municipal plan, perhaps

including the Rose Tree Media School District, will facilitate the creation of a regional strategy to meet these needs and help to prevent duplication of facilities.

Design and Construction Projects

Action 11: Re-design US Route 1 interchange - This action will implement or support objective 3B. This is perhaps the most ambitious action of this Comprehensive Plan. Fortunately, PennDOT already recognizes the critical need to improve this interchange, and preliminary work is in progress. Upper Providence Township is using this Comprehensive Plan to express its support for this work.

Action 12: Re-design of intersection of PA Route 252 (Palmers Mill Road) and Providence Road - This action will implement or support objective 3C. This action will become increasingly critical as traffic volumes increase along Palmers Mill Road due to new development in Marple and Newtown Townships. The Township Council may wish to appoint an ad hoc Transportation Committee, which should include representation from the Planning Commission, to promote this action as well as the other transportation-related actions recommended by this Plan.

Action 13: Re-alignment of “2650” curve on Providence Road - This action will implement or support objective 3D. This task would also be suitable for a Township Transportation Committee, as described above. Regardless of whether or not such a committee is appointed, it will be necessary to secure PennDOT cooperation, as Providence Road is a State road. We expect that an engineering analysis will be necessary in order to quantify the design characteristics that cause this to be such a treacherous location.

Action 14: Develop design for Providence Road corridor between Media Borough line and Rose Tree Park - This action will implement or support Goal 4. While this would also be an appropriate task for a Township Transportation Committee, the purpose of this project is not purely to improve transportation. Instead, the idea is to improve this corridor on a number of levels, creating a greater “sense of place,” a more pleasing appearance, and better accommodation for pedestrians. While vehicular traffic along Providence Road will always be heavy, better pedestrian accommodations would provide local residents with an alternative to using their cars for short trips, thereby increasing their transportation options and improving their overall quality of life. If successful, we envision a time when residents of the neighborhoods surrounding this corridor could walk to the schools, churches, and businesses along the corridor - and perhaps even to attend the summer concerts at Rose Tree Park. This could be a project for the Planning Commission, perhaps with assistance from local design professionals. Council may find that such professionals are willing to provide such assistance on a pro bono basis. Furthermore, Township Council (on their own or directing either the staff or the Planning Commission) should explore the applicability of “ Main Street” or “ Elm Street” funding to promote this project.

Action 15: Develop design for State Road Corridor between Media Borough line and Bobbin Mill Road - This action will implement or support Goal 5. This action is similar to the one described above for Providence Road. State Road is another major point of entry to the Township, and the visual quality of the area contributes significantly to how the Township is perceived. The specific steps necessary to implement this action are also similar to those described for Action 13.

Administrative

Action 16: Execute space utilization and needs analysis - This action will implement or support objective 8B. This action should be implemented by Township Council (or the staff at the direction of Council) and may be executed by securing a qualified consultant to perform the analysis.

Action 17: Execute staff utilization report and analysis - This action will implement or support objectives 8A, 8C, and 10B. Similarly to the preceding Action, this Action should be implemented directly by Council. It is critical that this analysis be conducted by a neutral third party in order to assure that there are no conflicts of interest - or even the *appearance* of such conflicts - and the integrity of the final product and recommendations.

Action 18: Develop benchmarking standards - This action will implement or support objectives 8E, 10A, and 10E. Ideally, any benchmarking exercise would have input from residents familiar with the service being measured as well as a representative from the service provider. This action is best suited to an ad hoc committee appointed by Township Council.

Action 19: Develop an annual capital improvements plan - This action is actually a necessary component for many of the objectives. It will directly implement or support objective 12B. This action should already be part of the current annual budgeting process. The Township Manager, at the direction of Township Council, is best qualified to implement this action.

Action 20: Identify funding sources - This action will most directly implement or support objectives 2C, 3A, 7C, 8D, and 10E. Given the Township's limited financial resources, this is a critical action. It can also be a time-consuming activity, as funds appropriate for the projects described here are available from a variety of public and private sources. Furthermore, the amount of funding available and the various program requirements change frequently. As with virtually all of the actions described in this chapter, work would need to be at the direction of Council. Ideally, this work could be executed by Township staff under the direction of the Township Manager; however, if the staff work load does not allow for a period of focused effort, the Township could seek assistance from Delaware County or could secure the services of an intern or summer employee.

Action 21: Initiate annual inspection of stormwater management facilities - This action will implement or support objective 19C. This should be administered by the Township Manager, but the actual inspection work would be performed by the Township Engineer. Prior to performing any inspections, Township Council in consultation with the Township Solicitor should develop and pass an Ordinance establishing the details of the process and establishing a fee structure so that this action will not result in any net cost to the Township.

Outreach & Coordination

Given the level of development in Upper Providence and the surrounding communities, maintaining open lines of communication with residents, County officials, and representatives of the neighboring municipalities is an essential part of achieving nearly all of the objectives we have named in this plan. The objectives cited below are those which are most directly supported by such outreach and co-ordination efforts.

Action 22: Maintain regular contact with residents, including identifying such individuals with

the interest and background suitable for serving the Township in a volunteer capacity - This action will implement or support objective 16A. The identification of residents with an interest in serving on Township boards or any of the ad hoc committees described in this Chapter is something that *everyone* connected to the Township should be doing, particularly residents who are already serving the Township in a volunteer capacity. Direct, personal contact, is by far the most effective method for securing volunteer help. Even so, the Township Council and administrative staff should continue to utilize other tools, such as the Township's website and direct mailing. In some cases, the Township may be able to "piggy-back" special mailings (if they are brief) with regular mailings of service providers.

Action 23: Maintain regular contact with staff and officials from surrounding municipalities to review issues of mutual interest and to develop strategies to address them - This action will implement or support objectives 9A, 9B, 10D, and 19B. Similar to the preceding action, we will find that this is most effective if it occurs on as many levels as possible: elected officials, professional staff, and appointed officials - all under the direction of their various heads - should be pro-actively establishing contact with their peers in the surrounding communities to address the concerns noted in this Plan and to promote the goals and objectives that we have identified. Establishing personal and professional relationships with these individuals will provide a wide range of benefits to the Township, will help to avoid misunderstanding and miscommunication, and will facilitate the success of Township policies.

Action 24: Maintain regular contact with the Rose Tree Media School District to review issues of mutual interest and to develop strategies to address them - This action will implement or support objectives 12C, 14B, and 14C. Similar to the preceding action, this is an action that should be promoted on as many levels as possible, although elected officials will have primary responsibility.

Action 25: Maintain regular contact with representatives of local athletic associations regarding issues of mutual interest - chiefly the provision of appropriate facilities - and to develop strategies to promote them - This action will implement or support objectives 7A, 7D, 12A, and 12E. Since many Township residents are *already* involved with organizations of this type, there is a "built-in constituency" that will favor the success of this action. This could be formally administered by Township staff, but maintaining the personal connections will be the responsibility of all Township officials, both elected and appointed.

Action 26: Maintain regular contact with State- and Federal-level legislators to assure that local concerns - particularly traffic issues - are raised at the level of government that has the authority to address them most effectively - This contact will also help to keep the Township aware of funding and programs that have the potential to benefit the Township by promoting other objectives. This action will implement or support objectives 2B and 3A. Experience has shown that government officials respond best to their own peer level: elected officials (State senators and representatives) respond best to local elected officials, while professional staffers respond best to others who work in the same or similar professions. Principal responsibility for this particular action will therefore fall to Township Council.

Prioritization and Implementation

As with any organization or unit of government, how actions are implemented is often a function of urgency and the availability of resources. There is a tendency to disparage starting

with such easy actions as going for the “low-hanging fruit,” but these are *still* things that need to be done, and successfully completing a simple project is a confidence-builder for attempting more complicated tasks. However, ease of effort, assurance of success, or the “tyranny of the urgent” cannot be the only criteria used for prioritizing actions for implementation. The whole point of planning is to avoid such considerations from being the sole drivers of action. Other factors include the following.

- Urgency of situation - While urgency should not be the only reason for executing an action, it is the most important. We note that urgent problems - such as traffic congestion in Upper Providence - are often complex problems that must be addressed on various fronts (i.e., different levels of government) and by various means (i.e., administrative, regulatory, structural), and success may not be immediately apparent.
- Availability of resources - The most critical resources are funding and appropriate personnel. Note that the definition of “personnel” is not limited to Township staff, but includes residents who may volunteer for such tasks.
- Need for preliminary work - Some of the actions described above are clearly meant to be preceded by other actions. For example, the development of a multi-municipal traffic management plan (Action 6) will be facilitated if it is preceded by continued, habitual contact with surrounding municipalities (Action 22). This has resulted in some actions being designated for implementation in later years. This does not imply that they are unimportant, only that they should be preceded by other tasks in order to have a sufficient foundation for success.

Our intent is to develop a strategic action plan that will enable the Township to make the most of the resources that are available as it addresses a wide variety of goals.

We have divided the twenty-six actions established in this chapter into four categories, depending upon the timing of their implementation. It may appear that an excessive proportion of the actions are to be executed in the earlier years of the planning period (2005 - 2015). This is so for several reasons. First of all, the easier tasks *are* first, for reasons described in the preceding paragraphs. Secondly, this chart is showing when these actions should be started, and we note that a number of them are multi-year or on-going efforts that will carry over into the subsequent period.

Priority I Actions: Implementation to begin within six months of Plan adoption

Although there appear to be a lot Priority I actions, note that most of them are communication pieces: activities that we should be ongoing throughout the planning period and that may be initiated easily.

- Action 1: Review/amend Zoning Ordinance - This action typically follows a municipal update to the Comprehensive Plan.
- Action 11: Re-design US Route 1 Interchange - Although this may be the most ambitious action identified by this plan, the preliminary stages are currently underway.
- Action 12: Re-design of PA Route 252/Providence Road intersection (included as a phase of Action 10).
- Action 22: Maintain regular contact with residents.
- Action 23: Maintain regular contact with surrounding municipalities.

- Action 24: Maintain regular contact with Rose Tree Media School District.
- Action 25: Maintain regular contact with representatives of local athletic associations.
- Action 26: Maintain regular contact with legislators.

Priority II Actions: Implementation to begin between six and twenty-four months of Plan adoption

The eighteen-month period allotted to the Priority II actions is the busiest in our implementation schedule. Note that some of these actions involve the appointment of ad hoc committees and that their work may extend beyond the period that defines Priority II actions: this is acceptable, although the Township Council may wish to provide a timeline for committee activities as they are established. Recall that this time period is when these actions will *begin*; they need not necessarily be *completed* within this timeframe. Other actions are intended to be sequential: these are noted below.

- Action 2: Review/amend Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance - This action typically follows a municipal update of the Zoning Ordinance; a reasonable timeframe for this task would allow for completion of this task well before the end of the eighteen-month period allotted for Priority II actions.
- Action 3: Review/amend Sewage Facilities Plan - It is critical that this plan be consistent with the Zoning Ordinance, so work on this project should ideally be subsequent to any revision of that Ordinance. There are also points where consistency with the Subdivision Ordinance are required; however, most communities find that this is facilitated by doing the Subdivision Ordinance and Sewage Facilities Plan concurrently, although this would be at the discretion of Township Council. Concurrent preparation of these documents is more feasible when two different committees (perhaps with some individual as an official liaison) are responsible for the work.
- Action 4: Development of Historic Preservation Plan - This action would be the first task of a permanent group to be appointed by Council. As the members of this group would be different from those participating in Actions 2 and 3, it is feasible for this action to be implemented concurrently with these other actions. It is likely that completion of this action will extend beyond the eighteen-month period that defines the Priority II actions.
- Action 5: Promote the Emergency Management Plan - As noted earlier, this action may be implemented at the staff level by amending the Township website and various publications.
- Action 6: Develop multi-municipal traffic management plan - This is among the more ambitious actions in this Comprehensive Plan. We recommend that it commence upon completion of Action 2 (review/completion of Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance); work will extend beyond the eighteen-month period established for Priority II actions.
- Action 7: Develop pedestrian circulation plan - This action could be included as part of Actions 2 or 6, or could be reassigned as a Priority III action if it becomes burdensome.
- Action 16: Execute space utilization analysis - This action should be executed at the staff level with the assistance of a professional consultant.
- Action 17: Execute staff utilization analysis - This action should be executed at the staff level with the assistance of a professional consultant.
- Action 19: Capital improvements plan - As noted earlier, this action is a current task of the municipal staff and Council; it is not noted as a Priority I action simply due to the

timing of the adoption of this Plan.

- Action 20: Identify funding sources.
- Action 21: Initiate program of annual inspection of stormwater management facilities - As described earlier in this chapter, this action will require some co-ordination among the Township Engineer, the Township Solicitor, Council, and the Township Manager. Given this logistical complexity, we have made this a Priority II action rather than a Priority I action.

Priority III Actions: Implementation to begin between two years and five years of Plan adoption

Although the list of actions is shorter, bear in mind that we expect that the actual work of a number of the Priority II actions will extend into this period.

- Action 8: Analysis of Media Station - We expect that a number of the transportation-related actions in the Priority II section will entail contact with SEPTA, thereby creating a foundation for additional cooperative efforts such as this one.
- Action 9: Analysis of parking for mass transit - This action is clearly related to Action 8, although its scope is not limited to the train station. Regardless, they could be executed more or less simultaneously.
- Action 14: Re-design of Providence Road corridor between Borough and Rose Tree Park - While this is a major element of this Plan (and an ambitious one) it should be preceded by the traffic-related Priority II actions.
- Action 18: Develop benchmarking standards - Given the generally high level of satisfaction with public services, we see this as a less critical project than the Priority I and II actions.

Priority IV Actions: Implementation to begin between five years and ten years of Plan adoption

As with the Priority III actions, these actions should not be seen as unimportant, but as requiring completion of the other actions in order for them to be efficiently executed. Also, the work of some of the Priority II and III actions is likely to extend into this period as well as many (if not all) of the “ongoing” Priority I actions.

- Action 10: Begin work on a multi-municipal Open Space and Recreation Plan - While open spaces and recreational facilities are an important component of quality of life, the urgency and complexity of the other actions indicates that this action should have lower priority.
- Action 13: Re-alignment of “2650” curve on Providence Road
- Action 15: Re-design of State Road corridor between Borough and Bobbin Mill Road - This action is similar Action 13, although it addresses a different location. We anticipate that lessons learned during the implementation of Action 13 will allow us to implement this action with greater efficiency.